

Attachment 2

Metro Vancouver's Regional Strategies and Programs along the Fraser River¹

Metro 2040

Metro 2040 is the regional federation's collective vision for how to manage anticipated growth in the region in a way that:

- structures growth to support complete, connected and resilient communities;
- protects important lands (agricultural, industrial and important ecosystems);
- supports a diverse and growing regional economy;
- supports the provision of diverse and affordable housing; and
- supports the efficient provision of urban infrastructure (e.g. transit and utilities).

Metro 2040 has numerous policies that provide context for land use along the Fraser River Corridor. They include:

- Ensuring that development is focused in Urban Centres and along frequent transit corridors, and for development outside of these areas within the General Urban designation, density is lower;
- Discouraging major commercial and institutional development outside of Urban Centres or Frequent Transit Development Areas;
- Protecting remaining industrial lands and excluding uses on industrial lands that are inconsistent with the intent of industrial areas, such as medium and large format retail, residential uses, and stand-alone office uses that are not supportive of industrial activities;
- Identify policies and actions which support the protection of rail rights-of-way and access points to navigable waterways in order to reserve the potential for goods movement;
- Encourage better utilization and intensification of industrial areas for industrial activities;
- Concentrating commercial and other major trip-generating uses in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas; and
- Implementing the Metro Vancouver Regional Parks and Greenways Plan in collaboration with municipalities, to identify, secure and enhance habitat and park lands and buffer, where feasible, park and conservation areas from activities in adjacent areas.

Member jurisdictions have Official Community Plans (OCPs) that provide further policy context with more specific direction for lands and natural features and areas within their

¹ Source: Metro Vancouver's Regional Planning Committee Report on *Responding to Funding Request for Fraser River Waterfront Revitalization Initiative*, dated September 22, 2020

jurisdiction. Overall, regional objectives to improve the quality of life and sustainability in the region, including affordable housing, active transportation, efficient infrastructure, environmental protection, climate action, employment growth, and place-making are identified within *Metro 2040* and member OCPs.

Regional Industrial Lands Strategy

The Regional Industrial Lands Strategy, approved by the MVRD Board on July 3, 2020, notes that Industrial lands are crucial to maintaining a prosperous, sustainable economy and to providing space to accommodate the industrial services needed in the growing region, and reiterates the need to protect Industrial lands for industrial uses.

The development of the Regional Industrial Lands Strategy was a collaborative process guided by the Industrial Lands Strategy Task Force between 2018 and 2020. The Task Force included representatives from some Metro Vancouver member jurisdictions, the Provincial government, TransLink, Port of Vancouver, and the private sector. The Regional Industrial Lands Strategy establishes a vision for the future of industrial lands across Metro Vancouver to the year 2050, and provides a set of recommendations to guide a broad range of stakeholder actions to achieve that vision.

Through the development of the Regional Industrial Lands Strategy, significant research was undertaken including an assessment of the Economic Value of Industrial Lands to the Metro Vancouver Region (2019) and a Survey of Industrial Land Users and Tenants (2018). The former found that industrial lands are the foundation for a significant amount of the region's total economic activity, with a disproportionately large amount of employment, and wages above the regional average. Industrial lands serve both an important regional role and, as a facilitator of trade-enabling activities, a critical national role. The extent to which these activities can be moved elsewhere is limited.

Specifically:

- Industrial lands in the region comprise 4% of the land base, but account for about 27% (365,000) of the region's 1.3 million jobs and 30% of GDP;
- Of these 365,000 jobs, 200,000 are industrial-related, of which 93% are related to region serving industrial activities and 7% to trade enabling industrial activities;
- Business and employment activities on the region's industrial lands contribute billions in revenues; \$167 million to municipal governments, \$2.3 billion to provincial government, \$6.5 billion to federal government);
- Activities on the region's industrial lands contribute to regional economic diversity by spreading risk across business types, thereby reducing regional sensitivities to the ups and downs of individual business cycles;
- Demand for industrial land continues to be strong and the region is facing a significant shortage of land; and
- The relocation potential for most activities occurring on the region's industrial lands is limited.

Regarding the Survey of Industrial Users, respondents were asked to identify their top challenges from a list of challenges. Finding and retaining qualified employees (77%) and increased operational costs (75%) were identified as the biggest challenges. For those citing operational costs, the main components include input materials, property tax and rent. Other notable challenges include:

- Transportation and parking (41%); Finding and retaining affordable land (34%);
- Regulatory issues (31%); Competition in the market (30%);
- Lack of skills/knowledge/need for mentorship (25%); and
- Finding and retaining affordable building space (22%).

The findings of the Metro Vancouver User Survey largely reflect the issues and challenges of municipal stakeholders under the category 'constrained land supply'. Specifically, and with respect to land availability and affordability, stakeholders highlighted the high demand for (and lack of availability of) industrial lands, as well as record low vacancy rates. A regional scarcity of employment lands in general, and larger parcel sizes in particular (15+ acres), was also noted.

In addition, Metro Vancouver undertakes a Regional Industrial Lands Inventory every five years. It is currently being updated for 2020. The 2015 Inventory played a significant role in setting the stage for the development of the Regional Industrial Lands Strategy. It found that 93% of lands classified as General Urban (50% of the inventory) were fully utilized, and confirmed that there was a net reduction in industrial lands of 350 ha between 2010 and 2015.

According to the latest market reports from Q2 2020, this is the thirteenth consecutive quarter where the region's industrial vacancy rate has been below 2.0%. For the 212 million sq. ft. inventory of industrial building floor space in the region, the average vacancy rate was 1.7%, while average asking rents were at \$13.15 per sq. ft. In terms of development activity, there were 3.4 million sq. ft. of floor space under construction, and 1.9 million sq. ft. of new supply.

Regional Parks

Metro Vancouver's Regional Parks Plan seeks to implement opportunities to build and protect the regional parks network. In particular, the Plan has identified opportunities to expand regional greenways to support connectivity throughout the region. One such measure is Experience the Fraser. This a partnership to further enhance and extend the regional greenways along the Fraser River Corridor. In addition to greenways, the Parks Plan also highlights the need to ensure adequate mitigation and adaptation measures are implemented in an effort to deal with the effects of climate change. To date, Regional Parks staff have fostered these partnerships and continue to implement such

measures in an effort to build a regional parks network that “*protects natural areas and connects people to nature.*”

Further to the above work, Regional Parks staff are currently consulting on a Regional Greenways 2050 Plan. This plan will further supplement the current land use and parks vision for the Fraser River Corridor to promote connectivity across the region.

Metro Vancouver Regional Prosperity Service

The Regional Economic Prosperity Service is a new service of Metro Vancouver organized to advance a shared prosperity in the region, which includes actively seeking out companies interested in locating or expanding in the Metro Vancouver region, and connecting investors with the right opportunities that will facilitate successful business growth. This entails a collaborative approach involving member jurisdictions of Metro Vancouver, First Nations, key regional stakeholders as well as federal and provincial ministries and agencies active in investment attraction. The service is structured around three functions: fostering collaboration, conducting regional data collection and research and attracting investment.

A Management Board, chaired by MVRD Board Chair Sav Dhaliwal, composed of elected officials and community leaders, will provide guidance and strategic advice. The Regional Economic Prosperity Advisory Committee, composed of senior staff from member jurisdictions with responsibilities for economic development and long-term planning, contributes a local perspective on economic development, and the Global Advisory Group, comprising a relatively small group of executive-level leaders, provides insights on the broader national and international trends affecting strategic investment.

Other Plans

There are various other plans that also influence the use along the Fraser River corridor. These plans include the Port of Vancouver’s Land Use Plan and the Vancouver International Airport’s YVR 2037 Master Plan which both look to preserve and enhance the current land uses. These uses include, industrial, employment and aviation uses. Beyond these two plans, there is the Agricultural Land Commission’s focus to preserve land within the region to support agricultural activities.