



City of Delta
COUNCIL REPORT
Regular Meeting

To: **Council**

File No.: **P25-Metro Vancouver**

From: **Development Department**

Date: **February 26, 2026**

Response to Proposed Metro 2050 Amendment Options

The following report has been reviewed and endorsed by the City Manager's Office.

▪ **RECOMMENDATION:**

THAT, in response to the letter dated January 20, 2026, titled "Consultation on Proposed Metro 2050 Amendment Options in Response to South of the Fraser Mayors' Request," this report be forwarded to the Metro Vancouver Board to convey the City's concerns with the proposed options and to request that Metro Vancouver staff continue to explore policy reforms aimed at streamlining the Regional Growth Strategy amendment process while maintaining appropriate regional oversight.

▪ **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to present staff's analysis of the four Regional Growth Strategy amendment options proposed by Metro Vancouver in response to a letter jointly submitted by the Mayors of Delta, Surrey, and the Township of Langley expressing the need for reforms to the current Metro 2050 growth framework. Metro Vancouver has initiated the pre-consultation phase for their proposed Metro 2050 amendments. Comments from all member municipalities are requested by March 20, 2026.

Staff recommends that Delta provide feedback highlighting the following key concerns with the proposed amendments:

- **No immediate need for SSAs:** Delta does not currently have sites suitable for designation as a Special Study Area, and additional time and analysis would be required before considering this approach.
- **Limited process improvement:** While Options 1–3 lower the voting threshold, they retain a process that staff have identified as lengthy, complex, and which duplicates many aspects of the municipal review process.
- **Missed opportunity for meaningful reform:** The proposed amendments do not address broader procedural improvements that could streamline amendment timelines while maintaining appropriate regional oversight.

▪ **BACKGROUND:**

In June 2025, the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors received a joint letter on behalf of three South-of-the-Fraser municipalities – the City of Delta, City of Surrey, and

Township of Langley (Attachment A). The letter expressed the need for a more flexible approach to plan for housing, employment lands, and critical services required for these rapidly growing communities. To help address these issues, it called on Metro Vancouver to initiate a review of the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) amendment process and suggested the following changes that would simplify consideration of minor boundary adjustments to provide more local autonomy:

- Modernize the approach to allow contiguous UCB extensions.
- Simplify eligible UCB expansions as Type 3 Metro 2050 amendments.
- Introduce a streamlined “minor realignment” allowance to grant local authority over minor changes.

At their July 25, 2025 meeting, the Metro Board directed their staff to engage with the Mayors and staff of the three jurisdictions. Following this engagement, on November 28, 2025, Metro staff presented four potential Metro 2050 amendment options to the Board for consideration in advance of pre-consultation with all Metro member jurisdictions on the potential amendments.

On January 20, 2026, Council received two separate letters (Attachment B) from Board Chair Hurley outlining four potential Metro 2050 amendments to address the concerns raised in the joint letter and a request to identify any Special Study Areas (SSA) Delta may wish to include in the amendments. Metro staff attended the Regular Meeting of Delta Council on February 23, 2026 to provide an overview of the options presented.

▪ **DISCUSSION:**

Regional Growth Strategy Amendment Process

The Regional Growth Strategy, Metro 2050, was adopted in 2023 following acceptance by all member municipalities. Amendments to Metro 2050 are classified by type, according to their expected impact on the broader region. Each amendment type is regulated by specified procedures and voting thresholds, outlined in Section 6.3 of Metro 2050. A visual summary of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) amendment process is included as Attachment C. Per the *Local Government Act*, the Metro Board is required to follow the procedures outlined in Metro 2050. The types of amendments are as follows:

Type 1: Intended for fundamental changes to core goals and strategies, including modifying or deleting a strategic objective or policy. A Type 1 amendment is also required to modify or reclassify other amendment types. Type 1 amendments require a 50%+1 weighted vote by the Metro Board and acceptance by all affected local governments.

Type 2: For changes with region-wide significance to non-urban designations, such as expansions of the Urban Containment Boundary. Type 2 amendments require a two-thirds weighted vote by the Metro Board to pass, and require a regional Public Hearing.

Type 3: For changes with region-wide significance to urban designations, such as re-classifications of areas from General Urban to other, non-agricultural and non-rural regional land use designations. Type 3 amendments require a 50%+1 weighted vote by the Metro Board to pass.

Amendment requests are subject to review by Metro Vancouver staff and relevant advisory committees. For example, regional land use redesignation applications are reviewed by the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC – staff committee) and Regional Planning Committee (RPC – elected officials committee), which provide recommendations to the Metro Board on the proposed amendment. If a proposed amendment is given initial readings by the Board, the amendments are then circulated to affected local governments, First Nations, and relevant Regional and Provincial agencies such as TransLink, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC), and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, for comment, before returning to the Metro Board for final approval. These processes are in addition to the local governments' own process which generally includes technical review and analysis, public and committee engagement, external agency referrals, and Council consideration.

A review of approved RGS amendments over the past four years is summarized in Attachment D. This review found that the process takes between 4 to 25 months from the local government's resolution to final adoption by Metro Vancouver. This can result in substantial delays, as well as uncertainty for developers and local governments planning for future land use changes. Furthermore, the majority of amendments received comments from 2 or fewer affected municipalities.

Amendment Options Proposed by Metro Vancouver

To address the issues raised by the Mayors' letter, Metro Vancouver has proposed four options for consideration by member jurisdictions.

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

Description: Metro 2050 allows the Metro Board to establish Special Study Areas (SSAs) where a municipality anticipates future land use changes. SSAs do not change the current regional land use designation but make any future reclassification a Type 3 amendment. This approach lowers the voting threshold for future amendments while still requiring Board approval. Establishing SSAs requires a Type 3 amendment now, and Type 3 amendments in the future to change the regional land use designation.

Implications for Delta: At this time, staff have not undertaken any technical analysis or engagement about the potential introduction of SSAs in Delta. Further, Delta recently updated its Official Community Plan and Regional Context Statement which put in place the current land use designations following a public engagement process. The Vancouver Landfill has been raised as a potential SSA, as it is currently designated Conservation and Leisure. However, Metro 2050 also identifies the site as a Natural Resource Area, which indicates an existing provincially-approved natural resource use such as a landfill, quarries, active forestry areas, and wastewater and water treatment facilities. While the current framework around the Vancouver Landfill contemplates new uses as sections are closed, further discussions are needed on the types of future land uses that may be considered.

Without taking the time to fully understand the implications of the introduction of SSAs, staff are not recommending that Delta propose any SSAs at this time. In the past, where Council supported RGS amendment applications for housing or industrial employment areas, Delta has successfully completed the regional

process to approve the applications such as MKB Industrial Lands, Southlands, and Tsawwassen Springs.

Option 2: Re-classify amendments to lands with a Rural regional land use designation from Type 2 to Type 3 amendments

Description: This option would lower the voting threshold to amend lands with a Rural regional land use designation from a two-thirds weighted vote to a 50%+1 weighted vote of the Metro Board. Enacting this option would require a Type 1 Metro 2050 amendment now, and Type 3 amendments in the future to amend areas designated Rural.

Implications for Delta: Currently, only a small amount of land (approximately 0.5 hectares) bordering the Fraser River near the intersection of River Road West and Kettles Road is regionally designated as Rural. These properties are also within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and outside of the UCB.

While this option is not impactful for Delta, there are more regional Rural lands within Surrey and particularly in the Township of Langley where lowering the voting threshold would enable new housing or employment areas.

Option 3: Expand amendment opportunities for properties adjacent to the UCB

Description: This option would lower the voting threshold required to re-classify lands with the Rural or Agricultural regional land use designations that: are contiguous with the existing UCB; are outside of the ALR and ecologically sensitive areas; can be serviced with existing or committed infrastructure; and support compact, transit-oriented, complete communities. Enacting this option would require a Type 1 Metro 2050 amendment now, and Type 3 amendments in the future to amend areas adjacent to the UCB.

Implications for Delta: Relative to Option 2, there are more areas of Delta with the Agricultural designation that are connected to the UCB and not within the ALR or ecologically sensitive areas. However, none of these lands currently have active applications for an RGS amendment nor have been considered for future housing or employment areas under Delta's current policies. Delta's policies encourage agricultural protection, and only under exceptional circumstances has Council supported an RGS amendment to the Agricultural designation. Under the current policy framework for Delta, and given the criteria that would need to be met, this option is unlikely to be used.

Option 4: Expand use of the Flexibility Clause for properties adjacent to the UCB

Description: The Flexibility Clause in Section 6.2.7 of Metro 2050 currently permits member municipalities to make changes to designations within the UCB without the need for an amendment to Metro 2050, provided the redesignations are consistent with the member municipality's Regional Context Statement, and the affected area is generally no larger than 1 hectare. This option proposes expanding this flexibility to also include lands contiguous with the UCB, rather than only lands within the UCB. Enacting this option would require a Type 3 Metro 2050 amendment.

Implications for Delta: For the purposes of enabling development of housing and employment lands, this option involves approximately the same areas as Option 3, as they are adjacent to the existing UCB. While this option represents the easiest path to opening up new lands not currently within the UCB for development, it is limited by the fact that the redesignated areas must be fairly small (1-3 hectares depending on the proposed change). As for Option 3 above, the immediate utility for Delta is not clear as the UCB is generally contiguous with Delta's agricultural land base.

Process Improvements Proposed by Metro Vancouver

As part of the discussions between Delta and Metro Vancouver staff in the fall of 2025, concerns with the current Metro 2050 amendment process were identified. In response, Metro Vancouver has identified some potential process improvements that would not need a Metro 2050 amendment:

- Streamline application intake through a dedicated email address or web portal.
- Ensure that the 45-day comment period on Metro 2050 amendments begins immediately following third reading.
- Introduce a pre-application process to allow the submission of amendment materials prior to local third reading.
- Remove RPAC review of minor and straightforward applications.

The first two items reflect sound regulatory practice, and the third formalizes an existing staff-level process. The fourth is a positive step, as removing the staff-level committee reduces duplication of the review process and may shorten regional application timelines for standard applications.

Other Potential Process Improvements

The following are additional opportunities for streamlining the amendment process that could be considered by Metro Vancouver:

- Reduce duplication of local and regional staff planning and technical analysis by implementing standard submission requirements.
- Reduce duplication of the referral process of external review agencies where approval or comments have been previously provided (ie. where Translink comments were provided as part of the local review process and/or where ALR exclusion has been approved by the ALC).
- Explore opportunities for delegation of authority to staff for amendment requests that are of a minor or technical nature.
- Consider opportunities to reduce pre-consultation and/or consultation requirements for some applications given the limited member jurisdiction participation for the majority of recently approved RGS amendments.

In summary, with the exception of Option 4, the proposed options will continue to require Metro Vancouver Board approval of local government amendment requests. While the voting thresholds are proposed to be lowered, there are minimal changes proposed to the processes leading up to Board consideration. Given Delta's OCP and Regional Context Statement were recently updated, and that more discussions are needed to determine the future land uses of the Vancouver Landfill, there are no immediate candidate sites for the City to put forward as SSAs or site-specific

amendment requests at this time. If the City was to advance amendments, more review of sites would be required. There would also be opportunity, as part of a future Metro-initiated Regional Growth Strategy update, to add lands to the SSA layer.

Implications:

Financial Implications – There are no financial implications.

▪ **CONCLUSION:**

Metro Vancouver has initiated the pre-consultation phase for Metro 2050 amendments proposed in response to South-of-the-Fraser Mayors' request for regional policy reform for housing, employment land, and other critical services. The Mayors' letter requested broader consideration of reforms and process improvements to address redundancy and lengthy timelines, while still ensuring an appropriate level of regional oversight for significant amendments. The four proposed options do not adequately address the issues identified; therefore, it is recommended that the Metro Vancouver Board be advised of Delta's concerns. It is further recommended that staff continue to engage with Metro Vancouver on options for policy reform with a focus on streamlining the process for Regional Growth Strategy amendments.



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▪ **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Letter from Mayors of Delta, Surrey, and Langley Township, dated June 19, 2025
- B. Letters from the Metro Vancouver Board, dated January 20, 2026
- C. Metro Vancouver Amendment Process
- D. Recent History of Metro 2050 Amendments