



## THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE VILLAGE OF LIONS BAY

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November 25, 2021

Chair Sav Dhaliwal  
Metro Vancouver Board  
Metrotower III, 4515 Central Boulevard  
Burnaby, BC, V5H 0C6

Via email: [Chris.Plagnol@metrovancover.org](mailto:Chris.Plagnol@metrovancover.org)

RE: Council of the Village of Lions Bay: Commentary on the draft Regional Growth Strategy,  
Metro 2050

Dear Chair Dhaliwal and the Metro Vancouver Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy. The Council of the Village of Lions Bay has reviewed the draft RGS and provides the attached commentary for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ron McLaughlin, Mayor

cc.

Village of Lions Bay Council  
Peter DeJong, Chief Administrative Officer

## **Introduction**

Council of the Village of Lions Bay would like to commend Metro Vancouver Regional District (“Metro”) staff for the clear, well formulated draft Metro 2050 document. The information is an easy read as well as being clear on the strategies to achieve the region’s primary goals.

Because of its small size, remote location on the periphery of Metro, and limited opportunities for growth, the Village of Lions Bay has little ability to influence the attainment of regional objectives, as stated in our Official Community Plan (OCP) and confirmed in Metro 2040.

However, we fundamentally wish to support the region’s goals where we can. For example, Lions Bay is especially well positioned to support environmental and recreational goals for the region. The Village has been a strong supporter of the Howe Sound Biosphere Initiative, recently recognised by UNESCO, as well as efforts to protect the glass sponges found in Howe Sound (both spearheaded by Lions Bay residents and supported by Council) and other local initiatives. We also lead the region in lowest per capita garbage output.

We take the preservation of our forests and the natural heritage we are fortunate to enjoy extremely seriously. More now than ever before - thanks to COVID-19 - visitors from across the region make use of our trails maintained in most part by resident volunteers. The Village recognises the need for providing access and facilities to those from the region who choose to recreate here and continues to work through the challenges associated with large crowds in a small geographic area with limited resources. However, we are committed to facilitating the enjoyment of the lands designated by Metro for conservation and recreation around us while attempting to manage the impact on our community.

Small as we are, it is our view that Lions Bay’s continued focus on preserving the natural heritage that surrounds us, as enshrined in our OCP, is one of the greatest contributions we can make to the region.

As a caveat, we are of the opinion that circumstances in Lions Bay often necessitate a unique approach when making decisions on behalf of the community. It would appear that Metro intends to differentiate between large cities and small communities with targeted actions and specific focuses in support of its strategic goals and with financial restraints in mind. Fiscal prudence and carefully considered allocation of budget are both principles we support.

Due to its location, Lions Bay has of necessity had to become self-reliant and we recognise that services other member municipalities of Metro may readily access are not available to us. We do not and will not receive either water or wastewater services from the region, which places an additional financial burden on our taxpayers.

If there are opportunities to investigate access to grants from which we are currently excluded, we will look to Metro for support in these endeavours.– We take our sustainability and future viability seriously. Our residents pay a heavy cost to be the unique Community we are with insignificant commercial activity, no economy of scale, and a small residential tax base. For three years there has been an across the board 10% Infrastructure Levy to fund current and future needs.

Although there are parts of the regional growth strategy that simply cannot apply to Lions Bay, we respectfully submit the following commentary with regards the draft Metro 2050.

### **Metro 2050 Goals**

#### **Goal 1: Create a Compact Urban Area**

Having declared a climate emergency earlier this year, Council supports one of the regional plan's most fundamental elements, namely ensuring that growth is accommodated within the Urban Containment Boundary. To this end, following recent public consultation, we are reconsidering our "general urban" designation. The results of our consultation suggests that residents believe the "rural" designation best supports the community's vision. This may also align more accurately with the goals and guidelines in Metro 2050.

#### **Goal 2: Support a Sustainable Economy**

This is an area in which we cannot influence the region in a significant manner, however, Lions Bay enjoys a robust network of home-based businesses that provide employment, services, products and activities for residents close to home. Further, as a result of the pandemic, more residents now work from home. Council will continue to support this trend in the interests of reducing commuter traffic in the region, enhancing the quality of life for residents, especially working parents, and to encourage the influx of young families, a positive result of the pandemic.

The Village has become a destination as well as a stopping point for travellers along the Sea to Sky Highway, whether to visit the local café or our beaches or to hike local trails. In this way, we contribute to the vital tourism industry in the region which we will continue to support.

#### **Goal 3: Protect the Environment and Respond to Climate Change Impacts**

The Village of Lions Bay is surrounded by land identified by Metro as ecologically sensitive and designated "Conservation and Recreation". It also falls within the Howe Sound Biosphere Region and the English Bay, Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound Important Bird Area.

Early this year, Council created a Climate Action Committee “to provide a technical and local perspective and advice to Council to aid in the advancement of targets, policies and actions for reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and adapting to climate change, as noted in the Official Community Plan (OCP).” Our watershed is of particular concern.

While tiny in size and population, we believe Lions Bay nevertheless can and does contribute to this Metro 2050 goal through conservation and preservation efforts. We are in support of the strategies outlined to achieve these goals with the caveat that some may be better achieved with local municipal input.

As recent flooding has made us all more acutely aware, the agricultural land in the region is of vital importance to all of us. As such, we strongly support the efforts of Metro to preserve land designated for agriculture.

#### **Goal 4: Develop Complete Communities**

As outlined in Metro 2040 and our OCP, the Village is not anticipated to see significant levels of growth, given that there is a limited supply of land to accommodate new development. Lions Bay is too small to be a complete community in terms of the Metro vision of walkable/transit-orientated centres that provide employment, amenities, or services close by.

The Village is largely a community of single family homes. Housing choices also include apartments and town homes in the centre of the Village and above-ground secondary suites scattered throughout the municipality. In the past two years, there has been a significant influx of young families as homes were snapped up in the hot COVID-19 property market, offering city dwellers more living space and easy access to outdoor activities (e.g. trails, beaches, cul de sacs).

Ten years ago, secondary suites were legalised to provide rental opportunities and Council is currently considering an incentive to increase the availability of suites for rent.

That being said, opportunities for providing different housing forms for those at different stages of their life may be considered, in consultation with the community, and within the context of compatibility with the character of the Village.

#### **Goal 5: Support Sustainable Transportation Choices**

Council strongly supports the concept of Frequent Transit Corridors as an efficient use of funding to expand TransLink services within compact urban centres pegged for development, and in order to encourage ridership as a means to reduce the region’s GHG emissions due to

transportation. Although Lions Bay is largely – of necessity – car dependent, Council and residents strongly support the ongoing provision of a bus service to the Village and will continue to encourage ridership.

We are seeing a healthy number of electric vehicles (EVs) in the community and continue to seek grant funding for the installation of a fast charger for the use of both residents and visitors traveling on the Sea to Sky Highway. We look forward to the outcome of BC Hydro's pricing restructuring in the hope that electricity will be more affordable for EVs owners in Lions Bay, since most residents are subject to Step 2 rates for the bulk of their billing cycle due to electric heating.

### **Conclusion**

While we support the guiding principles within Metro 2050, we value the uniqueness of our small, geographically separate community which has shaped how we live and who we are, which is the recurring refrain throughout our OCP. This means that we will be unable to achieve some targets intended for larger communities or to contribute to all of the region's goals, as outlined above:

1. Put growth in the right places (urban centres and transit corridors)
2. Protect important lands (food, ecological and job lands)
3. Develop complete communities
4. Provide mobility, housing, and employment choices
5. Support the efficient provision of infrastructure (utilities and transit)