

2. A Compact, Complete Community by Nature

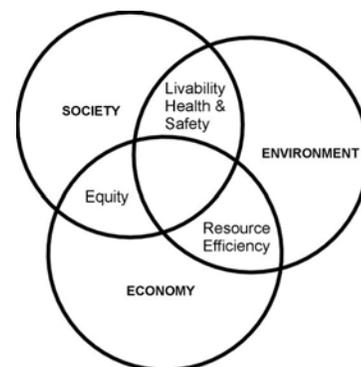
DEFINING A COMPACT, COMPLETE COMMUNITY

Helping to ensure that Coquitlam is a complete community will play an important role in managing change appropriately, as described in Chapter 1. But what exactly is a complete community, and why is it important?

In simple terms, a compact, complete community provides opportunities for people at all life stages to live, work, and play close to home. In doing so, the approach focuses on sustainability in all of its major dimensions. Compact, complete communities help promote *environmental sustainability* through broader goals of preventing regional urban sprawl and the preservation of selected green spaces nearby. They promote *economic sustainability* by: avoiding the costs of unnecessary infrastructure and service duplication; ensuring the critical number of people close enough to warrant improved levels of transit; and providing job opportunities close to home. Finally, complete communities foster *societal sustainability* in providing services and functions to meet daily needs and help strengthen individuals' ties to local places. These include such activities as retail and entertainment facilities and community leisure services.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE MUNICIPAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SCALE

A complete community can occur at both the municipal scale and the smaller community and neighbourhood scales. At the municipal level, a complete community provides choices for people to meet daily needs locally, reducing the need for routine trips to other regional destinations outside the city. But at the neighbourhood level this same range of choices is not necessarily expected. Rather, the smaller geographic areas comprising the city may each serve some needs better than others, and play a different function within the city overall.



The three aspects of sustainability

AN EVOLVING NETWORK OF COMPLETE COMMUNITIES IN THE CITY

The network established in Coquitlam by earlier community plans envisioned two different scales of completeness in the City's urban structure organized around specific facilities or centres. These have consisted of¹:

- The Regional City Centre, which is to function as Coquitlam's downtown, as a regional city centre serving nearby cities and as a high density residential neighbourhood with services, retailing and employment; and
- Eight community-serving retail clusters surrounded by a mix of residential densities.¹

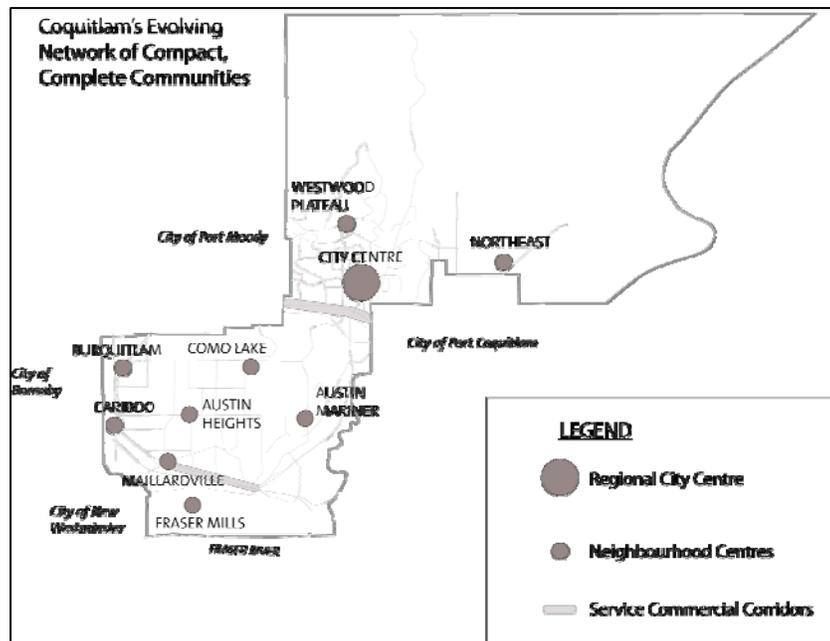
In addition to these nine centres, a waterfront neighbourhood centre is envisioned composed of medium to high density residential development mixed with commercial, institutional and industrial uses.¹

This pattern of centres has been achieved and continues to evolve and become more complex.

Coquitlam's communities and their centres will remain dynamic. The potential for positive change will be directly related to: proximity to new transportation facilities (e.g. SkyTrain Stations and other transit nodes); the attraction of existing facilities and amenities; as well as continued population and employment growth and market activity.

Figure 2.1 below suggests how the scale of completeness for Coquitlam's communities could be further differentiated as a result of such factors. As shown, the next largest scale after the Regional City Centre is expected to be transit-oriented neighbourhood centres. A neighbourhood centre is also designated for the Fraser River waterfront near United Boulevard and King Edward Street. This extended hierarchy will serve as an important framework for prioritizing servicing and transportation investments. It will also provide a focus for future growth opportunities.¹

FIGURE 2.1¹



PLANNING FOR COMPLETENESS AT ALL SCALES

Regardless of scale, this plan promotes three important aspects of completeness throughout Coquitlam and, where appropriate, within the individual communities themselves. These include:

- Everyday needs primarily met ***through the marketplace*** for serving the needs of the local population, which will vary depending on the community's scale or role. (These consist of retail and entertainment facilities, privately provided services, opportunities for employment, and housing for a range of life-stages);
- The availability of ***responsive government services***, both human (schools, health, recreational and cultural services) and the utilities infrastructure, as appropriate to community scale; and
- Effective ***linkages***, including transportation choices, to enable residents and workers of one neighbourhood to easily access facilities and services elsewhere.

The plan also presumes that these three aspects are complemented by other measures to achieve overall sustainability.



2.1 Ensuring that New Developments Foster Completeness

The jobs to labour force ratio represents the proportion of jobs in the City to the workers who live in the City.

Coquitlam is already reasonably complete, with a solid base of jobs, retail, services and open spaces, and a range of housing choices. The private sector plays an important role in ensuring completeness, and, as new developments occur, these should be encouraged towards appropriate locations. Of particular note are opportunities to meet future housing needs in a manner that prevents regional urban sprawl. It will also be important to encourage new employment-oriented developments that further improve Coquitlam's jobs to labour force ratio, fulfilling another dimension of completeness by providing more opportunities for people to work closer to home.

ISSUES:

Coquitlam has done well so far in ensuring a range of housing choices -not just at large, but within each of our four communities. This helps young people forming households to stay in Coquitlam, along with seniors who wish to age in place.

ENSURING COMPACTNESS AT REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS

Urban sprawl within Greater Vancouver is a key issue to be addressed through the goal of compact, complete communities concept. A threefold approach will be required to achieve this goal in a manner which maintains existing neighbourhood character and provides for increasing choice. Over the next twenty years it is anticipated that approximately one-fifth of this population growth can be accommodated within the Northeast, as acknowledged in the Northeast Coquitlam Area Plan and is consistent with the Liveable Region Strategic Plan objectives of achieving 70 percent of future growth on the Burrard Peninsula. Opportunities thus exist to respond by directing any future residential and commercial growth in other areas to existing community and neighbourhood focal points, rather than forcing new growth to locate in more remote locations outside the Growth Concentration Area. Skytrain Station areas provide particular opportunities. In addition, the potential exists for smaller scale additions to Coquitlam's inventory of affordable, ground-oriented housing through sensitive residential intensification. This two-fold approach provides for a gradual evolution and could provide useful guidance in those instances where the City is asked to consider future amendments to area and neighbourhood plans through a consultative process.

IMPROVING COQUITLAM'S OVERALL JOBS TO LABOUR FORCE BALANCE

As the number of total jobs approaches the resident labour force, the likelihood that residents will have more opportunities for working closer to home increases. Coquitlam could improve in this aspect of "completeness" by attracting additional business activities which will provide high calibre, household-supporting jobs. Care is required to ensure these activities are accommodated in a way that complements existing community assets. Ideally efforts would also focus on attracting activities whose labour needs match the skills of local residents.

RESPONSES:

OBJECTIVE 1:

To shape future development in a manner that fosters completeness within Coquitlam and its network of smaller, complete communities, and helps improve Coquitlam's overall jobs to labour force balance.

POLICIES:

- a) Encourage any major new developments to reinforce existing community and neighbourhood focal points, through appropriate planning and consultation. Place particular emphasis on Coquitlam Regional City Centre and all Skytrain and West Coast Express Station Areas. In encouraging growth, provide for varying responses of "completeness" based on the area's role in Coquitlam's urban structure, and as appropriate to local needs, character, and scale.
- b) Provide opportunities to add ground-oriented housing through sensitive infill and intensification in lower density neighbourhoods, through appropriate planning and consultation.
- c) Continue to support the complete communities goal over the longer term. As required by future demand, consider additional growth in areas anchored by uses with the potential to become focal points, such as community centres, parks and existing smaller-scale commercial uses.
- d) Attract additional business activities which will provide household-supporting jobs. Implement the policies contained in Chapter 5, A Vital Economy.



2.1.1 Comprehensive Development (CD) Zones¹

- a) The use of Comprehensive Development (CD) zones may be considered in any Land Use Designation based on the following criteria:
 - i. Large site over 2.5 hectares that includes multiple buildings and uses;
 - ii. Small sites with significant constraints;
 - iii. Multiple phases;
 - iv. Multiple uses, tenures and ownerships (i.e., multiple stratas and airspace parcels);
 - v. Significant public amenity and community benefit;
 - vi. Significant housing affordability component; and
 - vii. Complicated or unique servicing, public amenity, and design schemes that require variances, incentives and innovative approaches.

2.1.2 Comprehensive Master Plan Policies¹

- a) All development sites greater than 2.5 hectares or proposing greater than 50,000 square metres gross floor area shall require preparation of a comprehensive master plan, which is secured through a Development Agreement with the City, concurrent with rezoning. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements to the satisfaction of the City:
 - i. A site plan showing the general location and uses of all buildings, streets and public spaces;
 - ii. Density and building height ranges for each development parcel taking into consideration factors such as view line potential, shadow impacts and wind effects, and traffic and pedestrian circulation;
 - iii. Development program and site statistics, including development areas, land use mix, residential and commercial unit types;
 - iv. The appropriate zones that will be applied;
 - v. Greenways and/or green streets as appropriate;
 - vi. A public space, amenities and benefits strategy that incorporates parks, publicly-accessible open spaces and/or plazas that comprise at least 5% of the total site area and total a minimum of 0.2 hectares in size;
 - vii. Landscaping plan (including interim landscaping between phases);
 - viii. Transportation strategy for vehicles, cycling and walking, with an emphasis on supporting a pedestrian-friendly environment;
 - ix. Parking and loading strategy;
 - x. Urban Design Framework plan to detail key corridors, precincts, nodes, landmarks, gateways, streetscapes, and other public realm features and outline their design treatment;
 - xi. Public art plan;
 - xii. Sustainability Strategy;
 - xiii. Utilities servicing concept, including a storm water management plan;
 - xiv. Phasing plan; and
 - xv. Securities, as appropriate, to secure infrastructure and public benefit.

2.2 Responsive and Appropriately Located Government Services

ISSUES:

Facilities and services provided by the public sector also play a role in ensuring community completeness. A range of factors influence investments by the City and other levels of government. Where possible, priority for these investments should be given to new facilities, services and infrastructure that reinforce the centres shown in Figure 2.1.



RESPONSES:

OBJECTIVE 1:

To focus future public sector investment in a manner that continues to foster community completeness within Coquitlam.

POLICIES:

- a) Prioritize City infrastructure investments that reinforce efforts to direct future growth to those centres shown in Figure 2.1, and any areas deemed appropriate in future by the community for residential intensification.
- b) Prioritize City investments in parks, leisure and other City facilities that reinforce efforts to direct future growth to existing centres and any areas appropriate for future residential intensification.
- c) Encourage other government agencies to locate any planned new facilities in the centres shown in Figure 2.1, with emphasis on Coquitlam Regional City Centre as a preferred destination.

2.3 Improving Community Linkages

ISSUES:

A balanced multi-modal transportation system, which reduces overall reliance on single-occupant vehicle travel, is essential to ensuring the livability and completeness of Coquitlam as a whole and within its neighbourhoods. The City is committed to providing greater transportation choices within Coquitlam. Yet the City's goals for complete communities, which address broader regional goals, also depend on regional and senior governments and agencies to ensure the provision of regional transportation facilities that support the movement of people, goods and services to, from and through the City. It is also important to acknowledge Coquitlam's own role in the broader regional transportation network, which may at times pose challenges for some local objectives.

RESPONSES:

OBJECTIVE:

To develop an attractive, affordable and safe multi-modal transportation system that supports more compact, complete communities within Coquitlam, and fulfils the broader regional goal of achieving a compact metropolitan area comprised of complete communities.

POLICIES:

- a) Support continued development of the Coquitlam Regional City Centre with provision of attractive transportation services that support all modes of travel. Provide improved connections to nearby municipalities, reinforcing the attractiveness of Coquitlam Regional City Centre.
- b) Support compact, mixed-use transit-oriented developments around Skytrain Station areas (including Lougheed, Burquitlam, Falcon, Coquitlam Central/West Coast Express and stations along Pinetree Way). Integrate land use and transportation facilities that provide attractive pedestrian, bicycle, and bus access to the area.
- c) Ensure transportation supports continued success and future expansion of key commercial areas within the City. Provide attractive levels of transit service and convenient walking and cycling connections to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- d) Increase accessibility to major employment areas of the City from local and regional destinations, as well as external gateways. Achieve this through attractive transit services, roadway network connections, (including more effective access to the Provincial highway system) and support from the federal government on rail, marine and urban transportation investment issues.
- e) Recognize Coquitlam's strategic role in broader regional transportation networks. Make appropriate tradeoffs through public consultation where there are potential conflicts with local objectives.

2.3.1 Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)¹

ISSUES:

Ideal Transit-Oriented Development places public transit at the heart or center of a neighbourhood providing local residents and commuters with the option of walking to a public transit station without the intermediate step of driving or riding in an automobile. A Transit-Oriented neighbourhood encompasses a vibrant pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use precinct that still accommodates the automobile, but is not dominated by it – the pedestrian, not the automobile, is given prime consideration when setting down the fundamentals of ‘community’. These policies should be adhered to in both the planning of Commercial Village Centres within Neighbourhood Plans and the review of development proposals by their reference to the following TOD policies.

RESPONSES:

OBJECTIVE:

To develop Transit-Oriented Commercial Village Centres that offer multi-modal transportation choices featuring transit-, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly street design, but also accommodate vehicular access.

POLICIES:

- a) Create a distinct Village Centre featuring a multi-modal transportation hub and strong civic identity through urban parks and squares.
- b) Provide an interconnected street network throughout the neighbourhood to facilitate ease of walking and cycling and to enable a more efficient use of infrastructure.
- c) Achieve tree-lined, safe, pedestrian-friendly streets (i.e. buildings close to the street with windows, doors, and porches of commercial, institutional, and residential uses oriented towards the street).
- d) Provide compact development that contains a range of uses at medium to high densities within a ten-minute walk or a 400 metre radius from the multi-modal transit hub.



Transit-Oriented Development planning objectives can be summed up in a single word – connections.

*‘First, they try to connect the streets into a network so that people can readily reach other sections of their neighborhood or town. Second, they try to connect residents to shops and services by encouraging retail and institutional development within walking distance of where people live. Third, they try to connect individuals to one another by insisting that walkways be sociable – usually running alongside narrow streets, rows of trees, picket fences, and front porches, balconies, terraces, or other inviting exterior elements of houses. Fourth, they try to bridge the divide of age, household size and economic status by mixing together homes and apartments of assorted sizes and prices. Fifth, they try to connect the new developments to mass transit. Sixth, they try to connect individuals to civic ideals and public responsibilities.’
P. Langdon, A Better Place to Live, U Mass Press, 1994.*

2.3.2 SkyTrain Guideway Integration Policies¹

The SkyTrain guideway is a significant piece of transportation infrastructure and developments proposed at sites adjacent to the guideway require an appropriate design response. The elevated guideway also provides opportunities to enhance street-level public space in the neighbourhood.

Policies:

- a) Encourage the improvement of public space under the guideway in a way that integrates with the North Road and Clarke Road enhancements, animating this space and improving natural surveillance. This space should contribute to a positive pedestrian experience with appropriate lighting and clear sightlines to the street.
- b) New commercial uses fronting the guideway should be designed to create active edges that are highly integrated with areas under the guideway and visible from the adjacent street. This should be a seamless and complementary connection.
- c) Development fronting the SkyTrain guideway shall incorporate measures to mitigate noise impacts and allow the housing units to meet Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) guidelines for maximum acceptable levels of noise in dwellings. These measures may include:
 - i. **Sensitive site and building design:** placing noise sensitive rooms away from noise sources; locating hallways, stairwells and utility areas closer to noise sources; and using single-loaded building design;
 - ii. **Improving building construction:** triple-glazed windows; additional wall insulation; locating vents and ducts away from noise sources; alternative ventilation systems; sound dampening or absorptive walls and cladding materials; and concrete construction; and
 - iii. **Noise buffers:** solid glazed balconies; fences; sound absorptive landscaping; and water features.