



Backgrounder 7

Land Use and Transportation Planning

Possible Change:

The updated RGS will set clear direction for coordinating land use planning with transportation planning.

What does this mean?

Land use patterns play a key role in influencing travel patterns. When development occurs at low densities and when the places where people live are located far from where they shop, work, go to school, and recreate, people have very few options for getting around. When different land uses are sited together or even close together then people have options other than the car for traveling. Walking, cycling and transit are viable travel options when different land uses are located close to each other and when facilities are provided.

Why is this important for a sustainable region?

Better integration of land use planning with transportation planning is important for environmental, social and economic sustainability. A region is more sustainable when energy requirements are reduced and negative impacts on the environment and greenhouse gases are minimized. Currently, car use contributes to 63% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the RDN. Decreasing car use will lessen climate change and improve air quality.

More compact, walkable communities within the region benefits people with mobility issues or

without access to a car, such as seniors who are no longer able to drive vehicles, but have access to an electric scooter. Compact land use patterns are needed for an efficient transit system. Hourly bus service needs residential densities of more than 10 units per hectare and frequent bus service needs densities of 23 units per hectare.

As well, walking and cycling contribute to the physical health of the population and the environmental health of the region. The annual cost to our health care system caused by physical inactivity is \$2.1 billion annually, and it costs our economy \$5.3 billion annually.

How can the RGS support more coordination between land use and transportation planning?

The RGS could include policies on integrating transportation and land use planning; currently it provides no guidance on this important sustainability challenge. The RGS could direct that official community plans (OCPs) show how land use will support walking, cycling and transit. To gauge the effectiveness of the policies, the RGS could direct OCPs to include targets for travel mode share, vehicle kilometres driven, and density in the different urban centres.



For more information on this topic please see the discussion papers at www.shapingourfuture.ca