

THE CORPORATION OF THE  
**CITY OF WHITE ROCK**  
CORPORATE REPORT



**DATE:** June 13, 2022

**TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Anne Berry, Director, Planning and Development Services

**SUBJECT:** Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

THAT Council:

1. Receives for information the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy, titled “Metro 2050 (Metro Vancouver Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1339, 2022),”;
  2. Accepts, as presented, the proposed Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy (Metro Vancouver Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1339, 2022) pursuant to section 436 of the *Local Government Act*; and
  3. Directs staff to forward the Council resolution of acceptance of Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy (Metro Vancouver Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1339, 2022) to Metro Vancouver Regional District.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

City staff have undertaken a review of “Metro 2050,” a growth plan (the “Plan”) prepared by Metro Vancouver. The *Metro Vancouver Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1339, 2022*, was given first and second readings by the Metro Vancouver Board on March 25, 2022. A public hearing was held on April 20, 2022. At its meeting on April 29, 2022, the Metro Vancouver Board resolved to refer *Bylaw No. 1339, 2022*, to all affected local governments (signatories) for acceptance.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION**

<b>Motion # &amp; Meeting Date</b>	<b>Motion Details</b>
2021-433 November 9, 2021	It was MOVED and SECONDED 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.”

## **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

Metro Vancouver is the political body and corporate entity which provides planning services to the region. It is established under provincial legislation as a ‘regional district.’ It is a federation of 21 municipalities, one Electoral Area and one Treaty First Nation, working collaboratively in planning and providing vital utility and local government services to about 2.75M residents. Essential services include the provision of drinking water, sewage treatment, and solid waste disposal, along with regional services like parks, affordable housing, land use planning, and air quality management. A board of directors governs the regional district, consisting of elected officials from each local authority.

Metro Vancouver has been working closely with member jurisdictions, local First Nations, and other agencies and organizations over the past three years to review and update the regional growth strategy for Metro 2050. 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 primarily structured around five key goals, including:

- Create a Compact Urban Area
- Support a Sustainable Economy
- Protect the Environment and Respond to Climate Change and Natural Hazards
- Provide Diverse and Affordable Housing Choices
- 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 ask Metro staff questions. Following the open house, Metro staff attended a meeting of Council to present the regional growth strategy. City staff reviewed Metro 2050 to identify topics and policy directives that may affect land use and development activities in White Rock and presented these comments to Council at the November 9, 2021, meeting for endorsement or revision. Metro is now looking for a resolution of support from its members.

Local governments must accept the regional growth strategy by way of a council resolution submitted to Metro Vancouver and within 60 days of receipt of notice (received May 3, 2022). The *Local Government Act* affirms that if an affected local government fails to act within the period for acceptance, it is deemed to have accepted the regional growth strategy.

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).

Staff comments on the plan were presented to Council at the November 9, 2021, meeting and Council resolved to send them to Metro Vancouver staff for review. Staff have provided a summary of the comments received from Metro Vancouver in response to the City of White Rocks comments (Attachment A).

## **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 through a resolution, prior to third reading and adoption of the bylaw. 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 adopting the regional strategy.

### **COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

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. In addition, on October 4, 2021, Metro hosted a digital open house to enable White Rock residents to learn more about Metro 2050 and ask questions of Metro staff.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

Strategy 3.4 within Metro 2050 includes a series of policy directives to combat the causes of, and impacts resulting from, climate change. Staff believe that Metro Vancouver will serve as an essential resource in assisting local governments in evaluating 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 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**

Several strategies and policy directives within Metro 2050 encourage an increase in 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 noted this in the comments sent to Metro Vancouver. However, staff do believe 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 their role in advocating to higher levels of government for support, 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:

Direct staff to inform Metro Vancouver that the City of White Rock does not support Metro 2050. If an affected local government does not accept the regional growth strategy, it must indicate by way of a resolution within the sixty (60) day period:

1. the provision(s) to which it objects,
2. the reasons for its objection, and
3. whether it is willing that a provision to which it objects to be included in the regional growth strategy on the basis that the provision will not apply to its jurisdiction.

### **CONCLUSION**

City staff provided Metro Vancouver staff with comments related to Metro 2050, following Council direction in November 2021. These responses are presented in Appendix A. Most of White Rock's comments were not about the Metro 2050 text itself but related to implementation issues. For this reason, no changes were made to the Metro 2050 text as a direct result of White Rock's comments. However, Metro Vancouver staff did provide a response to each comment (Appendix A). Overall, staff believe Metro 2050 to be a well-established plan for the region and recommend that Council provide a resolution indicating acceptance of Metro 2050, as presented in this corporate report.

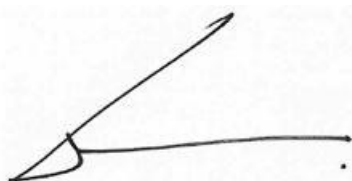
Respectfully submitted,



Anne Berry,  
Director, Planning and Development Services

### **Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer**

I concur with the recommendations of this corporate report.



Guillermo Ferrero  
Chief Administrative Officer