

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: November 8, 2021

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Greg Newman, Acting Director, Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Review of Metro Vancouver’s Draft Regional Growth Plan (Metro 2050)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the corporate report, titled “Review of Metro Vancouver’s Draft Regional Growth Plan (Metro 2050)” for consideration, and pass the following resolution:

“That the report titled Review of Metro Vancouver’s Draft Regional Growth Plan (Metro 2050) containing the City of White Rock’s comments on the July 2021 version of Metro 2050, the draft regional growth strategy, be forwarded to the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors for consideration.”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City staff have undertaken a review of “Metro 2050,” being a growth plan (the “Plan”) prepared by Metro Vancouver, the body and corporate entity which provides planning services to the region. Appendix A to this report includes several general comments on the Plan. Staff recommend that these comments be provided to Metro Vancouver along with a formal resolution of Council endorsing the comments. A second resolution will be required once Metro 2050 is adopted by the regional Board of Directors. Once the regional growth plan is adopted, the City of White Rock’s Regional Context Statement, located within the Official Community Plan, must be updated; the *Local Government Act* requires that the Regional Context Statement be updated within two years of the adoption of the regional growth plan (Metro 2050).

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not Applicable.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Metro Vancouver is the political body and corporate entity established under provincial legislation as a ‘regional district.’ The district itself is made up of 21 municipalities, one Electoral Area and one Treaty First Nation. Metro Vancouver (‘Metro’) provides regional-scale services to those within its jurisdiction. These services, where not provided locally, include wastewater treatment, solid waste management, and drinking water. Metro also plays a pivotal role in helping to manage urban growth and a regional parks system, provide affordable housing, and regulate air quality. The regional district is governed by a board of directors made up of elected officials from each local authority.

In 2019, Metro Vancouver began a review of its regional growth strategy, titled "Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future." The strategy establishes a vision for progressively managing growth considering diverse and affordable housing, transit and mobility, resilient employment, healthy ecosystems, secure agricultural lands, the impacts of climate change and other matters. The updated (draft) regional growth strategy, titled "Metro 2050" was released for comments in June, 2021. The strategy is largely structured around five key goals including:

1. Create a Compact Urban Area
2. Support a Sustainable Economy
3. Protect the Environment and Respond to Climate Change and Natural Hazards
4. Provide Diverse and Affordable Housing Choices
5. Support Sustainable Transportation Choices

On October 4, 2021, Metro hosted a digital open house to enable White Rock residents to learn more about Metro 2050 and to ask questions of Metro staff. Following the open house, Metro staff attended a meeting of Council to present the regional growth strategy. Over the past month, City staff have been reviewing Metro 2050 to identify topics and policy directives that may affect land use and development activities in White Rock. Appendix A to this report identifies specific policies within the draft strategy that staff believe to be of particular interest to White Rock. Where a policy is identified, staff have offered commentary for Council's endorsement, or revision. This report recommends that the commentary provided herein be circulated to Metro Vancouver's Board of Directors for consideration. The deadline for providing comments on the draft regional growth plan is November 26, 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* establishes the legal framework for the preparation, scope (contents), and implementation of "regional growth strategies." The Act requires that affected local governments accept the regional growth strategy by way of a resolution. Currently, Metro Vancouver is seeking comments on the draft strategy by way of Council resolution. A subsequent resolution providing support for the final draft of the strategy will be sought later. While there are no immediate legal implications as it relates to commenting on the draft strategy, the City will eventually be required to update the "Regional Context Statement," included in its Official Community Plan (OCP) once Metro 2050 is adopted. Note that Section 446 of the *Local Government Act* requires that municipalities update their regional context statement, through OCP amendment, within two years of the adoption of the regional strategy.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The regional growth strategy is being prepared by Metro Vancouver. Over the past two years Metro has undertaken a series of community engagement events to solicit feedback on draft versions of Metro 2050. The project webpage for this undertaking ([Metro 2050](#)) includes a detailed breakdown of the engagement work undertaken.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Strategy 3.4 within Metro 2050 includes a series of policy directives aimed at combating the causes of, and impacts resulting from, climate change. Staff believe that Metro Vancouver will serve as an important resource in assisting local governments with the evaluation of natural hazards that may become more prevalent due to climate change (e.g., sea level rise, slope instability, etc.). Furthermore, the strategies within Metro 2050 recognize the role that the region can play in advocating to the province and federal governments for improved legislation and guidelines that will aid in matters such as flood hazard management, improved building codes and standards, modernized emergency preparedness, and funding to assist local governments in planning for climate change impacts.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TREE PRESERVATION AND TREE CANOPY ENHANCEMENT

There are several strategies and policy directives within Metro 2050 that encourage an increase to the overall tree canopy within the region. While staff support such directives, consideration should be given to the unique composition of each local government as the capacity to support increases to the canopy are partly dependent on the availability of lands to support tree planting. It may be unrealistic to think that White Rock, for example, will be able to increase the proportion of its tree canopy to the same degree as less urban jurisdictions such as the Township of Langley and Electoral District A. Staff do believe, however, that there is merit to setting regional-level goals for tree canopy increase.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The over-arching objectives of Metro 2050 are aligned with many of Council's strategic priorities and efforts to provide White Rock citizens with a high quality of life. These include policy directives focused on nurturing the environment, efforts to protect humans from natural hazards, measures to promote transit use, and initiatives to help address climate change. Throughout Metro 2050, the regional district also recognizes the role they can play in advocating to higher levels of government for supports, particularly as they relate to legislative controls, funding, and technical resources. Council may wish to leverage these supports due to resourcing limitations inevitable in a smaller jurisdiction.

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The following alternate options are available to Council:

1. Direct staff to modify the comments in Appendix A prior to sending comments to Metro.
2. Direct staff not to provide comments on the regional growth plan.

CONCLUSION

City staff have undertaken a review of Metro 2050, being the growth plan for the region. The comments presented in Appendix A recognize several policies of the Plan which relate to local, White Rock interest. Overall, staff believe Metro 2050 to be a well-established plan for the

region and recommend that Council provide a resolution offering the comments as presented in this corporate report.

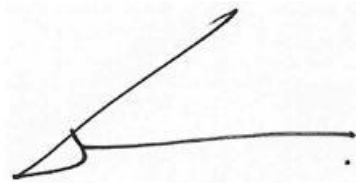
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Newman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Greg Newman, MCIP, RPP
Acting Director, Planning and Development Services

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.

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Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix A: Comments on Regional Growth Plan "Metro 2050"