



# How do planners coordinate?

Exploring formal and informal coordination mechanisms  
in Vancouver and Edmonton

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## Summary

This study explores the perceptions of respondents involved in plan coordination in two Canadian cities. The objective of the research is to learn about perceived barriers and successes of coordinating planning activities in the context of multiple plans. The goals of the project are to understand respondents' experiences, to inform municipal government of best practices, and to explore informal and formal activities. The primary information sources for the study are 27 semi-structured interviews with 15 Vancouver and 18 Edmonton-based professionals involved in planning activities.

The interviews suggest that informal factors such as personalities, relationships, and leadership play an important role in the success of coordination. The attitude of staff, especially those in managerial and leadership positions can determine the outcome of coordination activities. A common team-oriented attitude, supported by strong leadership, must exist throughout an organization for coordination to work. Having a clear corporate direction contributes to information sharing across departments. Informal coordination mechanisms provide the opportunity for greater communication with less structure; however, formal processes are necessary to make informed planning decisions bringing people together that otherwise may not communicate. Interdepartmental committees provide a platform for communication and knowledge sharing. The greatest challenge for municipalities appears to be aligning formal and informal activities within particular organizational structures to achieve coordination.

## Introduction

Canadian communities have developed myriad plans and policies that affect the use and development of land. Policies created at different times for varying purposes may be inconsistent and contradictory. With the number of new plans and policies appearing, the task of coordination has become complex. Ineffective coordination of multiple policies undermines the effectiveness of local land use planning. Examining two municipalities with different methods of coordinating can provide insight into the barriers and successes of coordination. Efforts to coordinate planning in the Canadian context have not previously been documented. The study fills a knowledge gap regarding how planning activities are coordinated. By examining the challenges and successes of coordination in two communities, I am adding to the literature and advancing the field of land use planning.

My research is part of an ongoing research project led by Jill Grant: “Coordinating land use planning in the context of multiple plans”. Other members of the research team include Pierre Filion, Ahsan Habib, Patricia Manuel, and Eric Rapaport. The Canadian Institute of Planners and DalTRAC (transportation lab) are partners in the project and will assist in developing practical applications for the research results. The larger research project is investigating the strategies local planning departments are using to coordinate their many plans and policies on land use. The research began in early 2013 and will continue for three years. My study is a component of the second phase of the larger research project. I focus on plan coordination concerns in Metro Vancouver and the City of Edmonton. During the preliminary analysis (Burns and Grant 2013), researchers found that Vancouver’s plans demonstrated coordination efforts across plans and include Regional Context Statements linking plans together; the graphic representation and titles of Edmonton’s plans indicated concerted coordination efforts. Edmonton has a ‘one-city’ approach, with evidence of strong coordination across its plans. Vancouver operates within a voluntary regional planning structure and provincial land regulation with a history of success. These places have different issues and approaches that are worth examining. Formal coordination mechanisms such as interdepartmental committees and plans provide a consistent approach to managing land use planning activities. Informal coordination is not documented and occurs inconsistently. An example of informal coordination may be a social event or discussing planning projects with colleagues while commuting to work. Investigating formal and informal coordination activities may reveal factors that contribute to the barriers and successes of coordination.

## Literature Review

Coordinating planning activities has become an increasing issue due to the separated functions of municipalities. Interdepartmental rivalry and turf protection appears frequently in the literature as the major obstacle to effective coordination. Bakvis (2004) found evidence of tension between departments and between regional offices and headquarters in Ottawa when efforts are made to implement horizontal (cross-department) strategies. “Departmentalization” is a natural and unavoidable barrier to the sharing of knowledge, preventing one department from benefiting from the experiences of another (Argote et al. 2000). Sisk (2001, p. 140) defines collaboration as “the process



by which the diverse interests that exist in a community are brought together in a structured process of joint decision making. Collaborative decision making is linked to efforts to prevent disputes, to involve everyone in decisions before conflicts arise, to manage ongoing differences, and to settle disputes that threaten the health and cohesion of a community.” Collaboration and coordination are used interchangeably in this document.

The establishment of more departments organized on a functional basis and headed by specialists in that particular discipline produces administrative structures in most municipalities that suffer from fragmentation. As a result, each department tends to be preoccupied with its own area of expertise, creating what has been increasingly referred to as a “silo” problem. The “silo-ed” or distributed nature of duties in local government can impede communication and cooperation in pursuing objectives, including land use planning (Mills et al. 2007). Provincial departments with similar specializations reinforce municipalities’ narrow focus. Provincial departments deploy programs that ensure municipal departments give high priority to their specialized area, resulting in little attention being paid to the overall needs of the municipality. Even where municipalities use a standing committee system, communities often tend to reinforce a narrow focus on the activities of “their” departments, to the neglect of a broader consideration of overall municipal needs (Tindal and Tindal 2000). An example of a lack of coordination is a street being paved by council one month and then torn up by the utility commission for sewer work in subsequent months.

Peters (1998) explored the various challenges faced by departments and individuals seeking “horizontalty” (coordination across government departments) in Canada, Britain, and Australia. He also explored efforts made to achieve “horizontalty”. Existing behaviour is often reinforced by other factors in government including budgetary concerns and links between programs and powerful external interest groups. Timing is also important. Means of coordination should be agreed upon early enough to avoid confusion later on, but if the process of bargaining begins too early, bureaucratic “turf fighting” may distract from policy development. According to Peters (1998), influencers of interdepartmental coordination include: budgetary concerns, links between programs and external interest groups, political leadership and intervention, departmental hierarchy, and timing.

A review of organizational theory literature revealed the distinction between formal and informal coordination. Formal systems consist of any kind of coordination that is planned and formally established, such as procedures, rules, manuals, and processes. Willem and Buelens (2007) found that more intense knowledge sharing between departments results from the informal character of coordination. Informal coordination results in more flexibility, especially in crossing the formal boundaries in the organization (Gargiulo and Benassi 2000; Hansen 1999). Formal systems are less effective for leveraging knowledge sharing.

Bate and Robert (2002) emphasized the need for voluntary, natural, and spontaneous personal networks with high levels of personal connectivity and social identity and low levels of management control to allow knowledge sharing. Other authors have also emphasized the need for an open atmosphere, with a lack of control and high levels of sociability to allow spontaneous and voluntary knowledge sharing (Andrews and Delahaye 2000; Constant, Kiesler, and Sproull 1994; Jarvenpaa and Staples 2001). In

such environments, trust is often present, another condition that encourages knowledge sharing. Willem and Buelens (2007) looked at characteristics that increase or limit interdepartmental knowledge sharing and determined that it is greatly influenced by power games and trust among members in an organization. They conclude that government institutions have organizational characteristics that are less beneficial for knowledge sharing compared with other public sector organizations.

Workplace culture and a common organizational vision are essential components to coordination. A “silo mentality” can result in managers blaming each other for problems due to a lack of cooperation across functional subunits (Yukl and Lepsinger 2005). Yukl and Lepsinger note that it is difficult to achieve coordination across different parts of an organization, especially when subunits have different functions and subcultures. Formal plans and objectives are helpful, but effective coordination is unlikely unless managers also have shared ideals and values. According to Yukl and Lepsinger, leaders at all levels of an organization must build support for the core ideology and ensure it is understood and used to guide daily actions.

Central agencies have an essential role to play, not only in the design of structures and mechanisms for managing horizontal issues, but also in providing adequate leadership throughout the entire life of an initiative intended to improve interdepartmental coordination (Bakvis 2004). Active intervention by political leaders may be necessary to produce behavioural changes among government departments (Peters 1998). Strong leadership at the highest level may be a prerequisite for innovations in promoting interdepartmental cooperation (Bakvis 2004).

According to McDonough and Wekerle (2011 p. 33), “research on policy silos and horizontal management reiterates the importance of cooperation between lateral government groups to enhance effectiveness and minimize overlap and competing objectives.” While the problem of horizontal management surfaces in the literature on public administration, no theory can explain and prescribe effective management (Sproule-Jones 2000).

Peters (1998) found that allowing those involved at the ground level to coordinate among themselves informally may be a more effective means of achieving coordination than relying on hierarchy and formal organizational mechanisms. While prioritization of interdepartmental coordination at the policy setting level of an organization can improve coordination, budgetary concerns and politics often preoccupy leaders. Those responsible for the direct implementation of policies may have a greater incentive to coordinate with individuals from other departments. However, Peters (1998) found that structural changes to government, while capable of facilitating coordination, may not be able to change the behaviour of departments. Tornberg (2012) documented the importance of commitment by different levels of government in coordinating national infrastructure planning and local urban planning.

Klijn, Koppenjan, and Termeer (1995) created a theory of co-governance that suggests that managers seek to promote cooperation among network actors using tactics such as arranging interaction, facilitating interaction, brokerage, and mediation. Simeonova and van der Valk (2009) documented that a communicative planning approach may be beneficial to achieving greater coordination. A mutual exchange relationship among units of government may create interdependency in policymaking, creating a culture of cooperation among departments (Sproule-Jones 2000).



Organizational culture affects the potential for monitoring and evaluation. Seasons (2003) found that organizations interested in constant improvement are willing to embrace monitoring and evaluation procedures. Erickson (2004) argued that coordination between different levels of government is lacking.

Many western governments have launched new organizational regimes since the 1980s in order to strengthen the coordination of policy and programs in the face of growing administrative fragmentation (Perri 2004). The UK's New Labour government's efforts at joined-up government led to new central coordinating units, the creation of a cabinet position in charge of cross-departmental coordination, and other policy-focused measures. Bakvis (2004) noted a growing recognition that traditional conceptual and administrative divisions no longer reflect the realities of government interventions that are needed. Different levels of coordination may involve varying dynamics and challenges: a different set of actors and greater political commitment may be necessary to facilitate such processes (Peters 1998).

The evidence suggests the topic is a major issue in Canadian planning. Identifying barriers and successes of coordination can help municipalities better plan their communities. The study is relevant to many professions given the wide range of stakeholders involved in the planning processes. Land use planning affects the spaces where Canadians live, play, and work: finding innovative ways to make it more effective in achieving the aims of sustainability can make an important contribution to Canadian society.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore how Vancouver and Edmonton are coordinating planning activities. Investigating formal and informal mechanisms may lead to insights regarding factors that contribute to the barriers and successes of coordination.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are the barriers to coordinating planning activities?
2. To what extent do formal and informal coordination activities play out in Vancouver and Edmonton?

## **Approach to Study**

The main objective of the study is to explore how Vancouver and Edmonton are coordinating their planning activities. Examining the organizational structures and mechanisms of coordination in both cities may provide insights into the barriers and successes of coordination. The objective aligns with the main research project to focus on policy coordination in the context of rapidly proliferating plans. Systematically interpreting and coding data provides the necessary comprehensive approach for identifying emerging themes. The study is primarily informed by in-person interviews. A

thematic content analysis of communities' primary planning documents provides additional data to support the study. Several aspects of each suite of plans, such as timing, branding, and referring to other plans were studied to identify coordination mechanisms.

Selection of the communities is based on coordination efforts presented in plans and their different organizational structures. The Vancouver region consists of 23 municipalities governed by a regional board (Metro Vancouver); Edmonton acts as a single jurisdiction with 12 wards. Analyzing coordination strategies across diverse institutional structures provides a platform for comparison. Examining how councillors are elected in each city will provide additional background information for looking at factors that influence coordination. In Vancouver, councillors are elected 'at large', and are responsible for the entire city rather than local jurisdictions. In Edmonton, councillors are elected in the wards they represent and may be interested in advancing the interests of their own area. In the interviews, many respondents discussed how formal and informal methods of coordination affect the outcome of the planning process. The interview questions did not ask directly about formal and informal coordination; however, the topic was one of the strongest themes emerging from the data.

## Methods

### *Interviews*

I conducted in-person, semi-structured interviews over the summer of 2014 with respondents identified as heavily involved in plan creation and coordination. I recruited participants by email and telephone. I started recruitment by contacting the Dalhousie School of Planning Alumni list: participants often referred to other professionals that led to more interviews. Interview questions focused on participants' experiences with interdepartmental coordination in the development of plans, as well as their perceptions on the major challenges and opportunities involved in improving coordination (See Appendix I: Interview Questions).

The interviews were recorded with an audio recording device. I sent sound files to a professional transcriber. Once I received each transcript, I edited content for overuse of planning jargon, italicized my questions for clarity, and highlighted key points reflective of the aims of the research. I added identifying factors about each respondent, including estimated age and observations about their tone and demeanor.

The typical length of each interview was about one hour. Table 1 shows the type of planner, estimated age, and gender of respondents in the communities. Municipal planners were the most common type of respondent in both communities; however, Vancouver respondents were more varied in the types of planners. In Vancouver there were more male respondents, while in Edmonton there were more female respondents. In Edmonton, most respondents were between the ages of 20-39, while in Vancouver most respondents were between the ages of 30-49.

**Table 1. Respondent Information**

| <b>Type of planner</b> | <b>Edmonton</b> | <b>Vancouver</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Municipal planner      | 12              | 7                |
| Manager/director       | 6               | 4                |
| Planning consultant    |                 | 1                |
| Developer              |                 | 1                |
| Professor              |                 | 2                |
| Total:                 | 18              | 15               |

| <b>Participant gender</b> | <b>Edmonton</b> | <b>Vancouver</b> |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Male                      | 8               | 12               |
| Female                    | 10              | 3                |
| Total:                    | 18              | 15               |

| <b>Estimated age of participant</b> | <b>Edmonton</b> | <b>Vancouver</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 20-29                               | 8               |                  |
| 30-39                               | 5               | 5                |
| 40-49                               |                 | 5                |
| 50-59                               | 3               | 2                |
| 60-69                               | 2               | 3                |
| Total:                              | 18              | 15               |

### ***Thematic content analysis of plans***

To identify coordination efforts across suites of plans, I identified coordination themes in each city's plans. Examining elements in plans such as naming, structure, timing, branding, and referencing other plans and policies provides a framework to measure formal coordination efforts. A plan analysis framework developed for this study provided a consistent and systematic documentation tool (See Appendix II: Plan Content Analysis Framework).

I used the table of contents headings in each plan to organize the main themes presented. I then identified subthemes. Sub-themes are terms that fall under major themes. For instance, if I was reviewing the theme of 'Coordination' and came across a related term in a plan such as 'Alignment', 'Collaboration', or 'Partnership', I would document these terms under the theme of 'Coordination'. I used two approaches to examine major themes. The first approach I used was to read and document where a key word or reference to another plan would occur. The second approach I used was the word search function. This was an efficient method to determine where key words were located and in what context they were mentioned.

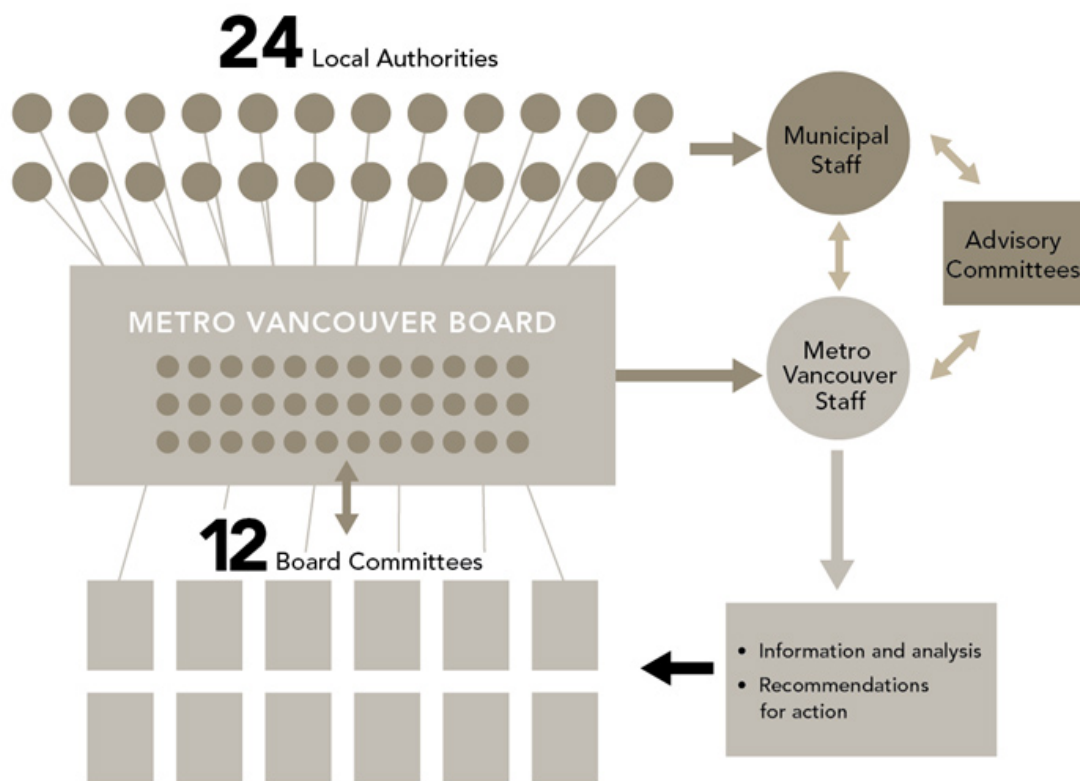
### ***Comparative Case Study***

The coordination mechanisms in each city are compared to explore the strategies that exist within different organizational structures. Comparing different approaches to coordination may lead to insights regarding how certain institutional frameworks support or impede coordination activities.

## Background Context

### Vancouver

Metro Vancouver is the name of the political body and corporate entity designated by provincial legislation as one of the regional districts in British Columbia. This regional district comprises 24 local authorities as members (See Map 1): 22 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation as shown in Figure 1. Metro Vancouver is a partnership of the region's municipalities that work together to deliver regional services, set policy, and act as a political forum. Metro Vancouver represents residents of a region under four separate legal entities: Greater Vancouver Regional District, Greater Vancouver Water District, Greater Vancouver Sewage and Drainage District, and Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (Metro Vancouver 2014a).

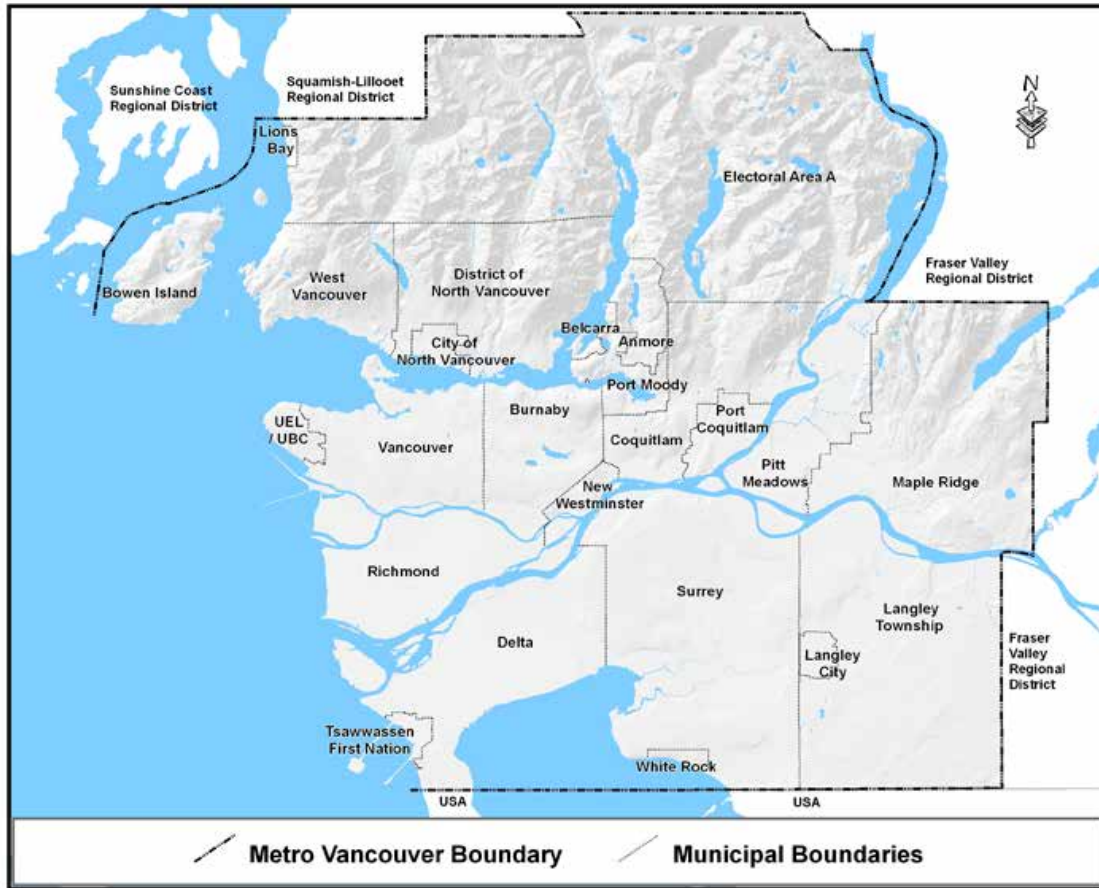


**Figure 1. Metro Vancouver Governance Structure**

Source: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Vancouver has an excellent reputation for its planning achievements and is touted as one of the leading model cities for the future (Vancouver 2013). In 1936 the electoral system in Vancouver changed from a ward system to a citywide system. This change created a small council and contributed to the emergence of a small business oriented, pro-development political elite. Vancouver's unique discretionary planning system evolved from a political background of a small council, elected citywide, and given considerable independence from the province. This included a high level of delegation

given to planning officers alongside a high level of discretion in day-to-day decision-making (Punter 2003).

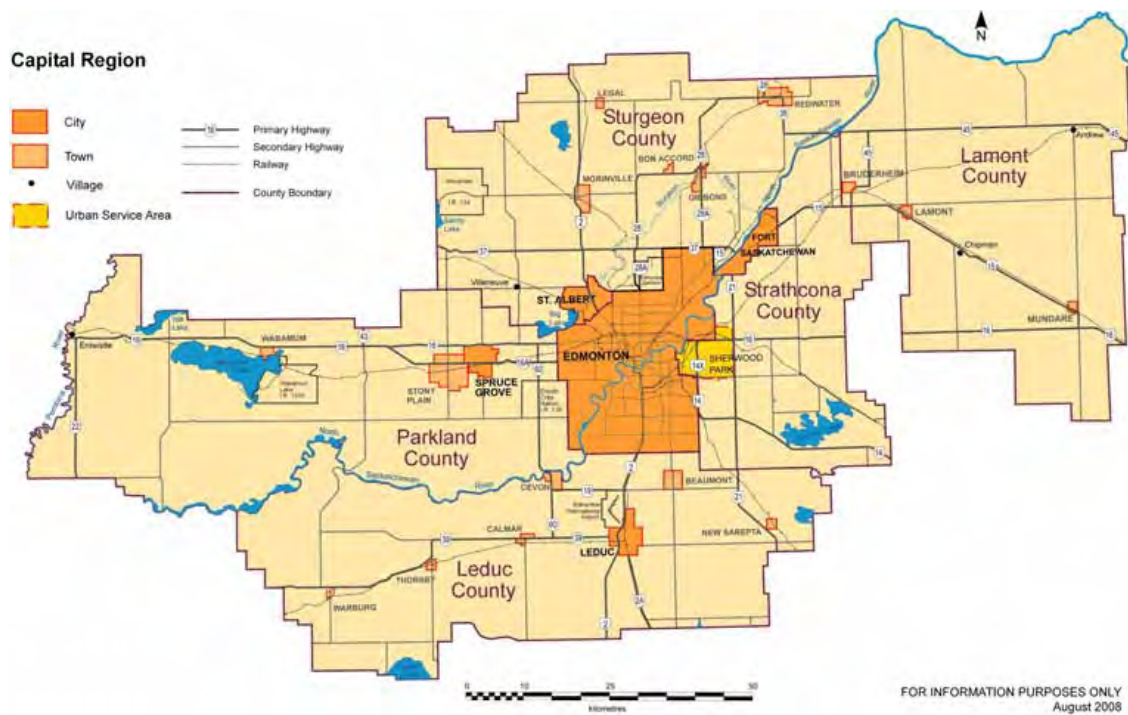


**Map 1. Metro Vancouver Municipalities and Electoral Area**

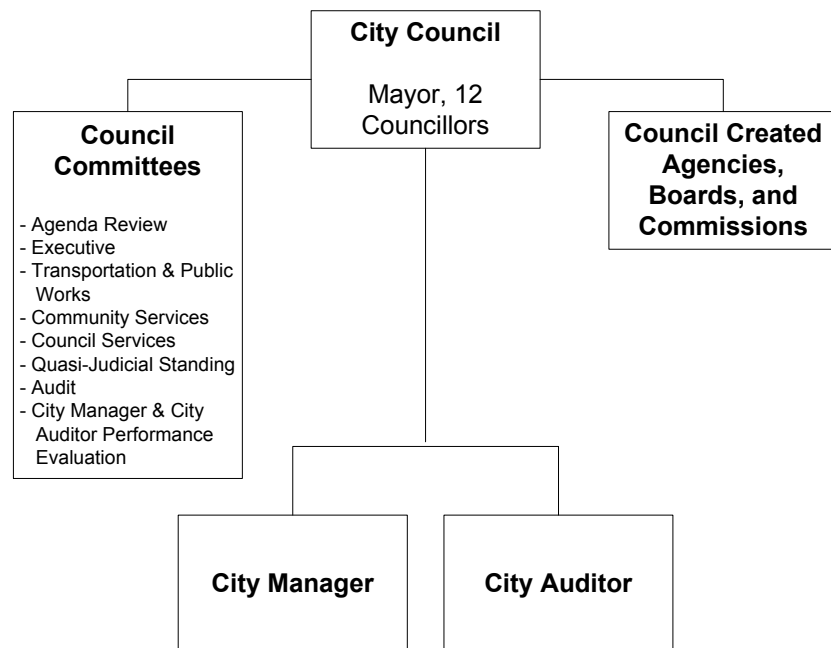
Source: Retrieved from Metro Vancouver (2014)

## Edmonton

A mayor and twelve councillors represent the citizens of Edmonton (Edmonton, City of 2014). On July 22, 2009, City Council adopted an electoral system that divides Edmonton into 12 wards, instead of the previous two for each of six wards (See Figure 2). The Edmonton Capital Region (ECR) is a conglomeration of 34 municipalities; however, its boundaries are different for Capital Region Board (CRB) administrative purposes (See Map 2). The CRB formed to create a regional government that would be more effective in fostering regional cooperation among its surrounding municipalities.



**Map 2. Edmonton Capital Region**  
Source: Retrieved from *The Way We Grow*



**Figure 2. City of Edmonton Governance Structure**  
Source: Edmonton, City of (2007)



## Findings: Plan Content Analysis

### Vancouver

Three of Vancouver's six primary planning documents include sections dedicated to coordination efforts. The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) includes a section called 'Scope and linkages to other plans'. The Transportation 2040 Plan includes a section on 'Partnerships' and explains how the City and its partners work together on transportation issues through a number of related plans. The Regional Corporate Climate Action Plan states how it aligns with the Sustainability Framework and has a section called 'Links to other plans', including Metro Vancouver Plans and how they align with provincial initiatives. Regarding coordination with other governments and agencies, the RGS states that Metro Vancouver will work with the Fraser Valley Regional District, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, and the Islands Trust to facilitate the compatibility of regional growth planning and initiatives in Metro Vancouver and neighbouring jurisdictions.

#### *Graphics and Naming*

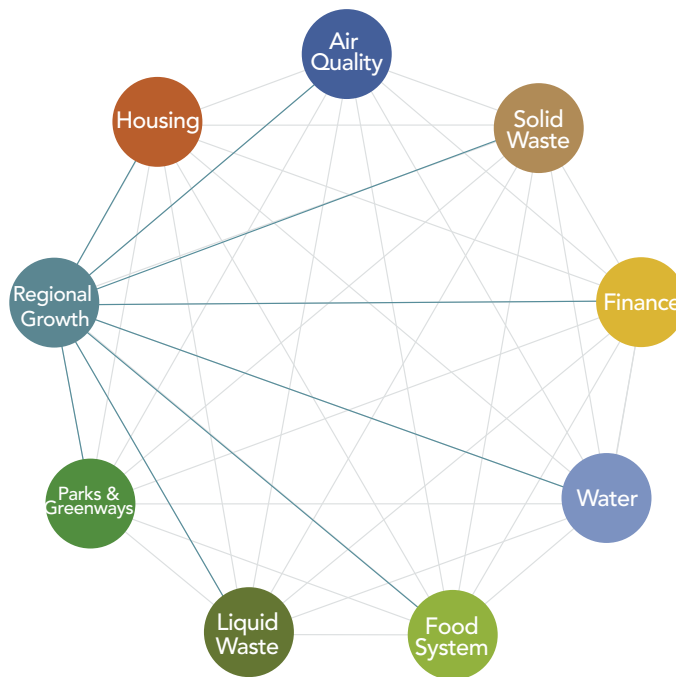
There is no consistent graphic representation among Vancouver's suite of plans. Each plan has a different layout, while each cover page has different graphics. Each plan has its own title reflective of the plan type as shown in Table 1.

**Table 2. Vancouver plans**

| <b>Plan - Name</b>                                                                | <b>Plan - Type</b>        | <b>Date Approved</b>                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| City of Vancouver Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan            | Official Development Plan | Adopted September 24, 2013                                                                                  |
| Regional Growth Strategy<br>Metro Vancouver 2040<br>Shaping Our Future            | Growth Strategy           | Adopted by the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board on July 29, 2011;<br>Updated to September 21, 2012 |
| Transportation 2040                                                               | Transportation            | Adopted by Vancouver City Council on October 31, 2012                                                       |
| The Vancouver Economic Action Strategy: An Economic Development Plan for the City | Economic                  | N/A                                                                                                         |
| Greenest City 2020 Action Plan                                                    | Green                     | N/A                                                                                                         |
| Corporate Climate Action Plan                                                     | Climate                   | Adopted June 16, 2010                                                                                       |

Figures and diagrams represent how Vancouver's plans are interconnected with one another as shown in Figure 3.





**Figure 3. Vancouver's interconnected plans**

Source: Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy

#### *Metro Vancouver Sustainability Framework*

Metro Vancouver's plans are coordinated by a Sustainability Framework. The framework has formally put sustainability at the core of its operating and planning philosophy since 2002. Four points of significance from the framework regarding coordination measures include:

1. Plan for the future by developing and using an integrated system of plans.
2. Facilitate collaboration with local governments and citizens.
3. Recognize and reflect the interconnectedness and interdependence of systems.
4. Be collaborative.

Regional Growth Strategy, p. 8

The RGS states that Metro Vancouver and associated local governments will implement the RGS within a collaborative decision-making framework. The Local Government Act establishes the provisions of this framework, along with recognition that a collaborative decision-making process is necessary in order to achieve the visions and goals in the RGS. The RGS is designed so that the more regionally significant an issue, the higher the degree of Metro Vancouver involvement in decision-making, and conversely, the less regionally significant an issue, the less Metro Vancouver involvement. This collaborative decision-making process applies to:

- Acceptance by affected local governments of the initial RGS and subsequent amendments;
- Acceptance by Metro Vancouver of initial municipal RGS and subsequent amendments;
- Ongoing Regional Growth Strategy and Regional Context Statement administration and procedures.

#### *Transportation 2040 Plan*

The Transportation 2040 Plan indicates that partnerships are critical to achieving success, particularly in a region with 21 municipalities, regional transportation and planning agencies, and many overlapping jurisdictions and interests. As TransLink sets regional priorities for transportation and Metro Vancouver for land use planning, it is imperative that coordination efforts are in effect. Transportation 2040 addresses the importance of coordination and states that the City is working to ensure consistency with the 2045 regional transportation strategy TransLink is currently developing, as well as with past plans and strategies such as the Provincial Transit Plan. The City coordinates with other municipalities in the region, both directly and through TransLink's Major Roads and Transportation Advisory Committee.

#### *Greenest City 2020 Action Plan*

The Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (GCAP) is divided into 10 smaller plans, each with a long-term (year 2050) goal and medium-term (year 2020) targets. Together, these 10 plans address three overarching areas of focus: carbon, waste, and ecosystems. Although the GCAP is organized into 10 distinct goals, the actions work together to form one integrated plan. For example, increasing composting and gardening helps achieve the Green Economy, Zero Waste, Access to Nature, and Local Food targets. Improving transit services supports the Climate Leadership, Green Transportation, and Clean Air targets.

#### *Economic Plan*

The City's economic goals pervade the GCAP. The first of the ten GCAP goals is *Green Economy* under the title, 'Secure Vancouver's international reputation as a mecca of green enterprise'. Under this goal, increasing "green" jobs is a high priority action item. The plan states that doubling the number of "green" jobs in the City and "greening" existing businesses will take a coordinated effort. Key strategies in obtaining these goals include partnering with the Vancouver Economic Commission, capacity building, education and training, and greening existing workplaces. Possible green jobs related to each GCAP goal are provided in the plan highlighting the economic priorities of the City.

## Edmonton

Plans are mechanism to formally coordinate planning policies, goals and objectives in Edmonton. Developing plans with other departments allows buy-in and less chance of amendments. Many Edmonton respondents referred to *The Ways* suite of plans as a success story. The Municipal Development Plan (*The Way We Grow*) and the Transportation Plan (*The Way We Move*) were developed together, a factor in their success. The same is true for other *The Ways* plans. An Edmonton planner said they ensure *The Way We Move* aligns with *The Way We Grow*, *The Way We Live*, and *The Way We Green* because transportation plays into all of them.

### Structure

Edmonton's plans are structured to align with other plans and the priorities of the City. Edmonton's City Council developed a City Vision that sets the direction, guides decisions, and aligns with the priorities of the City. Edmonton's Strategic Plan, *The Way Ahead*, is the ten-year planning framework that guides the evolution of the city and ensures that Edmonton continues to work towards the development of the city described in the City Vision. Edmonton has six complementary plans guided by *The Way Ahead* all set for a 30 year time period (for the year 2040) under the 10 year goals of *The Way Ahead*.

### Naming and Timing

The way the plans are named indicates coordination efforts. All plans employ the same naming style beginning with "*The Way We...*", followed by a verb reflecting the plan type. Table 3 presents Edmonton's master plans and the adoption date.

**Table 3. Edmonton Plans**

| Plan - Name        | Plan - Type                                      | Date Approved               |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| The Way We Grow    | Master Plan (Municipal Development Plan)         | May 26, 2010 (approved)     |
| The Way We Move    | Transportation Plan (Master Transportation Plan) | September 2009 (approved)   |
| The Way We Green   | Environmental Plan                               | 2011 July 2011 (approved)   |
| The Way We Live    | Social Plan                                      | July 7, 2010 (approved)     |
| The Way We Prosper | Economic Plan                                    | March 20, 2013 (approved)   |
| The Way We Finance | Corporate Plan                                   | In development              |
| The Way Ahead      | Corporate Strategic Plan                         | 2009-2018 (updated in 2011) |

The recent adoption of Edmonton's plans and similar timeframes indicates coordination among plans. For example, *The Way We Grow* parallels the 30-year timeframe of *The*

*Way We Move*, establishing Council's policy direction for future land development and redevelopment decisions. *The Way We Grow* indicates that any amendments will consider the impact of the proposed change on the achievement of the goals of *The Way Ahead*. Integrated monitoring and a performance measurement program for *The Way We Grow* is also under development in conjunction with *The Way Ahead*, the Corporate Business Plan and other pertinent City initiatives. *The Way We Move* further states that a review and update of the plan will be completed in ten years or as required depending on the development and alignment requirements with other corporate strategic plans.

### *Branding*

Edmonton's plans have visual continuity: the covers and content of the plans use the same visual style illustrating efforts to coordinate plans as shown in Figure 4. Each plan's cover page has a stream of colour representative of the pyramid structure on top of Edmonton's City Hall:

The pyramid-shaped logo (Figure 5) mirrors the pyramid landmark at City Hall. Just as the pyramid sits atop City Hall, Transforming Edmonton sits atop the City of Edmonton's strategic planning initiatives. The pyramid represents the apex, the culmination of all of the other plans; the pyramid structure represents stability and cohesiveness, with a clear upward focus.

*The Way Ahead* Strategic Plan, p. 24



Figure 1: Edmonton plan covers illustrate efforts to coordinate plans. Images used with permission from the City of Edmonton Planning Department.

**Figure 4. Edmonton's *The Ways* plans**

Source: Plan Canada (2014)

The pyramid is used as a way to show how Edmonton has made an effort at plan coordination and alignment. The spectrum of coloured streams on the right side of the pyramid represent City of Edmonton's initiatives, the suite of plans under *The Way Ahead*. The blue stream at the top represents the City Vision. The integration of plans is represented by the blending of colours in the right corner of the pyramid. The grey streams on the left side of the pyramid represent the public. The design is meant to reflect the integration of City of Edmonton's planning initiatives.



**Figure 5. Transforming Edmonton Committee Logo**

Source: *The Way Ahead* plan

#### *Aligning with the City Vision*

The City of Edmonton aligns its strategic planning processes to ensure an integrated and holistic approach toward city building over a 30-year timeframe (City of Edmonton 2013). The primary planning documents work together to achieve the City Vision and contain specific information on each corporate identity. The strategic goals, objectives, actions and policies in each plan align with the City Vision but are unique to each planning document. The plans either begin with the City Vision statement or provide an explanation for how a given plan aims to achieve the City Vision.

#### *Aligning with other plans*

Each plan highlights how it coordinates with other plans. One way in which the plans show coordination efforts is in referencing partnerships or alignment with regional boards or organizations. *The Way We Green* was produced to align with other regional plans, such as the Capital Region Growth Plan. Similarly, *The Way We Grow* promotes regional cooperation and partnerships and suggests how Edmonton can collaborate in the region and as part of the Capital Region Growth Plan. This plan also establishes how Edmonton will work with its intermunicipal neighbours and states a need to establish an interdepartmental strategy within the City to ensure consistent messaging and no duplication of services. Figure 6 shows the interconnected plans guided by *The Way Ahead*. *The Way We Grow* contains an introduction section titled, 'Aligning with Edmonton's Other Strategic Plans'. It explains that *The Way We Grow* aligns with *The Way We Move*, *The Way We Green*, *The Way We Live*, *The Way We Prosper*, *The Way We Finance*, and the Infrastructure Strategy.



**Figure 6. Edmonton's Interconnected Planning Framework**

Source: [http://www.edmonton.ca/city\\_government/city\\_vision\\_and\\_strategic\\_plan/the-way-ahead.aspx](http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/city_vision_and_strategic_plan/the-way-ahead.aspx)

#### *Direct and indirect references*

Direct and indirect references to other plans is another way the City of Edmonton has demonstrated efforts to coordinate planning activities. *The Way We Grow* refers to *The Way Ahead*:

*The Way We Grow* works to achieve *The Way Ahead* by directing our future urban form and the land use, development and redevelopment decision framework that will move Edmonton towards our desired future

*The Way Ahead*, p. 15

Plans refer to different levels of plans, such as The Great Neighbourhoods Initiative and Fire Rescue Master Plan. Collaborating with Edmonton's school boards to support the City of Edmonton's long-term intensification efforts in established communities in *The Way We Grow* demonstrates multi-level coordination efforts. The most frequent direct references made across plans are between *The Way We Grow* and *The Way We Move*. I documented a total of seven direct references to *The Way We Move* in *The Way We Grow* and nine direct references to *The Way We Grow* in *The Way We Move*. When a plan stated a connection to another plan, but did not state the plan name, I documented this as an indirect reference to a given plan. For example, encouraging new buildings and public spaces to incorporate design features that mitigate impacts on the natural and ecological environment stated in *The Way We Grow* was documented as an indirect reference to *The Way We Green*.

### *Implementation*

*The Way We Grow* states that implementation will happen in partnership with all City departments and the City of Edmonton's Transforming Edmonton committee. Implementation of *The Way We Grow* and subsidiary plans also require an integrated approach that achieves the strategic goals of *The Way Ahead*, *The Way We Grow*, and *The Way We Move*. Coordination language is present in reference to implementation and monitoring across plans, yet determining how this translates into practice will not be analyzed until future phases of the research project.

### *Sustainability*

Sustainability is a common theme throughout all plans studied. Sustainability is mentioned in varying capacities, depending on the plan type. A word search of 'sustainability' in *The Way We Grow* only produced two results. The first mention of the term is in relation to financial sustainability indicating support for economic growth, diversification and innovation promoting a move to cleaner, ecologically friendly business and industrial development. The second mention of sustainability is more general indicating that Edmonton will move towards a sustainable state, specifically in regards to the built environment.

*The Way We Green* is not the City's only plan guiding sustainability. Many relevant policies already exist in *The Way We Grow*, *The Way We Move*, and *The Way We Live*. Relevant goals, objectives, and strategic actions contained in these plans are restated and referenced in *The Way We Green* to provide a complete picture of the City's overall approach to environmental sustainability and resilience. An illustrative framework demonstrates how sustainability is connected to all other plans on page 14 of *The Way We Green*. The plan was developed as an integrative plan with overlapping and integrative policies with other major City directional plans. This is reflected in the development of the Sustainability Lens, where the City's social, economic, and environmental sustainability principles are to be applied in all decision making.

An analysis of subsequent plans reveals the economic objectives inherent in Edmonton's sustainability goals. *The Way We Prosper* highlights economic goals through a sustainability lens. The plan states that sustainable development is to drive long-term economic growth and place Edmonton at the cutting edge of sustainable development. Sustainability is framed through an economic lens and is frequently mentioned in relation to leadership and city competitiveness.

### *Integrated Transit*

*The Way We Grow* and *The Way We Move* were developed concurrently as an acknowledgement that land use and transportation are inherently linked. Both plans are designed to assist in achieving the City Vision. *The Way We Grow* states that over a ten-year planning period these two plans will promote population growth in the central areas of the city in order to encourage a denser urban form based around LRT stations and transit centres.

The introduction of each section in the *The Way We Grow* contains strategic goals of the MDP and the TMP in how they relate to each other. For example, chapter three of the MDP, *Managing Growth*, defines 'Sustainable Urban Form' and 'Integrated Land Use and Transportation', and is followed by a list of strategic goals of the MDP and TMP



in ways that they support growth management in Edmonton. This format follows for each section in the document.

## Findings: Interviews

### The coordination challenge

Many plans are created in isolation and are sometimes reviewed only moments from going to council. Then planning becomes a disservice in municipal government because conflicts are more likely to surface among policies and plans. Many respondents indicated that regular reflection on planning activities is needed. A major barrier to coordination indicated by many respondents was a lack of having someone overseeing plan amendments and changes to policies. Data sharing is another issue identified by many respondents. Communication systems need to be established and used by everyone in an organization. A solution some municipalities adopt to avoid conflicts was noted by a respondent:

*I think a lot of times we handle coordination or the lack of a consistent approach to coordination by making our broader plans very general and very inclusive of ideas so that more specific plans are not inherently coordinated with them. It's just they fit within them. [VAN13m]*

Many respondents commented on the challenges of coordinating within a large organization. When discussing the size of the organizational structure, communication as a strategy surfaced in many responses. The number of policies to keep track of and aligned is a challenge. The number of people in large municipalities to coordinate creates challenges for communication.

*Well, I think as you scale up in an organization, the challenges of coordination kind of start with communication. And so communication and our information systems need to be mature and robust in order to make sure that you've got really effective coordination... It comes back to the information system thing. It's a big complex organization with multiple layers internally and externally. It's also the outside agencies that there may also be some inconsistencies with. [VAN10m]*

One respondent commented on the sheer number of items to consider in decision-making:

*One of the challenges of working in this complex environment, is these plans and policies and approaches are all integrated and you're constantly having to think about 15 things for any given decision. [VAN01m]*

Time is also a factor. By the time the city-wide vision translates down to the smaller scale of an organization, community priorities may have shifted. Another issue is that planners at the implementation phase of the planning process may not believe in the city-wide vision or forget what is informing the decision-making. Many respondents said they often question decisions not reflective of the city's vision.

## Formal coordination mechanisms

Many respondents noted that the structure of the organization is a major indicator of whether coordination is successful or not. The way regional, corporate, and departmental levels and processes are set up affect the success of other levels to coordinate. Many respondents mentioned that having strong vertical integration within the organizational structure is key for coordination. A respondent from Vancouver reflected on the City's organizational structure:

*I think just the way we've structured ourselves in the City of Vancouver has been helpful. You know, right down to things like our development permit board where none of the development permits on an individual building are decided by council. Council delegates that authority to a board that consists of members of the public who are appointed by council, architects from the urban design panel, heritage, development community, and then three votes from the city engineer, the city manager, and the director of planning. So individual buildings have to show how they meet the policy and plans that council has adopted but council doesn't vote on an individual building. And I think that's really important as well for integration and ensuring that we're crossing all the t's and dotting the i's in a way that's not highly politicized. [VAN01m]*

Having regional planning processes embedded within a municipal government is how Vancouver and Edmonton coordinate planning activities. A respondent discussed the significance of having a regional planning process in Metro Vancouver, emphasizing strong governance:

*At the regional level, I think we've got pretty good structures in place to make sure that as each of the municipalities and agencies do their planning work, there is a way of ensuring at least a kind of loose coordination. It doesn't mean it's always perfect. Sometimes Delta might grumble at what Surrey does. But there is a way of ensuring that where those plans impact another municipality, there is a forum at Metro Vancouver for working out those conflicts [VAN07m].*

Even though governance appears to be important in supporting coordination activities, many respondents noted communication is essential despite formal mechanisms:

*Even if governance was locked up and it was perfect... people still need to talk to each other even within an organization that has one common executive. There's departments and divisions that operate in silos. That's just human nature, I think, to sort of have a bit of tunnel vision and to just... you end up really thinking what you're working on is probably the most important thing. Not in a bad way, just that that's where most of your effort is. And you don't necessarily always look up and see where those touch points are that you need to coordinate with other people. So that's I think within any organization. So then when you expand that to multiple organizations or very large organizations then those challenges just multiply. [VAN04m2]*

Another respondent echoed the insight stating that formal structures may not be necessary for coordination given that such activities are relationship-based:

*Planner1: There's kind of structural things that can help with coordination but they're not a guarantee. And there's a lot in there that can be relationship-based. It may have as much of an impact on the level of coordination as the actual structure. And*

*sometimes our relationships with our different agencies on a staff to staff level is really good and it can be even better than maybe what happens internally just because of the relationship openness.*

*Planner2: It seems like almost to have really good coordination, you want all of those things lining up. You know, where you have good administrative procedures in place, the governance that requires the coordination is in place, and then you also have the relationships – the actual human to human thing. [VAN04m]*

The shift away from departmental silos in the 1970s and 80s in Vancouver came from a matrix management approach where people from various departments worked on projects in a multidisciplinary environment. In the 1990s, Vancouver's transportation, engineering, and planning departments began planning together. A respondent from Vancouver described the process:

*In fact, this city [Vancouver] was almost completely on a multidisciplinary approach to what it did. So planning and implementation became multidisciplinary, not just driven by a planning department, an engineering department, a social planning department, a health department, a parks department, and all that, but working collaboratively. Once we developed the protocols and the experience to work collaboratively, everyone noticed that it just made our lives easier. So people were inclined to do it on everything. And it was a huge benefit to us after that. But that matrix, the Major Projects Steering Committee, is probably the one that broke through the glass ceiling of cooperation and just establish that was the new way of doing business. We also set up some protocols. For example, no department head made a unilateral decision without consulting his or her other department heads... Once you established those protocols, it makes it a lot easier. [VAN13m]*

Many respondents mentioned the success of the Major Projects Steering Committee in bringing together departments with senior staff, managers, and the city manager. At these meetings managers provide high-level direction to projects that are reviewed by all members. Another respondent from Vancouver discussed the success of formal groups to facilitate coordination:

*I think our Major Projects Steering Committee is a huge success story. We also have another committee that I formed later called the Amenities Committee where we broker using our community amenity contributions, which were in the hundreds of millions, we brokered who got what among all the interests. That was also a big success story because everything went through that committee. And there was nothing inconsistent with it. So we were able to then manage all kinds of development proposal negotiations and everything and still achieve a relatively balanced deployment of the resources that came out of that. I also think the Regional Districts Coordinating Committee was always very effective. Certainly bringing issues forward, getting them debated, not necessarily concluding on something but again most of the time we were probably inclined, once we understand one another, to try to be cooperative. So I think it was pretty successful. And I think the planning directors' review committee was very important within the planning department to coordinate the work of various planners within the city. And because all that work was pretty multidisciplinary, inherently it*

*meant that it coordinated the work of whoever was doing planning in the city.*  
[VAN13m]

Restructuring departments within an organization is another way to move towards more effective coordination. A Vancouver respondent referred to Edmonton's recent departmental restructuring as an example of a success:

*AT: Are you aware of any other communities either in Canada or internationally that are good at coordinating their plans?*

*Planner: The City of Edmonton has totally restructured... They've moved away from very traditional departmental alignments and into a much more... It was a very aggressive restructuring. And so that's one that I know of that I think has been quite successful. I think there are... You hear more about ones where it's the opposite, and departments don't get along and there's fighting that kind of thing. But I think Edmonton has impressed me as being one where they actually... They broke up their fire department and renamed it like Department of... I don't know. It's not even department anymore. It's a community services or something. And parks and fire are in the same department. And man, getting the fire department to work with civilians in the same department and report not to a fire chief but to a bureaucrat is huge. And Edmonton did that. ...And I've seen Edmonton brought up in case studies around strategic planning in Canada. So that's I'd say one very obvious one. [VAN7m]*

### **Plans**

A major coordinating mechanism in Metro Vancouver is the Regional Context Statement (RCS). All municipalities in Metro Vancouver are required to submit a RCS within two years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The RCS demonstrates how the City's existing plans and policies support the goals, strategies and actions identified in the RGS. If applicable, the RCS must also show how the City's plans and policies will be made consistent with the RGS over time. The RCS must identify the relationship between the Official Community Plan and the goals, strategies and actions identified in the RGS.

Respondents were divided on the RCS acting as a coordinating mechanism. It is widely accepted that the RCS is a mechanism to coordinate plans; however, respondents debated whether RCSs fulfill their role or not. One respondent discussed the role of governance:

*It's the governance piece which is quite good in BC. The regional context statements legislation requiring the municipalities or the OCPs to be consistent with the regional growth strategy, I think pretty strongly as far as that goes. [VAN04m2]*

Another respondent spoke of how a regional vision is the reason for coordination in Vancouver, and that the RCSs do not have much impact:

*AT: How do you see the regional context statements playing into coordination?*

*Planner: Not very much. That's my take. It would be interesting to say all municipalities think quite differently, and somehow there was this regional vision, and they all had to get in line, and the context statements made that happen. I just don't think that's the truth. I think the municipalities are thinking relatively similarly. They*

*all bought in years and years ago to the original regional plan. And I don't think it would be very hard for them to get in line with the regional plan. [VAN13m]*

The legislation states that municipalities have two years to develop a RCS after approval of the RGS. One respondent stated that less than half of the member municipalities met the two-year deadline. Each municipality operating on different timelines for official plan updates created challenges when trying to produce a RCS. As a result, municipalities create 'work towards' statements in the RCS that indicate items to be dealt with at a later date. The different stages each municipality is in their planning process presents challenges when attempting to create coordinating documents.

Metro Vancouver's RGS is one plan among a suite of interconnected management plans developed around Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Framework. The RGS focuses on land use policies to guide the future development of the region and support the efficient provision of transportation, regional infrastructure and community services. The RGS, in combination with other management plans, is intended to meet the region's priorities and mandates to support the long-term commitment to sustainability. One respondent referenced the RGS when asked about success stories in Metro Vancouver:

*I think the regional growth strategy really is unique. It is a vision for growth in the region that has been signed onto by 21 municipalities, adjacent regional districts, TransLink, and our board of directors. And that's no small feat – to say this is where we want to go in the future of this region. It's a huge success in terms of integrating that many agencies and local governments together in one common vision... It facilitates a whole pile of future integration because once you've got that common vision, it becomes the springboard for a collective vision around transportation. It becomes the springboard for much more detailed plans. [VAN03f]*

Another respondent echoed the success of the RGS:

*The regional growth strategy is an example of an amazing level of achievement to get 22 local governments together to do a regional plan with a threshold of having to reach 100% agreement in order for the thing to pass. That's I think an example that would stand up anywhere in the world of a very high level of coordination required and commitments required to be able to get a regional plan that isn't just like majority approval but every municipality has to agree to it in order for it to go. It's the highest threshold that I'm aware of for regional cooperation and coordination. [VAN10m]*

However, municipalities have their respective goals and priorities, which may not always align with neighbouring jurisdictions. One respondent reflected on the political nature of the planning process:

*I do have to say though, there is an inclination by both politicians and planners to feel responsible for the area within they are officially designated to have responsibility. So municipal politicians and planners might feel a strong need to coordinate within their municipality but not across municipalities. And they might not feel much of an inclination to coordinate with the regional government. The regional government probably is more inclined to want to motivate coordination and collaboration simply because they have a larger view. But often they might not have the power to insist. So*

*that difference of jurisdictions can be a problem for coordination... I'm just saying that with those different jurisdictions, there does need to be some kind of collaborative organization for collaboration. [VAN13m]*

The challenge of coordinating over twenty municipalities with different goals and objectives is no easy task:

*Our biggest challenge is that we're really looking at the fact that we have 22 different municipalities. So this very diverse array of municipalities, and they have different aspirations, different geographies, different realities, and planning drivers on the ground. So from a governance perspective, you know, you have the City of Vancouver which is primarily developed, looking at infill. A totally different universe than the Township of Langley out on the fringe of our region where they're really feeling the pressure to convert agricultural land, industrial land, and so on. So it's a different set of pressures. So bringing all of those things together and having all of those different municipalities at the table really makes it a challenge to collectively agree on a set of planning policies. [VAN03f]*

Another respondent described the challenge of having a voluntary governance framework:

*They [municipalities] don't have to... It's a courtesy for them to align their plans with the plans of Metro. And that's where you get a lot of squabbling, is over those kinds of things where one or another group feels that they don't need to coordinate their plans. They might do it as a courtesy but they're not actually required to do that. And that sometimes causes a problem. [VAN07m]*

The Vancouver Charter contributes to Vancouver's distinctive politics. Granted by the province in 1953, the Charter gave the city much greater powers of self-government than other British Columbian or Canadian cities, which remain subservient to provincial municipal acts. The city could amend its Charter by means of private bills submitted to the BC legislature, allowing council and the director of planning significant scope for policy innovation and direct response to local circumstance. In Vancouver, council shapes policy and approves all plans, rezonings, and design guidelines, but generally does not interfere in day-to-day planning practices. Most notably, council delegates decisions on development permissions to the director of planning (Punter 2003). One respondent shared his opinion on the Charter acting as a coordination mechanism:

*I don't think the Vancouver Charter plays much of a coordination role. What the Vancouver Charter did and still does is it allows the City of Vancouver to experiment with ideas, planning ideas and regulations and policies by itself, not with the rest of the cities and municipalities in the province. And that has meant that we've often been in a leadership role on those ideas. Often things get tested, explored, tried here in Vancouver. And if they're working well then they'll get adopted around the province. It just shows how unimportant it was to us because I don't remember anything that really motivated or made it a requirement to do coordination. I don't think you would need a law to do that. You don't need a charter to do that. If you're smart planners, you're going to try to make sure your plans are consistent and coordinated. And the*

*public is demanding it because they have to live with all the contradictions.*  
[VAN13m]

Given that Metro Vancouver municipalities have a lot of autonomy, the governance structure itself is oriented around consensus building as opposed to controlling or issuing policy statements from higher levels of government. As a result, the plan documents become the focal point as opposed to government policy that must be followed. A respondent spoke about the role of plans in Vancouver:

*One of the things that I think is interesting is that a lot of the consistency of the plans through the years came out of the consistency of our philosophy about planning. If you get colleagues together from various municipalities in the region, you'll find a very consistent philosophical predisposition for cities about cities and about planning. And that find its way into the plans. So that inherently, they're not often contradictory. Occasionally they are... But often they're not. But the activity of coordination I think is pretty sparse.* [VAN13m]

TransLink is the regional transportation authority responsible for planning, managing, and operating Metro Vancouver's regional transportation system. The RGS states that Metro Vancouver will work with TransLink with the objective that the RGS and TransLink's regional transportation plans are compatible and complimentary. TransLink is required to provide a regional transportation system that supports Metro Vancouver's RGS, air quality and greenhouse gas reduction objectives, and the economic development of the region. TransLink's long range plan sets out transportation strategies for the road and transit networks as well as other matters affecting the regional transportation system in support of the RGS, provincial and regional environmental objectives, and the economic development of the transportation service region. The RGS states that these plans must be mutually reinforcing to be successful.

When asked about the challenges of coordinating plans in Metro Vancouver, a planner offered insight into transportation and land use planning:

*In our region, the fact that the land use and transportation planning elements are conducted by two separate agencies can be a real challenge. We have a great relationship with TransLink. We work really hard on a number of projects and plans collaboratively. But the fact that we do have a different kind of governance and different drivers, I think is a challenge. From a legislative perspective, I think that there is some kind of lack of clarity on the role of the region when it comes to regional planning as laid out in the legislation. Another challenge might be that you've got federal and provincial agencies that aren't bound by the same kind of planning framework that we are. We can do a really great land use and transportation plan, and then the province can come and decide to put \$3 billion into replacing the George Massey Tunnel. It's just a challenge to integrate that decision-making into what we're all agreeing to on the ground as priorities.* [VAN03f]

Another respondent commented on having two different political bodies involved in coordination:



*...but there are also political realities that infuse that. Both of our agencies are guided by, at one level, by the political masters. And there's overlap but they're not identical. We then have a professional board. So there's some trickiness there whenever you have two political masters. We also have different relationships, to be candid, with the provincial government. I would say the transportation authority has a more active interface with the provincial government than the land use folks. [VAN04m]*

Edmonton is obligated under the Municipal Government Act to ensure plans are consistent; however, many respondents indicated how difficult this is given the number of plans. Many respondents indicated that a move over recent years to have strong city-wide policies, partly to be more efficient and partly to be more consistent, but also to ensure that high level city goals are being worked towards. Many respondents stated that *The Ways* are good high level policies:

*AT: What success stories do you have in Edmonton for coordinating plans?*

*Planner: The Ways I think are a success story... The Way We Grow and The Way We Move were done together. The other Ways have followed but have certainly reflected the same model. So if you look at the collaboration that went into creating those high level strategic plans, I think that's a real success. [EDM05f]*

## **Groups**

The main formal coordinating mechanism mentioned by respondents was interdepartmental groups. The types of groups that bring departments together include working groups, technical and steering committees, oversight groups, and senior and corporate management teams. One of the objectives of these meetings is to hear updates on what other departments are working on. Sharing information in meetings provides the opportunity to exchange ideas and identify conflicts. Some respondents said they strike a committee or host a workshop to scope out plans and think of issues across departments. In Vancouver, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee meets monthly with the directors of planning across the region and reflects on progress of the regional plan. One municipality in Vancouver has a sustainability working group chaired by the sustainability manager: their job is to ensure everyone is pulling in the same direction on issues around sustainability.

Committees appear to be an effective way to coordinate across departments according to respondents. This includes sharing work plans to project status to problem solving opportunities. Oversight committees such as Edmonton's Capital Plan Oversight Committee looks at the relationship between plan creation and implementation. The following comment acknowledges the role of committees in providing the environment to identify conflicting policies:

*...there's a reliance on them [interdepartmental committees] and an expectation of knowledgeable people in a variety of parts of the organization being able to identify conflicts and issues at the scoping or program development stage. So lots of committee structures that help with that. [VAN13m]*

One respondent fantasized about have a planning group that includes engineers, transportation engineers, land use planners, environmental planners, arts planners, and parks planners in one group working together. Even though these professionals have

different priorities and answer to different people, having everyone in one working space or one department was thought to improve coordination. However, the respondent argued that the right combination of people may only happen occasionally. Another respondent suggested having someone to discuss policy conflicts with such as a planning ombudsman. The city manager role is somewhat responsible for reconciling conflicts between professionals; however, having an ombudsman could provide an unbiased role to address conflicts. At the City of Edmonton, the Great Neighborhoods Committee facilitates coordination:

*I'm not sure if you've heard of them [Great Neighbourhoods Committee], but they oversee a lot of these corporate-wide projects and are sort of tasked with a coordinator's role. So they don't necessarily have a vested interest in the infrastructure, or the schools, or the social agencies, or some of the policing issues, but they are the ones that know a little bit about everything and can bring the right players together at the right time. So I think just having that office of Great Neighbourhoods has been a real success in terms of a corporate approach to big projects. [EDM05f]*

Responses containing information about formal coordination often contained information about informal coordination. This indicates defining formal and informal coordination is complex and that both mechanisms often function together. For example, some respondents talked about committees as formal, while others identified them as informal. Many respondents stated that they use both formal and informal coordination approaches in their organization. The following comment illustrates the ambiguity of formal and informal mechanisms:

*AT: What types of groups are you a part of and how frequently do you meet?*  
*VAN: Some of them are formal and some are informal. We have a sustainability working group here at the city. And so it's chaired by the sustainability manager whose job it is to ensure that everybody is kind of pulling in the same direction on issues around sustainability. So that group meets monthly or every 6 weeks, that kind of thing. We also have the senior management team. All the department heads meet weekly. And always bringing up subjects of what's going on in their world and how it relates to others. At the more informal level, there are often working groups set up around projects – steering committees and working groups. [VAN07m]*

## **Visions**

The concept of “Vancouverism” represents a widely accepted vision and consistent language of the city’s goals. Several respondents stated that Vancouver is a success story of a city developing under a “one-city” approach. Vancouver developed over many years involving tens of thousands of people, including citizens, professionals and politicians. One respondent with an extensive planning background stated:

*Vancouverism is probably one of the strongest concepts of a city that I've ever seen in all my travel around the world... the very best coordination comes from wide acceptance of a vision or a set of ideas. Vancouver is basically a vision of a city. There was both a sharing of common language and a common set of ideas, but also there was one adopted prime principle against which you could test any idea that came forward. [VAN13m]*

Having a vision appears to be a method of coordination supported by many respondents:

*The strength of that idea [Vancouverism] and... I can't tell you how strong that is, how strong it was, and I think how strong it continues to be, not just in government but in the entire development community, among citizens. It's not something that gets debated in elections because it's a widely embraced set of propositions. And I always tell every government, local government where I work, the most important thing is a good clear idea or vision of something that everyone develops together, that everyone believes in, and that everyone will implement and protect. And once that happens, all kinds of contradictions get managed in a very dispersed way by people because they all know in the back of their mind it either is good for or not good for the vision. [VAN13m]*

Edmonton respondents echoed Vancouver's insights regarding visions functioning as a coordination mechanism. However, one respondent concluded that visions may not be realistic at all levels of the organizational hierarchy:

*Like one of those things that you work at in good governance is that, you know, you've got the right functional arrangement. It changes all the time depending on what your needs are. But you've got people that buy into the culture of what's a good city about, what is it to be a great city. And that's really a strong theme within the City of Edmonton. We want to go to the next level. Our city manager has started a process of translating a vision and building a culture where the people that work for the corporation believe in the value of being a great city and all of the great things that it can mean for both themselves and the citizenry. So this implementation plan is a way to communicate that to our own staff. I think one of our problems always is we've got folks that work in different areas of the corporation, and they might be involved in really operational stuff, really transactional, and they look around and they maybe don't have a connection up to the vision. [EDM09m]*

### **Process**

Many respondents mentioned listing relevant policies in reports going to council as a way to coordinate. One municipality has a section in council reports called "Sustainability Considerations" where the report aligns with the sustainability charter. This is a way to address previous policies that may contradict with new policies. Other municipalities have "Policy Considerations" in council reports where new policies are aligned with existing ones. One respondent stated that the structure exists within their municipality to identify related policies; however, it is more of a prompt and can result in "cherry-picking" policies that are best suited to emerging policy.

Bringing people together from different departments early in the process is key. Conflicts are more likely to surface when people get together later in the process. Involving actors early in the process can make identifying conflicting policies more achievable. Similarly, having a consistent planning process ensures the integrity of coordination:

*Planner1: We also need... Like in some ways, the benefit of doing plans regularly and when we've been doing an annual plan, a rolling annual plan, it forces that coordination within an agency and then also within our other agencies like the*

*coordination with the municipalities to make sure that we're being transparent and clear and checking in on where our direction is. So you can never go too long without having things kind of come to the surface if there are ambiguities or areas where you're misaligned.*

*Planner2: That's a good point. The more regular planning processes shine a spotlight on those gaps and force you to actually deal with them. If there's not like a deadline or a process that requires you to do that, it can drag on for a while and not being super effective. [VAN04m2]*

## Informal coordination mechanisms

### **Interpretation**

Coordination is not possible without the willingness to be collaborative. Respondents frequently mentioned that the shift from departmentally-centered to thinking about what is good for the city as a whole can only come from a willingness to engage in coordination together. With this comes the recognition that what may be good for one department may not be good for another. A system and culture has to exist so people feel comfortable talking to their counterparts. For example, inviting staff from other departments to meetings provides an opportunity to learn about different views. Many respondents stated they are investing resources into having conversations about coordination regularly and making it a part of their culture.

One of the challenges identified by many respondents was developing respect for different disciplines: all views need to be considered in planning decisions. Different groups in society have different perspectives; views cannot be dismissed if an issue is thought of differently. One respondent gave an example of the challenges of interpreting greenway plans and walkability plans:

*Greenways plans and walkability plans cover the same area but with a slightly different focus. The walking plan might be more about direct access to facilities and amenities for people; the cycling plan may prioritize kind of straight and direct routes that cyclists are able to get where they need to get in a hurry; the greenways plan maybe deals with the same infrastructure but maybe more concerned with either environmental values or experiential values along the way. So that's one challenge in coordination, is that we see the world through a different lens sometimes. [VAN07m]*

Similarly, another respondent offered insight into how different professionals interpret words in plans differently:

*Planner: I think often we find in regional and transportation plans the wording was crafted with a whole bunch of input from various different organizations. So almost each word was wordsmithed by many groups. But even then you'll find that no matter how you write things, people can read them as different and they interpret various different definitions out of them... there was probably about 3 or 4 different ideas of what it meant. In the end, all of those were actually different than what they were intending it to be. [VAN11m]*

A respondent offered insight into the purpose of plans when asked about how different professionals interpret terms:

*So for sure everyone brings their own lens to these things. I think that one of the cautionary tales in our work is that the balance between plans as communication vehicles to a wide audience versus instruction manuals to a narrower audience is a real challenge. And so the benefit of simpler, higher level policy documents and plans is ascertainably and accessibility to a wide audience that gets to the broad thrust of it. On the down side, it also probably means that when you're reading things, it can mean a lot of things to different people. [VAN10m]*

### **Knowledge**

Many respondents mentioned the challenge of knowing who to contact for addressing issues. Scheduling meetings and finding people on different floors and buildings can be inconvenient and time-consuming. If people are closer it may be more efficient to informally ask each other questions. Many respondents stated that overhearing conversations or stating, "I'll just pop in", allows a more informal and open method of communication. The downside is that when communication occurs informally, items may not be recorded and key people may be left out of the discussion. A key component to coordination is having knowledgeable staff:

*Quite often some of the more senior staff are really aware of what would be a good planning procedure will recognize when there isn't someone there who should be, or when there isn't a policy that's been addressed that should be, or when there's things missing. We have a lot of good staff that will acknowledge that and recognize that. So good staff influences the success of interdepartmental policy and plan coordination. [VAN08m]*

### **Ad hoc coordination**

Respondents frequently used the term 'ad hoc' when referring to informal coordination. Many respondents address conflicting policies on a one on one basis rather than using a strategy due to resource constraints. One respondent said their approach is to use constant collaboration with colleagues. Another respondent reads corporate reports to understand departments' priorities and objectives. Another respondent stated that the city manager is the coordinating fulcrum as they sign off on reports and plans before going to council. The following insight summarizes the challenge of balancing different professions, personalities, plans, and places:

*I think it's impossible to ever get absolute coordination. I think it's human nature. We're all a bit different; we see things differently; we have a different perspective on things. And so I think there always needs to be some acceptance of an uneasy fit... So my sense is that I don't think you're ever going to get complete absolute coordination, word for word, from plan to plan. Because some plans are on a different time scale; some are detailed; some are general; some are dated; some are brand new. But if they're all kind of within a corporate strategic plan structure that is living and breathing and has the support of those highest in the organization, I think success is better. [VAN07m]*

Informal mechanisms can exist within formal mechanisms of coordination. For example, one respondent described several department heads on a steering committee with other staff on working groups. The managers are responsible for assigning the appropriate people to the working groups depending on the issues. The formal structure is where the

senior management team determines the appropriate staff for the working groups. The formal structure houses the informal coordination. One respondent described this process in detail:

*I've had lots of times where I'm put a team together on working on a plan, and all of a sudden halfway through it's kind of like why isn't [name] on this group?... And then you invite that person in. So it's organic to a certain degree. Or suddenly maybe halfway through a plan, issues around social sustainability or social planning and housing. It's like, oh, yeah, we really need to get somebody from that. Or another example is we were working on a neighbourhood plan, and halfway through the plan, issues around energy efficiency became more significant. So then we would make sure that we had somebody from our district energy group on the plan team. So it's a little bit fluid. [VAN07m]*

### **Location**

A major factor in coordination identified by many respondents is the physical location of people in an organization. Informally collaborating with others is more likely when people are in close proximity. A respondent shared their views on the effect of location on informal coordination:

*But there's an informal collegial environment. And that can be enabled literally by physical space. So having a coffee shop or a place where staff can just plunk themselves and you kind of do things informally. [VAN10m]*

One respondent described the transition from an office format to a cubicle format. Staff were concerned about losing individual offices and moving to an open concept work space. In the end, staff preferred the convenience of walking to another professional's desk without scheduling a meeting or going to a different floor or building. One respondent's comment sheds light on the significance of informal interactions:

*I think you don't coordinate quite as well when you're in different areas. Versus if you're situated in the same place, there's kind of informal connections and stuff that you hear about more about in the different plans that are being developed. [VAN11m]*

An increasing effort to consolidate office space is occurring in Edmonton. The city administration will be moving into a new building in the next few years. Many Edmonton respondents have high hopes for what the new building will deliver in terms of coordination when everyone is physically together. One respondent commented on the transition:

*If we were closer together it would make it easier to be more spontaneous with talking to our counterparts. Right now you pretty much have to program into your day a meeting and invite the players, and then pick a location where everyone will gather. And that makes it that much more difficult just logistically to get together. [EDM05f]*

### **Leadership**

Many respondents stated that having a strong culture of leadership is a major factor influencing the success of coordination. The City of Edmonton established leadership principles under the Transforming Edmonton Committee and each department has a leadership mentor (See Appendix II: City of Edmonton Leadership Principles).

Respondents frequently referred to the “human factor” as a key determinant of whether coordination is successful. The attitude of staff, especially those in managerial and leadership positions can determine the outcome of coordination activities. A common team-oriented attitude must exist throughout the hierarchy of an organization in order for coordination to work; this needs to be supported by strong leadership. One respondent offered insight into the importance of strong leadership in facilitating coordination:

*I would say managerial leadership and professional/personal buy-in by those that are engaged with the plan and the policy. Because if you have planners that don't agree with a policy, it's going to be a challenge. If you have planners that feel slighted about not being included, they're not going to connect with the policy or plan. If you have planners that don't even know that it exists, they're not going to engage with it at all. If you have management that doesn't set up some kind of system that gets those planners connecting with the policy, it's not going to go anywhere. [VAN08f]*

Another respondent reiterated the importance of having strong leadership by using clear objectives:

*We're human beings so we need clarity and leadership. And leadership tends not to work well if, from day-to-day, you never know a) who's in charge, b) what they want, and c) are able to provide direction. If everything has to be taken into account then effectively nothing can be done because you can't take everything into account. [VAN12m]*

In addition to leadership, formal structures are necessary to facilitate coordination:

*AT: What factors influence the success of interdepartmental policy and plan coordination?*

*Planner: The attitude of the various department heads is very important. And the attitude of the leader, whether that's a city manager or in some situations a mayor, to insist on that. Then next to that, the institutions that foster coordination such as the Major Projects Steering Committee. Thirdly, the protocols that you adopt to implement that coordination through those institutions by people with the same attitude are very important as well. And that's probably one of the blindnesses in the multiple municipal governments that we have in regions, is that those kind of mechanisms don't tend to go across municipal boundaries very often. [VAN13m]*

Having champions facilitate coordination is critical according to many respondents. Important champions mentioned by respondents were elected officials. When council demonstrates clarity on objectives, aligning city policies and goals is achievable. The role of the city manager is important in ensuring staff reports are aligned and that clear goals are set. The following comment echoed the need for clear corporate direction as a factor influencing the success of interdepartmental coordination:

*I think one thing is a clear corporate direction. And if you know that “listen, guys, this is the direction of the city, this is what's important, and we're all going to row together on it”, that really helps. Without that, you're left with kind of goodwill. But I think a clear corporate direction, a set of priorities reinforced by those in the highest most senior positions saying “it's important that we do this together”, and living that out. Nothing is as important as that. Nothing. So I think clear corporate direction and*



*saying we are one city, we have one objective. It's not about different departments scraping for their piece of the pie or getting their oar in the water. There's no substitute for that kind of leadership from the senior management team. And of course that's facilitated by a council that has a clear and consistent direction. Without that I think what you're left with is kind of more voluntary association. And that can be good but I think it can also lead to the point where you work with the people that you like and that you work well with, and you don't work with those that you don't work well with. And that's poison because you have to work even with the people that you don't like working with if you're going to actually coordinate". [VAN7m]*

### **Corporate culture**

Respondents emphasized the importance of having a corporate culture or philosophy where everyone is invested in working towards a common goal. Wide acceptance of a vision or set of ideas is the most effective way of coordinating. Several respondents used the term “one-city” when describing a common goal. This implies a collective understanding of general principles and reduces departmentalism. Many respondents stated that the big picture is usually set by managers of departments or by council and translates down through the organization. One respondent described an example of where goals are set in an organization:

*So you have people from the general manager of Parks meeting with the general manager of Engineering, meeting with the general manager of Planning and Development Services... And they all meet and set that big picture tone about where we're going as a city... And so they're the big overarching kind of vision there. And that I think really sets the tone about that integration and that coordination right from the get go. And then that kind of translates down through the organization, all the way from the director level to the planner level to the people who are the technical staff who are supporting it. [VAN06m]*

Making coordination activities a norm is an effective way to reduce conflicting policies. Realizing that knowledge sharing benefits all actors involved can increase support of coordination mechanisms. One respondent reflected on the idea of a “one-city” approach:

*Not just buy-in because that makes it sound like you're trying to...you have a vision and you're trying to drag people along with you. But actually consolidating one approach as a city is pretty important. So that, you can do that from the top and have great key messaging about how you do things and what the culture needs to be. But at the end of the day, it's how actual humans are working together all the time, and if they're actually open, if they're actually collaborating. And when that's happening, we see great success. [EDM02]*

Many respondents said that clarity is a key component of coordination. Having clear integration of how decisions help to achieve larger objectives and how they relate to other plans and policies is essential. Community plans that reflect city-wide objectives and give clear targets for local areas are the most successful. The details must be clear and have a measurable matrix. Identifying unachievable objectives also enhances clarity. One respondent discussed the importance of vertical integration:

*Our iterative process from principles to policy plans and zoning to development, to really start at the high level and think about...be very clear about what objectives you have, what directions you have from your elected bodies, what directions you have from regional authorities, what legislative directions you have... it's the vertical integration which I think is fundamental to getting it right. [VAN1]*

### **Relationships**

Many respondents stated that coordination comes down to relationships. Strengthening personal relations in an organization allows open communication because trust is present. Positive personal relations make a difference in the ability to create change and advance ideas, policies, or projects. Respondents frequently used the term “buy-in” referring to accepting ideas from other professions. The following comment echoed the importance of relationship building:

*So that seems a bit cheesy to say that but it's all about the human relationships when it comes to implementing plans and prioritizing actions and working together to get things done. Because there's a million things that could get done, and nothing will get done if everybody is working alone on their own thing. So you know, again, figuring out how to work that human network and get buy-in. [EDM2]*

A respondent from Vancouver provided insight regarding relationship-building and coordination:

*...it's all about people at the end of the day. And opportunities for collegial meeting and friendly exchange goes a long way. You know, there are some people you don't get along with very well. And I can tell you, coordinating with them even when you're in agreement is tough. Whereas other times, when you have a really good working relationship and you have a friendship built up over all kinds of shared good experiences, even very divergent opinions can come together and be coordinated. So I think at the end of the day, finding opportunities to break down those kinds of interpersonal. So social events, feeling a part of a shared team, team building stuff, all that stuff is super important, more than any structure. [VAN07m]*

A respondent from Edmonton reinforced the importance of relationships:

*I think networking and relationships are gigantic. Because you need to know who to work with, how to work with them, understand where you're both...you know, it's a win-win. [EDM13f]*

Even though many respondents indicated good relationships are necessary for coordination, not everyone will always get along. The above comments shed light on the importance of having formal mechanisms in place to facilitate collaborative processes. One respondent discussed how the alignment of the right people at the right time resulted in a positive planning outcome; however, it appears to be based on chance rather than coordination:

*...It was relationship and personalities, and just the right people in the right positions at the right time ...the right person came into the right role in both, at the regional level and at the provincial level, and they just had a conversation. The right transportation minister was appointed at the time or elected... And they were able to*

*make it happen. But had it been different people, it might not have happened.*  
[VAN04m2]

Another respondent talked about how informal and formal mechanisms must co-exist to ensure coordination:

*I think a lot of it is relationship-based... requiring regular communication and coordination, and it also requires the appropriate governance within organizational structure to allow for balancing of different priorities and intentions so that there's clear mandates for each one of those groups. So they know who is responsible, accountable, and who needs to be consulted on different things so that everybody knows where their decision-making space is... So you have that as a platform but then kind of maintaining these through structures, you know, be them regular. And then the informal element. I think those are kind of key for us.* [VAN04m1]

## Synthesis

Respondents from Edmonton and Vancouver frequently stated that coordination is about relationships; however, coordination cannot depend on whether certain people work well together or not. One respondent stated that when the right people came together, an important planning decision resulted. Yet relying on key people to align is risky and can undermine planning. Formal mechanisms provide consistency in the planning process bringing together professionals to make informed decisions. One respondent stated that very divergent opinions can come together and be coordinated, but this is only possible provided a platform exists for conflict resolution.

Formal mechanisms provide a comfortable, consistent, and inclusive method of coordination. Informal mechanisms are vulnerable: they can be inconsistent and exclusionary. Respondents' insights illustrate how diverse these mechanisms are: they work in parallel, sometimes exclusive of one another, and sometimes overlapping. One mechanism is not better than the other; instead, a combination of the two must exist that is unique to each municipality. One respondent stated that good coordination comes from a combination of factors: administrative procedures, good governance, and relationships.

The most common theme among respondents' insights when asked about the factors that contribute to coordination was relationships. One respondent stated that relationships may have as much of an impact on the level of coordination as the actual structure. Another respondent indicated the need for social events to break down interpersonal differences and create a team environment. If relationships are such a large factor of successful coordination, municipalities need to focus on building social capital and cultivating a team environment. However, the formal structure cannot exist without informal activities: they are mutually reinforcing.

Respondents from Vancouver and Edmonton shared similar insights regarding city visions acting as a coordination mechanism. Wide acceptance of a vision throughout an organization has a higher chance of implementation. The vision must be broad enough to include all levels of the organizational structure, yet narrow enough to include those who may not frequently connect with the vision. Therefore, the vision has to come from the top and be reinforced from the bottom. One respondent stated that by having a common vision, formal mechanisms are not as necessary because everyone is moving in

the same direction. Vancouver appears to coordinate more through their visions; whereas Edmonton is largely coordinated through their plans.

The structure of municipalities is not reflective of how planning has changed as a professional practice. Planning has developed beyond its technocratic beginnings, but the planning regulatory system only provides planners with limited tools for addressing issues that are increasingly becoming interconnected. Many respondents saw the role of the planner as a coordinator, yet coordination is not given priority and functions on an ad hoc basis. Edmonton restructured their organization to make coordination efficient. What changes can other municipalities make to foster an environment for coordination?

## Further Research

Metro Vancouver consists of 24 local authorities and covers a large geographic region. The City of Edmonton consists of 12 wards and governs a much smaller area than the Vancouver region. More formal mechanisms may need to exist in a place like Vancouver due to the number of people to coordinate. Edmonton may require less formal coordination mechanisms because people work in closer proximity to each other. Many Vancouver respondents indicated that even though formal coordination mechanisms are in place, due to the 24 local authorities having different geographies and priorities, disagreements are common. Further examination of the processes to deal with conflicting policies in Vancouver and Edmonton may lead to insights into effective procedures. Monitoring the impact of Edmonton's organizational restructuring may reveal changes for other municipalities to consider.

Many respondents noted the success of Vancouver's Major Projects Steering Committee acting as a coordination mechanism. Exploring factors that contribute to the committee's success may allow other municipalities to consider similar strategies. Vancouver has a history of regional visions such as the Livable Region Strategy; examining how these visions shape coordination may provide insights into methods of coordination.

Examining how different political environments affect coordination may advance this study. The ward system operates with one or two councillors elected from a specific territory within a city. A problem with the ward system is that ward-based politicians may be interested only in advancing the interests of their own area at the expense of the broader community (Edmonton Governance Review 2007). A mixed system with some at-large councillors and ward councillors tries to arrive at a compromise between the ward and the at-large system. Since municipal organizations are largely driven by political will, elected officials likely play a significant role in coordination.

## Conclusion

This study provides a detailed analysis of two Canadian communities that present both challenges and opportunities to coordinating planning activities. Respondents' perceptions of coordination in Vancouver and Edmonton suggest that efforts towards better coordination activities are occurring; however, respondents indicate a critical need for better planning practices in their communities. Formal coordination mechanisms such as interdepartmental working groups and plans provide consistency across the planning

process. Even though formal processes are necessary, respondents frequently referred to communication, relationship-building, and personalities as playing a key role in the outcome of coordination. It is apparent that formal and informal mechanisms are needed for coordination.

In Vancouver and Edmonton an overarching vision guides all city plans and policies. A “one-city” approach allows a common set of objectives to permeate through the hierarchy of large organizations. When staff in an organization operate under a common vision, decisions are more likely to align with that vision at all levels.

This study is unique because it examines a growing issue in the planning discipline. Planners are only now starting to recognize the inherent challenges with coordination. The findings in this study are place-specific; however, given the similarities of responses in Vancouver and Edmonton, other Canadian municipalities are likely experiencing similar challenges. The focus on communication in a planning study demonstrates how innovative the research is. The study involves professionals from many disciplines including planners, transportation administrators, municipal staff, developers, and community leaders. Given the range of professions involved and those impacted by the topic, the research is relevant to a wide audience. The evidence shows that achieving coordination comes from a multitude of factors and that coordination is often an afterthought. This is not acceptable in a profession that has an impact on multiple scales. Given that coordination is such an integral part of planning, it is time to address barriers and realize the benefits by investing resources towards better coordination strategies.

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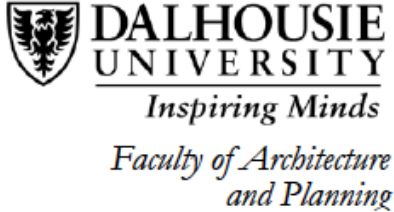
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## Appendix I: Interview Questions



Project Title:

**Coordinating land use planning in the context of multiple plans**

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### Interview Questions

1. **Describe your role and responsibilities.**
2. **How long have you been working for local government in these kinds of roles?**
3. Can I ask you about your education and training for the job: **Where and what did you study? When did you graduate?**
4. **To what extent is policy and plan coordination a priority here in [city name]?**
5. We have found that many cities have a large number of plans. **What factors explain the number of plans that Canadian communities are producing?**
  - Examples of factors [*these can be used as prompts, but should not be listed off. May be asked later if there is time.*]
    - Good planning practice has led to new kinds of plans.
    - Political pressure leads to particular kinds of plans.
    - Community expectations can drive the planning process.
    - Developer pressures can drive the planning process.
    - Strategic priorities of agencies or departments may lead to plans.
    - Responding to local risks generates plans.
    - Funding programs may require certain plans or policies.
6. [*Show the participant a list of possible **types of plans** and ask them to indicate which of these they have in their city, and who is responsible for them*]

**7. What do you see as some of the challenges to coordinating multiple plans and policies?**

- Examples of challenges [*these can be used as prompts, but should not be listed off. May be asked later if there is time.*]

- Too many plans.
- Insufficient staff time.
- Insufficient staff expertise.
- Depends on political priorities.
- Depends on market conditions.
- Reflects changing needs in the community.
- Insufficient data availability.
- Depends on legislative requirements.
- Competing interests among departments.
- Professional rivalries affect outcomes.
- Difficult to change past practices.
- No established hierarchy of priorities.
- Plans don't apply to outside agencies.

**7. Could you describe an example of the challenges of coordinating different plans and policies you have experienced in your own work?**

**8. What strategies do you use to identify conflicting policies or approaches in plans?**

**9. What are some strategies communities may use to coordinate plans? What strategies are used in your community?**

- Examples of strategies [*these can be used as prompts, but should not be listed off. May be asked later if there is time.*]

- Communities set a clear organizational hierarchy that facilitates choices.
- Legal frameworks set out in planning acts guide decision making.
- Policies are coordinated when the comprehensive plan is revised.
- Collaborating, sharing data, and consulting with others facilitate consensus based decisions when policies may conflict.
- Interdepartmental meetings provide opportunities to coordinate priorities.
- Budgets provide mechanisms for communities to set policy priorities.
- Communities allow plans to lapse because priorities and conditions change.
- Processes or organizations are created to deal with particular coordination challenges.

- Champions are appointed to facilitate coordination around critical issues.
- Planning is inherently political, so plans have to be flexible.

**10. What success stories do you have in *[name of city]* in coordinating plans?**

**11. What factors influence interdepartmental policy/plan coordination?**

- Examples of factors [*these can be used as prompts, but should not be listed off. May be asked later if there is time.*]
  - Budgetary concerns
  - Links with external interest groups
  - Political leadership
  - Departmental hierarchies
  - Timing

**12. Is there anything about coordinating plans and policies that you would like to add before we finish?**

## Appendix II: Plan Content Analysis Framework

### Plan Analysis Framework

A framework to assess coordination measures in municipal plans

| Plan Information          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name                      | Main title associated with plan                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Type                      | Master Plan, Transportation, Economic plan?                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Goal                      | What goals (if any) are identified for the plan?                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Graphic Representation    | Does the plan use branding (similar colours, themes, icons, images) that connects it to other plans?                                                                                                              |
| Timing of Plan            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Draft Date                | When was the plan draft submitted?                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Adoption Date             | When was the plan adopted by Council?                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Timeframe                 | 10, 20, 30 year plan?                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Reference to other plans  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Direct Reference          | Eg. When the Transportation Master Plan is mentioned in the Municipal Development Plan                                                                                                                            |
| Indirect Reference        | Eg. When "Home to an innovative and diverse business environment that fosters economic development and supports prosperity" is mentioned in the Municipal Development Plan (Indirect reference to Economic plan). |
| Plan Creation             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Stakeholders              | Who was involved?                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Dedicated Section         | Does the plan contain a section on this process? What measures of coordination are indicated?                                                                                                                     |
| Coordination Strategies   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Dedicated Section in Plan | Mention or section on how plan aligns with other plans?                                                                                                                                                           |

Stakeholders      What other institutions, Regional Boards, other stakeholders are mentioned in the plan that may signify coordination efforts?

| Themes        |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Plan Name     | Does the plan name indicate coordination efforts? (eg. City of Edmonton's <i>The Way Ahead</i> plans: Transportation Plan: <i>The Way We Move</i> ; Environmental Plan: <i>The Way We Green</i> ) |
| Section Names | List section names of plan in order (for comparison across other plans)                                                                                                                           |

| Key Terms                                                                                                                            |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Look for words indicating coordination efforts (ie. 'coordination', 'collaborate', 'partnership', 'integration', 'alignment')</i> |  |

| Term/Pg. no           | Notes                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Eg. Alignment (p. 16) | Eg. The City of Edmonton is currently aligning its strategic planning processes to ensure an integrated and holistic approach toward city building over the next three decades. |
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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## Appendix III: City of Edmonton Leadership Principles

### ***Leadership Expectation***

A leader with the City of Edmonton  
is a visionary, credible and trusted role model who inspires and  
challenges others to achieve their full potential

| <b><i>Leadership Principles</i></b>     | <b>Descriptors</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>We are one city</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared vision</li> <li>• Collaborative</li> <li>• Integrated</li> <li>• Communicate</li> <li>• Share information</li> <li>• Transparent</li> <li>• Many voices make the whole</li> </ul>         |
| <b>We are proud to serve the public</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noble, honourable work</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Professionalism</li> <li>• Strive for excellence</li> <li>• Responsive</li> <li>• Accountable</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>As stewards we lead</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position of trust</li> <li>• Responsible for the future</li> <li>• Create environment for good decisions</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Higher standard</li> <li>• Build reputation</li> </ul> |
| <b>We do as we say</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead by example</li> <li>• Walk the talk</li> <li>• Accountability</li> <li>• Worthy of trust</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Honesty</li> </ul>                                                 |
| <b>I make a difference every day</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership begins with me</li> <li>• Stay engaged</li> <li>• Individuals make a difference</li> <li>• No matter where we are in the organization</li> </ul>                                      |