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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

METRO VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE

MEETING

Friday, May 8, 2026
9:00 am
28th Floor Boardroom, 4515 Central Boulevard, Burnaby, British Columbia

REVISED AGENDA

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. May 8, 2026 Meeting Agenda
THAT the Air Quality Committee adopt the revised agenda for its meeting scheduled for May 8, 2026 as circulated.

B. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. April 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes *pg. 6*
THAT the Air Quality Committee adopt the minutes of its meeting held April 10, 2026 as circulated.

C. DELEGATIONS

D. INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Added **1.** **Gillian Fuss, Manager, Emergency Planning Secretariat**
Deborah Carlson, Staff Lawyer, West Coast Environmental Law
Lina Azeez, Habitats Program Director, Watershed Watch Salmon Society
Subject: Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition Joint Statement: Calling on Higher Levels of Government to Recognize the Lower Fraser

E. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province

pg. 10

Report dated April 22, 2026 from Marcin Pachcinski, Division Manager, Electoral Area, Planning and Analytics, Regional Planning and Housing Services.

Executive Summary

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) has sent a request to all regional districts to sign an advocacy letter asking the Province to assume responsibility for orphan dikes and establish a provincial management program. The RDOS also requests that the letter be shared with each regional district's member jurisdictions so that councils can consider signing the letter.

In the information provided, the RDOS notes that there are over 100 orphan dikes across the province that are in a deteriorating condition and that lack an identified owner, diking authority, or long-term maintenance program. It makes the case that the Province should assume responsibility for orphan dikes for the following reasons:

1. Public safety requires a single responsible authority *(for orphan dikes)*
2. Local governments & First Nations cannot shoulder the burden *(for capital costs and engineering expertise associated with the maintenance and upgrade of orphan dikes)*
3. These *(orphan dike)* structures are often on Crown land
4. Provincial risk assessment already identifies the threat *(to orphan dikes from structural deficiencies and natural hazards)*
5. Coordinated provincial stewardship prevents future failures *(by establishing consistent standards and predictable funding and maintenance, which reduces long-term risks and costs).*

There are several dikes on Metro Vancouver Regional Park Land, including one 300m section of orphan dike in Capilano River Regional Park. There is also a dike on Barnston Island in Electoral Area A that, while not orphaned, has faced similar challenges to orphan dikes. Based on the relevance of this issue to Metro Vancouver and the region, staff recommend showing support for this initiative by signing the letter and forwarding the RDOS request to member jurisdictions to enable each member council to consider also signing the letter.

Recommendation

THAT the MVRD Board:

a) request that the Board Chair send an advocacy letter on behalf of the MVRD requesting that the Province assume responsibility for orphan dikes, as described in the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province", and

b) direct staff to forward a copy of the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province" to member jurisdiction staff.

2. BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps *pg. 21*

Report dated April 23, 2026 from Erik Blair, Senior Planner, Regional Climate Action Policy, Air Quality and Climate Action Services and Jason Emmert, Program Manager, Regional Climate Action Policy, Air Quality and Climate Action Services.

Executive Summary

The BC Retrofit Accelerator is a program delivered by the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC) to accelerate energy-efficient, low-carbon retrofits in large buildings with seed funding from Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Innovation Fund (SIF). Metro Vancouver's support enabled ZEIC to establish the BC Retrofit Accelerator from the ground up and to leverage an additional $18 million in diverse external funding. The program provides technical support, retrofit planning, and helps building owners navigate incentives and financing, delivering specialized services at a scale that individual municipalities do not have the capacity to provide, and supporting affordable housing while advancing climate action. Member jurisdictions have been actively involved in ZEIC's suite of programs for many years, including participation in the BC Retrofit Accelerator through advisory committees and program recruitment alongside Metro Vancouver staff. The program is now transitioning to ongoing delivery to 2028.

Project Impact Snapshot (as of the end of 2025):

Between the Retrofit Accelerator's launch to the end of 2025, four sector-specific programs have registered 961 buildings across BC, representing more than 50,000 residential units, with over 50% located in Metro Vancouver. Participants have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 39,500 tonnes to date, with more projects moving toward implementation. This report marks the conclusion of the SIF phase of the project, and outlines opportunities to increase participation and impacts including emissions reduction.

Recommendation

THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 23, 2026, titled "BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps", and direct staff to forward a copy of the report to member jurisdiction staff with an offer of a presentation to Council upon request.

3. Air Quality Warning Program and Wildfire Smoke Preparedness for 2026 *pg. 56*

Report dated April 15, 2026 from Geoff Doerksen, Air Quality Planner, Air Quality and Climate Action Services, and Ken Reid, Superintendent Environmental Sampling and Monitoring, Air Quality and Climate Action Services.

Executive Summary

For over 30 years, Metro Vancouver has operated an air quality warning program in collaboration with health authorities and partners. Metro Vancouver issues air quality warnings to protect public health when regional air quality degrades. New in 2026, air quality warnings will be issued as yellow or orange warnings to improve public understanding of the level of risk, aligning with provincial and federal partners.

The length and intensity of the wildfire season in BC is influenced by rainfall in May and June, along with spring snowpack levels. Average snowpack levels as of April 1 were below normal in BC (92 per cent) and Metro Vancouver's watersheds (55 per cent). Metro Vancouver is experiencing the impacts of a changing climate now, with wildfire smoke and heat waves degrading regional air quality in seven of the last ten summers. This reflects a significant increase in wildfire activity from conditions that dominated much of the past century.

Recommendation

THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 15, 2026, titled "Air Quality Warning Program and Wildfire Smoke Preparedness for 2026".

4. Manager's Report *pg. 66*

Report dated April 20, 2026 from Conor Reynolds, Director, Air Quality and Climate Action Services.

Recommendation

THAT the Air Quality Committee Receive for Information the report date April 20, 2026, titled "Manager's Report".

F. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Draft Solid Waste Management Plan *pg. 70*

G. OTHER BUSINESS

H. RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING

Note: The Committee must state by resolution the basis under section 90 of the Community Charter on which the meeting is being closed. If a member wishes to add an item, the basis must be included below.

I. ADJOURNMENT

THAT the Air Quality Committee adjourn its meeting of May 8, 2026.

Membership:

Chair, Lisa Dominato, Vancouver
Vice Chair, Dennis Marsden, Coquitlam
Belcarra, Jamie Ross
Burnaby, Alison Gu
Electoral Area A, Jen McCutcheon
Langley City, Rosemary Wallace
Langley Township, Tim Baillie
Lions Bay, Ken Berry
Maple Ridge, Judy Dueck
Maple Ridge, Dan Ruimy
Port Moody, Meghan Lahti
Richmond, Bill McNulty
Surrey, Doug Elford
West Vancouver, Linda Watt

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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

METRO VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT
AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE

MEETING

Friday, April 10, 2026
9:02 am
28th Floor Committee Room, 4515 Central Boulevard, Burnaby, British Columbia

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Chair, Lisa Dominato, Vancouver
Vice Chair, Dennis Marsden, Coquitlam* (arrived at 9:05 am)
Belcarra, Jamie Ross
Burnaby, Alison Gu
Electoral Area A, Jen McCutcheon* (departed at 9:56 am)
Langley City, Rosemary Wallace
Langley Township, Tim Baillie
Lions Bay, Ken Berry*
Maple Ridge, Judy Dueck*
Port Moody, Meghan Lahti*
Richmond, Bill McNulty
Surrey, Doug Elford
West Vancouver, Linda Watt

*denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by the *Procedure Bylaw*.

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Maple Ridge, Dan Ruimy

STAFF PRESENT:
Conor Reynolds, Director, Air Quality and Climate Action Services
Hadir Ali, Legislative Services Coordinator, Board and Information Services
Esther Bérubé, Division Manager, Air Quality Bylaw and Regulation Development, Air Quality and Climate Action Services
Derek Jennejohn, Lead Senior Engineer, Air Quality and Climate Action Services
Kathy Preston, Director, Environmental Regulation and Enforcement, Air Quality and Climate Action Services
Jay Soper, Communications Specialist, External Relations

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. April 10, 2026 Meeting Agenda

It was MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the Air Quality Committee adopt the agenda for its meeting scheduled for April 10, 2026 as circulated.

CARRIED

B. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

1. January 16, 2026 Meeting Minutes

It was MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the Air Quality Committee adopt the minutes of its meeting held January 16, 2026 as circulated.

CARRIED

C. DELEGATIONS

No items presented.

D. INVITED PRESENTATIONS

No items presented.

E. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

1. MVRD Air Quality Management Fees Regulation Bylaw No. 1440, 2026

Report dated April 1, 2026 from Gaurav Singh, Air Quality Planner, Air Quality and Climate Action Services, and Esther Bérubé, Division Manager, Air Quality Bylaw and Regulation Development, Air Quality and Climate Action Services, seeking MVRD Board adoption of *MVRD Air Quality Management Fees Regulation Bylaw No. 1440, 2026* to repeal and replace *MVRD Bylaw No. 1330, 2021*.

9:05 am Vice Chair Marsden joined the meeting.

Esther Bérubé and Kathy Preston, Director of Environmental Regulation and Enforcement in Air Quality and Climate Action Services, provided the Committee with a verbal overview of the report, highlighting key changes made to the proposed Bylaw since it was last presented to the Committee at its January 16, 2026, Air Quality Committee meeting.

The Committee was informed that a letter from the Provincial Government is anticipated, confirming that alignment has been reached between Metro Vancouver and the Ministries of Environment and Parks, Jobs and Economic Growth, and Agriculture and Food. Staff noted that, once received, the letter will be forwarded to the April 24, 2026 MVRD Board meeting, along with additional information regarding the bylaw's time sensitivity.

It was MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the MVRD Board:

a) give first, second, and third reading to *Metro Vancouver Regional District Air Quality Management Fees Regulation Bylaw No. 1440, 2026*; and
b) adopt *Metro Vancouver Regional District Air Quality Management Fees Regulation Bylaw No. 1440, 2026*.

CARRIED

2. Overview of Air Quality Communications Tools

Report dated March 26, 2026 from Derek Jennejohn, Lead Senior Engineer, Air Quality and Climate Action Services, and Jay Soper, Communications Specialist, External Relations, updating the Air Quality Committee and MVRD Board on Metro Vancouver's range of communication tools for conveying air quality information and the bylaw requirements to the public.

Derek Jennejohn and Jay Soper gave the Committee a presentation titled "Overview of Air Quality Communication Tools" and provided an overview of Metro Vancouver's role in regulating air quality, along with a summary of the approaches used to communicate with the public. Members were informed of how warnings are issued to residents when air quality is degraded, including through the Metro Vancouver website, media releases, social media, and email alerts.

9:56 am Director McCutcheon left the meeting.

It was MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated March 26, 2026, titled "Overview of Air Quality Communications Tools".

CARRIED

3. Manager's Report

Report dated March 11, 2026 from Conor Reynolds, Director, Air Quality and Climate Action Services, providing the committee with an update of the Committee's 2026 Work Plan and related activities.

It was MOVED and SECONDED
That the Air Quality Committee receive for information the report dated March 11, 2026, titled "Manager's Report".

CARRIED

F. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Initial Draft Solid Waste Management Plan

G. OTHER BUSINESS

No items presented.

H. RESOLUTION TO CLOSE MEETING

No items presented.

I. ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the Air Quality and Climate Committee adjourn its meeting of April 10, 2026.

CARRIED
(Time: 10:19 am)

_____	_____
Hadir Ali, Acting Supervisor, Legislative Services	Lisa Dominato, Chair

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metrovancouver
SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

To: Air Quality Committee

From: Marcin Pachcinski, Division Manager, Electoral Area, Planning and Analytics, Regional Planning and Housing Services

Date: April 22, 2026 Meeting Date: May 8, 2026

Subject: **Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the MVRD Board:

a) request that the Board Chair send an advocacy letter on behalf of the MVRD requesting that the Province assume responsibility for orphan dikes, as described in the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province", and

b) direct staff to forward a copy of the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province" to member jurisdiction staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) has sent a request to all regional districts to sign an advocacy letter asking the Province to assume responsibility for orphan dikes and establish a provincial management program. The RDOS also requests that the letter be shared with each regional district's member jurisdictions so that councils can consider signing the letter.

In the information provided, the RDOS notes that there are over 100 orphan dikes across the province that are in a deteriorating condition and that lack an identified owner, diking authority, or long-term maintenance program. It makes the case that the Province should assume responsibility for orphan dikes for the following reasons:

1. Public safety requires a single responsible authority *(for orphan dikes)*
2. Local governments & First Nations cannot shoulder the burden *(for capital costs and engineering expertise associated with the maintenance and upgrade of orphan dikes)*
3. These *(orphan dike)* structures are often on Crown land
4. Provincial risk assessment already identifies the threat *(to orphan dikes from structural deficiencies and natural hazards)*
5. Coordinated provincial stewardship prevents future failures *(by establishing consistent standards and predictable funding and maintenance, which reduces long-term risks and costs).*

There are several dikes on Metro Vancouver Regional Park Land, including one 300m section of orphan dike in Capilano River Regional Park. There is also a dike on Barnston Island in Electoral Area A that, while not orphaned, has faced similar challenges to orphan dikes. Based on the relevance of this issue to Metro Vancouver and the region, staff recommend showing support for this initiative by signing the letter and forwarding the RDOS request to member jurisdictions to enable each member council to consider also signing the letter.

PURPOSE
To provide the Air Quality Committee and MVRD Board with the opportunity to consider a request from the RDOS to sign an advocacy letter asking the Province to take responsibility for orphan dikes and to share the request with member jurisdictions.

BACKGROUND
In February 2026, the RDOS reached out to all regional districts to request their support to be signatories on an advocacy letter to the Province to take over responsibility for orphan dikes. This initiative comes in part from their experience following the 2021 failure of the Similkameen River orphan dike that impacted RDOS communities. This report provides information supplied by the RDOS related to their request as background information to inform the Committee and Board's discussions.

REQUEST TO SIGN AN ORPHAN DIKE ADVOCACY LETTER TO THE PROVINCE
The RDOS CAO's report (**Attachment 1**) points out that there are more than 100 orphan dikes across British Columbia that lack an identified owner, diking authority, or long-term maintenance program, and that their deteriorating condition presents significant risks to public safety, infrastructure, and emergency response capacity.

Below are short excerpts from the report that make the case for the Province to assume responsibility for orphan dikes:

1. Public Safety Requires Single Responsible Authority
   Orphan dikes currently exist in a governance vacuum, with no assigned owner, operator, or qualified diking authority responsible for inspection, maintenance, emergency repair, or long-term capital upgrades. Centralized responsibility at the provincial level would ensure uniform engineering practice, risk-based prioritization, and coordinated emergency response

2. Local Governments & First Nations Cannot Shoulder the Burden
   Restoring, upgrading, and maintaining orphan dikes requires specialized engineering expertise, ongoing inspection regimes, and significant capital investment that far exceeds the capacity of local governments and First Nations communities. Only the Province has the scale, expertise, and fiscal capacity to manage such significant provincial-scale infrastructure safely and equitably.

3. These Structures Are Often on Crown Land
   A large portion of British Columbia's orphan dikes were constructed decades ago on Crown land. First Nations and local governments do not have jurisdictional authority on these Crown parcels, nor do they derive taxation benefit from the land. Provincial ownership of Crown land means the Province is the only entity with the authority necessary to manage these assets properly.

4. Provincial Risk Assessment Already Identifies the Threat
   The Province funded and received the Fraser Basin Council's provincial flood and dike risk assessment, which concluded that many orphan dikes are structurally deficient, poorly documented, and high-risk. Given that the Province already relies on engineering-based flood hazard assessments to guide investment decisions in other areas (e.g., major river systems, coastal flood infrastructure), extending provincial responsibility to orphan dikes is a logical continuation of existing risk management practice.

5. Coordinated Provincial Stewardship Prevents Future Failures
   A proactive, province-led approach is more cost-effective, more efficient, and more protective of communities compared with the reactive, ad hoc system currently in place.

The letter accompanying the CAO report:

- requests that each regional district support the attached advocacy letter and include the regional district's name and logo as signatories; and
- asks each regional district's member municipalities to seek endorsement from their councils to support the attached advocacy letter.

DIKES AND METRO VANCOUVER

Regional Parks

The regional park system includes sections of dike overseen by municipal diking authorities, one short section of orphan dike without an assigned diking authority, and a dike for which Metro Vancouver is the designated authority.

Several regional parks include sections of municipally managed dike systems. In these cases, Metro Vancouver is responsible for public access, litter pickup, and regional park bylaw enforcement along the dike. The municipal diking authority retains responsibility for inspection, maintenance, and repair of dike infrastructure.

Capilano River Regional Park includes a 300m section of orphan dike that extends into adjacent District of North Vancouver Land. This dike was constructed before the park was established and no diking authority is assigned.

Metro Vancouver is the diking authority for 4.2 km of dikes along the Coquitlam River in ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park. The dike system in this area is a non-standard agricultural dike constructed in the 1920s, which pre-dates the establishment of the regional park.

Electoral Area A (Barnston Island Dike)

On Barnston Island, which is part of Metro Vancouver's Electoral Area A, there is a 10-km ring dike on top of which there is a Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure-maintained road. Metro Vancouver is the local government for Barnston Island and is responsible for emergency management for the Island, alongside the q̓ic̓əy̓ (Katzie First Nation). Neither Metro Vancouver nor the q̓ic̓əy̓ is responsible for the dike. Instead, it is managed by the Barnston Island Diking District, which was established by the *Drainage, Ditch and Dike Act* of 1907, and therefore, this dike is not considered an orphan dike.

The Barnston Island Diking District comprises a few local resident volunteers, who collect approximately $15,000 annually from Barnston Island property owners. This is not sufficient to make necessary upgrades to the dike, which does not meet current provincial dike design and construction guidelines. Recognizing these challenges, the Province provided Metro Vancouver with a grant of $5.25 million in summer 2023 under the *Emergency Program Act*. Metro Vancouver staff are currently managing a project to make dike and drainage improvements using this grant funding.

In 2008, the Province announced its intent to repeal the *Drainage, Ditch and Dike Act* and to transfer responsibility from diking districts created by the Act in MVRD's Electoral Area A (Barnston Island), City of Coquitlam, the City of Surrey, and the Township of Spallumcheen. The MVRD Board at that time requested that the Province not repeal the legislation and meet with the affected local governments. For Barnston Island, this led to the Province, Metro Vancouver, and q̓i̓c̓əy̓ working together to hire an engineering consultant to do a technical assessment of the dike, which was completed in 2013. The dike assessment highlighted a number of physical and legal issues with the dike and drainage infrastructure on the Island. After considering the assessment, the MVRD Board passed the following resolution at their September 2013 meeting, which remains current:

> *That the Board reiterate to the Province opposition to the proposed transfer of the Barnston Island Diking District to Metro Vancouver until the Province has fully addressed all the physical and legal issues associated with the diking facility.*

While not an orphan dike, the Barnston Island dike is an example of infrastructure in a small community that cannot meet provincial standards due to costs and technical requirements that are beyond local community tax base and residents' capacity.

Flood-related Advocacy

In July 2024, the MVRD Board passed the following resolution:

> *That the MVRD Board write letters to the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, and the Honourable Bowinn Ma, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, requesting that the implementation of the BC Flood Strategy be prioritized, expedited, and adequately resourced as it relates to the Metro Vancouver region.*

In September 2025, the MVRD Board Chair and Air Quality Committee Chair met with the BC Minister of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship and BC Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness to reiterate the MVRD Board's interest and support in seeing the timely implementation of the *BC Flood Strategy*. The Board and Committee Chairs also asked the Province to coordinate with the federal government to make capital funding available for local governments, who are ultimately responsible for delivering the capital projects needed to protect our communities.

Metro Vancouver continues to participate in flood-related planning processes in the region, and staff will provide updates on these processes to Air Quality Committee and MVRD Board as they progress.

ALTERNATIVES

1. THAT the MVRD Board:
   a) request that the Board Chair send an advocacy letter on behalf of the MVRD requesting that the Province assume responsibility for orphan dikes, as described in the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province" and
   b) direct staff to forward a copy of the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province" to member jurisdiction staff.

2. THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 22, 2026, titled "Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter to the Province".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Metro Vancouver is responsible for costs associated with maintaining the 4.2 km of dikes along the Coquitlam River in ƛ̓éxətəm Regional Park where it is the diking authority. Metro Vancouver is also responsible for costs associated with public access, litter pickup, and regional park bylaw enforcement along dikes that are on regional park land but that are maintained by the local municipality.

While there are no immediate financial implications associated with the recommendation to sign the advocacy letter, there may be some financial implications (potential savings) if the Province were to take responsibility for orphan dikes, including the 300m section of orphan dike in Capilano River Regional Park.

CONCLUSION

Orphan dikes are a long-standing challenge for local governments and First Nations in terms of responsibility, maintenance, and risk. In the broader context of flood risk reduction in the region, signing this letter acknowledges the need for Province to play a greater role in dike management, and in particular in managing orphan dikes where there is no responsible local authority. Staff recommend Alternative 1.

ATTACHMENT

1. Administrative Report to the Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District Board of Directors dated February 5, 2026, titled “Board support to Sign Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter & Request for Province to Assume Responsibility”.

84016015

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO:	Board of Directors
FROM:	J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE:	February 5, 2026
RE:	Board support to Sign Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter & Request for Province to Assume Responsibility

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Board authorize the Chair to sign the Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter addressed to the Honorable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia, requesting that the Province assume responsibility for orphan dikes and establish a Provincial management program; and,

THAT the CAO be directed to forward the letter to First Nations and Regional Districts across British Columbia, requesting their support and authorization to include their names and logos as signatories; and,

THAT regional districts be asked to contact their member municipalities to encourage their endorsement and authorization to add their names and logos to the collective letter.

Purpose:

To obtain Board authorization for the Chair to sign the Provincial Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter and to coordinate participation from First Nations, Regional Districts, and municipalities. Across British Columbia, more than 100 orphan dikes—totalling approximately 85 kilometres—lack an identified owner, diking authority, or long-term maintenance program. Their deteriorating condition presents significant risks to public safety, infrastructure, and emergency response capacity.

Strategic Priorities:

3.3 Influence Other Orders of Government

ANALYSIS: WHY THE PROVINCE MUST ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY

1.Public Safety Requires Single Responsible Authority

Orphan dikes currently exist in a governance vacuum, with no assigned owner, operator, or qualified diking authority responsible for inspection, maintenance, emergency repair, or long-term capital

upgrades. When structures intended to protect communities from floods have no oversight, the result is uneven standards, inconsistent, or no monitoring, and heightened vulnerability.

The Province's own Fraser Basin Council Flood Risk Assessment identified that many orphan dikes do not meet Provincial safety requirements, lack engineering documentation, and have not been regularly inspected or certified. Without a single authority accountable for maintaining these structures to consistent Provincial standards, communities face unnecessary and avoidable risk.

Centralized responsibility at the Provincial level would ensure uniform engineering practice, risk-based prioritization, and coordinated emergency response across British Columbia's watershed systems — something no individual local government, particularly small or rural jurisdictions, can provide.

2. Local Governments & First Nations Cannot Shoulder the Burden.

Restoring, upgrading, and maintaining orphan dikes requires specialized engineering expertise, ongoing inspection regimes, and significant capital investment. The UBCM and multiple Provincial studies have repeatedly concluded that the financial burden far exceeds the capacity of local governments and First Nations communities.

This especially is true for smaller Indigenous, Regional Districts, and Municipalities with limited tax bases. For these jurisdictions, assuming responsibility would require unsustainable tax increases or reallocation of scarce funds away from critical services.

Furthermore, many communities lack internal technical staff qualified in dike inspection, hydrotechnical engineering, or flood hazard management. As a result, even if funding were available, these communities could not safely or efficiently take over orphan dike responsibility.

Only the Province has the scale, expertise, and fiscal capacity to manage such significant Provincial-scale infrastructure safely and equitably.

3. These Structures Are Often on Crown Land.

A large portion of British Columbia's orphan dikes were constructed decades ago on Crown land, often during past flood emergencies or Federal/Provincial public works programs. First Nations and local

governments do not have jurisdictional authority on these Crown parcels, nor do they derive taxation benefit from the land.

It is unreasonable and legally unclear for First Nations or Local governments to assume responsibility for infrastructure they do not own, cannot legally control, and in many cases cannot access without permission.

This situation creates a governance gap where no level of government has clear authority to intervene, despite the structures posing a public safety risk. Provincial ownership of Crown land means the Province is the only entity with the authority necessary to manage these assets properly.

4. Provincial Risk Assessment Already Identifies the Threat.

The Province funded and received the Fraser Basin Council's Provincial flood and dike risk assessment, which concluded that many orphan dikes are structurally deficient, poorly documented, and high-risk. Despite this, no Provincial program has been implemented to address the findings.

This creates a contradiction:

- The Province has explicit knowledge of the risks.
- The Province has not implemented a long-term stewardship solution.
- Communities remain exposed to hazards identified by Provincial analysis.

Given that the Province already relies on engineering-based flood hazard assessments to guide investment decisions in other areas (e.g., major river systems, coastal flood infrastructure), extending Provincial responsibility to orphan dikes is a logical continuation of existing risk management practice.

5. Coordinated Provincial Stewardship Prevents Future Failures.

The 2021 failure of the Similkameen River orphan dike illustrates the consequences of fragmented responsibility. Without clear oversight, maintenance schedules lapse, structural deficiencies go unaddressed, and no authority steps in until after a disaster occurs.

A Provincial coordinated program would:

- Apply consistent engineering standards province-wide
- Establish long-term maintenance cycles
- Prioritize upgrades based on province-wide hazard assessments
- Provide predictable funding for capital improvements

- Ensure integrated emergency response coordination
- Reduce long-term disaster recovery costs that ultimately fall to the Province anyway

A proactive, province-led approach is more cost-effective, more efficient, and more protective of communities compared with the reactive, ad hoc system currently in place.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications for the RDOS in signing or circulating the letter.

Communication Strategy:

Information will be posted on the RDOS website, social media channels, and sent to local media via email.

Alternatives:

THAT the Board does not authorize the Chair to sign the Orphan Dike Advocacy Letter addressed to the Honorable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia, requesting that the Province assume responsibility for orphan dikes and establish a Provincial management program.

Will a PowerPoint presentation be presented at the meeting? No

Written by staff and reviewed by Copilot - Yes.

Respectfully submitted:

Jim Zaffino
J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: TBA

To: The Honorable David Eby

Premier of British Columbia
Office of the Premier

PO Box 9041 STN Prov Gov't

Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Province of British Columbia

Re: Provincial leadership needed for orphan dike responsibility and long-term flood protection

Dear Premier

We, the undersigned First Nations, Municipal, and Regional District governments across British Columbia, are writing to collectively express our deep concern regarding the condition, safety risks, and lack of governance surrounding orphan dikes, many of which are located on Crown land.

British Columbia has more than 100 orphan dikes structures, totaling approximately 85km in length, however, there is no identified diking authority, no responsible owner, and no long-term maintenance plan. Many of these dikes were constructed during historical emergency events without engineering standards and now fail to meet provincial safety requirements.

The Fraser Basin Council's provincial risk assessment, funded by the Province, confirmed widespread deficiencies and highlighted the significant risk these structures pose to communities, yet no long-term strategy or provincial stewardship program has followed.

The Province is stating that the responsibility for orphan dikes lies with local governments. However, orphan dikes, especially those on Crown land, fall outside any jurisdiction, leaving communities vulnerable. An example is the 2021 failure of the Similkameen River orphan dike, which resulted in severe flooding and property damage. The failure of the orphan dike is evidence of the real danger posed when no authority is responsible for these structures.

First Nations and local governments cannot assume responsibility for these assets. The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and provincial reviews clearly state that the costs of restoring, upgrading, and maintaining orphan dikes far exceed the financial capacity of local jurisdictions.

Compounding this, a dike failure presents a direct risk to life safety, homes, agricultural land, transportation networks, and community infrastructure. Fragmented responsibility and unclear

ownership are unacceptable given the risks. A single point of responsibility is necessary to ensure consistent standards, proper engineering oversight, and effective emergency response.

Accordingly, we formally request that the Province of British Columbia:

1. Assume full responsibility for all orphan dike.
2. Establish and fund in conjunction with a provincial orphan dike management program including upgrades, rehabilitation, and long-term maintenance.
3. Ensure the program includes stable, predictable provincial funding for ongoing operations and emergency preparedness.
4. Designate a single accountable provincial authority for oversight and maintenance of these structures.
5. Engage in meaningful collaboration with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts throughout implementation.

We urge the Province to take immediate action to address these longstanding safety and governance gaps and to protect the lives, property, and economies of communities throughout the province.

We look forward to your leadership and stand ready to collaborate on this critical matter.

Respectfully,

[Signing First Nations / Municipal / Regional District]
[Names and Titles of Authorized Representatives]

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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

To: Air Quality Committee

From: Erik Blair, Senior Planner, Air Quality and Climate Action Services
Jason Emmert, Program Manager, Regional Climate Action Policy, Air Quality and Climate Action Services

Date: April 23, 2026 Meeting Date: May 8, 2026

Subject: **BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 23, 2026, titled "BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps", and direct staff to forward a copy of the report to member jurisdiction staff with an offer of a presentation to Council upon request.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BC Retrofit Accelerator is a program delivered by the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC) to accelerate energy-efficient, low-carbon retrofits in large buildings with seed funding from Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Innovation Fund (SIF). Metro Vancouver's support enabled ZEIC to establish the BC Retrofit Accelerator from the ground up and to leverage an additional $18 million in diverse external funding. The program provides technical support, retrofit planning, and helps building owners navigate incentives and financing, delivering specialized services at a scale that individual municipalities do not have the capacity to provide, and supporting affordable housing while advancing climate action. Member jurisdictions have been actively involved in ZEIC's suite of programs for many years, including participation in the BC Retrofit Accelerator through advisory committees and program recruitment alongside Metro Vancouver staff. The program is now transitioning to ongoing delivery to 2028.

Project Impact Snapshot (as of the end of 2025):

Between the Retrofit Accelerator's launch to the end of 2025, four sector-specific programs have registered 961 buildings across BC, representing more than 50,000 residential units, with over 50% located in Metro Vancouver. Participants have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 39,500 tonnes to date, with more projects moving toward implementation. This report marks the conclusion of the SIF phase of the project, and outlines opportunities to increase participation and impacts including emissions reduction.

PURPOSE

To provide an update on the BC Retrofit Accelerator Sustainability Innovation Fund project, summarize outcomes to date, and outline next steps to increase participation from Metro Vancouver member communities.

BACKGROUND

The BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) SIF project was approved by the MVRD Board in 2022 as a climate action initiative aligned with the *Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap* and the *Board Strategic Plan*. The project was funded between 2022 and 2024, with the objective of establishing and testing a scalable, collaborative model to support energy and emissions-reducing retrofits in existing large buildings – one of the region's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

This report, together with the attached final report (**Attachment 1**), marks the conclusion of the SIF-funded project phase, while the BC Retrofit Accelerator program is continuing with external funding.

BC RETROFIT ACCELERATOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND OUTCOMES

Program Overview

As a matter of course, most large buildings will require major upgrades to heating, cooling, and other building systems over the coming years. While these upgrades present important opportunities to reduce energy use and emissions, building owners – particularly in strata, rental, non-profit, and small commercial sectors – often face significant barriers related to complexity, financing, governance, and coordination of incentives.

The BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) program was established to address retrofit challenges by providing coordinated, objective planning support at scale. Delivered by the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC), in partnership with sector organizations, the program helps owners align energy and emissions upgrades with planned capital renewals, reducing costs and avoiding missed opportunities for low-carbon investment. The BCRA provides technical support, retrofit planning, and helps building owners navigate incentives and financing.

Importantly for member jurisdictions, the BCRA provides a regionally and provincially coordinated service that individual municipalities do not have the capacity to deliver on their own. By centralizing technical expertise, market coordination, and funding navigation, the program helps building owners protect and upgrade existing housing, improving safety, affordability, and long-term building performance while advancing municipal and regional climate objectives.

Since its launch in 2024, the BCRA has established four sector-specific coaching programs delivered through trusted partners:

- **Market Rental Housing** – Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator (Landlord BC)
- **Commercial (Class B and C) Buildings** – Decarb Accelerator (Building Owners and Managers Association of BC)
- **Non-Profit Housing** – BC Non-Profit Housing Association and Aboriginal Housing Management Association
- **Strata-Owned Residential Buildings** – Strata Energy Advisor Program (ZEIC and Condominium Homeowners Association BC).

The BCRA functions as a province-wide hub that brings together governments, utilities, industry associations, and financial institutions to address barriers to retrofit implementation, with a focus on under-served sectors.

Policy Context and Program Design
The BCRA was initiated in 2022 through a partnership between Metro Vancouver and the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre, aligning with regional and municipal policy direction including the *Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap*. Existing buildings are a priority given that over 80% of the region's building stock will still be in use in 2050.

The program builds on lessons from other retrofit support initiatives, including Metro Vancouver's Strata Energy Advisor Pilot Program (2017–2019), also a SIF project, and the Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator (2023-present). While existing utility and government programs have supported individual energy-efficiency measures, the BCRA was designed to address persistent gaps in coordinated planning support, particularly for buildings facing multi-party decision-making (e.g., stratas) and long capital planning timelines.

SIF support enabled early stakeholder engagement, development of a collaborative delivery model, and a long-term sustainable funding approach, leading to the BCRA's province-wide expansion and additional $18 million secured.

Program Status and Outcomes
Since launching, the BC Retrofit Accelerator has demonstrated strong market uptake across all sectors. As of the end of 2025:

- **961 buildings** have registered in BCRA programs across British Columbia
- These buildings represent **more than 6 million m² of floor space** and **over 50,000 residential units**
- Participating buildings have identified **approximately 39,500 tonnes of potential annual greenhouse gas reductions** through retrofit planning

Many participating buildings are now moving from planning toward implementation. Consistent with experience from other large-building retrofit programs, building owners typically require several years to plan for, and implement, building renewals. As a result, emissions reductions are expected to increase over the next two to three years as projects currently in the planning phase move into implementation.

More information about the program development, status and outcomes to date can be found in the Final Report (**Attachment 1**). The BCRA website provides information about each coaching program (Reference 1).

Regional and Municipal Benefits
The BCRA is designed to deliver multiple regional benefits by accelerating the pace and scale of building retrofits:

- Supports energy savings and emissions reduction in one of the region's largest emitting sectors.
- Helps integrate energy upgrades with planned capital renewals, extending the life of existing buildings, including older and more affordable housing.
- Improves building safety, comfort, and resilience, including reducing overheating risks.
- Helps building owners manage costs and avoid more expensive future retrofits.
- Reduces duplication by providing specialized, technical services that municipalities would otherwise need to develop independently.
- Builds industry capacity and improves efficiency in program delivery for the retrofit market.

For municipalities, the program complements local climate, housing, and asset-management objectives by providing consistent, expert support to building owners without requiring new municipal programs or staffing. With over 50% of registered buildings located in Metro Vancouver across all programs, the BCRA delivers a substantial share of its emissions, resilience, and cost-management benefits in the region with the highest concentration of retrofit demand.

As part of the SIF project, ZEIC also developed a long-term funding model and completed a review of retrofit financing in Metro Vancouver. The funding model is designed to adapt to changing economic and policy conditions and is based on continuing to seek a diversified mix of government and utility funding, philanthropic support, and engagement with financial institutions over the next 15 years. While the funding of the BCRA beyond 2028 is uncertain, the funding model provides a strategic approach for long-term program sustainability, reduces reliance on short-term funding cycles, and supports a more durable, adaptive program delivery. Further details on the funding model is provided in **Attachment 1**.

NEXT STEPS

Metro Vancouver's SIF funding was designed to be a time-limited and catalytic contribution. The SIF project phase is now complete and has met its intended objectives by successfully establishing the BC Retrofit Accelerator and positioning the program for sustained delivery through external funding sources. The total investment of $850,000 between 2022 and 2024 enabled ZEIC and its partners to secure more than $18 million in external funding, expanding the program from a regional pilot to a province-wide initiative and securing delivery through at least mid-2027. In April of 2026, BCRA program partners secured funding from BC Hydro to continue the strata and rental apartment programs to 2028, with a possibility of extension.

Metro Vancouver staff participation on BCRA advisory committees is currently planned to continue through 2027 to monitor program effectiveness in reducing emissions. ZEIC is also currently seeking to expand the number of municipal staff representatives to support BCRA advisory committees focused on program development and financing retrofits. Staff will provide updates to the Air Quality Committee and the MVRD Board and seek direction on continued and complementary projects to reduce emissions from existing buildings in the region.

While the SIF project phase has concluded, space is still available in the programs, *with free retrofit planning reports offered until December 31, 2026*. Municipalities can play an important role in supporting recruitment by leveraging existing relationships with building owners, community associations and local industry networks, and through traditional communications channels. Promotional materials such as website and social media copy, print flyers and communications briefs are all available upon request. Increasing participation from Metro Vancouver communities will help maximize emissions reductions and housing benefits to the region during this remaining funded period.

ALTERNATIVES

1. THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 23, 2026, titled *"BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps"*, and direct staff to forward a copy of the report to member jurisdiction staff with an offer of a presentation to Council upon request.

2. THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 23, 2026, titled *"BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps."*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The BCRA SIF Project was funded through allocations of $250,000 in 2022, $250,000 in 2023, and $350,000 in 2024 from MVRD SIF. All funds were fully expended by the end of 2025. Staff resources to administer the SIF project and participate in project advisory groups was provided for in the annual Air Quality and Climate Action Services operating budgets since 2022.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Member jurisdictions have been actively involved in ZEIC's suite of programs for many years, including participation in the BCRA through advisory committees and program recruitment alongside Metro Vancouver staff.

CONCLUSION

The BCRA Retrofit Accelerator has achieved its intended purpose of establishing a scalable, collaborative retrofit support model that addresses key barriers faced by existing buildings. Through a Sustainability Innovation Fund investment, Metro Vancouver helped catalyze a province-wide program that is delivering clear benefits for building owners, residents and member jurisdictions while leveraging significant external funding. Expanded municipal outreach will help maximize emissions reduction, support building renewal, and advance regional and municipal climate objectives. The long-term funding model developed through the BCRA SIF project positions the BCRA well to continue to provide retrofit planning advice for a growing number of buildings in the region.

ATTACHMENT

1. "BC Retrofit Accelerator: Metro Vancouver Sustainability Innovation Fund Final Report", dated March 19, 2026.
2. Presentation re: BC Retrofit Accelerator Program Update – Impacts and Next Steps.

REFERENCE

1. Zero Emission Innovation Center. (2026). *BC Retrofit Accelerator.* https://www.zeic.ca/programs/bc-retrofit-accelerator/.

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BC Retrofit Accelerator

METRO VANCOUVER SUSTAINABILTIY INNOVATION FUND FINAL REPORT

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MARCH 19, 2026

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Executive Summary

The **BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA)** was developed through a partnership between Metro Vancouver and the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre (ZEIC) to accelerate low-carbon retrofits in existing large buildings in the region. The Accelerator was launched with **$850,000 in seed funding from Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Innovation Fund (SIF)** to address emissions from existing buildings, which account for approximately **25% of regional greenhouse gas emissions**.

The BCRA focuses on supporting building owners in planning and implementing high-efficiency, low-carbon retrofits aligned with planned building renewal cycles. It also emphasizes non-energy benefits, such as added cooling for climate resilience. The program prioritizes building sectors that have historically had limited access to retrofit support, including **multi-unit residential buildings (market rental and strata), non-profit housing, and commercial buildings**.

The Accelerator operates as a collaborative framework that coordinates retrofit activities across governments, utilities, industry associations, and financial institutions. Its core activities include building owner coaching programs, industry capacity building, research and tool development, and collaboration with financial institutions to address retrofit financing barriers.

The SIF funding was formalized in October 2022 starting with developing a Metro Vancouver Retrofit Accelerator framework. By September 2024, ZEIC had established the advisory committee and delivery partner network and had secured additional funding to create an expanded Provincial Accelerator. The **BC Retrofit Accelerator formally launch in September 2024**, with fully funded programs in place to March 2027.

Project Impact Snapshot (as of the end of 2025):

961
buildings registered

400
building owners participating

50,577
residential units represented

Over
6 million m^2
of floor space

39,500
tonnes of annual GHG reduction potential identified

16,000
tonnes of annual GHG reductions moving toward implementation

The initial SIF funding allowed ZEIC to leverage **more than $18 million in additional external funding**, including support from Natural Resources Canada's Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative and philanthropic partners.

This funding and collaborative approach accelerated program development and expansion to a provincial scale, enabling the launch of a comprehensive **BC-wide retrofit accelerator a full year ahead** of the planned regional accelerator**.** Coordinating over 30 different organizations including 10 local government advisors, 8 financial institutions, and 6 delivery partners, to steward the success of the Accelerator.

Early program registrations demonstrate **strong market interest in all sectors with growing interest** awareness spreads. Since comprehensive retrofits typically require 2–3 years to complete a project cycle, the first projects begin implementation summer 2026, followed by a year of monitoring to assess performance, energy, and carbon savings.

BC Retrofit Accelerator Impacts
(as of December 31, 2025)

Commercial Buildings	Non-profit Housing	Market Rental	Residential Strata	
50 buildings *(1 million m2)*	119 buildings *(500,000 m2)*	91 buildings *(600,000 m2)*	30 buildings *(200,000 m2)*	*…have received decarbonization plans or energy studies*
17 buildings	18 buildings	6 buildings	2 buildings	*…are moving to implementation*
4,000 tonnes	9,500 tonnes	2,000 tonnes	TBD	*…of projected annual GHG savings if all measures implemented*

While the BCRA is currently a large, multi-pronged initiative, its role is expected to evolve as the retrofit market matures. Given typical building system renewal cycles of 10–30 years, a 10–15 year effort could significantly shift the existing building market toward zero-emission performance. Program sustainment strategies are outlined further in the report.

Ultimately, success for the BC Retrofit Accelerator would mean that every building in the province has a pathway to reach zero emissions by 2050, supported by aligned policy, industry capacity, and financing systems.

BC Retrofit ACCELERATOR | ZEIC

Background

In 2022, the Metro Vancouver Regional District entered into an agreement with the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre to develop a framework and implementation plan for a large building retrofit accelerator. This work began just over a year after British Columbia experienced one of its most extreme years of climate-related events.

The 2021 B.C. Heat Dome was followed by severe wildfires, floods, and landslides, occurring as the world emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, British Columbia's economy was recovering strongly, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 6.2%, exceeding the national average.

Momentum around climate action and resilience was also building. In July 2022, the City of Vancouver approved the province's first greenhouse gas and energy reporting requirements and emissions limits for large buildings, with implementation beginning in summer 2024. British Columbians were increasingly aware of the risks posed by a changing climate.

Metro Vancouver had also begun implementing the Clean Air Plan. Buildings generate 25% of regional GHG emissions—and are a significant source of harmful air pollutants such nitrous oxide and particulate matter. About 70% of existing buildings will still be in use in 2050 and about 90% of these buildings' emissions come from gas-fired space and water heating.

Metro Vancouver's Climate 2050 Buildings Roadmap outlines a pathway to zero-emissions buildings, including actions to address existing

Mar 2018

Metro Vancouver launches the **pilot Strata Energy Advisor** program in collaboration with local government partners to learn if coaching services can improve efficiency outcomes in strata-owned buildings.

Sept 2018

Metro Vancouver adopts the **Climate 2050 Strategic Framework** setting forth comprehensive climate action targets aligned with science-backed international goals to limit global warming to 1.5°C

Mar 2019

CleanBC Better Homes and Better Buildings program launches to support single-family homeowners and commercial building owners with energy efficiency and electrification incentives.

Mar 2021

Metro Vancouver's **Clean Air Plan** is published. A 10-year air quality and GHG management plan aligned with Climate 2050 targets.

Jun 2021

In 2021, B.C. experienced **a heat dome** causing **619 deaths**, followed by wildfires and severe flooding that disrupted access to the Lower Mainland.

Oct 2021

Metro Vancouver publishes the **Climate 2050 Roadmap for Buildings**, mapping out a pathway to achieve zero-emission buildings in the region.

Oct 2022

Metro Vancouver Regional District and ZEIC partner to develop **a Retrofit Accelerator to support hard-to-reach building owners in improving energy efficiency and reducing emissions.**

Apr 2023

ZEIC establishes the **scope and partnerships** under the BC Retrofit Accelerator.

Sept 2023

ZEIC is confirmed as a recipient of NRCan's Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative.

Sept 2024

BC Retrofit Accelerator is formally launched.

buildings, such as working with partners on programs that help owners plan and complete retrofits that reduce these emissions.

British Columbia has a long history of energy efficiency programming. Since the launch of the BC Hydro Energy Manager program in 1989, utilities—particularly BC Hydro—have supported energy efficiency improvements in institutional, commercial, and industrial buildings through initiatives such as Power Smart. In 2011, BC Housing, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, and BC Hydro partnered to create an energy efficiency retrofit program for social housing. The Province's CleanBC Better Homes and Better Buildings programs, launched in 2019, provide incentives for single-family homeowners and commercial building owners to improve efficiency and transition to high-efficiency heat pumps. With high uptake for single-family home heat pumps a self-sustaining market has developed and incentives have been refined to target income-tested households.

Despite these programs, several sectors have not been included in efficiency and decarbonization initiatives, including multi-family residential buildings—both market rental and strata—as well as small commercial building portfolios. Multi-family residential buildings represent the second-largest share of building floor area in Metro Vancouver after single-family homes and face growing overheating and indoor air quality issues as a result of climate change. Hence the BC Retrofit Accelerator was designed to focus on these building types.

Within this context, Metro Vancouver and the Zero Emissions Innovation Centre partnered to create a regional retrofit accelerator to serve as a one-stop resource and support hub, accelerating high-efficiency, low carbon retrofits across the region.

The agreement was funded through a three year, $850,000 contribution from Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Innovation Fund (SIF) and established three key objectives, broadly aligned with each year of funding:

1. **2023 LAY THE GROUNDWORK** – Conduct best-practice and gap analyses for a retrofit accelerator, informed by broad stakeholder engagement , and establish an advisory group to guide development and alignment with the broader retrofit ecosystem.
2. **2024 MAKE A PLAN** – Define the scope of offerings and core services for the Retrofit Accelerator, design its core services, and explore funding models capable of sustaining the program over the 10–15 years required for meaningful market transformation.
3. **2025 LAUNCH THE RETROFIT ACCELERATOR** – Initiate program implementation and establish a multi-year funding approach.

The BC Retrofit Accelerator

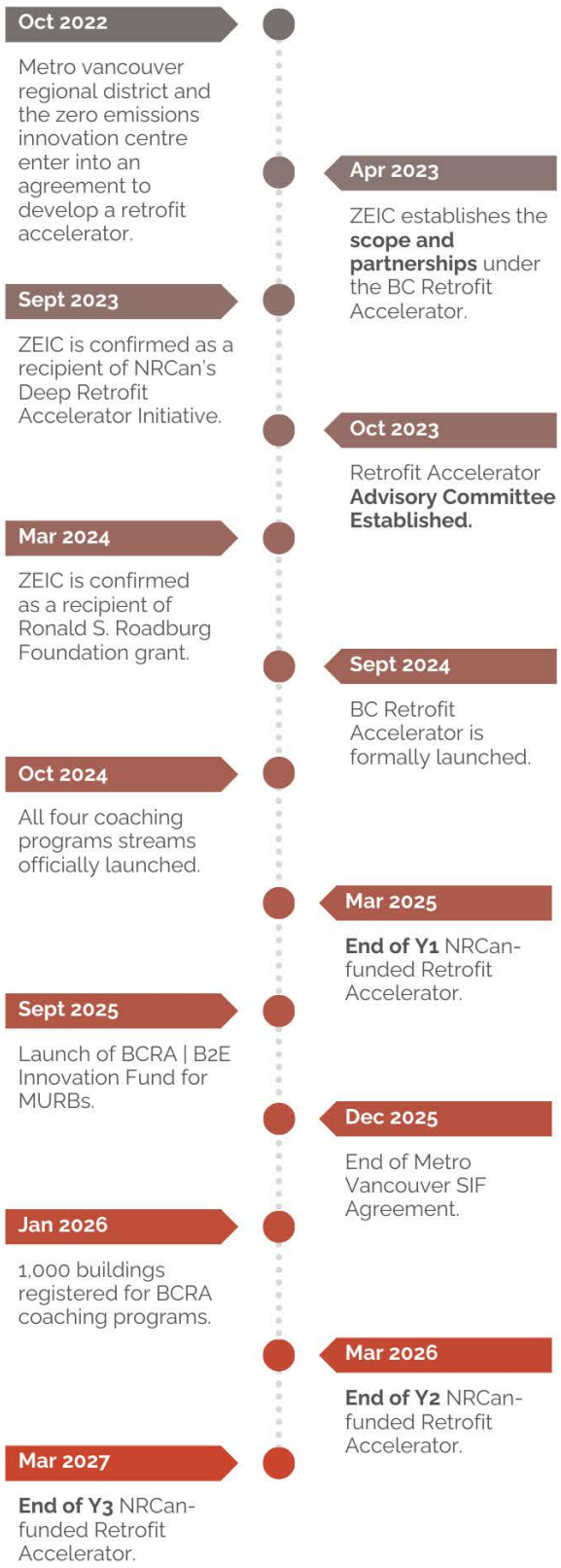
The first year of the BC Retrofit Accelerator focused on laying the groundwork and defining the program's role within the broader retrofit ecosystem supporting market transformation. The vision was to **accelerate high-efficiency, low-carbon retrofits in large buildings across British Columbia**, with a particular focus on "hard-to-move" ownership groups, including market rental, strata, and Class B and C commercial building owners. This vision evolved from lessons learned in a previous Sustainability Innovation Fund grant to develop the Strata Energy Advisor pilot program.

The BC Retrofit Accelerator's market transformation objectives draw on research by Sam Rashkin[1] and include:

1. **Reducing costs and/or increasing the value of retrofit outcomes**
   (cooling, comfort, safety, relative market value)

2. **Reducing uncertainty and risk**
   (retrofit cost, outcomes)

3. **Reducing friction and removing barriers**



[1] Efficiency Canada, *Unlocking the Retrofit Mission: Market transformation in action*, video, Oct 27, 2025

Through best-practice research and extensive stakeholder consultation with representatives from 32 organizations, a theory of change was developed to guide the design and operating principles of the BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA).

The first principle of the BCRA is to **support, amplify, and complement existing initiatives**. While British Columbia already many organizations working toward similar objectives, limited coordination was causing duplication of effort. Two key actions were identified:

1. **Establish the BCRA Advisory Committee** to convene, coordinate, and align key stakeholders—including regional, local, and provincial governments, utilities, and industry partners—and help guide the work of the BCRA.
2. **Develop a collaboration framework** to align organizations delivering similar retrofit support services.

At the same time, Natural Resources Canada launched its Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative (DRAI). SIF funding allowed ZEIC to lead a collaborative funding application, securing **$13.6 million over three years** to implement the BC Retrofit Accelerator. This effort helped crystallize the BCRA approach, expand its scope to a **province-wide**, and position it as an umbrella program connecting several organizations and retrofit initiatives.

ZEIC also secured **$2 million from the Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation** to address gaps not covered by the NRCan program, alongside additional contributions from ZEIC's own endowment.

This funding and collaborative approach accelerated program development, enabling the launch of a comprehensive **BC-wide retrofit accelerator a full year ahead of schedule.**

Collaboration is the foundation of the BCRA's success and rapid scaling. The Accelerator brings together delivery and supporting partners across multiple ZEIC program areas while engaging industry and the financial sector to identify and address barriers to achieving zero-emission buildings.

BCRA Supporting and Delivery Partners

In addition to the partners identified above, the Accelerator engages an array of retrofit industry, finance, and local governments as working group members, advisors and project partners in addition to almost 1,000 buildings that have signed up for BC Retrofit Accelerator coaching programs. All this initiated in less than two years, starting with $850k from the Metro Vancouver Sustainability Innovation Fund.

Design and Engagement

The BC Retrofit Accelerator framework is built on four pillars of market transformation:

Achieving cost-effective, replicable, and scalable retrofit solutions requires these sectors to develop in tandem to avoid market distortion. Rather than a standalone program, the BC Retrofit Accelerator is a coordinated umbrella initiative that brings organizations together to accelerate the speed and scale of retrofit solutions across these four market sectors.

The BCRA was developed through extensive consultation with industry, non-profits, and local, regional, and provincial governments—each with direct experience supporting retrofits within their spheres of influence. The program was also informed by research on best practices in other jurisdictions. This collaboration continues through BC Retrofit Accelerator-led advisory committees and working groups described in the following section.

Eligible Buildings

Both the SIF funding and Natural Resources Canada's Deep Retrofit Initiative (DRAI) are intended to focus on large buildings that are four or more storeys or greater than 600 m^2 (Part 3 buildings in the Building Code). Eligible multi-unit residential buildings must also have a shared entrance and corridor serving at least two suites.

Multi-unit residential buildings represent one of the largest segments of BC's building stock after single-family homes but have historically received limited support for energy efficiency upgrades. As a result, they represent a major opportunity for both energy savings and emissions reductions through low-carbon retrofits.

"Zero Over Time" Retrofit Approach

The BCRA uses a "zero-over-time" (ZOT) model that phases energy- and emissions-reducing retrofits over 10–20 years, aligned with equipment replacement cycles. Central to this approach is a decarbonization roadmap that identifies low-carbon retrofit opportunities tied to capital planning timelines, allowing upgrades to be implemented with modest incremental cost. The journey typically begins with shallow retrofits, followed by mechanical and enclosure upgrades, with renewable energy integration as the final step This phased approach aligns with long-term emissions targets and building performance standards while offering a flexible pathway to zero-emissions buildings.

Affordability

The phased retrofit approach helps minimize incremental costs, while coaching programs reduce financial barriers by supporting access to planning tools, education, and process navigation support, rebates, low-interest financing, and tax incentives: helping mitigate affordability concerns. Coaching services significantly reduce upfront costs to identify opportunities and navigate project development through standardized tools and resources. Energy efficiency improvements can also lower operating costs through utility savings.

As the low-carbon retrofit market matures, costs are expected to decline through streamlined processes, improved tools, supports that aid more efficient planning and decision-making, and as low-carbon technologies become standard practice. While policy plays an important role in signaling this transition, strengthening industry capacity to deliver affordable retrofits is a core objective of the BCRA.

Non-Energy Benefits

Many low-carbon retrofits can also address overheating, indoor air quality, noise, and comfort, particularly electric heat pumps that replace existing heating systems while adding cooling.

Capturing these non-energy benefits in financial business cases remains a challenge, even if they are the primary driver of some retrofits. While some upgrades—such as replacing electric baseboards with in-suite heat pumps—can generate utility savings, electrifying gas heating systems may not, even though both provide additional cooling. Despite this, many building owners consider low-carbon retrofits to be smart investments, especially where they improve comfort, resilience during extreme heat, and overall building performance.

Coaching Programs (Demand-side)

The BC Retrofit Accelerator supports and expands existing coaching pilot programs where possible. Building on lessons from pilots allows programs to evolve and scale while maintaining sector-specific support delivered through industry associations.

Market rental, strata (condominiums), and Class B and C commercial buildings represent the largest portions of Metro Vancouver's building stock after single-family homes. Based on the size of the sector and the need for coaching, these buildings have the greatest potential for energy and emissions reduction through retrofits.

To launch the BC Retrofit Accelerator, ZEIC established partnerships with industry organizations to deliver sector-specific programs.

Commercial Buildings: Decarb Accelerator	BOMA BRITISH COLUMBIA *Building Owners and Managers Association of BC*
Non-profit Housing: Member Services: non-profit housing and off-reserve Indigenous housing	BC Non-Profit Housing Association Aboriginal Housing Management Association
Market Rental Buildings: Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator	LANDLORDBC *with FRESCo Building Efficiency*
Residential Strata Buildings: Strata Energy Advisor program	ZEIC ZERO EMISSIONS INNOVATION CENTRE CHOA Condominium Home Owners Association of BC

Continuous Improvement

Supporting existing coaching programs created opportunities to share lessons learned across program streams. For multi-unit residential buildings in particular, many technical retrofit solutions are similar, while governance and financing structures differ significantly. This allowed the Accelerator to test different approaches within the same jurisdiction while sharing knowledge across programs. The collaborative structure also reduced duplication and enabled partners to share tools, resources, and effort within a trusted network.

Outreach and Marketing

The BCRA uses a collaborative approach for outreach using a "channel-partner" strategy, working through aligned organizations—particularly local governments—to promote programs within their networks. To support this, the BCRA developed an amplification package with ready-to-use website content, social media materials, and promotional resources that local governments can adapt to encourage building owners to participate.

In addition to partner-led promotion through industry associations, the BCRA created a single point of entry to multiple retrofit programs through BCRetrofitAccelerator.ca, providing centralized program information and public resources.

Programs are also cross-promoted through presentations, social media, and earned media, allowing partners to reach a broader audience than any single program could achieve alone. The BCRA will continue expanding its network of channel partners to further amplify program visibility.

Capacity Building (Supply-side)

ZEIC already supports industry capacity building through the Zero Emissions Building Exchange (ZEBx) and the Building to Electrification Coalition (B2E). Rather than creating new structures, the BCRA leverages B2E advisory committees to inform programs and identify barriers to large-building retrofits, aligning with B2E's priority to support multi-unit residential retrofits.

ZEBx also serves as a hub for sharing information and best practices across the building sector. BCRA initiatives are amplified through ZEBx activities such as Decarb Lunch events, newsletters, online resources, and industry events.

Financial

In addition to coaching services that help participants access incentives, BCRA supports convening and coordinating stakeholders—including governments, commercial banks, credit unions, and building owners—to align financing solutions and support retrofit investment. This work is described in more detail below.

Policy and Regulation

While the BCRA does not directly influence government policy or regulation, BCRA programs support building decarbonization objectives across all levels of government. The Accelerator also helps identify challenges and opportunities for policy or regulatory change. This is achieved through an advisory committee structure that both guides program development and provides opportunities for improved alignment across jurisdictions.

Overview of Current BCRA Initiatives

Coordination and Alignment

To date, BCRA and related initiatives engage with a broad network of organizations, including members of the national NRCan-led Retrofit Accelerator Network, advisory committee representatives, financial institutions, local governments, and coaching program delivery partners. Together, these groups support coordination across policy, finance, industry capacity, and program delivery.

BCRA Advisory Committee

The BC Retrofit Accelerator Advisory Committee is co-chaired by Metro Vancouver and ZEIC staff and provides strategic advice on program development, including alignment with emerging policy, regulatory changes, and new program opportunities. In addition to Metro Vancouver and ZEIC representatives, members include:

- Three Metro Vancouver municipalities: Surrey, Richmond, and Vancouver
- Two Capital Regional District municipalities: Victoria and Saanich
- One North Thompson municipality: Kamloops
- Two BC Hydro departments: Market Transformation and Energy and Decarbonization Solutions
- Two Province of BC ministries: Energy and Climate Solutions, and Ministry of Housing

The committee meets quarterly, with additional meetings convened as needed to address specific priorities. This structure helps track policy and regulatory developments while enabling BCRA partners to share progress, opportunities, and emerging challenges.

Retrofit Finance Committee

The Retrofit Finance Committee includes 34 representatives from financial institutions, provincial and municipal governments, and industry organizations. Established in June 2025, the committee facilitates dialogue on reducing financial barriers to retrofits. Early discussions have highlighted the importance of bridging gaps between building owners and the finance sector to develop effective financing products and programs.

Delivery Partner Working Group

The BCRA Delivery Partner Working Group meets bi-weekly to coordinate program delivery, share lessons learned, and identify opportunities for deeper collaboration. The group includes representatives from the five program delivery partners along with ZEIC staff responsible for communications, industry capacity building, and economic development initiatives related to retrofit finance.

Building to Electrification (B2E) Coalition

The Building to Electrification (B2E) Coalition Leadership Council provides input on strategic priorities for B2E. Additional committees focus on awareness-building and communications, expanding industry capacity, and technical solutions.

B2E and the BCRA operate as complementary programs. The BCRA draws on B2E's industry expertise to align programming with sector priorities and identify barriers to large-building retrofits. Collaboration between the two programs is described further in the following section.

Strata Working Group

Because the Strata Energy Advisor program is delivered directly by ZEIC, a dedicated Strata Working Group provides guidance on program design and delivery. Members include representatives from five municipalities (Vancouver, Victoria, Saanich, New Westminster, and UBC Neighbourhoods), the Condominium Home Owners Association of BC (CHOA BC), the Vancouver Island Strata Owners Association (VISOA), and BC Hydro's Energy and Decarbonization Solutions team.

The group provides advice on program resources, outreach, and communications strategies. Other coaching programs receive similar guidance through their partner organizations and member networks.

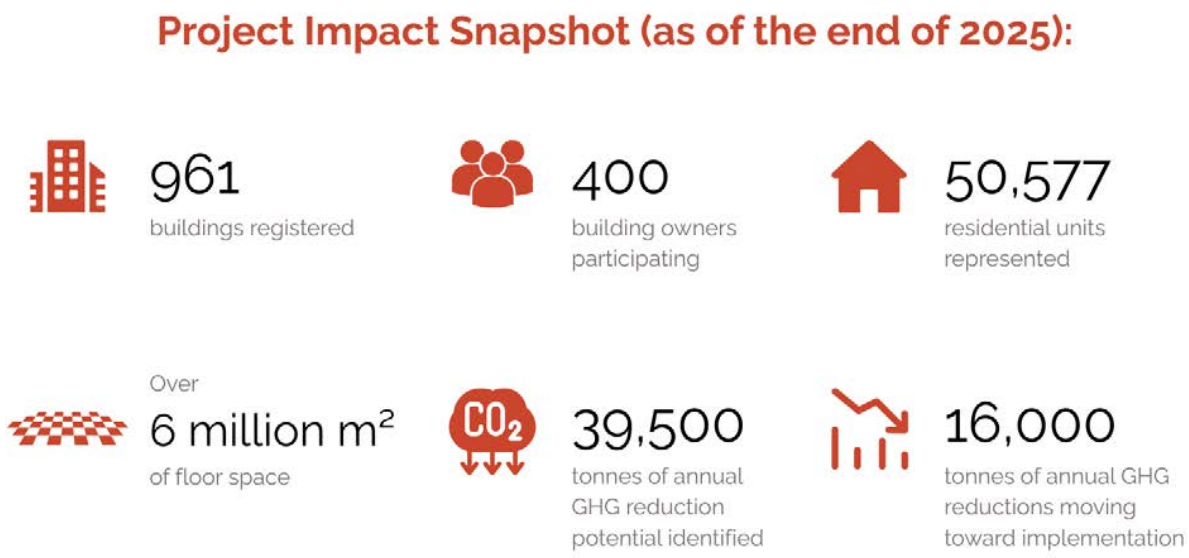
National and Network Collaboration

Beyond internally hosted committees, ZEIC participates in Natural Resources Canada's Retrofit Accelerator Network, which connects DRAI-funded initiatives across Canada. This network enables accelerators operating in different climates and policy environments to share lessons learned and best practices.

ZEIC is also one of seven Low Carbon Cities Canada (LC3) centres established by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to demonstrate, de-risk, and scale local climate solutions that reduce emissions while delivering economic and community benefits.

Concierge (Coaching) Programs

Each BC Retrofit Accelerator coaching program uses a tailored delivery model to meet the needs of its target building sector. Of the buildings in the project impact snapshot, over 50% are in the Metro Vancouver region.[2]



BOMA BC Decarb Accelerator (Commercial)

The Decarb Accelerator for commercial buildings is delivered by BOMA BC. Participants are paired with a dedicated Decarb Program Engineer who provides one-on-one support to advance retrofit projects.

Each participating building receives a decarbonization plan and, where appropriate, an ASHRAE Level 2 energy audit conducted by a pre-qualified engineering consultant. Additional services may include ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager setup, green lease development, and support with energy and emissions reporting requirements. While informed by successful cohort models, the program was developed specifically through DRAI funding.

> As of the end of 2025, **50 buildings representing nearly 1 million m²** of floor space have received decarbonization plans. **Seventeen buildings** are moving toward implementation of recommended measures, representing **approximately 4,000 tonnes of annual GHG reductions**.

[2] Note: energy and emissions data is collected less frequently than building progress, GHG impacts are from September 30, 2025 combined reporting data.

BC Non-Profit Housing Association & Aboriginal Housing Management Association

The BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) provides a range of services to its members, including asset management, incentive navigation, and retrofit support. Through the Retrofit Accelerator, BCNPHA dedicated staff capacity to support electrification initiatives among interested housing providers.

By leveraging existing building condition assessments and energy audits, the program identifies properties with strong electrification potential and works with owners to pursue retrofit projects using available federal, provincial, and utility funding.

The Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) provides similar support for off-reserve Indigenous housing providers, many of whom are also BCNPHA members. The two organizations collaborate closely to meet participant needs.

> As of the end of 2025, **119 buildings representing nearly 500,000 m²** of floor space have received study services, with **18 buildings moving toward implementation**, representing **more than 9,500 tonnes of annual GHG reductions**.

LandlordBC Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator

The Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator (RARA), delivered by LandlordBC in collaboration with FRESCo Consulting, builds on a pilot program originally developed by the City of Vancouver and later expanded provincially.

By partnering directly with an engineering firm, RARA delivers technical services in-house—from initial assessments through to feasibility studies—ensuring continuity throughout the project lifecycle. The program can also conduct portfolio-level analysis to identify buildings with the strongest potential for energy savings and electrification.

A key focus is building a strong financial case for retrofits, including maximizing available rebates and tax incentives. The program also provides guidance on tenant–landlord considerations during retrofit planning and implementation.

> As of the end of 2025, **91 buildings representing more than 600,000 m²** of floor space have received study services. **Six buildings** are advancing toward implementation, representing **over 2,000 tonnes of annual GHG reductions**.

Strata Energy Advisor Program

The Strata Energy Advisor (SEA) program is delivered by ZEIC in partnership with the Condominium Home Owners Association of BC (CHOA BC). The program builds on a pilot supported by Metro Vancouver's SIF fund and was redesigned to scale up programming and prioritize carbon reduction.

Participating strata corporations are matched with a Strata Energy Advisor who works with them to identify priorities and develop a decarbonization roadmap. Advisors provide comparative analysis of retrofit options—including conventional replacement approaches—to help strata councils evaluate investment decisions.

Given the governance structure of strata corporations, which typically require a three-quarter vote to approve major retrofits, the program emphasizes transparent information and trusted guidance. Advisors also assist with accessing incentives and navigating study, design, procurement, and implementation processes. CHOA provides guidance on interpreting the Strata Property Act and related legislation.

> As of the end of 2025, **93 buildings have applied**, with **30 buildings representing more than 200,000 m²** of floor space, receiving study services. **Two buildings** are moving toward implementation, with GHG savings estimates still in development.

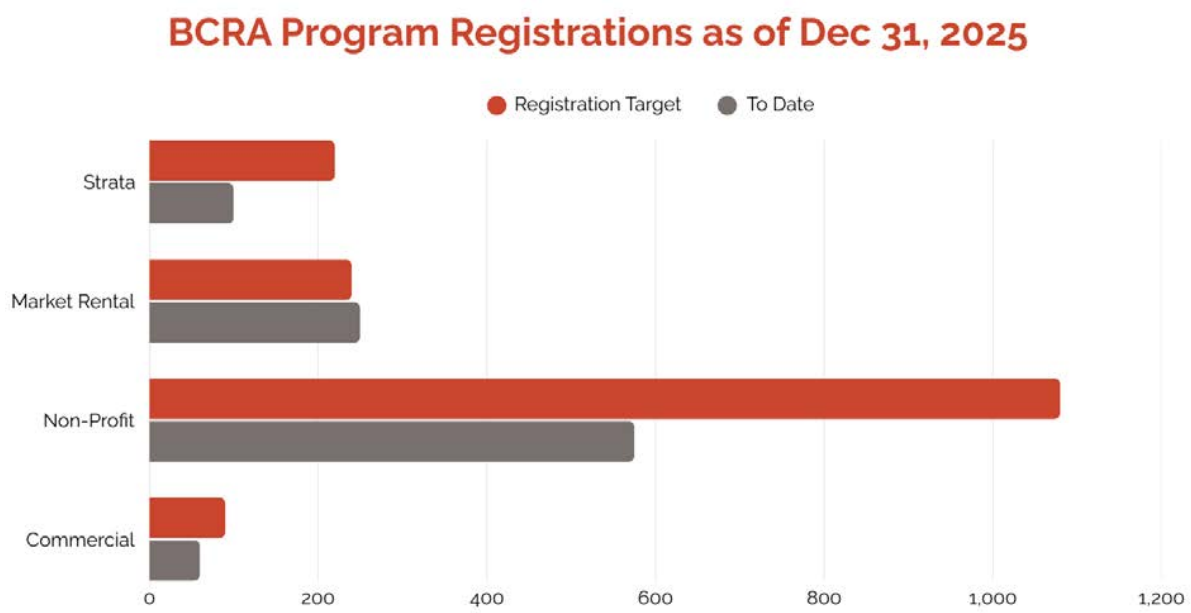
With guidance from the Strata Working Group and additional funding from the City of Victoria and the District of Saanich, ZEIC has expanded SEA services in these municipalities. Eligibility has also broadened to include strata corporations with five or more units and projects focused on electric baseboard-to-heat pump conversions. In 2026, ZEIC will develop a program adaptation for townhome complexes to address an existing program gap.

Early Program Results

Coaching programs have been operating for just over a year and are beginning to see their first retrofit projects move into implementation. This represents significant early progress, as most retrofit projects take two to three years to move from initial assessment to construction.

One key success factor has been program continuity. Several streams—particularly those serving non-profit and market rental housing—were able to build on existing pilot programs, enabling faster program launch and early participant engagement.

Given the long timelines associated with retrofit projects, many projects will still be underway when current funding allocations conclude. Longer-term funding commitments would allow programs to support projects through completion, develop case studies, and refine program design through continuous learning.



Reducing Financial Barriers to Retrofits

Activities to reduce financial barriers to retrofits are undertaken collaboratively by ZEIC's Economic Development and Market Transformation team and BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) partners. The Retrofit Finance Committee helps guide this work by strengthening alignment and understanding among building owners (represented by delivery partners), and incentive and financing providers. To date, ZEIC has produced a Retrofit Financing Guide for commercial building owners with support from BOMA BC and provided seed funding for a program led by Affine Climate Solutions to accelerate deep, climate-resilient retrofits by transforming how financial institutions assess, value, and finance green buildings.

ZEIC is also pursuing longer-term strategies to enable new financial products that lower barriers to low-interest, long-term financing. This includes research on property-secured financing for large buildings (C-PACE) and an initiative to advance retrofit financing options for strata corporations, which face unique borrowing constraints.

Beyond new rebate and financing mechanisms, there are opportunities to reduce retrofit costs. The Strata Energy Advisor program is testing software-based decarbonization planning tools to lower the upfront cost of identifying retrofit opportunities. Sharing case studies and developing best-practice guides can also improve replicability and reduce costs. In addition, BCRA partners are exploring ways to reduce duplication across common studies—such as electrical capacity, EV-ready, and opportunity assessments—by combining analyses with similar data requirements. Efforts are also underway to pilot a methodology for monetizing non-energy benefits in commercial retrofits using a protocol developed for the European Union. These initiatives are all being advanced under the BCRA umbrella.

Capacity Building

Strategic alignment between ZEIC's Building to Electrification (B2E) Coalition and the BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) has identified opportunities to strengthen construction industry capacity and accelerate retrofit market development. In fall 2025, a collaborative call through the B2E Innovation Fund identified four tools in development to support low-carbon retrofits in multi-unit residential buildings (MURBs). To date, twenty-four capacity building projects have received full or partial funding and/or in-kind project management support, leveraging funding from Natural Resources Canada. Examples include:

- **Power Efficiency Design Guide for MURB Retrofits:** strategies to electrify buildings and add EV charging while remaining within existing electrical capacity and avoiding costly service upgrades.
- **Visual Resource Library:** local photo and video assets for BCRA stakeholders to support outreach and communications.
- **Municipal Policy Guide for Thermal Safety:** guidance for local governments to reduce barriers to implementing thermal safety retrofits in existing MURBs.

These projects have **leveraged an additional $1.25M in matching funding** from partner organizations. Further details are provided in Appendix D: Impact Report.

The Zero Emissions Building Exchange (ZEBx), BC's hub for zero-emission building information, has supported BCRA initiatives by promoting programs, sharing case studies and best practices through its Decarb Lunch series, and cross-promoting BCRA tools and resources.

To support BCRA's goals of reducing financial barriers and streamlining retrofit processes, ZEIC has partnered with the University of Victoria's Energy in Cities team to analyze data from MURB retrofit studies and projects. With Natural Resources Canada support, ZEIC is co-funding a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) research position focused on:

1. Improving early-stage retrofit cost estimation to strengthen business cases and decision-making; and
2. Streamlining identification of retrofit options based on existing building systems to reduce project development costs.

Initial research results are expected in mid- to late-2027.

BCRA Continuation Strategy

A key outcome of the Sustainability Innovation Fund funding was the development of a funding model to support the BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) and its programs over a 10–15 year horizon. Details are provided in Appendix C: BCRA Funding Model

Designed for resilience, the model anticipates changing economic conditions and government priorities and relies on a three-pronged fundraising strategy:

1. **Government and utility contributions** through new agreements and existing streams such as BC Hydro demand-side management (DSM) and electrification funds;
2. **Philanthropic funding** focused on equity-deserving populations and building types served by BCRA programs; and
3. **Contributions from Canadian financial institutions**, particularly major banks, to support financial sector market transformation and long-term retrofit uptake with reduced reliance on government funding.

To future-proof the program, four funding scenarios were modeled to sustain momentum from the first three years. These range from a **minimum viable scenario**, maintaining the BCRA network and a cohort-based Strata Energy Advisor program, to a **best-practice market transformation scenario** aligned with current funding levels. Further details are provided in the *Memo on BCRA Continuation Efforts*.

Investments Leveraged

ZEIC exceeded the original scope and fundraising expectations of the BCRA start-up, leveraging SIF funding to both launch and operate the BC Retrofit Accelerator for 3 years and counting.

Funder: **Natural Resources Canada, Deep Retrofit Accelerator Initiative** Amount: **$13.6M** Term: **April 2024 – March 2027**	Start-up and delivery of a BC-wide Retrofit Accelerator: • Advisory Network • Tool, resource and research development • Retrofit financing support • 4 coaching program streams (commercial, non-profit housing, market rental and strata) • Industry capacity building
Funder: **Ronald S. Roadburg Foundation** Amount: **$2M** Term: **April 2024 – March 2028**	Contributing funding to fill programming gaps: • Expanded Strata Energy Advisor program, including post project impact measurement • Industry capacity building • Commercial property owner capacity building • Tool and resource development

Funder: **Zero Emissions Innovation Fund** Amount: **$68k** Term: **November 2023 – December 2025**	ZEIC has also contributed funding from its own endowment to cover shortfalls.
Funder: Various contributors to BCRA-led **Tool & Resource Development** Amount: **$1M**	Third party contributions to support 10 different tools and resources, including funding dispersed through B2E Innovation Fund collaboration
Funder: Various contributors to BCRA-led **Research** Amount: **$232k**	Third party contributions to support 5 different research projects, including the University of Victoria collaboration.
Funder: Various contributors to **Expanded Coaching Programs** Amount: **$1.1M**	Strata Energy Advisor expanded services BOMA BC Climate Ready Buildings Leadership Council

The above accounts for funds directly secured or leveraged through BCRA initiatives. It does not include investments in program pilots, those leveraged by BCRA delivery partners, or funding raised by ZEIC for complementary initiatives in other program areas.

Funding Status

ZEIC has secured federal, local government, utility, and philanthropic funding to continue delivery of the BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) through March 2027. ZEIC is building on this foundation while adapting to evolving government priorities and a volatile economic environment.

While details cannot yet be disclosed, the Strata Energy Advisor and Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator programs will continue in modified formats through at least March 2028. We are also actively engaging potential funders and are confident additional support for broader BCRA initiatives will be secured. These efforts highlight the importance of a complementary funding approach that combines BCRA's long-term vision with shorter-term, project-based funding.

Blending funding sources also helps mitigate the limitations of typical three- to four-year government funding cycles. Philanthropic contributions can support continuity, maintain internal capacity, and fill gaps in project-based funding while expanding program offerings.

Balancing project-specific funding with flexible funding to respond to emerging opportunities will also be critical. Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Innovation Fund (SIF)

helped unlock Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) funding, while NRCan's flexible resource development funding has leveraged additional third-party contributions toward project outcomes.

Demonstrating the effectiveness of BCRA programs—and how they evolve to address emerging challenges, engage new audiences, and deliver broader social benefits—helps strengthen the case for continued investment. The non-energy benefits of high-efficiency, low-carbon retrofits are described in the program design and engagement section above [insert cross link].

Aligning and collaborating with other ZEIC programs and external partners further strengthens funding resilience by engaging a broader range of funders with aligned priorities. Sustaining this coordination, however, will require ongoing core funding.

While contributions from Canadian financial institutions have not yet been secured, interest from major banks and credit unions in greening investment portfolios is growing. Participation in the Retrofit Finance Committee reflects this interest, though economic uncertainty may temper momentum. Continued efforts to align BCRA objectives with financial sector priorities could unlock longer-term funding opportunities.

Evolution of the BCRA

BC Retrofit Accelerator (BCRA) programs launched in September 2024. Because comprehensive retrofits typically require 2–3 years to complete a project cycle, the first projects are expected to move into implementation in summer 2026, followed by a year of monitoring to assess performance, energy, and carbon savings. While the BCRA has been successfully established, it remains in an early implementation phase.

The next phase will focus on capturing lessons from early projects and refining program delivery through several priorities:

Refinement: Documenting early retrofit projects through case studies and lessons learned, including barriers that prevented projects from advancing or led to suboptimal outcomes. These insights will reduce uncertainty, improve program design, and lower costs as retrofit approaches are replicated and refined.

Amplification: Translating early lessons into best-practice resources to support industry capacity and help more companies participate in the retrofit market. Adapted case studies will also support outreach and awareness among building owners.

Alignment: Strengthening collaboration across retrofit stakeholders, including delivery partners, building owners, financial institutions, and all levels of government. This includes improving coordination, sharing resources, and supporting policy development as the retrofit landscape evolves.

Activation: Identifying systemic barriers and developing longer-term solutions. This may include addressing regulatory or code barriers, identifying technology gaps, or streamlining processes to reduce project development time and costs.

Multi-solving: Advancing retrofits that deliver multiple benefits beyond energy and carbon reductions, including climate resilience (e.g., cooling, air quality, and climate adaptation) and extending the life and value of existing affordable housing and commercial building stock.

Workforce development: Although not a core focus of the initial BCRA design, scaling retrofit activity will require upskilling the existing workforce and supporting development of interdisciplinary trades skills needed for retrofits and high-performance construction.

While the BCRA is currently a large, multi-pronged initiative, its role is expected to evolve as the retrofit market matures. Given typical building system renewal cycles of 10–30 years, a 10–15 year effort could significantly shift the existing building market toward zero-emission performance. Success would mean that every building in the province has a pathway to reach zero emissions by 2050, supported by aligned policy, industry capacity, and financing systems.

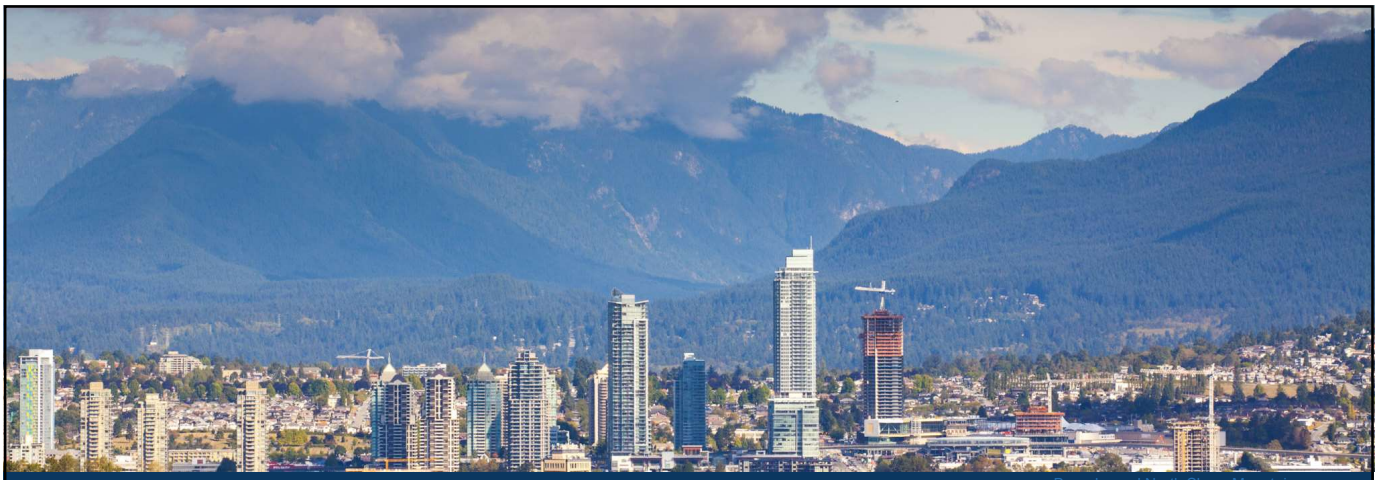
In the near term, local governments and partners can support this effort by promoting BCRA services and encouraging building owners to take advantage of remaining fully funded program spaces. Raising awareness of retrofit coaching services and sharing case studies of successful projects—particularly those highlighting non-energy benefits—will help build broader support and showcase BC's leadership in practical, cost-effective climate action.

Appendices

Follow this link for the full report with all appendices.

BC Retrofit Accelerator

SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION FUND – FINAL REPORT



Burnaby and North Shore Mountains

Update on the BC Retrofit Accelerator

A METRO VANCOUVER SIF PROJECT

Erik Blair, MAP, RPP
Sr. Planner, Air Quality and Climate Action Services

Jason Emmert, RPP, MCIP
Program Manager, Air Quality and Climate Action Services

Darla Simpson, BSc
Sr. Program Manager, BC Retrofit Accelerator

metrovancouver

Air Quality Committee meeting May 8, 2026
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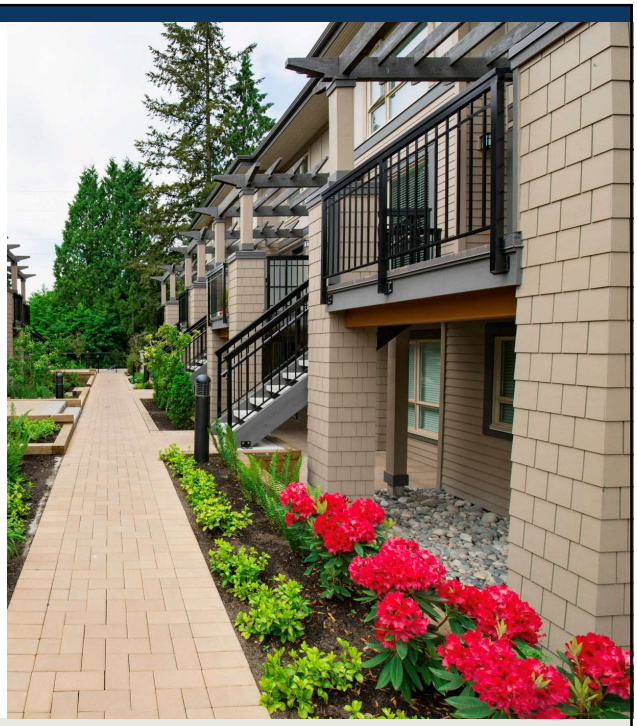
BC RETROFIT ACCELERATOR

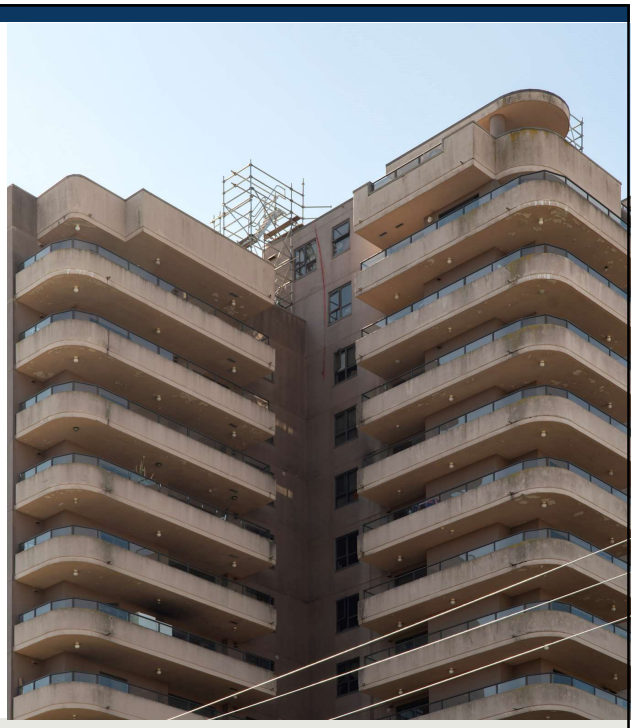
- Update on the BC Retrofit Accelerator
- Work completed in SIF project
- Next Steps: member jurisdiction support to bring additional buildings into program



2

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO RETROFITS

- Most large buildings still here in 2050, big source of GHGs
- Retrofits are complex – high costs, big decisions, long timelines
- SIF funding to catalyze long-term retrofit programs



3

FUNDING & PROGRAMS

Funding to Establish BCRA and Programs

Natural Resources Canada

metrovancouver
SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

RONALD S ROADBURG FOUNDATION

Coaching Programs

Commercial Building Decarb Accelerator

BOMA BRITISH COLUMBIA

Non-Profit Housing Member Supports

BC NPHA

Aboriginal Housing Management Association

Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator

LANDLORDBC

FRESCo Building Efficiency

Strata Energy Advisor Program

ZEIC
ZERO EMISSIONS INNOVATION CENTRE
With CHOA

4

PROGRAM UPTAKE AND OUTCOMES

Project Impact Snapshot (as of the end of 2025):

- 961 buildings registered
- 400 building owners participating
- 50,577 residential units represented
- Over 6 million m^2 of floor space
- 39,500 tonnes of annual GHG reduction potential identified
- 16,000 tonnes of annual GHG reductions moving toward implementation

MVRD SIF $850K | Additional Funds $18M

5

EXTEND REGIONAL IMPACT OF THE BCRA

- Spaces still available in strata, rental, and commercial programs
- Free retrofit reports available until December 31, 2026
- BCRA recruitment materials available to member jurisdictions upon request

6

Vancouver Skyline

Thank You.

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7

7

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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

To: Air Quality Committee

From: Geoff Doerksen, Air Quality Planner, Air Quality and Climate Action Services; and Ken Reid, Superintendent Environmental Sampling and Monitoring, Air Quality and Climate Action Services

Date: April 15, 2026 Meeting Date: May 8, 2026

Subject: **Air Quality Warning Program and Wildfire Smoke Preparedness for 2026**

RECOMMENDATION
THAT the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated April 15, 2026, titled "Air Quality Warning Program and Wildfire Smoke Preparedness for 2026".

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
For over 30 years, Metro Vancouver has operated an air quality warning program in collaboration with health authorities and partners. Metro Vancouver issues air quality warnings to protect public health when regional air quality degrades. New in 2026, air quality warnings will be issued as yellow or orange warnings to improve public understanding of the level of risk, aligning with provincial and federal partners.

The length and intensity of the wildfire season in BC is influenced by rainfall in May and June, along with spring snowpack levels. Average snowpack levels as of April 1 were below normal in BC (92 per cent) and Metro Vancouver's watersheds (55 per cent). Metro Vancouver is experiencing the impacts of a changing climate now, with wildfire smoke and heat waves degrading regional air quality in seven of the last ten summers. This reflects a significant increase in wildfire activity from conditions that dominated much of the past century.

PURPOSE
To provide information about Metro Vancouver's air quality warning program and wildfire smoke preparedness for the 2026 summer warning season.

BACKGROUND
The Air Quality Committee 2026 Work Plan includes a priority to provide a report on the air quality warning program and preparedness for the 2026 season. This air quality warning program began in 1993 and is operated through Metro Vancouver's delegated authority to manage air quality in the region and through a shared service agreement for the Fraser Valley Regional District.

AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH IMPACTS
Air pollution significantly affects human health, the environment, and the economy. Health-harming air contaminants (commonly referred to as "air pollutants") that Metro Vancouver residents breathe directly impact their health and lifespan, and also have costs to society, including increased medical treatments and lost productivity.

The potential regional health benefits from implementing Metro Vancouver's *Clean Air Plan* over a ten-year period have been estimated to be as much as $1.6 billion, based on Health Canada data. Today, our cleaner air has contributed to an estimated 580 fewer premature deaths each year, compared to air quality 25 years ago, as reported by Health Canada (Reference 1). Recent research on the health effects of wildfire smoke exposure has demonstrated that relatively low smoke concentrations can still lead to an increase in asthma-related physician visits (Reference 2). For these reasons, it is important to warn residents when air quality is degraded so that they can take action to protect themselves from air pollution.

METRO VANCOUVER AIR QUALITY WARNING PROGRAM

Metro Vancouver operates one of the most comprehensive air quality warning programs in Canada. Metro Vancouver issues air quality warnings for the entire Lower Fraser Valley airshed, including Metro Vancouver and parts of the Fraser Valley Regional District, when air quality is degraded or expected to degrade. The program is delivered in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the BC Ministry of Environment and Parks, Fraser Valley Regional District, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Fraser Health Authority, First Nations Health Authority, and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BC CDC).

Metro Vancouver's air quality monitoring network provides data that is available in real time on AirMap.ca (Reference 3) and informs the air quality warning program. Air contaminants of primary concern are those with greatest potential to reach levels in the region that may be harmful to human health:

- **ground-level ozone**, or smog, is produced by a chemical reaction between nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds on hot and sunny days; and
- **fine particulate matter**, from sources including wildfire smoke, residential wood smoke, vehicle exhaust, industrial processes, and chemical reactions.

These contaminants are measured against Metro Vancouver's ambient air quality objectives, which are benchmarks for acceptable air quality.

Metro Vancouver staff provide on-call coverage seven days a week from June to mid-September, when air quality has historically caused warnings, with further coverage if needed. Staff use tools, such as data from the air quality monitoring network, air quality and wildfire smoke forecasts, and satellite imagery, to guide decisions about issuing a warning, and regularly consult with warning program partners.

UPDATES TO THE PROGRAM

Metro Vancouver has updated its Air Quality Warning Program this year to align with Environment and Climate Change Canada's colour-coded weather alerts. Air quality warnings will now be issued as Yellow (High Health Risk) and Orange (Very High Health Risk) to convey the level of risk to the public and actions they should take to protect their health. Collaboration with provincial and federal government partners ensures consistent warning trigger levels and warning colours will be used.

Metro Vancouver worked closely with health authorities and the BC CDC to update warning messaging and public outreach materials with actions people can take to reduce their exposure to unhealthy air. Warning messaging has been improved to make the messaging more accessible to the public, and provide clearer information about the health risks and the actions people can take.

Updates to the warning program, including the new colour-coded warning system, will be communicated to the public through social media, websites, a public subscription list, and in the warning notices.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

During an air quality warning or as air quality deteriorates, staff post updates on air quality conditions on Metro Vancouver's website (Reference 4) and email the updates to a public subscription list (Reference 5). The updates can inform the public, municipalities, and emergency managers that Metro Vancouver is considering issuing an air quality warning, which may help guide actions to protect public health, such as opening clean air spaces.

An air quality warning is issued when air quality exceeds or is predicted to exceed thresholds defined by Metro Vancouver's air quality objectives. Warnings are intended to reflect regional conditions rather than localized air quality issues (e.g., small structure fire). Warnings are sent to media outlets, a public subscription list, health authorities, and other government agencies, and posted on Metro Vancouver's website, AirMap.ca, and provincial and federal websites. The warning contains the reason for the warning being issued, where it is in effect, important information such as checking the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) regularly, and other actions residents can take to protect their health.

Metro Vancouver may also post information on social media before and during a warning. Posts may include updates about current conditions, health advice, how to receive air quality warnings, where to find information on local air quality conditions, and other resources.

OTHER PUBLIC RESOURCES

For more information about the health impacts of wildfire smoke and ways to reduce exposure, such as using air filtration, residents can visit the BC CDC website (Reference 6).

Several factsheets are available including:

- Health effects of wildfire smoke
- How to prepare for the wildfire smoke season
- Portable air cleaners for wildfire smoke
- Face masks for wildfire smoke
- Wildfire smoke during extreme heat events
- Wildfire smoke and outdoor event planning
- Wildfire smoke recommendations for schools

The BC CDC website includes many more factsheets, some of which are translated into other languages.

OUTLOOK FOR THE 2026 SEASON

Summer wildfire risk across the province will depend on the amount of rain that falls in May and June, as the amount and duration of rain during these months influence the length and intensity of the wildfire season. Provincial and regional snowpack levels are also important indicators heading into wildfire season, as lower snowpacks can limit drought recovery entering the summer.

As of April 1, snowpack in Metro Vancouver's water supply areas remained below normal, averaging 55 per cent of the historical average, compared with 88 per cent at the same time last year. Although the winter was wetter than normal, it was also warmer than normal, which limited snow accumulation. As a result, snowpack conditions were well below average, particularly at lower elevations.

The provincial snowpack average on April 1, 2026, was 92 per cent of normal (Reference 7). However, the provincial average masks a strong regional divide, with many basins experiencing snowpack conditions that are either well below or well above normal. Basins near our region that are well below normal include the South Coast (57 per cent of normal), Vancouver Island (44 per cent) and the Skagit Basin (26 per cent). In contrast, other basins that experienced drought last year are well above normal, such as the Peace Basin at 136 per cent of normal.

The BC Wildfire Service had not yet released its Spring 2026 Seasonal Outlook, as of April 7. Environment and Climate Change Canada forecasts wetter-than-normal conditions for March and April, followed by warmer-than-normal temperatures in May. In addition to spring weather conditions, hotter, drier summers can lead to longer, more severe wildfire seasons. While it is still too early to predict the severity of the upcoming wildfire season, Metro Vancouver's Air Quality Warning Program is fully prepared to respond as needed.

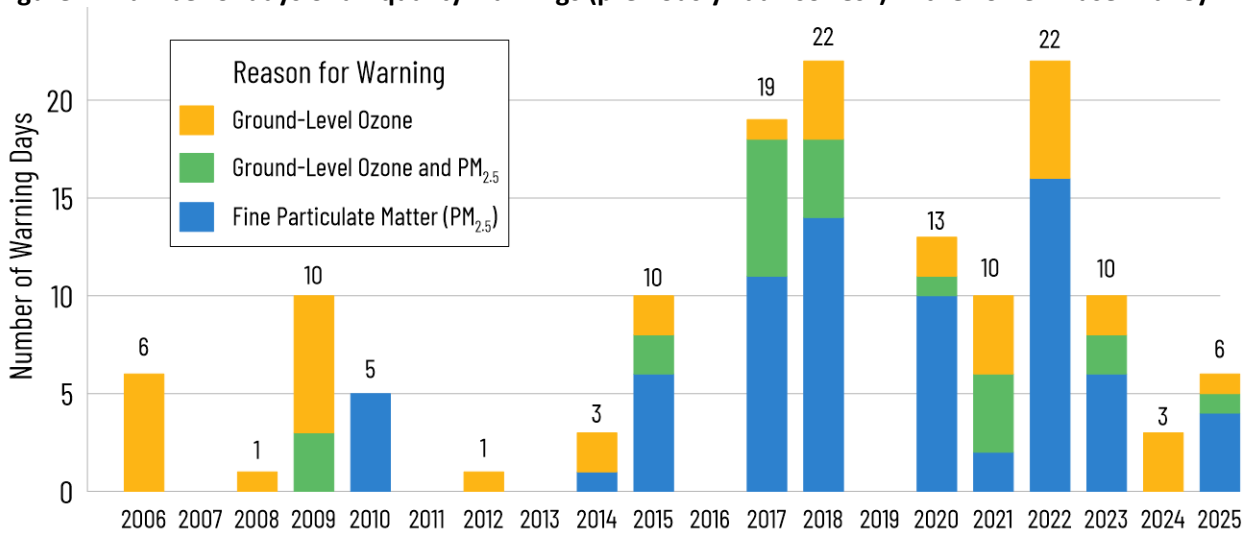
CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON AIR QUALITY

Air quality in the region is already being degraded by the impacts of climate change, and poor air quality causes a wide range of adverse health effects and associated costs. The region is facing impacts and costs associated with climate change, with increased flooding, crop damage, wildfires, and heat waves, the latter two of which significantly impact air quality.

The summer heat dome in 2021 saw ground-level ozone levels not experienced since the 1980s, and on May 15, 2023, Metro Vancouver issued its earliest ozone warning since the air quality warning program began in 1993. Metro Vancouver's Regional Ground-Level Ozone Strategy is currently being reviewed with consideration of more extreme temperatures and new sources of emissions, including wildfires.

Extensive wildfire smoke impacts have occurred in seven of the last ten summers (Figure 1). Research indicates that after nearly a century-long decline, wildfire activity in BC has increased significantly since 2005 (Reference 8). More area burned in BC in a recent 7-year period (2017-2023) than in the 58 years preceding (1959-2016). Figure 2 shows the area burned in BC by year from 1972 to 2025. The combined effects of climate-induced changes and altered wildfire fuels is causing more frequent years of intense and prolonged wildfire activity. With a changing climate, the region can expect warmer, drier summers, and longer periods of drought in the Metro Vancouver region, which can lead to more frequent and severe wildfire smoke impacts and elevated levels of ground-level ozone.

Figure 1: Number of days of air quality warnings (previously "advisories") in the Lower Fraser Valley

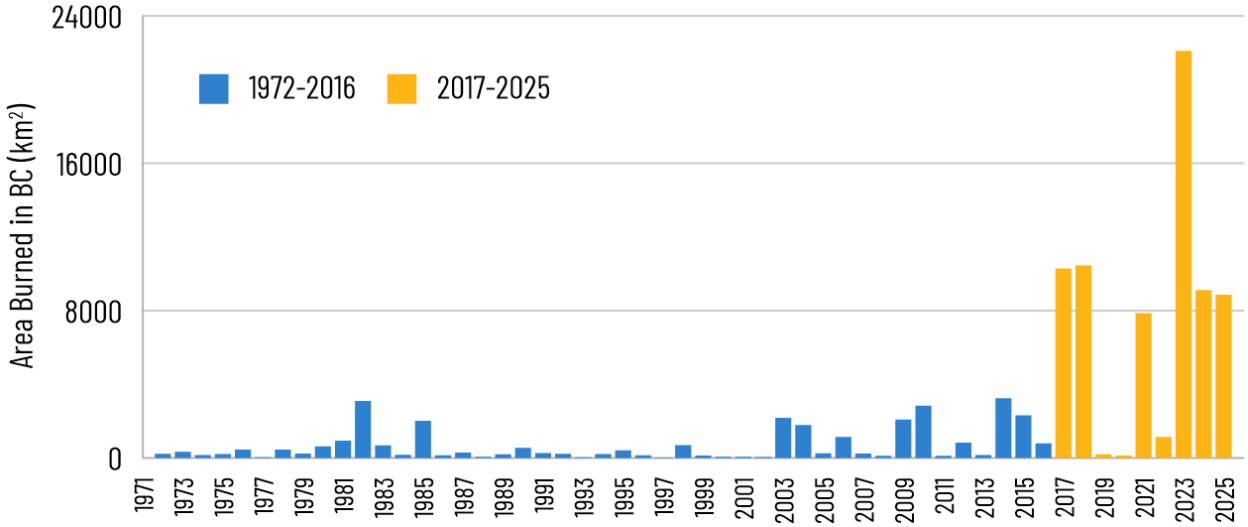


The *Clean Air Plan* outlines strategies for continuous improvement in regional air quality, including actions underway to:

- provide better protection against wildfire smoke (such as public clean air spaces);
- develop resources to help residents and businesses manage indoor air quality; and
- provide high quality information to the public during air quality warnings.

By working with health authorities and other partners, the air quality warning program helps develop awareness and informs residents and businesses about the links between air quality and health, including impacts on vulnerable populations. Metro Vancouver intends to continue collaborating with regional partners on managing air quality warnings, and enhancing public awareness.

Figure 2: Area burned in British Columbia by year from 1972-2025



Note: Data obtained from the Natural Resources Canada and BC Wildfire Service.

ALTERNATIVES

This is an information report. No alternatives are presented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time for the air quality warning program is included in annual operating budgets. Consideration of increased resource levels in long term financial planning may be needed as wildfire activity continues to increase in the future. Staff will continue to monitor workload and resource demands associated with the program over future years and will report to the Board as appropriate should adjustments be required.

CONCLUSION

Metro Vancouver staff work closely with health authorities and other partners to continuously improve the air quality warning program. This year air quality warnings will be issued as Yellow (High Health Risk) and Orange (Very High Health Risk) to convey the level of risk to the public and actions they should take to protect their health. Rainfall amounts and snowpack levels in the next several months are important in shaping the severity of the upcoming wildfire season. The region is experiencing the impacts of a changing climate now, with wildfire smoke impacting the region in seven of the last ten summers. It is essential that Metro Vancouver continues to accelerate actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate, and improve regional air quality.

ATTACHMENT

1. Presentation re: "Air Quality Warning Program and Wildfire Smoke Preparedness for 2026", dated May 8, 2026.

REFERENCES

1. Fuller-Thomson, E. G., Pappin, A. J., Rouleau, M., Xi, G., van Donkelaar, A., Martin, R. V., & Burnett, R. T. (2024). Mortality Attributable to Ambient Fine Particulate Matter Exposure in a Changing Canadian Population, 2001 to 2021. ACS ES&T Air, 1(9), 1177–1189. https://doi.org/10.1021/acsestair.4c00130.
2. British Columbia Centre for Disease Control. (2025 April). *The Public Health Paradox of Wildfire Smoke.* https://bcmj.org/bc-centre-disease-control/public-health-paradox- wildfire-smoke.
3. Metro Vancouver. (n.d.) Air Map. http://www.airmap.ca/.
4. Metro Vancouver. (n.d.). Air Quality Data and Advisories. https://metrovancouver.org/services/air-quality-climate-action/air-quality-data-and-advisories.
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6. British Columbia Centre for Disease Control. (n.d.). Wildfire Smoke. http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/wildfire-smoke.
7. British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship. (April 1, 2026). Snow Survey and Water Supply Bulletin. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/air-land-water/water/river-forecast/2026_apr1.pdf.
8. Parisien, MA., Barber, Q.E., Bourbonnais, M.L. et al. (2023, September 5). Abrupt, climate- induced increase in wildfires in British Columbia since the mid-2000s. Communications Earth & Environment. https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-023-00977-1.

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Wildfire Smokey Skies – September 3, 2025

Air Quality Warning Program and Wildfire Smoke Preparedness for 2026

Geoff Doerksen, M.Sc.
Air Quality Planner

Ken Reid, M.Sc.
Superintendent, Environmental Sampling and Monitoring

Air Quality and Climate Committee Meeting
May 8, 2026

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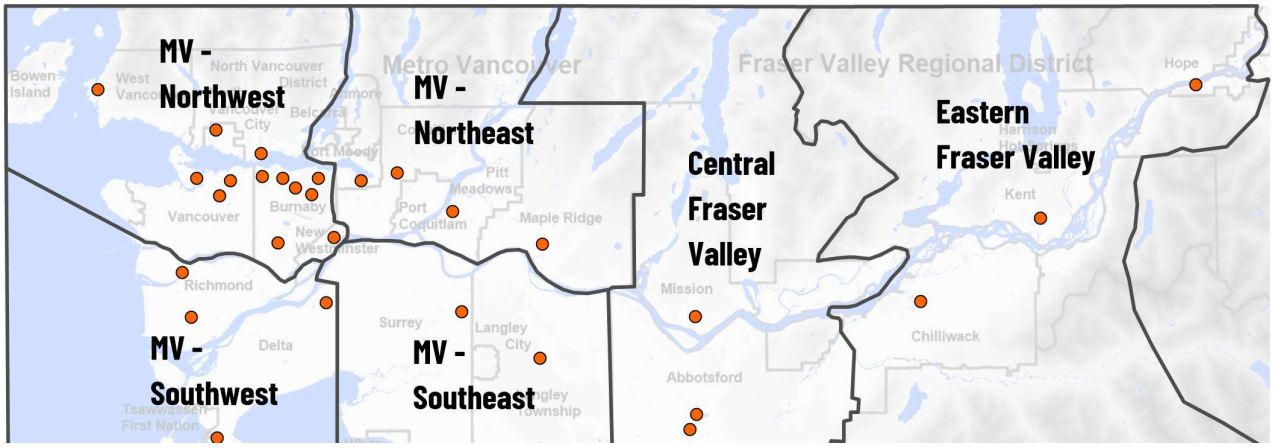
METRO VANCOUVER AIR QUALITY ADVISORY PROGRAM



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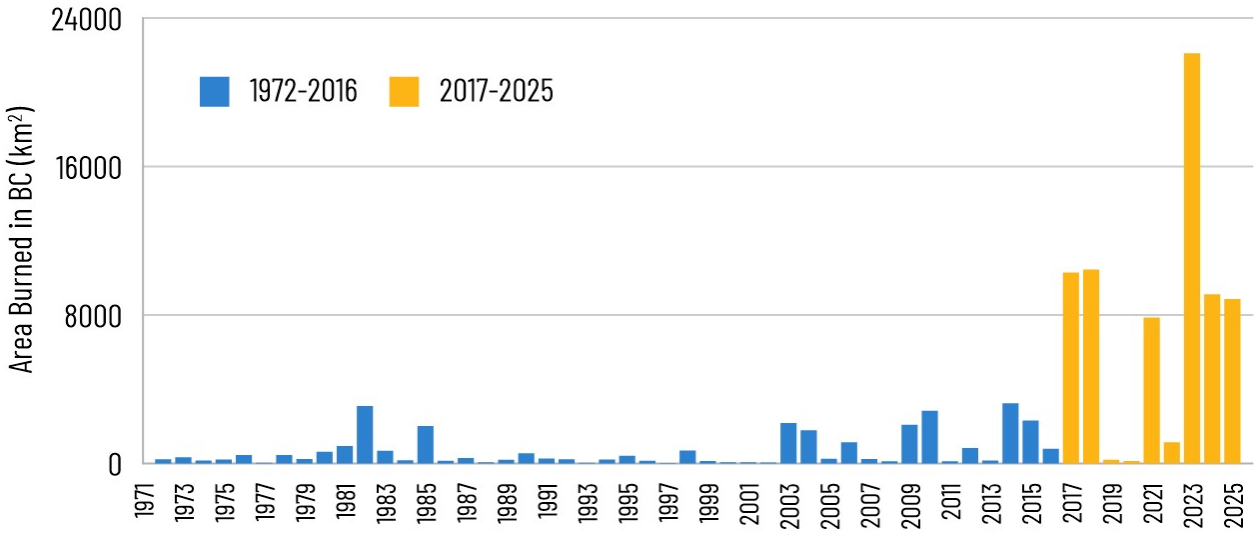

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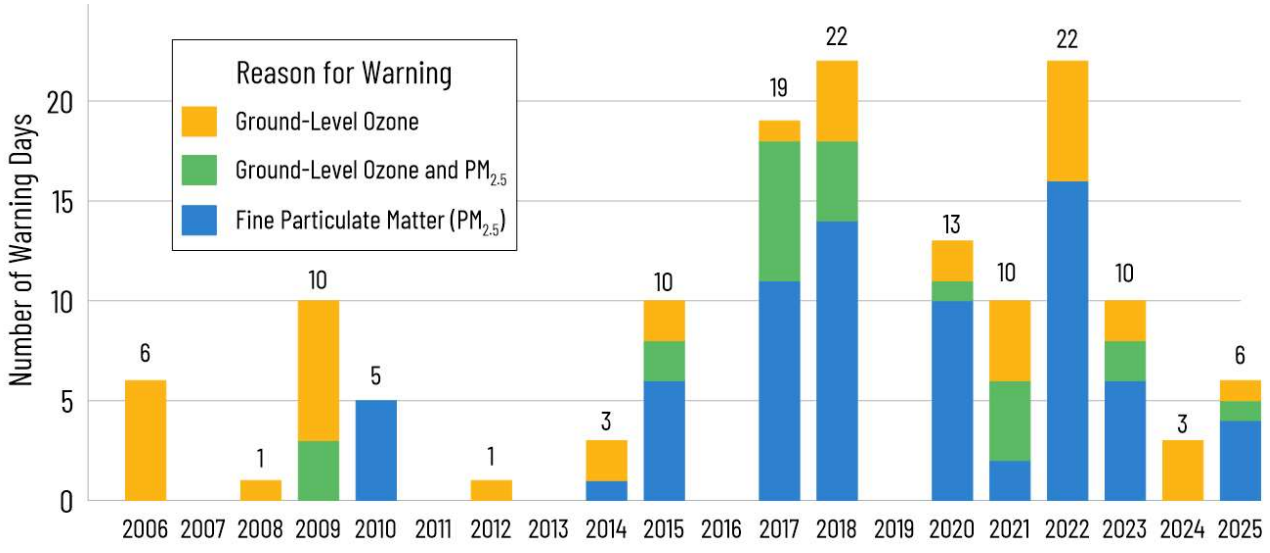
AIR QUALITY WARNINGS 2006-2025



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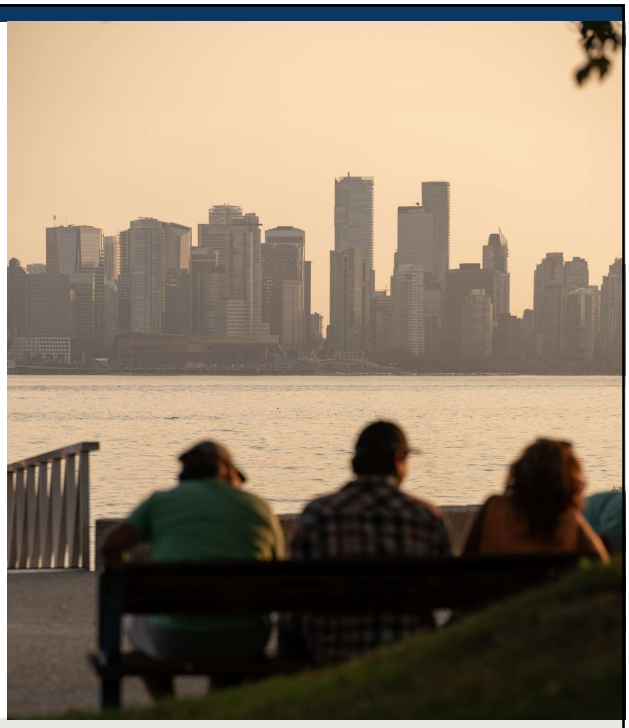
2026 KEY ENHANCEMENTS

- Local partner and health authority collaboration
- Yellow and Orange Warnings for Air Quality
- Alignment with provincial and federal partners



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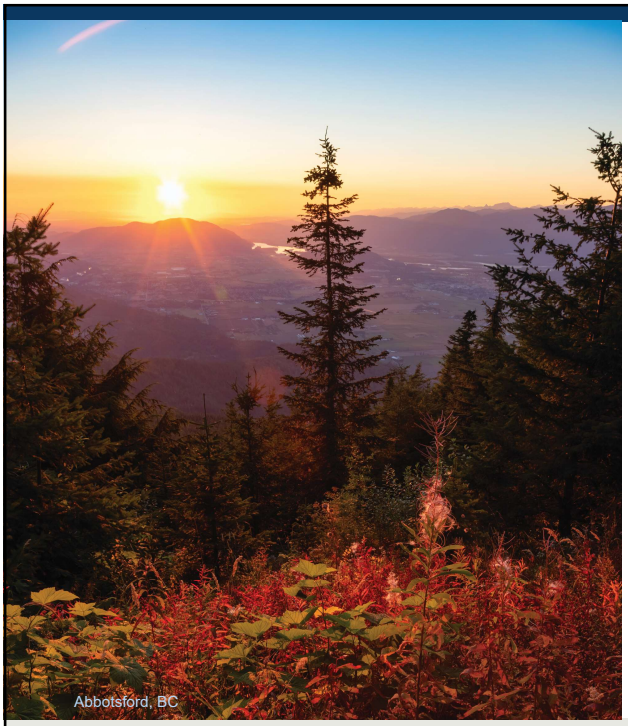

Abbotsford, BC

OUTLOOK FOR 2026 SEASON

- Spring snowpack and May to June rainfall are key to summer wildfire risk
- Changing climate will increase frequency and severity of wildfire smoke and heat waves

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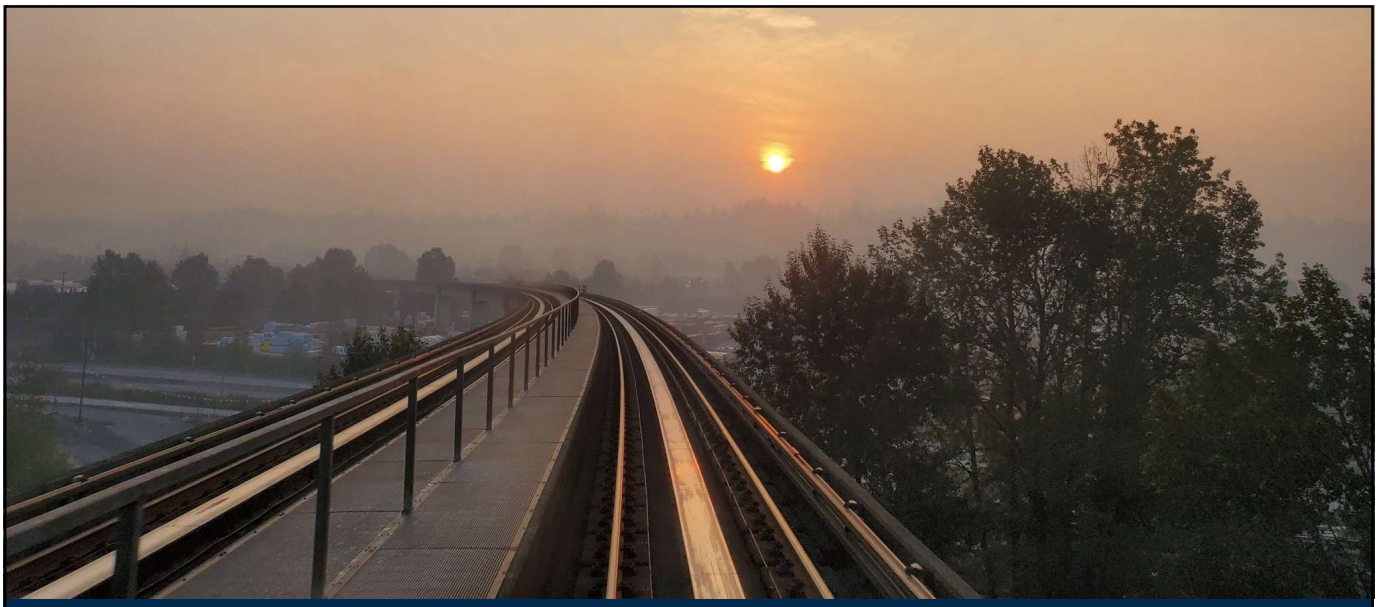

Questions?

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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

To: Air Quality Committee

From: Conor Reynolds, Director, Air Quality and Climate Action Services

Date: April 20, 2026 Meeting Date: May 8, 2026

Subject: **Manager's Report**

RECOMMENDATION
THAT the Air Quality Committee Receive for Information the report date April 20, 2026, titled "Manager's Report".

AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE 2026 WORK PLAN
Attachment 1 sets out the Committee's Work Plan for 2026. The status of work plan priorities is indicated as pending, in progress, or complete. The work plan is updated, as needed, to include new priorities that arise, items requested by the Committee, and changes to the schedule.

CLIMATE RELATED MONITORING PROGRAM
Metro Vancouver renewed its participation in the Climate Related Monitoring Program (CRMP) by signing on to a renewed agreement in February 2026. The CRMP is a provincial government initiative that brings together climate and weather data from organizations across BC, including provincial ministries, the federal government, regional districts, utilities, academic institutions, and industry. Its purpose is to improve how climate information is collected, shared, and used by creating a comprehensive provincial climate dataset. This shared understanding is critical as climate change is already affecting communities through more frequent and severe heat events, storms, drought, flooding, and wildfire activity, with direct consequences for air quality, public health, infrastructure, and emergency response, particularly during wildfire season when exposure to smoke impacts the region.

Metro Vancouver provides meteorological data to the CRMP from an extensive network of meteorological and air quality monitoring stations in the region. Sharing this information helps ensure that conditions experienced in the region are fully reflected in provincial climate assessments, while also giving Metro Vancouver access to a richer, provincial climate dataset. The Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium (PCIC), a key partner in the CRMP, will aggregate data from the various CRMP members that operate climate and weather networks to create a Provincial Climate Data Set, enhancing the understanding of the scope of climate change and variability. The CRMP also aims to improve data quality and accessibility to the public. Climate records dating back to the 1890s are available through PCIC, with new stations continually added by CRMP members.

BCUC DECISION ON BC HYDRO NET METERING SERVICE RATES (ORDER G-64-26)
Under MVRD Board direction, Metro Vancouver participated jointly with the City of Vancouver, City of Richmond, and District of North Vancouver as the Local Government Interveners (LGI) in BC Hydro's 2024 Rate Design Application to the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC). During the proceeding, the BCUC established a separate proceeding to review proposed changes to the Net Metering Service Rate (Reference 1). The BCUC has now approved BC Hydro's redesigned net metering framework, including approval of the new rates, as described below.

The current net metering program, which has been in place since 2004, has grown quickly in recent years as more customers install small-scale electricity generation such as rooftop solar systems. To address concerns about the current program's cost impact on non-participating ratepayers, BC Hydro proposed to replace it with two new options: one for customers who generate electricity on their own property (Self-Generation Service Rate, RS 2289), and a new option for people who cannot install their own systems, such as renters and residents of multi-unit buildings, to take part through shared projects (Community Generation Service Rate, RS 2290).

Local Government Interveners' Input

In its submission, the LGI supported modernizing the net metering program and agreed that the proposed payment rate for customer-generated electricity was a reasonable starting point. However, the LGI raised concerns about the fairness and likely effectiveness of the proposed community generation option, citing differences in how self-generation and community generation would be compensated, limits on the size of community projects, and limited consideration of the value of generation by location and time. The LGI asked the Commission to direct BC Hydro to redesign the community generation program to address these fairness and uptake concerns, and to require a more robust evaluation to inform future improvements. The LGI also recommended that the BCUC direct BC Hydro to assess and implement a form of virtual net metering so that community generation participants could receive more comparable credit for electricity produced on their behalf.

Approval of Redesigned Net Metering Framework

In Order G-64-26, issued March 24, 2026, the BCUC approved BC Hydro's redesigned net metering framework, including approval of the new rates (RS 2289 and RS2290) in place of the existing program (RS 1289). It also approved the net billing compensation mechanism and an energy price of 10 cents/kWh for electricity injected to the grid under both new programs. Although the BCUC did not direct BC Hydro to redesign the program as recommended by the LGI, it included several modifications aligned with LGI input:

- The Panel increased the maximum net injection limit for community generation facilities from 1 MW to 2 MW per facility. The Panel concluded that a higher limit would reduce barriers to entry, enable economies of scale, and improve early program viability, while retaining other safeguards to prevent use of the rate as a substitute for independent power producer arrangements.
- Evaluation and monitoring: Responding directly to LGI recommendations, the Panel expanded the scope of BC Hydro's required evaluation report (due April 30, 2030). The report must now include analysis of uptake trends in summer-peaking areas of the system and a discussion of the merits of incorporating location-based benefits. This is relevant since there are several summer-peaking substations in the Metro Vancouver region. The Panel also directed consideration of time-varying pricing in future reviews, noting these mechanisms may become more relevant as program participation grows.

Impacts and Implementation

Overall, the decision modernizes net metering in British Columbia, prioritizing ratepayer fairness while maintaining optional pathways for customer-owned and community-based generation. While the Panel did not adopt broader equity reforms such as virtual net metering, several outcomes—particularly the increased community generation size limit and enhanced evaluation requirements—reflect meaningful alignment with local government input. Metro Vancouver staff will continue to monitor implementation and opportunities to engage in future BCUC and provincial processes to advance equitable and climate-aligned energy policy outcomes.

ATTACHMENT

1. "Air Quality Committee 2026 Work Plan", dated April 20, 2026.

REFERENCES

1. Metro Vancouver. (April 10, 2025). *BC Utilities Commission Decisions on BC Hydro's Distribution Extension Policy and 2024 Rate Design Application.* https://metrovancouver.org/boards/AQC/AQC-2025-05-09-AGE.pdf.

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Air Quality Committee 2026 Work Plan

Report Date: April 20, 2026

1st Quarter Priorities	Status
Air Quality Committee 2026 Meeting Schedule and Work Plan	Complete
Amendments to Air Quality Management Fees Regulation Bylaw	Complete
BCUC Proceeding on BC Hydro's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan	Complete
Amendments to Boilers and Process Heaters Emission Regulation Bylaw	Pending
2026 Update on Regional District Sustainability Innovation Fund Projects	Pending
Overview of Air Quality Communications Tools	Complete
2nd Quarter Priorities	
Overview of Air Quality Warning Program and Preparedness for 2026 Season	In Progress
Amendments to Ticketing Bylaws	In Progress
Outcome of BC Utilities Commission Decisions	Pending
BC Retrofit Accelerator Update	In Progress
Electric Vehicle Curbside Charging Guide	Pending
Prioritization Matrix for Flood-related Capital Projects	Pending
Regional Flood Resiliency Planning Processes – Update	Pending
3rd Quarter Priorities	
Annual Regional Air Quality Report	Pending
Appointment of Enforcement Officers	Pending
2024 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update	Pending
Update to Regional Ground Level Ozone Strategy	Pending
Update on Regional Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessment	Pending
2026 Regional District Sustainability Innovation Fund Applications	Pending
4th Quarter Priorities	
Annual Budget and Five-Year Financial Plan	Pending
Report on 2026 Air Quality Warning Season	Pending
Report on Corporate Energy and GHG Management	Pending
Update on Regional Toxic Air Contaminant Risk Assessment	Pending
Regional Flood Resiliency Planning Processes – Update	Pending

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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

To: Air Quality Committee

From: Paul Henderson, General Manager, Solid Waste Services

Date: April 24, 2026 Meeting Date: May 8, 2026

Subject: **Draft Solid Waste Management Plan**

The attached report dated March 31, 2026, titled "Draft Solid Waste Management Plan" was received by the Zero Waste Committee on April 2, 2026, and the GVS&DD Board on April 24, 2026. The GVS&DD Board passed the following recommendation:

THAT the GVS&DD Board:

a) direct staff to invite feedback on the draft updated solid waste management plan (the "Solid Waste Management Plan") from First Nations, interested parties, and the public;

b) request that the Board Chair and the Zero Waste Committee Chair invite feedback on the Solid Waste Management Plan from member jurisdictions and adjacent regional districts; and

c) authorize the Board Chair and the Zero Waste Committee Chair to submit to the Ministry of Environment and Parks for approval the Solid Waste Management Plan materially in the form attached in Attachment 1 to the report dated March 31, 2026 titled "Draft Solid Waste Management Plan", along with feedback received by August 1, 2026.

The report is provided here to the Air Quality Committee for information, as it is related to *a Climate 2050* issue area (waste). Actions within the draft Solid Waste Management Plan aim to increase waste reduction and recycling, while reducing disposal and resulting greenhouse gas emissions, and exploring additional emission reduction initiatives. The plan reflects *Climate 2050* targets, including targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from solid waste operations to 45% of 2010 levels by 2030, and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Next steps include seeking final comments on the draft Solid Waste Management Plan and submitting the plan, along with all feedback, to the Ministry of Environment and Parks.

The Staff report has been attached for the Committee's reference (**Attachment 1**). The full report with attachments as presented to the April 24, 2026, GVS&DD Board meeting, can be accessed using the Metro Vancouver Website (Reference 1).

ATTACHMENT

1. Report dated March 31, 2026, titled "Draft Solid Waste Management Plan".

REFERENCE

1. Metro Vancouver. (2026). Board Meeting - April 24, 2026: GVS&DD. https://metrovancouver.org/boards/GVSDD/SDD-2026-04-24-AGE.pdf

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SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

To: Zero Waste Committee

From: Terry Fulton, Senior Project Engineer, Solid Waste Services

Date: March 31, 2026 Meeting Date: April 2, 2026

Subject: **Draft Solid Waste Management Plan**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the GVS&DD Board:

a) direct staff to invite feedback on the draft updated solid waste management plan (the "Solid Waste Management Plan") from First Nations, interested parties, and the public;
b) request that the Board Chair and the Zero Waste Committee Chair invite feedback on the Solid Waste Management Plan from member jurisdictions and adjacent regional districts; and
c) authorize the Board Chair and the Zero Waste Committee Chair to submit to the Ministry of Environment and Parks for approval the Solid Waste Management Plan materially in the form attached in Attachment 1 to the report dated March 31, 2026 titled "Draft Solid Waste Management Plan", along with feedback received by August 1, 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following five years of engagement, this report presents a draft solid waste management plan to guide the region for the next 10 years and beyond. The Zero Waste Committee and GVS&DD Board received updates across all five phases of the solid waste management plan update, and the GVS&DD Board has approved components of the updated plan. The updated plan emphasizes affordability, collaboration, and transparency, while continuing to position Metro Vancouver as a North American leader in waste prevention and recycling.

An initial draft solid waste management plan was published on January 22, 2026, and presented to the Zero Waste Committee on February 5, 2026. Feedback on the initial draft was received from a range of groups and individuals and considered in developing the revised draft Solid Waste Management Plan (**Attachments 1 and 2**).

Key changes to the initial draft solid waste management plan following feedback include:

- a strategic principle of prioritizing local solid waste management solutions
- 2036 targets including sector specific targets
- key focus areas highlighting priority initiatives such as increasing multi-family diversion and reducing construction and demolition waste
- strengthened language with respect to implementation including education and outreach actions and actions tailored to newcomers and multilingual communities
- additional financial details including detail on allocation of expenditures to waste reduction and recycling within the five-year financial plan, and annual reporting on allocation of expenditures and efficacy of those expenditures

The Metro Vancouver solid waste system is cost effective compared to solid waste systems in other major Canadian cities, and provides reliable and resilient recycling and waste services to residents and businesses in the region. The Waste-to-Energy facility and Vancouver Landfill continue to be safe and cost-effective methods for managing residual garbage, and are approximately half the cost of remote disposal of garbage.

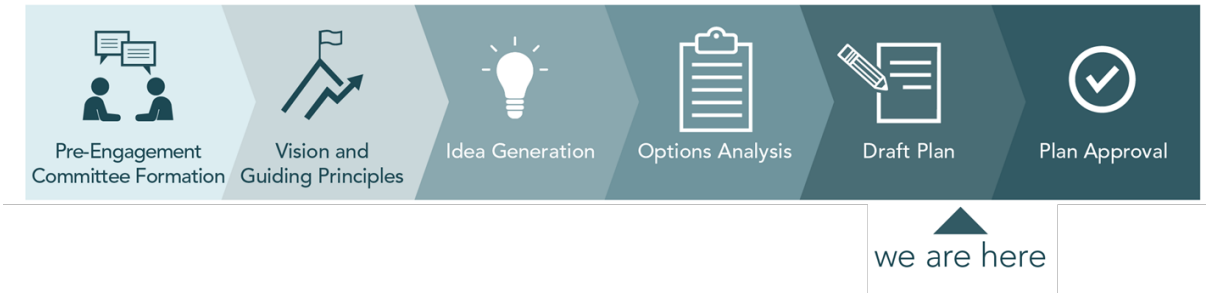
PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the draft solid waste management plan to the Zero Waste Committee and GVS&DD Board, and seek Board direction to invite feedback on the draft in advance of submitting it to the Minister of Environment and Parks.

BACKGROUND

Regional districts are required to develop solid waste management plans under the *Environmental Management Act*, to be approved by the BC Ministry of Environment and Parks. Provincial guidelines recommend initiating an update of the plan every 10 years. In November 2019 the GVS&DD Board authorized initiating an update of the regional solid waste management plan approved in 2011.

The Zero Waste Committee and GVS&DD Board have received updates at each phase of the solid waste management plan update process. The solid waste management plan is currently in the last phase of development, as depicted below. On February 5, 2026, the Zero Waste Committee received information on the components of the initial draft of the updated solid waste management plan. Comments on the initial draft have been considered and incorporated into the draft updated solid waste management plan (the "Solid Waste Management Plan", Attachment 1).



The plan update process is supported by a robust engagement process. Across the multiple engagement phases, Metro Vancouver has:

- Held over 23 meetings or workshops with member jurisdiction staff
- Met with adjacent regional districts
- Held 60 meetings with the Solid Waste Management Plan Public/Technical Advisory Committee and Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee
- Worked with 23 not-for-profit organizations to reach over 3,000 residents who otherwise would not have been aware of or had access to participate in the engagement process
- Received over 1,400 questionnaire responses
- Engaged thousands of residents at the PNE and community events
- Provided over 50 updates to the Zero Waste Committee and/or GVS&DD Board

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Feedback from all phases of engagement, including the recent options analysis phase, was considered in developing an initial draft solid waste management plan. Metro Vancouver published the initial draft plan on its website on January 22, 2026, and invited comments on the initial draft plan from First Nations, member jurisdiction staff, adjacent regional district staff, the Solid Waste Management Plan Public/Technical Advisory Committee, the Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee, provincial staff, and others. Metro Vancouver also held dedicated feedback sessions on the initial draft with member jurisdiction staff, the Solid Waste Management Plan Public/Technical Advisory Committee, and the Solid Waste and Recycling Industry Advisory Committee. Several e-mail submissions were also received from other interested parties.

At the February 5, 2026, Zero Waste Committee meeting, committee members noted priority for strengthening actions related to education for newcomers, and waste reduction in the multi-family, construction, food, and commercial/institutional sectors. These all feature prominently in the actions within the Solid Waste Management Plan, as well as in the focus areas outlined below. They will also become areas of focus in the beginning stages of plan implementation.

The Solid Waste Management Plan was developed considering feedback received. Changes between the initial draft solid waste management plan and the current Solid Waste Management Plan are shown in the comparison (blackline) document included as Attachment 2 to this report.

Key changes to the initial draft solid waste management plan following feedback include:

Targets and Implementation

- Added targets to be achieved within a 10-year planning horizon, including sector-specific targets for waste diversion.
- Introduced a high-level implementation schedule to improve transparency around sequencing and timing.
- Provided greater clarity on the role of member jurisdictions in plan implementation.
- Outlined how potential impacts, including impacts to adjacent regional districts, will be assessed.
- Strengthened language throughout the plan, replacing aspirational wording with clearer commitments to implementation.

Focus Areas

- Identified priority focus areas for near-term action, including multi-family residential waste diversion, construction and demolition waste reduction, and food waste prevention. These focus areas are new or significantly enhanced compared to the 2011 plan. Identified how focus areas will contribute to the targets.
- Focus areas highlight key initiatives that are intended to drive progress towards goals and targets.

Financial transparency

- Expanded financial details, including a commitment to assess the efficacy of and regularly report on expenditures.

Inclusivity

- Enhanced actions related to education and outreach, with specific attention to newcomers to the region and populations facing access barriers, supporting more equitable service delivery.

Recycling and residuals management

- Highlighted that prioritizing local solid waste management is a strategic principle.
- Updated descriptions of recycled materials to include all source-separated recycled materials incorporated into new products, with only materials used as fossil fuel substitutes categorized as recovery.
- Listed current third-party disposal and composting facilities contracted by Metro Vancouver, and enhanced language on use of appropriate procurement processes for future disposal or composting capacity.
- Identified clear bags as a potential tool to improve the effectiveness of disposal bans, responding to feedback on enforcement challenges.

The Metro Vancouver system solid waste system is cost-effective compared to solid waste systems in other major Canadian cities and provides reliable and resilient recycling and waste services to residents and businesses in the region. The Waste-to-Energy facility and Vancouver Landfill continue to be safe and cost-effective methods for managing residual garbage and are approximately half the cost of alternatives. Key feedback that was received and not incorporated in the Solid Waste Management Plan is summarized in the following table, and more detail is available in Reference 1:

Table 1: Key Feedback not incorporated in Solid Waste Management Plan

Feedback	Rationale
Close the Waste-to-Energy Facility	Despite the region's success in reducing waste, approximately one million tonnes per year of garbage from residential commercial and institutional sources require disposal. Waste-to-energy costs are consistent with local landfilling, and half of remote landfilling. Emissions from the Waste-to-Energy Facility are closely monitored and openly shared in real time online, in addition to being reported to regulators. All regulated emission parameter values are below regulatory emission limits, with most parameters less than 10% of limits.
Stop landfilling waste	The plan prioritizes preventing the generation of waste and minimizing disposal. In terms of managing materials not diverted through reuse, repair and recycling, landfills are an important component of the regional solid waste system. Landfills provide approximately 75% of regional disposal capacity, and account for more than 95% of residuals disposal in Canada.
Private regional solid waste system	Through a network of recycling and waste disposal facilities operated under contract from a best value, fair and transparent procurement process, Metro Vancouver provides convenient drop-off for small loads of recyclables, and disposal of garbage for all residents and businesses in the region. This system provides reliable and resilient waste and recycling services that benefit and are available to all residents and businesses who generate waste in the region. It also allows Metro Vancouver to implement the disposal ban program at its facilities which encourages recycling rather than disposal of many recyclable materials. Recycling sorting and processing facilities, and most commercial recyclables collection and drop-off are managed by the private sector. An integrated system allows and encourages private sector innovation in recycling.

Feedback	Rationale
Do not send material to cement kilns and other industries to be used as alternative fuel	Where a feasible alternative exists, Metro Vancouver aims to manage materials according to the highest applicable level of the waste hierarchy (e.g. recycling before recovery). Recovering energy from non-recyclable materials is preferable to disposal according to Metro Vancouver's waste hierarchy, which is consistent with the provincial and federal hierarchies.

Prioritizing Local Solid Waste Management Solutions

Prioritizing local solutions (solutions within Metro Vancouver region or in close proximity) for solid waste management aligns with the vision and guiding principles of the solid waste management plan and is a strategic principle. Local solutions for managing solid waste increase resilience, reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions, create local employment and economic benefit, and are typically less expensive than solutions in distant communities. A number of actions within the solid waste management plan prioritize local solutions including:

- Work with economic development agencies to identify and implement circular businesses opportunities
- Develop, test and share definitions and approaches for zoning and development bylaws to clarify siting requirements for waste reduction and recycling activities
- Prioritize the development of local facilities and collection programs for triaging building materials to their best and highest use
- Support the development of additional local organics processing through leveraging Metro Vancouver procurement processes for organics management from recycling and waste centres
- Explore opportunities to reduce reliance on remote disposal facilities through optimized use of the Vancouver Landfill and the Waste-to-Energy Facility.

Updated Targets

Table 2 outlines updated targets for the Solid Waste Management Plan. Feedback received on the 2050 targets in the initial draft plan indicated that while some groups felt the targets were unrealistic and unachievable, others felt they should be more ambitious. Targets were created based on assessment of the collective impact of the strategies and actions included in the Solid Waste Management Plan. The plan includes more detail on which key initiatives will drive progress toward these targets.

Primary Metric	Baseline	2036 Target (New)	2050 Vision
Per Capita Waste Generation (Disposal + Diversion)	1.2 tonnes/capita (2024)	1.1 tonnes/capita waste generation (10% reduction)	1 tonne/capita (20% reduction)
Diversion/Recycling Rate	65% Diversion (2024) 62% Recycling (2024)	75% Diversion 70% Recycling Diversion by sector: Single-family: 75% Multi-family: 60% Commercial/Institutional: 65% Construction and Demolition: 85%	80% Diversion 75% Recycling Diversion by sector: Single-family: 80% Multi-family: 70% Commercial/Institutional: 70% Construction and Demolition: 90%
Per Capita Disposal	430 kg/capita (2024)	300 kg/capita (30% reduction)	210 kg/capita (50% reduction)
Greenhouse gas Emissions	660,000 tonnes CO_2 equivalent solid waste greenhouse emissions (2010)	360,000 tonnes CO_2 equivalent (2030 target) 45% reduction from 2010	Carbon Neutral

Focus Areas

An executive summary was added to the revised draft Solid Waste Management Plan in response to feedback calling for better articulation of key initiatives to drive progress towards the plan goals and targets. These initiatives are referred to in the Plan as Focus Areas, and outline high priority strategies and actions consisting primarily of initiatives that are new since approval of the 2011 of the plan. The Focus Areas are summarized below:

1. Lead the transition to a regional circular economy through waste prevention
2. Scale up reuse opportunities at recycling and waste centres and beyond
3. Increase access to organics and recycling services for multi-family residents, businesses, and institutions
4. Expand efforts to prevent disposal of valuable food and organics
5. Expand efforts to prevent disposal of valuable building materials
6. Work with organizations that make, sell, use, collect, and recycle plastics to improve collection of recyclable plastics and eliminate unnecessary and hard to recycle plastics

Next Steps in the Process

The next steps in the solid waste management planning process are as follows:

- A revised draft Solid Waste Management Plan is being provided to the Zero Waste Committee and GVS&DD Board for consideration.
- Following GVS&DD Board review, staff will invite feedback on the draft updated Solid Waste Management Plan from First Nations, interested parties, the public, adjacent regional districts, and member jurisdictions. Draft letters to member jurisdictions and adjacent regional districts are included as **Attachments 3 and 4**.
- Submit to the Ministry of Environment and Parks, for approval, the draft updated Solid Waste Management Plan, materially in the form of Attachment 1 to this report, along with the received feedback.

ALTERNATIVES

1. THAT the GVS&DD Board:
   a) direct staff to invite feedback on the draft updated solid waste management plan (the "Solid Waste Management Plan") from First Nations, interested parties, and the public;
   b) request that the Board Chair and the Zero Waste Committee Chair invite feedback on the Solid Waste Management Plan from member jurisdictions and adjacent regional districts; and
   c) authorize the Board Chair and the Zero Waste Committee Chair to submit to the Ministry of Environment and Parks for approval the Solid Waste Management Plan materially in the form attached in Attachment 1 to the report dated March 31, 2026 titled "Draft Solid Waste Management Plan", along with feedback received by August 1, 2026.

2. THAT the GVS&DD Board receive for information the report dated March 31, 2026 titled "Draft Solid Waste Management Plan".

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Affordability is embedded in the Solid Waste Management Plan's guiding principles and will be a key consideration as plan actions are implemented.

The Solid Waste Management Plan specifies that actions in the plan requiring Metro Vancouver expenditures will be brought forward for consideration by the GVS&DD Board through the regular budget process, prioritizing actions where business casing shows the highest potential to advance solid waste management plan primary and secondary metrics. Annual reporting will indicate how funds were allocated to Solid Waste Management Plan initiatives including corresponding metrics on the effectiveness of each, such as progress toward plan targets and improvements in secondary metrics. This reporting strategy will assist in prioritizing funding and informing where investments can be most strategically allocated.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Solid Waste Management Plan includes specific member jurisdiction actions, which have been reviewed by member jurisdiction staff and revised to incorporate feedback. The member jurisdiction actions comprise areas of focus for members to consider – they are not requirements.

CONCLUSION

Metro Vancouver shared an initial draft updated solid waste management plan which was developed considering feedback from all prior phases of engagement. Feedback on the initial draft plan indicated a need for stronger direction and prioritization to demonstrate a clear path forward to meet the goals and targets outlined. Revisions made in the Solid Waste Management Plan include the addition of priority initiatives to drive measurable progress in preventing waste, increasing recycling, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and transitioning to a circular economy. The next steps in the planning process are to invite feedback from First Nations, interested parties, the public, adjacent regional districts and member jurisdictions, and to submit for approval of the Ministry of Environment and Parks the Solid Waste Management Plan, materially in the form of Attachment 1.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Solid Waste Management Plan.
2. Blackline Version – Revised Draft Solid Waste Management Plan.
3. Draft Letter to Member Jurisdictions.
4. Draft Letter to Adjacent Regional Districts.

REFERENCES

1. Metro Vancouver. (2026). Draft Summary of Ideas Staff Consider Unadvisable. https://metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/Documents/draft-summary-of-ideas-staff-consider-unadvisable.pdf

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