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Mayor Mike Hurley and Council  
City of Burnaby  
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Dear Mayor Mike Hurley and Council:

### Consultation on Proposed *Metro 2050* Amendment Options in Response to South of the Fraser Mayors' Request

On November 28, 2025, the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) Board of Directors directed staff to initiate consultation on potential amendments to *Metro 2050*, the Regional Growth Strategy, in response to a letter to the Board Chair from three South of the Fraser Mayors. These municipalities have expressed that the current amendment framework is limiting their ability to accommodate the region's growing demand for housing, employment lands, and essential services.

In June 2025, the mayors of Surrey, Langley Township, and Delta submitted a joint letter outlining policy changes they believe are necessary to better support growth and development south of the Fraser. Informed by this request and subsequent discussions with municipal staff and the MVRD Board, Metro Vancouver has developed four amendment options for consideration. These options focus on improving flexibility for making adjustments to the Urban Containment Boundary and streamlining the amendment process while maintaining the integrity of regional growth management objectives.

The proposed amendment options are:

- 1. Type 3 amendment: Add new Special Study Areas in the requesting municipalities.**  
Currently, *Metro 2050* does not allow the addition of new Special Study Areas (SSAs). SSAs are designated locations where future regional land use changes are anticipated but require further study before an amendment can proceed. This amendment would allow Surrey, Langley Township, and Delta to identify a limited number of new SSAs for inclusion in *Metro 2050*, enabling future land use changes in these areas to be considered under a lower voting threshold.

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2. **Type 1 amendment: Re-Classify amendments to lands with a Rural regional land use designation from Type 2 to Type 3 amendments.**  
Lower the voting threshold for designation changes from Rural to Industrial, Employment, or General Urban.
3. **Type 1 amendment: Expand amendment opportunities for properties adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary.**  
Lower the voting threshold for changes from Agricultural or Rural to General Urban or Employment, provided that the sites (a) are contiguous with the Urban Containment Boundary; (b) are outside the Agricultural Land Reserve and ecologically sensitive areas; (c) can be serviced with existing or committed infrastructure; and (d) support compact, transit-oriented, complete communities.
4. **Type 3 amendment: Expand use of the flexibility clause (6.2.7) for properties adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary.**  
Allow regional land use designations on sites contiguous to the Urban Containment Boundary to be changed without a *Metro 2050* amendment, if the change satisfies criteria outlined in the current flexibility clause (i.e. site size and cumulative usage).

Under *Metro 2050*, Type 1 amendments require a 50%+1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board plus unanimous acceptance by all affected local governments to pass. Type 3 amendments require a 50%+1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board to pass after an opportunity for comment from all affected local governments. More details about these amendment types is contained in Part F of *Metro 2050* ([Implementation](#)) and in the [Regional Growth Strategy Amendments Implementation Guide](#).

The MVRD Board cannot give initial readings to a *Metro 2050* amendment bylaw that affects local governments without first consulting with them. As an agency with a statutory role in the Regional Growth Strategy amendment process, we are seeking your feedback on these options, as detailed in the enclosed staff report. At this stage, we are not requesting formal consideration of any bylaw; all feedback received through this consultation will be summarized and provided directly to the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board when it considers the initial readings of any draft *Metro 2050* amendment bylaws. If the MVRD Board grants initial readings to any bylaw at that meeting, a formal referral and comment period of at least 60 days will be initiated.

To meet this timeline, we request that you provide any comments by **March 20, 2026**. Staff would be pleased to meet with your staff or present to your Council or Board to discuss the proposed options in more detail. To arrange this, or should you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Cote, Deputy General Manager, Regional Planning and Housing Development, Regional Planning and Housing Services, by phone at 604-432-6391 or by email at [jonathan.cote@metrovancouver.org](mailto:jonathan.cote@metrovancouver.org).

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued collaboration in shaping the region's growth.

Enclosed is a copy of the aforementioned staff report for your reference.

Yours sincerely,



Mike Hurley  
Chair, Metro Vancouver Boards

MH/JC/ms

cc: Leon Gous, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Burnaby  
Juli Halliwell, Corporate Officer, City of Burnaby  
Jerry Dobrovolsky, Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer, Metro Vancouver  
Heather McNell, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Policy and Planning, Metro Vancouver

Encl: [MVRD Board Report dated November 14, 2025, titled "Proposed Metro 2050 Amendment in Response to South of the Fraser Mayors' Request" \(pg. 407\)](#)

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To: MVRD Board of Directors

From: Heather McNell, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Policy and Planning

Date: November 14, 2025 Meeting Date: November 28, 2025

Subject: **Proposed Metro 2050 Amendment in Response to South of the Fraser Mayors' Request**

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#### RECOMMENDATION

That the MVRD Board receive for information the report dated November 14, 2025, titled "Proposed Metro 2050 Amendment in Response to South of the Fraser Mayors' Request".

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to MVRD Board direction, Metro Vancouver staff have started to explore potential *Metro 2050* amendments regarding the Urban Containment Boundary in response to the letter to the Board Chair from three South of the Fraser Mayors. Metro Vancouver staff met with staff from the three municipalities to better understand the issues of concern and have developed a set of potential amendments to *Metro 2050*.

The MVRD Board cannot give initial readings to a *Metro 2050* amendment bylaw that affects member jurisdictions without first consulting with them. Prior to initiating that pre-consultation, staff are providing the potential amendments to the MVRD Board to ensure that the proposals have Board support for engagement. Once the pre-consultation with member jurisdictions is complete, staff will bring forward the comments received as well as amendment bylaws for MVRD Board consideration.

The four potential amendment options for pre-consultation are:

1. Add new Special Study Areas in the requesting municipalities;
2. Re-Classify amendments to lands with a Rural regional land use designation from Type 2 to Type 3 Amendments;
3. Expand Amendment Opportunities for properties adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary; and
4. Expand Use of the Flexibility Clause for properties adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary.

In addition, staff have identified a number of procedural improvements that can improve *Metro 2050* implementation without an amendment. Staff will implement these changes, with the goal of enhancing the efficiency of the *Metro 2050* amendment process.

#### PURPOSE

This report lays out the *Metro 2050* amendment options that are expected to form the basis of pre-consultation with member jurisdictions for Board information and input.

## BACKGROUND

On June 19, 2025, the Board Chair received a joint letter (**Attachment 1**) from the mayors of Surrey, Langley Township, and Delta expressing concerns about *Metro 2050*. The letter argues that the existing *Metro 2050* amendment framework is impeding the ability of South of the Fraser municipalities to meet the growing demand for housing, employment lands, and essential services. To address these concerns, the mayors outlined three policy changes they believe are important to better support growth and development:

1. Redefine the Urban Containment Boundary to allow for targeted expansion for sites that are contiguous extensions that are outside the Agricultural Land Reserve and ecologically sensitive areas, can be serviced with existing or committed infrastructure, and that support compact, transit-oriented complete communities;
2. Reclassify qualifying Urban Containment Boundary amendment requests from Type 2 (requires an amendment bylaw passed by a weighted two thirds vote of the Board) to Type 3 (requires an amendment bylaw passed by a weighted 50%+1 vote of the Board); and
3. Introduce a minor realignment mechanism to permit site specific Urban Containment Boundary adjustments that are consistent with local plans without requiring a full amendment.

The MVRD Board received a copy of the joint letter, along with a summary of the mayors' request, at its July 25, 2025 meeting in a report dated July 11, 2025, titled "Proposed Metro 2050 Amendments: Next Steps in Response to City of Surrey, Township of Langley, and City of Delta Mayors" (**Attachment 2**).

At the July 25, 2025 meeting, the MVRD Board passed the following resolution:

*That the MVRD Board direct staff to undertake engagement with member jurisdictions as a precursor to bringing forward for Board consideration a Type 1 Metro 2050 amendment reflecting the City of Surrey, Township of Langley, and City of Delta mayors' requests as three separate amendments.*

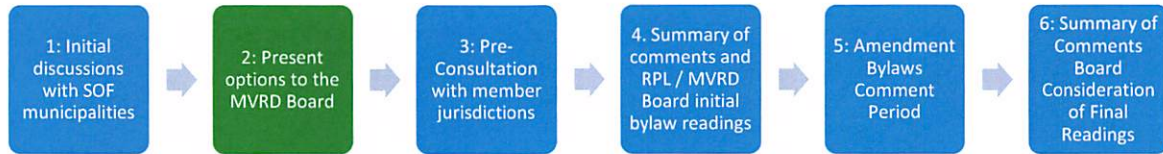
## ENGAGEMENT AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

In response to the MVRD Board's July 25, 2025 resolution, Metro Vancouver staff have initiated a multi-phase process to explore potential amendments to *Metro 2050* that address the concerns raised in the South of the Fraser Mayors' joint letter.

Because these amendments would be initiated by the MVRD Board rather than a member jurisdiction, additional engagement requirements apply under *Metro 2050*. Specifically, Metro Vancouver must provide all affected member jurisdictions with an opportunity to comment on the proposed amendments before any amendment bylaws are given first reading. This pre-consultation step is essential to ensure transparency, regional collaboration, and alignment with the principles of the regional growth strategy.

The engagement and amendment process includes the following steps (Figure 1):

**Figure 1: Engagement and Amendment Process**



**Step 1: Initial discussions with staff from the three requesting municipalities**

Staff met with staff from the City of Surrey, Township of Langley, and City of Delta to better understand their needs and priorities. These discussions helped clarify the intent of the mayors' request and informed the development of policy options that could address their concerns.

**Step 2: Presentation of options to the MVRD Board**

This report represents the second phase of the process. It outlines a set of potential *Metro 2050* amendment options for the MVRD Board's consideration, based on feedback from the South of the Fraser member jurisdictions and Metro Vancouver's staff's best assessment of viable policy options. The intent is to seek Board support for engaging with all member jurisdictions on these options.

**Step 3: Pre-consultation with member jurisdictions**

*Metro 2050* stipulates that the MVRD Board cannot give initial readings to an amendment bylaw without first providing an opportunity for affected member jurisdictions to comment. This additional step is not required when a member jurisdiction requests an amendment via Council resolution. As part of this phase, staff will also engage with the Regional Administrators Advisory Committee (RAAC) and Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC), to support technical review and coordination.

**Step 4: Summary of comments and consideration of initial readings to amendment bylaws**

All comments will be compiled and conveyed to the Regional Planning Committee and MVRD Board along with amendment bylaws for consideration of initial readings

**Step 5: Referral and Comment Period**

If the MVRD Board grants initial readings to the proposed amendments, a formal referral and comment period of at least 45 days will be initiated, as per *Metro 2050* Policy 6.4.2 b). This provides an opportunity for all affected local governments (member jurisdictions, TransLink, and adjacent regional district Boards), local First Nations, and other agencies as noted in *Metro 2050* to formally respond prior to final readings and adoption.

**Step 6:** All comments will be compiled and conveyed to the MVRD Board along with the amendment bylaws for consideration of final readings and adoption.

### Approval Requirements

If a proposed amendment is classified as a Type 1 amendment, unanimous acceptance by all affected local governments is required prior to MVRD Board approval. If an amendment is classified as a Type 3 amendment, a 50% +1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board is required following the comment period. This report sets out the *Metro 2050* amendment options that are expected to form the basis of pre-consultation. Since the proposed amendment options are not geographically specific, all member jurisdictions are affected, and all will be engaged in pre-consultation activities.

### OVERVIEW OF AMENDMENT OPTIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION

This section outlines four potential *Metro 2050* amendment options for pre-consultation with member jurisdictions. These options reflect Metro Vancouver staff's interpretation of the South of the Fraser Mayors' letter, feedback from municipal staff, and existing *Metro 2050* policy. They are not mutually exclusive and could be packaged together or separately.

Under *Metro 2050*, amendments are categorized into three types:

**Type 1:** Requires an amendment bylaw passed by a 50% +1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board and unanimous acceptance by all affected local governments. Typically applies to changes to the amendment process itself or other major changes such as the deletion or amendment of goals or strategies. The *Local Government Act* (LGA, Section 437) identifies what may not be considered minor amendments (e.g., changes to the amendment process for a regional growth strategy); thereby making them Type 1 amendments.

**Type 2:** Requires an amendment bylaw passed by a two-thirds weighted vote of the MVRD Board. Generally applies to regional land use designation changes outside the Urban Containment Boundary and changes to the Urban Containment Boundary.

**Type 3:** Requires an amendment bylaw passed by a 50% +1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board. Applies to specific designation changes as outlined in *Metro 2050*.

#### Option 1: Add new Special Study Areas in the requesting municipalities

Under *Metro 2050*, Special Study Areas (SSAs) are geographically defined locations where future regional land use designation changes are anticipated, but where further study is required before a regional land use amendment can be considered. Within an SSA, any proposed change to the regional land use designation is processed as a Type 3 amendment, requiring a 50% +1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board, rather than as a Type 2 amendment with a higher threshold for approval.

This option would allow the three South of the Fraser municipalities to identify specific lands outside the Urban Containment Boundary that they are interested in exploring for potential future land use changes. By adding SSA overlays to these areas, the member jurisdiction signals its intent for future regional land use designation changes and establishes a lower voting threshold for those amendments. These would be added to *Metro 2050* as new SSAs.

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*Metro 2050* did not originally envision the expansion of Special Study Areas as a broad growth management tool. SSAs were intended to be used in limited, site-specific circumstances where future land use changes were anticipated but required further study. However, in this particular instance, the SSA framework may offer a practical and policy-aligned way to respond to the concerns raised by South of the Fraser municipalities. It provides an existing mechanism within *Metro 2050* that could support targeted growth areas while maintaining a structured and regionally consistent amendment process. Further policy work would be required to define the conditions under which new SSAs should be considered

Option 1 would be a Type 3 amendment, requiring an affirmative 50% +1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board.

**Option 2: Re-classify amendments to properties with a regional Rural land used designation as Type 3 amendments**

Amendments to properties with a Rural regional land use designation are currently classified as either Type 2 or Type 3 amendments depending on the proposed regional land use designation.

- Type 2: amendment from Rural to Industrial, Employment, or General Urban regional land use designations (6.3.3 c)
- Type 3: amendment from Rural to Agricultural or Conservation and Recreation regional land use designations (6.3.4 d)

This option would merge the above policies, classifying regional land use designation changes from Rural to any other designation as Type 3 amendments, including movement of the Urban Containment Boundary. The effect of this change would be to lower the MVRD Board voting threshold to 50% +1 for Rural to Industrial, Rural to Employment, and Rural to General Urban amendments.

The vast majority (over 99 percent) of Rural lands in the region are located outside of the Urban Containment Boundary. Option 2 directly responds to the second request in the South of the Fraser Mayors' letter, to reclassify qualifying UCB expansions as Type 3 amendments by lowering the voting threshold for Rural-to-Urban designation changes. While this option facilitates more streamlined consideration of growth areas outside the UCB, it maintains the existing Type 2 amendment process for Agricultural and Conservation and Recreation lands, consistent with the mayors' first request to exclude lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve and ecologically sensitive areas.

Option 2 is a Type 1 amendment, requiring unanimous acceptance by all affected local governments and the MVRD Board as per the *Local Government Act* and *Metro 2050* policy.

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**Option 3: Expand amendment opportunities for properties contiguous with the Urban Containment Boundary**

*Metro 2050* contains a policy, 6.3.4 f), which applies to Agricultural and Rural properties that are contiguous with (i.e. outside but immediately adjacent to) the Urban Containment Boundary and outside the Agricultural Land Reserve. This policy allows that such properties may be amended to the Industrial regional land use designation as a Type 3 amendment.

Option 3 would expand the amendment opportunities for such sites beyond Industrial and specify that any regional land use designation may be proposed as a Type 3 amendment.

The effect of this change would be to lower the MVRD Board voting threshold to 50% +1 for sites contiguous to the Urban Containment Boundary for Agricultural and Rural sites that are proposed to be amended to General Urban or Employment that would otherwise be considered Type 2 amendments. For these sites, conversions to Conservation and Recreation or Industrial are already considered Type 3 amendments.

Option 3 would address the second request in the South of the Fraser Mayors' letter – i.e. to: “allow contiguous Urban Containment Boundary extensions that:

- are outside the Agricultural Land Reserve and ecologically sensitive areas;
- can be serviced with existing or committed infrastructure; and
- support compact, transit-oriented, complete communities.”

These eligibility criteria would be layered onto Option 3 under a revised policy 6.3.4 f). Any application for regional land use designation changes under 6.3.4 f) would need to address these criteria, but interpretation of eligibility would be at the sole discretion of the MVRD Board.

The intent of the existing policy framework surrounding contiguous sites is to provide flexibility for sites that are directly adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary, recognizing that some parcels outside the Urban Containment Boundary may represent supportable extensions of urban development. However, the current definition of Urban Containment Boundary contiguous parcels has, at times, created uncertainty for member jurisdictions. This proposed amendment presents an opportunity to refine and clarify the definition to better support consistent implementation across the region. Option 3 would not change the amendment type or process for any sites that are not contiguous with the Urban Containment Boundary.

Option 3 would be a Type 1 amendment, requiring unanimous acceptance by all affected local governments, as it would change the process for making minor amendments as specified in *Metro 2050* sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4.

#### **Option 4: Expand the use of the 'Flexibility Clause' for properties contiguous with the Urban Containment Boundary**

*Metro 2050* contains a policy (6.2.7), commonly referred to as the *flexibility clause*, which allows member jurisdictions to make limited changes to regional land use designations within the Urban Containment Boundary through their Regional Context Statements, without requiring a formal *Metro 2050* amendment. This clause is subject to specific conditions, including limits on the size and cumulative area of affected sites.

Option 4 proposes to expand the scope of Policy 6.2.7 to include sites contiguous to the Urban Containment Boundary located just outside the boundary, provided they meet the same conditions currently required for flexibility clause use. This change would allow member jurisdictions to exercise greater local discretion over these sites and, in some cases, proceed without a *Metro 2050* amendment, if criteria outlined in Policy 6.2.7 are satisfied.

Option 4 responds to the South of the Fraser Mayors' request to enable more flexible and streamlined treatment of Urban Containment Boundary expansions. By extending the flexibility clause to include sites contiguous to the Urban Containment Boundary, this approach would allow member jurisdictions to pursue targeted growth opportunities without triggering a formal *Metro 2050* amendment.

Option 4 would not change the amendment process for any sites that are not contiguous with the Urban Containment Boundary, nor any sites within the Urban Containment Boundary where the flexibility clause may currently be used. As noted previously in the discussion of Option 3, clarifying the definition of "Urban Containment Boundary-contiguous parcels" will be important. The same considerations as discussed in Option 3 would apply to Option 4, where the expanded use of the flexibility clause would rely on a clear and consistent definition to ensure appropriate application.

Option 4 would be a Type 3 amendment, requiring an affirmative 50% +1 weighted vote of the MVRD Board, as it would not amend the amendment process itself. Option 4 would therefore face a lower voting threshold than Option 3.

#### **Implications for Regional Planning and Servicing**

The implications for these options have not yet been assessed in terms of the land base impacted, nor the potential servicing and cost implications for utilities, transit and other urban services. This assessment would accompany consideration of amendment bylaws.

#### **PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS TO STREAMLINE METRO 2050 AMENDMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

Through preliminary discussions with staff from the City of Surrey, Township of Langley, and City of Delta, concerns with the current *Metro 2050* amendment process were identified. These concerns primarily relate to procedural complexity and extended timelines, with most applications currently requiring between five to six months to progress through the full amendment cycle.

In response, Metro Vancouver has identified a series of process improvements that can be implemented immediately to streamline the amendment process. These improvements do not require a formal amendment to *Metro 2050*, as they pertain to administrative procedures rather than policy changes. Collectively, these changes have the potential to reduce amendment processing times by one to two months, providing greater clarity, efficiency, and predictability for member jurisdictions.

Identified process improvements include:

- Remove Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC – staff advisory committee) review for minor and straightforward applications;
- Streamline application intake through the creation of a dedicated email address and/or web portal to facilitate submission and tracking;
- Introduce a pre-application process allowing member jurisdictions to submit *Metro 2050* amendment materials prior to local third reading, enabling earlier review and coordination; and
- Implement a next-day correspondence standard for *Metro 2050* amendments, ensuring that the 45-day comment period begins immediately following third reading.

Staff will proceed with implementing these changes, with the goal of enhancing the efficiency of the *Metro 2050* amendment process.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

Following presentation of this report, Metro Vancouver staff will incorporate any feedback received from the MVRD Board. A letter will then be issued to member jurisdictions initiating region-wide pre-consultation on the proposed amendment options. Staff will be available to provide presentations to Councils if requested. Engagement will also occur through RAAC and RPAC to gather technical input from across the region.

If the MVRD Board receives this report for information, Metro Vancouver will proceed to consult with member jurisdictions on all four proposed amendment options. While each option represents a distinct approach, there is considerable overlap in their intended outcomes. Although all four options could technically be implemented, doing so may result in duplication and added complexity. As such, it may be more practical and administratively efficient to pursue a subset of the options.

The Board may choose to provide early direction on which options to advance for bylaw development, or defer this decision until after the pre-consultation process is complete and proposed amendment bylaws are brought forward for consideration. Staff will prepare draft bylaws based on feedback received through pre-consultation and present them to the Regional Planning Committee prior to MVRD Board review.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

This is an information report. No alternatives are provided.

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**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This engagement process is being undertaken in-house through the 2025 and 2026 Regional Planning budget. There are no direct financial implications.

**CONCLUSION**

In response to MVRD Board direction, staff have initiated a process to explore potential *Metro 2050* amendments regarding the Urban Containment Boundary. Metro Vancouver staff will conduct pre-consultation on four potential amendment options:

1. Add new Special Study Areas in the requesting municipalities;
2. Re-Classify amendments to lands with a Rural regional land use designation from Type 2 to Type 3 Amendments;
3. Expand Amendment Opportunities for properties adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary; and
4. Expand Use of the Flexibility Clause for properties adjacent to the Urban Containment Boundary.

In addition, a number of procedural improvements have been identified that can improve *Metro 2050* implementation without requiring a formal amendment. Staff will proceed with implementing these changes immediately, with the goal of enhancing the efficiency of the *Metro 2050* amendment process.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Letter from City of Surrey, Township of Langley, and City of Delta mayors titled "Urban Containment Boundary – Urgent Need for Policy Reform", dated June 19, 2025.
2. MVRD Board report titled "Proposed Metro 2050 Amendments: Next Steps in Response to City of Surrey, Next Steps in Response to City of Surrey, Township of Langley, and City of Delta Mayors", dated, July 11, 2025. Redacted as per Correspondence Policy for Council and Advisory Bodies
3. Presentation re: Proposed Metro 2050 Amendment in Response to South of the Fraser Mayors' Request.

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