

Regional Context Statement





3. REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENT

In 1995, the Provincial Government passed into law the “Growth Strategies Act”. The purpose of this provincial initiative was to encourage regional districts and member municipalities to better prepare for growth and future change in a more integrated manner. The “Growth Strategies Act” provides a framework for interactive planning between municipalities and a regional district that relies on a cooperative, rather than hierarchical, process.

In 1996, Metro Vancouver adopted the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) as its growth strategy. The LRSP is the policy blueprint for the evolution of the region and is subject to periodic review to ensure it continues to appropriately address changing social, economic and environmental conditions.

Every Metro Vancouver member municipality is required to identify the relationship between its OCP and the strategies of the LRSP by incorporating a Regional Context Statement into its OCP.

The four fundamental strategies of the LRSP are:

1. Protect the Green Zone
2. Build complete communities
3. Achieve a compact metropolitan area
4. Increase transportation choice

If necessary, the Regional Context Statement must identify the inconsistencies between the OCP and the LRSP and how the OCP will be made consistent over time.

The Regional Context Statement for Pitt Meadows’ OCP has been prepared in keeping with the requirements of Section 866 of the *Local Government Act*.



3.1 Protect the Green Zone

The Green Zone applies to a range of lands, including watersheds and floodplains, forests, wilderness areas, wildlife habitats, wetlands, recreational areas, farms and forestry areas. These are the green areas that are fundamental to Metro Vancouver’s character and ecology.

Eighty-two percent of Pitt Meadows is within the Green Zone; the vast majority of the City’s Green Zone is within the Agricultural Land Reserve and functions as productive farm land. Naturally, farm land has played a primary role in the settlement pattern and growth of Pitt Meadows and it continues to play a major role in the character and economic life of the City.

Other areas within Pitt Meadows that are within the Green Zone include:

- Grant Narrows Regional Park;
- Codd Wetland Ecological Conservancy Area;
- Most of the area on the river side of the dikes;
- Municipal parks and greenways;

The City of Pitt Meadows’ Official Community Plan supports the protection of the Green Zone in the following ways:

- The Green Zone areas in Pitt Meadows are identified on Schedule 2 of the OCP;
- Lands designated as Agriculture on the Land Use Map (Schedule 3A and 3B) are intended to be used for agricultural purposes, consistent with ALR requirements and rationale for inclusion in the Green Zone;
- Lands designated as Environmentally Sensitive (Schedule 9) of this plan are intended to be protected in their natural state. Lands designated as environmentally sensitive include wildlife conservation areas, such as Grant Narrows Regional Park and Codd Wetland Ecological Conservancy Area and the banks of the Fraser, Pitt and Alouette Rivers. The City will work with the Province, FREMP and the GVRD to ensure the protection of these areas;
- The City of Pitt Meadows and the Metro Vancouver will continue to work together to acquire land on the riversides of the dikes, especially along the Pitt and Fraser Rivers for recreation and environmental conservation and cooperate as partners in the acquisition and development of the Pitt Meadows – Maple Ridge Recreational Greenways Sector Plan;
- Designation of an Urban Containment Boundary that coincides, for the most part, with the Green Zone and planning for growth within that boundary, discouraging growth outside of that boundary;



- Including policies that protect agricultural lands from conversion to other uses, including rural estates;
- Including policies that minimize conflict between agricultural uses and urban uses, including the use of buffers;
- Applying land use designations such as “Park”, and “Open Space” for the protection of natural areas;
- Partnering with other agencies such as FREMP in order to protect those areas on the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Map.

Pitt Meadows is working towards consistency with the LRSP over time and will seek the removal of parcels of land from the Green Zone, as shown on Schedule 3A of the OCP.

While no decision has been made at this point, the City may in the future, depending on the final location of the proposed North Lougheed Connector, choose to amend Schedules 1 (ALR), 2 (Green Zone) and 3A (Urban Land Use) to make land between this corridor and the Lougheed Highway available for non-residential urban uses, subject to the amendment of the LRSP if necessary.

3.2 Build Complete Communities

Complete communities offer their residents the opportunity to live, work, play and shop without having to travel great distances to do so.

Pitt Meadows lies outside of the LRSP’s Growth Concentration Area within which most of the region’s future population is anticipated to be accommodated. As such, the City is intended to take only a small share of new growth.

Extensive analysis of population and housing in Pitt Meadows suggests that the City could achieve a population of 21,000 by 2021, with approximately 8,000 dwelling units in the urban area. This is close to the City’s ultimate residential development capacity under the land use policies set out in this OCP.

The LRSP classifies Pitt Meadows as a municipal town centre. Metro Vancouver’s network of regional and town centres are intended to be primary concentrations of jobs, housing, culture and recreation opportunities. Having a network of centres throughout the region means that residents will have improved access to the facilities they need within their communities, and that connections between communities can be improved. The Pitt Meadows’ Official Community Plan encourages the creation of a complete community by:

- Encouraging the Town Centre to be the central focus of activity in Pitt Meadows by permitting higher densities and mixed uses within a pedestrian friendly environment;



- Designating a Civic Centre within the Town Centre Area that will be the focus of public facilities in the Municipality;
- Encouraging greater diversity in the housing mix, including infill housing, particularly close to the Town Centre and within walking distance of public transit;
- Designating additional land for business park use in the south Harris Road area, which would provide future jobs for residents;
- Planning to meet the recreational needs of the community through a combination of approaches including providing parks for active and passive uses, public sports facilities, open spaces, trails and bike paths, protected natural areas and through recreational programs;
- Designating a Heritage Preservation Zone to ensure the conservation of several buildings with historic value;
- Providing for additional commercial development in Pitt Meadows, with different types of commercial activities concentrated in different areas of the community;

3.3 Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region

One of the goals of the Livable Region Strategic Plan is to minimize urban sprawl in the region, thereby using infrastructure in the most efficient manner, and reducing commuting distances.

Maintaining the compactness of the urbanized area and preserving the agricultural land is a primary goal of the Pitt Meadows' Official Community Plan.

The OCP supports this goal in the following ways:

- Crafting a land use plan with permitted densities that will accommodate the Metro Vancouver population projections for Pitt Meadows;
- Delineating an Urban Containment Boundary that would contain most of the future population within it;
- Locating commercial and industrial land uses within the Urban Containment Boundary;
- Locating medium to high-density multi-family housing on major roads and within the Town Centre. Preference for locating high density housing within walking distance of transit and within the Town Centre;
- Limiting sanitary service to the urban area;



3.4 Increase Transportation Choice

Metro Vancouver seeks to reduce the region's dependence on the car in order to alleviate air pollution, congestion and the increasing public costs associated with these issues.

The province is reconstructing the Pitt River Bridge and constructing the new Golden Ears Bridge primarily to facilitate the movement of goods to, from, and within the Lower Mainland.

These transportation works will improve the municipality's connectivity to the rest of the region. Pitt Meadows supports these transportation improvements and is proposing other improvements that would also support the movement of goods and people through the region, while at the same time preserve the community.

The City recognizes that building a larger road network is not the complete solution to efficiently move people within Pitt Meadows and throughout the region. Improved public transit in a variety of forms along with more opportunities for walking and cycling are also needed.

The Official Community Plan contains policies that address increased transportation choice by:

- Supporting regional and provincial transportation agencies to help provide transportation choice and improve regional air quality;
- Continuing to enhance and extend the extensive trail / cycle network utilizing the dikes on the Fraser, Pitt River and Alouette Rivers;
- Requiring linked pedestrian access in all new developments;
- Developing a pedestrian and cycling trail network plan to link the Town Centre and commercial, industrial and recreational areas;
- Acknowledging the importance of the airport to transportation and the economy;
- Continuing to work with CP Rail to ensure the safe transfer and movement of goods through Pitt Meadows;
- Not permitting any uses or activities which would disrupt the transportation functions of the Pitt or Fraser Rivers;
- Encouraging the location of higher density housing and commercial uses within walking distance of public transit.



WEST COAST EXPRESS STATION



A Partnership Approach

The City of Pitt Meadows is committed to working in partnership with Metro Vancouver to achieve the shared goals of the OCP and LRSP. Should a disagreement arise, the City will enter into discussions with Metro Vancouver to resolve the matter in keeping with provisions of the *Local Government Act*.

The City of Pitt Meadows is also committed to working in partnership with the Fraser River Estuary Management Program (FREMP) to complete an Area Designation Agreement.