



November 25, 2021
Our File: 13-6440-01/000/2021-1
Doc #: 4264126.v1

Chris Plagnol, Corporate Officer / Director Board and Information Services
Metro Vancouver
4330 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4G8

VIA EMAIL: chris.plagnol@metrovancover.org

Dear Mr. Plagnol:

RE: City of Coquitlam Comments on Draft Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy

Please be advised that at the November 22, 2021 Regular Meeting of Council for the City of Coquitlam the following resolution was adopted:

That Council forward the report of the General Manager Planning and Development dated November 12, 2021 and entitled “City of Coquitlam Comments on Draft Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy” to the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board of Directors for consideration, with copies to member municipalities, expressing the City of Coquitlam’s concerns, including the overly prescriptive targets and language, inadequate timelines for review, and the need to increase support for office growth in Urban Centres rather than only focused on the Metropolitan core.

Please find enclosed a copy of the report of the General Manager Planning and Development dated November 12, 2021 entitled “City of Coquitlam Comments on Draft Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy”.

Should you have any questions or require further information with respect to this matter please contact me directly at 604-927-3016 or slam@coquitlam.ca.

Yours truly,

Stephanie Lam
Legislative Services Manager

City of Coquitlam
3000 Guildford Way
Coquitlam, BC Canada V3B 7N2
Reception Desk: 604-927-3000

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File #: 09-3710-01/000/2021-1 Doc #: 4264126.v1

November 12, 2021

Our File: 13-6440-01/000/2021-1

Doc #: 4230494.v2

To: City Manager

From: General Manager Planning and Development

Subject: **City of Coquitlam Comments on Draft Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy**

For: **Council**

Recommendation:

That Council forward the report of the General Manager Planning and Development dated November 12, 2021 and entitled "City of Coquitlam Comments on Draft Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy" to the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board of Directors for consideration, expressing the City of Coquitlam's concerns, including the overly prescriptive targets and language, inadequate timelines for review, and the need to increase support for office growth in Urban Centres rather than only focused on the Metropolitan core.

Report Purpose:

This report seeks Council endorsement to provide official comments from the City of Coquitlam to Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) in regards to the draft *Metro 2050* regional growth strategy as part of the official comment period.

Strategic Goal:

The ongoing collaboration with MVRD and fellow member jurisdictions in the development of *Metro 2050* supports the strategic goal of 'Excellence in City Governance'.

Background:

MVRD has been undertaking a review of the current *Metro 2040* regional growth strategy. This update, known as *Metro 2050*, began in 2019 and anticipates completion in 2022. The regional growth strategy provides a long-term vision and set of goals guiding changes across the region between now and 2050. The *Metro 2050* update to the regional growth strategy represents a continuation of planning which dates back to the Livable Region Strategic Plan of the 1990s.

Since the beginning of the *Metro 2050* update process, MVRD, Coquitlam and other municipalities and stakeholders have assessed the existing regional growth strategy, conducted policy reviews, and updated growth projections through MVRD's staff-level Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Regional Planning Committee for elected officials.

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The structure of *Metro 2050* is significantly similar to the current regional growth strategy, including a vision and five goals. Each goal has subsidiary strategies and policy actions to guide MVRD, TransLink, and member jurisdictions, like Coquitlam.

The draft *Metro 2050* update was issued by the MVRD Board for comment at the end of June. MVRD has also sent two delegations to Coquitlam to present and discuss the *Metro 2050* update directly with Council. The first delegation was on May 17, 2021, while the second was on November 1, 2021.

Discussion/Analysis:

Staff have undertaken a thorough and interdepartmental review of the draft *Metro 2050* update to the regional growth strategy. In addition to the staff review, Council has had two opportunities to relay comments, concerns and questions to MVRD delegations presenting to Council-in-Committee. This feedback has been collected in detail in Attachment 1, and is summarized in this section:

- Regional employment remains concentrated within Vancouver's metro core, meaning longer, more congested, and more polluting commutes for many residents. Measures in *Metro 2050* should more directly support new jobs in urban centres, such as Coquitlam, through policy, advocacy, and investment in infrastructure and services.
- Coquitlam accommodates a high share of regional growth and is expected to continue to do so in the future. The high growth rate may be an obstacle to achieving other *Metro 2050* goals, like increasing tree canopy coverage or lands protected for nature, and additional supports and flexibility should be extended to Coquitlam and other high growth cities.
- The *Metro 2050* update includes a number of challenging regional targets, such as 15% affordable rental housing in certain growth areas and 40% tree canopy coverage within the Urban Containment Boundary. There is concern about how these targets were derived and tested, as well as questions of feasibility, flexibility, and local geographic distinctions.
- The Province issued the "Opening Doors: Unlocking Housing Supply for Affordability" report in summer 2021. This report, generally supported by Coquitlam, includes a goal of increasing housing supply for the region. There is concern that some *Metro 2050* policy actions may inadvertently work against the goals of this report, and should be assessed with this in mind.
- A number of the strategies and policy actions within *Metro 2050* are highly detailed and directive. Given the long-term, regional nature of the document, it may be appropriate to scale back certain details and allow for greater flexibility at the municipal level, recognizing that local government is better suited to flesh out the details within their own communities.

- The overall timeline to review and provide commentary on the draft *Metro 2050* update is challenging, with only five months available to coordinate feedback across the City and region. Coquitlam supports taking additional time to enable fuller review of this important document which will set regional direction for the coming decades.

Finally, based on staff level discussions between the City and MVRD, a series of minor notes on *Metro 2050* will be provided separately. This is intended to give the more significant comments noted above more prominence and enable more efficient workflows. The minor comments pertain to matters such as typographical errors, clarification of terms and metrics, and simplifying language.

Next Steps:

Subject to Council support of the recommendation in this report, staff will provide formal comments from the City of Coquitlam on the draft *Metro 2050* update to the regional growth strategy to the MVRD Board ahead of the November 26, 2021 deadline for public comments.

Following receipt of public comments, MVRD staff will assess the feedback and the timeline. Subsequent revisions to *Metro 2050* would occur prior to consideration of the document by the MVRD Board at a first and second reading and a public hearing in early 2022. Member jurisdictions, including local municipalities like Coquitlam, would then need to adopt the regional growth strategy update prior to the final adoption by the MVRD Board, expected by summer 2022.

Future work items following final approval and adoption of *Metro 2050* would include collaboration with MVRD and regional partners on Implementation Guidelines and an update of the City of Coquitlam's Regional Context Statement to reflect *Metro 2050*.

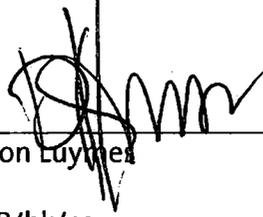
Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial impacts related to this report. Following anticipated adoption of *Metro 2050*, Community Planning staff resources will be need to be allocated to support the update to the City's Regional Context Statement, which will be accommodated within the annual operating budget.

Conclusion:

Providing formal feedback from the City of Coquitlam on *Metro 2050* is an important step in ensuring our voice is heard at the regional level. It supports Coquitlam's ongoing involvement in regional planning and collaboration with other partners within the MVRD federation and supplements past advice and discussion from both City Council and staff

that has occurred throughout the process. Coquitlam staff will continue to liaise and work with MVRD through subsequent steps to update and implement the regional growth strategy.



Don Luyten

ZB/bk/ce

Attachment:

1. City of Coquitlam *Metro 2050* Feedback (Doc# 4246806)

This report was prepared by Zak Bennett, Senior Planner, and reviewed by Genevieve Bucher, Director Community Planning.

ATTACHMENT 1

November XX, 2021

Our File: 13-6440-00/08-001/1

Doc #: 4246806.v1

Heather McNell, General Manager, Housing and Regional Planning
Metro Vancouver
4330 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4G8

VIA EMAIL: heather.mcnell@metrovancover.org

Dear Ms. McNell:

RE: City of Coquitlam Metro 2050 Feedback

The City of Coquitlam would like to express its thanks to you and your team for the ongoing opportunity to engage and provide feedback on the draft *Metro 2050* update to the regional growth strategy. In addition to the staff-level conversations that have been occurring throughout the process, Metro Vancouver has also provided direct engagement with our city Council through delegations to the May 17 and November 1, 2021, Council-in-Committee meetings.

We are encouraged by the commitments to listen and respond to the comments and concerns of member jurisdictions such as ourselves. This is reflected in changes made between the previous and current draft *Metro 2050*. In that same spirit, this letter provides official feedback from the City of Coquitlam, approved by Council resolution at the November 22, 2021. We look forward to continued collaboration and are available for further discussions through the next steps of the *Metro 2050* process and subsequent implementation efforts.

Staff have identified the following feedback to-date:

- The continued concentration of employment in the Metropolitan Core increasingly means longer commutes, more congestion, and higher levels of air pollution. This works against other goals identified in *Metro 2050*. Language within the regional growth strategy (For instance, 1.2.1, 1.2.16, and 1.3.6) should more aggressively support employment in other Urban Centres in the region in tandem with supporting community services and amenities. This would enable more efficient usage of transportation and other infrastructure in support of regional goals.
- Coquitlam has been and is expected to remain a city of high population growth in the regional growth strategy, as the Tri-Cities are again expected to accommodate a large population increase (Table 1). While Coquitlam is supportive of planning and accommodating a higher share of regional growth, policies in *Metro 2050* should include additional recognition, flexibility and supports for Coquitlam and similar municipalities who take the brunt of regional growth.

- The 15% regional affordable rental housing target (4.2.3) within Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas should be reframed to better reflect the challenges and economics underlying the target. Current development within Coquitlam adjacent to the Evergreen Line can achieve this mark, however there may be potential burdens on some local governments with existing area plans. Further, it is unclear if the 15% target has been tested for economic viability or how this will be measured over time. The policy, and concomitant advocacy from Metro Vancouver to the federal and provincial governments, should explicitly recognize that additional supports from senior governments may be necessary to achieve this target.
- The 40% regional tree canopy coverage target (3.2.1 b) within the Urban Containment Boundary is an area of concern. Local conditions vary significantly across the region, including geographic size, presence of significant parks and green space, and anticipated growth. Coquitlam is expecting above-average population growth which may impact its ability to contribute to the 40% canopy target. The policy should acknowledge that local context and achieving other regional goals may conflict with the tree canopy target. Further, additional testing of this target should occur prior to its adoption to measure feasibility.
- Provincial government released the “Opening Doors: Unlocking Housing Supply for Affordability” report in summer 2021. On the whole, Coquitlam supports increasing housing supply as one means to improve affordability. *Metro 2050* policies should be reviewed to ensure that they don’t lead to inadvertent conflicts with the “Opening Doors” recommendations.
- Some policy actions are highly detailed and directive, particularly in consideration of *Metro 2050* as a long-term regional document. We suggest that it is more appropriate that these areas are vested with local governments, who are best equipped to know and determine local needs and context. Examples include requiring communities to identify strategies to increase community acceptance of different housing types (4.3.7 b), increasing social connectedness (4.1.8 c. vi) or high-quality urban design (4.1.8 c vii). With respect to these directions, wording should be softened to “consider” or “explore” in lieu of “require” or similar language.
- The tight timeline of the *Metro 2050* process makes detailed and meaningful review by member jurisdictions challenging. There is also a risk that revisions stemming from the five month public comment period will be difficult for Metro Vancouver staff to accommodate in the coming months. Coquitlam encourages Metro Vancouver to take sufficient time to review and revise inputs on the *Metro 2050* regional growth strategy update, even if this means a delay to the anticipated adoption of the *Metro 2050* update in early 2022. The regional significance of the document means timing is a crucial consideration.

Additional minor comments inclusive of editorial notes, simplifying language, clarifying performance monitoring metrics, and definition of terms have been provided directly to Metro Vancouver staff. For brevity and clarity, they are omitted from this letter.

Coquitlam staff are available to discuss any of the aforementioned feedback or process. Should you have any questions or require further information with respect to this matter please contact Genevieve Bucher, Director of Community Planning at 604-927-3490 or gbucher@coquitlam.ca.

Yours truly,



Don Luymes
General Manager, Planning and Development

cc – Mayor and Council
Peter Steblin, City Manager
Raul Allueva, Deputy City Manager
Jerry Dobrovolny, Commissioner / CAO Metro Vancouver
Sean Galloway, Director of Regional Planning Metro Vancouver