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.
The provision and maintenance of diverse and affordable housing choices is critical to the livability of the region and the quality of life of its residents. To address this challenge, the provision of housing in each member jurisdiction needs to align with the projected needs of future populations and work towards implementing the growth framework set out in the regional growth strategy.

Since the adoption of Metro 2040 in 2011, the housing policy landscape has changed significantly. There are a number of critical issues that are being addressed in Metro 2050 including: the introduction of new provincial and federal housing plans and programs, new policy tools for local governments, a growing and evolving population, emerging tenant protections, the increasing costs and barriers to building affordable housing, increasing rates of homelessness, and overall heightened public concern around housing.

WHAT’S CHANGING

The following changes to housing policies are recommended:

1. Create a stand-alone housing goal area in Metro 2050
2. Expand the regional growth strategy’s housing role with a focus on new transit-oriented housing
3. Introduce a regional definition of ‘housing affordability’
4. Introduce comprehensive requirements for the adoption of Housing Action Plans
5. Add new housing performance measures and regular monitoring
6. Reference the Metro Vancouver Housing 10-Year Plan
7. Apply a social equity lens to the housing policy framework
8. Address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards

BENEFITS

These changes will provide the following benefits:

- Draws greater attention to the importance of housing as a key component of growth management in the region
- Establishes region-wide objectives for increasing housing supply, diversity, and affordability
- Creates a clear definition of housing affordability for use in the regional growth strategy
- Ensures that local housing policy decisions and implementation are based on the most recent data and are monitored
- Supports the development of socially-equitable housing policies to guide regional growth
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with housing
- Manages the impacts of natural hazards on communities
Recommendation #1: Create a stand-alone housing goal area in Metro 2050

Strategy 4.1 of Metro 2040 (Provide diverse and affordable housing choices) is embedded in Goal 4 (Develop Complete Communities). The scale of the issue and the complexity of the policy framework needed to address housing within the region requires a dedicated section within the regional growth strategy.

Recommendation #2: Expand the regional growth strategy’s housing role with a focus on new transit-oriented housing

With the evolution of housing policies, programs, and funding at all levels of government, many of the actions of Metro 2040’s strategies have been accomplished or superseded. The update to the regional growth strategy offers an opportunity to establish new region-wide objectives for increasing housing supply, diversity, and affordability.

The recommendation seeks to expand the role of the regional growth strategy in support of housing-related objectives. For example, introducing a requirement that member jurisdictions develop and implement community-specific affordable housing targets in Urban Centres and along major corridors, particularly for rental housing, will support increasing the supply of transit-oriented affordable housing in the region (in alignment with the recommendations of the Transit-Oriented Affordable Housing Study).

Recommendation #3: Introduce a regional definition of ‘housing affordability’

Metro 2040 does not contain a definition of housing affordability.

This recommendation introduces a common definition for housing affordability that can be shared across the region. It will ensure that member jurisdictions are working from a common understanding of the housing supply that is needed in the region.

Recommendation #4: Introduce comprehensive requirements for the adoption of Housing Action Plans

To date, 15 member jurisdictions have or will soon adopt a housing plan or strategy, though some are over 10 years old. As the region looks to the next set of challenges facing housing, there is a need to update these plans.

The recommendation introduces supports for member jurisdictions in preparing Housing Action Plans. For example, requiring that member jurisdictions update Housing Action Plans in alignment with provincially-required Housing Needs Reports, will assist in greater implementation of housing policies at a regional and local level.

Recommendation #5: Add new housing performance measures and regular monitoring

Without adequate performance measures and data, it is difficult to track and report progress on the desired housing outcomes. The recommendation to add performance measures and improve real-time data availability will promote regular monitoring of the implementation of Metro 2050 policies. It will further assist member jurisdictions in the implementation of their respective housing initiatives.

Recommendation #6: Reference the Metro Vancouver Housing 10-Year Plan

Metro Vancouver recently completed the Metro Vancouver Housing 10-Year Plan, which requires associated supportive housing policies in the regional growth strategy for implementation by member jurisdictions.

The recommendation adds a reference to this housing plan to the regional growth strategy including highlighting, in particular, the goal of developing partnerships with member jurisdictions as an effective means to expand affordable housing across the region.

Policies in Metro 2050 that align with the goals of the Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation will ensure that the regional planning and growth management principles not only support local affordable housing planning efforts, but also support the acquisition and redevelopment of Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation sites across the region.
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

Visit metrovancouver.org/metro2050

Recommendation #7: Apply a social equity lens to the housing policy framework

Many Metro Vancouver residents are disproportionately affected by high housing costs and lack of adequate housing. Recognizing the experiences of such groups and reflecting them in Metro 2050 is an opportunity to better consider and incorporate social equity into regional housing policy.

The recommendation creates a housing policy framework that supports the unique housing needs for all groups that live within the region.

Collecting data and identifying inequities, and identifying policies to address these issues, will lead to the introduction of strategies to guide housing growth in the region.

Improving the inclusiveness of policy language also acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equitable communities.

Recommendation #8: Address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards

Buildings generate 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in the region\(^1\), mostly from the fuels used to heat and cool them. As well, the location and design choices associated with new buildings can significantly influence exposures to climate change hazards, such as flooding and wildfire.

Metro 2040 does not include references to the climate impacts of housing and the relationship between energy costs and housing affordability. It also does not address potential climate change mitigation measures and how these might affect housing affordability and development patterns.

The recommendation seeks to incorporate policy language to address the emerging impacts of climate change and natural hazards on existing and future housing stock, as well as the impact of housing stock on greenhouse gas emissions. Housing policies that consider these factors will increase the region’s resilience, accelerate climate action to reduce emissions from housing infrastructure, and better manage the impacts of hazards on communities.

1. Source: Metro Vancouver Emissions Inventory

People have different housing needs. Maintaining a variety of housing stock creates more options and affordability.

\(1\) Source: Metro Vancouver Emissions Inventory