

Urban Development

Strengthening growth-management legislation

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Description: In 1995, the Growth Strategies Act gave regional districts more authority to undertake regional planning in order to make communities across B.C. more compact and to control urban sprawl. Although this important piece of legislation has been in place in B.C. since the mid-1990s, of the 27 regional districts only six regional districts have completed an RGS and only four others are in the process of developing one. The regional growth strategies that have been put in place have had some success at controlling sprawl and thus some measurable impact on reducing automobile usage. It has been particularly successful in the Lower Mainland. However, stronger legislation will be needed in order to meet the 33% GHG reduction target set out by the province. Some lessons can be taken from other jurisdictions (i.e., the states of Oregon and Maryland) on improving the effectiveness of regional planning and growth management.

An update to the Local Government Act is necessary to strengthen Regional Growth Strategy legislation. The main change would require each regional district to have in place a regional growth strategy by the end of 2009. Each RGS would include specified GHG targets, urban containment boundaries, and density thresholds. It would also give new authority to the regional governments to enforce growth-management provisions and establish an independent oversight body to monitor progress towards meeting goals.

Type: Targets, enabling legislation, and reductions

Implementers: Municipal and regional governments

Reductions estimate: Very large (approx. 1.8 million Mt CO₂e assuming a 25% drop in VKT by 2020)

> 1 Mt CO₂e: Very Large



See **APPENDIX 15: (Strengthening Growth Management Legislation)** for additional information on this measure.