About Metro 2050

Metro Vancouver is updating Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future (Metro 2040), the regional growth strategy. Since its adoption in 2011, Metro 2040 has been a strong and effective tool representing the regional federation’s collective vision for livability and managing growth anticipated to come to our region over the long term.

Having a regional growth strategy allows Metro Vancouver and member jurisdictions to prevent urban sprawl by focusing growth (i.e., new homes and new jobs) in transit-oriented locations to support the development of livable neighbourhoods, with a range of housing, jobs, and amenities. The strategy also protects the region’s vital agricultural, ecologically important, and industrial lands. These efforts support the provision of affordable housing, a diverse economy, and mobility for all, and they help prepare the region for the impacts of climate change.

Metro 2040 was co-created and supported by all municipalities in the region, Tsawwassen First Nation, TransLink, adjacent regional districts, and the Metro Vancouver Board. The direction provided by the strategy recognizes the region’s collective vision for the future and the importance of cooperation among member jurisdictions to create that future together.

The regional growth strategy is being updated. Though many of the goals, actions, and tools that are working well in Metro 2040 will remain unchanged, updates will extend the strategy to the year 2050 and allow the region to better respond to critical and emerging issues such as climate change, social equity, resilience, and housing affordability. Updates will also align the strategy with Transport 2050 (TransLink’s new regional transportation strategy) and implement policy improvements in a number of areas. The updated strategy, anticipated to be completed in 2022, will be called Metro 2050.

Policy Review Summaries

Content for Metro 2050 is being developed through a series of 11 themed Policy Reviews scoped to address specific policy topics in the regional growth strategy like Agriculture or the Environment. Each Policy Review is looking at the current policies in Metro 2040 related to the topic area, identifying gaps and opportunities, engaging with stakeholders and others, and developing policy recommendations to be integrated into Metro 2050. Upon completion of the Policy Reviews, Metro Vancouver is producing Policy Review Summaries to support a broad understanding by decision makers and interested stakeholders of the issues and updates proposed that will guide the drafting of amended and new policy directions for each topic area in Metro 2050.
Complete Communities

Metro 2040 defines complete communities as those that are walkable, mixed use, and transit-oriented, and which foster a variety of jobs and social, cultural, educational, and recreational amenities for people in all stages of life.

While the development of complete communities is primarily a role for member jurisdictions, Metro Vancouver supports that work with data collection, policy research, a forum for information sharing and capacity building, and a collaborative regional policy framework.

Since the adoption of Metro 2040 in 2011, three key Complete Communities policy issues have been identified:

- **Social Inequity**: Growing social inequities (recently exacerbated by the pandemic) have increased the need for community and social services, and a heightening awareness of inequity has led to more calls for inclusive engagement in planning and land use decision-making.

- **An Aging Population**: Demand for seniors’ services and universal accessibility, which helps residents maintain mobility and social connections in their communities as they age, has grown in recent years.

- **Physical and Mental Health**: Increasing physical and mental health challenges and an expanding recognition of how the built environment affects health and wellness (including cultural or social isolation and loneliness), is highlighting the need to better address the social determinants of health in designing and building communities.

Updates to the Complete Communities policies of Metro 2040 will better support member jurisdictions and reflect the priorities, address inequities and health challenges, and enable a shared understanding across the region that benefits all residents.
Recommendation #1: Clarify the definition of ‘complete community’

Currently, some member jurisdictions see the concept of ‘complete communities’ as one that does not apply to them, particularly if they contain mostly suburban or rural areas.

The recommendation to update and clarify the definition of what elements contribute to a complete community will support a broader, shared understanding, creating a spectrum of ‘community completeness’ from which all member jurisdictions can apply elements in their unique local context. This will support the region-wide promotion of the concept.

Recommendation #2: Reflect critical priorities

A number of priorities have increased in urgency since Metro 2040 was adopted, including the impacts of climate change, the need for resilience, social inequities, health outcomes and the built environment, an aging population, and the provision of adequate childcare.

The recommendation suggests addressing these priorities through new or revised policies for complete communities, especially in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas.
Recommendation #3: Introduce new performance measures

Metro 2040 has only one performance measure for complete communities: i.e. walkability. Outcomes that are not measured are difficult to monitor and assess. New performance measures are needed to first establish a baseline, and then track performance over time to ensure that community services and amenities are provided to all residents, especially those who are currently underserved.

The recommendation introduces performance measures to monitor equitable access to community services and amenities that support complete communities, such as public spaces and access to local food and childcare.

Recommendation #4: Encourage health impact and social needs assessments

The full health and social impacts of growth and development are not easily understood. New growth can overwhelm existing amenities and/or create inequalities.

The recommendation encourages member jurisdictions to prepare health impact and social needs assessments as part of new local area or neighbourhood plans. This will ensure that the need for sufficient community services and amenities is considered early in a planning process, with a view to mitigating the negative impacts on local services, amenities, and community health that can come from new growth.

Recommendation #5: Encourage urban design that supports all residents

Residents in the region are experiencing physical and mental health challenges with more frequency and severity than ever before. Better urban and community design can help address these challenges and improve livability. Urban design can support social connections, improve accessibility, and respond to the needs of children, seniors, and those experiencing health challenges.

The recommendation encourages urban design considerations that support all residents in the region. This will ensure that the built form of communities encourages social connections, supports an aging population, promotes safety, and facilitates mobility for everyone, unique to the local context.

REGIONAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The recommended changes align with Metro 2040’s established core regional planning principles to:

- Put growth in the right places (centres and corridors)
- Protect important lands (agricultural, ecologically important, industrial)
- Support complete communities
- Create diverse and affordable housing, better mobility, and a prosperous economy
- Enable efficient urban infrastructure (utilities, transit).

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Member jurisdictions have had opportunities to provide feedback on these recommendations through Metro Vancouver’s Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Regional Planning Committee, and Board. Member jurisdictions may submit questions or request a presentation from Metro Vancouver staff by sending an email to regionalplanning@metrovancouver.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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