

POLICY REVIEW SUMMARY

Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas

About Metro 2050

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

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

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

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



Policy Review Summaries

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

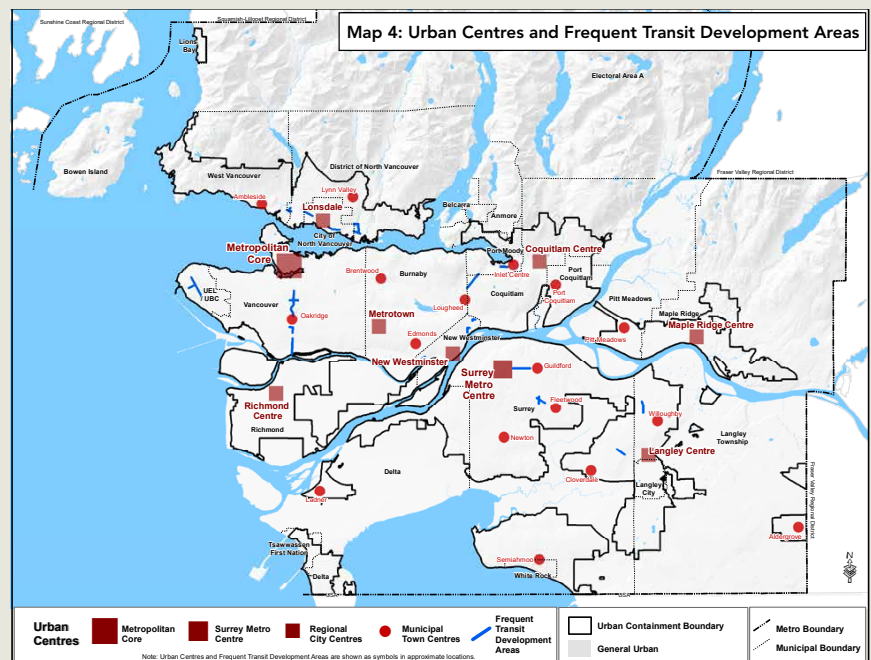
Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas

Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDAs) are the key focal areas for the connection between growth, development, and transit investment in the region. In *Metro 2040* there are four centre types:

- Metro Centres
- Regional City Centres
- Municipal Town Centres
- Frequent Transit Development Areas

They, along with the Urban Containment Boundary, make up the region's growth framework, allowing Metro Vancouver and member jurisdictions to focus growth to a network of centres and transit-oriented corridors throughout the region, supporting the creation of livable, walkable communities, and the efficient expansion of the transit network.

Updates to the Urban Centres and FTDAs framework will better reflect existing development, set the stage for more resilient neighbourhoods going forward, and make the policies easier to implement.



Metro 2040 Urban Centres and FTDA map

WHAT'S CHANGING

The following changes to the regional growth framework are recommended:

1. Include a Frequent Transit Corridor Network map to simplify the use of the FTDA tool
2. Update the Urban Centre and FTDA classifications
3. Introduce an Urban Centre and FTDA Type reclassification framework
4. Update the Urban Centre and FTDA targets to align with the 2050 growth projections
5. Strengthen neighbourhood and complete community policies to support climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts and other regional priorities

BENEFITS

These changes will provide the following benefits:

- Makes the regional growth strategy simpler to implement at the local level
- Clarifies the distinction between centre types and improve consistency with existing conditions
- Specifies the expectations, function, and location of each Urban Centre and FTDA
- Helps to better coordinate community planning with transit planning
- Clarifies the intended use of transit corridors by providing a map that identifies potential areas where FTDAs could be identified.
- Brings a stronger climate lens to growth planning to ensure regional resilience

Recommendation #1: Include a Frequent Transit Corridor Network Geography to Simplify the use of the FTDA Tool

The intent of the FTDA tool is to encourage more people to live and work along the Frequent Transit Network (FTN) across the region. Over the past decade, FTDA's have not been identified as quickly as desired, and have not always been aligned with a frequent transit corridor. This has made it hard to measure where growth is going. It also means the regional growth strategy has not provided consistent signals to developers and member jurisdictions about where growth should be directed.

This recommendation is to add a map in *Metro 2050* that identifies the Frequent Transit Corridor Network and potential areas for growth (including housing and job growth), supports transit-oriented development, and increases ridership for transit. It will also improve and simplify regional growth monitoring.

Through the use of FTDA's, member jurisdictions will be asked to identify how much growth will be going to transit-oriented corridors over time and how they will be supporting transit oriented development along the Frequent Transit Corridor Network.



Recommendation #2: Update Urban Centre and FTDA Typology

There are four "centre types" in the *Metro 2040* typology: Metro Centres, Regional City Centres, Municipal Town Centres, and FTDA's. The typology is intended to reflect the different scales of intensity, roles, activity, and land uses in Urban Centres and FTDA's across the region. Over the past decade, the region has matured and Urban Centres and FTDA's have developed in different ways to the point where the typology no longer accurately reflects today's Urban Centres and FTDA's. FTDA's are also being used in different ways depending on the transit service. Member jurisdictions have requested more specific criteria and more explicit growth expectations for each centre type.

This recommendation would divide the Municipal Town Centre "type" into two "subtypes": Municipal Town Centres and High Growth Municipal Town Centres and divide the FTDA "type" into two "subtypes": Corridor FTDA's and Station Area FTDA's. There are also new criteria to define the general expectations, function, and location of each centre type and subtype.

This will incorporate more nuance into the typology to reflect the variety of communities across the region. In addition, the updated typology provides clearer expectations for growth, location, and function of Urban Centres and FTDA's as well as a stronger relationship with transit service planning.

Recommendation #3: Introduce an Urban Centre Reclassification Framework

Metro 2040 has a process for adding or deleting Urban Centres and FTDA's, and a process to adjust the boundaries of Urban Centres and FTDA's, but it lacks a process for reclassifying centre types from one centre type to another. Since Recommendation #2 would add new subtypes to the typology a reclassification framework is needed.

This recommendation introduces a framework to guide the reclassification of one centre type to another. It outlines clear, fair, and standardized criteria by which a centre type reclassification could be evaluated as well as the required amendment process. The framework would only allow existing Urban Centres or FTDA's to be reclassified (although new FTDA's are always encouraged provided they are located along the FTN).

The reclassification framework has been defined using a "climate lens." This means that a member seeking reclassification to a higher order centre type would need to demonstrate that the area has high accessibility to jobs, has high density of jobs and residents, and is not in a known hazard area. This helps to focus new growth in areas where residents can walk, bike, or take transit for most trips and in areas that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.



Recommendation #4: Update and Refine Urban Centre and FTDA Targets to align with 2050 Projections

Through *Metro 2040*, member jurisdictions have committed to a target of focusing 40% of housing growth and 50% of job growth between 2006 and 2041 to the region's Urban Centres. In addition, members have committed to a target of 28% of housing growth and 27% of job growth to take place along the Frequent Transit Network across the region.

These targets are not currently broken out by sub-region or by municipality, making it unclear how much growth each community is anticipated to accommodate. Transit-oriented growth is taking place along the Frequent Transit Network but that growth is not being reflected in the growth monitoring framework.

This recommendation would extend the Urban Centre and FTDA growth target timeline to the year 2050 to align with the 2050 growth projections. The proportion targeted for Urban Centres and FTDA's may be revised to ensure that they are achievable and supportive of the regional vision. Furthermore, the targets may be broken out by sub-region and potentially by municipality to clarify growth expectations. The FTDA target will be clarified with growth targets for appropriate areas along the Frequent Transit Network. Finally, additional targets for different metrics may be added, recognizing that growth is not the only determinant of complete communities.

Recommendation #5: Strengthen Compact and Complete Development Policies to Support Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation and other Regional Priorities

Developing compact, complete, walkable, and transit-oriented Urban Centres and FTDA's is a critical strategy essential to achieving the region's goal of reaching carbon neutrality by the year 2050. This strategy also supports the creation of more affordable rental housing, improved access to community amenities, and a healthy built environment. Over the past decade, Metro Vancouver has done extensive policy research to develop best practice guidelines for the development of complete communities.

This recommendation adds new policies to Goal 1 of the regional growth strategy based on recent policy research. These new policies address emerging and critical issues, including climate change, green infrastructure, transit-oriented affordable housing, childcare, and other topics that were not considered in *Metro 2040*.



REGIONAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

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

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

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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