

**The tensions between state control and local
autonomy: can collaborative planning practice align
local with regional strategic planning outcomes?**

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under the supervision of Professor Heather MacDonald and
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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, **Neil Frederick Selmon** declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy (C02001), in the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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Abstract

This research explores the factors that facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having influence on, regional strategic plans. In particular the research investigates how collaborative planning practice can contribute to reaching agreements about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes.

Case studies of practice in preparing and aligning local and regional plans in two comparable city-regions, Vancouver BC Canada and Sydney NSW Australia, provide empirical evidence to fill an identified gap in theoretical and practical understanding of the shifting variables that have made different configurations of collaboration and governance work well or not, in different places at different times.

A set of anticipated explanatory factors is developed, the manifestation of which, in different configurations in the two case study cities, may explain how local strategic planning outcomes have made their way up to, and had influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes, or not. A thematic, interpretive analysis of documentary and interview data is undertaken against these factors, and the findings from the case study cities compared. This approach provides situated and contextualised explanations of practice to answer three key questions:

1. Why is it important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies?
2. What factors facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being aligned with regional strategies?
3. Under what circumstances can collaborative planning practice align local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes?

This is exploratory, comparative case study research about planning practice in the case study cities. It does not seek to adjust the theoretical framework, rather analyses the case study data to identify areas where practice indicates theory may need more grounding, where claims made for collaborative planning are less well grounded, and where claims are more solidly reflected in practice.

In the context of ongoing neoliberal planning system reform, the research provides useful comparison of two jurisdictions facing similar planning problems, and addressing them through similar planning legislation, producing similar planning documents. They occupy similar political-economic positions and have experienced similar growth (and growth tensions) as they have each consolidated their position as second-ranked global centres on the Pacific Rim. Nevertheless, significant differences emerge in their approaches to planning for similar challenges, and these are reflected in the different roles for and manifestation of collaborative planning processes.

This comparison identifies approaches that might strengthen the consonance between local and regional strategic planning, providing opportunities for governments and institutions to combine some measure of local democracy and autonomy with coherent and deliverable metropolitan and regional planning frameworks. Areas of further research to enrich our understanding of the circumstances under which collaborative planning practice can be effective in aligning local with regional strategic planning outcomes are suggested.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Aim

This research investigates the factors that facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having influence on, regional strategic plans. In particular the research investigates how collaborative planning practice can contribute to reaching agreements about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes.

Alignment of local strategic planning outcomes with wider metropolitan/regional strategic planning outcomes is a requirement of planning frameworks in many jurisdictions. How this is achieved and with what success appears to vary considerably despite the similarities inherent in hierarchical planning frameworks established to address similar urban planning problems.

How governments approach alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes matters. It matters because those approaches will affect what kinds of agreements will be reached between levels of government about growth and development. What is the balance between state control and local autonomy in reaching those agreements about how and where growth will occur at the local level? How does that balance shape governance arrangements over time, and understandings of ‘who and what we are planning for’? How is power constructed and redistributed? How is ‘rationality’ defined? Are local strategic planning concerns reflected in regional plans – and why might it be important that they are?

In some jurisdictions, alignment of local and regional strategic plans is the source of considerable and ongoing tension between state control and local autonomy. This tension sometimes results in the planning system itself being seen as ‘the problem’, being blamed for preventing the development necessary to accommodate growth and fuel national and state economies as it is simultaneously blamed for permitting inappropriate development that destroys local character and adversely impacts the amenity and liveability of localities and city-regions generally - simultaneously criticized for being too pro-growth and too-anti-growth (Campbell, Tait and Watkins, 2014, p.46).

In Australia and other western democracies planning systems and urban politics may be seen as instruments of evolving neoliberal strategies of governance. Neoliberalism has been the driver of seemingly continuous reform of planning systems in Australia and other western democracies (Campbell, Tait and Watkins, 2014; Gurran and Phibbs, 2013; Ruming and Gurran, 2014).

Concurrently, recent decades have seen collaborative planning become mainstream in planning theory and practice, and participatory local democratic practices are often extolled as a central and fundamental tenet of neoliberal reform agendas. While many agree that collaborative planning has become a dominant paradigm in urban planning theory (see

Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 2002; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, for example) they do not agree how effective it may be in practice. Much of the literature discusses collaborative planning in the context of various overarching neoliberal governing strategies, most often describing those strategies as reasons why collaborative planning cannot work in practice.

Despite these criticisms, and a significant literature identifying the “cracks within collaborative planning” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007), arguments for why we should plan collaboratively remain persuasive, and it has “become the mainstream” in how we understand, teach and practice planning (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, p.90). Brand and Gaffikin seek to “expose the concept of collaborative planning to the reality of planning, thereby assessing its efficacy for informing and explaining what planners ‘really’ do and can do.” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p. 282). This ‘reality’ is the fact that planning systems generally and collaborative planning processes specifically operate within a political framework; a wider political economy of urban governance. Here, there are many factors at play: legislated, hierarchical planning frameworks; entrenched power relations; institutionalised governance structures, processes and rationalities; and increasingly, governments depending on city-regions as drivers of the state economy.

There is, however, a lack of empirical evidence about this “wider context of urban governance” (Mason, 2007, p.2380) – of the particular and situated practices of planning and the shifting factors that have led to their relative success or failure in different places at different times (see also Kahane et al, 2013; Healey, 2006; Mason, 2007; Agger and Löfgren, 2008; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

This research provides empirical evidence to fill that gap. It explores a range of ‘anticipated explanatory factors’ that may facilitate or impede effective alignment of local strategic plans with regional strategic plans. It does so through case studies of situated practices of strategic planning in two cities, Vancouver, British Columbia (BC) Canada and Sydney, New South Wales (NSW) Australia.

The aim of the research is to explore how collaboration is enacted (or not) in practice; to better understand the situated manifestation of factors that facilitate or impede effective alignment of local and regional strategic plans; to better understand the effectiveness of collaborative planning, in situated practice, in reaching agreements about those alignments; and to identify approaches that might strengthen the consonance between local and regional strategic planning, providing opportunities for governments and institutions to combine some measure of local democracy and autonomy with coherent and deliverable regional strategic planning frameworks.

1.2 Framing the research problem

In practice, the collaborative planning paradigm dominates, while evolving economic, environmental and social conditions have created different kinds of problems that cannot be resolved through state planning or market action alone. A deeper understanding of the factors underlying the successes and failures of situated planning practice may better equip practitioners and theorists to evolve planning systems that can deal with the diverse needs and interests of governments, markets and communities. From a practical perspective, empirical analysis leading to an understanding of the shifting variables and particular ‘politics of place’ (Healey, 2006, p. 240) may identify opportunities for governments and institutions to better integrate the social, intellectual and political capital that can be generated by effective local collaborative action into acceptable and resilient meta-governance configurations. This understanding may identify the challenges and opportunities, in different contexts, that can assist evolution of configurations that combine some measure of local democracy and autonomy with coherent and deliverable metropolitan and regional planning frameworks.

The questions investigated here have emerged out of a sharply contested effort to reconfigure planning in NSW. The NSW state election in March 2011 saw planning system reform become a key election issue. The largest swing in NSW election history against a sitting government saw a conservative government elected on a promise of introducing an entirely new planning system in its first term. In promoting its draft planning legislation to communities, the State Government pledged that the new system would be more collaborative, a system where ‘everyone gets a say’ (Hazzard, 2013). It pointed to places like Seattle, Portland and Vancouver, where collaborative approaches had been very successful in reaching agreements about growth in the past (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2012, p.23).

To provide support for its proposals for a new planning system the NSW State Government invited internationally recognised planners to speak at agency and community events that I was able to attend as a planning practitioner. One of those visitors was a former City Planning Director at a city council in the Greater Vancouver Region. She spoke about the collaborative planning, community engagement and decision-making processes that had achieved success in reaching agreements about accommodating growth in Vancouver – but warned about attempting to transfer these directly to the Sydney situation, as ‘different factors were at play’.

This sparked my research interest in delving more deeply into exactly what the different factors had been over time in Vancouver as compared to Sydney. What were those factors that had led to agreements being reached between communities, local governments and state agencies about accommodating growth in Vancouver? Why might those factors not be evident in Sydney, or be different? How important is the context within which the factors are manifested?

Patsy Healey has been one of the most prominent theorists arguing for the potential benefits of collaborative planning practice. She agrees that modes of governance are the product of local contingencies and that an understanding of the ‘politics of place’ is essential. “This involves contextualising specific practices, in terms of both their local contingencies and broader structuring dynamics” (Healey, 2006, p.240). Mason, in concluding his article ‘Collaborative partnerships for urban development: a study of the Vancouver Agreement’ agrees, saying that further research on initiatives such as that agreement for Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside “could usefully dwell on exogenous variables: notably, the location of the initiative within a wider political economy of urban governance” (Mason, 2007, p. 2380). Innes and Booher, describing the praxis of collaboration in their book *Planning With Complexity* discuss, as some of the ‘necessary conditions for successful policy dialogues’ (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.89) an incentive structure, leaders and sponsors, inclusionary decision making, a negotiated text and evolving agreement, adaptiveness, and authentic dialogue.

Innes and Booher and many other commentators (see Chapter 2, Literature Review) discuss the role of power in urban planning systems and processes. Power is discussed in positive and negative terms – the potential for network power to grow through collaborative planning processes and the ‘inevitability’ of any agreements emanating from collaborative processes being controlled or undone by entrenched socio-political power structures. Exogenous factors that may affect alignment of local and regional strategic plans may include entrenched systems for the distribution of resources. The problems faced by state and local governments in planning for regional growth are often exacerbated by a range of resource distribution issues somewhat external to the planning system, but directly impacting it. Taxation systems and infrastructure funding arrangements can drive certain approaches to strategic planning and increase horizontal and vertical competition between the levels of government.

From consideration of all of these sources, and from my own experience as a planning practitioner in the NSW planning system, I developed a set of ‘anticipated explanatory factors’ that might facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes having influence on regional strategic planning outcomes and these are set out in Table 1. Chapter 2 provides further explanation and justification for selection of these anticipated explanatory factors.

Table 1: Anticipated explanatory factors

Factor	Component theme
1. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of regional planning and cooperation• Legislative framework• Structure and culture
2. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal power• Network power• Political champions and visionary leaders
3. Rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicative vs instrumental• Joint problem definition• Joint decision making• Capacity building and joint learning
4. Approaches to strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visionary vs regulatory• Deal-making cities vs plan-making cities• Top-down vs bottom-up

I explored these anticipated factors through an in-depth comparison of the two case studies.

1.3 Case study comparability

The case study cities face similar planning problems and address them through similar planning legislation, producing similar planning documents, and with the state/province having similar powers to over-ride local plans. They occupy similar political-economic positions, and have experienced similar growth (and growth tensions) as they have each consolidated their position as second-ranked global centres on the Pacific Rim.

Nevertheless, significant differences have emerged in their approaches to planning for similar challenges, and these are reflected in the different roles for and manifestation of collaborative planning processes.

Greater Sydney Region

In Sydney, the State Government's efforts to deliver on its 2011 election commitment of a new planning system for NSW set out a relatively rigid and hierarchical system of state and local plans, with each successive layer required to give effect to the higher level plans.

During consultation and parliamentary debates concerns were raised by the community and by opposition parties that this hierarchical framework and the limits it would impose on the scope of local level plans were inconsistent with the government's rhetoric of "handing local planning powers back to local communities" and promises for a new era of up-front community and stakeholder engagement in plan preparation. Putting "the community first" while putting "NSW back in business" (Hazzard 2013) did not sit comfortably together for many stakeholders. The Upper House of the NSW Parliament would not pass the draft *Planning Bill 2013*.

This and other ‘about-turns’ the NSW government has had to make in its attempts to implement state and regional planning imperatives through local government planning processes and plans, are reflective of what many see as a distinct imbalance between state control and local autonomy in Greater Sydney and in NSW more generally in achieving alignment of local and regional strategic plans. Key stakeholders, including the State Government itself, have described the NSW planning system as ‘combative’ (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013).

In the face of such tension between state and local governments, achieving coherent and deliverable regional planning strategies grows increasingly important as cities like Sydney expand, becoming more diverse and complex. Historically fragmented metropolitan areas provide challenges for implementation of regional strategies that address planning problems that transgress local government boundaries.

In Sydney recent decades have seen regular and vocal resistance to growth, with local councils and communities claiming ‘over development’ and lack of supporting infrastructure is destroying the character and amenity of their localities, as successive regional growth strategies have been rolled out. The regional ‘public good’ espoused by state and regional planning authorities through regional strategic plans appears be at odds with perceptions of the public good as articulated at the local level.

The rhetoric of successive planning system reform agendas in NSW has claimed to be “handing local planning powers back to local communities” (Hazzard, 2013; Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013), a not-too-subtle admission that planning powers continue to be centralised though continued efforts to over-ride decision-making powers of local councils, shoring up Ministerial powers and those of agencies such as the Greater Sydney Commission.

The establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission, during the period over which this study was conducted, was the most explicit attempt by the NSW State government to address these tensions between state control and local autonomy. Announced in December 2014 within a new regional plan for Greater Sydney, *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, the Greater Sydney Commission was to drive implementation of the plan, “working with councils and state agencies to ensure that growth is aligned with infrastructure and delivered in the right places at the right time” (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013, p.18). Its eventual commencement in January 2016 ended many years of calls by the planning profession and the development industry for new metropolitan governance arrangements that could coordinate growth and infrastructure planning across (then) 41 local government areas. However, it was immediately tasked with preparing yet another new regional plan in the first 12 months of its operation.

The short time frame for preparation of a new regional plan for a rapidly growing Greater Sydney Region raised questions about how closely the new agency would be able to work

with local councils to reach agreements about where and how growth would occur. The State Government had promised a new planning system that would, through extensive community participation and through agencies, councils and communities working together, move from combative to collaborative. This change would “radically depart from previous practices where strategic plans were imposed, leaving the community disengaged and concerned by directions for growth” (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013, p.25).

Significantly the Greater Sydney Commission commenced operations one month after the NSW State Government announced forced amalgamations of local councils in NSW, in December 2015 (Blayden, 2017). The government proposed reducing the total number of councils in NSW from 152 to 112; in the Greater Sydney region from 41 to 25 local councils. The constitution and membership of the Greater Sydney Commission through the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* was shaped by these events. There are no elected representatives on the Board of the Commission or on any of its committees. The nine Commissioners are appointed directly by the Minister for Planning.

The Greater Sydney Commission therefore commenced its work at a time of considerable tension between state control and local autonomy, with the state threatening the very existence of many Greater Sydney councils.

This study explores the contextualised nature of the engagement undertaken with councils in preparation of regional strategies and alignment of local plans, and evaluates how collaborative these processes have been compared to similar processes in the Greater Vancouver Region.

Recent statements from the NSW State Government suggest that ongoing incremental reforms, including the establishment of new governance arrangements, have not delivered what it needs from the planning system. At an Australian Planning Institute conference in late 2019, the Minister for Planning set out a new vision for reform. Noting how ‘brittle’ the planning system had become, through a succession of ad hoc fixes, the Minister sought a more resilient system that would address community concerns that currently it was “neither transparent nor predictable” (Stokes, 2019). His vision was for a planning system where planners and the community could “work to co-create great places”.

Greater Vancouver Region

The Greater Vancouver Region, in contrast to Sydney, exhibits a long history of regional collaboration in aligning local and regional strategic plans. Operating under legislation originally enacted in 1965, and known from 1968 until 2007 as the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the regional authority now known as Metro Vancouver delivers a range of regional services including regional planning. This regional planning work addresses similar planning problems to those facing Sydney- rapid growth, escalating house prices, and alignment of growth and infrastructure planning and funding. As in Greater Sydney, a regional growth strategy reflects population, housing and employment projections that are incorporated into local strategic plans by local councils and finally translated into statutory land use zoning controls.

However, the way that the regional strategy is produced is quite different to the Sydney example. Differing governance arrangements, a long history of regional cooperation, and clear evidence of a communicative rationality in approaches to strategic planning have produced regional plans that are agreed with by the local governments they apply to, and are implemented by those local governments who feel ownership of their guiding principles and directions. The regional plans are resilient. Decision-making processes are more transparent, and outcomes at the local level better understood and more predictable. While the State Government in NSW has increased and used its powers to override local strategic planning outcomes on a regular basis, Provincial powers to over-ride local plans in Greater Vancouver have never been used.

A notable difference between the case study cities is the long history of regional cooperation around regional planning. Metro Vancouver and the regional district system has existed in one form or another for over 50 years, but voluntary cooperation and upward delegation by the 23 local authorities that are members of Metro Vancouver has existed since the early part of the 20th century, and regional planning boards established through 1948 amendments to the *Town Planning Act 1925*. The Metro Vancouver webpage refers to its communities having “cooperated in the development and delivery of services essential to our growing region” since 1886 (Metro Vancouver, 2020).

Governance structure and culture appears to have been fundamental to the success and longevity of Metro Vancouver. The Greater Vancouver Regional District is governed by a Board of Directors of elected officials from each of the 23 local authorities. The Regional Planning Committee which makes regional planning decisions for endorsement by the overarching Board comprises 12 Mayors and elected representatives from the region’s local authorities. This federated structure has fostered and supported joint-problem definition, joint learning, and joint decision-making among Metro Vancouver members. Political buy-in to processes and outcomes is assured, with the case study data providing clear explanations for why stakeholders work hard to reach agreements and keep collaborative approaches alive.

This study reveals that there is considerable thought given to the distinction between a local planning concern and a regional planning concern. This consideration shapes decisions made by the Regional Planning Committee and Metro Vancouver Board. Different approaches and levels of collaboration by actors at different times in the history of development of regional plans at the Metro Vancouver authority have directly shaped the content and level of detail prescribed in the regional plan itself.

The successful regional governance approaches maintained in Greater Vancouver may have contributed to a political landscape in the BC Province where local government does not appear to have been ‘under attack’ as it appears to have been in the case of Greater Sydney. While the *British Columbia Local Government Act 2015* (BCLG Act) includes principles that include the fostering of “cooperative relations between the Provincial government and regional districts” (section 186 BCLG 2015) this has not stopped the Provincial Government from investigating municipal amalgamations in the Capital Regional District on Vancouver Island, home of the provincial capital city, Victoria. The Fraser Institute, an independent Canadian-based think tank, published a report in March 2016 recommending that refining the regional district system of governance in the Capital Regional District would likely produce better results, socially and fiscally, than amalgamations, based on the experience of other BC region such as the Greater Vancouver Region (Bish and Filipowicz, 2016).

This is not to say that there are not tensions in Greater Vancouver between state control and local autonomy. There have been significant disagreements, during the period of this research, about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes that have tested the resilience of both the current regional plan and the processes around its development.

A recent court case between one Greater Vancouver municipality and Metro Vancouver (Greater Vancouver (Regional District) v. Langley (Township) 2014 BCSC 414) resulted from a Chief Administrative Officer at the regional authority taking what interviewees in the Vancouver case study of this research described as an unprecedented, top-down approach to forcing the municipality to align its local plan with the regional plan (LV8, November 2016; AV4, September 2017). This damaged the long-standing collaborative relationships and resulted in a rare threat by the Province to use its powers if such disagreements were repeated. This has resulted in new management at the authority returning to a much more collaborative approach to plan making.

“The new faces in Metro Vancouver, from the CAO down, are all of a collaborative mind, and are now working to repair the relationships” (MV1, July 2015).

The ramifications of this court case for the local and regional government actors, how they perceive their working relationships, and how regional plans are implemented in the context of state control versus local autonomy are discussed in greater detail through the case study analyses in later Chapters.

Comparability summary

The selected cities provide an interesting case study comparison. The parallel histories of Vancouver and Sydney describe cities facing similar planning problems. These parallel histories are described in greater detail in Chapter 4, Comparative History of Regional Planning.

Planning problems are addressed through similar planning legislation and the production of similar planning documents. The cities have experienced similar growth and growth tensions.

Nevertheless, significant differences have emerged in their approaches to planning for similar challenges, and these are reflected in the different roles for and manifestation of collaborative planning processes.

Tensions exist between state control and local autonomy in both jurisdictions, but those tensions are manifested and dealt with quite differently. Historically the question of aligning local with regional strategic plans has been strongly contested in Greater Sydney, with the state using its substantial powers to override local plans in a number of legislative and administrative ways.

In contrast, exertion of power from the Province in Greater Vancouver has been, for the most part, much more subtle. Local governments have continued to participate in collaborative planning processes, and have continued to work hard to reach agreements about where and how growth occurs, in the regional interest. In this way, they ‘keep the Province at bay’, maintaining control over a wider range and depth of local planning decisions than their Greater Sydney counterparts. While differing taxation and revenue raising systems play a part in Greater Vancouver municipalities maintaining a greater level of autonomy over local planning decisions than their Greater Sydney counterparts, the governance structure and culture of the regional planning authority appears key to this. It allows joint problem definition, joint learning and joint decision-making that, over a relatively long history of cooperation, have mediated the tensions between state control and local autonomy. Municipalities describe the regional strategic plan as a ‘collection of local strategic plans’ (LV6, April, 2016; LV2, November, 2016).

Greater Sydney councils by contrast describe top-down processes that have ignored or overridden the detailed local strategic planning they have undertaken. They see this as a ‘lost opportunity’ for the State Government and its planning agencies. The relatively new regional planning authority, the Greater Sydney Commission, despite promises of a new collaborative approach to coordination of growth and infrastructure planning, has either not been able to, or not been permitted to, achieve this. Interventions by its counterpart, the Department of Planningⁱ, in identifying and taking over the planning of ‘priority precincts’, the power of the Planning Minister to make local plans against the wishes of local councils,

and the tight time frames it is given to prepare and review plans, do not allow for the kind of communicative action evidenced in Greater Vancouver.

The aim of the research is to explore, better understand and explain these differences. It does so through the research questions set out in the following section. In exploring the case study data, it emerges that there are some clear explanations for the historical differences in approach to regional strategic planning in the two cities. In analysing these differences, more questions arise. Is there opportunity for approaches to change? Is it important that local strategic planning outcomes are reflected in regional strategic outcomes, and why?

1.4 Research questions

The research questions investigate the impact of these contextual similarities and differences on mediating the tensions between state control and local autonomy. The rationale for these lines of enquiry is further developed and explained in Chapter 2, the Literature Review.

The principal question this study addresses is:

Under what circumstances can collaborative planning practice align local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes?

To reach my conclusions about this question, I investigate two supporting questions:

What factors facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being aligned with regional strategies?

To answer this question, I use in-depth interview data and document analysis to explore the impacts of the anticipated explanatory factors listed in Table 1.

Why is it important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies?

This question is explored through the literature review and the in-depth interviews with planning practitioners and elected officials in the two case study cities.

1.5 Research contribution

This study uses qualitative research methods to explore the tensions between state control and local autonomy through consideration of the relationship between local strategic planning outcomes and regional strategic planning outcomes. It does this predominantly through comparative case studies of planning practice in two cities, aimed at identifying the factors that facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having any influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes.

From a theoretical perspective, the research is important because it bridges an identified gap between theory and an understanding of practical applications of collaborative planning practice. A number of authors have argued that while there has been a significant amount of research into the processes and outcomes of specific collaborative episodes, little has focused on contextualising them in the wider political economy of the place, and less still on identifying the opportunities for change that link specific sites and practices to wider relations of power and changes in governance process and culture (Kahane et al, 2013; Healey, 2006; Mason, 2007; Agger and Löfgren, 2008, Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

“What is missing is analysis directed at understanding opportunities for change that link specific sites and practices to wider relations of power. And, we argue, to be effective, these analyses need to be linked to the objects of planning – that is, spatial processes, land development, the built environment. Research needs to demonstrate the specific effects of planning practices rather than starting from theoretical normative assumptions about the ends of those practices” (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000, p. 337)

The research provides an empirically grounded evaluation of practice in two contrasting settings, to fill that gap.

The study provides clear evidence that our understanding of the successes and failures of approaches to strategic planning must be contextualised if it is to be useful. An understanding of situated practices of planning may explain why some aspects of planning work which are firmly institutionalised in some jurisdictions, are difficult to introduce in other jurisdictions. The study also, as Healey suggests, identifies “windows of opportunity” for governments and institutions to introduce approaches that might strengthen the consonance between local and regional strategic planning, combining some measure of local democracy and autonomy with deliverable metropolitan and regional planning frameworks.

1.6 Structure of thesis

The remainder of the thesis is structured in the following manner:

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The literature provides the theoretical base from which I have sourced the four anticipated explanatory factors – governance, power, rationality and approaches to strategic planning – that are explored through in-depth comparison of my two case studies. The discussion around these factors provides the framework within which the explanatory case studies are analysed in following chapters.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Design

This chapter describes the methodological approach adopted, the rationale for its design and components, and their use in the research.

Chapter 4 Setting the scene - regional planning and governance in the Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney regions

This chapter explores the planning systems in British Columbia, Canada, and NSW, Australia, as they relate to the Greater Vancouver Regional District and Greater Sydney Regionⁱⁱ respectively. It describes the history and origins of regional cooperation and collaboration in the two places, and the ways that these beginnings have shaped regional planning processes and the relationship between state, regional and local authorities over many decades. It provides a brief historical account of the institutions and legislation that have shaped regional planning processes in both jurisdictions.

Chapter 5 Greater Vancouver Case Study

This Chapter delves deeper into the ‘how’ of local and regional strategic planning in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. It describes the data that has been obtained through document analysis and from in-depth interviews undertaken in Vancouver.

Chapter 6 Greater Sydney Case Study

This Chapter delves deeper into the ‘how’ of local and regional strategic planning in the Greater Sydney Region. It describes the data that has been obtained through autoethnography, document analysis and from in-depth interviews undertaken in Sydney.

Chapter 7 Comparative Analysis

This chapter presents the comparative analysis of findings from the case study investigations in Vancouver BC Canada and Sydney NSW Australia. The chapter firstly directly compares the findings from Sydney and Vancouver and then presents an analysis of those findings in terms of the key research questions.

Chapter 8 Conclusions, Limitations and Further Research

This chapter summarises the key findings and conclusions from the case study research. It describes how the research contributes to our understanding of collaborative planning practice in context. The chapter reflects on the chosen anticipated explanatory factors and their efficacy in explaining how planning is done in the case study cities, how local and strategic planning outcomes are aligned, and how tensions between state control and local autonomy manifest themselves in the cities.

Chapter 8 also describes the limitations of the research and potential areas of further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter 1 describes the research aim of this study, framing the central research question “*can collaborative planning practice align local with regional strategic planning outcomes*” within a wider context of urban governance where a range of factors may facilitate or impede alignment of plans, shape approaches to strategic planning more generally, and explain the tensions in the shifting balance between state control and local autonomy.

This chapter explores the literature around these themes, as relevant to local and regional strategic planning outcomes, first discussing neoliberal governing strategies and planning system reform. Neoliberal strategies exacerbate tensions between state control and local autonomy. Planning reform has been pursued to advance neoliberal strategies (to ‘cut red tape’ and streamline development for instance) and several reform initiatives aim to strengthen state control and undermine local autonomy.

The chapter then moves to the rise and claimed ‘dominance’ of collaborative planning in the field of planning theory and practice, discussing the claims made for collaborative planning, and explaining why collaborative planning practice has emerged as a dominant paradigm. The major claims are that through inclusionary dialogue and shared understanding of planning problems and potential solutions, collaborative planning might build trust and mediate tensions. I investigate the theoretical context which underpins collaborative planning, and the critiques formulated within this context. I then explore common critiques of collaborative planning. These critiques essentially challenge the claims made, suggesting that collaborative planning episodes privilege communication at the expense of its wider social and economic contexts. Critics question whether collaborative planning episodes can move beyond the local and influence the regional context, in what is essentially an uncollaborative, neoliberal world (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p.283).

The literature provides the theoretical base from which I have sourced the four anticipated explanatory factors – governance, power, rationality and approaches to strategic planning – that are explored through in-depth comparison of my two case studies. The discussion around these factors provides the framework within which the explanatory case studies are analysed in following chapters.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the research gap that the literature review has identified and that this research and thesis fills.

2.1 Neoliberal governing strategies and planning system reform

There is a widely held view that since the 1980s planning systems have been gradually neoliberalised to be more facilitative of market interests over societal interests (Murphy and Fox-Rogers, 2014; Campbell, Tait and Watkins, 2014, MacLaren and Kelly, 2014).

The term ‘neoliberalism’ describes economic liberalisation policies of open markets, free trade, privatisation, deregulation and reductions in government intervention and spending to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy. Neoliberalism promotes market-led economic and social restructuring (Jessop, 2002, p. 461).

There is a significant literature linking neoliberalism and planning system reform, with suggestions that rolling reforms have seen planning as the last area of public policy to fall victim to the deregulatory impulse of the neoliberal project, and that neoliberalism may well ‘be everywhere’ (Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014). However, in making these observations the same commentators recognise that in the transition from land-use planning to strategic planning (that many jurisdictions have witnessed) planning regulation has been particularly resilient. Rather than radically changing the balance of power between state control and local autonomy, state-led reforms have more been constant and represent piecemeal tinkering rather than wholesale reform (Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014, p.355).

Others suggest that much of the critical neoliberalism literature has become imprecise and over-reaching (Storper, 2016). Storper suggests that much of the literature has failed to understand classical liberalism, which is concerned with the appropriate mix of state and market and with income distribution. He further contends that the literature:

confuse(s) a mid-twentieth-century movement to revive liberalism (i.e. appropriately-labelled neo-liberalism) with a late-twentieth century to radicalize and deform liberalism into either laissez faire doctrine or plutocratic authoritarianism, a sort of oligarchic doctrine. (Storper, 2016, p.37).

Rather than producing actual ‘neo-liberal’ or deregulated, laissez-faire cities, Storper suggests that ongoing planning reforms produced cities that continue to be heavily regulated with regard to land-use and housing – cities that have liberal economies but highly regulatory planning systems (Storper, 2016, p. 29).

As a concept in the literature, ‘neoliberalism’ may have swept quite spatially and politically disparate practices into an over-reaching and overarching phenomenon that ‘explains everything’. Critics of that view say that it doesn’t, but that there is little doubt that planning reforms in some jurisdictions “are entirely consistent with the neoliberal ends of creating spaces within which market principles can flourish” (Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2016, p.356). Markets ‘need’ planning to deal with issues around how land is priced and allocated, and the fixed relationship between powerful land owners and development rights (Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2016).

Olesen and Carter (2018, p.691) describe an historical shift from managerial to entrepreneurial urban governance, “whereby city authorities and other actors attempt to attract economic growth to their city, rather than focusing on managing the effects of growth”. They describe this shift from managerial to entrepreneurial governance as “the

process by which the political-economic ideology of neoliberalism becomes increasingly hegemonic in planning" (Olesen and Carter, 2018, p.691).

It was a noticeable shift in 'what we are planning for' in NSW that was one of the motivators for undertaking this research, as successive regional plans for the Greater Sydney Region emphasised the need to plan for economic growth. Therefore the usefulness of relating neoliberal governing strategies and planning system reform for this research is in using neoliberalism as an analytical category through which to explain the trajectory of ongoing reforms I discuss, a number of which are related to economic growth and a revenue-raising pre-occupation of the state and how that might conflict with non-fiscal concerns, for example social and environmental concerns, at the local level.

Cities are increasingly regarded as drivers of economic growth and global competitiveness (COAG, 2012, Jessop, 2002, p.465, Olesen and Carter 2018) and planning regulation often seen as blocks to both. There is concurrently a strong emphasis on partnerships and networks, rather than top-down national government (Jessop, 2002, p. 466) which is reflected in much of the recent rhetoric around planning reform in NSW and in other jurisdictions. Of interest too is that neoliberalism, and the ongoing planning system reform that it seems to result in, is not a partisan phenomenon in itself, but is used to reflect changing political and economic priorities, often coinciding with the electoral cycle.

Planning systems are increasingly identified as 'the problem' in challenging economic times. They are seen as too rigid and inflexible, with planning rules stifling competition and tight zoning controls being unresponsive to rapidly changing markets (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2012, pp. 13-16).

The response of neoliberal governments has been ongoing attempts to unclutter regulatory systems, free the market and make for speedier and cheaper development decision-making processes (Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2016, Campbell et al, 2014).

Planning reform as a strategy of neoliberalism

Planning system reform in Australia and similar western democracies has evolved in an era of neoliberal economic reform. In many jurisdictions this has resulted in ongoing reform of planning systems, as governments attempt to find an acceptable balance in the 'meta-governance mix' of hierarchy, markets and governance networks (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p.180).

In the case of NSW this has resulted in one recent State Government led reform agenda claiming that "the main purpose of the planning system is to promote economic growth and development in NSW for the benefit of the entire community, while protecting the environment and enhancing people's way of life" (Department of Planning and Infrastructure 2013).

It appears this is not an unusual trajectory for planning system reform in western democracies. In their paper '*That sounds familiar! A decade of planning reform in Australia, England and New Zealand*', Gurran, Austin and Whitehead (2014, p.196) note striking similarities in the diagnoses of planning problems and prescribed solutions. The English 'presumption in favour' of sustainable development has translated as a presumption in favour of 'development' in Australia and an elevation of 'economic growth and employment outcomes' above the objectives of sustainable management in New Zealand.

The call from the NSW State Government has been to replace legislation that has "become too complex and difficult to navigate" with modern legislation – a "new world class planning system" that will "achieve our common goal of making NSW number one" (NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013, p. 12).

This history of reform mirrors what has occurred in the UK in recent decades, with several reforms of planning and procedures, even by the same government, all premised on the need to make that country more economically competitive (Campbell et al, 2014, p. 46; Inch, 2012, p. 512; Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2016). The UK reforms have been based on the same 'necessity' of transforming an inflexible system, making it more efficient and responsive to changing needs of the economy and communities. David Cameron, former British Prime Minister, said in September 2012 when announcing further regulatory reduction:

"We're determined to cut through the bureaucracy that holds us back. That starts with getting planners off our backs. Getting behind the businesses that have the ambition to expand, and meeting the aspirations of families that want to buy or improve a house".

The similarities between these two examples, in both the justification for change and the methods by which it should be achieved, should not be a surprise. These are the hallmarks of neoliberalism - deregulation of development assessment and approval systems to stimulate growth for 'the benefit of all'. Indeed some, including Allmendinger and Haughton (2013, p. 6), describe planning and its ongoing reform as "a form of, or contributor to, neoliberal spatial governance". Seen through the lens of neoliberal discourse "which disparages the effectiveness of public intervention and celebrates the efficiency and even morality of markets" (Campbell et al 2014, p. 45), market freedom through reduction in regulation combined with the argument that economic growth is synonymous with the public interest is to be expected. Allmendinger and Haughton see "a planning system regularly though fruitlessly searching for the perfect market supportive scalar and institutional fix" (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2013, p.10).

In both the NSW and UK examples, incoming governments have claimed they are reforming the planning system to replace the misguided systems of their predecessors. Despite these claims, and regardless of party affiliation, the successive reforms have a familiarity about

them. The NSW White Paper described the proposed new planning system as “transformative change”. Ruming and Davies (2014, p. 2) in their recent review of NSW Planning reforms over the past decade have described the change as not so much revolutionary as evolutionary.

This assessment reflects similar reviews in the UK that have been sceptical about just how radical each change in approach over the last twenty years has actually been (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2013, p. 2). In that country some commentators have described successive policy shifts as little more than superficial change revealing apparently “eternal optimism, despite repeated failure” (Shaw and Robinson, 2010, p.140). Haughton and Allmendinger (2013, p. 1) refer to “a pattern of repeated reform with various repackaged elements and arguments”.

Some suggest that these ongoing links between neoliberal competitiveness and planning outcomes represent a “dangerous obsession”, because neoliberalism itself represents an array of forms and pathways of market led restructuring, each socially, historically and spatially specific. The term ‘neoliberalisation’ is used by some (see Boland, 2014, p.771) to capture the ongoing transformation of the neoliberal project which may in turn be the catalyst for ongoing, evolutionary and incremental reform of planning systems.

Inch (2011) in an investigation of the relationships between politics and policy-making, suggests that ongoing neoliberal planning reform and its rhetoric promising sustainable development, a strong economy and empowered citizens is a governing strategy necessitated by governmental inability to confront the politics and antagonism that urban development often creates. He suggests that “ongoing systemic reform might be understood as a product of a politics of displacement”, as fundamental political conflict generated by urban development is closed down rather than opened up for debate (Inch, 2011, p. 520). Inch is one of a number of commentators who, through analysis of the rhetoric and practice of UK reform in recent decades, describe ongoing planning reform as a neoliberal tactic for defusing and managing conflict, and who question the effects of such strategies on local democracy and the legitimacy and autonomy of local governments.

Metropolitan planning as a strategy of neoliberalism

A discussion around metropolitan planning (or regional planning as it is referred to in the two case study cities this research investigates) in city-regions that are fragmented into multiple local government areas is in large part a discussion about multi-level governance. The concept of multi-level governance refers to a particular kind of relationship, both vertically and horizontally, between several institutional levels. At a conceptual level, multi-level governance theory argues that although local authorities are embedded in regional and national webs of rules, resources, and patterns of coordination, and despite hierarchical models of intergovernmental relationships, lower level institutions are not necessarily

constrained by the actions and decisions of the higher-level institutions (Peters and Pierre, 2004, p.79).

In practice however, governance arrangements operate ‘in the shadow’ of hierarchical structures (Jessop, 2004), where the state is usually the most powerful actor, setting the broad parameters and limitations within which negotiations are undertaken and in which the market and networks operate. The question is then what the role of levels of government is in multi-level governance arrangements and what strategies the state might use to retain control. A model where local authorities can act with relative autonomy can challenge the authority of the state.

Changing the way regional strategic planning is undertaken is one such strategy that neoliberal governments might use to retain control, even as the rhetoric around planning reform suggests they are ‘handing local planning powers back to local councils’ (Hazzard, 2013; MacDonald, 2018).

I earlier touched on the shift in planning from managerial to entrepreneurial, as an attempt to attract economic growth as a fundamental purpose of the planning system. Planning has been re-oriented to be more strategic and goal -oriented, shifting from a focus on regulation of land use. In the UK this has been described as the move from land use planning to spatial planning (Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014) and in Australia a shift from statutory planning to strategic planning.

Olesen and Carter (2018), Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck (2012) are among commentators who suggest that neoliberal ideas of promoting planning as a means of creating growth are often conceptualised through a focus on strategic plans for larger urban areas and on new urban governance arrangements for those areas or parts of them. Alongside the formal layers of national, state and local governments (with their formal territorial units) lie what Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck refer to as the ‘soft spaces’ or ‘in-between’ spaces of governance – area masterplans, regional growth strategies and the like – and that the scale of these planning units and the governance arrangements around them can change, usually at the discretion of the state. Examples of governance arrangements that are now reflected in legislation include the creation of the Greater Sydney Commission in 2016 to lead strategic planning across a newly defined Greater Sydney Region. These spaces and governance arrangements can be changed at will by the state in many cases. Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck suggest they are:

..new state spaces that can be seen as an integral part of turbulent institutional dynamics driven by neoliberal regulatory restructuring in pursuit of a high growth agenda for nations, regions and localities, in which new policies and institutional forms can be rapidly created, mutated and discarded. (Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck, 2013)

Continuous planning system reform and regular changes to spatial boundaries and governance arrangements for regional planning exercises are seen by them as being “part of the ceaseless search for new forms of neoliberal spatial governance, continually adapting over time to reflect emerging understandings of the appropriate role of the state in capitalist societies” (Haughton et al, 2013). Peters and Pierre conclude that while multi-level governance can have a high problem-solving capacity (due to its inclusionary nature) that can generate efficient outcomes, it also has features which call its democratic nature into question. They refer to “fuzzy instruments of accountability and political control” in making that assessment (Peters and Pierre, 2004, p. 88).

Paddison claims that ongoing planning reform is “part of the wider canvas of neoliberal reforms affecting how cities (are) governed and the changing relationships between state, market and civil society” (Paddison 2009, p. 6). He says this has resulted in the emergence of a new kind of politics, urban neo-populism, which employs a range of strategies – which he refers to as ‘the techniques of consensual persuasion’ – to construct the consensus required by governments to mediate what appear to be contradictory aims of deregulating planning systems and development approval processes while emphasising participatory forms of democracy at the local level. Allmendinger and Haughton agree, arguing that in the UK;

“the (planning) system has been expected to focus much more on ‘delivery’ through dealing more rapidly with planning applications. Central to this is seen to be widespread engagement with stakeholders in preparing plans, plus improved public consultation. At the same time the government’s emphasis on improved speed in approving plans and planning applications requires that planning authorities must find ways of working that mean that oppositional elements do not fundamentally challenge the pre-eminence of the growth agenda.” (Allmendinger and Haughton 2011, p. 93).

Like Paddison they suggest that such strategies, designed to persuade that only policies that seek to facilitate the economic growth agenda are legitimate and appropriate, serve to weaken rather than strengthen local democratic processes, despite ongoing rhetoric about empowering local communities (Paddison, 2009, p. 9; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, p. 93).

Planning system reform often exposes the tensions between state control and local autonomy, as city-wide or regional land use and infrastructure requirements conflict with locally developed visions for the future that reflect a much finer-grained understanding of the social, environmental and economic matters that ‘glue’ communities together. The tensions raise questions about who and what we are planning for. If through planning we are attempting to produce a better city for all citizens (Fainstein, 2005), if the normative premise for planning is that through intervention, better places will result than if the planned intervention had not occurred (Campbell, Tait and Watkins, 2014, p.45), how can

we bring together the diverse views in modern and complex societies into a clear vision for the future and agreed actions that will take us in the direction of that vision?

For this research, investigation of how local strategic planning outcomes might be aligned with regional strategic planning does so in the context of anticipated explanatory factors of governance, power, and approaches to strategic planning, that are sourced from the above discussion.

Co-opting collaborative planning as a neoliberal strategy to reduce local autonomy

Proposals to improve community and stakeholder engagement and increase opportunities for consultation are very often an integral part of neoliberal planning reforms. In NSW the White Paper for a New Planning System for NSW promised that evidence-based strategic planning would be the basis for balanced planning decisions, and that community participation would be “at the centre of the new planning system” (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013, p.25).

“People from all walks of life will now contribute to the shaping of their community through ground breaking arrangements for community participation. A significant and representative proportion of the community will participate in the development of long term strategic plans for their area. The planning system can move from combative to collaborative”.

Successive UK reforms have also espoused an augmentation of participative processes (see Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p. 283; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, p. 93). Why then, with promise of collaboration in plan making, are there concerns that ongoing reforms are having the effect of disempowering local communities and weakening local democratic processes? Healey notes that in the ‘restless search’ for stable governance approaches, where “the politics of criteria and of entrepreneurial consensus confront the politics of inclusionary argumentation” (Healey, 2006, p. 241) the encounter is often masked in a common language, including ‘stakeholders’, ‘consensus building’, ‘empowerment’ and ‘collaboration’. Use of these terms has been prevalent and common in the rhetoric around both the recent NSW reforms and introduction of the UK *Localism Act 2011*. While neoliberal governments might argue that as they reshape planning through a reform agenda (Haughton, Allmendinger and Oosterlynck, 2012, p. 37), a greater emphasis on participatory democracy and devolution of powers to local authorities and communities will mean that the reshaping will match the desires of the people, many are not so sure.

Allmendinger and Haughton refer to ongoing reform in the UK as a “crisis of consensus” where, rather than the emphasis on collaborative planning processes providing an empowering arena for debating wide-ranging societal options for future development, the resulting planning systems are focussed on:

“carefully stage-managed processes with subtly but clearly defined parameters of what is open for debate. This system gives the superficial appearance of engagement and legitimacy, whilst focussing on delivering growth expedited through some carefully choreographed processes for participation which minimise the potential for those with conflicting views to be given a meaningful hearing”

(Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, p. 90).

Inch (2012), Brand and Gaffikin (2007) and Paddison (2009) have expressed similar concerns. They see ongoing planning reform focussing on collaboration as a neoliberal governing strategy to limit debate, hide or marginalise dissent, and thus weaken local democratic processes. Collaborative planning in this context cannot have meaningful effects in anything but a very local, small-scale sense. Critics therefore argue that neoliberal governing strategies render the claims made for collaborative planning invalid, particularly in terms of any wider influence on governance process or resource allocation. Brand and Gaffikin lament the lack of connection between ideas raised by participants in engagement exercises and any actual changes in policy and planning, suggesting that:

“collaborative planners need to appreciate arenas other than the local, even though they might not actually operate a great external leverage on external structural constraints. Indeed we need to guard against the delusion that somehow through local action the global frame will shift” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p. 303, p. 308).

Healey disagrees. She argues that the consensus-building work that is usually part of collaborative processes, in the right institutional and governance circumstances, can change wider governance process and culture.

“Consensus-building practices have transformative potential, changing the frameworks for thinking, and potentially changing the content and modes of use of rules, and the way resources flow, the key dimensions through which structure and agency interact in Giddens’ formulation of structuration theory. They thus have the potential to transform institutional capacity and relations of power.” (Healey, 2006, p. 265)

Autonomy

As this research aims to examine the tensions between state control and local autonomy, in the light of ongoing attempts to align local with regional strategic planning outcomes, I now investigate how this theme is addressed in the literature.

Considerations of local autonomy are central to this research. Grant and Drew devote a chapter to this matter in their 2017 book *Local Government in Australia*. In depicting the rhetoric of local government with regard to autonomy they describe the debates as being about “us” (good local government, seeking autonomy) versus “them” (bad state government, seeking control) (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.211). In describing this

characterisation of local-state relations as an over-simplification, they return to their contention that ‘autonomy’ doesn’t describe a fixed position of a particular entity. Rather, it describes “a relationship between a higher tier of government and the local”.

Citing Pratchett (2004) Grant and Drew develop a distinction between local democracy and local autonomy, identifying the conceptual differences between local democracy (about local self-government) and local autonomy (the relationship between local government and other levels of government). Thus described, autonomy is seen as both a granting and a negotiation of authority. These concepts are important for the case study descriptions and comparative analysis undertaken in later chapters of this study.

In the case study cities of Vancouver and Sydney, and as described in Chapter 4, local governments are a creation of state government legislation, serving, as Grant and Drew put it, “at the pleasure of the state legislatures” (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.184), and do not enjoy absolute “immunity” from state governments. The distinction is made between local government “immunity” and “initiative”. Grant and Drew explore the meaning of immunity and initiative for local government in Australia and I do not repeat that discussion here. However, in summary immunity refers to the power of local government to function free from the (fear of) oversight of higher levels of government, while initiative refers to the power of localities to legislate and regulate the behaviour of its constituents.

If autonomy is considered in terms of initiative (accepting that scope for initiative may be quite limited, especially if fiscal autonomy is not present) then the notion of autonomy can be thought of as the ability of local governments to influence central governments, to “seek to influence the ‘rules of the game’ as determined by higher tiers of government” (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.182). This results in a conception of autonomy that moves from the fixed position or ‘sovereign spheres’ concept to:

“autonomy is best conceived as denoting a relationship characterised by both immunity and initiative and importantly, as the means by which local government can influence the construction of possibilities for these” (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.192)

These distinctions and conceptions are important for this research in analysing the case study data. In terms of McGiurk’s plea (2005, p.68) for a more democratic means of identifying and implementing regional strategic planning outcomes these distinctions and conceptions inform, for the Greater Sydney case, the “work that has to be done in order to alter the essentially oppositional nature of politics between state and local government” in NSW (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.212). As I shall argue later, for the Greater Vancouver case these conceptions of autonomy are clearly evident in the case study data that describes lengthy negotiations about what constitutes a local planning concern and what constitutes a regional planning concern. That is, these negotiations determine the power of Vancouver local authorities to legislate and regulate within their local government areas, implementing

local and regional strategic planning outcomes at the local level, relatively free from oversight of the province.

Grant and Drew are among a number of commentators who identify the need for comparative examination of relationships between local government and higher tiers as a significant research gap.

The potential of collaborative planning in a neoliberal, ‘uncollaborative’ world

Healey's account of how she came to write her 1997 book *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, in a 2003 article titled 'Collaborative Planning in Perspective', provided the link in my research interest between what I considered to be a continuation of top-down approaches by the NSW State Government to implementation of growth plans at the local level, and the potential of collaborative planning processes to mediate the tensions between state control and local autonomy that such top-down approaches appeared to generate.

Her empirical work in the mid-1980s examined how far 'development plans' that were being prepared to guide development in the UK were actually being implemented, and she was interested in the gradual transition of such development plans from a 'spatial blueprints' to 'strategic structure plans' that had become "statements of policy principles and regulatory norms to guide land and property development processes" (Healey, 2003, p.102). I too had wondered, in the context of the NSW planning system, how such strategic documents would successfully be implemented without considerably more 'bottom-up' understanding of what growth outcomes might look like at the local level and what impact growth might have on local communities and infrastructure – or in other words, more collaborative approaches to implementation of regional plans to reach greater agreement about alignment with local plans.

Based on Healey's argument that all planning activity involves some interactive relation, and some kind of governance process, *Collaborative Planning* aimed to ground a discussion of process forms in the context of their economic, social and environmental dynamics and their translation into institutionalised governance processes. Healey hoped that the ideas set out in the book might assist those developing and evaluating process forms imagine "new process forms beyond the well-known possibilities of manipulative politics, the rational-technical process, top-down command-and-control practices and bureaucratic rule-governed behaviour" (Healey, 2003, p.107). Her work has informed the identification of my 'anticipated explanatory factors' and in particular my focus on collaborative planning practice as potentially key to mediating the tensions generated through alignment of local strategic planning outcomes with regional planning outcomes.

I therefore now discuss the claims made for collaborative planning in greater detail.

2.2 What are the claims made for collaborative planning?

There is a significant literature on collaborative planning, with some claiming that research in the field of planning theory generally has been dominated by the ‘communicative turn in planning’ for some decades (see Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011; Fischler, 2000, for example). Brand and Gaffikin (2007) say it is not possible to identify the particular author who coined the term, but like many point to Patsy Healey as the most prominent of those who have defined the concept and argued for its benefits. Indeed whether it can be termed a planning ‘theory’ or an ‘emerging paradigm’ or ‘just another way of doing planning’ (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000) are topics of ongoing debate. Brand and Gaffikin suggest it is less a ‘theory’ in any strict definition of the word and perhaps “more like a normative framework designed to describe and guide practice” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p. 283).

The potential of collaborative planning practice, says Healey, lies in an ethic of inclusion, “an ethic which asserts that all those with a stake in a place should have a right to give voice and be heard in the development of policies about what should happen there” (Healey 2006, p. 316).

This inclusion, this ‘giving of voice’ to communities and stakeholders is key to the claims made for collaborative planning. The literature around what collaborative planning actually includes the practice of planning, and planners, “facilitating communicative interchanges between interested parties, whether stakeholders or the community at large, over matters of common concern” (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000, p. 333). Collaborative planning seeks a shared understanding of the issues and of alternative solutions to them. Healey suggests that her interest is in the potential of collaborative forms and processes to “widen the range of voices and values which get to shape governance agendas” (Healey, 2006, p. 323). For her the attraction of collaborative processes lies:

“in their potential to lead to policy-making and implementation which is more knowledgeable, better-coordinated, more creative, more inclusive and hence more legitimate than a reliance solely on technical expertise, bureaucratic procedure, ideological programmes and the power of one or two strategic actors” (Healey 2006, p. 330).

These processes emphasise the planner’s role in mediating among stakeholders. Rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experiential learner, at most providing information to participants but primarily being sensitive to points of convergence (Fainstein, 2000, p. 175).

Kübler (2007) describes metropolitan/regional planning in Sydney since the 1990s as being characterised by an emphasis on collaborative processes. Against a background of relatively rigid territorial structures (local government boundaries), the division of planning

competencies between local and state government, and high levels of population growth and urban sprawl, the constellation of actors involved in regional planning are characterised by a high level of interdependency (Kübler, 2007, p.645). Put plainly, in the NSW planning system, the state government needs local government to deliver its regional strategic planning outcomes, and local government needs state government to provide direction, coordination and resourcing to enable it to do so.

Innes and Booher (2010) in describing their theory of ‘collaborative rationality’ claim that collaborative processes are likely to produce not only effective options for how actors can move forward together to resolve their problems, but also generate individual and collective (joint) learning that can make the community more adaptive and resilient. In making this claim Innes and Booher recognise that for very complex or wicked problems, there is no optimal solution – the challenge is to find a way for actors to jointly improve their situation, rather than find the “best” solution. Innes and Booher, agreeing with Healey, say that collaborative processes can lead to changes in the larger system, helping institutions become more effective and adaptable, and making the system as a whole more resilient (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.10).

Collaborative planning starts from a position that acknowledges the diverse nature of contemporary societies (Campbell et al, 2014, p. 48). By its nature it attempts to build a consensus among this diversity and through its concern with deliberation about alternatives, build shared understanding of complex urban issues. This, as is discussed below, is identified by various commentators as both a strength and a weakness. Debate centres on whether, in the contexts of modern, diverse and fragmented communities and neoliberal policy reform, collaborative planning can ever reach meaningful consensus about the kinds of issues urban planning policy formulation has to address and the conflicts and disagreements those issues can raise.

Arguing that “the whole idea of collaborative planning is built on a presumption of existing conflicts in planning, and the resolution of those conflicts” Agger and Löfgren contend that collaborative planning processes “should facilitate a functioning and legitimate realm for managing conflicts and the likely negotiations and trades that may occur as a result of conflicts”, but that this does not mean collaborative planning processes actually need to ‘solve’ those conflicts (Agger and Löfgren, 2008, p.156). They suggest that collaborative planning, by default, is a public policy-making process, and therefore part of the democratic governance of the particular location it is taking place in. While an episode may take place at a ‘micro’ level – within a limited geographical area and with selected stakeholders participating - it still takes place within the framework of a political system. Agger and Löfgren, like many supporters and critics of collaborative planning, are interested in the effect on, and quality of, democracy in collaborative processes and how to measure democratic effects - something they say is overlooked in most discourse, which focusses on process and outcome, but is weaker on the importance of inputs and democratic

assessment. If, for example, we aim to ‘empower local communities’ through local, democratic, collaborative processes, how will we know when we’ve achieved that aim?

Healey believes collaborative processes, under the right conditions, have the power to be transformative and to solve planning problems, explaining that they:

“should be recognised by the involvement of multiple actors in new combinations and new arenas. They come together through recognising mutual dependencies. They are prepared to be power-equalising within their working practices, granting mutual respect and listening to other participants. They draw on and mix together experiential and ‘localised’ knowledge, with systematised scientific and technical knowledge. They generate knowledge and power by collective learning and by mobilising attention, and hence have capacity to innovate. Through such respectful and creative agreement, often over a period of time, new frames of reference, and/or agreement on particular interventions are generated with the potential to endure through time. If these qualities are present, a collaborative episode may be able to combine creative innovation with effectiveness (through greater knowledgeability and coordination), to achieve a better problem-solving capacity than other policy-making modes. The capacity generated in an episode may contribute to wider institutional capacity building” (Healey, 2006, p. 332).

This is a convenient point to leave discussion about the claims made for collaborative practice and move to a discussion on why collaborative processes have emerged to now ‘dominate’ our thinking about how we do planning, before discussing the challenges it faces in a world of neoliberal governmentality.

2.3 The theoretical roots, and the rise, of collaborative planning practice

As mentioned in the previous section, there is debate among theorists as to whether collaborative planning is a planning ‘theory’ or an ‘emerging paradigm’ or ‘just another way of doing planning’ (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

Critiques of collaborative planning are discussed more generally in the following section, but a specific criticism relates to this point, and the extent to which collaborative planning is simply a form of planning practice derived from Jürgen Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action (Habermas, 1984). Neil Harris (writing in Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001, on ‘Collaborative Planning: From Theoretical Foundations to Practice Forms’) suggests there has been a “misdirected conflation of collaborative planning and communicative planning theory” (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2001, p.29).

Harris considers that ‘collaborative planning’ can be “most suitably interpreted as an element in a longer-term programme of research and theoretical development focused upon a concern with the democratic management and control of urban and regional environments and the design of less oppressive planning mechanisms” (Allmendinger and

Haughton, 2001, p.22). The term is widely used in literature in various quite generalised ways, and to attempt to define it, Harris returns to the terms used by Patsy Healey, who in the preface to her book on the subject of collaborative planning states that it “is about why urban regions are important to social, economic and environmental policy and how political communities may organise to improve the quality of their places” (Healey, 1997a, p.xii).

It is comparative evidence of the practical manifestation of ‘political communities organising to improve the quality of their places’ that this research investigates.

Combined with Healey’s assertion that the potential of collaborative planning lies in an ethic that asserts “that all those with a stake in a place should have a right to give voice and be heard in the development of policies about what should happen there” (Healey 2006, p. 316), the links to communicative planning theory become clearer.

While much of the literature around collaborative planning refers to Habermas’ Theory of Communicative Action as the theoretical basis of collaborative planning theory, Healey explains her early thinking around it had its foundations in Anthony Giddens’ Theory of Structuration (Giddens 1984). Giddens suggests our ‘working out’ of our individual identities and social relations is structured by what has gone before. We are embedded in these structures, which are active forces, filled with implicit and explicit principles about how things should be done and who should get what. They carry power relations from one period to the next. These structures reveal themselves in the systems that run our daily lives, and Healey recognised that planning systems are just such a system and structure. Human agency, the way we do things every day, continually challenges or affirms our pasts and therefore either changes the way we do things or not. This is Giddens’ theory of structuration – we are continually remaking systems, the structuring forces that control our lives, and in doing so we can change ourselves and our cultures.

Healey saw parallels in Giddens’ work with what she had observed and experienced in her research on planning practice, “the continual interaction between, and mutual constitution of, structure and agency” (Healey, 2003, p.106).

Habermas also considers structures; the economic structures and the market, the political structures and bureaucracy, the abstract structures that ‘constrain’ daily life. He sees these structures as being opposed to our ‘lifeworlds’, the things we do on a daily or yearly basis, just ‘getting on’ with life. So he seeks ways to reverse the tendency for those abstract structures to penetrate our lifeworlds – rather for our lifeworlds to help reconstitute and redesign systems so that they are more sensitive to those lifeworlds. Habermas believes that we need interaction and debate to help us develop new strategies for collective action.

How do political communities communicate in public arenas, how do participants exchange ideas, sort out what is valid, work out what is important and assess proposed courses of

action? Habermas argues that it is through collective debate about these issues, through communicative action, that cultures and structures are formed and transformed.

As it developed, communicative planning theory, according to Healey, drew on Habermas' discourses ethics and the concept of communicative rationality as a normative principle with which to evaluate and challenge interactive practices (Healey, 2003, p.106). The way systems operate depends not only on relations between actors with particular interests but also on the way such social relations and practices are structured by institutional designs and cultures.

Developed from these theoretical roots, the recent 'dominance' of collaborative planning theory in planning thought and practice has emerged, according to some commentators, out of "previous debates around the desirability, timeliness and effectiveness of various planning dispositions in the late 20th century, in particular out of 'the neoliberal, anti-planning morass of the 1980's'" (Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger 2002).

Collaborative planning has emerged as an antidote to the rigidity and narrowness of the comprehensive rational planning process. In the words of Healey "it seeks to escape from the strait-jacket of a narrow instrumental rationality in its approaches to how to identify problems in need of strategic attention and how to act on them" (Healey, 1996).

Healey suggests that the domination of strong central governments over time has limited and undermined the capacity for "local collective action" to address the impacts of development and suggest alternative solutions. Some groups have been systematically excluded from participating in the growth debate at all (Healey 2006, p. 315). This issue of power, its use, and the inability of collaborative processes to break through entrenched power structures and power relations, is a recurring theme in the literature around collaborative planning and neoliberal planning reform. The following section discusses a number of critiques that claim that collaborative planning cannot work in a neoliberal world because it fails to deal with existing power structures and power inequalities in society. Yet some of the fundamental tenets of collaborative planning theory – access to information; knowledge sharing and shared knowledge building; deliberation and joint decision-making – are the stuff of building power.

Booher and Innes' work on Network Power in Collaborative Planning describes network power as "an alternative form of power that...emerges from consensus building and other forms of collaborative planning" (Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 222). They suggest that collaborative planning is becoming more popular because of this ability to generate network power. Their model of power in 'connectionist networks' talks of individual agents connected together with information exchange links and a substantial, shared intelligence, which enables the networked agencies or individuals to accomplish things they could not otherwise. Therefore, network power can be significant while perhaps appearing not to be (Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 225). They describe a central outcome as being the building of a

sense of shared identity as part of a system or community. In increasingly individualistic and socially fragmented societies this sense of identity among diverse but interdependent stakeholders often feeds back into more collaborative action and more discovery of interdependence. Booher and Innes argue that it is this double-loop process that generates the cumulative and growing effect of network power (Booher and Innes, 2002 p. 231).

In *Collaborative Policymaking* Innes and Booher (2003) describe four styles of planning, expressed as a matrix across diversity and interdependence of interests of stakeholders. This matrix is reproduced at Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Four styles of planning

		Diversity	
		Low	High
Interdependence of interests	Low	Technical bureaucratic Convincing	Political influence Co-opting
	High	Social Movement Converting	Collaborative Co-evolving

(Source: Innes and Booher, 2003, p.52)

Innes and Booher claim that it is only the collaborative model that deals with both diversity and interdependence because it is inclusive and explores or relies on interdependence of actors in searching for solutions. It does not ignore or override interests but seeks solutions that will satisfy multiple interests. In their research around approaches to solving complex resource distribution issues, they found that "it is only the collaborative model that allows for genuinely regional or other collectively beneficial solutions to complex and controversial problems" (Innes and Booher, 2003, p.54). As Harris explains, communicative planning theory has been criticised for insufficiently understanding and addressing the dynamics of urban regions. Collaborative planning seeks to integrate spatial and political sensibilities from urban political economy and elements of communicative planning theory (Harris, in Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001, p. 32).

The increasing influence of collaborative planning practice may lie in its claimed ability to facilitate solutions to complex regional planning problems. Healey's early thinking for *Collaborative Planning* was influenced by her work assessing the level of actual implementation of UK development plans in the 1980s. As she suggests, the idea that such

plans can be directly implemented suggests a very traditional, Instrumental-rational conception of a plan as a ‘spatial blueprint’ (Healy, 2003, p.102). Many planning systems, not least that in NSW, are moving to a more strategic approach to regional planning, but given the complexity of regions encompassing multiple local government areas with diverse communities this means the regional strategic plans are becoming less prescriptive and more visionary. These visions often reflect overarching state imperatives of ‘the global city’, with city-regions seen as “the crucial generators of economic growth” (see Baker and Ruming, 2015; Ruming and Gurran, 2014). In the Greater Sydney example there has been a disconnect between how these regional strategic visions are translated into localised visions and actions and then into statutory planning controls, that can meet local needs and desires while contributing to the collective regional imperatives and desires.

Collaborative planning processes may hold the key to negotiating that translation between state and regional authorities and local government authorities. In recent announcements about further reform of the NSW planning system the Planning Minister stated that “neat...modernist approaches” such as blueprint planning did not consider “the complex needs and interactions of urban populations that were becoming increasingly diverse with massive movements of peoples in the post-war era” (Stokes, 2019). In noting the move towards the more communicative modes developed by Habermas, Healey and Judith Innes, a move that would see “planners serving as active listeners, seeking to bring balance and equality to competing voices and interests in planning and development”, the Minister notes that writers like Flyvbjerg and Forrester have questioned how effective communicative planning models can be “in the world of real urban planning, (where) there are inherent asymmetries of power that frame the way in which cities are shaped” (Stokes, 2019).

It is interesting in the context of this research that a current (and former) Planning Minister has recently published an article in the journal of the Planning Institute of Australia referencing theorists who have both championed and challenged collaborative planning practice, to support the most recent round of planning reforms announced for NSW. There are high-placed advocates for genuine collaboration in NSW, despite the State’s apparent difficulty in applying the concept in practice.

In calling for planners to become ‘problem solvers and peacemakers’ the NSW Planning Minister suggests they will need to “acknowledge and manage these intrinsic power imbalances and interests across the broader community” (Stokes, 2020). This places a considerable onus on planners. What tools might planners have at their disposal to ‘manage’ such embedded power imbalances? Could collaborative planning practice be an important tool in assisting them in this quest?

From its theoretical and practical bases then, what might a collaborative planning approach look like in a regional strategic planning process that seeks to align local with regional outcomes? The rise of collaborative planning practice has come from “a decisive shift from the ‘rationalist’ policy analysis paradigm” (Healey, 1999, p, 1129), which has in many

jurisdictions resulted in fragmented and adversarial decision-making systems, to a system characterised by inclusiveness and consensus-building; from top-down government intervention, to having all interested parties at the table negotiating an outcome.

In my work with the NSW State Government I have used the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) ‘Public Participation Spectrum’ as the guide to what level of participation is appropriate and possible in given planning projects. The IAP2 goal for ‘collaboration’ in terms of public participation is “to partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution”. The IAP2 ‘promise to the public’ for ‘collaboration’ is that “we will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible” (IAP2, 2014).

Through consideration of all of these sources I have developed a set of anticipated explanatory factors, and component themes, which form the analytical framework for the case study data. Section 2.5 below provides further explanation and justification for selection of these factors. As discussed in Chapter 3 this analytical framework also becomes important in considerations of the reliability and validity of this qualitative research.

The research aim and research questions have been developed on the basis that I consider that a collaborative rationality will be a key factor in reaching agreements about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes.

Based on the literature reviewed that has investigated the claims made for collaborative planning, its theoretical bases and the reasons for its rise to a ‘dominant paradigm’ in the recent history of planning theory, the three component themes I think warrant detailed case study investigation in considering a collaborative rationality are:

- Joint problem definition;
- Joint decision making; and
- Capacity building and joint learning.

Of these, in this section I pay attention to work done by Kübler in the Greater Sydney context regarding joint decision-making. In his article *Metropolitan Governance in Sydney: A case of ‘Joint Decision-Making’* (2007), Kübler describes the rising level of conflict between the NSW State Government and the local councils located within the Greater Sydney Region as being likely to increase blockages in a system where negotiated agreements are required between the levels of government to achieve implementation of broader regional strategic planning outcomes.

He describes systems where actors cannot solve policy problems on their own, that is, through unilateral action or hierarchical direction, as joint decision systems. These are usually “conceived of as systems of compulsory negotiation operating under unanimity or

consensus rules" (Kübler, 2007, p. 637) with four routes by which negotiated agreement can be reached in a joint decision-making system. These are:

1. *Negative coordination*: all actors adjust their behaviour in the light of possible objections from others. This results in reflecting the smallest possible common denominator, and therefore least departure from the status quo, as actors avoid possible veto.
2. *Bargaining*: actors who lose from a given decision are compensated by those who gain from it. The advantage of bargaining over negative coordination is that more options and solutions are considered, rather than automatically ruled out if they challenge the status quo. Potential vetoes can be bought off.
3. *Problem solving*: actors are less concerned with distribution of costs and benefits among each other, explicitly focussing on jointly reaching solutions that represent a clear gain in general welfare (e.g. the 'regional interest'). The actors expect a positive individual fallout from the general welfare increase, and so participate on that basis. This mode pre-supposes that any distributional conflicts between actors have been settled beforehand, or are not present in the policy problem to be resolved.
4. *Positive coordination*: It is not assumed that issues of distribution are neutralised. Actors reach agreement by a combination of distributive bargaining and problem solving. Negotiation settings are designed to allow actors to deal with issues of distribution and deliberate over the best solution for a given policy problem at the same time.

(Adapted from Kübler, 2007, p. 637-638)

The question raised by Kubler is the extent to which one of these routes, in terms of their contribution to effective policy-making, is superior to others. I ask the same question in regard to case study data obtained in Greater Sydney and Greater Vancouver, in Chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis. Kübler assumes that joint decision-making systems in which agreements are negotiated through bargaining, problem solving or positive coordination will result in more effective policy-making than if the underlying rational is negative coordination. However, while potentially more desirable, the former three are more difficult to achieve than negative coordination, which Kübler assumes to be the 'default option' for coordination in joint decision-making systems (Kübler, 2007, p. 639).

This discussion is important because a common criticism of collaborative planning practice and communicative planning theory, discussed in more detail in the following section, is that its focus on reaching consensus ignores the realities of the 'wider contexts of urban governance' within which it operates, to the extent that the results of such practice become meaningless. Collaborative planning is accused of privileging consensus over conflict. Healey disagrees (1999, p. 1132 for example) claiming that consensus is the ultimate aim of collaborative processes, but that those involved in communicative governance practices or consensus-building techniques are very aware of the diversity and fragmentation in

contemporary society. Collaborative planning practice must be considered within its situated urban political economy and governance context, and outcomes are negotiated, through open discourse, that can very often expose the underlying power-relations to community view and effect lasting change in institutional capacity to deal with those power-relations (Healey, 1999, 2006).

This aligns with the views of others who argue that “the whole idea of collaborative planning is built on a presumption of existing conflicts in planning, and the resolution of those conflicts” (Agger and Löfgren, 2008, p.156). Agger and Löfgren contend that collaborative planning processes “should facilitate a functioning and legitimate realm for managing conflicts and the likely negotiations and trades that may occur as a result of conflicts”, but that this does not mean collaborative planning processes actually need to ‘solve’ those conflicts.

This seems a useful point to turn to a discussion about the challenges facing collaborative planning, a discussion that naturally addresses the potential of collaborative planning in the face of broader power relations that exist in society.

2.4 What are the critiques of collaborative planning?

A major critique of collaborative planning is, broadly speaking, that collaborative planning cannot work in an essentially ‘uncollaborative world’ (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Brand and Gaffikin are among a number of commentators seeking to “expose the concept of collaborative planning to the reality of planning” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p. 282). They raise what they see as the paradox of “promotion of collaborative practice rooted in values of cohesion, solidarity and inclusivity in a world that can be seen as ever more individualist, socially fragmented, competitive, or in other words, uncollaborative” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p. 283). They argue that collaborative planning’s prioritisation of building consensus has led to an indulgence in generality and ambivalence, a limitation they attribute to its Habermasian roots. In their view, a localist focus on immediate and narrow issues coupled with an increasingly globalist perspective of governments, as they attempt to reform planning systems into drivers of economic growth and competitiveness, has created a ‘discursive gap’ not fully recognised in the ideals of collaborative planning (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, pp. 304-306).

Some question the hegemony of collaborative planning in the context of the contested nature of planning itself and the issues of power, state control and political economy that contain its practices and effectiveness. Huxley and Yiftachel feel that some proponents tend to privilege communication at the expense of its wider social and economic contexts (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000, p. 333). Fox-Rogers and Murphy go somewhat further, suggesting that even if collaborative planning practice could show the prospect of leading to more equitable planning outcomes, powerful interests will find ways to navigate the system and bypass

participatory processes (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014, p. 264). Yiftachel goes further still, suggesting that:

“planning is not only manipulated and used by powerful interests, but that urban and regional planning – as an integral part of the nation-state – is structurally devised to exert control and oppression” (Yiftachel, 1998, p. 403).

Healey herself says that the project of collaborative planning is a “site of contestation and struggle, both intellectually and experientially, in theory and in practice” (Healey 2006, p. 320).

Fawcett and Marsh, in considering the linkages between depolitisation, governance and political participation, provide another view of that ‘discursive gap’ by describing it in terms of depolitisation (of planning and more generally) and as a meta-governance issue, namely the linkages and balance between the three modes of governing – hierarchy, market and governance networks (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p. 180). They reference Jessop’s work in describing meta-governance, or ‘the governance of governance’, as the organisation of the conditions for governance involving “the judicious mixing of market, hierarchy, and networks to achieve the best possible outcomes from the point of view of those engaged in meta-governance” (Jessop, B. 2004, p. 70). However they, like Jessop, agree that it is usually the state that decides what that balance is (through a process of ongoing planning reform, some would argue) and go further to suggest that meta-governance usually reflects the patterns of structural inequality in society – an issue they suggest needs further exploration (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p. 181). For Jessop, the defining feature of meta-governance is that it operates ‘in the shadow of hierarchy’ – hierarchy that critics of collaborative planning say sets the broad parameters and limitations within which both the market and networks operate.

Kübler, in his consideration of metropolitan decision-making in Greater Sydney, also considers the impact and use of hierarchy (Kübler, 2007). He describes the tense relationships between the State and the local councils as a major obstacle to reaching policy solutions that depart significantly from the status quo, as mistrust and conflict increase the risk of confronting joint decision-making blockages. In Greater Sydney, he describes the response of the State as having been to reflexively strengthen its hierarchical instruments to overcome possible blockages. Kübler suggests that in a complex world in which interdependencies are increasing, effective policy-making might be “more adequately fostered by the casting of a ‘shadow of hierarchy’ rather than by the blunt exercise of this hierarchy” (Kübler, 2007, p. 645).

While Fawcett and Marsh agree that the relationship between hierarchy, markets and networks is often meta-governed by the state, they note that this meta-governance is not always successfully implemented (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p. 185). They argue that while much of the literature around depolitisation points to creation of a governance problem

through a decline in political participation and a related decline in the legitimacy of government, that in fact politics continues to be “remade by both the governors and the governed” (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p. 185). They argue that we are witnessing:

“both depolitisation, to the extent that citizens are not involved in formal politics, and repolitisation, given that many citizens are now more likely to be ‘remaking’ politics on their own terms, but only where they think that they can influence the outputs generated by the political system as members of a broader political community. To put it more clearly, while the decline in participation in input politics is evident, there is not a decline in the willingness of citizens to become involved in output politics” (Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p. 184).

The concerns of Jessop and Fawcett and Marsh that meta-governance is a process that takes place “within, and, in large part, is shaped by the broader power relations that exist in society” (Jessop, 2010; Fawcett and Marsh, 2014, p. 181) provide a link to research by Fox-Rogers and Murphy identifying ‘Informal strategies of power in the local planning system’. Their work uses empirical evidence gained through semi-structured interviews with 20 urban planners working across four planning authorities within the Greater Dublin Area to describe a “shadow planning system” of informal strategies and tactics used by the holders of power to bypass formal structures of the planning system (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014, p. 244). This shadow planning system, they say, is so systematic and ‘almost institutionalised’ that powerful groups continue to dominate planning practice and outcomes, despite an acknowledged hegemony of ideas of collaborative planning in recent planning theory. They agree with other commentators (including Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; Lord and Tewdwr-Jones, 2014) that collaborative planning approaches tend only to “tinker around the edges of discussions about the political economy of power and class relations but fail to deal with core issues focusing on the structural inequalities of society reflected in the planning system” (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014, p. 250). This failure has led to collaborative planning approaches being attractive vehicles for “neoliberals to maintain hegemony while ensuring political stability” (Purcell, 2009, p. 140).

2.5 Sourcing my ‘anticipated explanatory factors’

The literature review has considered the ‘wider urban context’ within which collaborative planning operates in framing the central research question, *“can collaborative planning practice align local with regional strategic planning outcomes”*. Through consideration of the theoretical roots of collaborative planning practice, the claims made for it and the critiques of its efficacy in an essentially ‘uncollaborative world’, the literature review has identified key factors and themes in the discourse around collaborative planning that assist understanding why it may or may not be useful in aligning local with regional strategic planning outcomes in different contexts.

The literature review considers planning system reform in the context of neoliberal governing strategies that include:

- shaping the planning system to ensure it delivers spaces within which markets can thrive and economic growth can occur (approaches to strategic planning; governance)
- changing the way we do regional planning and introducing new multi-level governance arrangements (governance; power; approaches to strategic planning)
- co-opting collaborative planning practice and limiting the scope of the negotiations and debate, as a means of limiting local autonomy and facilitating a neoliberal hegemony (power; rationality; approaches to strategic planning)

The review considers the claims made for collaborative planning, including that a communicative rationality will “lead to policy-making and implementation which is more knowledgeable, better-coordinated, more creative, more inclusive and hence more legitimate than a reliance solely on technical expertise, bureaucratic procedure, ideological programmes and the power of one or two strategic actors” (Healey, 2006); that will give voice to those who have a stake in the way places are shaped, and build trust through joint learning, capacity building and decision-making.

The literature review considers the challenges for and critiques of collaborative planning, namely that it cannot succeed in what is becoming an increasingly uncooperative world, and that it ignores or is bound to fail in the face of, powerful interests who can use it or bypass it to achieve their ends.

From these considerations and from document review in the jurisdictions I have sourced four overarching ‘anticipated explanatory factors: Governance, Power, Rationality, and Approaches to Strategic Planning. These explanatory factors, component themes and sources are set out in Table 2 below. The factors chosen reflect a number of the ‘necessary conditions for successful policy dialogues’ identified by Innes and Booher, which include an incentive structure, leaders and sponsors, inclusionary decision making, a negotiated text and evolving agreement, adaptiveness, and authentic dialogue (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.89) .

Table 2 provides a brief explanation of each of the subthemes of the four explanatory factors, with direct references to the literature from which they have been sourced.

Clearly there are many different factors in different situated practices of planning that will affect alignment of local with regional strategic planning outcomes. However, my focus is on those factors that have been identified:

- as important factors in the literature that discusses the efficacy of collaborative planning practice in reaching agreements about development of spatial land use plans, and that have emerged as common themes in the literature as identified in

the previous sections of this Chapter (particularly through the work of Patsy Healey, Judith Innes, Phil Allmendinger and Graham Haughton; Ralf Brand and Frank Gaffikin)

- through early discussions with a former City Planning Director for the City of Vancouver, about the different factors that might be at play in local and regional planning in the Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney Regions – and as discussed in Section 1.2 of this thesis;
- as important in shaping the discussion and identifying the boundaries between state control and local autonomy, such considerations emerging from my own practice as a planner in Australia, and through the literature review.

The potential importance of other factors in shaping the way regional and local strategic plans are developed and aligned, including taxation and development contribution systems, and development appeal pathways and the relative litigiousness of systems, has emerged during this research. These factors have been identified as areas for further research.

Table 2: Anticipated explanatory factors

Factor	Component theme	Sources
1. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of regional planning and cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative processes build joint learning and institutional capacity leading to further collaborative responses to solve other planning problems (Healey, 1997; Camron, 1999; Chadwick, 2002; Bish and Filipowicz, 2016; Booher and Innes, 2002) • Institutionalisation of long standing approaches to regional planning (Cameron, 1999; Healey, 1997; Healey, 1999) • Communicative practices recognised as critical elements in the development and maintenance of governance forms (Healey, 1999, p.1130)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchical planning framework evident in both case study cities (NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979; BC Local Government Act, 2015) • Hierarchical approach to alignment of local plans with regional plans

Factor	Component theme	Sources
		strengthened over time through State centralising planning powers and increasing power of hierarchical instruments (Kübler, 2007; McGuirk, 2005; Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2012; MacDonald, 2018)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of metropolitan/regional planning authorities in Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney (Chadwick, 2002; Harcourt et al, 2007; Metro Vancouver website; Greater Sydney Commission website) • Ongoing reform of NSW planning system to create a collaborative planning culture to replace a combative culture; referencing North American cities like Vancouver where a ‘collaborative’ planning culture had been observed by the NSW State Government (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013; Hazzard, 2012a; AV3, 2012) • <i>Culture</i> (Harcourt et al, 2007; Healey, 2006; Bish and Filipowicz, 2016; Campbell et al, 2014) • A governance culture within British Columbia that allows citizens to take the initiative to form their municipalities and enter into voluntary agreements with other municipalities for mutual benefits (Bish and Filipowicz, 2016, p.53) • Culture as something that an organisation ‘possesses’ (Inch, 2010, p.361) • Healey’s governance cultures: range of accepted modes of governance; range of embedded cultural values; formal and informal structures for policing

Factor	Component theme	Sources
		discourses and practices (Healey, 2006, p.327)
2. Power	• Formal power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of legislated and administrative powers by the state to override local strategic planning processes and outcomes (Booher and Innes, 2002; Van Assche et al, 2014; Inch, 2011; Keenan, 2017; Yiftachel, 1998) Critiques of collaborative planning practice assert that it fails to acknowledge the presence of entrenched formal and informal power relations and structures (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007; Purcell, 2009; Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011; Inherent asymmetries of power in the world of urban planning where cities are shaped (Stokes, 2019)
	• Network power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint-learning processes evident in collaborative planning practice generate network power among actors (Booher and Innes, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2010; Healey, 2006). Knowledge and power are generated through collective learning (Healey, 2006, p.332). Network power as an alternate form of power emerging from consensus building and other forms of collaborative planning (Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 222)
	• Political champions and visionary leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political champions and visionary leaders (Chadwick, 2002; Harcourt et al, 2007; Mason, 2007) Vision, political leadership and commitment from individuals as essential to advancing regional planning policies (Chadwick, 2002, p.122)

Factor	Component theme	Sources
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level political support for new governance approaches (Mason, 2007, p.2366, p.2380)
3. Rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicative vs instrumental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative planning practice rising from a shift from instrumental-rationalist policy analysis paradigm to the communicative action paradigm. (Healey, 1999; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Fainstein, 2005) A dominant instrumental rationality, displaying 'goal directed behaviour' guided by experts, results in Decide, Announce, Defend (DAD) Syndrome (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.9) • Communicative rationality seeks to integrate spatial and political sensibilities (Harris, 2001, p.32) • Collaborative planning well adapted to dealing with complex, changing and fragmented systems (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.10)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint problem definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint problem definition (what is the need, what are we planning for?) as a potentially time consuming component of a truly collaborative process to ensure ownership of the process and ownership of eventual outcomes (Healey, 1997; Healey, 2003; Campbell et al, 2014; Kooiman and Jentoff, 2009, Innes and Booher, 2010)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems described as effective joint decision making systems depending on how agreements are negotiated (Kübler, 2007); joint decision making as a fundamental element in reaching lasting agreements; (Healey, 1997; Healey, 2003; Campbell et al, 2014; Kooiman and Jentoff, 2009); Joint decision making as an element of a 'collaborative rationality' and as a

Factor	Component theme	Sources
		feature of an adaptive and resilient system (Innes and Booher, 2010)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building and joint learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building and shared knowledge and learning transfers from one collaborative episode to consideration of other planning problems, and builds network power(Healey, 1997; Healey, 2003; Campbell et al, 2014; Kooiman and Jentoff, 2009; Kübler, 2007; Innes and Booher, 2010,p.12). A process is collaboratively rational where participants engage in joint dialogue to deliberate on joint problems (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.6) Collaborative processes generate individual and joint learning opportunities.
4. Approaches to strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visionary vs regulatory Deal-making cities vs plan-making cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resilience of regional plans related to strength of vision and process of plan development; regulatory approach aligned with an instrumental rationality(Chadwick, 2002; Gunton, Day and Williams, 2003; Harcourt et al, 2007; Healey, 1996; Keenan, 2017; Tan and Artist, 2013) Spatial ‘blue-print’ plans developed through an instrumental rationality cannot adapt to rapidly evolving and complex planning problems in diverse communities (Healey, 2003, p.102) Deal-making cities as those where agreed planning controls are seen as the ‘starting point for negotiations’ by the development industry; use of additional development levies to negotiate development ‘deals’ outside planning controls that have been agreed with communities; plan-making cities as those with long-term, resilient strategic plans that are adhered to (Hazzard, 2013; Keenan,

Factor	Component theme	Sources
		2017; Bish and Filipowicz, 2016; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2009; Healey, 2006)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down vs bottom-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down approaches as an indicator or even necessity in an instrumental rationality; bottom-up approaches as an element of collaborative planning practice and a communicative rationality (Healey, 2006; Department of Planning and infrastructure, 2013; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2001; Innes and Booher, 2010; Booher and Innes, 2002, Bish and Filipowicz, 2016) • Bottom up planning processes as a reflection of the shift from rationalist policy analysis to collaborative planning (Healey, 199, p.1129)

2.6 The literature and research gap

This research addresses an identified gap in knowledge that has emerged from the literature review. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical evidence about the wider context of situated practices of strategic planning relative to their success or failure, and the shifting variables that have made different configurations of collaboration and governance work well (or not) in different places at different times (Kahane et al, 2013; Healey, 2006; Mason, 2007; Agger and Löfgren, 2008; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000). In the years since Patsy Healey first published her book *Collaborative Planning* in 1997, the ‘communicative turn’ in planning has been researched widely. Healey noted, in her 2003 review ‘Collaborative Planning in Perspective’, that as the ideas generated around collaborative planning had travelled around the globe, there had been, and needed to be, critical assessment of “the situated meanings, robustness and relevance” of particular episodes. This, she hoped, would:

“contribute to our knowledge about governance transformation processes, and what it takes to shift governance discourses and practices that have the potential to enhance social justice as inclusively understood and achieved in the dimension of place quality” (Healey, 2003, p. 117).

My case study approach using anticipated explanatory factors addresses this gap. Much of the literature refers to one collaborative episode in one place at one time, e.g. in the UK, or in Denmark (Olesen and Carter), whereas this research compares contrasting but parallel examples to consider the effectiveness of collaborative planning.

The effectiveness of collaborative planning practice in aligning local with regional strategic planning outcomes is evaluated in the context of enduring neoliberal governing strategies. This analysis addresses criticisms of collaborative planning practice identified in the literature review – that it cannot be effective in an ‘uncollaborative’ neoliberal world where powerful interests use a range of formal and informal strategies to bypass collaborative approaches and dominate planning processes and outcomes.

In considering if and how local strategic planning processes might influence regional planning processes and outcomes, the research explores the tensions between state control and local autonomy, and the factors that might shift the balance of those tensions in the case study jurisdictions. The research addresses the question of why it might be important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies.

The following chapter, Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Design, describes the methodological approach adopted, the rationale for its design and components, and their use in this research.

Chapter 3 Research methodology and design

3.1 Introduction – a case study approach

This chapter describes the methodological approach adopted, the rationale for its design and components, and their use in this research. This research is qualitative research exploring the tensions between state control and local autonomy through consideration of the relationship between local strategic planning outcomes and regional strategic planning outcomes. It does this predominantly through comparative case studies of planning practice in two cities, aimed at identifying the factors that facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having any influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes. The research term, the period in which interviews were undertaken in Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney, is from 2014 through 2017.

This is exploratory, comparative case study research about planning practice in the case study cities. It does not seek to adjust the theoretical framework, rather analyses the case study data to identify areas where practice indicates theory may need more grounding, where claims made for collaborative planning are less well grounded, and where claims are more solidly reflected in practice.

In Chapter 1, the conceptualisation of the real-world problem that the research addresses identified four explanatory factors anticipated to influence the consonance between local and regional strategic plans (see Table 6 below). Empirical evidence was gathered about the manifestation of these factors in the two case study cities, and this data is analysed and interpreted to test their relevance and role in helping us understand the principal research question:

Under what circumstances can collaborative planning practice align local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes?

Component research questions have also shaped the research design. They ask:

What factors facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being aligned with regional strategies?

Why is it important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies?

A research methodology design appropriate for such an enquiry has its foundations in an interpretive epistemology. My considerations, therefore, in designing an approach that could generate comparable, qualitative data that could be interpreted to address my principal and component questions lead me to case study research. As defined by Yin, case study research is:

An empirical enquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g. a “case”), set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin, 2009, p. 18)

Yin's definition and descriptions of when the case study method might be appropriate fit well with my research aim and questions. My research questions are 'how', 'why' and 'what' questions seeking information about situated, contextualised planning practice. I want to understand how and why particular things have happened in my case study cities through answering descriptive and explanatory questions (Yin, 2012, p. 5). "What is happening or has happened?" "How or why did something happen?" The Literature Review identifies contextualised empirical data about my questions as a significant research gap. The case study method investigates phenomena within their real-world settings, and provides me the "rich descriptions" and "insightful explanations" (Yin, 2012, p.5) that I need to understand the nuanced differences in manifestation of the anticipated explanatory factors in the case study cities, and in the opinions of stakeholders directly involved in local and regional planning practice in the cities.

3.2 Qualitative research and qualitative interview data

Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are generally not in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (McLeod, 2019). Qualitative researchers are attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in particular contexts and in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research is about developing a deep, contextualised understanding of the case or cases under investigation via the collection and analysis of a wide range of primary and secondary data sources (Maginn, 2006).

Research following a qualitative approach is exploratory and seeks to explain the 'how' and 'why' a particular phenomenon or behaviour operates as it does in a particular context (McLeod, 2019).

Methods of obtaining qualitative data include diary accounts, in-depth interviews, document analysis, focus groups, case study research and ethnography (Silverman, 2005, McLeod, 2019). Unstructured or semi-structured interviews, which generate qualitative data through the use of open questions, allow respondents to talk in some depth about their experience. As described in greater detail below, this research utilises three of these methods: document analysis, in-depth interview and autoethnography.

Interviews with planning practitioners can generate rich data providing nuanced descriptions of practice in their context that can enhance our understandings of the relationship between politics, planning practice and planning theory. This research relies heavily on the extensive interview data obtained in two case study cities. The data and

stories generated “provide a body of evidence through which planning scholars may articulate and interrogate theories of practice” (Grant, 2009, p.368).

The limitations of qualitative research are often expressed in terms of the adequacy of reliability and validity. Reliability, in terms of qualitative interviews, can relate to a number of practical aspects of the process of interviewing, including the wording of interview questions, the rapport established with interviewees, and consideration of power-relationships between the interviewer and the participant (Silverman, 2003).

Three common threats to validity in qualitative research are researcher bias, reactivity and respondent bias (McLeod, 2019). Researcher bias refers to potential negative influence of the researcher’s knowledge or assumptions about the study being undertaken. Reactivity refers to a possible influence of the researcher on the studied phenomenon and participants. Respondent bias refers to the potential for participants not to provide an honest response for any reason, or to withhold information, because they may perceive the given topic as a threat or because they may wish to provide responses they believe the researcher will find useful or desirable.

Robson (2002) has suggested a number of strategies aimed at addressing these threats, including prolonged involvement, triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, negative case analysis and audit trail (Robson, 2002, p.174). Of these, to address the potential for researcher bias in particular, given my long involvement in the NSW planning system, and to address the potential for respondent bias given my former working relationships with some Greater Sydney interviewees, and lesser knowledge of the planning system and processes and wider political economy of the Greater Vancouver example, I have employed triangulation and member checking to enhance validation of results.

Triangulation of data (comparison of autoethnographical accounts, document analysis including legislation and reports, and interview data) allowed comparison of my experience in Greater Sydney with participants who had differing or unexpected views, and in Greater Vancouver allowed comparison of my pre-conceptions and assumptions about how planning is ‘done’ in greater Vancouver, with the views of participants in that city.

Member checking was particularly useful in the Greater Vancouver case, where my knowledge of the planning system and political system was not as grounded as that of Greater Sydney. Multiple visits to Vancouver allowed repeat interviews with key participants. The research thus became longitudinal in respect of particular planning processes that were underway in Vancouver, so I could hear first-hand how collaborative processes were evolving, and also allowed ‘validation’ of my analysis of the outcomes of earlier interviews.

3.3 Concerns regarding case study research

Concerns about the legitimacy and rigour of case study research are well documented. Yin describes case study research as having a ‘notoriety’ as a method of last resort, that he and others (e.g. Flyvbjerg, 2006) attest to an outdated and traditional view of social science research that saw case study research as a prelude to other ‘more rigorous’ (often quantitative) research methods. Case study research may be seen as purely ‘exploratory’, in a sequential sense, to collect preliminary data to see if a topic is worthy of further investigation by other social science methods.

A second part of that notoriety, according to Yin, relates to a lack of trust in the researcher’s data collection and analytic procedures (Yin, 2012, p. 6). Concerns here include that case studies may contain a bias toward verification, confirming the researcher’s pre-conceived notions; that procedures and documentation may be perceived to limit any generalisation of findings to any broader level.

Yin’s response to these limitation assertions is that:

- all methods, including case study research, have an exploratory mode, and that all methods can cover the entire range of situations, from exploration to completion of full and authoritative study, if systematic data collection and analysis procedures (Yin, 2012, p. 6) – and all can fail by the same test
- that good case study design will deal with methodological challenges by addressing concerns regarding construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Issues and risks associated with detailed design of components of my case study methods are discussed in following sections.

Flyvbjerg’s *Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research* (Flyvbjerg, 2006) addresses similar concerns and criticisms of a case study approach, and is useful for reflection when considering the detailed design of the study and the data collection and analysis procedures to be implemented. The five misunderstandings, Flyvbjerg’s response to them, and the relevance for my case study methodology, are:

1. *General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.*

Flyvbjerg contends that social science has yet to produce predictive, context-independent theory useful for phenomenological studies of human activity and in fact has nothing to offer but concrete, context-dependent knowledge. As the case study can be a good source of such knowledge he concludes that, for the study of human affairs, generation of context-dependent knowledge “is more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 7).

For this research, obtaining rich and contextualised data about planning practices in the case study cities is essential to answering the principal research question, filling the identified research gap, and gaining a nuanced understanding of the source and nature of tensions between state and local governments in the cities.

2. *One cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.*

Flyvbjerg and Yin agree that while small sample case study information may not be able to be broadly generalised, this limitation stands for any method where quantitative data may be used to broadly generalise. As Yin suggests, case studies tend to generalise to other situations (on the basis of analytic claims) whereas surveys and other quantitative methods tend to generalise to populations (on the basis of statistical claims) (Yin 2012, p. 19).

Flyvbjerg concludes that it is incorrect to conclude that generalisation cannot occur from even a single case – it depends on the nature of the case and how it is selected.

For my research, broad generalisation is not important. I am, however, applying a set of theoretical propositions (my anticipated explanatory factors) to two case study cities “where similar concepts, constructs, or sequences might be relevant” and as Yin suggests, generalising from one situation to another comparable situation. As Flyvbjerg suggests, that knowledge cannot be formally generalised does not mean that it cannot enter into the collective process of knowledge accumulation in a given field or in a society (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 10).

3. *The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses; that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building.*

This is an extension of the second ‘misunderstanding’ that again can be mediated by ensuring that the nature of the case (case selection) and the data sought are suited to the method. As Yin suggests, the ‘generalisation’ that I seek through this research may not be that of a conclusion but more of a ‘working hypothesis’ – that a common set of explanatory factors will be at play in both case study cities, but with different emphasis at different times.

The case study approach for this research, set out in following sections, provides an appropriate method for the comparison I wish to make – where results will be analysed in terms of my conceptual framework.

4. *The case study contains a bias toward verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher’s preconceived notions.*

Assertions that there is ‘more room’ in case study and other qualitative methods for the researcher’s subjective and arbitrary judgment, and that it may be less rigorous than

quantitative, hypothetico-deductive methods are challenged by Flyvbjerg and Yin. Flyvbjerg suggests that the proximity to reality that case study entails, and the nature of the learning process it generates for the researcher may be fundamental for advanced understanding. Only by placing themselves within the context being studied will researchers achieve that advanced understanding, because “only in this way can researchers understand the viewpoints and behaviour, which characterises social actors” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.20). Furthermore, experience indicates, says Flyvbjerg, that the case study approach contains a greater bias towards falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification.

The potential for my own preconceived notions to affect case study findings has been a key consideration in thinking about the research design because the motivation for commencing this research had its genesis in reflections about my practical experience working for state, metropolitan/regional and local government agencies in Greater Sydney. Auto-ethnography is one of three case study methods described in more detail in following sections.

Yin suggests that necessary rigour can and should be built into a case study approach, through establishing a theoretical framework that can be analysed to establish a logic that might be applicable to other situations; through careful construction of conceptual claims that can inform the analytical framework; through systematic and robust recording of data; and through obtaining data through multiple sources to allow triangulation of evidence as a ‘check’ against preconceived notions or corroboration of evidence (Yin, 2012, p. 13, 16-17).

5. It is often difficult to summarise and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

Flyvbjerg agrees that summarising case studies is often difficult, but suggests that it is often not desirable to summarise and generalise them. His view is that the narrative that is often a substantial element of case studies is the site of the rich learnings that only case study can bring, and that a ‘thick’ and hard to summarise narrative is probably a sign that the study has uncovered a particularly rich problem (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 21).

For this research, the narrative of planning practice in the two case study cities is the result, or the ‘virtual reality’ as Flyvbjerg puts it. However the narratives are expressed in terms of the anticipated explanatory factors developed in the conceptual framework in Chapters 1 and 2, thereby providing a practical method of ‘summarising’ and comparing results in the two cities.

3.4 Case selection

This is a multi-case study comparing contemporary data from two cities. An explanation building technique (Yin, 2014, p. 147) is applied, analysing case study data by building an explanation based in an initial explanatory proposition.

Sydney, NSW, Australia

The tension between state control and local autonomy in developing and delivering a regional plan for Greater Sydney, and aligning local plans with the regional vision, has been the overarching theme in debates around the NSW planning system in recent years, with the planning system and management of growth a key election issue at State government elections held every four years. This has seen a succession of Greater Sydney Regional Plans (2005, 2010, 2014, 2018) developed, but poorly implemented if at all. Significant state-driven planning system reforms aimed at streamlining development of medium density housing have been successfully stalled by strong local government and community objection and action.

My direct experience working for the NSW State Government Department of Planning during a period of ongoing state-driven local government and planning system reform was the motivation for commencing this research. My role in coordinating the roll-out of a new standardised local plan for every council in Greater Sydney, with the intent of aligning those plans with a draft regional plan containing contentious housing and employment targets for each local government area, raised questions about the efficacy of a ‘top-down’ approach that over-rode local strategic planning outcomes that had been developed through community strategic planning processes, themselves mandated by the state government.

The resultant tensions between state and local governments meant that state-government desired density uplift in local plans was either not achieved or delayed for several years. In the meantime, a landmark state election occurred, with a conservative government coming into power in the biggest landslide defeat in NSW election history, on the back of a promise to install a completely new planning system in its first term of government. It failed to do so, again because of community and local government concern at what appeared to be similar ‘top-down’ proposals, where local communities might have very little meaningful say in articulating a regional vision.

For all of these reasons Sydney, with its concurrent and highly problematical policies around forced local government amalgamations (Grant and Drew, p.p.364-381), is an interesting case from which to analyse the tensions between state control and local autonomy in the local/regional strategic planning space.

Vancouver, BC, Canada

The second case study city is Vancouver BC Canada. I had become aware of Vancouver as a city that had built a reputation for reaching agreements about growth through my work with the NSW state government. Vancouver was one of a number of cities referenced by the NSW Government in documents supporting planning system reform proposals as “leading international practice” in planning for growth and community based planning (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2012, p. 23) but has more similar legislative and governance

arrangements with NSW than the USA examples also quoted. The NSW Government said that it saw community-based planning as fundamental to the local/regional agreements that had been brokered in Greater Vancouver and sought to capitalise on this success through suggesting similar approaches for a new planning system in NSW.

During a visit to Sydney by a former City Planning Director in the Vancouver area, (and one of the interviewees for this research) I attended a presentation given by her to NSW State Government planning staff about what had occurred in Vancouver and what lessons there may be for Sydney. She described a planning system, including strategic and statutory planning instruments, that appeared very similar to the NSW system, as well as the collaborative approach taken to strategic planning at the local and regional scale. I was intrigued to hear the former City Planning Director warn against attempting to simply transfer a Vancouver collaborative planning model to Sydney and expect to get the same results – her advice being that there were different factors at play during some very successful collaborative planning episodes in Greater Vancouver during the late 1990's and early 2000's, and in the present day, to those factors likely to be at play in Greater Sydney in 2013.

This shaped my research aim, of exploring the factors that facilitate or mitigate local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes. Vancouver seemed a very interesting case from which to analyse the factors at play in the local/regional planning space and make comparisons with practice in Sydney.

3.5 Data collection methods

The case studies employ three data collection methods: document analysis, in-depth interview and autoethnography.

3.5.1 Document analysis

Document analysis can provide the researcher with information about the background context of the study and can identify areas for investigation later in the study, and questions to be asked in interviews (Goodrick, 2013). Document analysis undertaken in this research allowed:

- an initial assessment of the nature of the planning systems and legislation that establishes them
- review of the kinds of planning instruments required to be prepared by legislation or through administrative arrangements, and by whom
- review of publicly available reports by state, regional and local authorities
- review of media articles related to local and regional planning
- reports and submissions by industry/sector groups and stakeholder groups
- review of documents recommended to me by interviewees

- a post-interview phase review to validate and adjust my initial assessment of the nature of the planning systems and role and weight of instruments and reports.

Analysis of information obtained through the initial document review was the source of the anticipated explanatory factors, described in Chapter 1, that form the basis of the analytical framework described in following sections. Table 3 summarises the documents reviewed.

Table 3: Nature of documents reviewed

Legislation and legislated documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Provincial Government Acts and Regulations • Regional Plans • Local Plans • Community Strategic Plans/Official Community Plans • Regional Context Statements (BC)
Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Paper and White Paper for draft legislation (NSW) • Regional Planning Agency reports • Local council reports • Background reports to local and regional strategic plans • Submissions to exhibition of draft legislation or proposed new administrative procedures • Government and industry group/stakeholder web-pages
Memoranda of Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-governmental agreements (NSW) • MOU North Shore Collaborative Pilot Project (BC)
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial media releases • Agency media releases • Newspaper articles • State, regional and local web-pages • Academic and resident group/community member blogs

Risks associated with document review process

Risks associated with the document review process are considered minimal.

Government agency and local council reports used were all publicly available on institutional websites. Any confidential documents that I may have had access to during my working experience in state and local governments were not considered or utilised, to ensure confidentiality risks were avoided (Goodrick, 2013, p.32).

There is a risk that explanations are suppressed in publicly available government documents, for example why a particular development/rezoning decision was supported, or why a particular office lost their job. For this reason, media reports, community organisation blogs and detailed in-depth interviews are utilised to gain background information. There is an associated risk that information from media reports may exaggerate or present a biased view. The multiple document sources combined with the cross-checking of information obtained through in-depth interviews and autoethnography mitigates these risks.

In the case of the Vancouver case study, interview participants alerted me to important legislation and reports that I may not have been aware of. In-depth interviews in both cities provided a check on the range of documents I had accessed and on preparation and approval protocols for them.

3.5.2 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews undertaken in Vancouver and Sydney were the richest source of case study data.

Selection of interviewees

A total of thirty-six qualitative interviews were undertaken in the two case study cities. The first interview was undertaken, in Vancouver, on 25 July 2015. The final interview was undertaken, in Vancouver, on 12 October 2017.

Forty two interview requests were sent, six contacts either not responding or unable to suggest a suitable time to meet or call. The thirty-six interviews were undertaken with a total of twenty-six interviewees. This was principally because the case studies started as cross-sectional studies but became more longitudinal in nature due to particular planning episodes underway, meaning that in the Vancouver case I undertook follow-up interviews with key participants to obtain their views on the progress of an embedded pilot project in the city, to validate data and analysis from previous interviews, and to obtain their opinions on reports of a changing 'culture' of planning and collaboration in the city. In both case study cities institutions targeted were limited to state/regional government agencies and local councils. The focus of the research is the processes around alignment of local and regional strategic plans, which directly involves those institutional groups in both cities. I did not interview community groups or development industry groups/stakeholders, who have input into local and regional strategic planning processes but are not directly involved in decision making about plans and plan-alignment. The interests of communities generally should be represented in those decision-making processes by the state, regional and local authorities.

Initially I intended to undertake semi-structured interviews with metropolitan planning agency staff in Sydney and Vancouver and in four local authorities in each city. Potential local councils were initially identified in both cities on the basis of their function and location in their region – including inner-core, outer-core, urban fringe, high growth and low growth councils. Relevant Sydney state and local government organisations were known through the author's working experience. In practice, the number of local authorities and interviews increased, due to the snowballing effect, and the morphing longitudinal nature of the Greater Vancouver case study, and because I simply had lesser understanding of how planning was done in Vancouver and that required greater interrogation of actors. In Sydney the number of local authorities increased from four to

five to ensure a recently ‘amalgamated’ council was included. However, the number of interviewees was reduced to one from each local authority, and two from the regional planning agency. This was because the autoethnographic component of the Sydney case study (described in the next section) meant not as many interviews were required, and because there was less response to interview requests from local planners in the Greater Sydney region.

Initial Vancouver contacts were provided by the local Vancouver contact for this research, a Professor at the University of British Columbia. ‘Snowballing’ occurred from initial interviews with a former Regional Planning Director and the current Regional Planning Director at the Metro Vancouver Authority, with recommendations being made for additional Metro Vancouver staff, and local council staff, who would have been directly involved in negotiating and integrating local and regional planning in the Greater Vancouver area. The initial interview with the current Regional Planning Director at the Metro Vancouver Authority, in July 2015, also identified the existence of a pilot project that had just commenced on the North Shore of the City. This was a collaboration between the Metro Vancouver Authority, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, Translink, and three adjoining North Shore councils.

The pilot project was added to the Vancouver case study, adding more councils and interviewees to the Vancouver inventory. It also led to a longitudinal approach being taken, over two years, with follow up interviews with the Metro Vancouver, Translink and council staff undertaken over successive visits to the city to discuss progress and challenges with the project. This project provided an ideal comparison with the way planning around a new metro station was being undertaken for three North Shore councils in Greater Sydney (two of whom were interviewed).

In Vancouver, it was decided to interview elected representatives, as well as planners, for a number of councils. This was because:

1. The Board and Regional Planning Committee of the Metro Vancouver Authority are made up of Mayors and elected representatives of member councils, and it was important to understand whether direct elected representative participation in decision-making at the regional level was important to success (noting that there are no elected representatives on the Board or any committee of the Greater Sydney Commission).
2. The author was invited (by the current Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director) to address the Metro Vancouver Authority Regional Planning Committee about this research and about the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission, and was introduced to elected representatives who expressed interest in being interviewed for the research.
3. Mayors of the three councils in the North Shore Pilot Project were also members of the Metro Vancouver Authority Regional Planning Committee.

Elected representatives were not interviewed in Sydney because shortly after commencement of this research the NSW State Government commenced forced amalgamations of local councils in the Greater Sydney region. Councils were sacked with State Government appointed Administrators replacing them, and the number of councils (in what was ultimately a failed amalgamation program) in Greater Sydney reduced from 41 to 33 local councils (the State Government's aim had been to reduce the number of Greater Sydney councils to around 25). One new Sydney Council was chosen for case study, following the amalgamations, as it is now one of the largest local government areas in Sydney, and located in a rapidly developing, central-western part of the city.

In both Sydney and Vancouver, some participants were able to provide reflections on their experience working in both a local council and for the metropolitan planning agency for the city. This provided very rich material for understanding some of the practices that might facilitate or mitigate local strategic planning outcomes having influence on regional planning outcomes. One Sydney participant was able to reflect on working as a planner and general manager in two councils, both before and after establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission, and before and after forced local council amalgamations.

One participant was able to provide very valuable reflection on local and regional strategic planning practice in both Sydney and Vancouver. She reflected on four roles, having worked as a strategic planner for key local councils in both Sydney and Vancouver, and for the regional planning agencies in both cities, developing and implementing regional plans across multiple local government areas. One participant was a former city planning director in Vancouver and subsequently worked as a consultant to state and local planning agencies in Sydney, providing another rich source of data comparison.

Interviewee demographics

As discussed above, interviewees were selected through a process of identifying government institutions directly involved in preparing and aligning local and regional strategic plans, and then by identifying key personnel who work in those institutions. This has, however, resulted in a group of interviewees who are not directly representative of the populations of the two cities in terms of age, gender and ethnicity, and the demographic mix of respondents may have the potential to skew responses.

Ethnicity of respondents: Greater Sydney and Greater Vancouver are both culturally and linguistically diverse city-regions. Both have accepted high rates of population international in-migration over many decades. Ethnicity of interview respondents is based on personal observation of the author. In general, there was little ethnic diversity observed in interviewees in both cities. The majority of respondents were of Western appearance and origin, with one respondent in the Greater Vancouver of South Asian origin.

Age: Of the twenty-six interviewees, the majority were of a younger demographic, including elected representatives. Twenty of the interviewees (or approximately 77 per cent) were observed to be in the age range 25-50 years of age, with six (or approximately 23 per cent) observed to be in the range 50-70 years of age.

Gender: Sixteen (or approximately 62 per cent) of respondents were male, and ten (or approximately 38 percent) interviewees were female.

Summary: Due of the focus of this research, and the questions asked of interviewees about their involvement in plan making and plan-alignment processes in government, I did not conclude that the demographic representation described above had bearing on the data collected.

Tables 4 to 7 set out the relevance of the participants in terms of agency and position.

Table 4. Greater Vancouver municipality participants

Local authority 1	Local authority 2	Local authority 3	Local authority 4	Local authority 5	Local authority 6	Local authority 7
LV1 Planning Director – 2 interviews	LV3 Planning Director	LV4 Planning Director		LV6 Planning Director	LV8 Planning Director	LV 10 Planning Director
LV2 Mayor & MV Regional Planning Committee member			LV5 Councillor & MV Regional Planning Committee member	LV7 Mayor & MV Regional Planning Committee member	LV9 Mayor & MV Regional Planning Committee member	
3 interviews	1 interview	1 interview	1 Interview	2 interviews	2 interviews	1 interview

Table 5. Vancouver regional planning agency and transport agency and academic participants (one regional planning commentator, three former regional and local planning directors)

Academics/former local and regional planning directors	Regional Planning Agency	Regional Transport Agency
AV1 Professor, Community and Regional Planning	MV1 Regional Planning Director – 3 interviews	TV1 Director System Planning
AV2 Adjunct Professor, Community and Regional Planning, and former Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director – 3 interviews	MV2 – Regional Planning Manager - 2 interviews	TV2 Senior Planner System planning
AV3 Adjunct Professor, Community and Regional Planning, and former City Planning Director – 3 interviews	MV3 Planning Division Manager – 2 interviews	TV3 Planning Manager
AV4 Adjunct Professor, Community and Regional Planning, former Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Manager, former Vancouver city council planner and former regional and local planner in Greater Sydney		
8 interviews	7 interviews	3 interviews

Table 6. Greater Sydney local council participants

Local authority 1	Local authority 2	Local authority 3	Local authority 4	Local authority 5	Local authority 6
LS1 Planning Director	LS2 Planning Director)	LS3 Planning Director	LS4 General Manager	LS5 Planning Director	LS6 Planning Manager
1 interview	1 interview	1 interview obtaining information for two local councils			1 interview

Table 7. Greater Sydney regional planning agency participants

Regional Planning Agency	
MS1 Former Regional Planning Director	MS2 Regional Planning Director
1 interview	1 interview

Interview technique

Interviews were semi-structured, face-to-face, and of approximately one hour in duration. Follow-up interviews were generally focussed on one or more issues that had been raised in initial interviews ('member checking' to enhance validity). All interviewees were emailed a Participant Information Sheet, at least a week prior to interview, briefly outlining the research aim and explaining how interview data would be used. The Participant Information Sheet clarified that anonymity of the interviewees would be maintained in the thesis. Here I note that some participants indicated, during interview, that they were happy to be named as their views were well known or they had no fear of their views being known. I chose to retain anonymity for all participants.

No interview questions were sent or requested prior to interview. The majority of interviews were recorded (with the participant's explicit permission) with the few that were not requiring note-taking during the interview, with a more detailed transcript of the interview developed from those notes immediately after interview conclusion. Key points were also noted by hand in recorded interviews. All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by the author.

Interviews were held at a time and location determined by the interviewees. Most interviews were held in the offices of the local and regional planning agencies where the participants worked, with the remainder being held in convenient locations close to the participants' place of work (quiet cafes and the like) with several being held at the private homes of participants.

Return visits were made to Vancouver (April 2015, July 2016, November 2016, and October 2017) as the case studies evolved from a cross-sectional approach only to an approach incorporating longitudinal analysis. This allowed follow-up interviews and cross-checking of responses with participants who had replaced earlier participants in similar roles.

A standard procedure was adopted for interviews. A brief overview of the research aim and the rationale for interviewing the particular participant was provided, and then a context setting question asked about the participant's location and role within the meta-governance

arrangements surrounding development and alignment of local and regional strategic plans in their region. A different emphasis was applied depending on the position of the participant (staff member or elected representative; regional or local government agency). If interviews strayed or went into unrelated detail the participant wanted to focus on, the list of anticipated explanatory factors developed in the conceptual framework was used to steer participants into relevant themes. This thematic approach to the semi-structured interviews allowed fluid interview processes where questions emerged during the interview (Goodrick, 2013, p.26). This approach led to interviewees in both case study cities discussing aspects of my ‘anticipated explanatory factors’ throughout the interviews. I was therefore able to analyse interview data through the transcription process (Silverman, 2005, p.169),

Risks associated with interviewee selection and technique

Risks associated with interviewee selection were:

- in Greater Sydney: that my working relationship with planners at both the local and regional agency level might influence my selection of participants towards those whom I thought would validate the proposition in my conceptual framework
- in Vancouver: that my lack of knowledge of actors in local and regional planning agencies, and resultant reliance on ‘snowballing’ from initial contacts provided to me by my University of British Columbia PhD contact in that city, might result in me being referred to participants sharing similar viewpoints.

These risks were mitigated:

- in Sydney: by selecting local government areas to target because of their location and function in the Greater Sydney region, rather than on the basis of any known views of the Planning Director/relevant contact in that local council; through selecting both a current regional planning director and former regional planning director (now working for local government) who had lost her job with the state government around development of regional plans; and by validating responses through having 3 methods of data collection for the city from which responses could be triangulated
- in Vancouver: through my initial University of British Columbia contact providing me with contact details for a current and a former regional planning director for the Greater Vancouver region, the latter whom he suggested might give me a “less sanitised view” (AV1, April 2016) of how regional plans and local plans were developed and aligned; through those two contacts then providing me with a suite of local government contacts whom they thought might provide a range of views, including one local council that had recently been involved in a Supreme Court case with the Metro Vancouver Authority over its refusal to align its local plan with the regional plan; through triangulation of data via the multiple method approach to data collection.

3.5.3 Autoethnography

A component of the data collection is autoethnographical, particularly for the Greater Sydney case study. This is evident in the research in:

1. The context setting chapter for planning practice in both case study cities, in Chapter 4. This is informed by my direct work experience in local, regional and state government agencies in the Greater Sydney region, and more detail of the planning system in the Greater Sydney context is provided. The Vancouver context was largely informed through document analysis and interview data.
2. Development of my conceptual framework, including the anticipated explanatory factors developed in Chapters 1 and 2, is informed by my work experience in Sydney, in addition to findings from the literature review.
3. My analysis of data from both document review and in-depth interviews – which provided results that challenged some of my assumptions about how participants might understand why certain processes and outcomes were evident in the case study cities.

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, I have worked in various roles in the NSW State Government planning agency, the Department of Planning. I have also worked as a senior planning staff member and Planning Director in a number of local councils in NSW. My planning roles have always related to preparation of local strategic and statutory plans and their relationship and alignment with state government priorities through state planning policies or through regional strategic plans – regional strategic plans being enshrined in NSW planning legislation relatively recently compared to the Vancouver/BC example. My work as planning practitioner, particularly work for the State Government in developing and implementing a new ‘standardised’ local zoning plan for all councils in NSW, including the Greater Sydney Region, provided the motivation for undertaking research into how planning is done, and how local and regional plans are aligned in different jurisdictions.

I was employed as a consultant to the NSW State Government, after commencing this research, to assist in establishing and operationalising the Greater Sydney Commission, a regional planning agency established in January 2016. As such, I was able to observe and reflect on the governance arrangements and operating procedures of that agency. I have since undertaken consulting work for the State Government developing and implementing key policy reforms aimed at improving the alignment between local and regional plans.

My working experience, where I have worked directly with local councils in shaping their local plans to align with state and regional ‘imperatives’ contained in regional plans, has contributed to a personal assessment that the NSW planning system responds in a ‘top-down’ manner, a ‘state expert’ and instrumental rationalist approach to alignment of plans. I have directly experienced local councils complaining about an approach that they too see as ‘top-down’. This personal view has been validated in statements from the State

Government itself, as it has attempted to reform the NSW planning system, saying that it wants to change the NSW planning system from ‘combative to collaborative’. However, I have been cognisant that I entered this research project with that personal view, and have triangulated data by means of ‘examining the record’ through the document analysis (which includes statements and media releases from the NSW State Government about the need to reform the system to make it more collaborative); through the interviews with planning practitioners in Greater Sydney, where I was interested to hear a quite different view from a State Government regional planning director to my own views about how collaborative plan-making processes had been; and through a multi-method data collection process in both case study cities.

While visiting Vancouver undertaking interviews, the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director invited me to attend and address a meeting of the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee about my research and the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission. I was able to observe debate and decision-making processes for a range of regional planning matters, which I reflect on in analysing data for both case study cities.

The autoethnographic component of the research is essentially descriptive and analytic – so more accurately described as ‘analytic autoethnography’ rather than ‘evocative autoethnography’ (Anderson, 2006; Mendez, 2013). Autoethnography is a narrative form of writing which fits well with the narrative essence of case study research (Dyson, 2007, p. 40).

Risks associated with an autoethnographic approach

While there are benefits for this approach the clear risk is that my subjective view of my real-world experiences may bias my findings and conclusions about the factors that have been at play in influencing if and how local strategic planning outcomes can have influence on regional strategic planning outcomes.

This risk is mitigated through a multi-method data collection approach. Both the interviews and document review undertaken for Greater Sydney provide a check on my autoethnographic approach to describing planning practice in the city. Data triangulation utilising data from multiple sources strengthens the construct validity of my case study approach (Yin, 2014, p. 121). The data triangulation consisted in part of cross-checking interview data with document review data, and reflection on my own views about the NSW planning system against views that I heard from a number of interviewees in both Greater Sydney and Greater Vancouver (as identified above, some Greater Vancouver interviewees had also worked in Greater Sydney, and so had an understanding of the nature of planning systems in both jurisdictions). Member checking, through testing my emerging findings with the research participants, was also utilised as a method of mitigating potential researcher bias in the Greater Sydney case study, and to validate findings in the Greater Vancouver case.

3.6 Analysing the case study data – the analytic framework

The analytic technique applied is that of an ‘explanation building’ case study (Yin, 2014, p. 147). The conceptual framework for the research described in Chapter 1 makes the initial claim that there is a set of explanatory factors and related indicators, the manifestation of which, in different configurations in the two case study cities over time, may explain how local strategic planning outcomes have made their way up to, and had influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes, or not.

A thematic, interpretive analysis of the documentary and interview data was undertaken against these factors. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and transcripts reviewed line by line to identify references to the factors and/or their component themes or indicators (see Table 8). The results are described in terms of the key factors and combinations of factors that are identified, and then through explanation of how and why particular approaches have been taken to local and regional strategic planning in the case study city. Rival explanations are explored. The interview data itself reveals some of these rival explanations.

The findings for each case study city are then compared. This provides a narrative about what factors and combinations of factors have been important in facilitating or mitigating local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having any influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes. From this comparison practical and theoretical lessons can be drawn about how the consonance between local and regional strategic planning might be strengthened.

Table 8: Anticipated explanatory factors

Factor	Component theme
1. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of regional planning and cooperation• Legislative framework• Structure and culture
2. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal power• Network power• Political champions and visionary leaders
3. Rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicative vs instrumental• Joint problem definition• Joint decision making• Capacity building and joint learning
4. Approaches to strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visionary vs regulatory• Deal-making cities vs plan-making cities• Top-down vs bottom-up

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter describes an appropriate methodology for obtaining and analysing the qualitative data I need to address my research aim and questions. To understand how and why planning practice has been successful or not in strengthening consonance between local and regional strategic planning, an explanation-building, multiple case study approach is applied.

Case study cities of Sydney NSW Australia and Vancouver BC Canada have been chosen because they demonstrate similar regional and local planning issues, legislation, planning instruments and documents. They make an interesting comparison for investigating the factors that may facilitate or mitigate local strategic planning processes making their way up to and having influence on regional planning processes because, despite planning issues, legislature, and actor similarities they are governed by metropolitan planning agencies that adopt very different approaches to regional governance and decision making.

Multiple data collection methods are employed: document analysis, in-depth interview and autoethnography. The key source of data is in-depth interviews in both case study cities, backed up by an autoethnographical approach in Sydney where I have extensive experience in government at state, regional and local levels. Risks related to the approach taken have been identified and mitigation strategies considered.

Chapter 4 Setting the scene - regional planning and governance in the Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney regions

This chapter explores the planning systems in British Columbia, Canada, and NSW, Australia, as they relate to the Greater Vancouver Regional and Greater Sydney Regionⁱⁱⁱ respectively. It describes the history and origins of regional cooperation and collaboration in the two places, and the ways that these beginnings have shaped regional planning processes and the relationship between state, regional and local authorities over many decades. The current statutory, administrative and governance arrangements for land-use planning in the Greater Vancouver Region and the Greater Sydney Region are examined in the light of this history, and in terms of Healey's conception of governance culture as an important dimension of governance (Healey, 2006). This review helps place current planning systems and processes, and the current state of the relationships between the levels of government, within the theoretical setting for regional strategic planning processes described in the review of literature at Chapter 2.

4.1 Regional and local planning in Greater Vancouver - a history of regional cooperation

The most widely recognised starting point for regional planning in British Columbia is in 1948, when amendments were made to the *Town Planning Act 1925* to establish regional planning boards (Chadwick, 2002 p. 5). However Cameron^{iv} (1999) argues that a mentality conducive to regional cooperation in the province has its roots earlier and deeper than that. First, he points to a jurisdictional difference reflecting the fact that ninety percent of the province's land base is Crown land and managed for forestry or other resource industry purposes. More than 90% of British Columbia is not incorporated municipally, with no form of local government other than relatively recently established regional districts. Cameron says these jurisdictional arrangements reflect the physical reality that most of British Columbia's land is not suitable for human habitation and those lands that are suitable are subject to considerable development constraints from flood and land instability, mountains and sea, and competing land uses such as fisheries, forestry and agriculture (Cameron, 1999).

Secondly, and importantly for any comparison with governance arrangements in other jurisdictions, regional cooperation in British Columbia has its roots in joint service boards voluntarily established in the early part of the 20th century. Lower Mainland municipalities, faced with the reality that water supply and sewerage disposal in a challenging physical environment could be more efficiently dealt with jointly, established service boards to undertake these functions with the joint arrangements later ratified by provincial enabling legislation. Cameron says:

From these arrangements came the principles of voluntary membership, upward delegation of power and local solutions validated by provincial legislation. These have been the hallmarks of regional government legislation to this day. They were reflected in later arrangements for regional parks and regional planning in the 1940s and 1950s.

(Cameron, 1999)

Table 9: Organisations and legislation relating to metropolitan Vancouver planning

1911	Burrard Peninsula Joint Sewerage Committee established to manage pollution and sewage disposal
1914	Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District (GVSDD) established
1926	Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD) established
1948	Amendments made to the <i>Town Planning Act 1925</i> to establish regional planning boards and regional areas
1949	Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board established – known for its regional planning vision of 1963, “Cities in a Sea of Green”
1965	Regional District legislation adopted by the BC Province
1968	Regional District of Fraser-Burrard renamed the Greater Vancouver Regional District
1972	Administration of GVSDD, GVWD and Greater Vancouver Parks District amalgamated within GVRD
1973	Agricultural Land Commission established and GVRD assigned a role in ‘Agricultural Land Reserve’ program
1975	Liveable Region Plan produced by GVRD
1996	Liveable Region Strategic Plan adopted by Metro Vancouver and local governments
2007	Province changes structure of Translink Board – from elected to non-elected representatives
2011	Adoption of Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future regional growth strategy

Adapted from McDougall, Mussell and Yang, 2017

Table 9 above provides a brief chronology of some of the more significant governance and legislative changes that have shaped regional planning outcomes in the Greater Vancouver

Region. The establishment of the Agricultural Land Commission in 1973 and the related Agricultural Land Reserve program was a response to rapid urban encroachment on farmland in the Lower Mainland and southern BC in general. Agricultural lands zoned as Agricultural Land Reserve are protected from subdivision or other non-farming uses unless made exempt (McDougall et al, 2017). Decisions about such exemptions, for example to allow rezoning of land for urban purposes, are made by the Agricultural Land Commission, in a separate process under different legislation from the land use planning decisions made by the municipalities. This provides a separation of powers that has been significant in preserving productive agricultural lands while also containing urban sprawl and encouraging compact, or more dense, development on other lands (McDougall et al, 2017).

However, Greater Vancouver's tri-level governance arrangements have not always been happy ones, particularly with regard to regional land use planning. Utilising 1965 legislation establishing regional districts, run by boards with representatives nominated by participating councils, the pre-existing special-purpose boards in Vancouver were largely and gradually merged into what became the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), which along with 27 other regional districts in the province had been charged with the two statutory functions of regional land use planning and regional hospital planning. Regional land use planning, however, proved difficult to do without 'real or perceived intrusions on local autonomy and on areas of significant policy interest to the provincial government' (Cameron 1999).

Regulatory powers over municipal planning, inherited from pre-regional district days and transferred to 4 new regional districts in the Vancouver Lower Mainland and then on to the subsequent Official Regional Plans, had 'more of the features of hierarchy than of upward delegation' (Cameron 1999). In the recession of the early 1980s, frustrated by arguments over agricultural land and transit routes, the provincial government legislated in 1983 to remove the powers of regional districts related to planning and to rescind all Official Regional Plans.

Despite the province removing official planning powers the GVRD continued a regional planning service after 1983, based on the tradition of voluntary municipal involvement and support and upward delegation. Once again, this voluntary arrangement was under-pinned by subsequent provincial legislation in 1989 which permitted regional districts to provide non-regulatory "development services". (Cameron 1999)

Rapid growth in the late 1980s saw the GVRD commence a regional response, the commencement of a visioning and growth management planning process, and a provincial/regional joint transportation planning process. These processes evolved without overarching or enabling provincial legislation. The GVRD board and its members established rules for completing and adopting a regional plan on a consensual basis. These voluntary rules formed the basis for new legislation, the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act* 1995, which reinstated a provincial legislative mandate for growth management planning by

the regional district boards. In 1996 the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Darlene Marzari, recognised the GVRD *Liveable Region Strategic Plan* as a regional strategy under the new legislation. Ken Cameron, the Manager Strategic Planning for GVRD at the time, said shortly after:

Greater Vancouver now has the best of both worlds: a growth management strategy that was developed through consultation and voluntarily supported by all 20 member municipalities and that has formal relationships in legislation to municipal and provincial planning and policies. (Cameron, 1999)

The Provincial legislation creating regions and regional planning authorities contains principles for relationships between the levels of government that facilitate a partnership arrangement, rather than a hierarchy of authority.

This partnership arrangement is explored in more detail in Chapter 5, Greater Vancouver Case Study, which describes interview data on ‘how planning is done’ in Greater Vancouver. This federated model will be contrasted with governance arrangements for planning authorities and ‘how planning is done’ in Greater Sydney in Chapter 6.

4.1.1 Metro Vancouver Authority

The former GVRD is now part of ‘a political body and corporate entity’ known as Metro Vancouver, which incorporates 4 separate corporate entities operating as a ‘regional district’ under the provincial legislation. Metro Vancouver is a large organisation with operations divided into ten ‘Regional Services’, including Air Quality, Solid Waste, Water, Regional Parks and Regional Planning (Metro Vancouver, 2016, website).

The Metro Vancouver Board is made up of 40 elected representatives^v from the 23 local government areas^{vi} comprising the Greater Vancouver Region, while the Regional Planning Committee, which makes recommendations to the Board, comprises 12 of those elected representatives.

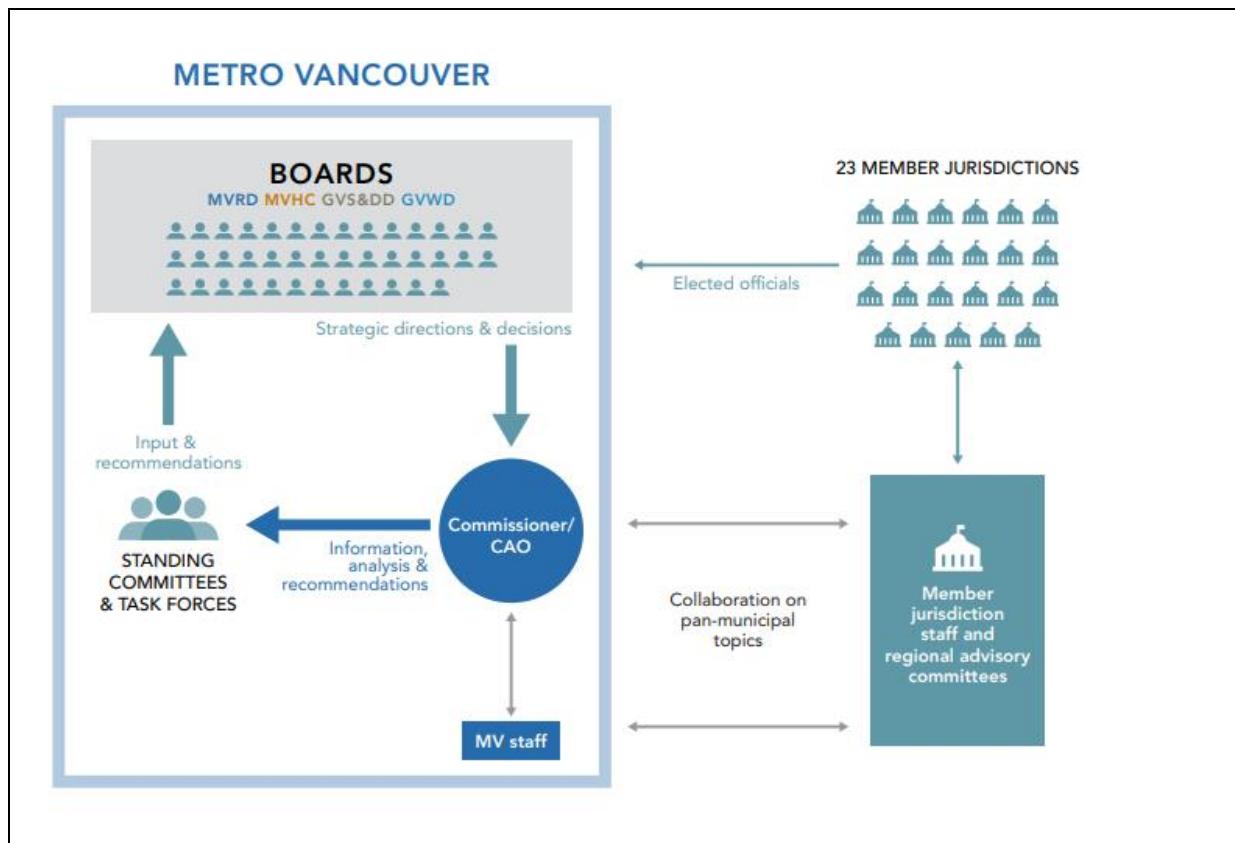
The composition of the Metro Vancouver Board is shown at Figure 2.

The Regional Planning and Housing Services division of Metro Vancouver ‘develops and stewards’ *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future*, the current regional growth strategy for the Greater Vancouver area. Greater Vancouver has a population in excess of 2.5 million people across its 23 local government areas. Metro Vancouver partners with its member councils to undertake regional land use planning that “strives to contain and structure the growth coming to our region, protect important lands, and ensure the efficient provision of infrastructure (i.e. utilities, transit and community amenities)” (Metro Vancouver, 2016).

As described above, Metro Vancouver administers a range of urban services. These include drinking water, wastewater treatment and solid waste management, as well as air quality, regional parks, affordable housing and urban growth planning. There are a number of

committees administering these service areas, all made up of elected representatives, as with the Regional Planning Committee. Elected representatives are nominated for the Board and Committees each year, and rotate between the service areas.

Figure 2: Metro Vancouver Board Structure



Source: Metro Vancouver website

4.1.2 Current planning legislation in Greater Vancouver

The legislation that enables the planning system in Greater Vancouver reflects the long history of regional cooperation and collaboration in the city.

The planning system is established principally under the *British Columbia Local Government Act 2015* (the BCLG Act). Other related and important Provincial legislation related to land use planning in Vancouver is the *BC Community Charter 2003* (the Community Charter) and, for the City of Vancouver local government area specifically, the *Vancouver Charter 1953* (the Vancouver Charter).

While there are striking similarities between the planning system and legislation operating in British Columbia and NSW planning system and legislation, there are also significant differences reflecting their different histories.

The recently amended BCLG Act still contains the 'Principles for government relations', a feature of the previous *British Columbia Local Government Act 1996*. These principles seek

to foster “cooperative relations between the Provincial government and regional districts....in order to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the citizens of British Columbia” (s186 BCLG 2015).

Principles for regional district-provincial relations

186 The relationship between regional districts and the Provincial government in relation to this Act is based on the following principles:

- (a) cooperative relations between the Provincial government and regional districts are to be fostered in order to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the citizens of British Columbia;***
- (b) regional districts need the powers that allow them to draw on the resources required to fulfill their responsibilities;***
- (c) notice and consultation is needed for Provincial government actions that directly affect regional district interests;***
- (d) the Provincial government recognizes that different regional districts and their communities have different needs and circumstances and so may require different approaches;***
- (e) the independence of regional districts is balanced by the responsibility of the Provincial government to consider the interests of the citizens of British Columbia generally.***

Related to, and referred to in the BCLG is the BC *Community Charter 2003*. The Community Charter repeats and builds on the principles contained in the BCLG, in *Section 2 Principles of municipal-provincial relations*. It contains “Principles of municipal governance”.

Principles of municipal governance

1 (1) Municipalities and their councils are recognized as an order of government within their jurisdiction that

- (a) is democratically elected, autonomous, responsible and accountable,***
- (b) is established and continued by the will of the residents of their communities, and***
- (c) provides for the municipal purposes of their communities.***

The Community Charter further establishes ‘principles of municipal-provincial relations’:

Principles of municipal-provincial relations

2 (1) The citizens of British Columbia are best served when, in their relationship, municipalities and the Provincial government

- (a) acknowledge and respect the jurisdiction of each,*
- (b) work towards harmonization of Provincial and municipal enactments, policies and programs, and*
- (c) foster cooperative approaches to matters of mutual interest.*
(Community Charter 2003)

The Community Charter goes on to describe the relationship between municipalities and the Provincial government, which should be based on principles of mutual respect, including that the Provincial government must not assign responsibilities to municipalities unless there is provision for resources required to fulfil those responsibilities. The Charter is important in considerations of local autonomy, stating that municipalities and their councils are “an order of government” that is “democratically elected, autonomous, responsible and accountable” (Community Charter SBC 2003).

The Provincial legislation relating to local government and to land use planning therefore goes not only to the nature of the planning local government will undertake, but to the nature of relationships between the Provincial, regional and local governments, as they work together. The legislation establishes the basis for the governance culture in British Columbia, the ‘formal and informal structures for policing discourses and practices’ that Healey refers to in her ‘Dimensions of Governance’ (Healey, 2006, p. 327).

The long history of cooperative relationships between the levels of government appears to have influenced the enabling legislation, which has sometimes been amended to retrospectively confirm collaborative arrangements that are working well. The legislative framework in Greater Vancouver is therefore one of the ‘anticipated explanatory factors’ I investigate through this case study research, to assess its contribution to Greater Vancouver’s international reputation for good urban governance.

There is no such reference to the nature of the relationships between State, metropolitan and local governments in NSW local government and planning legislation, or to the governance arrangements through which planning ‘will be done’, other than very direct legal requirements for local plans to be aligned with regional and district level plans prepared by State agencies.

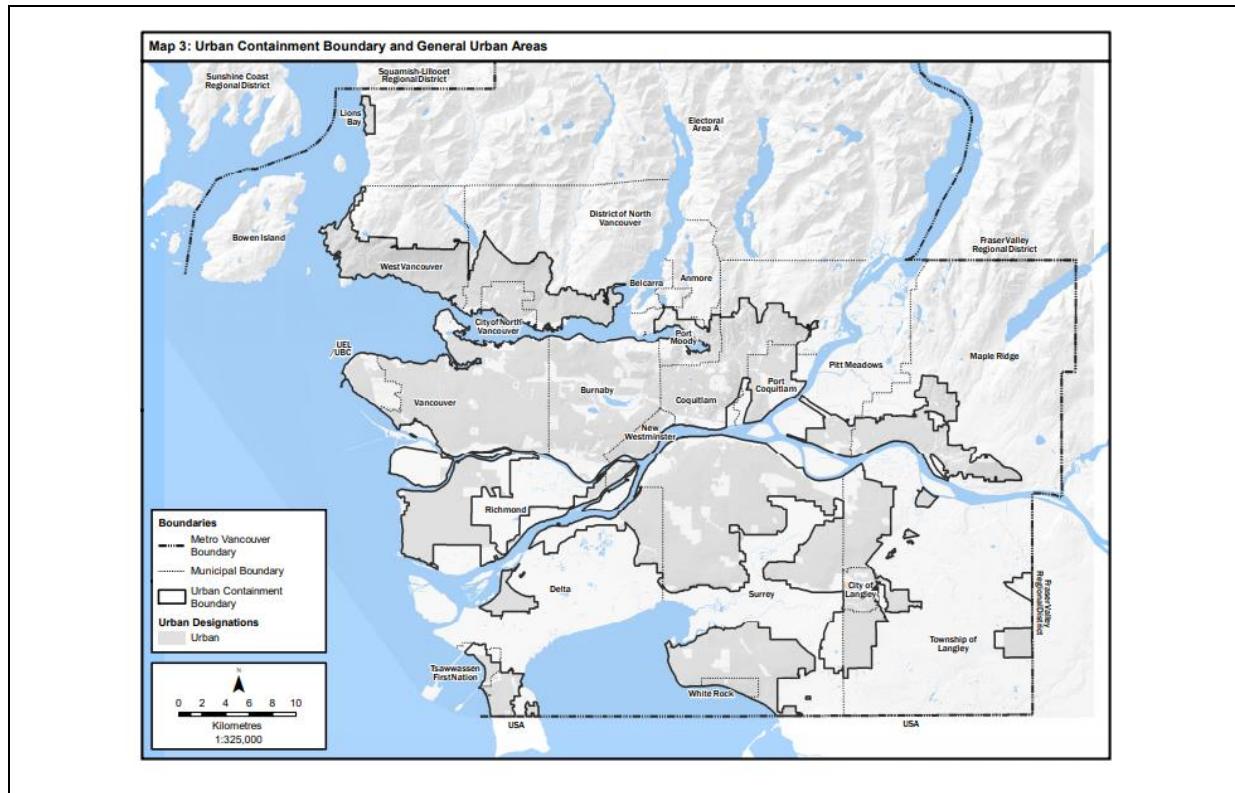
Important related legislation is the BC *Agricultural Land Commission Act 2002*. This Act has a significant bearing on local and regional land use planning in the region, and as described in Chapter 5, identifies the Agricultural Land Reserve which has shaped the outcomes of successive regional strategic plans in the Greater Vancouver Region.

4.1.3 Regional growth strategies

It is the BCLG Act that enables establishment of ‘regional districts’ and preparation of ‘regional growth strategies’. It provides that a regional board, like the Metro Vancouver Board, may adopt a regional growth strategy for the purpose of guiding decisions on growth, change and development within its regional district.

Figure 3 shows the extent of the Greater Vancouver Region.

Figure 3: Greater Vancouver Region



Source: Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Strategic Plan

Clause 428 of the BCLG Act sets out that the purpose of a regional growth strategy is “to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources”.

Like the recent amendments to the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), the BCLG Act contains provisions relating to the content, preparation and adoption of a regional growth strategy. Unlike the NSW legislation, the BC legislation provides that all affected local governments must accept the regional growth strategy, by resolution, before it can be adopted.

Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future was accepted by all 23 local governments (and Translink, the Greater Vancouver transit authority) and officially adopted by the Metro

Vancouver Board on 29 July 2011. It replaced what is described in later chapters as the landmark regional strategy for Greater Vancouver, the 1996 *Liveable Region Strategy*.

In the words of the Metro Vancouver authority, the regional growth strategy, Metro Vancouver 2040:

"sets out the collaborative vision for how our region will accommodate and shape anticipated long-term growth in a way that advances livability, protects important industrial, agricultural, and conservation lands, supports a diverse economy and supports the efficient and affordable provision of infrastructure such as transit and utilities". (Metro Vancouver web page)

The BCLG Act requires that at least every five years, a regional district that has an adopted regional growth strategy, consider whether that strategy needs to be reviewed for possible amendment. This decision, for Metro Vancouver 2040, was due in July 2016. Later chapters of his research identify that there have been considerable challenges to support for the strategy from some local councils, who considered it overstepped the agreed boundary between state control and local autonomy.

The Regional Planning Director of Metro Vancouver, interviewed as part of this research, became concerned that, if the regional plan was opened up for review, there was the potential for at least one council to refuse to sign it – and therefore not be adopted under the legislation. The Metro Vancouver Authority worked for all of 2016 on issues around the review, and in reaching agreement with one concerned council about some Board decisions around rezoning of agricultural lands. In March 2017 the Board resolved that a formal review of the Metro Vancouver 2040 strategy was not required, and that minor amendments would be made on an ongoing and as-needed basis. This analysis is presented here as context for the case study chapters, as an example of the extent of negotiation that occurs between the levels of government in Greater Vancouver to reach agreements ‘in the regional interest’.

4.1.4 Official Community Plans

In relation to Planning and Land Use Management, Part 14 of the BCLG Act provides that local governments may prepare an Official Community Plan. Official Community Plans are prepared in a similar manner to Community Strategic Plans in NSW (described in more detail in the following chapter) but have a significantly greater emphasis on strategic land use planning outcomes. The BCLG Act sets out minimum consultation requirements for development of Official Community Plans, specifically requiring the local government to consider whether opportunities for consultation with stakeholders should be “early and ongoing” (Clause 475, BCLG Act).

A significant difference to current Community Strategic Planning legislation and practice in NSW is that Official Community Plans must, by legislation, include provisions and maps relating to:

- (a) *the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years;*
- (b) *the approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;*
- (c) *the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;*
- (d) *restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;*
- (e) *the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;*
- (f) *the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites;*
- (g) *other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the minister.* (Part 14, clause 473, BCLG 2015)

The Official Community Plan must also contain housing policies relating to affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing, and targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In other words, it must set out in reasonable detail many of the matters expected to be found in a local environmental plan (LEP) in the NSW context. What this looks like, in reality, is a structure plan identifying broad land use designations (zoning) and building height for key development areas like commercial and residential centres and transport nodes. While Official Community Plans do not commit a local government to proceeding with any project set out within them, all bylaws adopted by a local government, including zoning bylaws, must be consistent with the Official Community Plan.

In this way, land use planning outcomes for each local government area are required, by legislation, to be a product of community-based strategic planning that has historically been based on local collaborative planning processes in Vancouver.

Official Community Plans in British Columbia are, therefore, through the relevant legislation, much more focussed on land use planning outcomes than are Community Strategic Plans in NSW, and as we see in Chapter 5, a key document in ensuring alignment between local and regional strategic planning outcomes.

While not compulsory to do so, all local governments in Greater Vancouver have adopted Official Community Plans. The City of Vancouver has a ‘deemed’ Official Community Plan. The Vancouver Charter^{vii} provides that the City may prepare an ‘official development plan’ in a similar manner, and with similar content to, an Official Community Plan, and the BCLG Act defines an Official Community Plan to include an official development plan under the Vancouver Charter.

4.1.5 Approaches to strategic planning

Hutton (2011) describes an evolution in approaches to strategic land use planning in Greater Vancouver as “a progression from relatively primitive development control instruments to the seminal urban containment programs of the post-war period, and then to the innovations in growth management of the 1970s and 1980s, and finally to the new era of sustainability planning” (Hutton, 2011, p. 252).

Notably, the regional strategic plans identified in Table 9 above, the 1975 Livable Region Plan, the 1996 Livable Region Strategic Plan and the 2011 Metro Vancouver 2040 plan, have been based on a clearly defined Vision and planning principles that, chronologically, have been rooted in models of urban containment, compact and complete communities, and sustainability. The literature describing regional planning processes in Greater Vancouver, and Vancouver interview data described in following chapters, returns to the ‘vision for the future’ and its achievement as a measure of success of the evolving policy positions put in place at both the local and regional level.

McDougall, Mussel and Yang (2011) describe the work of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB), which existed from 1949 to 1967, as fundamental in this focus on future vision. In what is regarded as the first vision plan for the Greater Vancouver Region, and indeed one of the first regional planning documents in Canada, the LMRPB document *Chance and Challenge* (1963) envisioned the region “as a series of cities in a sea of green ... a valley of separate cities surrounded by productive countryside”.

The Livable Region Strategy of 1996 built on this vision through its four fundamental strategies of “Protect the Green Zone; Build Complete Communities; Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region; and Increase Transportation Choice”. Most importantly, for the purposes of this research, the content of regional growth strategies is expected to be agreed by consensus. The Provincial Government, through its official webpage (gov.bc.ca) publishes guidelines for preparation of growth strategies for use by local governments and regional planning bodies. These guidelines discuss the importance of building consensus, stating that “the acceptance and the effective implementation of a regional growth strategy is dependent on buy-in to the process, ongoing involvement and commitment by all affected agencies” (Government of British Columbia, 2020).

Abbott and DeMarco suggest that agreements about the vision and principles for the 1996 Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) in 1996 were reached after “extensive negotiations and compromises with municipalities” (Abbott and DeMarco, 2016). This distinction between consensus and compromise is important, with some suggesting that the “consensus-building model for regional planning and growth management is not as effective as many authors seem to assume” (Tomalty, 2002, p.443).

Hutton suggests that the Greater Vancouver regional governance model, which seeks approaches to regional planning to be based on the principles and practices of consensus-building, “has the clear benefit of facilitating cooperation among the constituent municipalities, and is respectful of more intensely localized policy agendas and needs” (Hutton, 2011, p.252). However, he feels that these arrangements have presented a trade-off of regional and municipal powers that limits the force of the regional planning authority, Metro Vancouver. Hutton suggests that, in undertaking its regional strategic planning functions, and in preparing and reviewing the regional growth strategy, “the GVRD (now Metro Vancouver) is in many ways squeezed between the sovereign powers of the provincial government, which in the Canadian constitution include control over local authorities, and those of the municipalities that, while necessarily limited, encompass significant legal rights over land use and physical development in contrast to the essentially advisory powers of the GVRD/Metro Vancouver” (Hutton, 2011, p.254).

Despite the tensions described above, recent research has identified a desire among Greater Vancouver to maintain a strategic planning approach that is reflective of and that aims to meet, a negotiated and agreed strategic vision (McDougall et al, 2017, p.20). What the tensions between local autonomy and state control may mean in this context, is that compromise might be attained, rather than consensus reached, about the level of regulatory force that is available in implementing a regional vision at the local level, and the extent to which it is acceptable to use statutory force to align local strategic plans with regional strategic plans in order to be seen to be maintaining the agreed vision.

A focus on visionary rather than regulatory approaches to strategic planning appears to have resulted in resilient regional strategies in the Greater Vancouver Region – if judging only by the relatively small number of new plans that are prepared and adopted in that jurisdiction, compared to the number prepared and adopted in the Greater Sydney Region. This comparison is made in the following sections providing an overview of regional and local planning in Greater Sydney.

4.2 Regional and local planning in Greater Sydney

As in British Columbia, local government, and regional and local land use planning, exists in NSW by virtue of the state government and state government legislation. However, the nature of the relationship between state and local government, and the way planning is done in NSW, reflects a very different history to that of British Columbia.

4.2.1 A slow start to regional planning for Greater Sydney

NSW lagged behind the other Australian states and territories in introducing town planning related legislation (Hamnett and Freestone, 2000, p.78).

Despite a 1909 Royal Commission and several calls and proposals for a metropolitan-wide approach to planning for Sydney, legislated regional approaches did not occur until after the end of the Second World War.

NSW had seen a period of pre-war infrastructure spending, with the state government building railway networks, water supply systems and port development as a way of encouraging investment and growth. This was common for cities around the world in the first half of the 20th Century – to promote economic growth and development by investing in infrastructure ahead of demand (Toon and Falk, 2003). Following the war it became apparent that this spending had worked – perhaps too well – and there was a need for land use planning to regulate and control that growth. The genesis of planning legislation in NSW was actually the Federal Government, with the final report of a 1940's Commonwealth Housing Commission attempting to convince the states to adopt some form of town planning control^{viii}. It was an amendment to the *Local Government Act 1919* that saw this occur in NSW.

The *Local Government (Town and Country Planning) Amendment Act, 1945* provided for the preparation and implementation of local planning schemes by municipalities and shires. A Town and Country Planning Advisory Committee was set up to provide advice to the Minister for Local Government, who had the power to direct councils to prepare a local scheme.

The Local Government Act also contained provisions for the formation of County Councils, the state having been divided into counties, each containing a number of local government areas called shires. Importantly for this discussion, membership of the County Councils was one elected member from each of the represented local councils.

County Councils could, by resolution, request to have wide ranging powers delegated to them from the state government, and could levy rates from member councils to fund services. Like the British Columbia regional districts, their purpose was originally thought to be most useful for provision of region-wide services, and specifically in NSW for control of

noxious weeds and feral pests. The Cumberland County Council, covering roughly the area now known as Greater Sydney, moved into regional land use planning.

4.2.2 The first metropolitan plan for Sydney

The first town planning scheme for metropolitan Sydney, the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (CCPS), was released by the County Council in 1948 although not formally gazetted until 1951 (Toon and Falk, 2003). A significant feature of the County Plan was its Green Belt, a ring of open space comprising both agricultural land and parkland, designed to contain the metropolitan area. The plan was designed for an increase in population from 1.7 to 2.2 million people, a projection expected to be reached in 1983. In fact, it was reached in 1963 (Toon and Falk, 2003).

The CCPS is still regarded as an exemplary expression of strategic planning for a growing metropolis – “a truly remarkable and innovative plan” (Toon and Falk, 2003). However, the pressure to accommodate growth soon led the State Government to abandon the Green Belt and allow continuous sprawl development rather than developing satellite cities outside the belt. The fight over retention of the Green Belt lasted for five years, with the State Government ultimately successful in over-riding the County Council. This action is in stark contrast to the successful retention of the urban containment boundary in Greater Vancouver, supported by all levels of government over many decades, and fundamental to negotiations and agreements about how and where growth will occur across that region.

The original CCPS was also drawn up on the basis of an understanding that the Federal Government would fund key elements deemed fundamental to its success, mainly infrastructure and regional open space. When Prime Minister Menzies reneged on the funding promise the scheme had to be redrafted to reflect a lower level of funding.

4.2.3 Politics and planning in Australia

The impact of changes in Federal Government positions and policies on planning for Sydney, and the impact this has had on delivery of metropolitan strategic planning outcomes, is a recurrent theme in its planning history. Reviewers of this history refer to the “almost perverse alternation of the periods of office of opposing parties in power in Commonwealth and State Governments disrupted the planning intention in Sydney” (Toon and Falk, 2003). This disruption to planning intentions has persisted to this day. Every change of government, and even a change of Planning Minister in the same flavour of government, has meant a change in planning policy for metropolitan Sydney and a change in the relationships between Federal, State and local governments.

These changes of government and changes of Minister have often been accompanied by restructure of the State planning agency, renaming and repurposing of the agency, along with a raft of ‘planning system reform’ proposals, and often with the head of the agency (the Director-General or Secretary) being replaced as well. Since the ultimate failure of the

CCPS in the early 1960s there have been numerous changes of name and scope of the core state planning agency in NSW – and until 2016, no separate metropolitan or region-wide governance arrangement for the Greater Sydney Region.

Table 10 Organisations and legislation relating to metropolitan Sydney planning

April 1945	Town and Country Planning Advisory Committee under <i>Local Government (Town and Country Planning) Amendment Act 1945</i>
July 1945	Cumberland County Council for Greater Sydney area within boundaries of the Cumberland County District
March 1964	State Planning Authority of NSW under the <i>State Planning Authority Act 1963</i>
November 1974	NSW Planning and Environment Commission under the <i>NSW Planning and Environment Commission Act 1974</i>
September 1980	Department of Environment and Planning under the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> (EP&A Act)
July 1987	Department of Planning Under the EP&A Act
April 1995	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning under the EP&A Act
December 2001	Department of Planning (PlanningNSW) under the EP&A Act
April 2003	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources under the EP&A Act
December 2005	Department of Planning under the EP&A Act
April 2014	Department of Planning and Environment under the EP&A Act
January 2016	Greater Sydney Commission, for the land contained in the Greater Sydney Region, under the <i>Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015</i>

Table adapted from Toon and Falk 2003

In 2012 the Council of Australian Governments^{ix} (COAG) Reform council, in its 2012 *Review of Capital city strategic planning systems* found that:

“the issues at the heart of strategic planning – the shape of the city, the types and locations of housing, what infrastructure to build and where – are the subject of high-level political contest. This means that a change of government can lead to a change of long-term strategic direction and affect the apparent coherence of a strategic planning system”. (COAG Reform Council, 2012, p.28)

COAG developed and agreed to 9 criteria for assessment of capital city strategic planning systems. A key reason for having them was to have consistent criteria to provide a stable long-term framework for managing the growth of cities, and a stable basis for investment decisions by business and housing decisions by individuals. The high level of politicisation of planning in Australian jurisdictions is described by the COAG Reform Council as leading to a lack of durability of strategic planning through changes of government and therefore lack of achievement of long-term planning goals.

One of the most significant ramifications of this politicisation of planning, and the “almost perverse alternation of the periods of office of opposing parties in power in Commonwealth and State Governments” observed by Toon and Falk, relates to who controls funding for infrastructure. In this regard, the election of Menzies as Prime Minister in 1949 brought significant change to Australia’s taxation system. The States agreed to cede taxation powers to the Federal government, which soon led to a situation where the States became chronically short of funds to invest in public infrastructure – a situation that has remained to the present day. “One consequence was that once the surplus infrastructure accumulated prior to World War II was used up, which in the case of New South Wales and Sydney was by about 1969, the State Government became increasingly unable to meet the demands placed upon it for new infrastructure” (Toon and Falk, 2003).

Ongoing reform of the NSW planning system (as described in Chapter 2, Literature Review), and criticism of it, has related strongly to past failings of governments to align infrastructure provision with growth. Communities have criticised State Government plans for growth, and action groups have successfully campaigned against growth projects, and indeed against a proposed new planning system in NSW, arguing that they receive all of the problems associated with rapid urban growth, such as increased traffic congestion, crowded schools, and hard infrastructure including roads, water and sewer systems operating at or above capacity, without the benefits of improved and augmented social and community infrastructure that well-managed growth can bring (Ruming, Houston and Amati, 2012; MacDonald, 2014).

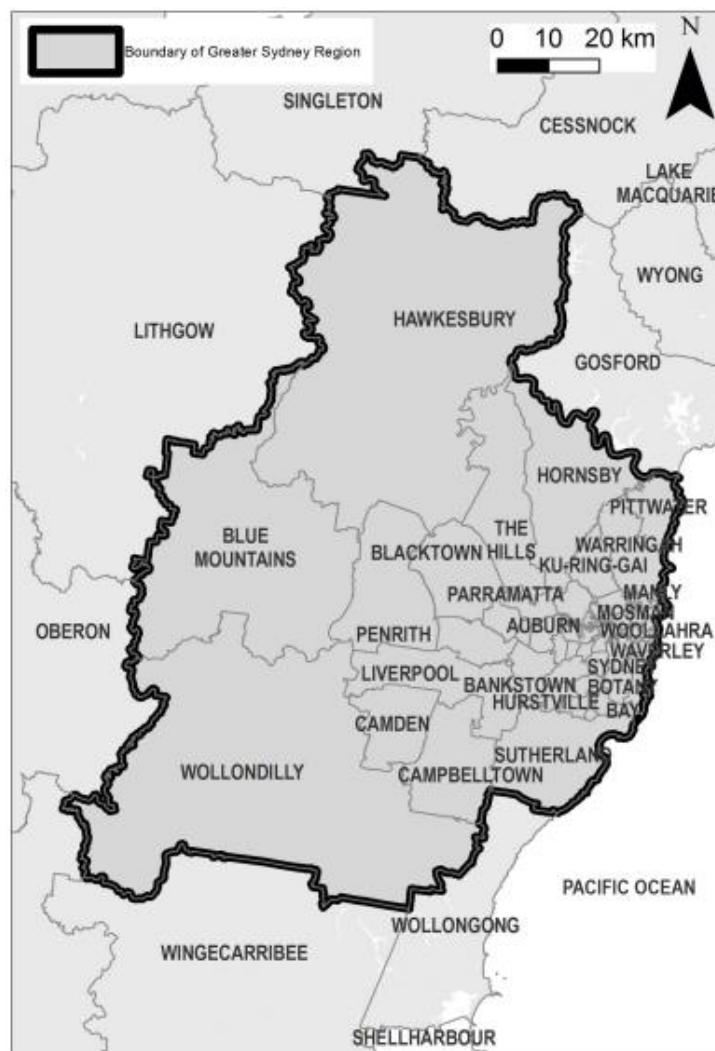
As the case study investigations described in following chapters demonstrate, aligning infrastructure planning and delivery with growth planning appears to be crucial to gaining

community acceptance of growth and to achieving agreement about alignment of local and regional strategic plans

4.2.4 Regional Growth Strategies

The numerous organisations described in Table 1 above have produced a series of regional plans for the Greater Sydney Region. Until relatively recently these were referred to as the Sydney Metropolitan Plan or the 'Metro Strategy'. Until early 2016 such regional plans have not had their legal status or content set out in the planning legislation, as has been the case for some decades in Greater Vancouver. It is the EP&A Act that enables establishment of regions and preparation of 'regional plans'. The extent of the Greater Sydney Region is shown at Figure 4.

Figure 4: Greater Sydney Region



(Source: Greater Sydney Commission Act, 2015)

Following the demise of the Cumberland County Plan, various urban consolidation policies were promulgated, in an attempt to produce a more compact urban form for Sydney in the absence of any grand plan, with one of the most notable being the 1997 *State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) 53 Metropolitan Residential Development*. This SEPP required Sydney local councils to prepare a residential development strategy to bring about urban consolidation, and was highly controversial, particularly in leafy and wealthy North Shore local government areas, like Ku-ring-gai. The policy was repealed when the Liberal-National Coalition government swept into power in 2011, the new premier Barry O'Farrell being the sitting Member of Parliament for Ku-ring-gai.

In 1968 The Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP) was introduced to supersede the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme. It adopted the model of town centres arranged along existing rail corridors. It stood the test of time but was criticised for essentially not being implemented, failing in particular to anticipate the rapidly declining number of persons per household in a changing society (Meyer, 2006). In 2005 a new metropolitan strategy, 'City of Cities', was introduced, building on the model of town centre development to decentralise growth. This was followed by a succession of new metro strategies: the 2010 strategy, the 'Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036'; the 2014 strategy 'A Plan for Growing Sydney'; and the 2019 strategy, prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission, 'A Metropolis of Three Cities'. These plans were prepared around the electoral cycle and changes of government, reflecting the COAG comments reported above, that such regular changes appear to affect the appearance of any coherence in the strategic planning system in the city. Regional planning strategies in Greater Sydney do not appear to have been given the time to be implemented effectively, to be allowed to "find their feet" (Schatz and Piracha, 2012).

4.2.5 Community Strategic Plans

All Australian state and territory jurisdictions have separate local government and planning laws with each requiring some form of strategic planning that aims to create better places for their communities (Tan and Artist 2013). In NSW every local council is required to engage with its community to prepare a Community Strategic Plan. These plans are similar in concept to the Official Community Plan described in the Greater Vancouver context above. However, they currently do not have the significant emphasis on strategic land use planning that Official Community Plans are required to have through legislation. Community Strategic Plans are to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future and develop strategies and actions to achieve those priorities (Division of Local Government 2013b). They were intended, in part, to mediate the state/local tensions through a legislative requirement to "give due regard to" any State government plans, including regional plans and strategies, but have done so unevenly (see Davies and Selmon, 2013).

'Integrated Planning and Reporting', which includes preparation of Community Strategic Plans, was introduced to NSW through reforms to the *Local Government Act 1993* in 2009/10. While an important and useful reform (to introduce a common planning and

reporting framework for comparison across all 152 NSW councils), Community Strategic Planning processes occur under different legislation to spatial land use planning processes^x and their outcomes inform each other variably or sometimes not at all (see Davies and Selmon, 2013). Similarly, outcomes from each local government area in the legislated Community Strategic Planning and spatial land use planning processes are rarely if ever aggregated to a subregional or regional level to inform higher level strategic planning.

4.2.6 The Greater Sydney Commission

In January 2016 a new metropolitan planning authority, the Greater Sydney Commission, was established. The need for some mechanism for metropolitan-wide governance had been widely discussed and debated for many years prior. Its eventual appearance had much to do with a visionary Planning Minister^{xi}, Rob Stokes, with a broad knowledge of planning systems and planning history, both in Australia and internationally. That Minister's vision and passion for good strategic planning boded well for the new Commission – but the timing of its establishment could hardly have been worse.

The State Government of the day, a Liberal-National Party Coalition government, had been elected in 2011 in the biggest swing and landslide win in NSW election history. Planning, corruption in planning, and the need for a new planning system for NSW were front and centre of the election issues. So, too, was local government reform. The simmering tensions between State control and local autonomy had come to a head at the end of 16 years of Labor Party rule, with allegations and actual charges of corruption through the planning system being made. The new government came into power promising a new planning system in its first term of office, and describing the need for local government amalgamations, particularly in Greater Sydney, which at the time encompassed 41 local councils. The government said it would not force amalgamations in its first term of office, but embarked on a "Fit for the Future" program whereby local councils across the State had to prove how they were 'fit for the future'^{xii} and therefore why they should not be amalgamated with adjoining councils.

The first news of a Greater Sydney Commission^{xiii} came via a press release in July 2014 (Daily Telegraph, 2014). The December 2014 release of a new metropolitan plan, *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, included much more detail about the role and function of the proposed Commission, and that it would be charged with delivery of the new strategy. Work on legislation and operational arrangements for the Commission began in earnest in 2015, and early proposals were based broadly on the Greater London Authority model, where Mayors formed the decision making forum, similar to the Metro Vancouver Authority, and the Minister suggesting that in the future he would like to see a popularly elected Mayor of Greater Sydney. A Ministerial Advisory Council was also proposed, and potential members, including local council elected representatives identified.

In March 2015, the Liberal-National Party Coalition was elected for its second term in State Government – and the push for council amalgamations became much more aggressive.

Draft legislation setting out the structure and membership of the Greater Sydney Commission was being concurrently drafted and was finalised and passed through Parliament in November 2015, at precisely the same time that the State Government announced that it was forcing council amalgamations and sacking local councils in the Greater Sydney Region immediately. While the presence of elected representatives and Mayors on the Greater Sydney commission had been mooted, this was no longer politically possible. Many Mayors had been sacked, and the rift and loss of trust between State and local government in the State deepened to probably its lowest level in the history of the State.

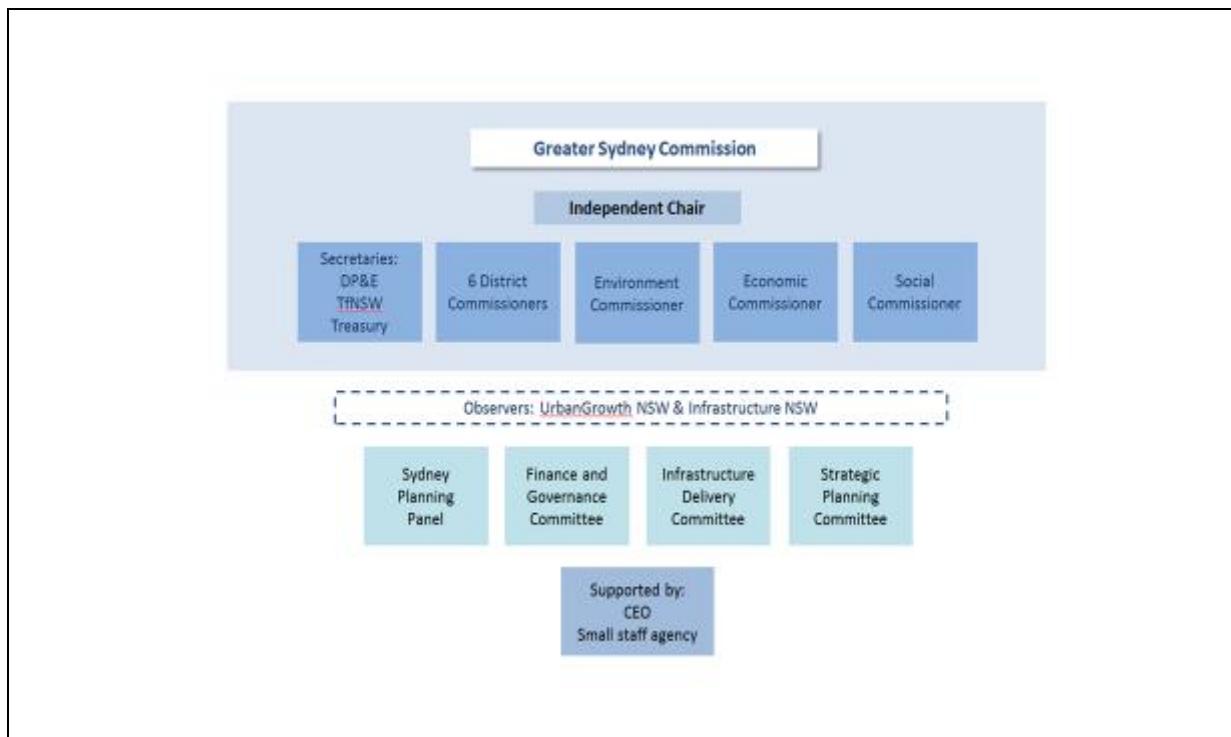
It was no great surprise then that the new Commission was made up entirely of Ministerial appointments – with no directly elected representatives on the Commission or any of its legislated Committees. Proposals for a Ministerial Council were shelved, despite potential members having been contacted. The Planning Minister announced that the decision to have ‘independent’ Commissioners appointed to run the Commission was because he wanted to get the politics out of planning, just as his government was making some of the most blatant politically ideological decisions about how planning would be done in Greater Sydney and what local government would look and act like in the future. The positions of six District Commissioners were advertised by the State Government and potential candidates selected based on pre-set criteria for qualification and experience. The six District Commissioners were then chosen from the short-listed candidates by panels of councillors from each district. How the District Commissioners would represent their district and the local councils and communities within them was not set out in the Greater Sydney Commission Act of 2015 or any Regulation or other policy document related to it.

The structure of the Greater Sydney Commission Board, when it was constituted in January 2016, is shown at Figure 5.

In comments that must have concerned local governments in Sydney at the time, given the State Government’s concurrent push to force local council amalgamations, the freshly appointed Chief Commissioner of the Commission, Lucy Turnbull, said in a Sydney tabloid interview in late 2015 that she believed “a ‘dream’ Sydney would slash councils across the city from 41 down to six” (Daily Telegraph, 2015). Had this occurred, it would have meant each District Commissioner was responsible for just one local council.

In late 2017, the Greater Sydney Commission announced that the number of districts in Sydney and therefore the number of District Commissioners had been reduced from six to five. The Economic Commissioner and Deputy Chief Commissioner Geoff Roberts was announced as Acting District Commissioner for the newly amalgamated districts. The Greater Sydney Commission undertook no community consultation about this decision.

Figure 5: Greater Sydney Commission Board



Source: Author's diagram

What has this lack of elected representation on the Greater Sydney Commission meant for a collaborative approach to strategic planning for the Greater Sydney region? Has the structure of the Commission, its membership and the governance arrangement it operates under facilitated or hindered alignment of local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes? Governance, including governance structure and culture, is one of the 'anticipated explanatory factors' I explore through this research to address these questions.

4.2.7 Approaches to strategic planning

Since the 'failure' of the 1948 Cumberland Plan and its visionary Green Belt, there have been no firm moves to create an urban containment boundary, or to protect peri-urban agricultural lands, or otherwise contain the outward spread of the city-region. This, combined with growing population projections and a lack of growth and infrastructure planning coordination has led to varying approaches to accommodation of growth through greenfield or infill development. While some regional plans have called for 70% infill development, this has not been achieved and the city continues its outward spread. Discussions with existing communities about the need for densification of their inner and middle ring suburbs has effectively been deferred – until recently.

The NSW Government uses powerful state policies (State Environmental Planning Policies), available to it through the key planning legislation in NSW, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*, to identify Priority Precincts. These are Precincts around town centres and/or transport nodes or corridors, where the state wants significant development uplift to support and pay for infrastructure it provides. The State collects developer contributions (Special Infrastructure Contributions or SICs) as development proceeds. The state planning agency, the Department of Planning, does strategic master-planning for the precinct, which overrides any local strategic planning undertaken by the local council. It then uses the Planning Minister's powers to make local plans, to insert new zonings and development controls directly into the councils' plans to achieve the development uplift.

This is a significant concern to local councils in Greater Sydney. Political backlash has caused several policy backflips from the State, which are described in later chapters, with the tension between state control and local autonomy in local planning decisions being an election issue at the state and local government elections held every four years.

The State needs to find ways of reaching agreement about growth, as local councils, through their local zoning plans, remain the key delivery agent of the state's growth imperatives. This is why it is becoming increasingly important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies in the Greater Sydney example.

This research investigates approaches to strategic planning as one of the 'anticipated explanatory factors' in alignment or non-alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes. This is considered in the wider context of state control versus local autonomy.

4.2.8 Current planning legislation in Greater Sydney, and planning system reform

The planning system in NSW is established principally under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the EP&A Act). Other important legislation related to land use planning in Sydney is the *Local Government Act 1993*, and the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*.

The EP&A Act is now more than 40 years old, but has undergone considerable reform and amendment for most of its life. These reforms and amendments have progressively centralised power to the Minister for Planning and the state planning agencies that administer regional planning in the Greater Sydney Region, the Department of Planning and the Greater Sydney Commission.

As discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, planning reform in western democracies often follows a familiar trajectory, with governments blaming the planning system for impeding economic growth and seeking streamlined approval processes, while simultaneously promising 'certainty and transparency', increased community participation and 'handing local planning powers back to local communities'. The reforms are often

socialised as being necessary to overcome the wrongs of the planning systems introduced by former governments.

Planning in NSW is highly politicised. In a 2012 report the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Reform Council warned that ineffective strategic city planning and infrastructure delivery was threatening Australia's global competitiveness. It criticised 'politicisation' of planning at the state level, which it said interferes with the states' ability to settle on long-term strategic plans (COAG Reform Council, 2012). By this, the Reform Council was referring to the regular production of a new regional strategic plan for the Greater Sydney Region around the four-yearly state government election cycle.

The need for planning system reform has become synonymous with neoliberal governments' promotion of economic growth, as they criticise any previous government's planning policies. In announcing a Green Paper describing the proposed planning reforms in July 2012, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Brad Hazzard said:

"These bold reforms will help break the shackles of 16 years of a deals-for-dollars culture and red tape that has been strangling investment in NSW".

The White Paper on "A New Planning System for NSW" (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013, p. 5) built on these ambitions:

"The main purpose of the planning system is to promote economic growth and development in NSW for the benefit of the entire community, while protecting the environment and enhancing people's way of life. To do this, the planning system has to facilitate development that is sustainable".

These proposals by a Liberal-National Coalition (conservative) government followed sixteen years of Labor government rule. The perceived failure of planning to deliver sufficient housing and employment opportunities and the need for system reform had been key election issues. But the proposals followed decades of incremental system reform by both Labor and Coalition governments, each reform aimed at reducing regulation and freeing approval systems (see Ruming and Davies, 2014; Ruming and Gurran, 2014; Schatz and Piracha, 2012).

Recent experience in NSW suggests that ongoing neoliberal planning reform has not led to political stability. Reform of the planning system and attempted structural reforms to local government (through forced amalgamations of councils) have been sites of contestation and tension. Attempts to introduce a new planning system for the state have failed. Regional strategic plans prepared by state agencies have not had political or community 'buy-in' at the local level, and have not been effectively implemented. The plans have not been resilient.

The effectiveness of collaborative planning practice in aligning local with regional strategic plans is an aim of this research. The rationality of the planning system in place (communicative versus instrumental) is identified as an ‘anticipated explanatory factor’ in my research methodology.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the planning systems in British Columbia, Canada, and NSW, Australia, as they relate to the Greater Vancouver Regional and Greater Sydney Region respectively. It describes the history and origins of regional cooperation and collaboration in the two places, and the ways that these beginnings have shaped regional planning processes and the relationship between state, regional and local authorities over many decades.

A longer discussion of the planning system in greater Sydney reflects a significantly higher level of reform to the system and change to regional planning governance arrangements and regular release of new regional planning strategies for the city. Other comparisons of planning systems in Australia and Canada have noted the marked differences in how controversial planning is as a topic in Australia (and in greater Sydney in particular) compared to Canada, and the differences in rhetoric around why planning reform is required at all (Schatz and Piracha, 2010).

The chapter has identified distinct similarities between the legislative framework that establishes the planning systems in the case study cities, and the planning problems that they face as rapidly growing ‘global’ city-regions. It has also identified some distinct structural differences in governance arrangements in their regional planning authorities. Figures 6, 7 and 8 present some of these similarities and differences.

Figure 6: The Case Study Cities

(NB: Figures correct at commencement of research)

The places

Vancouver:

- 2.5 million residents
- 23 local authorities

Sydney:

- 4.5 million residents
- 41 local authorities



Figure 7: Comparative Regional Planning

Regional planning

Greater Vancouver

- Regional Growth Plan Strategy
- Official Community Plans
- Sector strategies (residential, town centre)
- Zoning by-laws

Greater Sydney

- Regional Plan
- Community Strategic Plans
- Sector strategies (residential, town centre)
- Local environmental plans

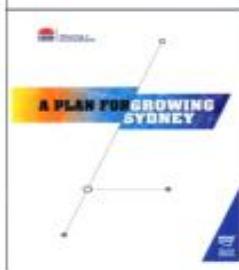
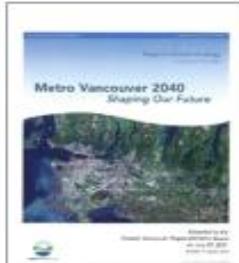


Figure 8: Regional Planning Context

The issues

- Rapid growth
- Escalating housing prices (both recently over \$1M median)
- Aligning growth and infrastructure planning and funding



This chapter has provided important context for the following case study chapters. Chapter 5 presents the case study data from the Greater Vancouver Region, and Chapter 6 presents the case study data for the Greater Sydney Region.

Chapter 5 Greater Vancouver Case Study

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter delves deeper into the ‘how’ of local and regional strategic planning in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. How does local and regional strategic planning actually happen and interact in the region? How do the key actors relate to each other, both formally (through legislative requirements) and informally? What are the factors that either facilitate or mitigate local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having any influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes? Why have regional planning outcomes been, apparently, so resilient over a forty year period in the Greater Vancouver region?

To find answers to these questions, key actors in local and regional planning in Greater Vancouver were interviewed. The interviewees included Planning Directors at local councils, Mayors and Councillors at some of those councils, current and former Directors of Regional Planning at the Metro Vancouver Authority and regional planning staff, staff involved in integrating land-use and transport planning at Translink, the transit authority for the Greater Vancouver region, and planning academics who have been directly involved in local and regional planning processes and who observe and commentate on planning matters in that region.

The Chapter provides a thematic, interpretive analysis of the Vancouver interview data with reference to the ‘anticipated explanatory factors’ identified in Chapter 1. These factors form the basis of the analytic framework for analysing the case study data. Conclusions are then drawn about ‘how’ local and regional strategic planning is undertaken in Greater Vancouver, and what factors or combination of factors facilitates or mitigates local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to and having influence on regional strategic planning outcomes.

The same process of data collation and analysis against anticipated explanatory factors is undertaken for Greater Sydney interview data in Chapter 6, allowing cross-case comparisons and conclusions to be drawn in Chapter 7, Comparative Analysis.

5.2 Governance

5.2.1 A long history of regional planning and cooperation

As described in Chapter 4, the Greater Vancouver Region has a long history of cooperative regional governance and collaborative planning practice at the regional and local government levels.

Interviews with planners in both local and regional planning authorities identified the long history of regional collaboration to deliver services as being important in the success of current strategic planning processes including alignment of local and regional strategic plans. But why would governance arrangements around service provision benefit regional planning processes? How could the history of planning practice in the region mediate tensions between state control and local autonomy? Ken Cameron, a former Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director, in describing the voluntary joint service arrangements put in place by local governments in the early 1900s, says:

From these arrangements came the principles of voluntary membership, upward delegation of power and local solutions validated by provincial legislation. These have been the hallmarks of regional government legislation to this day. They were reflected in later arrangements for regional parks and regional planning in the 1940s and 1950s.

(Cameron, 1999)

The wide range of services provided by Metro Vancouver was cited by interviewees as continuing to be of significant benefit to collaboration in regional planning. The range of services is detailed in Chapter 4. The clear benefits of a regional approach to provision of utilities and management of hazards, the origins of upward delegation from local governments to a regional authority, provides a ‘hook’ from which the sometimes less tangible benefits of regional planning approaches can hang. Those benefits include the ability to deal with issues that cross municipal boundaries in a coordinated and cost-effective (economies of scale) manner.

The current Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director said that when regional planning issues were losing traction, or in periods where disagreements were making municipalities question the benefits of regional planning, the historical service functions of Metro Vancouver – water, sewer, regional open space – were very useful to ‘hang’ the regional planning off.

Councils and communities can see how a strong regional plan can coordinate utilities and services and provide tangible benefits. Just talking about ‘the Regional Strategy’ doesn’t get any traction – you need to describe the benefits in a way that stakeholders can understand – why is this important to me? (MV1, 2015)

There are very practical strategic planning reasons why having a Board of Directors at the Metro Vancouver Authority responsible for utility provision as well as land use planning decisions.

The biggest advantages are the utilities. That works very well. But on top of that you need the planning. Because you can't have one municipality saying, well we're going to put a bunch of towers over here, if we can't get the water and sewer there to service them. (LV9, November 2016)

Long-term, multi-level collaboration around regional planning processes is cited by several interviewees as being the saviour of regional planning in Greater Vancouver, in the face of direct challenges from the British Columbia Provincial Government. In the 1980s the Provincial Government, unhappy with planning decisions being made, and blaming planning regulation for stopping growth on the back of an economic recession, removed all regional planning powers from the Provincial legislation and cancelled all existing regional plans. This move was part of a package of what became known as 'restraint bills' aimed at curtailing the powerful force that collaborative regional planning processes had become. As former Regional Planning Director AV2 says:

The Provincial Government doesn't like the idea of all the planners getting together and making decisions. (AV2, July 2015)

But the power of regional collaboration appeared to be stronger. The then Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Board (now the Metro Vancouver Authority) kept regional planning alive through a voluntary contractual agreement with the then fifteen member municipalities to deliver "development services". A new regional plan was seen as necessary to deal with a new surge of growth in British Columbia which was increasingly seen as being a potential threat to the quality of life in the province.

Ken Cameron, in his book *City Making in Paradise*, describes the voluntary and consensus driven resurrection of regional planning as one of the 'nine decisions that saved Vancouver'. As the Regional Planning Manager responsible for pulling together the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan, Cameron was incredulous when the Chair of the GVRD advised him that, given there was no legislative mandate for a new regional plan, he would have to develop it with the municipalities and achieve consensus with them about the plan's directions.

As the process continued it became clearer and clearer that there was no place in (the Chair's) concept of the GVRD for a superior/subordinate relationship between the GVRD and its members (the municipalities).

It was a non-partisan, inclusive style that was relatively rare in local politics, where councillors' loyalties to provincial and federal political parties always lurk in the shadows. It also meant that decisions would have to be made by consensus.

(Harcourt, Cameron and Rossiter, 2007, p.125)

Cameron began using a “powerful process”, described in ‘Approaches to Strategic Planning’ below, which resulted in the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan being prepared in such a collaborative manner with so much support from all of the municipalities, and therefore seen as so successfully expressing a joint vision for the future, that the Province (under the influence of one visionary Member of the BC Legislative Assembly) re-introduced regional planning as a function of the Metro Vancouver Authority, and retrospectively designated the Liveable Region Strategy as the official regional plan for the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Regional planning processes that had been removed from the functions of the GVRD by Provincial legislation had recommenced, and been validated by retrospective Provincial legislation, through an understanding of the benefits of a collaborative approach at the regional level. The principles contained in the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan underpin regional planning in the Greater Vancouver region to this day.

Municipal Planning Director and Chair of the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC), the Metro Vancouver committee made up of all Planning Directors in the region, says:

In fact, one of my challenges, when people talk about the regional growth strategy, they always talk about the Liveable Region Strategic Plan, rather than this (laughs, pointing to the 2011 adopted Metro Vancouver 2040 regional plan) and I often have to remind my political leaders that there is a new plan in place that has a bit more detail. So I think that really speaks to the Liveable Region Strategy, it really resonated with people in this region. (LV6, April 2016)

Despite, or perhaps because of, ongoing threats from the Provincial Government collaborative regional planning practice has proven resilient, adaptive and successful in the Greater Vancouver region. Having the Metro Vancouver Authority act as a metropolitan provider of coordinated services, rather than those services being provided by a host of separate state government agencies delegating powers downwards, has underpinned regional land use planning and even insulated that regional planning against withdrawal of formal legislative planning powers by the Province. The current Regional Planning Director concurs:

A big advantage is having metro Vancouver do so many things – utilities etc – that means it's easier to sell the benefits of aligned regional planning. (MV1, July 2015)

All of the interviewed local council Planning Directors in the Greater Vancouver region mentioned this long history of cooperation and collaboration, expressing their understanding of how and why this history matters.

And I guess that's the fascinating thing about studying government is how much of it is legislative authority and how much of it is convention.....I guess we have such a long experience with regional governance, that people's understanding and

expectation, and the relationships and what we do by convention, is now so ingrained in our thinking that a lot of the frictions are reduced because of that – the time we've had to work on this. (LV3, July 2016)

5.2.2 Legislative framework

Chapter 4 describes in detail the legislative framework for strategic planning at the local and regional level. The planning system is established principally under the *British Columbia Local Government Act 2015* (the BCLG Act). Other related and important Provincial legislation related to land use planning in Vancouver is the *BC Community Charter 2003* (the Community Charter) and, for the City of Vancouver local government area specifically, the *Vancouver Charter 1953* (the Vancouver Charter). There is no separate land use planning Act, as there is in NSW, nor a separate Minister for Planning. Planning in British Columbia is seen as a function of local government, and is established by the Local Government Act, and under the ultimate control of a Provincial Minister for Community Development.

Former Regional Planning Director AV2 describes the legislative requirements for preparation of regional plans and the relationships between local and regional strategic plans as being reflective of voluntary regional planning processes undertaken in Greater Vancouver in the early 1990's, rather than being responsible for collaborative and consensual processes existing. He suggests that the legislation encourages collaboration in a number of ways – from its broad 'Principles for regional district-provincial relations', which require that "*cooperative relations between the Provincial Government and regional districts are to be fostered in order to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of the citizens of British Columbia*", to its more detailed dispute resolution processes around alignment of local and regional strategic plans. AV2 says these dispute resolution processes were deliberately drafted to be so onerous and difficult that "nobody would ever want to go there" (AV2, July 2015). He describes the legislation as setting up processes where it is "better to resolve the issues in a collaborative, consensual manner, or the municipality would likely be hurt". He says the legislation was "never set up as a platform for litigation – just not part of the thinking" (AV2, July 2015).

This seems to have manifested itself in a governance 'culture' that does not see litigation as an appropriate way to solve problems. Local Planning Director LV3 said:

Having some kind of a system to reconcile disputes, and maintain communication channels is helpful. Even though there are disputes – that's the whole point, there will be – but you have some system to resolve them. (LV3, July 2016)

Importantly for regional planning, the BCLG Act, along with provisions relating to the content and preparation of regional strategic plans, also provides that all affected local governments must accept the regional plan, by resolution, before it can be adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board and the responsible provincial Government Minister. This is a

legislative requirement that encourages consensus-seeking negotiation. How that requirement has shaped development of plans and resolution of disputes over time is discussed in following sections.

Interviewees describe the BC Provincial Government as having the same powers to over-ride local and regional planning decisions as the NSW Minister for Planning – but note that those powers have never been used (LV3, July 2016; LV8 November 2016). However, the threat of Provincial intervention remains. With a Provincial Government well known for its dislike of the powerful regional planning processes undertaken in Greater Vancouver, and for removing regional planning powers from the Local Government Act completely in the 1980's, the Metro Vancouver Authority and its constituent municipalities are keen to display unity and agreement.

Several interviewees revealed that the underlying threat of intervention is fundamental to their persistence with a collaborative, consensual approach. They need to reach agreements and show the Province that everybody is happy, to keep the Province at bay. Interviewees describe significant distrust between the Province and the Metro Vancouver Authority (AV2, July 2015, LV5 November 2016). Any indication that the regional processes aren't working could trigger an intervention from the Province if it considers it isn't getting the planning outcomes it wants.

The City Planning Director of one of the fastest growing municipalities in the region says:

There's a certain amount of consensus, there's enough. Sometimes there's just this 'social glue' that makes things work. So there are enough opportunities for the Mayors and Councillors to feel that they are on the same side on various issues, that there is trust built. Occasionally that breaks down, Township of Langley is offside right now, but I think they are being brought back into the fold; Coquitlam was offside when we did the regional plan in 2011 and wouldn't adopt it initially, but over time there's enough social glue there that the Mayors are able to form a united front against the Provincial Government – the Big Bad Province. (LV4, November 2016)

Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV7 says:

There's no doubt that if we were at each other's throats and all you read in the newspapers was about Mayors fighting with each other, that's the recipe for the Provincial Government to step in. As you say, the Province does have the authority to step in, if they wanted to, into a lot of different local areas - they have the legislation that gives them that power, but they've never utilised it to the best of my knowledge. I compare it to the nuclear bomb. Yes we all know the nuclear bomb exists, and many countries have a nuclear bomb and have the ability to use it, but all parties recognise the consequences of going down that road. It changes the relationship and the dynamics that we have in place. (LV7, November 2016)

City Councillor and Regional Planning Committee representative LV5 puts it more strongly.

We all live in mortal terror of the Province. If we fail then the Province would have a case to step in. So there's an imperative on one side of us to be successful, and there's an imperative on the other side of us to not step on each other's toes. (LV5, November 2016).

The municipalities jointly and painstakingly work through the issues and will reach some kind of agreement, even if it isn't what the individual municipality wants, to show that decisions are made in the best interest of the entire region (references: LV6, April 2016; LV9, November 2016). This tension in the system is an ongoing power issue that is discussed in more detail in further sections of this Chapter.

5.2.3 Governance structure and culture

The former Greater Vancouver Regional District is now part of 'a political body and corporate entity' known as the Metro Vancouver Authority, which incorporates four separate corporate entities operating as a 'regional district' under the Provincial legislation, the BCLG Act. Metro Vancouver is a large organisation with operations divided into ten 'Regional Services', including Air Quality, Solid Waste, Water, Regional Parks and Regional Planning (Metro Vancouver, 2016, website).

The Metro Vancouver Board is made up of thirty eight elected representatives^{xiv} from the 23 local government areas^{xv} comprising Greater Vancouver, while the Regional Planning Committee, which makes recommendations to the Board, comprises 12 of those elected representatives. This governance model appears to ensure 'political buy-in' to regional decision-making processes while also encouraging local issues to be viewed through a regional lens.

When asked if the Metro Vancouver governance structure was conducive to agreements being reached regarding aligning of local and regional planning interests, Mayor and member of the Regional Planning Committee LV7 said:

Yes, even the way it's structured. You've got the Metro Vancouver Board - there you're with a big audience, probably 30-40 Directors, sitting around the table. The reality is that that's where the ultimate, final decisions come, but the real discussion happens at the lower committee levels. So whether that be the planning committee, the housing committee, the utilities committee, that's where you break it down to a more reasonable number of 8-10 members that are all ultimately on the Board, and in the wider region, but that's where you have the time to get into the more thorough conversations and understand, and it's been an interesting model because everyone on the larger Board participates in one or multiple of those committees, but through that process they've also developed that trust that, OK, I might not be on the housing committee but I trust that there are 10 of my colleagues there, that aren't just there

with their own municipal hat, but are there representing the region, just like I do with my committees. (LV7, November 2016)

There have been some significant disputes about alignment of local plans with the Metro Vancouver 2040, the last-adopted regional strategic plan. These have related to locally proposed rezoning of land that have not aligned with the broad land use designations and urban containment boundary contained in the regional plan. Such rezoning decisions, when inconsistent with the regional plan, are made by the Regional Planning Committee – that is, the elected representatives, Mayors and Councillors, from other municipalities in the region. Committee decisions are informed by advice and recommendations from the staff level committee, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC), made up of all of the Planning Directors from every municipality in the region. Local government peers are making the zoning decisions for other local councils' plans. This appears to be a very 'self-levelling' system. Considerable thought and discussion is entered into by the members of the Planning Committees, because they know well that next month it may be the turn of their own local plan or rezoning proposal to be judged. Where agreement cannot be reached, the dispute resolution process commences. Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV2 says:

That's where our strength is, in coming together. In planning we've had some challenges. We had problems with Coquitlam (local government area). We disagreed with Coquitlam, we went to some arbitration and at the end of the day we were able to resolve it. Sometimes at the end of the day it's Metro Vancouver having to compromise (LV2, November 2016).

Having political buy-in of locally elected representatives, through the structure of the Metro Vancouver Authority, appears to be a vital ingredient in reaching agreements that are respectful of a range of different viewpoints and therefore result in resilient decisions. Obviously agreements are reached in a collaborative way at staff level as well as the political level. Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV2 explains:

I think all municipalities 'buy in' not just at the political level, but at the staff level too. So they have the political realm, then they have the REAC, the engineers, RPAC, the planning directors, so all of the planning people come together. Then you've got the city administrators, the RAC. So they are critical too for municipal staff helping to shape regional policy. They see it before it comes to Committee. Staff do the work, they run it by the professional planners in the region, they get their feedback, input, redesign, and once they get approval from them, then it comes to the Regional Planning Committee, the politicians, and then to the Board, and the Board passes it as policy. (LV2, November 2016).

The multi-committee, multi-scalar approach takes time but means that the high level Metro Vancouver Board is effectively a rubber stamp for agreements made through negotiation at lower levels. The current Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director says:

Unless there is a major disagreement issues are generally sorted and agreed at officer level, before anything gets to the Regional Planning Committee. (MV1, July 2015).

Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV7 agrees:

I think if you want to learn about Metro Vancouver politics, don't go to a Metro Vancouver Board meeting, you'll fall asleep. Not a lot of discussion and we just end up approving most things. It's not because it's anti-democratic, it's because those democratic conversations have happened in the open public meetings of those other Committees, where people have had the time to say let's have a two hour conversation about how do we stop the conflicts between industrial land and farm land? You wouldn't have that opportunity with a Board that big at the larger level.

(LV7, November 2016)

The federated architecture of the Metro Vancouver Authority structure appears to have created a culture of trust and cooperation, with elected and staff committee members talking about their local issues through a regional lens. But the governance structure is not without its issues. The reason that there are 38 Board members with only 23 municipality members is due to a proportional membership arrangement based on population. While this means a lot of smaller municipalities are very eager to accept growth – more population means more votes on the board - it also means the bigger municipalities, if they wish to, can form coalitions to quite easily dominate the voting. The concerns this causes some of the smaller municipalities is discussed further in the following section on 'Power'. The proportional voting system only applies to some decisions, and only at Board level, not at Committee Level. Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Manager MV2 explains:

So every year it's calculated, you get one vote for 20,000 people and a Board Director for every 100,000. So a place like City of Vancouver has 5 Directors with 23 votes or something like that. But every community gets one. So we have municipalities that have 1100 people – they still get one vote at the Board, it's equal to someone who has 18,000. But as soon as you cross 20,000, you get a second vote. It's interesting. But some votes at the Board are weighted and some are just majority. A lot of the regional growth ones are weighted votes on the Board - whether that was a good decision or not, I don't know. (MV2, April 2016).

Despite these tensions, the governance structure of the Metro Vancouver Authority seems to play an important role in the understanding of member municipalities about why a regional approach works and why a cooperative and collaborative culture best serves the

interests of the region as a whole. Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV7 says:

I'm the Mayor of a city that represents 4 to 5% of the population of Metro Vancouver, but we're right in the middle of Metro Vancouver and face all the same challenges that the City of Vancouver is facing, that Burnaby is facing, and we deal with some very tough urban issues. And I think that we realised from the very get-go that a city of our size, 70,000 population and 4 to 5% of the region's population, by itself is not going to be able to effect the change or create the solutions. So from that very get-go, from my perspective of the type of municipality I represent on Metro Vancouver, I get why regionalism works and how regionalism would help a city of our size. But also, we've got some very large issues in the region and they're not individual municipality based. Whether it's the transportation issues that we're trying to deal with, to deal with public transit, there's just no way you're going to be able to deal with those issues if you're just looking at it from a New Westminster perspective or a Burnaby perspective. These are large issues that cross municipal boundaries and there's no way that cooperation wouldn't happen unless you wanted to design the worst possible system you could imagine. (LV7, November 2016)

In describing the basic principles that underpin regional growth planning and cooperation, originating in upward delegation to joint service boards in the early 1900s but continued reflected in the governance structure and culture of the Metro Vancouver Authority, former Regional Planning Director Ken Cameron says:

In a word, local government in Greater Vancouver is one level of government, not two. (Cameron, 1999)

This contrasts starkly with the legislated structure, role and observed operation of the Sydney equivalent of the Metro Vancouver Authority, the Greater Sydney Commission, which is discussed in the comparative case study of Greater Sydney, in Chapter 6.

5.3 Power

The Literature Review at Chapter 2 investigates power, largely through the lens of some of the critiques of collaborative planning theory, which suggest that in a neoliberal, capitalist society collaborative planning processes actually play into the hands of powerful interests, rather than dealing with core issues focussing on the structural inequalities of society that are reflected in planning systems (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014, p.250).

Power relations more generally in the planning system are discussed with Van Assche, Duineveld and Beunen (2014) making a distinction between the power of planning (the impact in society), power on planning (the influence of broader society on the planning system) and power in planning (the relationships between the players active in planning). They argue that “*planning theory can benefit from the understanding of power as essential*

to the daily functioning of a planning system, the continuous evolution of a planning system and the dynamic relations with its environment". (Van Assche, Duineveld and Beunen, 2014, p. 2387)

In this research power is considered in terms of its use in the processes evident in the two case study cities that attempt to align local strategic planning outcomes and regional strategic planning outcomes. In that context it is largely about the latter of Van Assche, Duineveld and Beunen's distinctions, that is the relationships between the actors involved in planning processes, or 'power in planning'. It is discussed in terms of formal versus actual power, network power, and the power exerted by politicians/political champions and visionary leaders.

5.3.1 Formal power

Interviewees in Greater Vancouver cited three key instances where formal power has been used to reduce or override local autonomy. They are:

1. the Provincial Government removing regional planning functions from the Provincial Local Government Act altogether in the 1980s;
2. the Provincial Government removing the locally elected Board of the regional transit authority, Translink, and replacing it with a Board of its own appointees; and
3. an Chief Administrative Officer of the Metro Vancouver Authority, described by some interviewees as 'authoritarian', attempting to force a local council to align its local plan with a regional plan by taking the local council through the court system all the way to the British Columbia Supreme Court.

The reasons for the use of formal power in these three cases, and the ramifications flowing from it, are described briefly below:

1. In 1983, during "*the crisis of self-confidence that British Columbia had suffered during the near-depression of the early 1980s*" (Harcourt, Cameron and Rossiter, 2007, p.112) the BC Provincial Government introduced twenty-six 'restraint bills' aimed at reducing public sector costs. One of those bills removed regional planning as a function of regional districts, including the Greater Vancouver region, and cancelled all existing regional plans. The new priority for regions became economic growth, and regional planning processes and decisions, which had become particularly powerful in British Columbia, were seen as impeding that growth.

Obviously they (the Province) are the ones who created this whole beast of a Regional District, they're the ones that have created the legislation that guides us from a regional planning perspective, and that too has shifted over time. So there used to be a regional planning authority that had a lot more authority here, and then the region made a decision that the Province didn't like, and that one municipality

didn't like, in the mid-80's, and regional planning powers were stripped away completely. (MV2, April 2016)

As discussed in earlier sections, this use of power had unintended consequences. Regional planning processes continued on a voluntary basis among the member municipalities of the region, because they had experienced the power and the benefits a regional planning approach could bring them collectively and individually. A change of Provincial government in 1993 led to regional planning powers being restored in 1996, following the voluntary and collaborative production of the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan.

While the use of formal power had the contrary effect to what was intended, the threat of the Province stepping in again, should it feel its interests are not being met, remains powerful. A key priority of the Province remains economic growth. While the key priority of the Metro Vancouver Authority is for the 23 member municipalities to work together "for a Liveable Region", sustainable economic growth is clearly a part of that liveability, in terms of provision of services and availability of employment.

The actual outcome of the Province's use of legislative power is that the Metro Vancouver Authority strives for consensus decisions in regional planning matters, and where that can't be reached, negotiates agreements with individual municipalities to ensure regional and local strategic plans 'align'. Reaching these agreements through collaborative processes keeps the Province at bay, provided of course that growth continues to occur.

2. In 2007 the Provincial Government removed the elected member Board of the regional transit authority, Translink, and replaced it with a Board of its own appointees. This reneged on the Province's decision 15 years earlier to instate a Board of 12 Mayors, who would be responsible for making transit investment decisions, with funding coming from fares and other taxes that it approved. However, over time the province saw light rail and bus services being provided to relatively low population areas of the region, where it believed transit investment should be driving growth through provision of heavy 'Skytrain' projects that would serve less of the region, but more people through intense density around Skytrain stations.

The end for the Mayoral Board of Translink came when it twice refused to approve a Skytrain service, 'the Canada Line', to the International airport, under pressure from the Provincial Government to do so before the 2010 Winter Olympics. One of the Municipalities on the route of the proposed Canada Line also said it would take a lot of growth if the line went ahead – growth that has now occurred on a floodplain, in contradiction to a key regional planning principle established when developing the 1996 Liveable Region Strategy. The Mayors could not justify the huge capital expenditure for the Skytrain, which would use more than their total budget that was intended for the original purpose of Translink – to move goods and people around the region more efficiently – so they voted against it and were then removed from the Board.

When Translink was created, the Provincial and Regional governments did a deal – that the Province would take over hospital funding, and the region would fund transport through raising property taxes. It is very unpopular to raise property taxes for investment heavy projects that serve only small parts of the region, and do not serve some municipalities at all. There has been backlash from communities about massive investment in Skytrain transit projects and major road and bridge projects that serve the Province's economic interests and not the needs of local communities. The conservative, Liberal Party Provincial Government cleverly proposed, in 2015, a referendum to introduce a public transit tax across the region to pay for transit development. Metro Vancouver rigorously opposed the referendum, knowing it would be strongly voted against by residents, and it was. Regional transit funding was perceived to be stalled, with the Province continuing to separately fund its (largely major bridge and highway) pet projects. This focus on Provincial transport projects has the potential to significantly effect on how the region works, and on how local and regional strategic plans must now be developed (McDougall et al, p.16, p.43).

This use of power by the Province has effectively been a 'back-door' way of taking back control of regional planning priorities and directions. While a Mayors Council provides advice to the Translink Board, the Board's decisions are subject to Provincial veto and increasingly reliant on direct Provincial funding.

The Provincial actions though use of formal power have angered local Mayors and Planning Directors. Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV2 says:

It's unfortunate, we have a Provincial Government that doesn't see it our way. They're still very much tied to the automobile, which is very disheartening to say the least. They're all in with the Port Mann Bridge, the Massey Crossing, it's all about the automobile, and in fact if you have to leave here tonight, you go to the bridges, you're going to wait an hour. If you're in your car you're waiting an hour. There's just no way around it. So we need transit. We've done nothing for the last 6 or 7 years, the government has just basically robbed us, and they've blamed it on us. (LV2, November 2016)

Planning Director LV8 says:

We say we are the orphaned child if you will, that we've never had the transit services that the rest of the region does. Translink recently did a chart that shows the dollar contribution per person from each municipality in return for how much service that person gets. Township of Langley gets 60 cents in the dollar – it's the lowest, we spend a dollar, we get 60 cents back, whereas a place like Vancouver gets \$1.30, \$1.40 return per person. Township of Langley was one of the municipalities that the majority of people voted against the plebiscite – because of this lack of trust over the years that regardless of what we do we will never get equivalent service, and we're paying too much into the system. Now we have two bridges, both of which are taxed,

tolled, you cross any bridge, you live over here, you work there, you have to pay.
(LV8, November 2016)

Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV7 says:

What you get in Metro Vancouver is the Provincial Government doing their own projects that may or may not align with the Metro Vancouver regional vision, and Metro Vancouver and the Mayors doing their own work. Which can be problematic, because you've got the region's Mayors wanting to invest \$10 Billion in public transit in the region, and you've got a Provincial Government throwing buckets of money on major road projects. In the end the region could end up spending a lot more money than it has to trying to deal with two very different visions for the region. (LV7 November 2016)

Former Regional Planning Director Ken Cameron said in 2014:

If I had my way I wouldn't build another inch of rapid transit in this region until we have a better idea of where we're growing. What we should be doing is the least costly solution to achieve the outcome that we want. What we seem to be losing track of is that we should be trying to move people and goods efficiently in the region and yet we have these vanity projects that are costing a lot of money. (Vancouver Sun, 2014)

This appears to be a use of formal power by the Provincial Government to get around powerful regional planning processes, directing where and how growth occurs by taking back control of major transport infrastructure decision making and provision. In doing so they control what kind of transport infrastructure is provided, who it serves, who benefits from fare and toll revenue, and ultimately the shape of the regional growth plan.

Planning Director LV4 says:

In BC the Province is lurking in the background but not with a regulatory club, they lurk with the fiscal club of infrastructure funding. (LV4, November 2016)

Example 3 below shows that the Province has, and may be willing to use, both kinds of 'club'.

3. When discussing the success or otherwise of Metro Vancouver regional planning processes the majority of interviewees asked if I was aware of a 2014 court case (GVRD v. Langley, 2014, BCSC 414) where the Metro Vancouver Authority had taken a Greater Vancouver municipality as far as the Supreme Court of British Columbia to force it to amend its Official Community Plan and associated zoning by-laws and align its local plan with the regional strategic plan, Metro Vancouver 2040. All of those who referred me to

this case also asked if I had heard of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) responsible for both preparing the 2011 Metro Vancouver 2040 plan, and for taking the municipality to court, indicating that this person's approach was responsible for one of the great breaches of trust in the collaborative and cooperative history of regional governance in Greater Vancouver. For the purposes of this research he is referred to as CAO X.

CAO X was described as having an aggressive management style quite different to his predecessor and successor, described variously by some interviewees as a "control freak" and "authoritarian" who surrounded himself with like-minded people, "people who conformed to his thinking" (LV2, November 2016; AV2, April 2016).

In describing the approach taken by CAO X to development of the Metro Vancouver 2040 regional plan, Mayor and Regional Planning committee Member LV2 says:

In the past - you could delete the name – [CAO X], well he was an authoritarian, and he said you guys are just elected, basically. I'll take care of you, let me run this and we won't get into trouble and we'll just do this. And he called the shots and he surrounded himself with people who agreed with him, and if you didn't agree with him, you weren't there. And it wasn't healthy, because I don't think we had healthy discussion, I don't think we made the best decisions – we made some good decisions – but for the most part it wasn't a real good program. (LV2, November 2016)

These comments are reflective of a disagreement between some of the local councils and the new CAO about what constitutes a local planning issue vs a regional planning issue, and where the line between state control and local autonomy should be drawn. While several interviewees raised the CAOs behaviour as an issue, it must be remembered that he was acting at the behest of a Board made up of elected representatives from constituent municipalities, and attempting to uphold the principles (around protection of Agricultural Reserve Land) that had underpinned development of urban containment boundaries in successive regional growth strategies. How the Metro Vancouver 2040 plan was prepared seems to be important in understanding the disagreements.

The 2011 Metro Vancouver 2040 regional plan was prepared by CAO X and his team in a much more prescriptive way, taking the broad principles and land use designations of the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan and "*putting lines on maps*" (AV4, September 2017)

Regional Planning Manager MV2, who worked with CAO X on developing the Metro Vancouver 2040 plan says:

And so we came up with something that is significantly more directive than the last plan. It has parcel-based land use designations which is really important, because it means every time a municipality contemplates a land use change they have committed to come to the Regional Board and have a dialogue about what are the regional implications of that, what do my peers think the regional implications of

that are, and receive a decision about it. So they were kind of ceding authority to the Regional Board for their own significant land use changes. And it also came up with eighty-plus actions for every municipality to undertake, and so it was very much more directive, and I would say through five years of implementation I think that we've found some people really didn't understand what they were necessarily signing up for. (MV2, April 2016)

Media comment at the time suggests that some thought the new regional growth strategy was 'rushed through', and raise concerns about the process leading up to adoption of the Metro Vancouver 2040 plan, concerns that may have led to some local councils and communities not understanding what they were signing up to.

The negotiations for the RGS (regional growth strategy, Metro Vancouver 2040) went forward virtually under the radar, without the proper oversight of our civic society. (MetroVanWatch, 2012)

When one municipality, VLA5, rezoned some of the Agricultural Land Reserve, outside the urban containment boundary, for housing purposes, with the approval of the Provincial Government Agricultural Land Commission, but without the approval of the Metro Vancouver Board, CAO X took the municipality to the Supreme Court to attempt to quash the rezoning and force alignment of the local plan with the regional plan (Greater Vancouver (Regional District) v. Langley (Township) 2014 BCSC 414).

Both the Supreme Court and the BC Court of Appeal agreed with the municipality that the Metro Vancouver Authority had no legislative power to force alignment of plans. The Planning Director from the municipality involved says:

We went through a court process, with Metro Vancouver on that particular issue and both the BC Supreme Court and the BC Court of Appeal ruled in favour of [VLA5] essentially saying land use planning resides and rests with local government, not with the region. With that the issues and challenges have been about power and authority – who has the ability to say yes to a land use proposal and why should the region have oversight over local government's ability and powers, bestowed upon them by the Province, to make local land use planning decisions. It was never intended for the regional government to have that power – and it hasn't, it still hasn't. (LV8, November 2016)

Other municipalities were delighted with the Agricultural Land Reserve Boundary court case outcomes, and the case has been seen by them as significantly weakening the authority of Metro Vancouver. CAO X retired shortly after, and Regional Planning Manager AV4, directly responsible for 'putting the lines on maps' was fired.

I actually got fired over that issue, over the regional plan itself - because what had happened, (CAO X) the CAO of Metro Vancouver, had retired, and the Deputy CAO

was really keen on bringing in this new planning guy, and he was a city manager at one of the municipalities, and he was very much against the regional governance, so he immediately tried to unravel it. (AV4, September 2017)

However, she still disagrees with the judgement and where power should lie in determining how local plans are ‘aligned’ with regional plans.

It clearly shouldn't have happened at all, and the court case was absolutely shocking. The judgement - there's not really much understanding of regional planning anywhere in the Province, and definitely not at the Provincial level of government. Anyway the judge ruled that because the Green Zone boundary was wholly within the municipality then it wasn't a regional issue. (AV4, September 2017)

This matter of what constitutes a ‘regional planning issue’ versus a ‘local planning issue’ has long been debated in Greater Vancouver, and the Agricultural Land Reserve Boundary court case has certainly fanned the fires of local discontent in this regard. This is discussed in greater detail in the following section on ‘Approaches to strategic planning’.

Regional Planning Manager MV2, who also worked on the more prescriptive Metro Vancouver 2040 regional plan, says:

The court case was an interesting one because it really was asking that question - who gets a say around local land use planning. And so the question really was “who gets to determine consistency with the Regional Plan”? (MV2, April 2016)

This use of formal power has had significant ramifications for both local and regional planning processes in Greater Vancouver. Interviewees from municipalities and the Metro Vancouver Authority said it had significantly weakened the authority of the regional organisation, and raised questions about the validity and usefulness of regional planning.

Current Regional Planning Director MV1, who replaced AV4, describes the years since the case as “*seeing the collaborative relationships falling apart*” (MV1, July 2015). She describes changing power-relationships between Metro Vancouver and individual municipalities, and between Metro Vancouver and the province, for which the failed court case against municipality VLA5 was a catalyst. The case has changed the way her job is undertaken. She says that “*the new faces in Metro Vancouver, from the CAO down, are all of a collaborative mind, and are now working to repair the relationships*” (MV1, July 2015)

So, a key outcome of the court case has been the Board of Metro Vancouver appointing new staff who will work collaboratively with member municipalities to negotiate outcomes rather than impose prescriptive controls. A thinly veiled threat from the Deputy Premier of British Columbia, and MLA for the municipality involved in the court case, has given the message to the Board that there can be no more court cases, no more significant disagreements, or the Province will intervene.

Emails between the Deputy Premier and the Chair of the Metro Vancouver Board, obtained through a Freedom of Information request from a former Mayor of the municipality involved in the court case, tell an interesting story about power in the planning system, and the Province's direct dealings with municipalities in planning matters outside the formal legislation.

Deputy Premier to Metro Vancouver Board Chair, 14 March, 2014:

I told you this was a problem. We won the lawsuit as we discussed. Please accept the result graciously and work with the communities in Metro. Otherwise the region will not be able to stay together.

Chair to Deputy Premier, 16 March 2014:

I am not sure I understand whom you are representing when you say "we won", are you speaking as the Provincial Government Deputy Premier?

I also don't understand how you would suggest that we accept this result graciously when we are simply working in accordance with the Province's Regional Growth Strategies legislation, which is within your Government's jurisdiction. How this can be a good ruling for the region or for the Province? This region unanimously supported both regional growth documents, at the Metro Vancouver Board and each council table. If we cannot enforce a regionally approved document, what is the use of having such a document?

I am curious how you think how this region might not be kept together. The regional district is stronger now, than we have ever been in the past and we achieve significant economies of scale through our regional governance model. If you know of any reason why our local governments think things should change, I ask you to enlighten me.

Deputy Premier to Metro Vancouver Board Chair, 16 March, 2014:

Well, we went to court and the court clearly stood on the side of my community. Our frustration with Metro is such that we would gladly join the FVRD (adjoining regional district) I think. The treatment we get from those weighted votes from the other side of the river is tiresome. So yes, we feel we won something because we have been treated with disrespect.

Chair to Deputy Premier, 16 March 2014:

With the exception of this item, what other issues are you referring to? Langley's neighbour, Surrey, has the second most votes, there is no fact to your comments that north of the Fraser dominates the votes. There is a reason why Langley wants to stay with Metro for most of our services, we provide excellent value and are equal in our

decision making. I cannot think of one item Langley has voted against, other than this Regional Growth Strategy issue.

Deputy Premier to Metro Vancouver Board Chair, 16 March, 2014:

I guess you need to get better informed on the history of Metro and us. Lots of files led up to the reasons to go to court on these ones. I was at an event the other night with politicians from Surrey, Delta, Maple Ridge, all happy for the court decision. None of them had any doubt that Metro has reached a level of arrogance that needs to be curtailed. (LangleyWatchDog, June 2014)

Exchanges like this may provide some reason for the Metro Vancouver Authority to continue to work collaboratively with its member municipalities to reach agreements about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes – and explain why some elected representatives say they “*live in mortal terror of the Province*” (LV5, November 2016), “*the Big Bad Province*” (LV4, November 2016).

Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Manager MV2 says:

I think that because of the court case there's a lot of eyes provincially and in other regions saying ‘what does that mean for the future of regional planning’. And there's been a fairly significant vocalisation of what that means from our Senior Management which is ‘it means we are going to proceed differently’. (MV2, April 2016)

Councillor and Regional Planning Committee member LV5 says:

So basically, the regional plan is an aggregate of all of our Official Community Plans. Whether that makes logical planning sense? Well I can't even answer that question because it's not the question we're asking ourselves when we're doing it. The question is, how do we agree on something so that these people (the Province) don't do it for us? (LV5, November 2016)

Current Regional Planning Director MV1 has since negotiated an agreement with the municipality involved in the court case. The municipality's Planning Director LV8 says:

LV8: We came up with an Official Community Plan, it had a Regional Context Statement, Metro Vancouver refused to accept it, we went through a court case, both courts supported our position, so we sat down with staff, and we negotiated a settlement, and we're now in the last stretches of concluding that process.

Researcher: So, you could have walked away from that process altogether, could you not, and just said well we're not going to do it?

LV8: Well no, because the Provincial Government required us to resolve the dispute.

Researcher: *So this is in the legislation, isn't it?*

LV8: *It is in the legislation. The Minister of Community Development has the power to either arbitrarily impose a condition or impose a set of requirements, or ask the parties to resolve that issue on their own. Or the Minister has the option of appointing an arbiter to go through a mediated process. So the first step is always non-binding resolution, which is just negotiate this between the two parties, and that's how we were able to achieve the resolution, but the Province ultimately does have the power to impose some resolution.*

Researcher: *But they've never done that?*

LV8: *No, they have never done that.* (LV8, November 2016)

The British Columbia Province is however willing to exert indirect forms of power, through threats of intervention and once again removing regional planning powers, to achieve the regional planning outcomes it wants. Some municipalities appear to know how to utilise those forms of power to swing the balance their way in the ongoing tension between state control and local autonomy. Six local government interviewees stated that they feared intervention from the Province, and that this was a key reason for them to continue to participate in regional planning initiatives through Metro Vancouver, to reach agreements at a regional level even if they didn't always get what they wanted for their individual council area. This seems to reflect a belief on their part that the regional interest will benefit local governments more directly than any Provincial interest might do.

5.3.2 Network power

In discussing the use of power in planning Booher and Innes argue that collaborative approaches have become more important in planning because they can result in network power (Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 221). Evidence from the Vancouver case study in this research supports this claim. As we saw in the discussion on use of formal power in the Greater Vancouver context, "*often the powerful player gets acquiescence but not results, or even results contrary to his intentions*" (Booher and Innes, 2002, p. 222).

A collaborative dialogue can generate what we call network power. As the participants get to know and understand other stakeholders and issues, they become more powerful themselves. As they develop common heuristics and shared purposes, each is empowered by the others. Power flows through the network, and each participant's gain in power is not necessarily a loss to others, but also a gain. (Innes and Booher, 2010, p. 109)

Having elected representatives populating the Board and the Regional Planning Committee of the Metro Vancouver Authority, with municipal Planning Directors and Managers populating the parallel Regional Planning Advisory Committee creates a fertile environment

for cultivation of the “*networks that connect people, ideas, and knowledge in changing combinations across organisations and public problems*” (Innes and Booher, 2010, p. 208). These evolving linkages are identified by interviewees as a key benefit of involvement in collaborative regional processes, and also as a means of addressing problems where traditional structures of government or mechanisms such as litigation have failed.

Resilience grows as networks strengthen linkages in the system. These linkages facilitate the self-organisation of nodes of interaction, dialogue, and collaboration to address emerging problems or crises. Networks do not get rid of conflict. Rather, by bringing together interdependent actors with different interests, perspectives and resources, network nodes can serve as sites of creative energy for finding mutually beneficial ways to move forward. (Innes and Booher, 2010, p. 209).

Planning Director LV3 says:

My personal experience working with the Metro Vancouver group on the RPAC, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee, has been fantastic – and I love it as it's as much to keep connected with the Metro Vancouver Corporation itself and its staff. But even more so I like it because I'm able to integrate with other Planning Directors and General Managers and find out that, you know, that they've got the same kind of issues that they're wrestling with and how we're dealing with it, and how we can then collectively advocate or lobby for certain interests, and that's where I get a lot of value from it. (LV3, July 2016)

In relation to a post-Agricultural Land Reserve Boundary court case collaboration between Translink, Metro Vancouver and the three municipalities on the North Shore of Greater Vancouver, LV3 said, in relation to network power:

One potential benefit is that we're all operating collectively to a joint objective and therefore we have more lobbying strength to get investment from Translink and others. The other is procedural. So Translink has these management agreements that they work with local governments to provide services, and if we're all, as they say, singing from the same song sheet in terms of where the needs are and that we've got the infrastructure to support it and the population, then we're hoping that those negotiations for those improved levels of service from Translink will be more straightforward. So, we're seeing the benefits there procedurally and for lobbying.

Having state agencies around the network table is powerful for the municipalities but also assists those agencies in their planning. Translink Director System Planning and Consultation TV1 says:

So trying to give municipalities certainty is one of the key outcomes we're trying to achieve with this, from the Translink perspective, that the three municipalities on the North Shore can say to their councils and to their citizens, that we've worked

collaboratively with Translink and we've identified that this is what we mean by 'rapid transit' along this corridor, and this is what you could expect should the funding pieces and the land use pieces fall into place, over the next x number of years. (TV1, April 2016)

This aspect of network power reflects one of its benefits as described by Innes and Booher:

By connecting diverse actors around specific problems or geographic areas, networks build sensitivity to local realities that centralized government often cannot achieve. (Innes and Booher, 2010, p. 209)

A different manifestation of network power in the Greater Vancouver context arises from the proportional voting system on the Metro Vancouver Board. A tension exists in the system with smaller municipalities annoyed that more populated neighbours get to vote down their rezoning proposals, where that rezoning would result in an inconsistency that requires a change to the regional growth strategy. Sometimes voting alliances are formed between like-minded municipalities on particular issues.

Planning Director LV4 says:

I'm speaking from one of the big councils, but I think from the smaller local governments, they can feel overwhelmed because they get one vote at the Metro Board table. So if you've got Vancouver and Surrey, and maybe toss in Burnaby, you can win every vote. So there's a certain amount of anxiety from smaller municipalities that growth is being forced on them – 'our agenda is not being respected, the big councils run the show'. (LV4 November 2016)

He provides a direct example:

We don't have that top down approach so it's the consensus of the group that's supposed to make those decisions. If you're a big municipality like us, you might have resentment about having to get approval from Metro, but we're big enough, we have enough Directors on the Board, that all we have to do is say to Vancouver, hey we scratched your back on that, now you scratch our back on this one. But if you're a small municipality - like Port Moody for example - they got 3 small rezonings of industrial land quashed by Metro Vancouver, and they haven't been able to build a coalition with other local governments to get them approved. (LV4, November 2016)

5.3.3 Political champions and visionary leaders

Political champions and visionary leaders have been very important in the history of regional planning and the relationships between the Provincial, regional and local government authorities.

Interviewees cited several who have acted as political champions and/or visionary leaders at key points in the Greater Vancouver history of collaborative regional planning

At the Provincial level, they have acted to reinstate regional planning as a function of regional districts through the BC Local Government Act; at the regional level, they have championed collaborative, consensual processes in plan-making, in the absence of enabling legislation or legislation with the ‘teeth’ to force municipalities to align their local strategic plans with a regional strategic plan, and as an antidote to loss of trust in the system following significant interventions; and at the local level they have championed the local benefits that can accrue by being an active participant in regional planning processes and regional governance more generally.

Their actions have demonstrated that if the interests of the region are collaboratively advanced, the interests of all member municipalities are also advanced, and in the Greater Vancouver case study example, the threat of intervention by the Provincial Government is lessened. Tensions between state control and local autonomy are mediated.

Political champions and visionary leaders in Greater Vancouver include:

- Gordon Campbell – former Leader of British Columbia Liberal Party. Campbell was elected to the Vancouver-Point Grey Riding in 1996, and became Premier of BC in 2001. Campbell recognised that without a legislative mandate for regional planning, the 1996 Liveable Region Strategy would have to be developed on a consensual basis with the participating municipalities if it was to get traction and succeed – and he directed former Regional Planning Director Ken Cameron to do just that.
- Darlene Marzari – MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey from 1986 to 1996, for the New Democratic Party. Marzari was the Minister for Municipal Affairs (responsible for the Local Government Act, Regional Districts and regional planning) who saw the benefits of the voluntary regional planning work that Campbell and Cameron were directing with municipalities, and re-introduced regional planning powers into the Local Government Act, retrospectively nominating the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan as the official regional plan for Greater Vancouver
- Mayor Corrigan, Mayor of Burnaby and Chair of the Regional Planning Committee for many years, including during most of the period of this research. Mayor Corrigan moved Burnaby Council from wanting to resist growth to recognising the benefits good regional planning and balanced regional growth could bring. Burnaby is now one of the fastest growing local government areas in Greater Vancouver.

In relation to the power of some political champions of regional planning, Planning Director LV4 says:

The current Regional Planning Committee Chair probably has dis-proportionate power, because he's well spoken, understands planning, whereas our council representative on the RPC doesn't have a clue, doesn't have a clue. Many councillors don't have a clue. (LV4, November 2016)

This comment is a reference to Corrigan, mentioned above, Mayor of a different local government area than that in which LV4 works. The particular elected representative mentioned by LV4 did not respond to a request for interview for this thesis.

5.4 Rationality

In her book *Collaborative Planning – Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, Patsy Healey contrasts strategy-making approaches in terms of their rationality. In particular, in developing her theory of collaborative planning, Healey contrasts the instrumental rationality of development of an ‘expert plan’ with the communicative rationality of developing knowledge and learning, and ultimately development of planning strategies, through collaborative processes that produce a socially constructed reality, as opposed to a ‘reality’ constructed by technocrats in a language that most stakeholders see as an “impenetrable ‘black box’ of ‘taken-for-granted’ knowledge” (Healey, 1997, p. 248-279).

This contrast of rationalities and the ramifications of the approaches are discussed in detail in the Literature review in Chapter 2, but briefly recounted here.

In the context of an instrumental rationality strategies are produced by technocrats, the experts, using evidence-based approaches that seek to separate the discussion of objective facts from the discussion of values. This approach, Healey says, encourages:

“a separation of the activity of technical analysis, the province of experts, from that of setting values, the province of politicians representing the ‘public interest’, as in the political model of representative democracy. (Healey, 2002, p. 250)

At some point the expert plan must meet up with the political, and be tested against the ‘public good’ and in strictly linear, hierarchical planning systems this results in the occurrence of the ‘DAD’ syndrome – Decide, Announce, Defend.

Healey contrasts this approach with a communicative or inclusionary argumentation approach to strategy making. Here claims for attention in strategy-making are based in collaborative discourse about what the planning problems are, the different ways they may be understood, what options there may be for acting on them, and what impact the choices around these options may have on the various stakeholders.

Decisions made under these conditions appear to be more resilient, and strategic plans more adaptable to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

In the Greater Vancouver context, interviewees have identified three key factors that they say have led to agreements being reached and maintained about alignment of local and regional strategic plans, factors that are indicators of a system with a communicative rationality. They are: joint problem definition, joint decision making, and capacity building and joint learning.

5.4.1 Joint problem definition

Joint agreement of regional planning principles and priorities was demonstrated through voluntary and consensual development of the 1996 Liveable Regional Strategic Plan. The 5 principles underpinning the plan, which addressed the key regional issues and ‘resonated’ with all stakeholders in the region (LV6, April 2016) continue to underpin the successor to the 1996 strategy, the Metro Vancouver 2040 Strategy adopted in 2011.

Considerable debate takes place at staff and elected representative level regarding what constitutes a regional issue vs a local issue (LV6, April 2016; LV7, November 2016). This was particularly important when developing the new prescriptive and regulatory Metro Vancouver 2040 strategic plan.

Planning Director LV6 says:

When the Plan was being done, RPAC oversaw the development of 2040. The planners around the table were essentially the steering committee for this, and all the hard work was done by Metro Vancouver staff, and there was a lot of shirt-sleeve sessions where people putting on their city hats would almost ‘duke it out’ with their partner about where lines should go and what designation – should this be industrial or should it be mixed employment, that type of thing. And after a lot of those battles the question that we always came back to was ‘Is there a regional interest in a policy in a certain area?’ We would always talk about ‘what is the regional interest or are we really going into areas that are of local significance?’ And we always landed on that question. So many times. (LV6 April 2016)

The ramifications of the Agricultural Land Reserve Boundary court case in highlighting the tensions between local autonomy and state control has highlighted the importance of this issue, to ensure every member municipality of Metro Vancouver is clear on what they have signed up to in terms of getting regional approval for a local rezoning action. While the court case was not about the issue of local vs state control per se, and in fact the Agricultural Land Commission concurred to the rezoning proposal by the municipality involved while the Metro Vancouver authority did not, the ramification of the judgement was that interviewees stated that collaborative processes in the region were damaged, and that the status of the regional plan itself may be damaged or altered as a result. A subregional pilot project commenced after the court case, with a renewed collaborative

approach from new Metro Vancouver staff, is a good example of the change to working relationships that the court case quite directly led to.

The North Shore Pilot Project

The North Shore Pilot Project commenced and progressed during the three-year period during which interviews were undertaken in Vancouver. It was a collaborative investigation into the level of transit service that might be provided along an east-west corridor traversing three municipal areas. It is led by the Metro Vancouver Authority and Translink in collaboration with the three key North Shore municipalities. Some augmented form of mass public transit has been foreshadowed for the North Shore area of Greater Vancouver for many years, to address growing private vehicle congestion caused by commuters entering and leaving the north side of Vancouver Harbour to reach places of employment. The nature of transit provided by the Province through Translink, designated ‘BRT or better’, will depend upon the level of jobs and population growth in the subregion to support that transit. It therefore involves negotiations not only between the agencies and the municipalities, but also between the municipalities and their citizens to reach agreement about the extent and location of growth. The latter process happens through the municipality’s Official Community Plan process. It took twelve months from commencement in mid-2015 until mid-2016 just to reach agreement between the municipalities and the two agencies exactly what the parameters and expectations of the pilot project would be, and these were expressed as Terms of reference in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all parties.

Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Manager MV2 explains some of the difficulty in getting agreement from local governments about regional vs local issues:

And so I think that the North Shore is a great example - I mean it took us a year to establish the value proposition for why Metro Vancouver needed to be at the table. Period. Because all of those guys saw Translink’s role, the transportation authority’s role, really clearly. ‘We need to ‘x’ to get this service level of transit’. So we understand why Translink’s there, because they need to know the road right-of-way width, they need to know where the layovers are, they need to know everything. They got that part. What they didn’t see was why Metro Vancouver Regional Planning was at the table. “We do our own land use planning, what are you bringing?” (MV2, April 2016)

5.4.2 Joint decision-making

The Vancouver case study reveals that joint decision making by staff and elected representatives of the member municipalities of the Metro Vancouver Authority is fundamental to agreements being reached about regional and local planning priorities,

alignment of local and regional strategic plans, and ultimately mediation of tensions between state control and local autonomy.

As discussed earlier the structure and governance arrangements that facilitate this joint decision making approach are contained in regional planning legislation that retrospectively acknowledged voluntary regional planning work being undertaken in the region by municipalities in developing the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan.

In April 2016 I was invited to address the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee, comprised of twelve of the Mayors and Councillors from municipalities, on the research I was undertaking and then invited to stay to watch the progress of a regular monthly meeting. Some difficult issues regarding rezoning of industrial lands for mixed use development were on the table, on the back of a media report claiming that Metro Vancouver was agreeing to too many industrial lands rezonings, against a key principle of the Regional Strategy. I watched as Mayors and Councillors discussed the local ramifications of such decisions, but through a regional lens. The effect of hearing each other's point of view seemed very powerful and 'self-levelling'. I observed:

- principled and informed discussion about the relative merits of certain land uses in different parts of the region – the 'principles' being elucidated in Metro Vancouver staff reports presented to the meeting
- elected representatives making decisions in the best interest of the region, not just one local government area
- 'respectful consideration' of each other's views – and this may reflect that at the next monthly meeting, local government colleagues may be making comment on each other's local plan or rezoning proposal.

As one Planning Director puts it:

Interesting from a political perspective, talking to my Mayor, is that he was really sensitive as to what he would say about others' plans knowing that if you made a negative comment about something in their Official Community Plan, that they're going to come back and slam you too. So, there is a bit of 'that kind' of discussion and I'm pretty sure there's discussion between the Mayors - you know, if they had a question that they would just pick up the phone and call them and say "Hey Richard, you know...." (LV6, April 2016)

The approach to joint decision making in Greater Vancouver, and its long history, appears to have led to a system of collaborative regional strategy-making that Healey aspires to in her 1997 work, *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*:

So the challenge for urban region strategy-making is to find ways of collaborating across the webs of relations with a 'stake' in an urban region's future, to develop new ways of thinking about how to share place and space which can endure over time. To

respond to this challenge clearly demands a considerable effort of collective political will. Building up that will, mobilising concern for urban region futures around the hope of collaborative strategy-making, is always an important pre-cursor to effective strategy-making. (Healey, 1997, p. 247)

5.4.3 Capacity building and joint learning

Staff at Metro Vancouver described their role as largely capacity building for the municipalities and their staff. Interviews with Metro Vancouver Authority staff revealed that in its current operations the agency acts as a provider of issue-specific and industry sector-related research, providing an evidence base to assist member local governments to undertake their functions, and to better understand the regional context for their decisions. This is an informing and coordinating role rather than a directing and rule-making role. Committees such as the Regional Planning Committee use this information to formulate and agree to 'rules' and policies that they will abide by, and ultimately to develop and review the regional growth plan. Information is disseminated at metro Vancouver meetings but also at municipal council meetings, so that all elected members in a municipality become aware of it.

Metro is now starting to go to council meetings, not to lecture but to be there as a resource. It used to happen, but fell away in recent years. (MV1, 2015)

Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member LV2 describes his view of the role and function of Metro Vancouver staff:

The Regional Planning Committee obviously has a staff that formulate policy to present to the elected officials on the Committee, and then the Committee vet that, they can then forward that Committee report to the Board or they can make modifications to it as well. So it's actually good feedback for the staff at Metro Vancouver. They're tasked with looking over the region – they have no power really other than all of us coming together and agree that we're going to have a certain set of rules to go by. This is what we're going to do - and as you've seen we get reports on protecting the industrial area, and we get developing regional town centres, and I think those things are really good. So the staff present us policy, they get feedback, and then it goes to the Board after 2 weeks. Over the past little while it's been great because we've got some great leadership by the staff team, the CAO and the Regional Planning Director and all of their staff. You've got some good talented people – it's critical to have that. They can help the politicians make some good decisions. That is so critical to have talented people in those positions. (LV2, November 2016)

Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Manager MV2 gives her take on how Board membership builds capacity among the elected representatives in the region:

Our Board of Directors similarly is appointed from elected officials throughout the region. And I would say it creates a really interesting dynamic, because basically you're asking that Director to take off their local hat and wear a regional one and there's only so much ability for anybody as a human being to do that. They were elected to represent their community and yet here they are sitting on a Board or a Committee that's mutual in nature. So it's an interesting dynamic all the time and what we often find is that there's a building in awareness and understanding of our Directors - they end up building capacity over the time that they sit on the Board and their understanding of the regional nature of the issues that they're voting on. (MV2, April 2016)

One interviewed councillor (LV5, November 2016) said that the local government areas across the Greater Vancouver area had differing issues, and the Regional Planning Committee was a forum for discussing those issues and for gaining an understanding of the challenges each council was facing. For example, Vancouver City has the most significant homelessness problem, whereas other councils face issues of encroachment into agricultural lands to accommodate additional residential development. Metro Vancouver and its committees provide a forum for discussion of these local issues in the context of broader metropolitan issues.

Mayor LV7 discusses the joint learning and capacity building benefits of his membership of the Regional Planning Committee:

Well it allows me to see the bigger picture. There's no doubt on the local level we've got our staff here in the city who do a very good job of presenting information but it's very focussed just on the city of (VLA5). Whereas when you go to Metro Vancouver you do get that broader perspective on whatever issue you are dealing with, and you get exposed to issues that might not be as closely tied to your own community. So there's no doubt you do bring that perspective back to your own local council. To be able to take that step back and think I recognise they are making some changes to our Skytrain that might be seen strictly from the (VLA5) perspective as a negative, but if you take that step back and regionally think, actually there is a wider system of place as to why these decisions are being made. You have to go back and forth. (LV7, November 2016)

Joint learning and capacity building occurs for elected representatives and municipal staff alike due to the parallel Committee structure. Planning Director LV6 says:

So it's an important role, the other part of it, which is the 'soft' part, is the fact you have the Planning Directors from the municipalities that get together once a month – there's a lot of information sharing, there's a lot of relationship building and we share a lot of information not just regionally but what we do on a day to day basis

and as you know that is so important in moving forward some of these bigger issues.
(LV6, April 2016)

5.5 Approaches to strategic planning

The approaches taken to strategic planning in Greater Vancouver have evolved over time at both the regional and local government levels. It is interesting to compare the ‘style’ of plan evident at the regional and local levels over the period from the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s. At the regional level the mid to late 1990s saw development and adoption of the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan, strong on collective vision but weak on implementation. Its replacement, the Metro Vancouver 2040 plan adopted in 2011, is much more prescriptive, with ‘lines on maps’ defining land use designations down to parcel or allotment level. This has caused such consternation among Greater Vancouver municipalities concerned at losing local autonomy over zoning decisions, leading to a Supreme Court case that has threatened decades of collaboration between municipalities and changing the Metro Vancouver Authority’s approach to its implementation, that interviewees almost unanimously stated that they expect the next iteration of the Greater Vancouver regional plan to be much less prescriptive and return to being an aspirational and collective vision for the future, to be implemented by local government action.

At the local level, the mid to late 1990s saw some councils, notably the City of Vancouver, undertake extensive community consultation to collaboratively prepare city wide plans, which neighbourhood by neighbourhood reached agreement with communities about growth and density and the local services, amenities and infrastructure that would be provided to support that growth. Changes of government and changing growth and economic circumstances saw some councils, including the City of Vancouver, ignore their community based plans and move to deal-making with developers through one-off spot rezonings accompanied by development contributions that communities had little knowledge or ownership of. This has sparked debate in the City of Vancouver about the need for a new, detailed CityPlan to provide certainty at the local level, within the broad vision of a regional plan. Indeed, after election of a new council for the City of Vancouver in October 2018, it took only until December that year for the council to resolve to do just that – to prepare a new city wide plan reminiscent of the landmark 1995 CityPlan (Howell, 2018).

This evolution informs the following discussion on strategic planning approaches: visionary versus regulatory plans; plan-making city versus deal-making city; and top-down versus bottom-up approaches.

5.5.1 Visionary versus regulatory plans

Making regional plans for Greater Vancouver

Earlier sections described how the Provincial Government’s 1983 decision to remove regional planning powers from its Local Government Act led to a new, voluntary and

collaborative approach that was ultimately so successful retrospective enabling legislation was introduced. Regional planning processes had not always been so ‘bottom-up’, nor have they remained so. Early regional plans, such as the 1966 Official Regional Plan of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board were considered quite regulatory plans.

It was probably in the 60's and 70's when the first regional plan was created. It was quite regulatory and it wasn't a pretty document at all, it wasn't what one would call inspiring. It was more top-down and not prepared by many people, and at the local government level one would have to make sure that whatever you're doing fit the regional strategy. It was very much parcel-based, it wasn't the inspirational document. (LV6 April 2016)

The 1965 legislation that had retrospectively converted voluntary joint service boards into regional districts had also charged those districts with statutory regional land use and hospital planning functions. Ken Cameron, former Regional Planning Director, recalls that regional planning had proved difficult to do without “*real or perceived intrusions on local autonomy and on areas of significant policy interest to the Provincial Government*” (Cameron, 1999). Cameron describes the special-purpose agency for planning that pre-dated the regional districts, the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board, as having regulatory powers over municipal planning that had “*more of the features of hierarchy than of upward delegation*”. It was finding a balance in meeting the interests of both the Province and local governments that led Cameron and the Chief Administrative Officer of the Metro Vancouver Authority to the conclusion that the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan needed to be an inspiring and visionary document, that communities and all levels of government could see addressed issues of concern to them, and that it needed a ‘bottom-up’ approach in its development to reassure local councils that their local planning autonomy was not being trampled.

Municipal Planning Director and RPAC Chair gave her views on development of the Liveable Region Strategic Plan from a local government point of view:

Then there was something called the Liveable Region Strategic Plan and Ken Cameron who you probably will talk to [prepared it] and what was really interesting about the LRSP is that it really moved to the collaborative approach in planning. Regional planning was never a provincial priority. So the idea behind the LRSP was an idea that came about from people in the region that thought there had to be a way to manage growth in the region. So it really was a bottom-up approach. (LV6, April 2016)

Ken Cameron notes that developing the underlying principles of the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan was undertaken in a “very powerful sequence” (AV1, July 2015). That powerful sequence involved:

1. Identifying the hard constraints – including flood prone lands, mountains and steep lands
2. Identifying protection of a Green Zone as one of the four key priorities of the regional planning process – and having local councils nominate which lands they thought should be protected as the Green Zone. The ‘Green Zone’ included open space and all of the Agricultural Lands Reserve, which has become controversial in recent court cases. This process resulted in some two-thirds of the developable area of Greater Vancouver being so identified, by the municipalities
3. Emphasising reduced private car use as one of the four key themes of the regional planning process through increasing transportation choice.

This sequence, according to respondent AV2, was crucial in creating the urban containment boundary that still effectively exists today and is a key test for any rezoning proposals outside it. The important aspect of the Green Zone identification was that it was a consensual process – and therefore a very powerful and resilient decision.

The process locked the local councils into accepting the boundary, as they had identified the agricultural/Green Zone lands that needed to be protected, and meant that the only option for growth in many municipalities was increased density. Protection of the Agricultural Reserve Lands is actually a responsibility and priority of the British Columbia Provincial Government and so the process had effectively welded priorities from the two levels of government.

Cameron says:

It was a double whammy. We had protected the major resource lands in the region, and we had established an urban containment boundary that would force us to be conservative with the land we had left ourselves for the construction of cities and towns. Regions such as Ottawa and Portland had spent years in acrimony attempting to defend green belts and urban growth boundaries that were seen as heavy-handed denial of the development aspirations of landowners and municipalities. Here we had arrived at the same place through a constructive process of consensus. (Harcourt, Cameron and Rossiter, 2007, p.132).

LV6, local Planning Director and RPAC Chair says:

It was meant to be aspirational, it was meant to be a positive document given that it comes from a bottom-up approach and it really, really set the tone for the growth of this region, so that's where the concept of the town centres approach came and that growth would happen around a number of town centres that would be hooked by good transit. That's the other part of it, of course, was preserving the agricultural land and the green space, the Green Zone, as it was called and those are concepts,

particularly the Green Zone and the urban centres that resonated well with people, both politicians and just people in the region, and they're still fundamentally there today. (LV6, April 2016)

Achieving agreement to the regional plan is essential in Greater Vancouver. As discussed above, the BCLG Act requires that each affected local council agree to it by resolution before it can be adopted. The visionary 1996 Liveable Region Strategy, based on broad principles and broad land use designations that everyone could agree to, made that relatively simple. All of the local government interviewees in Greater Vancouver volunteered or agreed that having all 23 local councils, and the metropolitan transport authority, TransLink, agree to sign off on the Regional Plan happens because in the end it is simply a collection of local plans.

Over time, the process of developing the regional plan has become a two-way, iterative process, where broad regional outcomes and priorities are agreed, these are then taken down to the local level where councils must prepare their local plan, an Official Community Plan that has a strong land use component, including a broad land use designation map for the local government area. This plan, similar to the Community Strategic Plan in the Sydney, Australia context, is developed with extensive community input. The Official Community Plan, accompanied by a Regional Context Statement is then adopted by the council and the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee and Board. As interviewees suggested, the regional strategic plan, through long-standing and collaborative processes and practices, then becomes a collection of local plans. RPAC Chair and local council Planning Director LV6 says:

That [aligning local plans with regional plans] is where the rubber hits the road. This Metro Vancouver 2040 plan really is putting all the Official Community Plans together, that's actually what it is. (LV6, April 2016).

It seems the devil may actually be the level of detail contained in the regional plan that is enforced as a 'quasi-regulatory' provision. Development of the 2011 Metro Vancouver 2040 regional plan that replaced the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan was undertaken by a new Regional Planning Director, with new regional planning staff, and with quite a different approach and outcome to the preceding plan.

Regional issues versus local issues

In Greater Vancouver there is disagreement between planners about how prescriptive a regional plan needs to be. That is, what is a regional planning issue and what remains a local planning issue? How far does the regional plan delve into or dictate local planning decisions? The 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan was very light on detail. It contained a vision and principles and broad-brush land use designations but did not try to designate land use zonings down to the parcel or allotment level. What it did very effectively was

introduce four key policy directions, including an agreed urban containment boundary. Within the urban areas, as long as those overarching principles or policy directions of the regional plan were being observed, and growth projections being met, municipalities were trusted to make local decisions in the regional interest.

AV3, former Vancouver City Planning Director, says that, during her term, Metro Vancouver was happy to set the principles and targets for growth and leave the ‘how and where’ to the municipalities. *“If the municipality can show that it can accommodate growth, Metro doesn’t care how they do it so much”* (AV3, 2015). The replacement for the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan, the 2011 Metro Vancouver 2040 plan, was much more prescriptive. New Regional Planning Managers and a new Metro Vancouver Authority Chief Administrative Officer, CAO X, felt there ‘needed to be lines on maps’ (AV4, 2017). But these ‘lines on maps’ have led to significant legal disputes and court challenges, that the Metro Vancouver Authority has lost, leading to a breakdown in trust and in the power of the collaborative processes and consensual governance model that has served the region so well for so many years.

The effect of this case was, in the words of the current Regional Planning Director, to erase the goodwill of decades of collaborative planning approach in the Greater Vancouver region in one fell swoop. She described “a couple of years” where she had seen the collaborative relationship between the Metro Vancouver Authority and the individual municipalities “falling apart”, and that as a relatively new Regional Planning Director she now had a “big focus on collaboration” (MV1, 2015). For her, the fallout from the Agricultural Land Reserve Boundary Case had created two distinct but related problems.

The first was the legislated need for a review of the Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional growth Plan by 2016. She felt that the lack of trust that the court case had generated between Metro Vancouver and the municipalities meant that it would be difficult to get all of the municipalities to resolve to agree to, and sign-off on, any revised regional strategy, as required by the legislation, and she didn’t *“want this to happen on my watch”* as Regional Planning Director (MV1, 2015). Lack of agreement, as discussed earlier, could well lead to the Province stepping in and taking control of regional planning. She had to find a way to resolve the Agricultural Land Reserve boundary issue with municipality VLA5 and then negotiate how the required regional strategy review would proceed.

The eventual result was a recommendation to the Board that the existing 2040 plan did not need comprehensive review in 2016, and that ‘minor’ boundary amendments (like the one sought by municipality VLA5) would continue to be made on merit. Without the Board’s agreement to this recommendation, again there was the threat of the province stepping in and accusing the Metro Vancouver Authority of not being able to reach sustainable agreements.

The second issue was how to now proceed with negotiations with other municipalities in the region, about sensitive growth issues and rezoning of land to allow more growth. This was directly affecting her approach to the North Shore Pilot Project, introduced in section 5.4.1 above. With some councils now questioning the efficacy of regional planning and with joint agency and municipality pilot projects as the hope for re-establishing collaborative working relationships between Metro Vancouver and the municipalities, she described her approach as beginning with building bridges and re-establishing trust.

Back to collaboration?

These challenges have now led to a deal of discussion in the region about the need for continued regional planning processes.

Former Regional Planning Director AV2 believes the strength of the 1996 plan was its lack of prescriptiveness. He believes that this forces collaboration to make decisions about zonings and development, and that an “*open and inclusive process will produce the regional interest in the long term*” (AV2, 2015).

But AV4, who worked to prepare the more prescriptive 2011 regional plan, disagrees. She says parcel-based land use designations were necessary to protect the Regional Vision and clearly define boundaries – but admits she was sacked from her job because of the issues such a prescriptive approach caused with the municipalities.

Municipal Directors are suggesting that any new iteration of the regional plan (which must be reviewed every 5 years under the legislation) will be much less prescriptive, leaving local zoning decisions up to local councils, within agreed broad strategic principles.

I foresee a weakening of the Regional Plan. I think a lot of local governments are saying that's not what we bargained for, that's not what we thought would happen. There's a feeling of resentment, where the City of Vancouver has converted much of its industrial land into high value residential. Now we're being dumped on by them against our rezonings. (LV4, November 2016)

I think, especially with the industrial land and the micro-managing of Metro staff on a few of these things has caused municipalities to step back. Vancouver is worried about whether some of their proposals will need Metro Board approval and I think the 2011 plan probably overshot and the next iteration will be less prescriptive. (LV4, November 2016)

From the Planning Director directly involved in the court case, about regional versus local issues, and what it might mean for a future regional plan:

I don't know if you've heard of CAO X? CAO X was the mastermind behind the 2011 regional growth strategy that we have. We spent 2 years, maybe longer, in monthly meetings discussing what we thought we could agree with as being 'regionally

significant' issues. What's a regionally significant issue? Some stuff surely can be done and dealt with at the local level, without the need for the region to have a say in it, whilst not giving up the farm, so to speak, and without having any of those higher level goals eroded. (LV8, November 2016)

The Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Manager, who worked on development of the current prescriptive Metro Vancouver 2040 plan, describes her organisation's new approach to dealing with local zoning issues:

So instead of saying 'though shalt adhere to these regional land use designations' we are saying 'hey, we're the stewards of this vision, you guys co-created it, here's the value that you all agreed upon to protect this kind of land, industrial lands, and so here's why it serves your community to follow the vision you signed on to'. So it's a complete shift in some ways to the intent of the plan, but we still are following the plan. (MV2, April 2016)

Avoiding a review of the Metro Vancouver 2040 Plan for a few more years may provide the time for relationships and trust to be re-built, and in the meantime, avoids any public disagreement and 'keeps the Province at bay'.

5.5.2 Plan-making city or deal-making city?

In Vancouver, Sydney and other growing cities around the world there is debate around the relative benefits of 'deal-making cities versus plan-making cities'.

Some places have these rules laid out in a plan that people follow. In other places, the rules amount, in effect, to a proposal to "make us an offer." (Keenan, 2017)

Supporters of the approaches say that:

- plan-making cities become the most successful because they have the ability to create a clear vision for growth and direction for the city in a positive way, and that planning, rather than deal-making, makes it obvious where priorities exist and how to leverage resources, assets and finances;
- deal-making cities offer more flexibility to meet changing needs – the city and the city councillors get to be involved, site-by-site in designing proposed developments and can extract dollars to build community amenities.

In Sydney and Vancouver 'deal-making' occurs through spot rezonings to allow greater building height and density, with additional developer contributions levied through 'Voluntary Planning Agreements' and 'Community Amenity Contributions' respectively.

They are very similar systems, and similarly unpopular with existing residents in the cities who rally against these ‘unexpected’ developments. In both cities media is full of stories about community unrest about processes – in Sydney exacerbated by the State Government’s role in over-riding local plans through “Priority Precincts” that it rezones for greater growth. The arguments, as Keenan says, are familiar:

“Developers running roughshod over the rules that protect our neighbourhoods” on one side versus “entitled NIMBYs hate new housing” on the other. (Keenan, 2017)

In Vancouver spot rezonings have become more popular as municipalities race to rezone land to meet regional growth plan targets and attract transit investment. In essence, the argument can come down to ‘what are we planning for?’. Are we planning for growth, planning for financial investment; or are we planning for complete communities, planning for “the greater public good”? (Campbell, Tait and Watkins, 2014). The Literature review at Chapter 2 explores these themes more deeply in terms of neoliberal reform of planning systems, and planning regulation being seen as the “enemies of enterprise”, the argument used by the British Columbia Provincial Government when it stripped away regional planning powers in 1983.

The Greater Vancouver case study exposes an interesting relationship between certainty and flexibility in plans, with calls from the Provincial Government, and some municipalities, for more flexibility in regional plans, concurrent with calls from communities for more certainty in local plans.

Making local strategic plans in Greater Vancouver

At the local level, in Greater Vancouver collaborative planning processes are undertaken, somewhat variably, by municipalities through development of their Official Community Plans, which must contain a broad strategic land use map, or zoning designation map, for the local government area. This map must then, through legislative requirement, be given effect through the zoning by-laws adopted by the council for the municipality. Official Community Plans are informed by the local strategic planning processes undertaken by municipalities. Official Community Plans can therefore become very powerful documents if they are built on strong local community engagement and support. Mayoral and elected representative involvement in Official Community Plan preparation in Greater Vancouver appears to be significantly higher than elected representative involvement in preparation of the similar Community Strategic Plan in the greater Sydney context.

The Mayor of a high growth municipality in North Vancouver says:

So our last election was fought over that Official Community Plan. It was fought over land use, it was fought over density, it was fought over growth. We’re doing more density. And if you don’t like what we’re planning for here, then you don’t vote for us! So it was really accountable. (LV2, November 2016).

The City of Vancouver and its former City Planning Director became internationally famous for collaborative processes used to develop and implement its CityPlan in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The agreements reached about densification and acceptance of growth in existing urban areas are referenced by Patsy Healey in her 1996 book *The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory and its Implications for Spatial Strategy Formation* as an example of how powerful collaborative planning can be.

As the City of Vancouver Vancouver's former Planning Director AV3 describes the state of planning prior to CityPlan:

The typical planning process in Vancouver was “DAD” – Decide, Announce, Defend. Draft plans were prepared by staff at Council’s direction. When the draft plan was put out to the public the response from citizens was, “Why weren’t we involved in developing the plan?

Council finally got exasperated and said a new planning process was needed. Council asked staff to develop a process which involved citizens from the start. They wanted to hear from new people, to hear about all issues citizens thought were important, and to hear in new ways. That was the start of Vancouver’s CityPlan. (AV3, July 2015)

Of the processes used in developing CityPlan, and reaching agreements with communities about growth the former City Planning Director AV3 says:

We were talking to the community. It was not a debate with the community, it was the community talking amongst itself, through the discussion circles etc that they invented themselves. (AV3, July 2015)

Community ‘choicing’, according to AV3, was a key component of the successes of community collaborations in the City of Vancouver in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The staff didn’t take the ideas away and come up with a plan for consultation. The community made choices and these choices were reflected directly in the plans – they could ‘see’ their work and their choices in the plans and supported them. (AV3, 2015).

A new City Council halted CityPlan neighbourhood planning processes in 2010, citing delays and the need to facilitate growth quickly. All interviewees in Greater Vancouver agreed that the collaborative processes they have become used to take time – but also say that it is worth it to reach agreements with their communities about growth, and have resilient plans and development decisions. There have been many spot rezonings in the City of Vancouver since 2010, and there is significant community unrest. Many communities blame the prescriptive regional plan for ‘forcing growth on their communities’. AV3 says the current lack of collaborative approach has led to community concern and protest about growth and density.

Former Regional Planning Manager, and former City Strategic Planner, AV4, says, in relation to the community pushback:

You know the City is getting pushback, because all of the carefully prepared local plans, neighbourhood plans, with maximum FSR, are getting thrown out the window. Rezoning proposals are coming in, and in West End alone there's something like 23 rezoning proposals being processed, and some of them we're going from 3 FSR, to 7, 8, or 9 FSR, with a stroke of a pen. So the big argument is the city is trying to do something for affordable housing through supply, but that supply is not hitting the affordable housing market. In the meantime the neighbourhood has to take the impact, the immediate neighbourhood, through overshadowing, loss of green cover etc. (AV4, September 2017)

And with regard to the ‘deal-making’ that accompanies those rezonings, AV4 says:

There's something wrong there, I think, with the neighbourhoods saying [to the City] who are you to make these deals? Without considering what we want in the neighbourhood, for example. Who is benefitting from this? (AV4, September 2017)

When asked if she thought there was a need for a new CityPlan to bring more certainty about development futures to communities, former City Strategic Planner and Regional Planning Manager AV4 said:

Yes, I think so, and have that discussion about what are the amenity trade-offs, what kind of housing are we really getting, are we getting back to the need for pure social housing, and if so, what are the sites for that? These are big discussions that aren't happening and I think it's time that they did. And that's a big criticism of the City Council that's in power right now. They haven't refreshed any long range plans for quite a long time. (AV4, September 2017)

In October 2018 the pro-development council responsible for the ‘deal-making’ was replaced by a more moderate council with a greater ‘green and sustainability focus. in local government elections. The new council resolved in November 2018 to re-commence development of a city-wide plan that “aims to give residents, business owners and builders more certainty about how neighbourhoods might be developed” (Howell, 2018).

In relation to the time it might take to develop and finalise such a plan, the current City Planning Director said “there's no substitute for taking time to conduct engagement and do the big picture thinking” (Howell, 2018).

A new ‘deemed’ Official Community Plan for the City of Vancouver will follow, which will directly inform the regional plan. Interviewees stated on numerous occasions that the Greater Vancouver Regional Plans have been supported by municipalities and have been resilient, because they are effectively “a collection of Official Community Plans”.

There appears to be power in communities being able to ‘see’ the outcomes of their strategic planning work and engagement appear in strategic planning outcomes – the community’s plan, not the expert’s plan. This seems to build trust and willingness to continue to participate in time-consuming collaborative plan-making processes.

To maintain that trust, it seems clarity is required about who will make final zoning decisions and why. Is this a regional issue or a local issue?

5.5.3 Top-down or bottom-up?

The planning system in Greater Vancouver has evolved over many decades into a two-way system. It is both top-down and bottom-up. Of fundamental importance is the fact that the ‘top-down’ decisions, about the regional imperatives that local plans should give effect to, are made by a federation of local governments. The fact that the Board of the Metro Vancouver Authority, and its various sub-committees, are comprised of Mayors and elected representatives of the member municipalities appears to achieve the political buy-in to regional planning decisions that is necessary to see the intent of those decisions transferred to local strategic planning processes, such as development of Official Community Plans.

As former City Planning Director, AV3 put it, the process of alignment of local with regional strategic plans starts at the broad regional visioning and principles level, drops down to the local level where the detail about what will happen in particular places as a result of regional imperatives is thrashed out, and then goes back up to the regional level as a negotiated agreement that often requires some compromise on the part of the local council, or the Metro Vancouver Authority, or both (AV3, April 2015)

5.6 Conclusion

The Greater Vancouver case study provides rich material for the key question of this research: how can local strategic plans have influence on regional strategic plans? The case study story is one of continuous evolution of the governance arrangements, power-relationships, and rationality of the system to find a sometimes uneasy balance between state control and local autonomy – combining some measure of local democracy and autonomy with coherent and deliverable regional planning outcomes.

Governance

Interviews revealed that governance structure, history and culture have been fundamental to ongoing participation in, and success of, regional planning initiatives in Greater Vancouver. The municipalities’ decision to form joint service boards in the early 20th Century established “*the principles of voluntary membership, upward delegation of power and local solutions validated by provincial legislation. These have been the hallmarks of regional government legislation to this day*” (Cameron 1999).

Political buy-in to the benefits of regional coordination and regional planning is ensured by the governance structure, with the Board and Committees of the Metro Vancouver Authority, including the Regional Planning Committee, comprised of elected representatives.

This governance history and structure has resulted in a cultural and institutional depth that has been sufficiently resilient to survive real and threatened challenges to authority from the Provincial Government, and internal conflict where some forays into a more “dictatorial” approach, a “failure of leadership” (AV2, July 2015) on the part of one CAO of the Metro Vancouver Authority, threatened to derail decades of collaboration – something the Authority is still recovering from through a renewed push for collaborative plan-making.

While a distinctly hierarchical planning system, with the Province having ultimate control over the planning system, including strong powers to over-ride local and regional planning outcomes, the Province is very restrained in its use of formal legislative power. This goes in part to a culture of respect that is enshrined in the *British Columbia Local Government Act 2015* that there are to be ‘respectful’ relations’ between the levels of government.

Power

The Greater Vancouver case study revealed three occasions where formal power was used in attempts to reduce local authority and autonomy. All three instances have, in the long term, failed to achieve the intended outcome of the actor initiating the use of that power. While always breaching the trust built up over many years of collaborative relationships between levels of government, the impact and outcome of the use of formal power has differed at the different scales of government. Those impacts can be summarised as:

- reduced trust between the levels of government
- threat of formal action by the Provincial Government increasing the resolve of the member municipalities of the Metro Vancouver Authority, and its staff, to work collaboratively, seek consensus and reach agreements in the regional interest to ‘keep the Province at bay’
- increased ‘surveillance’ of regional decisions and outcomes by the Province and individual Members of the Legislative Assembly including threats that further problems or court cases could ‘see the region disappear’
- increased use of informal power and network power at all levels to influence other levels of government
- renewed discussion about the validity and efficacy of regional strategic planning, particularly about the definition of what constitutes a regional issue versus a local issue, and a return to more collaborative, communicative action at higher levels of government

- evolving approaches to strategic planning at both the local and regional level, aimed at finding a mutually satisfactory balance between state control and local autonomy.

Where use of formal power has often weakened planning outcomes and relationships, evolving network power has proved to be a key strength that promotes both regional interests and interests of individual municipalities. Political champions and visionary leaders have contributed to establishment and maintenance of bi-partisan networks.

Rationality

Interviews in Greater Vancouver revealed that the long history of regional cooperation and the success of the processes around alignment of local and regional strategic plans means that there is now an expectation among municipalities that those processes will be collaborative, and that relationships will be respectful. Participating in regional planning purposes in the interests of a strong region has also strengthened the individual members of the Metro Vancouver Authority.

Joint problem definition, joint learning and capacity building, and particularly joint decision making, by Boards and Committees comprised of elected representatives from member municipalities, has built knowledge and trust between the partners and led to resilient decisions and resilient strategic plans.

All of these factors are reflective of a communicative rationality in the local and regional strategy-making and alignment processes in the Greater Vancouver region.

Approaches to strategic planning

The combination of governance, power and rationality factors at work in Greater Vancouver have shaped approaches to strategic planning at the regional and local levels. This has focussed debate on whether plans should be more visionary or regulatory, with great attention placed on what is a 'regional issue' and what is a 'local issue', and therefore who gets to make decisions that affect how and where growth occurs at the local level.

Absolute clarity about those matters - regional versus local, and who makes the decision – seems vital to maintaining a resilient and adaptive governance system.

The need for clarity about who makes strategic planning decisions has been expressed at the local level through debates around 'deal-making versus plan-making cities', especially in Greater Vancouver's most populous municipalities, including the City of Vancouver, City of Burnaby and City of Surrey.

Community calls for more certainty in planning outcomes at the local level, within broad regional planning principles, has led the City of Vancouver to re-commence development of a firm city-wide plan, reminiscent of the landmark 1995 CityPlan and based on extensive community consultation (Howell, 2018).

In Greater Vancouver, strong local strategic plans inform Official Community Plans which are approved by the Metro Vancouver Board and ‘bundled together’ to form a regional strategic plan. This is possible because of the joint problem definition, joint decision-making, and joint-learning and capacity building arrangements facilitated by the structure of the Metro Vancouver Authority, its Board and its Committees.

Alignment of local and regional strategic plans in Greater Vancouver has evolved over time to become a truly two-way process. Local strategic plans directly inform and influence regional strategic plans. Tensions between state control and local autonomy have been, to large extent, mediated, but this is a constantly evolving process, again made possible because of the constant involvement of elected representatives in the strategic planning process.

Chapter 6 Greater Sydney Case Study

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter delves deeper into the ‘how’ of local and regional strategic planning in the Greater Sydney Region. How does local and regional strategic planning actually happen and interact in the region? How do the key actors relate to each other, both formally (for example, through legislative requirements) and informally? What are the factors that either facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having any influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes? What may have caused the considerable and ongoing tension between state control and local autonomy in developing and implementing strategic land use outcomes for the Greater Sydney Region? Why have successive regional plans for Greater Sydney apparently not been successfully implemented, instead being replaced by new plans on a regular basis, indicating a lack of resilience of those plans?

To find answers to these questions, I have drawn partly on my extensive experience as a planner working for local and state governments across NSW and in Greater Sydney, particularly my work as an employee of, and consultant to, the Department of Planning, and my role assisting the Department in establishing the Greater Sydney Commission during the time-frame of this research. This auto-ethnographical foundation was supplemented and cross-checked through in-depth interviews undertaken with key actors in local and regional planning in Greater Sydney. The interviewees included Planning Directors and General Managers at local councils and current and former Directors of Regional Planning at the Department of Planning.

The Chapter provides a thematic, interpretive analysis of document review, auto-ethnographical analysis and interview data for Greater Sydney, with reference to the ‘anticipated explanatory factors’ identified in Chapter 1. These factors form the basis of the analytic framework for analysing the case study data. Conclusions are then drawn about ‘how’ local and regional strategic planning is undertaken in Greater Sydney, and what factors or combination of factors facilitates or impedes local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to and having influence on regional strategic planning outcomes.

The same process of data collation and analysis against anticipated explanatory factors is undertaken for Greater Vancouver interview data in Chapter 5, allowing cross-case comparisons and conclusions to be drawn in Chapter 7, Comparative Analysis.

6.2 Governance

6.2.1 History of regional planning and cooperation

As described in Chapter 4, the Greater Sydney Region has not enjoyed the long history of cooperative regional governance and collaborative planning practice between the regional and local government levels that is evident in the Greater Vancouver Region. While numerous plans have been prepared for the Greater Sydney Region, they have not proven to be resilient. New regional plans have been prepared by State Government agencies in 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2018. Interview data suggests this may be because a lack of cooperation and collaboration in preparing regional plans means the basis for strategic planning and the strategic planning outcomes are never agreed between the levels of government.

Opportunities for genuine collaboration in preparing regional plans, and aligning local plans with them, appear to have been rare, although opinions differ somewhat between the State Government's Regional Planning Directors and the local council Planning Directors about whether there have been genuine efforts to collaborate or not. Certainly any such opportunities for collaboration have been welcomed by local councils (MV2, November 2015, LS6, October 2016), even if they have not been so impressed with the processes and outcomes.

Council Planning Director LS6 commented on the opportunity for information sharing provided by the Technical Working Groups established by the NSW State Government to inform subregional plans, to underpin a new regional plan:

I found it good that we were even in the room – that was a positive! That we were even having the conversation was a big step forwards, and I think everybody acknowledged that. It was great to be in the room with the other councils and hear the issues the other councils were having and begin to swap information and begin to be able to express to the Department [of Planning] some of the frustrations that were happening at the council level, and to sit with people from the Health Department and say well, where are you going to be putting your hospitals, and have you got any plans? (LS6, October 2016)

That these conversations about the relationship between local and regional strategic planning were a relatively rare and new thing was echoed by MS2, the Regional Planning Director charged with working out the subregional detail of regional plans with councils through engagement with council planning staff through a series of 'Technical Working Group' meetings:

So, at every Technical Working Group, we've had every council, every time. Phenomenal, you know and at high levels, senior levels. Some of them were having their Planning Directors attend every meeting, depending on the size and staffing

level of the council, but we've had Managers at least, consistently attend, which I think is a demonstration that they are so infrequently engaged to that level that they're just revelling in it. (MS2, November 2015)

This ‘rareness’ of a collaborative or even cooperative approach to preparing and aligning regional and local strategic plans has persisted despite rhetoric from the state about its intentions to change relationships. Chapters 2 and 4 discussed the Department of Planning and former Minister for Planning describing the new ‘collaborative’ approach to be taken in a new planning system for NSW (not delivered due to the failure of the draft *Planning Act 2013* to proceed through the Upper House of Parliament) as meaning:

A significant and representative proportion of the community will participate in the development of long term strategic plans for their area. The planning system can move from combative to collaborative. (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013, p.25)

In 2014 a new Minister for Planning, through another new regional plan for Greater Sydney, *A Plan for Growing Sydney* (2014), announced the intention to create the Greater Sydney Commission to drive delivery of the regional plan’s actions, largely through a subregional planning process described as “a partnership between State Government, local councils and the community” (A Plan for Growing Sydney NSW Government, 2014a, p. 18). This partnership was delivered in part by the Technical Working Groups of council Planning Directors, established by the Department of Planning. The Commission was to “draw on the expertise of independent experts, as well as local councils” to “achieve a balance between the strategic development of Sydney, and local input into decision-making” (NSW Government, 2014b).

Interviews with state and local government planners in Greater Sydney were undertaken before and after establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission in January 2016. The interviewees’ hopes for, and assessment of, the Greater Sydney Commission’s role in transforming the way planning is done in Greater Sydney, and whether “the expertise and leadership of Councils will be a key asset that the Commission uses in delivering better outcomes for the people of Sydney” (NSW Government, 2014b), perhaps commencing a new era of regional cooperation, are revealed through their comments about the anticipated explanatory factors and set out in following sections.

6.2.2 Legislative framework

Chapter 4 describes in detail the legislative framework for strategic planning at the local and regional level. The planning system is established principally under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) with some governance arrangements legislated through the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* (GSC Act) and related local

government functions (such as preparation of Community Strategic Plans) falling under the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act).

It was the GSC Act of 2015 that introduced provisions for identification of regions, preparation of regional plans and alignment of local plans with them. These provisions are remarkably similar – in terms of both the planning documents that must be prepared and the processes around their preparation – to those contained in the *British Columbia Local Government Act 2015* but that have been in place in that Province since the 1965 legislation that introduced regional districts. While notions of regional planning and indeed regional plans have been in existence in Greater Sydney since the 1948 County of Cumberland Planning Scheme, legislation introducing concepts of regional plans and procedures for alignment of local plans with them are relatively recent, compared to Vancouver.

Importantly, it was the GSC Act that identified one of the principal objectives of the Greater Sydney Commission as being “to promote the alignment of Government infrastructure decision-making with land use planning”^{xvi}. The importance relates to the lack of focus on integrated land use and infrastructure planning in Greater Sydney that was described in Chapter 4, and a recognition by the Government that a new approach was needed to “streamline the way the NSW Government’s infrastructure and urban planning priorities are delivered” (NSW Government, 2014b).

While the case study data from the cities of Sydney and Vancouver identify quite similar planning problems and potential solutions, the legislative framework and the resulting regional planning processes in Greater Vancouver have remained essentially stable since the 1960’s. Chapter 5 found that stability of the legislation and the long experience and ‘convention’ of cooperative regional governance to be a key factor in the continued success of regional planning processes and alignment of local plans.

While the legislative framework for local and regional planning in Greater Sydney is somewhat more fragmented than in Greater Vancouver, coming from three separate but related Acts in Greater Sydney as opposed to one *British Columbia Local Government Act 2015*, on examination the legal controls are no more ‘top-down’ in Sydney than they are, on paper, in Greater Vancouver. The state has similar power to override local planning outcomes in British Columbia – but this research has identified that these powers have never been used in that jurisdiction, in a stark contrast to the Greater Sydney example. Is it the culture of governance arrangements around planning, the ‘how we do planning’ in Greater Sydney, that has led to continuation of an aggressively top-down approach to developing strategic plans, rather than the legislative framework that enables those plans?

A difference in the legislative framework between the case study cities that must be noted, is the appeal rights regime in Greater Sydney. Developers have a number of pathways, including ‘rezoning review’ procedures for unsuccessful rezoning requests to councils, and a right of appeal to the Land and Environment Court in relation to development consent

refusals by councils. These appeal rights have led to a lack of certainty and resilience in local strategic planning outcomes, noted by planners and interviewees in both cities.

In Vancouver there are very limited planning appeal rights and the substance of planning decisions generally cannot be reviewed or appealed other than very narrowly in the common law courts (Willey, 2005). Former City Planning Director AV3 in Vancouver noted that the lack of “Sydney-style” appeal rights over council development decisions in that city meant that developers were much more engaged in plan-making and resultant land zoning processes than she had experienced in Greater Sydney (AV3, November, 2016). In Sydney, former Regional Planning Director MS1 says:

That's what I think is a big problem for us. Because they (the developer) can go to the community and if they don't like what they hear, they can say “see you later, I'm going in this door now”. (MS1, February 2016)

AV3, former City Planning Director in Greater Vancouver, noted this difference from her experience working in Greater Sydney, particularly the uncertainty and delays that the appeals system can bring.

If developers know they can appeal a local decision to a higher authority they're not going to bother seeking consensus about their projects, and communities are not going to bother with engagement because they think “why waste our time? This work will just be tossed in the bin by an appeal”. (AV3, July 2015)

6.2.3 Governance structure and culture

The governance arrangements in Greater Sydney are complicated by the regular intervention of the state into what Greater Vancouverites might refer to as ‘local planning issues’. While the Greater Sydney Commission commenced operation in January 2016 as an independent authority to “lead metropolitan planning for the Greater Sydney Region”^{xvii} there are questions about its independence and its relationship to the Department of Planning – which continues to be involved in metropolitan or regional planning in many important ways. A strained relationship between the Department of Planning and the Greater Sydney Commission, both reporting to the Minister for Planning, has led to confusion about who runs planning in Greater Sydney, exacerbating the lack of trust between state and local levels of government, and intensifying the tensions between state control and local autonomy. The level of ‘independence’ of these state agencies was raised by Greater Sydney interviewees (LS1, February, 2016; LS3, July 2017; LS4, July 2017).

The Department of Planning

Prior to establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission in early 2016 the Department of Planning was solely responsible for development of regional plans (which were then known

as ‘metropolitan plans’) and for what were called subregional plans (known as District Plans when taken over by the Greater Sydney Commission).

Interviewees described increasing levels of secrecy about the work being undertaken by the Department around local planning, a lack of transparency that has exacerbated the ‘trust’ deficit’ between the levels of government.

It goes back in a way to an earlier day. We used to have a Planning and Environment Commission. I think the mistake we made years ago was to move to just a Department under a Minister because it looks like, and often was, in my view, a political statement when things were done – it looked like this is a government trying to win votes.

Poor old [former Director-General of the Department] he was master of survival, but it often looked like he was justifying what the Minister was going to say. (LS2, March 2016)

Former Planning Director and now council General Manager LS4 has a similar view about the changing nature and culture of the state planning agency.

I also have a theory that when the State Planning Authority morphed into the Planning and Environment Commission and then morphed into the Department of Planning, that’s when we lost it. Because while ever the State Planning Authority and Planning and Environment Commission were independent of government - which is what the Greater Sydney Commission could become if they did it properly - they were above political hoi-poloi and focussed on delivering growth and infrastructure. As soon as it became the Department it changed. I don’t know if that’s your perception? It gradually changed, and got worse and worse and worse, and now is the worst I’ve ever seen the Department functioning. Is it because there are no planners left in the senior ranks of the Department? (LS4, July 2017)

Perhaps this explains interviewees’ observations that, over time, Department staff appeared to become less empowered to share information, collaborate and make joint decisions with their local government counterparts. The Department has undertaken an internal culture change program since the time of the 2013 *White Paper for a New Planning System for NSW* (Department of Planning & Infrastructure, 2013), the document that initially discussed the need for a change in culture across the NSW system. The White paper described the Department’s understanding that it needed “to be the leader in creating a better culture for planning in NSW”, a culture that would “promote cooperation, and participation, the delivery of positive and pragmatic outcomes and a commitment to ongoing education and innovation” (Department of Planning & Infrastructure, 2013, p.34-35) without ever explaining what the problem was with the existing culture.

This echoes an assessment of culture change in the UK planning system, discussed by Andy Inch in his article *Culture Change as Identity Regulation: The Micro-Politics of Producing Spatial Planners in England*. In that paper Inch indicates that while not clearly defined in the UK example, “the idea of culture change suggests that the existing culture of English planning is, in some way, a problem and that planners are out of step with the requirement of spatial planning”, as set out in the government’s planning reform agenda (Inch, 2010, p.360). He goes on to suggest that the culture change movement in the UK is more about changing the attitudes of planners so that they are more likely to deliver the political agendas of their federal government masters, driving the reform agenda to ensure “faster planning decisions that are more responsive to market signals, whilst also allowing enhanced levels of time-consuming public involvement” (Inch, 2010, p.363).

Similarly, contradictory outcomes for the NSW planning system were identified in Chapters 2 and 4 and Inch explains the kinds of ‘culture’ that might be expected to deliver them.

Planning systems are often tasked with achieving ambiguous goals, or mediating tensions between competing aspirations (Vigar et al., 2000). However, it should be recognised that different priorities may suggest quite different types of change, requiring different planning cultures and different dispositions amongst planners. An emphasis on speed and delivery, for example, has generally been pursued through the use of centralised policy prescriptions and performance targets. As described above, these suggest a local planning culture geared towards the delivery of centrally determined outputs, and a planner willing to obediently respond to incentives to meet targets. By contrast, an emphasis on partnership and participation in planning suggests a culture committed to meeting local needs and a planner concerned with facilitating collaborative policy making. (Inch, 2010, p.364)

Interviewees in Greater Sydney clearly indicated that, if culture change was happening in that city, it wasn’t delivering the cooperation, collaboration and ‘positive change’ the State Government’s rhetoric had promised. A culture exhibiting a lack of transparency and a lack of willingness to share information emerges, and this has eroded trust in the planning system and exacerbated the ‘trust deficit’ between local and state governments in NSW. Council Planning Director LS1 describes a lack of willingness of state government to give answers.

I talk to the Metro team [at the Department of Planning], I talk to a Priority Precinct Director, I can get three different answers if I get an answer at all – there’s a reluctance, and that’s just the power of the staff, to me. There’s a big reluctance to ‘step out’ and obviously it’s a much more hierarchical process. So there’s this huge bureaucracy that you’re talking to at the Department and the staff aren’t empowered to do this sort of stuff and the Directors are put up there to chase certain targets, certain KPIs or whatever. (LS1, February 2016).

He further describes the relationship that this has engendered, far from a culture of transparency and cooperation.

And now we've moved into a realm where [the Department's] Sydney Region East Team have just changed Directors again, and the previous person, well I don't know if there's a planning degree in that body! Because I never actually got any discussion about regional issues, I just got piss-poor decision making and reports going off somewhere else where transparency is lacking. So I'm so far away from the Department right now. It's quite frustrating. (LS1, February 2016).

You don't get buy-in without any transparency and right now the state is on the nose so badly for their lack of transparency on all fronts. It's pretty unfortunate. (LS1, February 2016).

Council Planning Director LS3 describes what he sees as a developing culture of secrecy at the state government level that meant attending regional planning meetings was a waste of time.

That process which MS1 [former Regional Planning Director] ran was the process we participated in. So obviously MS1 had been given quite precise running instructions on what she could and could not talk to us about. So once I understood what was going on, I stopped participating and I sent....a senior planner because the Department was just informing us, they weren't consulting with us, just telling us stuff. (LS3, July 2017).

So (the senior planner) would go and would get information – but mostly it was "this is what we are doing, do you have any comment", but she wasn't allowed to take anything away, and we weren't given anything beforehand. So the general perception at my level was – don't bother. Send junior staff along just to see what's going on. (LS3, July 2017).

These comments do not align with those of the regional planning director MS2, quoted above, who spoke of consistently 'high levels, senior levels' of staff attending planning meetings. LS3 suggests that a political desire for secrecy through making planning draft regional plans 'Cabinet-in-Confidence' might drive the culture of secrecy in Departmental staff.

There seem to be two things that it appears to me drives these things. One is the pre-occupation with Cabinet confidence and secrecy in Sydney. Planning is not a secret business. Planning by its essence means everyone has to have all the knowledge, and our job as planners is to bring all the knowledge and make some coherent argument about all the knowledge. If you hide half the knowledge, people say well what are you hiding? What are you not telling us, what's going on? And I think that's the biggest problem that we've got, that the Department just can't release, discuss, tell

us what's really driving it because of this Cabinet-in-Confidence pre-occupation. (LS3, July 2017)

Council Planning Director LS1 agrees:

We've had MS2 [Regional Planning Director] and others who have been a bit guarded, but that [discussion] should not be a guarded environment. The guarded stuff is for the politics later on. And they pick and choose what gets up. And I get that, but if you don't have the robust discussions happening a bit further down that enables real collaboration..... (LS1, February, 2016).

The Vancouver case study identified the need for a culture of partnership to be developed, over time, to allow robust and open discourse, and to build trust in the system so that agreements could be reached. The culture developed between the levels of government there was described by a former Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Director as being that of "one level of government". That culture of partnership is not apparent in the Sydney case. Former Regional Planning Director MS1 says:

So you can't expect to deliver something at one level [of government], and make sure that the lower level just takes it on – you have to have gone through the whole of the process with genuine collaboration and genuine partnership. And that's where I think NSW has not been good at all. They have had some involvement with local government but there is not a real feeling of partnership. (MS1, February 2016)

Local councils suggested that their communication and 'partnerships' within their own organisations and local government areas, when undertaking detailed local planning, is much better. Council Planning Director LS1 says:

I'm sitting here with a team that doesn't say yes to me the whole time, so we get really good debate professionally about what the community needs. I've got a boss who trusts what I do and I've got a council that trusts what I do, and empowers me to do it. So as long as I hold the professional line that I'm committed to, you get some really good stuff coming out of the team. But that's not happening at the Department. It's very cagey, not wanting to talk, dumping stuff off, poor project management. (LS1, February 2016)

Council Planning Director LS3 agrees:

Yes, so when we did that with Talk of the Town [the council's successful engagement process around its local plan] we said to the population, we're going to get an increase of 14,000 dwellings. That was the draft subregional target that never got finally adopted. There's our target, that's what we've got to deal with. So if you tell the population this is the facts, the State Governments told us this is our target - OK, where do you want them to go? And if you sit with them and talk it through, break it

down – here's a bunch of physical constraints, road capacities, flooding, beach erosion, bush, biodiversity, etc. OK, what's your idea, where do you want these people to go? And if you give them that information in a rational way, over 2 or 3 days, they will vote rationally. (LS3, July 2017)

LS3 continues to explain why the State Government's approaches to aligning regional and local strategic planning outcomes destroy trust in the system.

So Brad Hazzard [the Minister for Planning] rolls in, says this is all bullshit, this process you've done, we're not going to follow it. And so the trust in the community evaporated, straight away, because they could see that an individual, ill-informed individual, comes in and changes the whole plan. We have an informed population and they say 'what's the point?' What's the point in being involved in anything anymore? So the whole thing basically collapsed, so then we had to go back and do (Sydney suburb) by itself, and resurrect that, against the Minister's wishes, who said "hell would freeze over before he'd allow apartments to go in (Sydney suburb)". And that is the Minister for Planning! (LS3, July 2017)

Other commentators on local government in Australia have described the nature of the relationship between state and local governments in NSW as considerably less than a partnership. Grant and Drew, in their book *Local Government in Australia*, note comments from the then NSW Minister for Local Government, Don Page, that when he took office in 2011, at the start of the timeframe of this research, that “the relationship between state and local government had deteriorated to a point where it could accurately be described as toxic”. Consistent with comments from interviewees in Greater Sydney, Grant and Drew express the view that, rather than the relationship improving through “what can only be described as a vexatious reform process from 2011 onwards”, relationships have more likely “reached heightened levels of toxicity” (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.211).

Chapter 5 described governance arrangements in Greater Vancouver that appear to have created a culture of trust and cooperation. The issue in Sydney appears to be that the building of trust has never really been given the time or opportunity to occur. Recent decades have seen a centralisation of planning powers in NSW (described in Chapter 4), a deterioration in the levels of trust and cooperation between state and local governments, and a continued lack of agreement about alignment of local and regional strategic plans. The Vancouver case study showed that it takes time to build trust in planning, but that trust can quickly be destroyed.

Former Greater Sydney Regional Planning Director MS1 suggests, in relation to the time it takes to build and break trust:

It's like building a Cathedral – it takes decades, generations to build a Cathedral; you can bomb it in an instant and it's gone. (MS1, February 2016)

The Greater Sydney Commission

As discussed in Chapter 4, the governance structure of the Greater Sydney Commission was determined in part by the unfortunate coincidence of forced amalgamations of local councils in the Greater Sydney Region in late 2015, when the Commission's structure and membership was being finalised for a January 2016 commencement of operations. This resulted in a structure quite different to the Metro Vancouver Authority in that there are no elected representatives on the Board of the Greater Sydney Commissions. Instead, local councils were involved in selection, from a pool of contenders, of an independent expert to represent their planning district, with that expert directly appointed as a 'District Commissioner' by the Minister for Planning. The Board of the Greater Sydney Commission is in its entirety comprised of Ministerial appointments. Interviewees had thought about the lack of elected representatives on the Board and made suggestions to government. Former Council Planning Director and now General Manager LS4 says:

So what I suggested when they were creating the Greater Sydney Commission was to say each region elects one of the Mayors to go and sit on a Panel, with the Minister for Planning, with Treasury and Transport, and sit as a Ministerial Committee, made up of 6 elected representatives, one from each region. And the regions would have elected a Mayor, there would have been a bit of hassle and argy-bargy, but they would have elected a representative Mayor to sit on the panel. And that Mayor then comes back to the regional committee of Mayors and says this is what's going on. And then there's a similar technical group where you'd have the General Managers meet with the heads of Departments. (LS4, July 2017)

LS4's suggestions showed marked similarity to the structure of the Metro Vancouver Authority, with multi-level committees of elected representatives making decisions about work undertaken by lower level technical groups. And he thinks his suggestions would have provided similar 'buy-in' benefits to the Vancouver model.

It would have meant the Mayors had a 'buy-in', and it would have given the egos of the Mayors somewhere functional to go to, and the egos of the Ministers, to actually sit down and talk about the issues. So the Ministers could tell the Mayors "this is our problem from a regional point of view, and we need your help to do...blah, blah blah". (LS4, July 2017)

LS4 suggested that the District Commissioner model, where those Commissioners were meant to be representing the Councils in each planning district on the Board of the Greater Sydney Commission, was not functioning well. When asked how the District Commissioners were operating, whether through regular meetings with elected representatives or technical staff in councils, LS4 responded:

Nothing! I have no idea what Commissioners in other Districts are doing, but as far as I'm concerned there is no appearance by our District Commissioner with the Mayors or Administrators in our District. There's no meeting with the Senior Planning Directors or General Managers. We get briefings from senior Greater Sydney Commission staff, but not from the District Commissioner. (The new Regional Planning Director) comes and gives us, as a group, a secret briefing, about what's going on. He gets the General Managers from the District together and we get a run through of the next iteration of the regional plan. Not for us to participate, but to inform. "This is what we're doing, this is what we've discovered". Not, "what are your problems". (LS4, July 2016)

This apparent lack of communication from the District Commissioners appears to have led some councils to respond in kind. LS4, Council General Manager says:

There are no fora where I get to talk to the District Commissioner, as the General Manager of the largest council (in Greater Sydney). Especially when it comes to preparing our budget. We just prepared our annual budget with no consultation whatsoever with the Greater Sydney Commission. Why would we talk to them? They don't talk to us, so we don't talk to them! So there's no forum for that discussion to take place, there's no discussion with the District Commissioners. Lucy Turnbull, the Chief Commissioner, comes out and pontificates at the WSROC^{xviii} meetings, but there doesn't appear to be any forum where our District Commissioner comes out and talks to the General Managers or the Mayors about what's going on. You would have thought that, we're all preparing our budgets at roughly the same time, that he would be out there saying, "Guys, we think you need to spend money on 'blah' – whatever it is". This is the stuff (LS4, July 2017).

And further, in terms of coordination of regional and local infrastructure spending:

There's no response from the government to our Community Strategic Plan, there's no discussion with Treasury, Infrastructure NSW, Transport – "oh, here's Cumberland's Community Strategic Plan, let's have a look, where's your money going, are you building anything new that we need?" No coordination with our budget. (LS4, July 2017)

In response to a discussion with the researcher about different governance models that might have been introduced for the Greater Sydney Commission, the need for elected representatives to have 'buy-in' to the decision-making processes, who might lead the Greater Sydney Commission, and in particular ideas of a popularly elected Mayor for the Greater Sydney Region, Council General Manager LS4 says:

I don't know whether Lucy's [the Greater Sydney Commission Chief Commissioner] position is a valid position, or whether they should have just had a Mayor, one of the

Mayors elected to the Chief Commissioner position – a Mayor of the Mayors, or it rotates.

The Premier would hate that – because a Mayor of Greater Sydney would be too powerful. But if you're going to have a non-government employee, head of the GSC, who should that person be?

So if it's the CEO's job to talk to the administrative body, then that's fair enough and we can meet with her as General Managers to talk about the mechanics of budgets and roads and blah, blah, blah. Who do the Mayors meet with? It should be the Minister for Planning. Or another Minister who is the Minister for Sydney, if that's the model. In the Cabinet structure there should be a Minister for Sydney, whose job is to drive the Greater Sydney Commission. Or a member of the opposition – it doesn't really matter, make the Leader of the Opposition the Chair of the Greater Sydney Commission. Therefore the whole of government, the whole of Parliament is going to get some buy in to it. But it should be a politician I would have thought, rather than the Prime Minister's wife. I don't know the solution to this. The media says "Lucy says Sydney's going to look like this". Well, no, various Government Departments say Sydney is going to look like this and Lucy is the mouthpiece. (LS4, July 2017)

The lack of opportunity for Greater Sydney Mayors and elected representatives to participate in, and have 'buy-in' to the Greater Sydney Commission processes appears to be a weakness in its governance structure – that weakens the effectiveness of the Commission, but also weakens the opportunities for genuine agreements to be reached about alignment of local and regional strategic plans. Certainly recently elected Mayors of councils where interviews were undertaken have continued to criticise the State Government's approach to regional planning and the manner in which it over-rides local strategic planning outcomes.

6.3 Power

In this research power is considered in terms of its use in the processes evident in the two case study cities that attempt to align local strategic planning outcomes and regional strategic planning outcomes. It is discussed in terms of formal versus actual power, network power, and the power exerted by politicians/political champions and visionary leaders.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the use of the state's formal and informal powers, in what appears to be a significantly 'top down' approach to regional and local strategic planning in NSW, is the source of significant tension in the planning system and in notions of local autonomy versus state control.

6.3.1 Formal power

The NSW state government's use of formal power is most obvious, and most often complained about by local governments and communities, in the legislative mechanisms it

has introduced to override local planning controls simply and swiftly and with little or no community consultation. Powerful *State Environmental Planning Policies*, or SEPPs, prepared by the State under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* make certain developments permissible in different land use zones even if the local plan prohibits those uses. These SEPPs are understandably very unpopular with councils and communities, who are engaged at length about the controls that appear in their local plans.

Local Government Planning Directors in Greater Sydney have argued against spending time on new processes implemented by the State for ensuring local plans are aligned with regional plans, and through community consultation, because it is a “waste of time” as the “SEPPs will override our controls anyway” (LS1, February, 2016; LS3, July 2017). SEPPs are also used to identify ‘Priority Precincts’, most often located around centres and transport nodes, where the State Government takes over planning of an entire precinct and introduces new planning controls, to allow significant development uplift, into a council’s local plan. Sometimes little or no notice is given of this, and little regard had to the detailed local planning councils may have already undertaken with their communities.

Council Planning Director LS1 says:

And the latest thing they’ve done with the (Sydney suburb) Strategic Centre – apparently (Sydney suburb) is now a Priority Precinct! And if that was the case, you’d think the Department would tell you! We got called to a meeting in October where (the Department’s Priority Precinct Director) ran out all the stuff that they were going to do – didn’t say the words Priority Precinct – which was all the local planning we had already done! So I passed him over council’s (Sydney Suburb) Strategic Study and said “is this what you’re talking about? We’ve done it”. He didn’t even know it was adopted; it wasn’t passed on from the Department’s Regional Team. And again, one of those lower days in my professional life with the Department not recognising what we were doing and wanting to do a whole new planning study via consultants! They had the tender brief up and running. I wrote to his boss and got it signed by the General Manager and finally we got something that said it’s going to be a strategic centre, a Priority Precinct, and we’d like you to help out. To me if they’re going to do (Sydney suburb) as a Priority Precinct then justify it, transparently. Because I’ve justified everything I’ve done, transparently, and that’s how I get the buy-in. You don’t get buy-in without any transparency. (LS1, February 2016)

A fundamental question is whether the State Government has any real choice in where it places itself in the spectrum of state control versus local autonomy – because doing deals to allow greater development yields and extracting significant development levies from developers is one of just a few mechanisms it has to raise the revenue it needs to build the infrastructure required by Sydney’s rapidly growing population.

The failure of some of its very powerful SEPPs is among three failures of the use of formal power by the current conservative government in NSW. The failed policy of forced council amalgamations and the failed 2013 Planning Bill to introduce a new planning system (an election promise that won the government the 2011 state election with the biggest swing in NSW election history) constitute the other two. Chapter 4 describes the failure of the 2013 Planning Bill. Commentators including Grant and Drew (2017) and Blayden (2017) provide commentary on the failed policy of council amalgamations in NSW, and this is not explored further in this research. The point for this research is that the forced amalgamations were a heavily top-down intervention that was successfully fought against, in public forums and in the courts, by local councils. The point to be made is why the state government persists with an aggressive use of formal power when it angers local communities (for whom the state says it is planning) and results in repeated failure of policy. As Grant and Drew point out “local governments overwhelmingly serve at the pleasure of the state legislatures and consequently are not afforded immunity from them in any absolute sense” (Grant and Drew, 2017, p.184).

This begs the question “where does the real power lie?” Clearly local government still does exercise a level of independence that is unacceptable to the NSW State Government, and that affords it sufficient political power that the state has backed down on use of its formal power on a number of occasions.

Council General Manager LS4^{xix} has very clear views on why certain boundary decisions were made around the few councils that were forcibly amalgamated, prior to failure of the State’s amalgamation policy, and why certain amalgamations would never happen, in his view. Those views relate to power.

Ah, here's my theory on "who's got one bigger than me!" I guess from an amalgamated council perspective, why the hell did they propose to cut Northern Beaches into 2 councils? That was the dumbest idea ever promulgated. It was done to protect (the sitting Member of Parliament's) election. Why did they create Cumberland Council, and the City of Parramatta? It makes no sense, what they've done – except the Lord Mayor of those two councils joined together would be too powerful. Why isn't City of Sydney Council 700,000 people? From the airport to the city, from the coast to the harbour? Mayor Clover Moore would be too powerful. If you look at it from that perspective..... (LS4, July 2017)

The political motivation of keeping councils smaller and perhaps the motivation for regularly over-riding the local strategic planning being done by councils is explained further:

The Minister for Planning for instance has 35,000 electors, the Mayor of Northern Beaches Council will have 200,000. So the Mayor of Northern Beaches has a bigger political reason for being than the State Government Member for Wakehurst has, who happens to be a member of Cabinet. So if you look at the reasons for why they

created the councils they did [through amalgamations] there's no reason except political expedience. The reason Cumberland was created is because it's a Labor council and the City of Parramatta is now a Liberal Council. So you get rid of the filth south of the M4 Motorway, who vote Labor, and you bring in some lovely folk from The Hills and Hornsby, who vote Liberal, and the City of Parramatta is guaranteed Liberal! Liberal Lord Mayor. If you put the two councils together, you'd have a council of approximately 450,000 people, a budget approaching \$600M or \$700M, and a Lord Mayor who could be either Liberal or Labor, but who would be a very powerful politician. And that council could actually do something! (LS4, July 2017)

In relation to successive regional plans identifying Parramatta as the 'second CBD' of the Greater Sydney Region, LS4 suggests why state political power-brokering might be an impediment to achievement of the policy.

If you want to make Parramatta the second CBD, give the Council a \$600M budget! And that council can make Parramatta the second CBD. While if you have a council that's just a little bit bigger than Cumberland, with a \$250M budget, well it's not going to function. And so I guess it comes down to the old "mine's bigger than yours" argument. Where the State Government, the State politicians, cannot accept that a council is more important than they are. I think that's the biggest issue, the biggest problem. (LS4, July 2017)

This suggests a strong desire of the State to retain control, a need to retain power, at the expense of achieving the regional planning outcomes it says it desires – a use of formal power that might prevent the planning system facilitating a more successful and equitable city.

6.3.2 Network power

Interviews in Greater Sydney did not reveal evidence of any sites of network power, such as those evident in the Vancouver case study. Interview data suggests that the opportunities for network power to manifest, that were identified in the Greater Vancouver planning system do not exist in the Greater Sydney planning system. The Technical Working Groups established by MS2 appear to have been an opportunity missed, or unable to be exploited because of the need for secrecy, with local council staff that participated in them having to sign confidentiality agreements.

MS2, the state government Regional Planning Director, takes quite a positive view of this confidentiality arrangement.

And the other thing I think is a massive testimony is that in doing this now for over a year and a half we haven't had one leak. We've shown them confidential information, shared information that could make people a multi-millionaire, and not

once has any of it been leaked. Which to me is just – I'm astounded! (MS2, November 2015)

Her comment however does seem to display a sense of surprise that the councils were able to be trusted with confidential information. Council interviewees take a different view of the confidentiality arrangements and the lack of open, multi-level discussion that might lead to building of network power. Council General Manager LS4 says:

And you ask them why can't you tell us what's going on, its "oh we don't trust the Councillors". Well, how is it going to work if you don't have any trust in the Councillors because again it's all so secret and there is this antagonistic regime built. And that seems to manifest itself every time the Department wants to come and consult or 'inform', they just inform, they don't come and ask us anything. And there are no fora, for us to participate in, to give our ideas – maybe now with the Greater Sydney Commission a little bit, but through Commissioners. But there's no forum for the Mayors or General Managers to sit down and talk about how this is going to function. (LS4, July 2017).

This evidence from the Sydney case study provides a stark contrast with that of Vancouver. In Greater Sydney the regional planning authority does not allow elected representatives, Councillors, to be informed at all about the regional planning work that will directly impact their local government areas and be reflected in their local plans – plans that will be forcibly aligned if necessary. In Vancouver the elected representatives effectively are the regional planning authority, by way of their membership of the Regional Planning Committee and constitution of the Board of Metro Vancouver.

6.3.3 Political champions and visionary leaders

Why hasn't a more collaborative approach to regional planning been adopted in Greater Sydney, when examples in jurisdictions such as Greater Vancouver Region, places the NSW State Government has identified as being successfully collaborative, exist? Are visionary leaders and political champions important in achieving collaborative and bi-partisan outcomes? Former Regional Planning Director MS1 thinks so:

Absolutely! Yes, you need that combination. At one time, and it's probably not acceptable to name names, but I will. At one time when we had two different Premiers actually, and Planning Ministers, in Kristina Keneally and in Brad Hazzard, who I think of still as a bit of a man of the people. I think he was genuinely interested in doing things differently and listening, as was I think, Kristina Keneally. But their tenure was so short, and I don't necessarily really think that they had the longevity of support that's needed to get these things accepted up and running and executed. Because it takes years to do it, and we just don't have that stability. (MS1, February 2016)

You need something of an enlightened government to happen, where you do get very different enlightened individuals in positions of power, and you think “oh, that’s good, that happens all the time!” (laughs). It actually is a rare thing to have those things aligned, in such a way, that the people who can pull the levers and make things happen, are genuinely committed to a collaborative way of working, and not just about delivering an outcome or an output, even – in order to get votes, or impress somebody or to satisfy the development industry in some way. (MS1, February 2016)

Regional Planning Director MS2 noted examples of leadership among councils, through the collaborative processes she was trying to establish to develop regional and subregional plans.

The City of Sydney [council] has taken it on themselves to play quite a leadership role in local government, so they’ve basically said that “we’re more educated, more advanced” – not really, but slightly, in an arrogant way – that they’ve taken it upon themselves to try to generate the robust discussion and encourage the other councils in their district to lift their vision. So at the very beginning of this some of the councils were very inward focussed and parochial and just couldn’t think beyond their boundary – wouldn’t think beyond their boundary – and then City of Sydney was challenging them and saying “hey, what about this, what about that”. “Come on, you guys do this, we do that, if we all work together etc...”. So the City of Sydney definitely played a leadership role amongst their peers. (MS2, November 2015)

Is there perhaps more evidence of leadership at the local level than the State level in the NSW planning system? Regional Planning Director MS2 had strong views on the importance and style of leadership at state and local levels and commented at length about examples of leadership at the local level, her own approach to leadership as a State Government employee, and the lack of leadership she experienced from those above her in State Government Executive positions.

Yes. Definitely. At the local level - there’s not so much leadership at the State level. Even the span at the local level, from (City Planner) at the City of Sydney who is the Manager of Planning, who’s trying to show leadership across his fellow councils. He apologises at the end of the meetings, saying “sorry I was so vocal” and I say no, don’t be sorry. And then we’ve had this conversation where he’s explained his motivation as actually consciously trying to show that leadership. (MS2, November 2015).

LS3 [Greater Sydney Planning Director], you know, he’s the first if I send something out. Guaranteed, within 5 minutes, LS3 will be on the phone! He’s the first to have a dig, but he’s also one of the biggest supporters. So he sees the benefit, but boy he gives me a hard time along the way. But he also sees the benefit of all of this.

Other leadership – certainly the Mayor of Warringah – I've won a friend with him, somehow! The Mayor of Waverly, very strong in support, and I think it's because we treat their staff with respect, that they are actually willing to support the process.
(MS2, November 2015)

In terms of needing leadership at all levels, state and local, staff and political, MS2 says:

In terms of the leadership I think the challenge we've had is we've had no leadership internally, from the State Government, so my biggest challenge has been the fact that I've had five Executive Directors in the course of one project. And every time you get a new Executive Director you get a new direction! And so I feel I'm the only one who has championed this. (MS2, November 2015)

This lack of continuity and consistency in regional planning efforts in Sydney appears to be quite significant both in terms of the number of regional plans prepared and in the capability of leaders at the state government level.

MS2 was asked why she continued to persist with a collaborative approach, displaying courageous leadership herself, despite little leadership and buy-in from above.

Researcher: You have thought, well this collaborative approach is what's going to work here. Why is that? Why are you feeling that way despite the fact that as you've said, it's been quite a struggle to get buy-in from the people above you?

MS2: I guess because I don't have the same ego as some of the people above who think they know everything, and I know that I can't know everything and that these people [in councils] are experienced people who have face-to-face experience at the coal face and have lots of value to contribute. But also the main thing is that it's very clear about how the regional plans are to be implemented – through the local environmental plans [LEPs]. Who does the LEPs? The councils! So who are we kidding! If we think that we're going to come in and be Big Brother and dictate how it's going to be – when we don't even do the LEPs! We know how painful the Standard Instrument LEP program was. (MS2, November 2015)

Interviews in Greater Sydney invariably led to discussion about the comparisons this research makes between the way planning is done in Greater Vancouver and the way it is done in Greater Sydney. Interviewees had been informed that this was comparative, explanatory case study research. Greater Sydney participants were unanimously interested in the collaborative approaches taken in Greater Vancouver, how much time those processes took (in the context of very tight, legislated time frames for processes in Greater Sydney), how trust was built between the levels of government (in the context of a well-documented trust deficit in Greater Sydney), and how perceptions of trust had been swiftly altered by one Metro Vancouver CEO attempting to force his will on a local council through the British Columbia Supreme Court.

Greater Sydney Regional Planning Director MS2 related her story of how a high-level state government bureaucrat had almost destroyed years of work by her in building trust with local councils in one part of Greater Sydney. Near the end of a long Technical Working Group process with councils, developing the subregional detail of the regional plan, when her team was preparing final reports to go to Cabinet for approval, the Deputy Secretary of the Department, who had not attended any of the previous 24 Working Groups, came along. The Deputy Secretary did not participate in the discussion with councils.

So in the North sub-region, the one that I've built up that relationship with, great discussion, (the Deputy Secretary) spent the entire time sitting at a table by herself, even at the break she didn't engage with anybody. She spent the entire time on her phone, or looking down. The last five minutes of the whole three hour session, when we got to next steps, she looked up to see what I was going to say. (MS2, November 2015)

Councils had been asking to see the final document that they had been contributing to. The State Government's need to have planning documents approved by Cabinet before public exhibition was proving a stumbling block.

And so I had been carefully crafting a story, you know, it's Cabinet-in-confidence, so I'm not able to show you the document, but you've all contributed so you know what the content of it is, even though you might not know the words of it. And I guess I could get away with that because of the relationship I'd built.

The Deputy Secretary then took it upon herself to stand up and say: "It's Cabinet-in-confidence, I can't let you see it, you will not see it. You don't show me your council reports before they're submitted to council" – which is factually incorrect because quite often the officers do show them to us – "so I can't show it to you and you can understand that you wouldn't show us, so I don't know what the problem is".

The Planning Minister, when he heard about this, took a different view. At another meeting with General Managers of the Northern Region councils, he advised that he didn't understand why the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Planning would take such a secretive approach, and that he was happy to show councils the document. The gap in leadership, as explained by MS2, seemed to lie at the senior levels of the bureaucracy.

I met the Minister outside the door of the General Manager's meeting and I said to him, "I want to warn you, they're going to ask you to see the Cabinet Minute and the Deputy Secretary has told them they can't see it. He said, "Yes, I'm aware of that stance. I'm not sure why the Department has taken that view – if they'd like to see it, I'd be more than happy to invite them to my office and show them".

And so, she [the Deputy Secretary of the Department] can destroy all that work, by being bureaucratic. And here's the Minister, saying the complete opposite, fully

informed, they didn't spring it on him, because I got to warn him quietly in the corridor first, and he said "If you would like to see it, I'm happy to show it to you in my office beforehand. I don't quite understand why the Department is taking that approach". So if there's leadership, there's a gap in the middle! (laughs). (MS2, November 2015)

Political leadership, right from the top, and as evidenced in the Greater Vancouver case study, appears vital in developing and maintaining a collaborative approach. Former Regional Planning Director in Greater Sydney, MS1 says:

Very important, yes. Political leadership right from the top, because that's where it all emanates. So you can have a great Mayor or a great Planning Minister, but if you've got a Premier who is disinterested or anti what's going on, it won't happen. You've got to have it right from the top, I think. You can get a disconnect when you get to the local level because of the democratically elected Mayors who might come in on a platform of 'no growth' or something. But then you have to have a great Premier and a great Planning Minister, who'll talk to the great independent Mayor, and try and get a collaborative solution.

So even although the ideal is to have aligned political leadership, you may get strong political leadership that's at loggerheads but it's all down to working together again, collaborating together to a common good. (MS1, February 2016)

6.4 Rationality

In her book *Collaborative Planning – Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, Patsy Healey contrasts strategy-making approaches in terms of their rationality. In particular, in developing her theory of collaborative planning, Healey contrasts the instrumental rationality of development of an 'expert plan' with the communicative rationality of developing knowledge and learning, and ultimately development of planning strategies, through collaborative processes that produce a socially constructed reality, as opposed to a 'reality' constructed by technocrats in a language that most stakeholders see as an "impenetrable 'black box' of 'taken-for-granted' knowledge" (Healey, 1997, p. 248-279). Fainstein describes the instrumental-rational planning model as "expertise divorced from its social base" (Fainstein, 2005, p.123).

The history of strategic planning and planning system reform in NSW displays a strongly instrumental rationality. Strategies, and the evidence base behind them, are produced by state technocrats, the experts, using evidence-based approaches that seek to separate the discussion of objective facts from the discussion of values. Governance arrangements in Greater Sydney have resulted in the planning system operating in a strictly linear and hierarchical manner, which the legislation certainly permits, but as evidenced in the Greater Vancouver case study, does not mandate as a modus operandi. Governance arrangements

can heavily influence how planning legislation is given effect to. A lack of opportunity for joint problem definition, joint decision-making, and capacity building in the Greater Sydney case has resulted in the ongoing ‘fight’ between state and local governments, and between governments and communities, about the outcomes of strategic planning work, individual development proposals, and state government policies such as SEPPs, which override local controls.

6.4.1 Joint problem definition

The first interviewee to discuss a perceived lack of joint problem definition in Greater Sydney was AV3, former City Planning Director in Vancouver and now Adjunct Professor Community Planning at the University of British Columbia, who has been engaged as a consultant to review regional plans in both Sydney and Melbourne. When discussing her visits to Sydney, AV3 said:

I always get the impression that the state in NSW feels that it is the only authority on how planning happens and what is good for its citizens. (AV3, July 2015).

Her comments were reflected in later interviews with Sydney council Planning Directors and General Managers – one of whom in particular used the analogy of ‘baseball bases’, saying that the discussion regarding the planning problem to be solved, when had with the Department of Planning, always started at ‘third base’ rather than ‘first base’. What he meant was, in relation to planning for growth in Sydney, the state develops population growth targets for every local government area – but historically did not produce or defend the modelling on which those targets are based – targets that are not developed or agreed by the local governments involved. The basis for regional planning, planning for significant population growth in Sydney which requires local councils to plan for significant housing growth in established areas, has arisen as a key point of contention. The growth targets have not been developed or agreed by councils. There has not been joint definition of the problem to be solved by the strategic planning work being undertaken.

LS3 agrees with the lack of discussion about defining the problem and about discussion of options for solving the problem. The evidence base for population growth targets is a key issue for Sydney councils – who undertake their own demographic analysis from census data. The very basis of why we are planning for certain levels of growth comes under question – and further erodes trust between levels of government and trust in the processes underpinning regional strategic planning. Regarding the Department of Planning population projections that underpin regional planning processes, LS3 says:

And when we asked as a regional set of Planning Directors or Deputy General Managers for them to say “tell me how you came to these population projections”, they never would tell us. Sometimes you’d get the Department demographer out and they’d talk double-Dutch to you for a little while, and we’d say well that assumption

is not right, or this assumption is not right, or that's very ambitious, but we never got the detail of how they'd arrived at the conclusions. (LS3, July 2016)

Once the Greater Sydney Commission was established, and new population projections developed for a new regional plan, the same issue of validity of projections and evidence base was apparent. LS4 says:

And then the CEO of the Greater Sydney Commission comes to a meeting out at Campbelltown, and says the population of Sydney is driven by natural birth rates. Next week, the census comes out, and says the population of Sydney is driven by in-migration. And so you say well, here's the Chairman of the Board, the CEO, coming out and making statements that are patently untrue, to try and calm down the fact that in-migration and increased demand for housing is driving housing prices up. And there's nothing that the State Government can do about it because migration is a Federal policy. So Federal policy drives in-migration which is driving demand, and Reserve Bank policy is to keep rates low for cheap cash; overseas people driving the demand up and price is just matching the demand. So when the Greater Sydney Commission CEO says no it's all by natural birth rate, we're all going "no its not". And then the next week the census comes out and confirms it's not. First statement – Sydney's population driven by in-migration. So where's the trust, where is the acceptance and understanding, it's just silly. She may have been told that was the situation, but that's patently not true. (LS4, July 2016)

The Department of Planning and/or the Greater Sydney Commission make the decisions about what the 'problem' is that needs to be solved, and the metrics around it. Interviews revealed that the local councils think that the problem to be solved and its nature is never agreed with the local councils, and is rarely well explained. Because the problem is not well defined and agreed jointly there is little understanding or acceptance of the solutions suggested and brokered by the state. There is little local government buy-in to the regional plan – the plan that is largely implemented through council's local plans.

This seems to be a fundamental problem for planning in the Greater Sydney Region. If it can't be agreed between the State and local councils what the problem is that we are trying to solve, what we are planning for, local councils are unable to have a rational discussion with their communities about accepting growth and change. Sydney interviewees think it could easily be different, if a different conversation was held. Council Planning Director LS1 says:

I think you start with the data, the demographics – the numbers (from the Department of Planning) were a bit high, but if it was evidence based and communicated – you'd get to the end. You've just got to take people through the dance, that's what it is in my view" (LS1, February 2016)

Council Planning Director LS3 agrees.

(The Department needs to) talk about “what is the problem” before you develop all those options. “We have a problem, this is the problem, what do you local Councils think about it?” (LS3, July 2017)

The definition of the ‘problem’ of how much growth Sydney was facing and how much of the population growth should be allocated to each local council area was raised as an issue by all councils interviewed.

They [the 2008 housing targets] were just released – these are your targets and what we’ll be expecting to happen in the area. Our target was 1,650 new dwellings, which might sound small, but because we’re 75% conservation area it doesn’t leave a lot of space for it and I think it was a little unclear as to how everyone was to respond to that? What happened if you said, well, we’re just not going to do it?! (laughs). But the issue then was we had a draft LEP [local environmental plan] and DCP [development control plan] pending, and it was pretty clear that wasn’t going anywhere, until some of those housing targets had been addressed. (LS6, October 2016)

Her comments reflect the fact that the state government and Minister for Planning have the final say in approving local plans – so she knew she had to accept the target she was given and have a difficult conversation with her community, if she was to finally get the local plan approved. State government decisions about what local housing targets should be, meant local planning had to be redone.

So the message was you don’t have a lot of areas where you can accommodate this housing, (Sydney suburb) is going to have to do the heavy lifting, if you want your LEP and DCP to go through. How are you going to manage that? Which then caused the changes in the LEP and DCP, the consultants got called in and FSRs and heights went up. There wasn’t any data around the housing targets – there wasn’t, for example, “we have looked at the infrastructure in different council areas, and decided that your open space, your schools your shopping centres, roads, have the capacity to cope with many more people”. None of that data was given. So it was “here’s your housing targets”. Well how do we fit it in? We can’t cope with that; our schools, our roads are congested. (LS6, October 2016)

A lack of understanding about where growth and housing targets had come from made councils’ job in consulting with their communities about new local plans a lot harder.

The community didn’t understand. They didn’t understand because there’d been no modelling done, there’d been no education campaign, there’d been no talking about what this meant. “We’re not accepting the targets; we don’t believe them”. Where

had these targets come from? "You just made them up, why do we have to grow anyway?" That was a lot of the comment. (LS6, October 2016)

The lack of discussion and lack of agreement around housing targets between the state planning agency and local councils, having targets delivered as a fait accompli, effectively pushed the difficult decisions and arguments about growth down to the local level rather than the regional level. Council Planning Director LS6 believes this pitted communities against their local councils, rather than the state.

Absolutely. And I found that a real shame, because what a difference it would have made if our community instead of saying, council's corrupt and you're on the take, and you're out to get us; if they'd come and said we're really upset about this, how can we work together to get a better solution but we were just lumped into the 'enemy camp' with the developer, and they were going to fight us every step of the way. And that was a real shame - and not just us but also the State Government.

(LS6, October 2016)

6.4.2 Joint decision-making

As opposed to the Greater Vancouver case, where joint decision making by staff and elected representatives of the member municipalities of the Metro Vancouver Authority was identified as being fundamental to agreements being reached about regional and local planning priorities, the Greater Sydney case exhibits a lack of opportunities for joint decision making - in particular, joint decision making involving elected representatives from local councils. Greater Sydney Regional Planning Director sees this as something of an advantage.

We have had the luxury of really only being focussed at the technical level, we haven't had to battle politics. (MS2, November 2015)

This 'advantage' was apparently to bed down the 'technical' matters, such as what population growth targets were being talked about, without local political interference.

So we've made quite a conscious decision that we wanted to have the technical, accurate technical side of things bedded down before we tackled the politics. So we have briefed General Managers; on the odd occasion we've briefed Mayors, in a few forums. Mostly the Mayors don't have a problem with what we're doing because they have a level of confidence that their officers have been sitting in their every step of the way from Day 1. What they REALLY take offence to is how some other parts of the Department have treated them and whereas we're doing everything we can to be collaborative and partner with them, they get others like the Priority Precincts, where it just comes 'slam' over the top of them. They're very anti-UrbanGrowth^{xx} - you know the Parramatta Road Corridor Transformation project and some of those bigger projects, where they see [the engagement] as completely tokenistic, and they can't reconcile the fact we're just one beast and that one part [of the Department] could

be genuinely trying to take a collaborative approach while another part is absolutely, blatantly rail-roading them. (MS2, November 2015)

As discussed in the section on governance structure and culture, the Greater Sydney Commission, vested with leading regional planning across the Greater Sydney Region, does not include any elected representatives on its Board, and importantly in my view does not hold any of its Committee or Board meetings in public. The Metro Vancouver Authority holds Committee and Board meetings open to the public. There are no fora in Greater Sydney where Mayors and Councillors can discuss and make decisions on regional planning issues, in camera or in public.

6.4.3 Capacity building and joint learning

The potential benefits of capacity building and joint learning does emerge from Greater Sydney interviews as an aim of some parts of the regional planning authority. Regional Planning Director MS2 says:

At that stage we were affectionately called the ‘black box team’, because we weren’t really supposed to be out there talking, but we wanted to build that relationship really early, so we were out there talking to them and then it formally evolved into that Technical Working Group process. (MS2, November 2015)

Not everyone in the Department of Planning agreed that this was a good idea.

Our media people didn’t want us to do that, and we maintained that in order to collaborate you had to share the information, otherwise how could it be on equal footing; how could they [the councils] assist us, and they [the media people] were like “oh no – the sky’s going to fall in” – and it’s been 3 weeks and the sky hasn’t fallen in. (MS2, November 2015)

When asked how important joint learning had been in reaching agreements and showing transparency in the process of developing subregional and regional plans, MS2 says:

It’s been absolutely fundamental and it’s been absolutely hard work to maintain. So we’ve come up against barriers internally, and some more senior people not wanting us to share, but we’ve maintained over and over again, that if the councils have the local ‘on the ground’ knowledge and we want them to share it with us we have to empower them – to give them the opportunity to share it with us but we also have to explain ourselves and educate them. A big part of what we’re doing I think is an education process because we take it for granted that because we’re across all of this and because we understand the importance, that they will. But really for some of the councils it’s not important to them in their day to day role, so when you actually give them the opportunity to see how their little piece of the jigsaw puzzle fits into the region, they’re very happy to participate. (MS2, November 2015)

These comments reflect those of the Regional Planning Director in Vancouver, MV1, who said she sometimes had to work hard to convince councils of the benefits of regional planning. Regional Planning Director MS2 thought that local councils in Greater Sydney struggled with thinking regionally and that was why joint learning and capacity building was so important.

I mean putting aside their parochial views or putting aside their self-interested views about their local government area and being empowered to step up and actually think bigger picture, because they're so not used to doing that – well there's exceptions - but many of them are not used to doing that, and so to suddenly think bigger picture. So a lot of what we're doing is an education process for them about how their piece of the puzzle fits into the bigger picture. Why it's important that they play in our project. (MS2, November 2015)

Interviews with local councils through this research, however identified some differing views, and that there were significant disagreements about the role of each council in the region and the evidence base being used by the Department. When asked if there were disagreements, between her and the councils and between councils themselves, MS2 sys:

Absolutely – in both cases – and so we started off on the premise that we will never get 100% agreement on the end goal, but what's important to us is to get agreement on the methodology and the inputs and to make sure we have the most robust evidence-base going in, so that what comes out – you might not like it – but you can't fault the thinking behind it. So it comes to part of this collaboration is about knowing what they can and can't influence. (MS2, November 2015)

In earlier sections we saw that councils were strongly of the view that the rationale for the evidence base was never clearly explained to them. What did Regional Planning Director MS2 think about her approach in the light of those criticisms?

So in the second round of the Technical Working Groups that we had, we basically said "the floor is yours. You guys have been in this space, you guys have been working, you guys know your communities, you guys have done work - you tell us". And every single council got the opportunity to stand up and tell us what they've been doing in terms of meeting their community needs. Some did it way better than others; some prepared, some didn't; some brought presentations, some winged it; some were useless, totally uninformative, totally didn't comprehend their opportunity; others absolutely comprehended the opportunity and grabbed it with both hands and gave us fantastic presentations. We have at every step of the way asked them to share their studies with us, and some have been very responsive and flooded us with information; others have not shared so much. (MS2, November 2015)

MS2 continues, adding that she has worked hard to share evidence.

I've also made a conscious decision that if they ever ask for me to go out and brief them, I always go. I've worked furiously hard to try and get all of the documents released, so that we could...I've tried to practice what we've preached. I've also made an effort of sharing – you know how we often get stuff sent around, or there's a press release or more information. We take it for granted because we see it. They don't have access to that, so I have my own little mail distribution list to each of the Districts and if something comes up, like the Greater Sydney Commission legislation was introduced into the Parliament – we as a Department didn't show any leadership; we didn't send it out to anybody. I sent it out to all the councils and they really appreciate that opportunity to be exposed to things and be kept informed, and so they can see that it's genuine and its comprehensive. (MS2, November 2015)

MS2 displays an understanding that in successful regional plan making, state government needs local government just as much as local needs state.

So we know at the end of the day this regional plan has to get implemented by LEPs. There's a political will that has maintained that LEPs are the dominant zoning instrument, so if it's going to be implemented by the LEP why would you piss them off here and then turn around next week and say "no, no you've got to implement it". We have to have their input and buy in so that when it comes to the time when we actually get it off the ground - and now the Greater Sydney Commission legislation says that they have to, as soon as practical, actually implement this – but unless they have buy-in, they're just going to dig their heels in! (MS2, November 2015)

And so I guess it was a practical way of trying to see that if you actually wanted the planning process to succeed, the outcomes that we're trying to achieve, that we're actually going to have to have the people that are going to implement it on the ground, actually involved in it. And it seemed, to me, perfectly logical! (MS2, November 2015).

It seems from this evidence that Regional Planning Director MS2 had been making a genuine, if single-handed, attempt to be proactive and collaborative in her dealings with local councils. The interview evidence from local council Planning Directors, however, suggests that her efforts were not enough – there needed to be a culture that facilitated and actively encouraged joint-learning and capacity building across the hierarchy of stakeholders and, consistently over time.

A restructure of the Department of Planning, and replacement of Regional Planning Directors with new personnel, has MS2 concerned that her collaborative approach, where she has worked hard to share information and build capacity in local government, has gone. New leadership of the Department does not appear supportive of such approaches, and

new personnel are not building relationships with local councils. The breakdown in collaborative relationships in Greater Vancouver, resulting from a court case between Metro Vancouver and one local council, described in Chapter 5, were relayed to MS2. She described her fear that relationships in Greater Sydney may be heading the same way.

The Director-General knew what I was doing and I was allowed to go out and build those relationships and brief the councils and brief the people. I was allowed to go out – I was given that autonomy. I'm not allowed to talk to my next door neighbour without getting approval now! And I fear that it won't take 6 months, when I walk out this door - if (new Regional Planning Director) keeps talking to them [the councils] the way he talks to them - then Vancouver here you come! (MS2, November 2015).

Despite her concerns for the future, MS2 believed the Department had got benefit from her way of working.

So we've definitely got value from them [the councils] in terms of the practical implications at that 'on the ground' level where they're working with it day to day. We've come up with some great ideas and they've laughed at us and said "yeah you can try that!" or "it won't work for this or that reason". Or other times they've been able to say "our barrier is this or this" and we've been able to say "actually we're thinking about it at a different level and so what about this or this?" (MS2, November 2015)

And some councils agreed that the processes MS2 instigated were beneficial.

It was great to be in the room with the other councils and hear the issues the other councils were having and begin to swap information and begin to be able to express to the Departments some of the frustrations that were happening at the council level... (LS6, October 2016)

Other councils, though, thought that the process was still too 'one-way' and that the state had missed a significant opportunity to learn from local government. Council general Manager LS4, from a large amalgamated Sydney Council says:

I think another thing the government is not aware of is I've got 95 planning staff! And I've got 1,000 employees at my disposal. I've got more planning staff than the Greater Sydney Commission does. So if you actually put the strategic planning teams together, even if it's only one person from a small council, it could be 20 from my council, Blacktown's probably got 30 strategic planners - there's a huge pool of talent sitting there, with infinite knowledge of all their local government area issues. We know our local government areas! We know how to communicate with our communities. So we've got that pool of knowledge but they don't ask us to share that knowledge. (LS4, July 2017)

LS4 could see great strength coming from a genuine joint learning and capacity building approach, that would have been a lot quicker than the State Government and Greater Sydney Commission approaches in his view.

If you actually had the council teams working together on the subregional plans, they would have done the subregional plan in 6 months, and then have input from Transport for NSW and Sydney Water. Together we could probably produce something, and then have the same sort of model replicated at the political level, and you might get some buy in and some cooperation, some empowering plus some acceptance of the change that we have to deliver. (LS4, July 2017).

Reflecting on why a joint-learning approach might be important in preparing and aligning local and regional strategic plans, and perhaps why such an approach had not been effectively implemented in Greater Sydney to date, former Regional Planning Director MS1 says:

Well there was always the risk of resistance, that this was the State Government coming in with a heavy hand, from above, and not being sufficiently informed about local issues, local tensions, local aspirations. And really what it should have been was a ‘meeting of the minds’, and a meeting of these two levels [of government] but it hasn’t been done in that way I don’t think. It’s all very well to say the processes will be improved and the councils have got to sign off on how well they’ve regarded the regional strategic level in their local strategic plans, but they have to have been involved in drawing it up. (MS1, February, 2016)

6.5 Approaches to strategic planning

We saw in Chapter 4 that, unlike Greater Vancouver that has had a relatively stable regional planning framework since introduction of its 1996 Liveable Region Strategy, Greater Sydney has had many iterations of regional plans. The State Government has published a new regional plan for Greater Sydney in each of 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2018 – and these have been quite different, with ever increasing population growth projections.

While recent legislative and administrative changes, described in Chapter 4, may lead to greater agreement between state and local governments about alignment of local and regional strategic plans, it is the history of an adversarial planning system and continued top-down approaches from the state that informs the following discussion on strategic planning approaches: regulatory versus visionary plans; deal-making cities versus plan-making cities; and top-down versus bottom-up approaches.

6.5.1 Visionary versus regulatory plans

Making regional plans for Greater Sydney

Chapter 5 described conditions that saw the 1996 Liveable Region strategy for the Greater Vancouver Region prepared as a visionary document based on principles that resonated so well with all stakeholders that they remain the basis for regional planning today. Interviews in Greater Sydney described a more regulatory approach where the broad level strategic priorities were not clearly elucidated nor agreed between the key stakeholders. Instead development of regional plans takes a much more rational instrumental approach where the state government agency prepares an expert plan, and then asks local government and other stakeholders for comment. Developing a strategic vision for the Greater Sydney region, that is ‘visionary’ and that resonates with a broad cross-section of the community seems to be missing. In discussion with former Regional Planning Director for the Greater Sydney Region, MS1, she agreed and suggested why that might be the case.

Researcher: Coming up with that broad level strategy initially, is that what seems to have been missing in Sydney?

MS1: I agree, I agree.

Researcher: Is it that we don’t do that early enough - we come up with ‘our’ plan and then say “what do you think of our plan?”

MS1: Exactly. Because to do it any other way is time consuming, draining, and we never seem to apply that commitment to that genuine partnership with local government. And it does require intense involvement, if you’re genuinely going to collaborate. (MS1, February 2016)

Council Planning Director LS2 described the need for a clear vision for places that can show how good planning can deliver growth while creating better places to live, not just more of the same. He believed local strategic planning and master-planning of new suburbs in his local council area was delivering better places with a real sense of community. LS2 thought the Department of Planning was too focussed on processes and time frames, and this was a significant cause of tension in the NSW planning system.

That’s why state government and councils fight a lot – government looks at production and graphs and flow charts, but councils say “but hang on, we’re looking after communities”. And you’re destroying this place. (LS2, March 2016)

Why is the NSW Government so focussed on speed and time-frames and processes?

LS2 thinks creating the vision for the future is an integral part of the planner’s job. He thinks the State Government’s imposition of a standardised local plan that all councils had to adopt, had removed some of the vision in plans, vision that had been developed in consultation with communities.

The professionals doing their planning job need to articulate what is the future, based in evidence, and build a picture. We’ve gone backwards a bit – when we were

debating the Standard Instrument LEP. The old LEPs, Warringah, Blue Mountains, had local character stuff – very creative. (LS2, March 2016)

His comments reflect strong criticism of the standardised local planning program that the State Government had been implementing across the state of NSW – that it was a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach that did not allow for consideration of local strategic concerns to be expressed. Whereas the strategic principles behind the Greater Vancouver regional plan seem to have been locked in as the basis for planning over a long period of time, it does not appear we have been able to achieve that in Sydney. Former Regional Planning Director MS1 says:

But then you've got to lock it in, and that's another thing we haven't done. And that came up in the Federal Government's initiative back in the Rudd Government, when they actually did some reforms – when they had the Major Cities Unit and all of that. One of the issues there was, strategic plans change with Governments. So Governments have been at liberty to interfere with a previous government's strategy, and therefore you lack that continuity and you get a different approach every 3 or 4 years to what you're doing. So the aim then was to pull the strategic plan above politics and have it agreed across governments basically, so that you wouldn't get this chopping and changing of strategic direction. That was decided that was the only way to go, otherwise you get this thing where if the government changed, the strategy changed. (MS1, February 2016)

These comments reflect those of others who have criticised the politicisation of planning in NSW (such as COAG 2012; Schatz and Piracha, 2012) saying that it interferes with the state’s ability to settle on long-term strategic plans.

A clear vision underpinning strategic planning seems to be necessary at all levels of government. Council Planning Director LS6 says:

Yes! I think if I had to say the one good thing that came out of the [local strategic planning] process for me, was that when we started the process the community had no idea what they wanted. They could tell you what they didn't want, they had no idea what they wanted. And there was no 'Vision' in our Development Control Plan – no vision, which is why the developer came along and he kind of fitted to the controls and put a podium and tall towers. That was what the controls allowed and that's what he gave us. So the one really good thing that came out of it was clarity of vision. (LS6, October 2016)

It seems there is power in agreeing a local vision with the community.

Talking to the community they have said this is what's important to them, and that's really powerful because it's not us who is saying it, it's not the developer who is saying it, it's not the councillors that are saying it – the community – this is what they

came up with. That's very powerful because we didn't have that and we couldn't say to the developer you've got it all wrong, because against what? (LS6, October 2016)

A lot of time has been spent by the state government and regional planning authorities in the Greater Sydney, as discussed in Chapter 4, developing new planning legislation, amending legislation, and setting up mechanisms that ensure local statutory plans (LEPs) are aligned with statutory regional plans. The Greater Sydney regional plans were given statutory weight through 2018 amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Timeframes for development of regional plans, and alignment of local plans with them, which are included in the NSW planning legislation, leave little time for agreeing the strategic vision, nor for having a discussion about what is a truly regional issue, and what is a local issue best left to local councils to manage. The time frames do not allow time for collaboration.

Regional issues versus local issues

The Vancouver interviews revealed considerable discussion and thought going into the distinction between local and regional planning issues, therefore informing, in that system, who made the decisions about particular issues. The Sydney interviews have told a different story – where local strategic planning issues are not taken notice of or incorporated into regional plans, and are most often simply over-ridden by the state through a variety of legislative and administrative measures.

In Greater Vancouver many interviewees suggested that the regional plan was simply a collection of local community -informed plans. Council General Manager LS4 suggests a different story for Sydney:

I doubt anyone in the Department of Planning ever reads our Community Strategic Plans. Or read our Annual Budget or 4 year Delivery Program. Or even understand our Long Term Financial Plan. Because most people in State Government have no idea how councils work. They have no perception of how we work. (LS4, July 2017).

The question remains whether the State Government and the Department of Planning actually want to understand how local government works. Are there other factors that mean the state is locked in to an approach where it must make deals with developers to deliver the aligned growth and supporting infrastructure that communities need – and that those deals will often be inconsistent with, and over-ride, the local planning controls developed in consultation with communities?

6.5.2 Plan-making city or deal-making city?

In Vancouver, Sydney and other growing cities around the world there is debate around the relative benefits of 'deal-making cities versus plan-making cities'.

Some places have these rules laid out in a plan that people follow. In other places, the rules amount, in effect, to a proposal to “make us an offer.” (Keenan, 2017)

Interviews in Greater Sydney seem to indicate broad agreement among stakeholders, at state and local government level, that Sydney is a confirmed ‘deal-making city’ – as opposed to my contention through evidence gained in interviews that Greater Vancouver has traditionally been a ‘plan-making city’. Former Greater Sydney Regional Planning Director MS1 reflects:

I remember hearing about the Vancouver process, where many workshops were held starting from the premise “no growth here” to “well, let’s look at the demographics of this area, let’s look at how your family is growing, let’s look at 20 years hence when you’re 70, and your kids are 40 or whatever, you know, where are they going to live?” “Well, we would like some medium density here”. “OK, so the medium density, to develop that, the economics of that, is such that you won’t get the services you need until maybe you go 5 or 6 stories, and then you’ll get the medical centre, the new pre-school and all that”. And so bit by bit, the community was brought along until in the end, apparently, they were advocating for higher densities than were originally countenanced. Now, when communities have worked hard like that, and got something they ‘own’, they will tell the politicians “leave it alone, we want to stick with this”. We’ve never done that in NSW! (MS1, February 2016)

When asked why NSW had not embraced a collaborative, plan-making approach to strategic planning, MS1 placed blame on the lack of skills available in State Government planning agencies. She feels a number of things are lacking:

The time, the effort, the confidence? We don’t have people, I don’t think, in State Government who are confident and intellectually savvy enough to do that sort of intense work-shopping. There’s nobody – you need the leadership, the commitment, to doing it. The understanding that it’s needed, first off, that this is the right way to do it; then the skill and capacity to undertake it. You need really engaging and engaged bureaucrats to carry it off – or at least to know who they can get on board, in the consultancy world, to help them do it, if they can’t themselves do it. And you need the political buy-in; that yes, this is going to be a great outcome for the State of NSW, to do it this way. And we’ve never – we’ve got a history of never investing the time and the money and the commitment in that sort of thing. (MS1, February, 2016)

Local council interviewees felt that the ‘deal-making’ reputation of Greater Sydney was more a reflection of aggressive growth policies that are necessary to boost the NSW economy and provide the developer-funded contributions the state needs to provide infrastructure. As discussed in Chapter 4, infrastructure funding is a key issue for NSW, and when councils have tried to have discussions with state agencies about provision of key infrastructure, they have been informed that there is no state budget for it, so developers

must pay. Describing negotiations with agencies just after the Greater Sydney Commission was established (with “to promote the alignment of Government infrastructure decision-making with land use planning” being one of the ‘Principal objectives of the Commission’ under the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*) Council Planning Director LS6 says:

So I thought it was quite sad the first time we moved towards possibly a better regional, city-wide planning, but there's no money left in the pot to do it, so we're going to have to rely on developers and VPAs^{xxi} and it's really bottom up. (LS6, October 2016)

This need to encourage more and more development to finance infrastructure provision, in her view, has seen the State Government making trade-offs on behalf of local communities who have no voice.

What I don't want to see but what I am seeing at the moment, is State government making piecemeal decisions and accepting these VPAs [developer contributions], which just makes me think, oh! But not having enough bigger picture focus. So trade-offs are being made on behalf of people who don't have a voice. So they're making the trade-off for the five little oldies who live in that strip there because they just don't have a voice. “Oh, we'll just put the extra height on, it overshadows them but, who cares”. (LS6, October 2016)

Keenan (2017) feels that this kind of trade-off, where development rights that adversely affect communities can be bought, is inevitable in a deal-making city. “Some places have these rules laid out in a plan that people follow. In other places, the rules amount, in effect, to a proposal to ‘make us an offer.’” (Keenan, 2017)

The Vancouver case study identified that a plan-making approach takes time – time that the NSW State Government says councils don’t have, and that it confirms with very short time frames for plan preparation inserted into legislation. Council Planning Director LS6 clearly states her view of these state-imposed plan-making time constraints.

Yes, we don't have time because we have to keep fuelling the economy! (LS6, October 2016)

Former Regional Planning Director MS1 recalls long subregional planning processes, undertaken with local councils, never being finalised. There seemed to be no political will to see collaborative processes to an end.

But then you know that all fell apart when, to plot the politics of it, there was no appetite to finalise those subregional plans because it was such an intense process, I suppose. I kept pushing but nobody had the appetite for it. (MS1, February 2016).

McGuirk in her article ‘Neoliberalist Planning? Re-thinking and Re-casting Sydney’s Metropolitan Planning’ (2005) reflects on the enduring capacity of the state dominated

strategic aspirations at the metropolitan/regional scale. Rather than seeing this capacity as an inevitable continuation of neoliberal dominance, she identifies it as an opportunity for change in regional planning in Greater Sydney. However, the potential for change, in her view, would require:

"that a return to corporatist relations be avoided and that the enormous challenge of engaging a democratic means of identifying and implementing strategic aspirations be addressed. The increased public expectations for democratic inclusion in public policy means that strategies for participation must be meaningful if any plan is to gain political legitimacy, to address the planning needs of a city of deep diversity, and to outlast the fickleness of the political cycle. These are the challenges facing metropolitan planning in the face of neoliberalism" (McGuirk, 2005, p.68)

This may have seemed possible in 2005 but reform attempts since that time in Greater Sydney appear to be quite politically driven (and therefore not outlasting the fickleness of the electoral cycle) and local councils and communities continue to question how meaningful participation strategies of the state really are. It assumes the state might want to or be able to use its significant powers for 'good', for better planning outcomes, and might genuinely respect local autonomy.

6.5.3 Top-down or bottom-up?

Interviews in Greater Sydney have identified a distinctly top-down approach to regional planning by the State Government. As discussed in previous sections, tight time-frames for completion of strategic plans have some commentators saying they believe the system in NSW has been designed so that it can only be top-down.

Some state government stakeholders, notably Regional Planning Director MS2, have indicated that their approach has been collaborative and that they have genuinely attempted to introduce a two-way process of regional plan preparation, despite lack of support from their superiors in the Department of Planning, and despite some councils indicating that they feel the plan-making process in NSW has overwhelmingly been a one-way, and top-down, process.

When asked if a more collaborative, two-way approach to preparing and aligning strategic land use plans might work in Greater Sydney, some pointed responses were received. From Council Planning Director LS6 came a reflection on what she sees as the driver of the current culture in Sydney – a state government reliant on a booming property development industry, and its associated infrastructure contributions system, that means local plans must be routinely over-ridden by the state.

I think we have to move in that direction; Sydney real estate values are so important and the stuff that the State Government keeps going on about doing - you know, maybe we'll allow medium density development in all residential zones as complying development^{xxii} -

that type of thing that they keep on kind of lobbing in there. People are going bananas. Like you have got to be joking!

Where's the certainty when people are hocking everything they own to buy a house, and then you're going to lob that in there?! You know, how far do you think you'll get, Minister for Planning? He loses his job! So I think that people want more certainty, they want to understand it better. The developers are investing in real estate, so they want a plan, they want more certainty. The community wants more certainty, but the trouble is that we are trying to do it – if we are going to commence that approach - we are trying to do it at a time where the state government is using building to fuel the economy.

And they don't have any other options. So if a developer comes along and says "well we know that you want that to be a park, but look what I can do for you", and then that is very hard for the State government to refuse. (LS6, October 2016)

LS6 clearly feels that a top-down, 'deal-making' approach does not provide the certainty that local communities feel they get through a 'plan-making' approach.

Former Regional Planning Director MS1 also reflects on some of the realities of the property development industry in Greater Sydney and the time that collaborative plan-making processes can take.

And there will be many critics of this way of working because people just want to get through a process and get a development done. Reap in the profits and move on to the next site. It's not in the development industry's interests, I don't think, to have such a fully engaged community. Many would argue "yes, it is" because you would not get such opposition to your developments, that you'd actually have a smoother path. And I'm not sure if that rhetoric actually plays out or not - because you actually have to have the development industry on board to deliver what the strategic plan envisages. And it's in the very nature of the development industry to try and go above and beyond what the strategic plan envisages. (MS1, February 2016)

Vancouver interviewees pointed out that while collaborative or bottom-up processes take time, so does the 'fight' and the community push-back that inevitably comes with an aggressively top-down approach to strategic planning. When asked if it might not be worth taking the time to use collaborative or bottom up processes more, to mediate some of the current tensions between state control and local autonomy in Greater Sydney, former Regional Planning Director MS1 said:

I know, but it depends on what your mission in life is. If your mission in life is to keep a Minister happy and meet a deadline, then it doesn't work because it takes too long, and you don't know what the outcome's going to be. (MS1, February 2016)

6.6 Conclusion

The data from the Greater Sydney case study has shown a marked difference in how regional strategic plans are prepared and in attitudes of stakeholders towards the processes around plan making than what was revealed in the Greater Vancouver case study data. This is despite quite similar legislation requiring production of similar planning documents, and a legislated requirement for alignment of local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes.

Governance

Interviews revealed that the culture of governance around alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes is combative. There is a long history of adversarial relationships between state and local governments, described by a former Local Government Minister as ‘toxic’. The governance structure, including in relatively new agencies such as the Greater Sydney Commission, has not allowed for the political buy-in of Mayors and Councillors in decision-making processes. This has resulted in such political back-lash from local councils to some state-led planning processes and outcomes that the State Government has been forced to make policy back downs. It has also been unable to have legislation creating a new planning system for the state pass the Upper House of Parliament.

The combative planning culture appears to have contributed to a lack of resilience of regional plans and a lack of continuity of strategic planning direction. This has also contributed to the lack of trust in the system, according to interviewees.

Power

The State Government holds formal power through the legislative framework, including the power to over-ride local planning controls through a number of avenues. Importantly it is the State Government Minister for Planning who has final approval power for the local plan. Unlike the Provincial Government in British Columbia, the NSW Government has regularly used these powers over many years. Local strategic planning outcomes as expressed though Community Strategic Plans and local land use strategies are regularly overturned or ignored by state-led processes. Council Planning Directors described the significant frustration and disappointment this causes them, their staff, and their communities. Communities often blame the local council for decisions that are forced on localities by the state agencies who control regional planning – the Department of Planning and the Greater Sydney Commission. Trust that has been built up in the community through local processes is destroyed.

Interviewees described the need for political champions and visionary leaders at all levels of government, working collaboratively to solve problems. At both the state and local level, interviewees described gaps in that leadership in the Sydney case. In particular, high level

state government bureaucrats were described as being at odds with the wishes and vision of both local councils and their own Planning Minister.

Rationality

Interviewees' descriptions of 'how planning is done' in Sydney reflect a strongly instrumental rationality. The state government produces its 'expert plans' and seeks local governments' view on those plans. Interviewees have stated that there is little or no opportunity for stakeholders in the system to jointly define the planning problem to be solved, nor to jointly develop options for solving those problems. Final decisions on local planning controls are made by state government agencies. The Greater Sydney Commission, tasked with undertaking strategic planning for the Greater Sydney Region, is led by Commissioners who are directly appointed by the Minister for Planning. There is no direct local government representation on the Board of the Greater Sydney Commission or of any of its Committees.

Local government interviewees described the lost opportunities for the Department of Planning and the Greater Sydney Commission to use the local knowledge and expertise available in local councils, and to build on the community-based local strategic planning that is undertaken by those councils. Joint-learning and capacity building opportunities are not exploited. There is instead an air of secrecy around the planning that the state government undertakes, with local council growth target published planning outcomes often surprising local council Planning Directors, who cannot understand what evidence those targets and outcomes are based on.

Approaches to strategic planning

It is a history of a contested and adversarial planning system and continued top-down approaches from the state that have shaped approaches to strategic planning in Greater Sydney. A linear process develops a strict hierarchy of plans in what interviewees describe as a 'one-way' process. A significantly more regulatory approach to aligning regional and local strategic planning outcomes is evident in Sydney than what was revealed through interviews in Vancouver. In Sydney even the time-frames for aligning local plans with regional plans are legislated, in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* itself and through its associated Regulation. The NSW State Government, in its failed attempt to achieve a new planning system for NSW, stated that the 'primary purpose of the planning system is to drive economic growth' – and given the stamp duty and development contributions the state government reaps from new development, to pay for infrastructure and services, this may be the case in NSW. Local Planning Directors suggested that it was the state's need to fuel the economy that was being used as the justification for forcing councils to align their local plans with state-led regional planning outcomes and deliver high-growth scenarios.

Council interviewees identified aggressive growth policies of the state government as being behind the ‘deal-making’ culture of planning in the city. Plans are certainly made for Greater Sydney but where and how much growth will occur is often finally determined by deals done with developers involving ‘voluntary planning agreements’ and through imposition of ‘priority precincts’ where the state over-rides local planning controls to increase development yields.

State and local government interviewees describe Greater Sydney as more of a ‘deal-making’ city than a ‘plan-making’ city – despite the huge amount of effort and resources that goes into plan making at both state and local government levels.

The result is a lack of clarity and agreement about what is a regional planning issue versus what is a local planning issue. In NSW the state regularly makes forays into what Vancouverites would consider strictly local planning matters and decisions. It does this through both legislative and administrative means. Interviewees describe planning in Greater Sydney as having a ‘State knows best’ culture, and claim that this, combined with a lack of transparency in the evidence base for planning, fosters mistrust and continued pushback from local councils. This ongoing tension, the ‘inevitable fight’ about planning aligning local and regional strategic planning outcomes, may well take as long or longer than collaborative processes which are sometimes criticised for being too slow.

Tight time frames within a highly regulatory planning system are described by interviewees as meaning that the planning system in NSW can only be ‘top-down’. There is not the time nor motivation from the state, it seems, for bottom-up, collaborative processes.

Chapter 7, Comparative Analysis, considers why this might be the case when stakeholders from state and local government in Greater Sydney have stated that they recognise the benefits of more collaborative, bottom-up approaches.

Chapter 7 Comparative Analysis

Hopefully the critical assessment of their situated meanings, robustness and relevance will continue, from the perspectives of very different governance contexts and cultures. Such critical encounter should lead to a much greater understanding of the diversity of the manifestations of the ‘planning enterprise’ and of governance cultures in different parts of the world. (Healey, 2003, p.117)

In concluding a 2003 review of her book *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*, Healey hoped that as the ideas first set out in 1997 circulated in the ‘global planning community’, their relevance in situated practices of planning would be assessed to contribute to our knowledge of what has succeeded and what has failed in shifting ways of thinking and acting. Healey anticipated that there would be stories of successes and failures, but that even the failures would identify ‘windows of opportunity’, and ‘cracks in the structure’ that could lead to change.

This chapter describes the comparative analysis of the findings of research into the contextualised manifestation of planning practice in the case study cities of Vancouver BC Canada and Sydney NSW Australia.

The situated practices of strategic planning are analysed through the lens of the anticipated explanatory factors developed in Chapters 1 and 2. This analysis directly addresses my research questions and explains why approaches to regional strategic planning and alignment of local and regional strategic plans appear to have been quite different in the cities over the time frame of this research. The different approaches evident in the case study cities are considered having regard to the interview data and to the theoretical bases of, and claims made for, collaborative planning practice.

7.1 Comparison and analysis of findings through answering the research questions

In Chapters 5 and 6, interview data and documentary and autoethnographical evidence were considered in terms of a set of anticipated explanatory factors. This case study data is analysed through answering the research questions. High level data is tabulated for each of the four explanatory factors, and then analysed in detail to answer the first research question:

What factors facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being reflected in regional strategies?

This data is then further analysed to understand how research into contextualised planning practice that aligns local with regional strategic planning outcomes can contribute to our knowledge of the ‘planning enterprise’ and identify opportunities for governments and institutions to combine some measure of local democracy and autonomy with coherent and

deliverable metropolitan and regional planning frameworks. This discussion is presented through addressing the second research question:

Why is it important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies?

The central concern of the research and literature gap identified through the review of literature presented in Chapter 2, a lack of empirical evidence about the wider context of situated practices of strategic planning relative to their success or failure, and the shifting variables that have made different configurations of collaboration and governance work well (or not) in different places at different times (Kahane et al, 2013; Healey, 2006; Mason, 2007; Agger and Löfgren, 2008; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000) is then considered in addressing the final research question:

Under what circumstances can collaborative planning practice align local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes?

7.2 What factors facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being aligned with regional strategies?

Case study data from this research shows that my four anticipated explanatory factors and component themes can all play a significant role in impeding or facilitating alignment of local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes in the Greater Sydney and Greater Vancouver regions.

High level comparative data for each of the four anticipated explanatory factors is presented in a table, with detailed analysis and discussion presented below.

7.2.1 Governance

Greater Vancouver Region	Greater Sydney Region
Governance	
<i>History of regional planning and cooperation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long history of regional planning cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long history of adversarial relationships between state and local governments in regional planning
<i>Legislative framework</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local government and strategic land use planning are creations of Provincial legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local government and strategic land use planning are creations of State legislation• Hierarchical planning framework and establishment of regions enabled through

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hierarchical planning framework and establishment of regions enabled through the British Columbia <i>Local Government Act 2015</i> <i>BC Community Charter 2003</i> sets out principles for regional and municipal relationships • 	the <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> , the <i>NSW Local Government Act 1993</i> , and the <i>Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015</i>
<i>Structure and culture</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Greater Vancouver Regional District, operating as Metro Vancouver, is responsible for regional planning Board and Regional Planning Committee of Metro Vancouver are comprised of elected representatives of member municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Department of Planning and Greater Sydney Commission are responsible for regional planning Board and committees of Greater Sydney Commission comprised of expert Ministerial appointees (no elected representatives)

History of regional planning and cooperation

The history of regional planning and cooperation is an important consideration in understanding the differences in approaches and outcomes in the parallel attempts to align local and regional strategic plans in the case study cities.

As was demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5, Vancouver has a long history of regional cooperation that has its foundations in voluntary upward delegation in the early 1900s to service delivery boards, with the municipalities agreeing that utility services could be more efficiently and effectively delivered on a regional basis (Cameron, 1999; Bish and Fiipowicz, 2016; Chadwick, 2002). This historical foundation has also meant that as the service boards evolved into the Greater Vancouver Regional District in the 1940s and 1950s, the District itself continued to oversee and coordinate a wide range of urban services and infrastructure. Regional planning powers were not added until the 1960s. During periods where the benefits of regional planning have been under question (notably when regional planning powers were removed by the Province in the 1980s, and through litigation between the regional planning authority and one municipality during the period of this research) the successes of regional approaches to deliver other urban services have been returned to as a way of restoring confidence in regional planning (AV2, 2015; MV1, 2016).

The long history of regional cooperation in Greater Vancouver has institutionalised voluntary, collaborative planning practices, which in turn facilitates alignment of plans. The benefits of regional cooperation and regional planning are well-recognised by member municipalities and there is an expectation that regional cooperation will continue.

As was demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 6, Sydney, by contrast, has a long history of contestation between the state and its regional planning agencies and local government.

While local and regional plans are ultimately aligned (in terms of local plans demonstrating that they can accommodate the State's growth targets) through top-down actions of the state, collaborative approaches and agreements about those alignments are impeded by this history.

Through ongoing reform of the planning system, the NSW State Government has progressively centralised planning powers (MacDonald, 2018; Gurran et al, 2014). It has also attempted to reform the local government sector as a whole through a program of forced council amalgamations (Blayden, 2017; Grant and Drew, 2017). This history has resulted in ongoing, and increasing, tension between state planning agencies and local councils; tension between state control and local autonomy. In contrast to the cooperative historical relationship between levels of government in greater Vancouver, the relationships between state and local government in Greater Sydney have been described as being adversarial and even 'toxic' by no less than a former Minister for Local Government (Grant and Drew 2017, p. 211).

Cooperative alignment of local and regional plans in Greater Sydney is impeded by this adversarial history. In Chapter 6, state and local government interviewees described an expectation that relationships would continue to be tense, despite rhetoric from the state government suggesting it intended to reform the planning system in order to transform it from "combative to collaborative" (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013).

The differing histories of regional cooperation appear to have been institutionalised in both case study jurisdictions.

Unlike Vancouver, for most of its regional planning history Greater Sydney has not had a single authority coordinating provision of a range of urban services. The Greater Sydney Commission, established in 2016, has a mandate to lead strategic planning across the region (Greater Sydney Commission Act, 2015). While it also has a legislated 'principal function' of coordinating infrastructure and growth planning, this has proven difficult when different government agencies control other urban services. Metro Vancouver regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages the regional parks system and provides affordable housing for the Greater Vancouver Region. Its inclusive governance structure, demonstrated in Chapter 5 and discussed below, has built an understanding between the member municipalities of the inter-relationships between urban management functions.

Legislative framework

In both case study cities local government is a creation of the state/province through legislation. There is no recognition of local government in the constitutions of either Australia or Canada. Local government is recognised in the NSW *Constitution Act 1902*, but not in the BC *Constitution Act 1996* (although partially through the BC Community Charter)..

This provides local governments in NSW a constitutional basis for some of their actions and approaches.

Canada and Australia are Commonwealth countries sharing a common legacy of UK-sourced Westminster systems of government and legislature. Of interest for this research is that, in addition to a common Commonwealth foundation, the planning systems that have emerged in the countries through state/provincial legislation are also strikingly similar. The planning systems, described in detail in Chapter 4, are hierarchical, with each successive level of strategic plan required to ‘give effect’ to the higher order state or regional plan. Despite this similarity, there is a perception of significantly stronger state control in Greater Sydney than that observed in Greater Vancouver. Interviewees in both cities (including with those who have worked in both places) noted this (AV3, 2015; AV4, 2017). Other factors must be influencing what appears to be a much more aggressive approach to requiring alignment of plans in the Sydney case. Aggressive timeframes for preparation and alignment of new local and regional plans have been embedded in the legislation itself (*Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*).

Important factors in Greater Sydney, raised by local government interviewees, are the stronger powers of the state to declare designations such as ‘priority precincts’ and take over local planning controls for those areas. The state has also introduced a system of fast-tracked development assessments called “complying development” where approvals are issued by private certifiers rather than the local council. A state environmental planning policy introduces this new stream of development assessment and the powers override any controls that might be in the council’s local plan. Ultimately, the Minister for Planning/state government has final approval power over local strategic and statutory plans through the planning legislation, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. These interventionist powers of the state were mentioned numerous times by Greater Sydney interviewees in Chapter 6, as directly limiting local autonomy LS1, 2016; LS4, 2017).

A further factor noted in Greater Sydney was the regularity with which the state uses its considerable powers to override local strategic planning processes. While the Provincial Government has similar powers to override local and regional plans in the Greater Vancouver region, interviews there confirmed that it has never used them (LV8, 2016; MV1, 2016).

Another significant legislative difference is in available appeal rights for developers between the Sydney and Vancouver legal and planning systems. This was raised by interviewees in both cities as one reason why the development industry might become more engaged in negotiating and reaching agreements about strategic planning outcomes in Vancouver (AV3, 2015; MV1, 2016). The development industry has to be part of strategic planning negotiations because it cannot wait for the outcomes and appeal them if it doesn’t like them, as development proponents can to much greater extent in Sydney. In Sydney, some interviewees argued, the development industry doesn’t have to bother reaching

agreements. If a development proponent doesn't like a development decision, or the strategic planning/development controls applying to a parcel of land, the State has introduced multiple pathways by which it can bypass those controls, appealing to the NSW Land and Environment Court (an expensive process) if it must.

In Vancouver there are very limited planning appeal rights and the substance of planning decisions generally cannot be reviewed or appealed other than very narrowly in the common law courts (Willey, 2005). Commentators who have reviewed the Vancouver regional planning system have noted that state control over local land use planning decisions and rezonings is generally unpopular:

It is also hard to believe that residents of any community would be happy with land use and zoning decisions that could always be made over the opposition of the representatives from the neighbourhood directly involved. (Bish and Filipowicz, 2016, p.37)

As documented in Chapter 6, there are also review provisions for proponent-led rezonings applications that are delayed or refused by local councils in Greater Sydney (Department of Planning and Environment, 2016). These reviews are undertaken by State Government appointed planning panels that make recommendations back to the Department of Planning and the Minister for Planning about whether the rezoning should proceed. The Minister has the power to override the council's decision and let rezonings proceed on the recommendation of the panels they appoint. By contrast, rezoning decisions that are inconsistent with strategy in Greater Vancouver are made by local government peers through the Regional Planning Committee comprised of elected representatives from across the region.

All of these factors conspire to create a lack of trust in the planning system more generally in Greater Sydney, and a sense within local government and their communities that they may be wasting their time being involved in lengthy local strategic planning processes, according to Greater Sydney interviewees. The legislated and administrative powers of the state grant it considerably more control over local planning processes, and it has demonstrated that it is willing to use these powers on a regular basis to force alignment of local strategic plans with regional strategic plans.

Governance structure and culture

Perhaps the most significant governance factor identified by this research in determining with what level of agreement and with what effectiveness local and regional strategic planning outcomes are aligned, is governance structure and culture. An inclusionary organisational structure for Metro Vancouver and a culture of regional cooperation result in strong alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes, and a resilient regional plan. Regional cooperation has become institutionalised (LV3, 2016; AV2, 2015).

As identified in Chapter 4, the Board and Regional Planning Committee are comprised of elected representatives of the member municipalities. Monthly meetings are held in public. Decision-making processes are transparent. A Regional Planning Advisory Committee comprised of all the Planning Directors from the member municipalities provides strategic advice and recommendations on regional planning matters to the Regional Planning Committee and Board. This creates strong connection between Regional Planning Directors and regional elected representatives in the regional planning space.

By contrast in Greater Sydney, a long history of adversarial relationships between state and local government in the regional planning space continues. Chapter 5 established that alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes is contested, with the state using its considerable legislative and administrative powers (discussed above) to force agreements.

New governance arrangements have been introduced for the Greater Sydney Region with the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission in January 2016. However, the structure of this new agency and its lack of real independence from Cabinet and the Department of Planning have local government interviewees in this region claiming it has been ineffective in mediating tensions between state and local government and through administrative and legislative requirements has entrenched the top-down approach to planning in the region.

The notable difference in governance structure in Sydney is the composition of the Board of the Greater Sydney Commission. The eight Commissioners on the Board are all appointed by the Minister for Planning. There are no elected representatives on the Board or the Committees of the Commission. Meetings are not held in public. There are no Mayoral committees or advisory committees made up of elected representatives from the five planning districts in Greater Sydney. Each of the five planning districts is represented by a District Commissioner, again appointed by the Minister for Planning. One Greater Sydney council General Manager, interviewed 18 months after establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission said there had been no contact between him and his appointed District Commissioner (LS4, July 2017).

Summary

Case study data shows that an investigation of governance arrangements is crucial to understanding how and to what extent local strategic planning outcomes are aligned with regional strategic planning outcomes. Good governance can be seen as an asset of a city-region looking to elevate its position in the national and international competitiveness league tables (Harrison, 2008). Different city-regions that are facing similar challenges and have similar aspirations develop different governance approaches.

Case study data from this research confirms that aligning local with regional strategic planning outcomes is a site of contest, tension and conflict. Although the legislative framework and many of the actors in each case study region are essentially the same, their role and authority in each differs.

While the Province/State in the Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney regions have similar authority enabled through similar, hierarchical legislatures, the extent to which that authority is exercised is quite different. The level of autonomy granted to local governments in the Greater Vancouver example is much greater, and the perceived legitimacy of the regional planning authority, Metro Vancouver, much stronger than in the Greater Sydney example. The long history of regional cooperation in Greater Vancouver, with its roots in voluntary, upward delegation of powers from local governments to a regional authority in the early 1900s, has clearly contributed to the legitimacy of the authority of Metro Vancouver.

That the governance structure and culture in both case study cities appears to have remained relatively unchanged over many years, that the adversarial approach to planning continues in Sydney despite stakeholders at different levels of government acknowledging the need for change, again suggests an institutionalisation of the quite different approaches.

A ‘state-interventionist’ approach in Greater Sydney appears to support continuation of an aggressively top-down approach to preparing and aligning local and regional strategic plans.

7.2.2 Power

Greater Vancouver Region	Greater Sydney Region
Power	
<i>Formal power</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Province has legislated power to over-ride local strategic planning outcomes but has never used these powers• Province used formal power in the 1980s to remove regional strategic planning powers from regional authorities via the BC Local Government Act• Province has threatened to remove regional powers recently following disagreement between a local authority and the regional planning authority• Province uses fiscal power to shape regional planning outcomes through funding decisions for major transport infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State has legislated power to over-ride local strategic planning outcomes and uses these routinely• State has been reforming the NSW planning system almost continually since introduction of the <i>1979 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act</i>. These reforms have directly affected local and regional strategic plan development• State Minister for Planning has power to approve local plans, not local councils• State uses fiscal power through control over developer contributions; council rate-peging• Broad developer appeal rights

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited developer appeal rights 	
<i>Network power</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network power fostered through governance structure and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited opportunities for network power to be generated • State actions foster competition between local governments
<i>Political champions and visionary leaders</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the importance and existence of political champions and visionary leaders at all levels of government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the importance of political champions and visionary leaders at all levels of government

As demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, evidence from the case study cities shows that stakeholders have an understanding of the ways power is used in planning, and the influence uses of power have on how regional plans are prepared and local plans aligned with them.

The Provincial Government in British Columbia and State Government in NSW have similar power through planning legislation to override regional and local planning processes. The authority to prepare regional and local plans is delegated from the state to regional and local planning authorities, and those authorities are themselves creations of state legislation.

The marked difference evident from the case study data is the use of those powers by the Provincial and State Governments and the differential responses from local governments in the two city-regions. In Greater Vancouver use of formal power has been rare. When use of legislated power has been threatened, the long history of regional cooperation has strengthened the resolve of local governments to work together to reach agreements in the regional interest and ‘keep the Province at bay’ (LV5, 2016; LV7, 2016).

In Greater Vancouver the Province has never used its powers to override regional or local planning outcomes. However, during a financial recession in the 1980s, when regional planning processes were identified as ‘the problem’, holding back economic growth, the Province amended legislation to remove regional planning powers from the functions of regional boards. The long history of regional cooperation and collaboration between the local governments and between local and regional authorities meant that they continued to work collaboratively on regional planning matters. They prepared a new regional plan, by consensus, which became the 1996 Liveable Region Strategy. The strategy was retrospectively adopted as the official regional strategy when a visionary Provincial Minister re-introduced regional planning powers into the legislation.

The structure and culture of the regional planning authority, Metro Vancouver, has generated network power, and in Chapter 5 local government interviewees in Greater

Vancouver noted it as one of the significant benefits of the governance arrangements in place.

By contrast in Greater Sydney, the use of formal power has been multi-faceted and regular. There have been ongoing reforms of the NSW planning system that local governments consider are centralising control and reducing local autonomy (Kübler, 2007; LS6, 2016; LS1, 2016; LS3, 2017).

In Sydney there are fewer opportunities for local councils to collaborate in aligning local strategic planning outcomes horizontally (to align outcomes and achieve consistency across local government areas) and vertically (with regional strategic planning outcomes).

Political champions and visionary leaders have been very important in supporting the benefits of regional planning in Greater Vancouver, as demonstrated in Chapter 5. In Greater Sydney interviewees recognised the efforts of some individuals but noted that opportunities for those visionary leaders or political champions to work collaboratively horizontally or vertically between levels of government had not existed in their experience (MV1, 2016; LS4, 2017).

7.2.3 Rationality

Greater Vancouver Region	Greater Sydney Region
Rationality	
<i>Communicative vs instrumental</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicative rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instrumental rationality.
<i>Joint problem definition</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Problem definition jointly agreed through long-standing inclusionary governance arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Government decides nature and extent of problem of planning problem to be solved and informs local government
<i>Joint decision making</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint-decision making ensured through long-standing inclusionary governance structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Government agencies make final decisions on regional planning outcomes and on alignment of local strategic planning outcomes
<i>Capacity building and joint learning</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structure and culture of Metro Vancouver facilitates capacity building and joint-learning• Joint-learning facilitates joint development of options to address agreed planning problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local councils see the State's approach to regional plan-making as an 'opportunity lost' in terms of joint-learning and capacity building

Data from this research suggests a clear difference in the rationality of the planning systems that underpin preparation and alignment of local and regional strategic plans in the case study cities. By ‘planning system’ I mean the legislative and administrative framework for planning, the actors and the processes by which we prepare and implement plans, working together as a system.

While the two planning systems display elements of both instrumental and communicative rationality, there is a clearly dominant modus operandi in each, as evidenced by personal observation and participation in planning processes in each city and through interview data.

In Greater Vancouver voluntary commencement of collaborative regional planning processes has resulted in an organisational structure and culture for the regional planning authority, Metro Vancouver, that display the hallmarks of a communicative rationality in action. Data presented in Chapter 5 demonstrated that joint problem definition, joint decision making, and capacity building and joint-learning not only exist but are well-recognised by stakeholders and institutionalised to the extent that such arrangements are simply ‘expected’ to occur. These arrangements are not taken for granted – stakeholders recognise the power of communicative action in making decisions in the regional interest that are resilient over time and demonstrate resistance to top-down interference from the Provincial Government.

In Greater Sydney local government stakeholders, and some state government stakeholders, describe plan-making, and plan-alignment processes that display a distinctly instrumental rationality. Governance is more complicated with two state agencies, the Department of Planning and the Greater Sydney Commission, both involved in regional planning and local planning decisions. The structure and culture of these agencies is described by local government interviewees as not facilitating opportunities for joint problem definition, joint decision making or capacity building and joint learning. Data presented in Chapter 6 identified that local government stakeholders see this as an ‘opportunity lost’ for the NSW State Government (LS3, 2017; LS6, 2016; MV1, 2016).

7.2.4 Approaches to strategic planning

Greater Vancouver Region	Greater Sydney Region
Approaches to strategic planning	
<i>Visionary vs regulatory</i>	
• Visionary regional plans based on clear, agreed planning principles	• Lack of clear and agreed vision and principles
<i>Deal-making vs plan-making city</i>	
• Predominantly a plan-making city	• Predominantly a deal-making city
<i>Top-down vs bottom-up</i>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom-up • Regional plan is a ‘collection’ of local strategic plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top-down processes • Local strategic plans ignored or over-ridden by State-run processes.
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Data from this research shows quite different approaches to strategic planning in the two case study city-regions. While the documents produced are similar, approaches to preparing and aligning regional and local strategic plans vary significantly. These approaches have shaped, and are shaped by, the three explanatory factors discussed in general terms above. Analysis of the approaches provides a deeper understanding of the nature of the tensions between state control and local autonomy in the cities. The analysis provides clear evidence of how collaborative planning practice can align local with regional strategic planning outcomes, and mediate the tensions between state control and local autonomy.

A clear regional vision underpinned by five principles, developed and agreed by the municipalities comprising the region in the 1990s, remain the basis of regional planning in the Greater Vancouver Region. Those five principles remain in the current iteration of the regional plan, Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future, adopted in 2011 and updated in 2017. Interviewees describe the significant effort and negotiation directed at determining what is a regional planning issue versus what is a local planning issue (LV6, 2016; LV2, 2016; MV2, 2016). Municipalities work with their communities to develop the local vision and detail of how and where growth will occur in their local government areas. Growth targets (housing and employment) are developed jointly at the regional level, they are then integrated into Official Community Plans at the local level by the municipalities, and then negotiated upwards into the regional process and finally agreed – a two-way process. The governance structure of Metro Vancouver assists this process occur in a collaborative manner. The regional plan is agreed and signed by all of the municipalities in the region. Interviewees said that this agreement occurs because in effect the regional plan is a ‘collection of local plans’ (LV6, 2016; LV7, 2016; LV2, 2016; LV5, 2016).

This appears to be a very powerful approach to regional strategic planning that builds resilient plans. Importantly this approach provides the arena in which the negotiation about the boundary between state control and local autonomy can take place. The “relationship between a higher tier of government and the local” (Grant and Drew, 2017) is defined through this approach.

In Greater Sydney the story of regional planning has been one of continual change and uncertainty and uneven implementation. The state government has released a new regional plan in each of 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2018. The plans have had an increased focus on a vision of Sydney as a global city, and the need for the planning system and regional strategic planning outcomes to facilitate economic growth (Baker and Ruming, 2015). A new set of state-developed growth targets (housing and employment) is delivered for every

local council to incorporate into local strategic plans with each iteration of regional plan (LS1, 2016; LS6, 2016).

Local government interviewees have described a lack of collaboration and transparency in development of regional plans (LS1, 2016; LS3, 2017; LS6, 2016). Regional plans are prepared by the State Government, historically by the Department of Planning and since 2016, jointly between the Department and the Greater Sydney Commission. Data presented in Chapter 6 demonstrates that local governments do not agree with the economic growth emphasis of the visions for the plans, and are not provided with evidence and modelling that underpins their growth targets. Their communities also do not agree with these top-down directives (LS3, 2016; LS6, 2016).

Local councils in Greater Sydney do their own demographic modelling from census data and prepare their own strategic land use plans for the local government areas and for precincts within them (LS1, 2016; LS3, 2016). The State Government has a long history of identifying ‘priority precincts’ around centres and transport nodes, and through powerful legislation take over the strategic planning for those precincts and insert new land use zones and development standards (building height and density controls) directly into councils’ statutory land use plans. Local strategic plans are ignored or over-ridden by these state-run processes. In undertaking its priority precinct planning the state ‘does deals’ with developers to gain significant developer contributions that it uses to pay for physical and social infrastructure provision.

Local government interviewees see Greater Sydney as a ‘deal-making’ city where top-down processes predominate (LS1, 2016; LS3, 2016; LS5, 2016; LS6, 2016). The governance structure and culture of the relatively new Greater Sydney Commission does not facilitate agreements being brokered as they are via Metro Vancouver in the Greater Vancouver region. There are no elected representatives on the Board or Committees of the Commission to achieve the ‘political buy-in’ that Vancouverites suggested was so important to their relative success in aligning local and regional strategic plans. Some local government Planning Directors described having little or no contact with the state government and Commission officials (LS1, 2016; LS4, 2016). They also described their perception of a lack of transparency from state agencies, with the evidence-base for top-down decisions not provided to them, leading to them choosing not to share localised information and evidence-base upwards.

A lack of regional cooperation, regular use of formal powers, and instrumental rationality have shaped approaches to strategic planning in Greater Sydney, exacerbated the tensions between state control and local autonomy, and led to a forced rather than collaborative alignment of local with regional strategic plans.

I now turn attention to consideration of why it might be important that local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategic planning outcomes.

7.3 Why is it important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies?

The case study data from this research shows that it is important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies, in order to achieve:

- Ownership of the strategy
- Commitment to strategy delivery
- Trust in the planning system
- Resilient regional strategies.

Ownership of the strategy

Interviewees in both case study cities cited the importance of seeing the results of local strategic planning processes reflected in regional strategies. In the Greater Vancouver case interviewees described a very clear expectation that this would happen, and that the regional strategy would indeed be a collection of local strategies. Local governments and local communities understand where the regional strategy outcomes have come from and they feel genuine ownership of it. A feeling of ownership may be an important factor in ‘why people bother’ to be involved in planning processes at all. AV3, former City Planning Director says “*people will be willing to participate in local strategic planning processes if they can see the results manifested genuinely in the regional plan*” (AV3, April 2016).

In Greater Vancouver this has meant a commitment, and an expectation, that local government stakeholders will be involved in the regional strategic planning process from ‘first base’. That is, they are involved in vision setting, in outcome/target setting (housing and employment targets for each local government area), and in the case of specific collaborative episodes such as the North Shore Pilot Project, a subregional planning process described in Chapter 5, directly involved in developing the terms of reference, the roles of the stakeholders, and the outcomes/commitments expected from each level of government.

In Vancouver, an early and ‘visionary’ regional plan, the 1996 Liveable Region Strategy, has made agreement and commitment to the vision for the region more achievable and palatable. Previous and subsequent regional strategies have been much more regulatory, making regional planning much more difficult to do without “*real or perceived intrusions on local autonomy and on areas of significant policy interest to the Provincial Government*” (Cameron 1999). Returning to the voluntarily agreed vision and principles of the landmark 1996 strategy appears to have helped resolve some disagreements and galvanise the member municipalities around the regional planning cause, and facilitated ‘joint-ownership’ of regional planning outcomes.

Perhaps the last ‘visionary’ regional plan for Greater Sydney was the 1951 County of Cumberland Plan, discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Visions for more recent regional plans

have been primarily about pursuing state priorities, economic growth, high growth scenarios and associated state revenue (through property transaction stamp duties and developer contributions).

In Chapter 6, Greater Sydney local government interviewees lamented a lack of consideration of detailed local strategic planning work, some saying their hard work with communities to reach agreements about growth is ignored by the regional planning authorities (the Department of Planning and the Greater Sydney Commission), and by the Minister for Planning. LV4 says:

"I doubt anyone in the Department of Planning ever reads our Community Strategic Plans. Or reads our annual budget or 4 year Delivery Program. Or even understand our (10 year) long term financial plan. Because most people in State Government have no idea how councils work. They have no perception of how we work". (LV4, July 2017)

Others complain of the Department of Planning 'starting at third base' when engaging with local councils about preparation of the regional strategy. Population and housing targets were developed by the state government and local councils told to accommodate them in local strategic planning work (LS1, 2016; LS6, 2016). The evidence-base behind the targets was not made clear to interviewees, who could not understand where additional population was coming from, and how local infrastructure plans might need to be changed to accommodate such growth.

This highlights the importance of being involved in the definition of the problem to be solved. Greater Vancouver local governments are involved jointly in identification of the planning problems to be solved through regional planning, through the governance structure of the Metro Vancouver authority and through a long history of regional cooperation in regional planning that has become institutionalised to the extent that it is now simply expected that this level of collaboration will occur (LV3, 2016; LV6, 2016; LV7, 2016).

This does not happen in Greater Sydney, according to interviewees, and this results in a weaker sense of ownership of the regional strategy by local government stakeholders. The perception of the regional strategy seems to be far from the 'collection of local strategies' that interviewees spoke of in Greater Vancouver.

Commitment to strategy delivery

In the BC and NSW planning systems, local governments and the local strategic plans they prepare remain the key delivery mechanisms for state/provincial and regional planning imperatives. Local government is crucial to regional strategy delivery. State governments ignore or override local government planning outcomes at their peril, perhaps, with recent Australian research showing that internationally it is local government that nearly always

delivers the city shaping places and infrastructure that make for more globally competitive and more liveable cities. The research shows that it is the Australian examples where local government has been excluded where most controversy has resulted (Harris, 2019).

If local governments are not collaboratively involved in regional plan development, and do not feel any ownership of its directions and actions, they are less likely to commit to its implementation. Furthermore, without a collaborative approach to regional strategic plan development, local councils may not have the capacity to implement the plan.

In the lack of the two-way process of aligning local and regional strategic planning outcomes, as described to me by Greater Vancouver interviewees, Greater Sydney councils do not have the opportunity to drill down to the local level, to explore what different growth and infrastructure scenarios might look like at the local scale, in consultation with their communities. Growth targets have implications for local infrastructure provision as well as for regional level infrastructure – all of which come at a cost, and in both case study cities, costs that are funded through local development contributions and agreements. The common complaint from local councils and communities in Greater Sydney is that growth is being forced on them by the State Government, without adequate provision being made for the infrastructure required to support that growth (LS1, 2016; LS2, 2016; LS3, 2016; LS4, 2016; LS5, 2016, LS6, 2016).

One Sydney council recently challenged growth targets for its area through the NSW Land and Environment Court and succeeded in having the State Government agree to a 12 month moratorium on all rezonings as well as a two year deferral of application of a powerful state policy, the Medium Density Housing Code, which would allow significantly more dense development through a streamlined approval process. Ryde council argued that growth being ‘forced’ on it by state government policies, via the Greater Sydney Regional plan was not matched by the infrastructure necessary to support it (City of Ryde, 2016).

The Greater Sydney Commission was requested by the local Member of Parliament and the Premier, to undertake an ‘Assurance Review’ of development and planning activity in the Ryde local government area. The Greater Sydney Commission review found that “the significant scale and rapid rate of housing supply has led to a misalignment between the timing of development and the delivery of the infrastructure necessary to support it” (Greater Sydney Commission, 2019). The report goes on to say “stakeholders have identified the lack of effective collaboration between local and state government, together with the development sector, as a contributing factor” (Greater Sydney Commission, 2019).

Greater Vancouver councils on the other hand know that when they sign off on the regional strategy, or on a subregional strategy such as the North Shore Pilot Project, that there is a commitment from the state to provide the necessary regional level infrastructure, and the capacity within their own local strategies and contributions plans to deliver the growth expected of them and provide the local infrastructure required. While there is a ‘leap of

faith' involved here (LV10, 2016)) sufficient trust has been built over a long period to ensure commitments are adhered to. Greater Vancouver Planning Director LV10 explained that he took his community on a path of accepting increased growth, because he trusted that the rapid transit commitments made by the regional transit authority, Translink, would be delivered. He and his community had sufficient trust in the process to take that "leap of faith" (LV10, November, 2016).

Trust in the planning system

Having local strategic concerns reflected in regional strategies has built trust in the planning system, according to local government interviewees in Greater Vancouver. Collaborative approaches appear, from case study data and from the literature, more likely to produce that trust. Brand and Gaffikin contend that, in the uncollaborative world that collaborative planning practice necessarily operates in, the need for trust in the system is ignored by its proponents.

How can we enter the virtuous bootstrap loop (of collaborative planning processes) without even an initial amount of trust? Expressed differently, how do we get to that 'big bang' moment that creates the foundation of trust? (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p.291)

This view certainly aligns with data from the Greater Sydney case study. The planning system has been described as suffering from a 'trust deficit' (Moore and Dyer, 2012) with the relationship between local and state government described as 'toxic' by a former Minister for Local Government (Grant and Drew, 2017 p. 211). Interviews in Greater Sydney reinforced this view from the point of view of local councils and state government officials. The assertion from local councils' Planning Directors that local strategic planning outcomes were generally ignored, rather than reflected and embedded in regional strategic planning outcomes, was a consistent theme and complaint from councils (LS1, 2016; LS2, 2016; LS3, 2016; LS6, 2016)). With regard to the secrecy and lack of transparency in regional plan preparation, local council staff had been made to sign confidentiality agreements ensuring that they would not pass information onto their elected representatives. They were told this was because the state government did not trust the local councillors (LS3, 2016). This has resulted in the quite uncollaborative situation in Greater Sydney where local plans that are adopted by local councils are required to reflect regional plans, but that regional planning outcomes are kept confidential until they are adopted by State Cabinet and published.

Kumar and Paddison argue that trust and collaboration reinforce each other. Applying trust indicators to collaborative planning processes around joint structure plan-making in Scotland, and through participant observation and stakeholder interviews in those processes, they found that:

The stakeholders expect that high trust will result in better understanding among them leading to sustained collaboration. It is expected that as collaboration matures, trust will further develop. (Kumar and Paddison, 2010, p.205)

This view certainly reflects the findings from the Greater Vancouver case study. Interviewees there spoke of the trust that joint plan-making processes, facilitated by collaborative governance arrangements, had built over time – trust that allowed them to feel comfortable about staff and elected representatives from other local government areas sitting on the various Metro Vancouver Authority committees and making decisions on their behalf, decisions about a range of regional issues that are reflected in the regional strategy.

Mayor and member of the Regional Planning Committee LV7 says:

It's been an interesting model because everyone on the larger Board participates in one or multiple of those committees, but through that process they've also developed that trust that, OK, I might not be on the housing committee but I trust that there are 10 of my colleagues there, that aren't just there with their own municipal hat, but are there representing the region, just like I do with my committees. (LV7, November 2016)

Interviewees also discussed the trust between levels of government – reflected in the fact that a clear delineation has been debated and agreed between what is a local issue and what is a regional issue, a debate that has not been had in Greater Sydney according to interviewees there. In Greater Vancouver, this means that the Metro Vancouver Authority trusts local councils to do the local planning to deliver growth without interfering.

If the municipality can show that it can accommodate growth, Metro doesn't care how they do it so much. (AV3, July 2015).

Local strategies are developed incorporating regional growth targets that have been agreed by the member municipalities through the Regional Planning Committee. These strategies, expressed through each council's Official Community Plan, are then 'joined up' to essentially form the regional strategy. Trust is built, and through a long history of regional cooperation, trust is maintained, for the most part. Collaborative processes, commencing historically with service/utility provision, have spread to regional planning matters. Collaborative planning practice has built trust, and that trust has sustained further collaboration.

There may be lessons for Greater Sydney from processes evident in the Greater Vancouver Region that could build that initial trust that Brand and Gaffikin (2007) say is necessary to support more collaborative approaches. Innes and Booher suggest that collaborative planning practice often has to proceed independent of trust, and that collaborative processes often end up building trust nonetheless (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.114). In their view collaboration involves "two often contradictory ideas of meeting one's self-interest

and attaining the common good". Assurances are necessary to allow the negotiation to proceed.

During the period of this research, successive state governments have said they want to hand local planning powers back to local councils, and reform the NSW planning system so that it is transparent and certain and that public confidence in the planning system can be rebuilt (Hazzard, 2013; Stokes, 2020). Empirical evidence from this research seems to indicate that rebuilding trust and confidence in the planning system in NSW is not occurring.

Resilient regional strategies

Case study data from this research, particularly from the Greater Vancouver Region, suggests that ensuring local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies may assist the resilience of those strategies. In Greater Vancouver the vision and principles that underpin the current Metro Vancouver 2040 regional plan emerged from collaborative work undertaken in preparing the 1996 Liveable Region Strategy, and it is detail around those five key principles that local councils must align their plans with. This 'resilience' appears to be related to the approach taken to regional strategic planning in the particular jurisdiction, specifically how prescriptive the regional strategy is, and what agreement there has been between what constitutes a local issue versus a regional planning issue. Clarity around that point seems to be vitally important in reaching agreements and is discussed further in following sections. It is a debate that helps determine the boundary line between state control and local autonomy in that jurisdiction.

However, the case study data identifies quite different narratives around resilience of regional strategies in Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney.

Greater Sydney has seen a succession of regional strategies in recent decades, with new plans published in 2005, 2010, 2014 and 2018. This has created a degree of uncertainty about who and what we are planning for in the region, and what councils should be doing to respond to changing plans through their own local strategic planning. These successive plans have been increasingly focussed on economic prosperity through different visions of a 'Global Sydney', but have varied widely on their emphasis on environmental, social and 'quality of life' or liveability goals, which make these seem like more contingent aims.

Greater Sydney has developed a reputation for being very good at developing regional plans, but not so good at implementing them (Paine, 2017; COAG, 2012). Interviewees from both state and local government concede that approaches to regional strategic planning in Greater Sydney have not been inclusive of local strategic planning processes and outcomes, and that constantly moving goalposts of new regional strategies prepared by new governments with new priorities mean there is a lack of transparency in strategy outcomes, and a related lack of ownership and commitment to delivery of those outcomes by local government (MS1, 2016; MS2, 2016; LS1, 2016; LS6, 2016). Greater Sydney Regional

Planning Director MS2 admitted her state government team was known as the “black box team”.

The fact that local governments, identified by all stakeholders as being the key implementers of regional strategic plans, are not adequately involved in plan preparation, cannot see the results of their local strategic planning reflected in successive iterations of the regional strategy, and therefore do not support the planning outcomes may well be a key factor in the apparent lack of resilience of those strategies.

By contrast, Greater Vancouver interviewees describe planning processes at both the local and regional level that are inclusive, achieve political buy-in and accountability, and see local strategic planning outcomes directly reflected in regional plans.

The community made choices and these choices were reflected directly in the plans – they could ‘see’ their work and their choices in the plans and supported them. (AV3, 2015).

Former Greater Vancouver Regional Planning Director AV2 describes the process of developing the underlying principles of the resilient 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan as being undertaken in an inclusionary and powerful way, where local councils worked together to agree the fundamentals and effectively locked themselves in to supporting and implementing the regional strategy through their own local plans. He talks of other North American cities that had spent ‘years in acrimony’ arguing over regional level planning priorities, and felt that the success and resilience of the 1996 plan was due to greater Vancouver having “arrived at the same place through a constructive process of consensus”. (AV2, July 2015; Harcourt, Cameron and Rossiter, 2007).

The resilience of the 1996 Liveable Region Strategic Plan is evidenced by the fact that some local government interviewees still refer to it as the regional plan, despite it having been replaced in 2011 by the Metro Vancouver 2040 Strategy, and by the fact that the underlying principles collaboratively developed by local governments during its presentation are “still fundamentally there today” (LV6, April 2016) and are returned to when disputes over alignment of local and regional strategies arise.

7.4 Under what circumstances can collaborative planning practice align local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes?

As described in Chapter 1 the genesis of this question was my experience working in local and regional planning in Sydney and wondering if there were any circumstances under which local strategic planning outcomes could make their way up to, and have any influence on, regional strategic planning outcomes.

Having become aware of jurisdictions where local strategic planning outcomes did influence regional strategic plans, including in Vancouver, I was motivated to explore if this was the case, and if so, what factors were at play in specific situated practices of planning.

Vancouver

Vancouver case study data indicates that local strategic plans in that jurisdiction have direct influence on regional strategic plans. This occurs through a multi-scalar approach to plan building. High-level, overarching regional planning principles are the foundation of the regional plan, Metro Vancouver 2040. Originally developed and agreed through a voluntary, collaborative process between the local governments that comprise the Greater Vancouver Region, when preparing the iconic 1996 Liveable Region Strategy, these principles have proven resilient and stakeholders have returned to them to resolve (relatively rare) disputes between local governments and the Metro Vancouver Authority.

High-level regional growth scenarios and agreements are then drilled down, through development of local community plans called Official Community Plans, to see what this means at the local level. Preparation of an Official Community Plan is generally a two year process (LV2, 2016; LV5, 2016; LV6, 2016), based on wide community consultation about regional and local imperatives and development of options for what growth scenarios might look like locally. Official Community Plans must, through legislation, include an indicative growth plan (generally expressed as broad residential, employment, commercial, recreational and environmental ‘zones’) and the zoning by-laws developed by the local council must (also through legislation) reflect the broad local strategic plan. Development of a Regional Context Statement, by the local council, explains how the local strategy aligns with and delivers the regional strategic outcomes. Vancouver interviewees at both local and regional planning authorities described the regional strategy as a “collection of Official Community Plans” (MV1, 2015; LV5, 2016; LV6, 2016)). Local strategic plans in Greater Vancouver not only influence regional strategic plans but effectively become the regional strategy. Local communities are involved in how growth manifests itself in their areas, with local councils directly involved in preparation of suitable housing and employment targets to feed into the regional plan.

This is not to say there are not disagreements about alignment of local and regional strategic plans. Chapter 5 described relatively rare but significant disagreements, as well as long time frames to reach agreements about what constitutes a regional planning issue versus a local planning issue, the terms of reference for collaborative work between councils and the Metro Vancouver authority and so on. The important finding in this regard is that local governments and the Metro Vancouver authority are at pains to work together to continue to reach agreements, if not consensus, about alignment of local and regional strategic plans. Effectively the municipalities work together to reach an acceptable compromise.

Governance arrangements that facilitate joint problem definition, joint learning and capacity building, and joint decision-making, all hallmarks of a communicative rationality, have facilitated collaborative alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes in the Greater Vancouver Region.

During the course of this research, the Provincial Government instigated research into whether another regional district close to Greater Vancouver should consider amalgamations of local governments in order to achieve efficiencies. The Fraser Institute, an independent think-tank, undertook some of this research and after reviewing the governance arrangements embedded in the regional district system in British Columbia, recommended against amalgamations, suggesting that the collaborative processes evident in the existing system were already providing those efficiencies.

This is because the councillors are both the members of the committees, boards, and commissions that govern the regional organizations and those who decide which local, sub-regional, or regional government will provide the great majority of the services. This allows local knowledge to be used to divide up decision-making and production of different activities within a service instead of having the provincial government make those assignments. (Bish and Filipowicz 2016).

Sydney

With very similar regional planning legislation and similar planning documents to be prepared, Sydney appears, on paper, to have similar potential as Vancouver for local strategic plans to have influence on regional strategic plans. Case study data suggests that local strategic planning outcomes do influence regional planning outcomes but that this happens with different effect, in quite different ways, and for differing reasons than in the Greater Vancouver case study.

Greater Sydney case study data suggests that it is regional strategic planning processes that influence local strategic planning outcomes via sustained top-down action from the state, not the other way around. However, it can be argued that local strategic plans influence regional strategic plans in Greater Sydney through the equally sustained resistance and argumentation from local councils. The pushback from councils has often been politically driven with local councillors threatening rebellion about growth targets being forced upon them without agreement, and in some cases through legal action. Local councils have successfully fought against implementation of a powerful state government policy, the Medium Density Housing Code, which will allow significantly more medium density housing, including in traditionally 'low density' residential zones, through a fast-tracked certification process, rather than through a local council merits-based development assessment process. Councils have been successful in deferring application of this policy, against the wishes of the Minister for Planning, for more than two years.

Another example of pushback from councils overturning state government, top-down initiatives has been Greater Sydney councils, threatened with forced amalgamations, challenging the State Government's processes in court and winning – forcing another very embarrassing and expensive policy failure for the state.

While the NSW regional planning legislation requires alignment of local and regional plans it does so in a different way than in Greater Vancouver. Firstly, the NSW community plan, the Community Strategic Plan, has not had a focus on land use strategy nor does it have a requirement for inclusion of a broad land use strategy for the local government area. Secondly, until recently there was no equivalent to the Regional Context Statement that Greater Vancouver councils must prepare. In March 2018, the NSW State Government changed the planning legislation (the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*) to require councils to prepare a 'Local Strategic Planning Statement', which would explain how local plans would be aligned with regional plans. These Local strategic Planning statements are being prepared by Greater Sydney councils as this thesis is being written, and their effectiveness is as yet unknown. The State Government has introduced an administrative 'Assurance Review' process, run by the Greater Sydney Commission, and has amended the legislation to require that a local council in the Greater Sydney Region cannot approve its own Local Strategic Planning Statement "*unless the Greater Sydney Commission has advised the council in writing that the Commission supports the statement as being consistent with the applicable regional and district strategic plans*". (Part 3, Division 3.1, Section 3.9(3A) *Environmental planning and Assessment Act 1979*).

Thirdly, the NSW legislation sets tight time frames for preparation and approval of Local Strategic Planning Statements. These time frames do not align with preparation and endorsement of councils' Community strategic Plans, and do not allow time for the deep community engagement that is expected to underpin preparation of those plans in the Greater Sydney context, and Official Community plans in the Greater Vancouver context. As some interviewees have suggested, such tight time frames mean a top down approach to alignment of plans is inevitable: "It's designed to be a top-down approach – you won't have time for the consultation you need" (AV3, April 2016). (AV3 was one of many Vancouver interviewees who noted that collaborative planning practices take time). Political pushback has seen these time frames extended, as local councils claimed the time frames did not allow time to undertake the strategic planning work required to populate a Local Strategic Planning Statement, nor to test that content with communities through public engagement processes.

Alignment of local and regional strategic plans is not undertaken in a collaborative way in the Greater Sydney region.

Concluding comparative remarks

Collaborative planning practice can align local strategic planning outcomes with regional planning outcomes. The case study data from this research indicates that local strategic plans can influence the shape, resilience and delivery of regional strategic plans when certain factors are present concurrently. A key factor is the presence of a communicative rationality that supports collaborative planning processes. Combined with visionary leadership and an inclusive governance structure, a communicative rationality in the approach to strategic planning in Vancouver has meant that agreement is reached about what is being planned for, and local strategic planning outcomes directly inform the regional strategic plan. These processes have been maintained because (1) there is a legal requirement for all municipalities in the Greater Vancouver Region to agree to and sign the regional strategy before it can be officially adopted and (2) the Provincial Government uses formal and informal power to threaten abolition of regional planning powers should agreements not be reached. Here I repeat a quote from a City Councillor and Regional Planning Committee Member that expresses the tension between local autonomy and state control that she felt, and what that meant for how she and her council worked collaboratively to reach agreements:

We all live in mortal terror of the Province. If we fail then the Province would have a case to step in. So there's an imperative on one side of us to be successful, and there's an imperative on the other side of us to not step on each other's toes. (LV5, November 2016).

What appears to be happening here is a form of 'pragmatic compromise'. As Holden and Scerri note, "we cannot possibly all understand one another, all agree with one another in all (or even most) respects, but through compromise, we do gain the opportunity to live with our differences and find a way to move forward in spite of them" (Holden and Scerri, 2014, p. 19). In reaching compromise (while seeking consensus) local authorities in the Greater Vancouver Region have accepted that there will be winners and losers, have formed voting coalitions to ensure issues of common interest get a hearing in the regional decision-making arena, and ensured that agreements that reflect the 'regional interest' will be made. This 'pragmatic-collaborative' approach, while acknowledging the benefits of a rationality based in communicative action, also recognises the limitations of communicative action theory (Holden and Scerri, 2014, p.2). Jackson and Holden describe the outcomes of the court case described in Chapter 5 as "an eventual compromise reached", which they feel weakened the sustainability agenda in land use policy for the Metro Vancouver region (Jackson and Holden, 2013, p.4843). The ramifications of the court case for relationships between actors involved in regional governance in Greater Vancouver continue, but have highlighted the need for a regional view when considering important local rezonings, that joint-learning opportunities might foster.

This also aligns with Healey's assertion that in the complex and diverse societies in which we live, a "simple opposition of conflict versus consensus is unlikely to capture the dimensions

of the power struggles being played out in governance contexts" (Healey, 1999, p.1132). In her view of the potential governance benefits of collaborative planning practice, an approach of 'entrepreneurial consensus' sees a local consensus-building effort among key regional and local players to foster horizontal network-building (Healey, 2006, p. 236). The promotion of the economic, social and environmental values of the region through collaborative processes can generate options through individual and collective learning, but there may be no solution that appears optimal for all (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.9). The challenge for collaborative planning processes, which actors in the regional decision-making arena in Greater Vancouver may have met, is to ensure that compromises reached are the result of jointly developed options that are mutually beneficial to the actors, rather than lowest common denominator solutions (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.10).

The benefits of regional planning processes to local councils and communities in Greater Vancouver appear to have outweighed any dis-benefits, during the period of this research. Sufficient local autonomy in decision-making about how and where growth will occur has been maintained, with transparent and inclusive processes at both the local and regional (Metro Vancouver authority) level meaning that decisions are made in the regional interest and in general consistency with regional planning principles developed and agreed by the member local governments. While Metro Vancouver and its constituent municipalities continue to make decisions that are seen to 'support the regional interest', the Provincial Government, despite threats to use its powers to override regional planning decisions or even remove regional planning powers, is kept at bay.

In a 'deal-making' city like Greater Sydney, local strategic plans may also have some influence on regional plans, but through contestation rather than collaboration. Rather than local governments signing off on regional plans, regional plan making bodies are responsible for signing off on local plans, with the state Minister for Planning having ultimate authority to approve, refuse or amend local plans. This directly 'state-interventionist' approach is reflective of a dominance of instrumental rationality, according to Innes and Booher, where expert-led goal and policy setting exercises result in the 'Decide, Announce, Defend' syndrome "which wreaks havoc on public engagement with decision making" (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.9).

In Greater Sydney, differing governance arrangements, uses of power, and approaches to strategic planning do not provide the opportunities or motivation for local governments to collaborate with regional planning authorities to align local and regional strategic plans. Aggressively top-down approaches by the state with regard to plan making and alignment of plans have prevailed despite ongoing attempts by the state Government to reform the planning system, to introduce "a new approach to strategic planning (that is) the basis for balanced planning decisions" (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013). Empirical data obtained through this research indicates that an acceptable balance in planning decisions, between state control and local autonomy, has not been reached, at least in the

eyes of local governments. A rational-instrumental approach, strongly state-interventionist, portrays a sharp contrast with collaborative and consensus-building approaches to strategic plan alignment in Greater Vancouver. Approaches to strategic planning in both case study cities reflect a shifting balance between state control and local autonomy. For the period of this research, perceptions of the level of autonomy granted to local governments in the Greater Vancouver example have been much greater, and the perceived legitimacy of the regional planning authority, Metro Vancouver, much stronger than in the Greater Sydney example.

Local autonomy is strongly protected by the municipalities of the Greater Vancouver region, and their continued participation in regional planning processes through the Metro Vancouver Authority is dependent on maintaining a certain level of autonomy in land use decisions. The municipalities work cooperatively and collaboratively to ensure the broader interests of the region are met while meeting local needs and addressing local strategic planning concerns. The municipalities' perseverance with collaborative regional planning pursuits is in no small part due to the threat of intervention by the Provincial Government. While the Provincial Government has the power to intervene in local planning matters, it has never used that power, letting the regional planning authority go about its business as long as it sees that its interests in the region are being supported and that the growth it needs the region to achieve is occurring. However, it is clear that the municipalities see and feel the threat of intervention and so they negotiate agreements about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes to 'keep the Province at bay' (LV2, 2016, LV5, 2016, LV7, 2016). The Mayor of a rapidly growing city in the Greater Vancouver Region expressed how he thought the Provincial Government saw the relationship with the regional and local authorities:

I think from the Province's point of view, they really don't want to have to clean up any messes. So if you had a regional government that was running into a mess, unable to manage things....but if you've got a well-functioning group, not creating any scandals or headaches, then from the Provincial Government's point of view, as long as there isn't any noise making, their attitude is "this is your sandbox and we're OK with it" (LV7, November 2016).

It is a combination of factors related to governance, power, and rationality of the systems in place that shape both the relationships between the regional authority, the Metro Vancouver Authority, and the Province, and between the Metro Vancouver Authority and its member municipalities. These three factors – governance, power and rationality have directly shaped approaches to local and regional strategic planning over time – approaches that have necessarily varied to meet the challenges and issues that threaten to de-rail decades of edgy balance between state control and local autonomy.

Interviewees in both case study cities acknowledged that collaborative planning processes take time – sometimes a lot of time – as joint agreements are reached and outcomes

negotiated. However, stakeholders in Vancouver agree that they value a collaborative approach above top-down approaches that force agreements. A Greater Vancouver City Councillor and Regional Planning Committee representative suggested the development industry actually preferred collaborative approaches:

On the record, developers in Vancouver will say the same things developers in Sydney will say, that the system takes too long, it costs them too much. Off the record, they say they love this system of negotiation around good outcomes, because they get some social license, they get to build their building, of all the places they work it's the least 'head on', but it also takes the longest – these collaborative processes take a long time. And the alternative is endless court cases, and very few benefits there".
(LV5 November 2016)

Mayor and Regional Planning Committee member (and a planner by profession) LV7 thinks the extended time frames of the 'two-way' process of aligning local with regional strategic plans is necessary to get the agreements about growth at the local level:

There's no doubt that there's been a bit of conflict (about growth goals) here. So we're slowly working our way through those issues. By having this longer process, this longer engagement process, it's actually allowed the temperature to come down on a lot of issues, instead of people feeling like "the city is trying to force something on us" (LV7, November, 2016).

This aligns with claims made for collaborative planning and its basis in communicative action theory that were discussed in Chapter 2. Collective and inclusive debate, where those with a stake in a place are given voice, and are heard, in the development of policies about how growth will occur in those places, takes time but has the potential to reach collective and lasting agreements (Healey, 2006, Innes and Booher, 2010).

The research shows that local and regional plans are 'aligned' in Greater Sydney – but that such alignment is often forced through top-down processes, regular use of state powers to over-ride local strategic planning outcomes, and legislated time frames that mean there is simply no time for collaborative approaches.

Interviewees describe planning in Greater Sydney as having a 'State knows best' culture, and claim that this, combined with a lack of transparency in the evidence base for planning, fosters mistrust and continued pushback against state-led processes from local councils and communities (LS1, 2016; LS3, 2017; LS6, 2016). This ongoing tension, the 'inevitable fight' about planning aligning local and regional strategic planning outcomes, may well take as long or longer than collaborative processes which are criticised for being too slow.

There is a stark contrast in approach to regional strategic planning between the case study cities. Vancouver interviewees suggested that the top-down approaches they had heard about and in some cases worked in, in Greater Sydney, wouldn't work in the Greater

Vancouver context (Av3, 2015; AV4; 2017, LV4, 2016). Greater Vancouver City Planning Director and Regional Planning Committee representative LV4 suggests:

Because you have that State, top-down approach in Sydney, you're able to enforce that kind of policy. We don't have that top down approach so it's the consensus of the group that's supposed to make those decisions. (LV4, November 2016)

The rhetoric around planning and planning system in Sydney suggests that it is collaborative, and that ongoing reforms aim to give communities a greater say in shaping their places. Having a voice, however, means that those who make the decisions, the state in the case of NSW, has to be listening.

"Having a voice, however, can mean very different things – from being heard (but ignored) to being directly involved as an equal participant in the process from the planning stage, via the final vote, to the actual implementation and evaluation of the decision made". (Kooiman and Jentoff, 2009, p.826).

Research evidence from Greater Sydney and from Greater Vancouver is reflected in Kooiman and Jentoff's quote. In Sydney local councils may sometimes be heard, but they are often ignored by state planning processes. In Vancouver, local councils, through the governance structure and culture of Metro Vancouver are involved as an equal participant from defining the planning problem to be solved, to developing options for solving the problems, and finally through being directly involved in decision-making around regional planning outcomes.

Communicative action theory suggests that this is very important – how do political communities communicate in public arenas, how do participants exchange ideas, sort out what is important and assess proposed courses of action? Habermas argues that it is through collective debate about these issues, through communicative action, that cultures and structures are formed and transformed. Greater Vancouver City Councillor and Regional Planning Committee representative LV5 says:

The challenge with community-based planning, when everybody gets to the table, it's not that everybody gets heard, it's whether everybody can hear each other. That's the only way community-based planning works. You have everyone at the same table. Yes, they all need to talk, but then they need to sit back and hear what other people are saying. (LV5, November 2016)

Centralised planning powers and processes in Sydney have achieved alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes, but this has come at a cost. There are ongoing political and legal challenges from local governments in Sydney, and from community groups. Research evidence clearly shows that Greater Sydney councils do not feel a sense of ownership of regional strategies, and are not committed to their delivery for this reason.

Regional strategies in Greater Sydney are not resilient, whereas evidence shows very resilient regional strategic planning outcomes in the Greater Vancouver example.

Despite ongoing claims in Greater Sydney that reform of the planning system is aimed at more collaborative approaches (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2013; Stokes, 2020), and Regional Planning Director MV2 genuinely believing her approaches to working with Greater Sydney councils were ‘collaborative’, the case study data does not support these claims. Analysis of planning practice through this research does not identify practice in either of the case study cities as meeting “an idealised communicative model” (Healey, 1999, p.1134), but it has identified factors that “hold the current practices in place” and provides some indication of how likely these factors are to change, and how communicative practices might identify alternative pathways for planning practices, “both in individual instances and in the design of the system as a whole” (Healey, 1999, p.1134).

Discourse structuration in Greater Sydney, referred to by local government interviewees as having the state government start the discussion about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes at ‘third base’, with the state experts having already determined what growth targets would be applied to local governments and essentially where the growth should occur, appears to be a key factor in holding current practices in place’ in that city. This can be triangulated to critiques of collaborative planning processes discussed in Chapter 2.

For example, Allmendinger and Haughton highlight the apparent contradiction of governments espousing more collaborative and extensive public engagement in plan making while ensuring that they “find ways of working that mean that oppositional elements do not fundamentally challenge the pre-eminence of the growth agenda” (Allmendinger and Haughton 2011, p. 93). Local government interviewees in greater Sydney complained of having their views ignored, by state government officials and planning processes, reflecting Allmendinger and Haughton’s concerns about governments *“delivering growth expedited through some carefully choreographed processes for participation which minimise the potential for those with conflicting views to be given a meaningful hearing”* (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011, p. 90).

7.5 Summary

To summarise this comparative analysis of findings I recap key points relating to each of the research questions.

What factors facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being reflected in regional strategies?

Case study data reveals that the anticipated explanatory factors have manifested themselves in quite different ways in Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney.

The inclusive governance structure and culture evident in the regional planning authority in Greater Vancouver is fundamental to the success of regional planning initiatives and alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes. Locally elected representatives constitute the Board and Committees of the Metro Vancouver authority. The lack of involvement of locally elected representatives in regional planning governance in Greater Sydney, reflected in a state-interventionist approach, was a point of contention for local government interviewees in that city.

A factor raised by interviewees in both cities was differing appeal rights for developers around rezoning and development decisions in the case study cities. This factor may be significant in shaping opportunities for collaborative governance structures and practices to exist in the cities.

Critiques of collaborative planning practice suggest that claims for it are naïve because they ignore the power structures within which it must operate (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014). This research has shown power to be a significant factor in shaping regional planning processes and outcomes in both case study cities – albeit power wielded in quite different ways. The NSW State Government uses its legislated power or formal power to override local strategic planning outcomes regularly in Greater Sydney. Successive planning system reform efforts have incrementally centralised power in the state planning agency and in direct Ministerial powers.

An unexpected finding in Greater Vancouver was interviews revealing that they persisted with collaborative approaches, reaching agreements and compromises in the ‘regional interest’ because of threats from the Province to use its powers to override or remove regional planning processes and outcomes. The threat of Provincial intervention motivates the member municipalities of Metro Vancouver to work together to reach agreements to keep the Province at bay.

The rationality of the planning systems revealed through analysis of interview and documentary data is reflective of the governance arrangements and the approaches to strategic planning in the case study cities. Planning practice in the Greater Vancouver system displays the hallmarks of a communicative rationality. Interview data revealed the opportunities for, and practice of, joint problem definition, joint learning and capacity building which facilitates joint development of solutions, and most importantly joint decision making.

In Greater Sydney, a state-interventionist approach to regional and local strategic planning is reflective of an instrumental rationality. The state planning agency sets the agenda for discussion of the ‘planning problem’ to be solved, and state bureaucrats and the Minister for Planning make the final decisions on local plans and their alignment with regional plans. The Greater Sydney Commission, established during the course of this research, has no

elected representatives on its Board or Committees. Commissioners are all appointees of the State.

Why is it important to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies?

Interview and document review data suggests that it is important to have local strategic concerns reflected in regional strategies because it strengthens:

- Local ownership of the regional strategy
- Commitment to strategy delivery at the local government level
- Trust in the planning system and commitment to further engagement
- Resilient regional strategies.

Under what circumstances can collaborative planning practice align local strategic planning outcomes with regional strategic planning outcomes?

Collaborative planning practice can align local strategic planning outcomes with regional planning outcomes. The case study data from this research indicates that local strategic plans can influence the shape, resilience and delivery of regional strategic plans when certain factors are present concurrently. A key factor is the presence of communicative action or collaborative planning processes.

In the next and final Chapter I consider these comparative findings in terms of how they strengthen our understanding strengthened our understanding of collaborative planning and communicative action theory in practice. I discuss the efficacy of my anticipated explanatory factors, which leads to a discussion of the limitations of this research and the opportunities for further research.

Chapter 8 Conclusions, limitations and further research

The connection of planning to spatial policies of the State is what gives planning its specificity, whether we talk about governance, governmentality or insurgent planning. The practices of urban/spatial/environmental/community planning are connected in diverse and changing ways to the state, its powers and resources deployed in projects of spatial management. Theories ignoring this context risk losing their explanatory potential for prescriptive futility. (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000, p.339)

This research provides empirical evidence to fill an identified research gap. The gap is empirical evidence about the ‘wider context of urban governance’ in which collaborative planning practice operates, of particular and situated practices of planning. The research has provided rich data to assist in developing, as Healey suggests, “*a greater understanding of the diversity of the manifestations of the ‘planning enterprise’ and of governance cultures in different parts of the world*”. (Healey, 2003, p.117).

Empirical evidence has been obtained through case studies of situated practices of strategic planning in two cities, Vancouver, British Columbia (BC) Canada and Sydney, New South Wales (NSW) Australia.

This is exploratory, comparative case study research about planning practice in the case study cities. It has not sought to adjust the theoretical framework, rather has analysed the case study data to identify areas where practice indicates theory may need more grounding, where claims made for collaborative planning are less well grounded, and where claims are more solidly reflected in practice. Chapter 7 provided a comparative analysis of the data from the two case study cities, triangulating findings and interview statements back to the theoretical considerations of collaborative planning practice and its basis in communicative action theory, these theoretical bases for collaborative planning practice having been explored in Chapter 2.

This concluding chapter reflects on how this research has strengthened our understanding of collaborative planning and communicative action theory in practice. The chapter then reflects on the efficacy of the anticipated explanatory factors (developed in Chapters 1 and 2 and used throughout the document to describe and analyse case study data) in explaining planning practice in the two case study cities, and how the situated practices result in alignment of local with regional strategic planning outcomes. Other factors that have arisen through the research are described.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the research and identifies key areas for further research.

8.1 How has this research strengthened our understanding of collaborative planning in practice and communicative action theory?

The importance of defining what we mean by collaborative practice

Findings from this research reinforce the importance of clarity about what we mean when we use the term ‘collaborative planning’. As Harris noted (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2001, p.29) there has been a tendency for commentators to conflate collaborative planning and communicative action theory. Evidence analysed in Chapter 7 describing ‘collaborative practice’ in Greater Vancouver sits more comfortably with collaborative planning being a ‘form’ of planning, based on certain theoretical foundations and assumptions (Healey, 1997, p.7); a way of doing planning or a dominant paradigm in planning theory, rather than a theory in itself. Forms of planning are recognised as having greater dependence on contextual factors than are theories (Allmendinger and Haughton, 2002, p.23), and the explanatory factors researched here have been shown to vary significantly in their manifestation in different contexts.

The generalised way in which the term ‘collaborative planning’ is used and the debate this can generate in the space of aligning local with regional strategic planning outcomes has also been highlighted by evidence gathered through this research.

In both case study cities interviewees at both local and regional/state government level stated that they considered collaboration essential to achieving successful alignment and implementation of local and regional planning strategies, and that is what they seek in their dealings between levels of government – horizontally and vertically. However, interview data clearly identified significant disagreements about whether collaboration was occurring at all, particularly in the Greater Sydney case study.

In Chapter 2 I reverted to a definition of collaboration established by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and widely used internationally, in my attempt to place parameters around what collaborative practice might look like, and to compare what I observed happening in the case study cities. In doing so I developed component themes to my factor of ‘rationality’ that relate to the IAP2 definition and other reading about what constitutes ‘collaboration’. These include joint problem definition, joint decision-making and capacity building and joint learning. What the research has identified is that the ‘collaborative practice’, as expressed through these component themes, varies significantly between the two case study cities.

Collaborative planning in contextualised practice

In Greater Sydney, local government interviewees described that they were not involved in any definition of the planning problem to be solved, development of options for resolving those planning problems, or joint-decision-making to agree the preferred option. They described feeling that they were living in the distinctly ‘uncollaborative world’ described by

Brand and Gaffikin (2007). Rather than working towards consensus-building free of constraints, Greater Sydney local council interviewees described themselves as being involved in Flyvbjerg's 'dirty work of democracy' (Flyvbjerg, 1998).

While reaching 'consensus' may be the lofty aim of collaborative planning practice (Healey, 1996; Innes and Booher, 2010), practice aimed at 'consensus-building' was evidenced through this research. In both case study cities communication is framed and distorted (Fischler, 2000, p.358) by its context. In Greater Vancouver discourse between the local governments appears to be fettered by the underlying fear that if agreements are not reached the Provincial Government will step in, as it has threatened to do, and either override planning decisions or dismantle the system of regional planning altogether (as it has done in the past). In Greater Sydney discourse is even more constrained, according to interviewees. There, interviewees describe negotiations about the planning problem to be solved starting "at third base" (LS1, February 2016), a reference to the state having pre-determined growth targets that must be accommodated in each local government area through local planning, and often having decided where that growth will actually be located, overriding local strategic planning outcomes and concerns about supporting infrastructure provision.

In Greater Vancouver the research identified collaborative planning practice that appeared to be addressing, or dealing with, one of the common criticisms of collaborative planning – that is, that in very complex and diverse societies dealing with 'wicked problems' it is simply not possible for everyone to understand and/or agree with each other, and therefore to reach consensus (Holden and Scerri, 2014; Allmendinger and Haughton, 2011). Through reaching pragmatic comprise (through consensus-building approaches) local authorities in Greater Vancouver have recognised and dealt with the limitations of communicative action theory through their 'form' of collaborative planning practice.

Critiques of collaborative planning practice note that it 'operates in the shadow of hierarchy' (Jessop, 2004; Kübler, 2007; Fawcett and Marsh, 2014). It operates within established planning systems, each displaying a particular rationality. Hierarchical planning systems with similar legislative requirements for alignment of local and regional strategic plans were identified in both case study cities explored in this research. However, quite different approaches to strategic planning were noted. Greater Sydney evidence reflected a strong 'state-interventionist' approach to alignment of local plans with regional and state planning priorities, reflective of a dominance an instrumental rationality (Innes and Booher, 2010, p.9). The Greater Vancouver case study data identified significantly less direct intervention by the Province. The evidence suggests that the communicative rationality manifested at the regional planning authority level in Greater Vancouver supports and maintains a system where the Province rarely has justification for intervention. As long as agreements are reached that promote the regional interest, the Province will not intervene.

Returning to Innes and Booher's 'four styles of planning' (Figure 1, Chapter 2), and recognising rationality of systems varies or trends over time towards a particular theoretical position, evidence for the period of this research suggests the style or form of planning has been a combination of 'technical bureaucratic' and 'political influence' in Greater Sydney, while in Greater Vancouver a 'collaborative' model is clearly evident in research data. Interviewees in that city described a system that is inclusive, that explores or relies on interdependence of actors in searching for solutions, and that does not ignore or override interests but seeks solutions that will satisfy multiple interests (Innes and Booher, 2003, p.54).

Critiques of collaborative planning discussed in Chapter 2 had a focus on the use of power (Fox-Rogers and Murphy, 2014; Yiftachel, 2000; Fawcett and Marsh, 2014) and collaborative practices operating within a political framework and a wider political economy of urban governance. Power was chosen as an anticipated explanatory factor for this reason. The research has identified that power is used in quite different ways in the two case study cities, and that it does strongly influence the shape of collaborative processes and the manifestation of components of communicative action theory. The very interesting finding in Greater Vancouver has been that the threat of use of formal power by the Provincial Government has been a key driver for local governments to maintain collaborative, consensus-building practices. While much of the case study data in Greater Vancouver referred to a long history of collaboration as being the reason for continued practice, that such practice had become so institutionalised that it was now simply expected by local governments in the region, one example of significant disagreement about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes, observed as part of this research, exposed an 'underbelly' of quiet fear among local governments that the Province may step in at any moment and override or even remove their regional planning powers. The threat of use of formal power by the Deputy Premier of British Columbia following this disagreement was sufficient to see a new staffing regime installed at the helm of the regional planning authority, who saw it as their mission to collaborate and re-build trust in the system.

This contrasts with the use of formal power by the State Government in NSW. The Minister for Planning has regularly and routinely used his or her significant powers to override or bypass local strategic planning decisions and enforce alignment of local strategic plans with regional strategic planning outcomes.

The research has strengthened our understanding of how and why collaborative planning is effective, or not, in practice. Evidence has been obtained in both case study cities that reveals the important factors that describe the "wider context of urban governance" (Mason, 2007, p.2380) within which collaborative planning practice occurs.

8.2 Efficacy of the anticipated explanatory factors

The discussion above on the contribution of this research to our understanding of collaborative planning in practice touched on a number of the anticipated explanatory factors and component themes developed in Chapters 1 and 2. My anticipated explanatory factors and component themes are reproduced in Table 12 below.

The anticipated explanatory factors and component themes were sourced from themes emerging from the literature review and preliminary document review for the two case study cities (see Table 2, Section 2.5, Chapter 2).

Table 11: Anticipated explanatory factors

Factor	Component theme
1. Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of regional planning and cooperation• Legislative framework• Structure and culture
2. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal power• Network power• Political champions and visionary leaders
3. Rationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicative vs instrumental• Joint problem definition• Joint decision making• Capacity building and joint learning
4. Approaches to strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visionary vs regulatory• Deal-making cities vs plan-making cities• Top-down vs bottom-up

Having heard from planning practitioners in Greater Vancouver that the collaborative planning practices that had been successful there might not easily transfer to Greater Sydney because ‘different factors were at play’, I was motivated to explore what those factors might be. The anticipated explanatory factors chosen, have proven effective in describing quite different approaches to aligning local and regional strategic planning outcomes, while comparing two jurisdictions facing similar planning problems, and addressing them through similar planning legislation, and producing similar planning documents. However, other factors have naturally arisen through the research effort, and these are discussed in detail when I consider the limitations of this research.

Importantly for my understanding of why certain planning practices are maintained in the case study cities, exploration of these factors identified tension points between state

control and local autonomy, and highlighted quite different responses to those tensions from different levels of government.

Governance:

Governance structure and culture was shown to be an important factor in facilitating alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes in Greater Vancouver and simultaneously impeding such alignment in Greater Sydney. The governance structure of the Metro Vancouver authority provides the arena for joint-learning and capacity building where lengthy and important discussions are held about the division between local and regional planning issues. Who makes the decisions about particular issues and under what circumstances is, according to interviewees in Greater Vancouver, a discussion that is returned to on a regular basis, and one that helps define a shifting boundary between state control and local autonomy.

By contrast the governance structure of the Greater Sydney Commission and the heavily ‘top-down’ approaches of the state were strongly criticised by local government interviewees in Greater Sydney.

A governance-related factor that I had not anticipated as being so important is the legislative difference in available appeal rights between the Sydney and Vancouver legal systems. The litigiousness of the system was raised as an important issue by interviewees in both case study cities. The availability of considerably more development appeal pathways for Sydney stakeholders means that the development industry is significantly less engaged in local strategic planning outcomes (as it can simply appeal against decisions it doesn’t like), and communities become ‘engagement fatigued’ very quickly if they see their strategic planning efforts being overturned easily by appeal processes. Involvement in inclusive collaborative planning practice may become more important to stakeholders if broad appeal rights do not exist.

Power:

As described in the previous section, the research has shown that consideration of the use of formal and informal power was a key factor in the different approaches to strategic planning and in the characterisation of local autonomy in the two cities - a “relationship between a higher tier of government and the local” (Grant and Drew, 2017).

In particular, the generation of network power (Booher and Innes, 2002; Innes and Booher, 2010; Healey, 2006) was described by many Greater Vancouver interviewees as a product of the particular governance arrangements evident in that city.

That network power has helped local governments in Greater Vancouver reach agreements in the regional interest and have reduced the opportunity or motivation of the Provincial Government to intervene in regional and local planning matters. In this sense, collaborative

and consensus building practice in Greater Vancouver may have displayed the potential referred to by Healey – that is “the potential to transform institutional capacity and relations of power” (Healey, 1997, p.265).

In Greater Sydney, power has also been shown to shape approaches to strategic planning and redefine the balance between local autonomy and state control. The driver of ongoing planning system reform by the state appears to be facilitating development to underpin economic growth, and this has been reflected in successive regional strategies for the city that incrementally centralise planning powers, empowering the state and reducing local autonomy (Kübler, 2007; Schatz and Piracha, 2012).

Rationality:

The anticipated distinction between a predominantly communicative rationality in Greater Vancouver and a predominantly instrumental rationality in Greater Sydney was validated by research findings. However, elements of both are evident in both jurisdictions, and the balance was shown to shift over time. For example, the 2011 Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Plan, which replaced the 1996 Liveable region strategy and “put lines on maps” (AV4, November 2017; LV5, April 2016) was a move toward a more prescriptive regional plan and a stronger influence of an instrumental rationality in practice – one strongly resisted by some local governments subsequently in the Greater Vancouver Region who perceived that their local strategic concerns were not reflected in the regional plan.

The state-interventionist approach revealed through the Greater Sydney case study data, reflective of a strong instrumental rationality, has become only stronger in the face of ongoing local opposition, according to interviewees and commentators (Kübler, 2007; Schatz and Piracha, 2012; LS1, February 2016; LS3, July 2017).

The presence (in the Greater Vancouver case) or absence (in the Greater Sydney case) of my component themes of joint problem definition, joint decision making, and capacity building and joint learning, were identified by interviewees in both cities as being fundamental to the opportunities for collaborative practice existing, or not, in the way regional planning is done in the cities.

In terms of Kübler’s four modes of joint decision making system, described in Chapter 2, processes in Greater Vancouver tend significantly more towards ‘problem solving’ and ‘positive coordination’, where actors reach agreement by a combination of distributive bargaining and problem solving. Negotiation settings are designed to allow actors to deal with issues of distribution and deliberate over the best solution for a given policy problem at the same time (Kübler, 2007, p.638). As Healey suggests, collaborative practices that encourage respectful ‘speaking and listening’, and facilitate ‘mutual learning’ through a process of dialogue, have moved Greater Vancouver stakeholders towards agreements that are particular to their specific place (region) at specific times (Healey, 1996, p.266).

In Greater Sydney, decision making systems tend more towards ‘negative coordination’, where fear of veto by the state means local government actors adjust their behaviour in the light of possible objections from the state and from competing local government areas.

In Greater Sydney, local government stakeholders see the lack of capacity building and joint learning opportunities in that city as a ‘lost opportunity’ for the State Government.

Approaches to strategic planning:

A key finding in relation to this anticipated explanatory factor, revealed through interview data, is the strength and resilience of a visionary plan versus a regulatory plan, in the context of collaborative governance arrangements and decision-making structures. A combination of the anticipated factors contributes to this resilience, and in the case of Vancouver’s iconic 1996 Liveable Region Strategy, a vision and principles voluntarily prepared and agreed by member municipalities of Metro Vancouver are returned to when the benefits of regional planning processes are under scrutiny, or when disputes arise. In Vancouver, regional and local strategic plan preparation and alignment processes are described as being two-way processes: top down and bottom up.

Strongly top-down approaches described in interviews in Greater Sydney have been explained in part as being necessary because of the high-growth agenda of the state, which is dependent on developer contributions extracted from the development industry to pay for supporting infrastructure. Herein lies an additional factor that I had not anticipated as being so important in shaping the opportunities of and nature of collaborative planning practice – the influence of taxation and contribution systems on approaches to strategic planning and as an explanation for continuation of a state-interventionist approach from the State Government in Greater Sydney, even as it proceeds with further reform of the planning system enshrined in rhetoric promising more collaborative approaches.

This factor was made particularly evident in interviews in Greater Sydney, as a negative influence on negotiations about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes, and a key factor in incrementally increasing state control at the expense of local autonomy. In Greater Vancouver the alignment of infrastructure provision with negotiated growth options was highlighted as a distinctly positive influence in supporting collaborative decision-making processes.

In summary, the anticipated explanatory factors developed in Chapters 1 and 2 have proven to be relevant and useful in analysing the case study data, providing a sufficiently robust framework to describe quite different approaches to alignment of local and regional strategic plans, and a shifting balance between state control and local autonomy in the two case study cities.

8.3 Limitations of research

Consideration of the methodology, comparative analysis of case study data undertaken in Chapter 7, and the discussion above have identified limitations to this research. Limitations are identified through the following questions:

- To what extent did the time period of the research affect research outcomes?
- To what extent has my embeddedness in the NSW planning system affected my findings and considerations?
- Would I have found something different had I explored different explanatory factors?

Time frame of the research

With ongoing reform of the NSW planning system making it a “popular sport” in the media and a “BBQ stopper in political circles” (Schatz and Piracha, 2012) it is possible different reactions might have been elicited from interviewees over a different period of time. Since completion of interviews in Sydney, the Department of Planning has been restructured, and it has a new CEO, as does the Greater Sydney Commission. The NSW Planning Minister has announced a new raft of reforms to the planning system, with the familiar rhetoric of ‘handing local planning powers back to local councils’ (Stokes, 2020).

Introduction of new strategic planning documents into the Greater Sydney legislative framework has focussed councils’ work on aligning their local plans with regional strategic plans. ‘Local Strategic Planning Statements’ are currently being prepared by local councils to show how they will align local with regional strategic planning outcomes. These Local Strategic Planning Statements are similar in intent and required content to the Regional Context Statements that municipalities are required to prepare in the Greater Vancouver region. If this new process is successful, Sydney may see the current regional plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities, “finding its feet” (Schatz and Piracha, 2012) and proving to be more resilient than its predecessors. The very short, legislated time frames for completion of Local Strategic Planning Statements may, however, mean a continuation of top-down action from the state to enforce such alignment.

In Greater Vancouver, following a relatively stable period in regional planning governance, local government elections have meant new elected representatives on the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee, including a new Chair. The former, longstanding Chair and Mayor of a rapidly growing municipality in Greater Vancouver was noted in interviews as being a ‘champion’ of the benefits of sound regional planning. New staff, including a new Regional Planning Director at Metro Vancouver, report to that committee. The ‘institutionalisation’ of a collaborative governance structure and culture was highlighted in interviews during this research. This research has shown that different actors in the regional planning space can have a significant effect on the perceived ‘rationality’ of the system, and different findings may have emerged in Vancouver over a different time frame.

As Healey notes, consensus building practices are specific to place and time (Healey, 1997, p.266)

Embeddedness in the NSW Planning System

Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Design identified mitigation measures implemented to ensure risks associated with my embeddedness in the NSW planning system, and the partial reliance on autoethnographical evidence for the Greater Sydney case study, were reduced. Interview data from Sydney interviews was triangulated against any preconceptions I had about how planning was ‘done’ during the period of the research. ‘Member checking’ was utilised as a method of mitigating potential researcher bias in the Greater Sydney case study.

Range of anticipated explanatory factors investigated

The source of my anticipated explanatory factors and their efficacy were explained in Chapter 2 and in this, chapter, Chapter 8, above. The anticipated factors provided a useful and consistent framework for analysis of the case study data. That analysis helped explain why particular approaches are taken to strategic planning in the case study cities, and provided answers to my research questions. However, other factors emerged through interviews that appear to have a significant effect on shaping opportunities for collaboration in aligning local with regional plans. These include:

- legislative differences in available development appeal rights between the Sydney and Vancouver legal systems and the litigiousness of the system
- the influence of taxation and contribution systems on approaches to strategic planning and on the existence of collaborative practice as a useful tool in reaching agreements about alignment of local with regional strategic planning outcomes.

These two factors were raised by interviewees in both case study cities as being significant influences on the approach to strategic planning taken in the cities, and on the processes by which local and regional strategic plans are aligned. They are discussed in greater detail in the following section, Further Research.

8.4 Further Research

This research has identified areas for further exploration that will broaden our understanding of the factors that facilitate or impede local strategic planning outcomes making their way up to, and having influence on, regional strategic plans.

Development appeal pathways and litigiousness of the system

There are significantly more appeal rights and pathways available for the development industry in Greater Sydney than in Greater Vancouver (Willey, 2005). This was raised by interviewees in both cities as one reason why the development industry might become

more engaged in negotiating and reaching agreements about strategic planning outcomes in Vancouver (AV3, 2015; MV1, 2016). Interviewees noted that the development industry is not motivated to reach agreements with local governments and communities about development outcomes, as the State Government has introduced multiple pathways for developers to bypass local controls or appeal to the NSW Land and Environment Court.

The litigiousness of the NSW system has a significant effect on shaping the opportunities for collaboration in Greater Sydney. Litigation adds cost to the development process, but from the developers' point of view, this can be factored into the equation of development costs and sale price of the product, and so is not a huge concern for them – especially if they can get a more certain result in the same or quicker time than collaboration might take.

A more litigious system may diminish community trust in the planning system, and increase the tensions between state control and local autonomy. Interview data from both case study cities suggests that local communities are less likely to engage in collaborative local planning processes, to reach agreement about growth outcomes and how they might align with regional strategic planning outcomes, if they know the development industry can ignore their deliberations and appeal to a State Government appointed panel or the Land and Environment Court to override any adverse rezoning or development decision made by their local council.

While one Greater Vancouver City Councillor reported that the development industry would publicly decry the planning system there, claiming that collaboration takes too long and costs them too much, she advised that 'off the record' developers say they love the system of negotiation around good planning outcomes, because it generates them some 'social license' (LV5 November 2016). The links between appeal rights, litigiousness of the system, and opportunities for collaborative planning practice would be well worth further exploration.

Taxation systems and development contributions regimes

The impacts of development can be 'priced' through property taxes and development contributions. In NSW the State Government levies a tax (known as a 'stamp duty') on every residential property transaction in the State. This tax varies with property value, but to use an example of the approximate median value of a residence in Greater Sydney, of \$1,000,000 AUD, a stamp duty of more than \$40,000 AUD is payable (2019-20 figures). A similar tax exists in British Columbia but it is a significantly smaller percentage of total value. This NSW tax provides a strong incentive for the State to find ways to provide property developers with higher yields. One way of doing this was described by Greater Sydney local government interviewees as common practice – the State Government setting higher local growth targets and using various means to coerce local councils to reflect these targets in their local strategic plans, or using its powers to override local planning controls.

The same considerations appear to be a factor incentivising the NSW State Government to use its powers to identify ‘priority planning precincts’ in Greater Sydney. In these precincts, the State takes over strategic planning processes, over-riding and replacing locally developed planning controls with higher yielding development scenarios. In these priority precincts the state introduces ‘Special Infrastructure Contributions’ (SICs). Developers are given higher yields but charged the additional contribution, in addition to local council development contributions, and this additional SIC contribution goes to state revenue for infrastructure projects. These contributions are in addition to any local council developer contributions. Further comparison could be made with Greater Vancouver through further research, where ‘Community Amenity Contributions’ (CACs), initially introduced by the City of Vancouver, are now spreading to, and being used by, other municipalities in that region. The increases in ‘voluntary’ versus state-imposed developer contributions, and what this has meant for equitable distribution of new housing and employment developments, would be an interesting case study.

In combination, the taxation and development contributions system can have a significant effect on shaping opportunities for collaborative planning practices. The state gains revenue through a higher growth agenda, and the development industry also benefits from higher development yields. These factors disincentivise the State from facilitating collaborative planning processes to align local with regional strategic planning processes. It doesn’t need to take the time to ensure local strategic concerns are reflected in regional strategies. The story of the place and the development outcomes for it are not allowed to become more locally nuanced and perhaps more reflective of those local strategic planning concerns, which may reflect social and environmental considerations as much or more than economic concerns. As the State does these ‘deals’ with the development industry, at the expense of local concerns, the tensions between state control and local autonomy are intensified in Greater Sydney.

The links between taxation and development contributions systems and opportunities for collaborative planning in different jurisdictions could well be further explored.

Inclusionary governance structures and involvement of locally elected officials in regional planning initiatives

Findings in Chapters 5 and 7 identified the apparent importance of achieving the ‘buy-in’ of locally elected representatives into decision about alignment of local and regional strategic planning outcomes in Greater Vancouver. The collaborative planning practice established by the federated governance structure of the Metro Vancouver authority has facilitated ‘pragmatic compromises’ being reached between member municipalities, through consensus building processes.

Further exploration of the links between the existence of inclusionary governance structures and the opportunities for collaborative planning practice is warranted, potentially through

expansion of the comparison of jurisdictions undertaken in this research, while building on existing research into international comparison of planning reform agendas (Schatz and Piracha, 2012; Gurran, Austin and Whitehead, 2014; Campbell, Tait and Watkins, 2014). Such further exploration may explain whether factors at play in the Greater Vancouver Region are ‘special’ and specific to the particular place and time, or whether there is potential for locally nuanced replication of the processes evidenced in Greater Vancouver in other jurisdictions.

8.5 Conclusion

This research has identified a range of factors that have facilitated or impeded alignment of local with regional strategic planning outcomes. Analysis of the situated and contextualised manifestation of these factors in the case study cities of Greater Vancouver and Greater Sydney has enhanced our understanding of how and why collaborative planning is practised in different contexts, or not.

As set out in Chapter 1, the aim of the research has been to explore how collaboration is enacted (or not) in practice; to better understand the factors that facilitate or impede effective alignment of local and regional strategic plans in situated planning practice; and to better understand the effectiveness of collaborative planning practice in reaching agreements about those alignments. The research has sought to “expose the concept of collaborative planning to the reality of planning, thereby assessing its efficacy for informing and explaining what planners ‘really do’ and can do” (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007, p.282).

Through analysis of planning practice in the case study cities against the anticipated explanatory factors of governance, power, rationality and approaches to strategic planning, a greater understanding of the importance of history and context of the places has emerged, which helps describe why particular factors have either facilitated or mitigated alignment of local with regional strategic planning outcomes, and intensified or mediated tensions between state control and local anatomy.

Importantly the case study data has also identified other factors in the case study cities that may be fundamental in determining the approaches taken to strategic planning in the two cities. Differing historical legacies of taxation and developer contributions systems, and differing scope for appeal of development and rezoning decisions through administrative processes or litigation, may incentivise collaborative planning practice in one jurisdiction and state-interventionist approaches in another. These are areas ripe for further research in attempting to understand whether collaborative planning practice can be effective in aligning local with regional strategic planning outcomes.

While this research has addressed the key research questions around identification of factors that might facilitate or impede local strategic concerns being aligned with regional strategies, why it might be important that local concerns are reflected in regional

strategies, and has considered the effectiveness of collaborative planning practice in achieving those aims, further research into situated practices of planning is required to understand the potential for transfer of successful collaborative practice to other jurisdictions.

Transfer of approaches will require change in practice. Martens (2013) suggests that communicative planning theory implies a fundamental change in existing modes of governance. Dominant actors will have to be “willing to share their power, organisations willing to change their routine practices of decision-making, people will have to be willing to open their minds to new ways of looking at the world” (Martens, 2013, p.4).

In jurisdictions experiencing ongoing reform of planning systems, in a world some see as essentially an uncollaborative, neoliberal world (Brand and Gaffikin, 2007), the question remains just how much appetite there is for that change to occur.

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Endnotes

ⁱ A feature of the NSW planning system has been regular structural or ‘machinery of government’ changes after each state election and occasionally after a leadership spill in the absence of an election. The state government’s planning agency has changed its name and structure many times in recent decades, and these changes are detailed in Chapter 4: Setting the scene - a brief history. For the purposes of this research I refer to the agency as the Department of Planning.

ⁱⁱ The Greater Vancouver regional district is identified and declared pursuant to Division 6 of the British Columbia *Local Government Act RSBC 2015*. The Greater Sydney Region is identified by map in Schedule 1 of the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Greater Vancouver regional district is identified and declared pursuant to Division 6 of the British Columbia *Local Government Act RSBC 2015*. The Greater Sydney Region is identified by map in Schedule 1 of the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*.

^{iv} Ken Cameron FCIP is a former Manager of Strategic Planning for the Greater Vancouver Regional District (now known as Metro Vancouver).

^v There are 40 Metro Vancouver Board members on the 2020 Board. Board members are elected representatives from the 23 member municipalities. Chapter 5 describes how the Board is populated.

^{vi} The 23 members of Metro Vancouver include twenty one municipalities, one Electoral Area and one Treaty First Nation, referred to here as 23 local government areas. All 23 members nominate Directors to the Board either through direct election or by another system of voting.

^{vii} The Vancouver Charter is a Provincial statute that serves to incorporate the City of Vancouver as a local government area. It was passed in 1953 and provides the City with similar and additional powers to other municipalities incorporated under the BCLG Act.

^{viii} This was also the beginning of a close relationship in Australia and NSW between the need to provide housing for a rapidly growing population, and the planning legislation of the day. This has been reinforced in recent years with one of the key stated functions of the NSW Department of Planning and the planning system being to provide an adequate supply of affordable housing.

^{ix} The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) is the peak intergovernmental forum in Australia

^x In NSW Community Strategic Plans are prepared as one component of an “Integrated Planning and Reporting” regime established by the *Local Government Act 1993*. The principal legislation guiding land use planning is the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979*.

^{xi} Rob Stokes was Planning Minister from April 2015 until January 2017, and Minister for Planning and Public Spaces from April 2019 to date of submission of this thesis.

^{xii} mostly on a financial fitness basis via a formula developed by KPMG

^{xiii} initially a Greater Sydney Authority

^{xiv} The 38 Board members are Mayors and Councillors of the 23 member municipalities of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). The number of Board members for each municipality varies according to population.

^{xv} The 23 members of Metro Vancouver include twenty one municipalities, one Electoral Area and one Treaty First Nation, referred to here as 23 local government areas. All 23 members nominate Directors to the Board either through direct election or by another system of voting or by Mayoral appointment.

^{xvi} Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015, Division 2, clause 9(c)

^{xvii} One of the principal objectives of the Commission under the *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015*, Division 2, Clause 9(a)

^{xviii} Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, an organisation with voluntary council membership.

^{xix} LS4 was a council Planning Director and Deputy General Manager at one Sydney Council, and then General Manager at a newly amalgamated Sydney Council over the time-frame of this research. His experience spanned the preparation of two regional strategies and the establishment of the Greater Sydney Commission

and he had strong views on power and power relationships in the NSW planning system. He is quoted quite heavily in this regard.

^{xx} UrbanGrowth was the NSW Government's development arm. It was abolished in 2018 with its functions distributed to other State owned corporations, Landcom and Infrastructure NSW

^{xxi} VPAs are 'Voluntary Planning Agreements' enabled by the NSW *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, similar to Vancouver's 'Community Amenity Contributions', where developers pay an agreed development contribution for (usually) more development than current controls allow. When the State takes over Priority Precincts in NSW, it collects these contributions instead of the relevant local council.

^{xxii} Complying development is a fast-tracked approval process, established through a State Government Planning Policy, that over-rides local planning controls and decisions and allows certain development to proceed without community consultation and the opportunity to object.