REGIONAL GOVERNANCE: LOWER MAINLAND, BC

Evolution of Key Institutions for Local and Regional Governance
(Whistler to Vancouver to Hope)

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"Symposium on Regional Governance in the Vancouver Region"

December 2009
Victoria, BC

(Tri-RD) Institutional Inventory

TYPE	COUNT
Municipal governments:	30
First nation governments:	12
Regional districts (combined pop. 2.4 million):	3
Functional regional / sub-regional entities:	(36)
• Regional Hospital Districts	2
• Statutory regional entities (utilities, TransLink, E-Comm)	4
• Regional transit systems (by BC Transit)	4
• Regional library entities	2
• Islands Trust (Trust divisions operating in the region)	2
• Regional economic development entities	1
• School Districts	15
• Regional agricultural land panels (operated by ALC)	1
• Port / international airport authorities	3
• Regional health authorities (operating in the region)	2

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First Hundred Years...
A Typical Story

Territorial Organization	Rescaling

■ Initially very localized territorial organization
 	
■ Municipal sector :
    ■ Cities
    ■ Districts
 	
■ Schools / hospitals also very localized
	■ In the municipal sector:
	    ■ Mergers and demergers
	    ■ Functional regionalism (from about 1910)
	    ■ Devolution (eg, ports)
	■ In other sectors:
	    ■ Schools – 1940's
	    ■ Health regions – 1990's

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Next Fifty Years...
A Story Made-in-BC

- Since 1960: a unique, made-in-BC story
- Federated regional districts (by 1968):
  - 28 RD's cover BC, include all municipalities
  - 5 RD's for the whole Vancouver region
- Unique model, remarkably adaptable:
  - Not forced... instead, "*gentle imposition*"
  - Self-organizing... "*empty vessels*" designed to adapt to each region's needs

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Regional Government Institutions (Since 1965)

- **In the Vancouver region:**
  - Institutional consolidation / separation co-exist
  - Nothing has proven to be beyond change
- **Change in governmental institutions:**
  - Rationalization of <u>boundaries</u>: rescaling (eg, merger of Abbotsford/Matsqui, merger to create FVRD)
  - Rationalization of <u>functions</u> : who does what? (eg, agricultural land, air quality, regional planning)

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Scan of Broader Regional Governance Institutions

- **Transit**:
  - TransLink... from private to public; from provincial to regional to "hybrid"
  - BC Transit... provincial corporation
- **Agricultural land**:
  - Regional to provincial to regionally-based panel
- **E-Comm**:
  - New institution, old model (autonomous)
- **Metro Vancouver Commerce**:
  - New institution, new model (self-organized)

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Institutional Architecture: Lower Mainland Experience

- **Institutional design tensions**:
  - Power vs persuasion
  - Expertise vs representation
  - Effectiveness vs legitimacy
- **Tensions in system architecture**:
  - Simplicity vs complexity
  - Provincial vs regional

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Regional Governance – A Perfectly Imperfect Box

- **Lower Mainland experience**:
  - RD's have made a vital contribution
  - Yet many other regional bodies remain
  - Past 40 years – constant change/innovation
- **Regional space**:
  - Variable, messy, complex, dynamic
  - Composed of multiple, overlapping institutions
  - Need for strong vertical/horizontal connections

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