Rethinking the Region is an annual day-long conference that provides an opportunity for deep dialogue, reflection and learning about the past, present and future of regional governance in Metro Vancouver. For the first time this year, SFU Urban Studies is co-hosting Rethinking the Region with the SFU School of Public Policy and also partnering with the City of New Westminster.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The co-hosts of Rethinking the Region, SFU Urban Studies, SFU Public Policy, and the City of New Westminster, would like to express our gratitude to all our speakers, our participants and all the students and others who contributed to making this event a success.

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To see more products of the research produced in SFU Urban Studies, please see our new research summaries at: http://www.sfu.ca/urban/research-summaries.html

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@sfu_mpp
#RtR2016
AGENDA

8:00 – 9:00  Registration
9:00 – 9:30  Welcome
  Dr. Meg Holden, Associate Professor of Urban Studies at SFU
  Dr. Peter Hall, Professor and Director of SFU’s Urban Studies Program
  Doug McArthur, Professor and Director of SFU’s School of Public Policy

Panel: What vision gave rise to our regional government system?
9:30 – 10:30  Moderator: Paddy Smith, Professor of Urban Studies and Political Science at SFU
  Councillor Harold Steves, City of Richmond
  Joy MacPhail, former MLA
  Richard Hankin, former head of Metro Vancouver Regional Parks

10:30 – 10:45  Break

Keynote: Regional Districts and Vancouver
10:45 – 11:15  Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport, Cultural Development
  Introduced by Andrew Petter, President, Simon Fraser University and
  Mayor Jonathan Coté, City of New Westminster

Keynote: Regionalism and Legitimacy
11:15 – 12:15  Zack Taylor, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Western University
  Discussant: David Bragdon, Executive Director, TransitCenter

12:15 – 1:00  Lunch Break

Presentation of Award for Coordinator Region at a Crossroads
1:00 – 1:15  Presented by Gordon Price, former Director of the City Program at SFU

Panel: Working within our regional government system, local leader’s perspectives
1:15 – 2:15  Moderator: Doug McArthur, Professor and Director of SFU’s School of Public Policy
  Mayor Jonathan Coté, City of New Westminster
  Mayor Jack Froese, Township of Langley
  Chief Bryce Williams, Tsawwassen First Nation

2:15 – 2:30  Break

2:30 – 2:45  Introduction to Solutions panel
  David Hendrickson, Grants Manager, Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia

2:45 – 3:15  Group Discussion
  Student-facilitated

Panel: Where can we go from here?
3:15 – 4:00  Moderator: Meg Holden, Associate Professor of Urban Studies at SFU
  Councillor Raymond Louie, City of Vancouver
  MP Kennedy Stewart, Burnaby

4:00 – 6:00  Reception (in foyer)
  Ken Cameron, reading from biography-in-progress on H. Peter Oberlander
INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the New York Times noticed that a spate of recent urban manifestoes were advancing a shared theme: that local governments are uniquely positioned to save the planet and themselves\(^1\). These books argue that cities, rather than nations, have the best shot at delivering solutions to our most pressing problems. Urban dwellers seem to agree. Citizens are more and more looking to local governments to provide housing they can afford, quick and congestion-free commutes, clean air and water, and — if it’s not too much trouble — serious action against global climate change. The gaps between these expectations and cities’ available resources and powers are evident. But in urban regions, the solutions will also require co-ordinated efforts between municipalities whose fates have become even more intertwined than before. Our success in governing urban regions will therefore be key to our success in rising to the social, economic, and environmental challenges of the coming decades.

The following case studies look at four cities that have different answers to the question of how we should govern our regions. The cities fall on a spectrum from decentralized governance, in which municipalities retain autonomy, to more centralized governance, in which municipalities consolidate to form one local government. The Greater Toronto Area, which is dominated by the City of Toronto and its 2.6 million residents, falls towards the centralized end of the spectrum, though the presence of the 4 million other residents of the GTA creates a unique situation. Stockholm, Vancouver, and Portland represent more decentralized approaches with varying degrees of central authority over certain issues and varying means of deciding who occupies the offices of central authorities.

The case studies explore the geography and governance structures of these regions and illustrate how well the regions are performing on some common metrics regarding housing, transportation, and environment. They also explore the current questions and debates facing each region, where we see that regions tend to be unhappy in some not-so-unique ways.

We hope these vignettes provide useful material for discussions on the role of governance in regional development. As a prompt, we ask you to consider this quote from Raymond Louie, President of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities:

“This is what municipal governments do best: engage Canadians, find solutions grounded in local realities, and deliver meaningful action.”\(^2\)

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# COMPARATIVE REGIONAL STATISTICS

## GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portland(^i)</th>
<th>Toronto(^ii)</th>
<th>Stockholm(^iii)</th>
<th>Vancouver(^iv)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>2.3(^1)</td>
<td>6.1(^2)</td>
<td>2.3(^3)</td>
<td>2.4(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(millions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Density</strong></td>
<td>129</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(persons per sq. km)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population growth (%)</strong></td>
<td>10.7(^5)</td>
<td>16.8(^6)</td>
<td>18.0(^7)</td>
<td>13.8(^8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(change 2005-2015)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median age</strong></td>
<td>37.7(^9)</td>
<td>39.2(^10)</td>
<td>39.0(^11)</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top industries</strong></td>
<td>1. Electronics</td>
<td>1. Financial Services</td>
<td>1. Iron and steel</td>
<td>1. Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Machinery</td>
<td>2. Real Estate</td>
<td>2. Precision equipment</td>
<td>2. Wholesale and Retail Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Clothing and retail(^12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Processed foods</td>
<td>5. Accommodation and Food Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP (billions of $)</strong></td>
<td>159(^14)</td>
<td>314(^15)</td>
<td>241(^16)</td>
<td>145(^17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of municipalities</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25+4 regional municipalities (GTA)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mississauga, ON [713,443]</td>
<td>Brampton, ON [523,911]</td>
<td>Stockholm [911,989]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surrey, BC [468,251]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burnaby, BC [223,218]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share of regional population covered by largest regional government (%) of total regional population</strong></td>
<td>69 [Portland Metro](^18)</td>
<td>50 [City of Toronto]</td>
<td>100 [Stockholm County]</td>
<td>100 [Metro Vancouver]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^i\) Data are for Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro Metropolitan Statistical Area unless otherwise indicated  
\(^ii\) Data are for Toronto Census Metropolitan Area unless otherwise indicated  
\(^iii\) Data are for Stockholm County unless otherwise indicated  
\(^iv\) Data are for Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area unless otherwise indicated
### HOUSING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New housing starts in 2015</td>
<td>12 356₁⁷</td>
<td>42 287₂⁰</td>
<td>13 317₂¹</td>
<td>20 863₂²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of home ownership (%)</td>
<td>61₂₃</td>
<td>68₂₄</td>
<td>69₂₅</td>
<td>65₂₆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income (CAD)</td>
<td>60 248₂₇</td>
<td>72 830₂₈</td>
<td>62 294₂₉</td>
<td>73 390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median price of single-family detached home (CAD)</td>
<td>354 500₃₀</td>
<td>835 485₃₁</td>
<td>822 863</td>
<td>1 342 500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TRANSPORTATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation mode distribution (% of total)</td>
<td>78% car 7% transit 4% walk 3% bike</td>
<td>70% car 23% transit 5% walk 1% bike</td>
<td>51% car 19% transit 26% walk or bike</td>
<td>73% car 14% transit 11% walk 2% bike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average commute time (minutes)</td>
<td>25.6₂₄</td>
<td>32.8₂₅</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>28.4₂₆</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ENVIRONMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Portland</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air quality (PM10v mg/m³)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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v. A measure of the concentration of particulate matter in the air. Low values indicate better air quality.
GOVERNANCE

What is the region?

The Portland Metropolitan Area straddles the border of the US states of Washington and Oregon and is centered around the City of Portland. The US Office of Management and Budget defines the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA Metropolitan Statistical Area as including Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill counties in Oregon, and Clark and Skamania counties in Washington.

Who governs what aspects of the region?

Portland Metro is composed of twenty-five cities in Oregon. Metro, the only directly-elected regional government in the United States, operates under a Home Rule Charter, and as such is neither a general purpose authority nor a state agency. Metro is responsible for regional land use planning, setting urban growth boundaries, regional parks, solid waste management, and “visitor venues” like the Oregon Zoo and Oregon Convention Centre. Funding for Metro comes primarily from enterprise activities like solid waste disposal fees and facility revenues. Property taxes are also a significant source of revenue.

The largest transportation authority in the area is the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet), a public corporation of the State of Oregon which exists completely administratively separate from Metro. In fact, its creation pre-dated Metro by almost a decade. Funding for TriMet is raised through payroll taxes collected by the State. TriMet operates a light rail system, the Metropolitan Area Express (MAX), a commuter rail system (WES), buses, and the Portland Streetcar. Five other transit districts surround TriMet: one in neighbouring Washington and four in the surrounding Oregon counties.

Municipal governments, such as the City of Portland, have the power to levy taxes and can regulate public utilities, parks, recreational areas, and other public facilities. The Portland region contains substantial population in unincorporated areas (i.e. outside of municipal boundaries) that receive services from overlapping freestanding special-purpose bodies and county governments, making the governance structure quite complex.

Who decides who governs the region?

Metro is governed by a directly-elected body with six district councilors, one President, and one auditor. Each councilor represents a specific geographic region, while the President and auditor are elected region-wide. The council appoints a Chief Operating Officer and an attorney; the President appoints members of Metro’s committees, commissions, and boards. The Governor appoints the seven members of TriMet’s Board of Directors. Municipal leaders are elected by their communities, however Metro can’t tell municipalities what to do. Instead, it works through painstaking consensus-building processes.

Metro has the authority to take over operation of TriMet, though it has never exercised this power. Instead, Metro facilitates the metropolitan transportation planning process through their advisory committees.
1. Prioritization of public transit over automobile infrastructure

Metro has the following goals for public transit:

- continue investing in and expanding public infrastructure throughout the region
- invest $2.2 billion in transit and transportation infrastructure over next 25 years from local, regional, state and federal funding
- reduce congestion, accidents, and commute distances
- increase access to essential destinations by biking, walking, and public transit
- implement a bike sharing program by July 2016 which will include 600 bikes (City of Portland)
- triple walking, biking and transit mode shares compared to 2010 modeled mode shares by 2040

Some critics, like John Charles, argue that regional planning that prioritizes public transit over personal cars is more expensive, takes up scarce transportation space, makes commutes longer for residents, and only serves a fraction of the population. He advocates instead for more freeway development. The next Regional Transportation Strategy will be in 2018.

2. Maintain the urban growth boundary

The region is expected to grow by about 400,000 people between 2015 and 2035, so the growth strategy is likely to continue to be a contentious and important topic. Metro Council voted in November 2015 to not expand the urban growth boundary. This decision was based on a desire to increase density and utilize vacant or neglected properties rather than expanding outward. This decision was controversial, as it assumes that apartments and condos will be satisfactory to new residents to the region. This decision was opposed by the Home Builders of Metropolitan Portland. Council will review the urban growth boundary again in 2018.
3. Keep housing costs down

The cost of housing in Portland is quickly rising as Portland experiences a real estate boom. Average rents are rising by 9 percent, which is higher than the national average of 7 percent. The annualized growth rate may be closer to 14 percent. Combined with a vacancy rate of below 3 percent, rental housing is becoming a problem for Portland residents.\textsuperscript{44} In October 2015, Portland City Council declared an official housing emergency in the city and enacted an ordinance to temporarily reduce barriers to increasing affordable housing and address homelessness.\textsuperscript{45}

Some goals of Metro regarding housing include:

- support the urban growth management decision (i.e. increase density and utilize vacant or neglected properties rather than expanding outward)
- reduce the average household combined cost of housing and transportation by 25 percent compared to 2010 by 2040\textsuperscript{46}
- increase and diversify market-rate housing (could include changing zoning and building codes and streamlining permitting processes for some areas where housing is in high demand)
- mandate below-market rate rental units in new housing developments in certain zones
- encourage public-private partnership investments in high-need areas
- minimize displacement and stabilize communities through financial assistance, renter protections against evictions, and nonprofit community land trusts that would keep housing prices lower are three options they give in this area\textsuperscript{47}

4. Continue to build on environmentally-friendly and sustainable reputation

Portland prides itself on being environmentally friendly and sustainable. It focuses especially on encouraging sustainable transportation and maintaining ample green space to achieve these goals. However, it does struggle with GHG emissions as well as air quality.

In 2013, Metro voters approved a local option levy to invest in projects focused on improving water quality and restoring native fish and wildlife habitat.

Other environmental goals of Metro include:

- advocate for federal and state governments to advance Oregon’s transition to cleaner, low-carbon fuels, and more fuel-efficient vehicle technologies
- reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita to below 2010 levels, by 2040
- ensure zero percent population exposure to at-risk levels of air pollution\textsuperscript{46}, by 2040
Discussion

Given that the Portland area has prioritized public transportation since the 1970s, maintaining green spaces, and being environmentally friendly, these priorities make sense and are likely to be achieved. However, as mentioned above with regards to issues about air quality, GHG emissions, housing prices, and poverty levels, some issues clearly remain for the region.

Portland has long been seen as a leader in many aspects of urban growth and regional planning. Their longstanding focus on sustainable and efficient transportation not only encourages a greener lifestyle but also increases connectivity around the region. There is also a focus placed on participatory initiatives, as evidenced by Metro being a directly-elected body. This history of engaged citizens goes back to the 1960s and 1970s when citizens and neighborhood groups organized around sustainable transportation and ensuring livability for the middle class. Portland is a city with a strong local identity, and the unofficial slogan “Keep Portland Weird” is used to signify that Portland is a unique place to live.

However, Portland is clearly still struggling with some issues, particularly around housing and growth. Participants at Rethinking the Region 4 should consider how Portland can build upon its existing successful regional initiatives, and maintain its local identity, as it seeks to welcome new residents in the future and grow accordingly.

In the coming years, the Portland region will have to grapple with housing affordability and efficient transportation, all while welcoming thousands of new residents into the region and working within a mandate of curbing urban sprawl.

Questions

1. Do the Portland region’s multiple layers of governance help or hinder regional planning? How else could the region manage its regional matters?
2. How can the Portland region best implement its climate change goals, particularly on reducing congestion and encouraging more use of public transit, while ensuring residents’ personal freedoms are respected?
3. How can the Portland region ensure housing is more affordable, accessible, and available, while working within its current Urban Growth Boundary? Should Metro instead consider expanding the Urban Growth Boundary?
4. How can Portland maintain its local identity while welcoming many new residents into the Urban Growth Boundary-limited area?
Data Sources: GTFS or other open datasets from Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), GO Transit, Union Pearson Express, Brampton Transit, Burlington Transit, Durham Regional Transit, Milton Transit, MiWay, Oakville Transit, York Region Transit; Natural Resources Canada, Rail Network 2008; Statistics Canada, 2011 Census Boundary Files, Geographic Attribute File.
GREATER TORONTO AREA: GOVERNANCE

What is the region?

The GTA is best visualized with the current City of Toronto at the core, surrounded by the 4 regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York and Durham. Each of these regional municipalities are then further divided into smaller municipalities. The model sees the City of Toronto as the epicenter of growth, however issues related to transportation often include the City of Hamilton; the region as a whole can be referred to as the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). An even more expansive definition of the region is the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), which includes 110 municipalities. Additionally, some municipalities in the census metropolitan area (CMA) are not included in the GTA, and conversely some municipalities in the GTA are not included in the CMA.

Who governs what aspects of the region?

Governance in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has been nothing short of dynamic. As the city expanded throughout the 20th century, multiple types of governance models have evolved over an increasingly larger region. Today, a collection of municipalities with no regional government exists, although the 1998 amalgamation of the inner municipalities formed the City of Toronto as a “region within a region”. This change may not have had a marked impact on regional governance, as the previously existing Metro Toronto and its six constituent municipalities exercised the same authority over the territory. The region relies heavily on provincial intervention, and some argue that the provincial government is essentially the de facto regional government.

While no regional government exists, regional issues are generally dealt with through the intervention of the Ontario Provincial government. Each of the regional municipalities coordinates basic services such as school boards, law enforcement and some public works activities, while each local municipality still has its own autonomy as far as municipal powers go. Each municipality is under heavy provincial control that mandates things like regional transit, environmental policies, and some planning decisions.

The City of Toronto Act passed in 2006, and allowed the City to have more power in adjusting local tax rates. This represented a vertical shifting of responsibilities between the province and the City of Toronto, but not for the rest of the GTA.

The issue of transit is a complicated one in the region. Metrolinx is one of the few public authorities that operates on an interregional basis, even if it is still operated by the Province of Ontario. Metrolinx was created in 2006 via the province’s Metrolinx Act, which then serves the GTA as well as Hamilton. Metrolinx has launched a regional transportation plan called ‘The Big Move’ that local municipalities must adhere to. Transit services offered within each municipality are then operated in silos, with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) being the largest municipal transit services in the City of Toronto, integrating the city’s bus and subway system with Metrolinx’s regional GO Train system.
**Who decides who governs the region?**

The City of Toronto government is run by its City Council and elected Mayor. The council is formed by 44 elected ward councillors representing approximately 55,000 people each. In response to the overwhelmingly strong desire not to amalgamate before 1998, the City of Toronto has retained 4 Community Councils that overlap the 44 wards. These four councils are given some modest autonomous power over local, routine issues of planning, and operate to allow for resident engagement. When tackling larger planning issues that span multiple wards, the City Council has the final authority over the Community Council. This only represents the governance of the City of Toronto, giving notion of a “region within a region” functionality when interacting with the rest of the GTA. Important roles are also played by the regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, Durham, and York, which within their boundaries are robust infrastructure and service providers and exercise substantial land-use planning powers. The lower-tier municipalities within them must conform to their plans and policies. The Cities of Toronto and Hamilton are single-tier municipalities – they exercise the combined authority of upper- and lower-tier municipalities in the two-tier systems. In addition, conservation authorities manage watersheds. They parallel and overlap with the boundaries of municipal governments, and play an important role in land use and infrastructure planning.

The Province of Ontario also exercises considerable power in governing Toronto. The province’s planning policies are binding on local governments. Provincial policies affecting the Toronto region include the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and a special plan for the Lake Simcoe Watershed.
GREATER TORONTO AREA: CURRENT DEBATES

1. **The Big Move**

The Metrolinx Act was created in 2006 by the Ontario Provincial Government to address the growing need for a coordinated transportation effort in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Metrolinx launched their 25-year regional transportation plan entitled ‘The Big Move’ in 2008 which boldly calls to invest $2 billion per year over the 25-year lifespan of the plan. The plan has outlined a number of key strategies; the highest priority is bringing regional rapid rail transit to within two kilometres of 80% of GHTA residents. The plan also had the specific task of constructing a rail line between Toronto’s Pearson International Airport and the city’s primary downtown rail station, Union Station, which was completed in June 2015. Some dispute has occurred regarding the strategies to increase ridership, locations of proposed new transit lines as well as the overall cost-benefit analysis of certain parts of the plan.

2. **Urban growth boundaries**

In an effort to revitalize downtowns and curb sprawl, the Ontario Provincial Government set forth the Places to Grow Act in 2005, which led to a Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) in 2006. The plan primarily supports policies that are geared towards intensification. Using jobs and people per hectare as the metric, the plan specifically outlines three different target densities for 25 urban growth centres across the GHA, identified as the downtown core of most but not all municipalities in the region. Each municipality is expected to reach their respective target by 2031, with most on track to do so. The growth plan is gaining criticism for causing a shortage of single family homes in the region and with it a crisis of affordability. Coupled with the provincially protected Greenbelt that surrounds the city that was established in 2005, a constant battle with available land as well as housing prices persists.

3. **Health of the watershed and smog**

While the regional municipalities of the GTA span across several provincial conservation authority boundaries, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is at the heart of watershed issues surrounding the City of Toronto. One environmental issue the GTA has encountered is the listing of the Toronto Region as an area of concern (one of 15 Canadian AOCs around the Great Lakes) due to poor water quality and environmental degradation. With the “Area of Concern” listing being in place since 1986, a remedial action plan is in place to remove the Toronto Region’s listing by 2020, pending government investment. Another regional environmental issue is the passing of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act in 2001 by the provincial government. The province’s goal of ensuring land and resource uses in this region north of the GTA would maintain the ecological and hydrological functions were met through the passing of this act and subsequent planning actions to keep the rain barrel of Ontario’ protected.

The City of Toronto has historically been plagued with smog that smothers the entire city. The common measurement is the smog day, where a public advisory has to be issued because smog poses a health risk. Initiatives by the provincial government to phase out coal-fired electricity plants and mandatory vehicle testing have significantly reduced smog in the city. 2014 marked the first year of zero smog days in Toronto in 20 years.
Discussion

With provincial-level policies playing such a major role in regional planning for the GTA, changing political parties within the provincial government can cause disruptions to initiatives related to growth management or transportation within the GTA. Does the existing governance system have stability in spite of these disruptions? Will pressure to incite reform to the two-tier governance system grow?

The region certainly faces challenges of governance ahead. As an increasing proportion of the regional population is living outside of the City of Toronto’s boundary, the region becomes less centered around Toronto and will require constant provincial intervention to maintain coordinated efforts.

Questions

1. In effect, the Ontario government is the regional government of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Is this inevitable or desirable? What are the advantages and disadvantages of regionalism without a regional representative institution?

2. What can policymakers in other jurisdictions learn from the experience of the two-tier Metropolitan Toronto government (1954–1997), once hailed as the most fully realized example of a regional government in North America?

3. Does Ontario’s hierarchical planning system (in which lower-tier municipal plans must conform to those of upper-tier local governments, which in turn conform to provincial policies and plans) undermine intermunicipal cooperation?

4. The only institution of regional scope is the Metrolinx transit authority, which is a provincial agency without local government representation on its board. Is there potential for Metrolinx to become a more broadly based regional government?

5. Until recently, the provincial government required all municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area to contribute to regional social service costs, most of which were incurred in the City of Toronto. This was abandoned under suburban municipal pressure. How important is compensating for differences in fiscal capacity and service demand for the development of a regional identity or consciousness?
STOCKHOLM COUNTY: GOVERNANCE

What is the region?

This case study examines the political region of Stockholm County, with associated boundaries and political jurisdiction. A county is the smallest unit of state administration in Sweden, responsible for collective functions in the region with emphasis on public transport, healthcare, and regional development. There are 2.1 million inhabitants in the urban region of Stockholm County, which is divided into 26 municipalities (City of Stockholm, 2015b). Stockholm City is the largest municipality in Sweden with 900,000 inhabitants (City of Stockholm, 2015b).

Who governs what aspects of the region?

Stockholm County Council (SCC) is responsible for collective functions within the region, with special emphasis on healthcare, public transport and regional development (SCC, 2015a). SCC has 149 commissioners elected by popular vote, making it the largest nationwide (SCC, 2015c). Further, SCC is staffed by 44,000 employees, making it one of Sweden’s largest employers (SCC, 2015c). The 2015 budget is $13.7 billion, and the county ran a surplus of $21.7 million in 2014.

Regional governance in Stockholm County enshrines both local autonomy and values of collaboration and equity. Local governance is strengthened by the Swedish Local Government Act, with much decision-making, planning, and taxation under the purview of local governments (county and municipal). The concept of Langom, meaning “just enough” instead of “more is better,” is a part of Swedish national psyche and sums up local values of equality, fairness, and consensus which is at the core of the political system (AtKisson, 2009).

The SCC is the regional public transit authority in Stockholm County, which decides how public transportation will be structured to satisfy passenger needs (SCC, 2013; 2015c). Public transportation is based on the Regional Transport Provision Programme and governed by the Public Transport Act. The SCC’s Trafikförvaltningen (Public transport administration) has responsibility for the transit system, which is run by the public agency Storstockholms Lokaltrafik, known as SL (SCC, 2015b). SL is a limited agency with a board of directors who are nominated by the SL board (Translink, 2013). SL board of directors consists of politicians from the County Council Assembly, reflecting the political majority in the county, and also has employee representatives. The operation and maintenance of the public transport systems is delegated by SL to several contractors. The operating budget for transit in Stockholm is SEK 1.3 billion (~$205 million CAD), and funded 50% by fares and 50% from taxes (Translink, 2013).

Local self-government is enshrined in the Swedish Constitution, which means that municipalities and county councils have the right of independent and free self-determination (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015). Stockholm County has decision-making power regarding healthcare, public transport and regional development (SCC, 2015a). The county council assembly is the highest decision-making body at regional level, and sets the regional budget, the tax rate, patient fees, and transport fares (SCC, 2015a). The budget determines objectives, investments, budgetary constraints, and goals for the county (SCC, 2015c).
The Swedish Local Government Act provides a great deal of scope for municipal autonomy (SCC, 2015a). The City of Stockholm’s leadership has comprehensive responsibility for local issues, and the ability to levy municipal tax and set a common budget (City of Stockholm, 2015b). Local issues include schools, childcare, caring for the elderly and the disabled, and water and sewage (SCC, 2015a). Three-quarters of the City’s resources are passed on to district councils (City of Stockholm, 2015b). The amount each district council receives depends on individual needs, such as the number of inhabitants, median age, and living conditions (City of Stockholm, 2015b). City Council establishes goals and guidelines for the overall work of the municipality and districts (City of Stockholm, 2015c). The City Executive Board consists of opposition and majority party city councilors who have evaluative powers regarding City Council decisions, financial administration, and development (City of Stockholm, 2015c).

Who decides who governs the region?

SCC is politically governed, and council members are elected every four years during general elections (SCC, 2015c). SCC has its own parliament, the County Council Assembly, where most regional political decisions are made (SCC, 2013). County administrative boards also have decision making power to harmonize counties with the national vision, and are led by federally appointed governors (Government Offices of Sweden, 2015).

POLICY TARGETS and DEBATES

1. Transportation
   - Increase public transit’s share of motorized transport during peak hours to 80% by 2030
   - Increase proportion of all journeys at peak hours by bicycle to no less than 15% by 2030
   - Increase proportion of local journeys made on foot to at least 60% in the inner city and 50% in the suburbs by 2030
   - Limit through traffic to below 5% of all traffic in the inner-city street network

2. Housing
   - Build 78,000 new homes in Stockholm County

3. Environmental
   - Reduce GHGs to 3.0 tonnes per capita by 2015
   - Fossil-fuel free by 2050
STOCKHOLM COUNTY: DISCUSSION and QUESTIONS

Discussion

There is debate concerning the future funding of transit costs by either raising fares or taxes. Stockholm’s centre-right Alliance is pushing for a major price hike for the monthly travel card to fund public transit instead of raising council taxes [The Local, 2015b]. This is contrasted by Planka, or the “dodge the fare now,” a movement of fare-evaders organizing an insurance system for fare-evasion and advocating for free transit in Stockholm for its social benefits [Törnkvist, 2014].

Over half of Sweden’s local authorities state that they have a housing shortage, with particular impact on larger cities such as those in Stockholm County [The Local, 2015a]. This housing shortage disproportionately impacts young adults and increasingly asylum seekers. Over 300,000 young adults (ages 20-27) “are without property.” Current numbers are not available for housing shortages among asylum seekers. Sweden’s Minister of Housing argues that opportunities for new arrivals to establish themselves in Swedish society risk delay if they have to spend too much time in an asylum center [The Local, 2015a]. Conversely, there is also dissent among the public regarding providing extra support for asylum seekers.

The 2014 Stockholm Agreement is the result of a negotiation between the Swedish government, City of Stockholm, the County Council, and other municipalities, committing $15.9 billion in funding for new transit, road, and urban development projects [City of Stockholm, 2012]. Projects include 19 km of new Metro track, nine new Metro stations, and planning for 78,000 “dense urban” designated homes [SCC, 2015c]. This is the largest investment in the metro system in modern times. In 2014, the Extended Metro Administration was established with the task of implementing the Metro expansion. A total of $4.1 billion is invested in the metro expansion, which is expected to be in service by 2025. The Swedish Parliament passed a bill on higher congestion taxes in the inner city of Stockholm and Essingeleden bypass to co-finance metro expansion [SCC, 2014a].

Stockholm exhibits ambitious yet feasible policy ambitions, and impressive collaboration at multiple levels of government to meet its goals. It is a growing region, future-oriented, and recognizes the importance of livability for meeting the expectations of the electorate and competitiveness in the European region [City of Stockholm, 2012]. Major challenges include providing for youth and new arrivals to the country, and continuing to adapt and develop transit, housing, and sustainability.
Questions

1. The electoral model of Sweden differs from North American examples, with greater regional autonomy enshrined in the 1992 constitution. Is greater regional autonomy required for positive policy change to occur?

2. Sweden has a philosophy of Langom, meaning just enough, which is deeply engrained in many aspects of Swedish society. To what degree do cultural attitudes towards consumption and growth impact transportation policy?

3. Fare evasion is more openly organized, adversarial, and political in Stockholm. How much weight should advocacy have in regional decision making and debates?

4. Do you think that congestion tax tools like those in Stockholm are fair, or do you consider this tax model regressive?

5. How might Stockholm County Council free up housing immediately for newly arrived refugees?
What is the region?

The urban region of Vancouver generally refers to the Census Metropolitan Area of Vancouver. This area consists of 21 municipalities, the Tsawwassen First Nation, and the Greater Vancouver Electoral Area A.

Who governs what aspects of the region?

As Canada’s third largest metropolitan area, Vancouver is served by an overarching regional political body known as Metro Vancouver (also known as the Greater Vancouver Regional District), which consists of nine departments and nearly 1,500 employees (Metro Vancouver, nd). Metro Vancouver is responsible for the delivery of services including water supply, sanitary and sewage facilities. It also oversees regional parks, air quality regulations, Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation operations and importantly, regional planning.

As a regional district Metro Vancouver is essentially a voluntary and cooperative association. Its board is constituted by municipal elected officials, appointed by their colleagues. It holds few regulatory or taxation powers over the municipalities. Nonetheless, the BC Municipalities Act does enable regional districts to carry out important functions, such as the authority to regulate the regional water and drainage services and waste management.

In an interconnected region such as Vancouver, local governments long ago recognized the importance of an overarching regional body to deliver core services such as water supply, sewerage, drainage networking and even urban growth management. Thus, there is a firm desire for municipalities to collaborate at the regional table.

Metro Vancouver does not hold the regulatory power to enforce its policies, especially in the area of urban planning and land use. To affect local planning decisions, Metro Vancouver relies on persuasion and communication with its member municipalities. Otherwise, its only instrument to manage growth lies in its role as the region’s provider of water and sewage services. As per Metro Vancouver’s most recent Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) (2011) adopted by all 23 jurisdictions, the agency will not supply services to areas where the nature of the development is deemed inconsistent with the RGS. This provision allows Metro Vancouver to effectively regulate urban land consumption and curb sprawl.
As in the case of Toronto, Canada’s Constitution Act has clearly set out provinces’ jurisdiction over their municipalities under section 92, and they are given the ability to impose taxes, among many other powers (Library of Parliament, 2006). Nonetheless, owing to BC’s political culture of local autonomy, municipalities possess substantial power over their jurisdictions. The BC Municipalities Act lays out the jurisdictions and powers for municipalities. To name a few, local governments can enact bylaws to regulate business licensing, building structures and importantly, land use management (Harding, 2012). In particular, each municipality’s Official Community Plan is a significant document which sets out objectives and policies to guide land use planning and zoning. Thus, municipalities play a major role in shaping urban growth (Harding, 2012). Local councils of municipalities also have the power to set property tax rates (2012).

While provinces such as Quebec and Ontario have pursued amalgamation to achieve centralized planning and efficiency, the option has only been invoked in a limited number of instances in BC. When BC experienced rapid population and economic growth during the 1960s, many unorganized rural communities underwent rapid urbanization, and began to confront the challenges of a lack of strategic planning, difficulties in accessing critical services such as sewage and roads and the problem of free riders (CSCD, nd). In response, the province amended the Municipal Act (now Local Government Act) in 1965 to provide for regional districts. The key functions of a regional district include 1) providing for delivery of region-wide services including economic development, water and sewerage, waste management as well as planning, 2) provide a political forum for local residents from a collective of communities and 3) serving as the local government for rural areas (CDCD, 2006).

Who decides who governs the region?

Metro Vancouver is governed by a 38-member board of directors, which consists of mayors and councilors from each member municipality (Metro Vancouver, nd b). With the exception of Greater Vancouver Electoral Area A, local municipalities directly appoint elected officials (council members or mayors) as representatives on the board. The number of directors for each jurisdiction depends on the local population, with each director allowed one vote for every 20,000 people in the respective jurisdiction, up to a possible total of five votes (Metro Vancouver, nd b). As a result, representation and voting “weights” change automatically as population growth occurs. This removes a typical irritant in regional governance, which is the tension between the one-municipality/one-vote principle and the one-person/one-vote principle.
POLICY TARGETS AND DEBATES

1. Affordable housing

The Metro Vancouver Affordable Housing Strategy’s (2007) primary objective is to meet the needs of low-income renters and the homeless population by increasing the supply and diversity of modest cost housing. Some measurable goals include 1) increasing the Greater Vancouver Housing Corporation portfolio by 100 units per year and 2) advocating for provincial and federal funding for the provision of 500 new supportive / transitional housing units annually.

2. Greening the city

Metro Vancouver aims to protect land supply within the Conservation and Recreation designation, which represents 47% of the region’s land base (Metro Vancouver, 2014). Metro also states its commitment to enhancing natural features throughout the urban fabric, providing ecological services and improving quality of life. Metro Vancouver has ambitious targets with regards to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, aligned with the BC Climate Action Plan (2008). By 2020, it aims to reduce GHG emissions by 33% below 2007 levels, and 80% by 2050 (Metro Vancouver, 2014). New policy and guidelines will aim to encourage land use and transportation infrastructure that reduce GHG emissions.

3. Transportation

Although Metro Vancouver is not responsible for the delivery of transit infrastructure and services, it is committed to ensuring that land use policy and transportation planning are coordinated to reduce car dependence and encourage transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking. This entails communication with TransLink on identifying future growth areas and network infrastructure. In TransLink’s Regional Transportation Strategy, the agency aims to “reduce the distances driven in the region by 33% and make half [of the] trips by walking, cycling and transit” by 2045.

4. Containing growth

Growth containment is a significant part of Metro Vancouver’s RGS. With the passage of the RGS, Metro formalized the role that the Agricultural Land Reserve has played in growth containment since it was established in 1973, by planning to direct urban growth within the urban containment boundary (UCB), with boundaries that are consistent with the ALR as well as Conservation and Recreation lands, while limiting growth outside of it. Up until 2040, Metro Vancouver aims to keep 98% of both residential and employment growth within the UCB (Metro Vancouver, 2014).
Despite Metro Vancouver’s strong dedication to planning for future growth, the agency’s ability to implement and enhance regional plans may be constrained by the voluntary governance structure and limited power to enforce its strategies on local governments (Ryerson City Building Institute, 2014). Moreover, a lack of provincial and federal leadership have also resulted in little guidance and support for regional aspirations (Ryerson City Building Institute, 2014). Political scientist Patrick Smith has also criticized the current model of municipal political appointment for the board of directors, advocating instead for direct election of regional representatives, as is the case in Portland (Klassen, 2016; Kadota, 2002).

Housing affordability has been a recurring theme in recent years. The sensitive questions of empty homes and real estate speculation are beginning to appear in the news headlines and politician agendas. There is no question that Vancouver’s housing crisis alludes to region-wide social and economic challenges in the near future, including the struggle for home ownership and increased talent drain among the younger generation.

Another debate surrounds the effectiveness of a regional transportation plan when the public transit agency is independent from the regional government that is responsible for urban growth strategies. The result of the recent transit plebiscite also foreshadows a more challenging outlook for the future of Vancouver’s transportation network. There is no doubt that Vancouver’s mayors will need to consider other options to fund priority construction projects and corridors, many of which remain in doubt.

Finally, a larger regional issue concerns the gaps between the land use visions of the BC government, Metro Vancouver and the local municipalities. Despite the fact that all local municipalities have adopted the RGS and its principles, local governments do not always implement the regional policy and comply with the strategies in their Official Community Plans. Failures to comply might increase as land becomes scarce and housing market pressures grow, in particular due to Metro Vancouver’s lack of regulatory powers to enforce the regional policy on municipalities.

In addition, the provincial government has, on several occasions, used its executive power to impose projects that do not align with the regional and local land use vision. Examples include the Port Mann Bridge expansion and the Massey Tunnel replacement, both of which will expand the road network and increase car usage. Projects like these do not fit in with the region’s objective of reducing car dependence and prioritize rapid transit ridership.

Vancouver has long been seen as one of the most livable regions in the world, a recognition which may be credited at least in part to sound policymaking and strategic planning over the past decades. However, unresolved and new policy and planning challenges remain. As Vancouver heads into a period of significant population and urban growth, the time is ripe to adopt cooperative approaches to deal with the growing pains of housing affordability, transit infrastructure and environmental protection. Politicians will need to weigh and consider regional sustainability planning and local interests. Most importantly, the region needs to find the common ground and political will to incite meaningful intergovernmental collaboration.
1. Currently, there is not a regional economic strategy in Vancouver. Is there a need for a guiding policy in economic development? If so, what would be the key components? And what would be the role of Metro Vancouver in guiding regional economic growth?

2. Vancity released a report in 2015 which argued that a large portion of young millennials will leave the City of Vancouver given that their income is not increasing enough to keep up with the housing prices. How can Vancouver retain or attract a productive labour force with its current housing prices and income levels? What role can the region play in this policy problem?

3. Some are advocating for a board of directors directly elected by the public for Metro Vancouver, as opposed to the current model with appointed members. What are the strengths and weaknesses of an elected board?

4. Some have advocated for Metro Vancouver to have direct regulatory authority over land use instead of implementing its strategies through municipal official community plans. Would this result in more coherent planning, or generate new conflicts?

5. Are there any more opportunities for Metro Vancouver to collaborate with TransLink on the governance, funding and expansion of Vancouver’s transportation needs, especially in light of the 2015 referendum result? Would there be any advantage to bringing TransLink under the umbrella of Metro Vancouver, much as Metro Vancouver already operates water and sewer services?

6. Are the boundaries of the Greater Vancouver regional district big enough? The Fraser Valley Regional District to the east, centred on Abbotsford, is increasingly being drawn into the metropolitan housing and labour markets as housing prices in Greater Vancouver rise.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Keynote Speakers

On July 30, 2015, Peter Fassbender was appointed Minister of Community, Sport, Cultural Development and Minister Responsible for Translink. He previously served as Minister of Education and currently serves on the Cabinet Committee on Secure Tomorrow. Prior to his election to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, Peter served as a Councillor for the City of Langley for three years before being elected as Mayor in the November 2005, 2008 and 2011 Civic elections. Peter also served the community and region in a host of volunteer capacities and on numerous national, provincial and civic committees. Peter was recognized as a leader in his community and the region and was recently awarded a Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Dr. Zack Taylor is Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Political Science and Local Government Program at Western University in London, Ontario, and a non-practicing registered professional planner. His research is on the historical development and current practice of regional governance and planning in Canadian and American cities.

David Bragdon is a politician and civic leader, currently executive director of Transit Center, Inc., a New York-based civic philanthropy dedicated to improving urban mobility in the U.S. From 2003 to 2010, he was the elected president of the Metro Council, a regional government in the Portland metropolitan area. He served as Director of the Mayor’s Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability in the administration of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City.

Morning Panel

Harold Steves has served on Richmond City Council continuously since 1977, and served a previous term as alderman from 1968-1973. From 1973-1975 he served one term as an M.L.A. in the Provincial Legislature, and is one of the founders of the Agricultural Land Reserve. A former Richmond school teacher, Harold operates the family farm in Steveston with his wife Kathy, raising pure bred Belted Galloway cattle. Harold also assists his son Jerry operate a ranch in Cache Creek, B.C. Descended from a pioneer Richmond farming family, he is very active in community life in the Steveston area, and is particularly interested in the preservation of farmland, heritage preservation, and environmental issues. Harold represents Richmond as second Director on the Board of Directors of Metro Vancouver.

Joy MacPhail longtime member of the British Columbia New Democratic Party, she served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from 1991 to 2005 and as a Minister of the Crown from 1993–1999, and 2000-2001. Following her departure from politics, MacPhail married film and television producer James Shavick, and is currently a partner in his production firm Shavick Entertainment. She is the Chair of the board of OUTtv, a Canadian cable television station owned by Shavick Entertainment, and focused on the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities.

Richard Hankin has 35 years of experience in local and regional planning. Most notably, as the Manager of Metro Vancouver Regional Parks for 25 years until his retirement in February, 2003. During his tenure, Rick spearheaded the expansion of Metro Vancouver regional parks from 5,500 acres to 28,600 acres, an increase from 4 to 25 parks and greenways. Along with this growth, Metro Vancouver Regional Parks evolved from essentially a land acquisition agency to a full-fledged park and recreation operation with an enhanced conservation focus. Rick also oversaw the introduction of linear parks known as Greenways and the Parks Partnership Program designed to foster shared decision-making and park activities with community groups.
**Afternoon Panel**

Mayor Jonathan Coté served three terms on New Westminster City Council before being elected as Mayor in 2014. Jonathan is Vice Chair of the Regional Planning Committee, a member of the Housing Committee, the Mayors’ Committee, Performance and Procurement Committee and the Zero Waste Committee, and is also a member of the TransLink Mayors’ Council. Jonathan resides in the city with his wife Alix and their daughters Renee, Leah and Violet.

Mayor Jack Froese is currently serving his second term as Mayor of the Township of Langley. Mayor Froese works in cooperation with Council, other elected officials, and members of the community to ensure the Township of Langley remains a thriving residential and business destination. With a vision for enhanced economic activity and job creation, improved transportation, and safe, well-serviced communities, he is dedicated to providing an exceptional quality of life for those who live and work in the Township.

Chief Bryce Williams became involved in politics at a young age, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, serving as a youth representative on council and now as the Nation’s Chief. Williams is one of the youngest chiefs in the province’s history, elected at age 23. Since taking office two years ago, he has overseen multiple business development projects on the Tsawwassen lands.

Councillor Raymond Louie, City of Vancouver, is serving his fifth term on Vancouver City Council, having been first elected in 2002. His vision is to help create a Vancouver where new opportunities to learn, succeed, and thrive are available to all. Councillor Louie has served as the chair of the City Finance and Services Committee, and helped ensure that vital programs impacting affordable housing, the environment, and public safety maintained strong funding during an economic downturn. He has also served as the President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ and represented Canada’s 2000 local governments to the Federal government. He serves as Vice Chair of the Metro Vancouver Region and is a trustee and board director on numerous other regional, provincial and national boards.

MP Kennedy Stewart was elected in 2011 and re-elected 2015, Kennedy Stewart is the NDP Member of Parliament for Burnaby South and BC Caucus Chair. He is best known for defending science, bringing electronic petitioning to Parliament and opposing the Kinder Morgan pipeline. A tenured associate professor on leave from Simon Fraser University’s School of Public Policy, Kennedy has a Masters degree from SFU and a PhD from the London School of Economics. He has published widely and provided policy advice to municipal, provincial, First Nations, and national governments and the United Nations. An award winning musician, Kennedy is married to Jeanette Ashe who teaches politics at Douglas College.

Dr. David Hendrickson is the Grants Manager of the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. He is a Registered Professional Planner (RPP, MCIP), a Certified Sustainability Professional (CSP) and has taught community planning locally and internationally. He was an Emerging Leader with the US Congress of Community Economic Development and has extensive international development experience in Asia and Latin America. David received his PhD (Geography) from Simon Fraser University and MA (Policy & Planning) from Tufts University.

**Moderators**

Dr. Josh Gordon, Assistant Professor, SFU School of Public Policy

Dr. Peter Hall, Professor and Director, SFU Urban Studies

Dr. Meg Holden, Associate Professor, Urban Studies and Geography, SFU

Doug MacArthur, Professor and Director, SFU School of Public Policy

Dr. Patrick Smith, Professor of Political Science and Urban Studies, SFU
ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
2. Statistics Canada, CANSIM table 051-0056.
7. 2005-2015
8. 2005-2014
9. U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
14. US Bureau of Economic Analysis
17. 2009 USD exchange rate
22. CMHC Monthly Housing Statistics January 2016
region-forward thinking