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# METRO VANCOUVER SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK



metro vancouver

a framework  
for decision  
making and  
moving ideas  
into action



Natural splendour, access to abundant resources and markets and a diverse civil society have converged in Metropolitan Vancouver to create one of the world's most livable regions.

But with this privileged position comes responsibility for the immediate and long term impacts of our actions both locally and globally. While we have earned an enviable reputation for our quality of life, we are challenged to take the next step in the region's evolution by becoming as sustainable as we are livable.





CONTENTS

Map and overview of Metro Vancouver 6

Introduction 8

Sustainability Framework Diagram 9

Vision 10

Three Roles 12

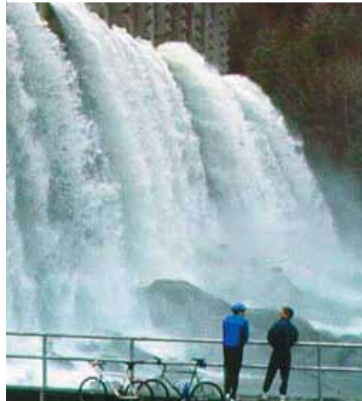
Mission 14

Values 15

Sustainability Imperatives & Principles 16

Strategic Priorities 20

Notable Achievements 26



CITY OF  
ABBOTSFORD

VILLAGE OF  
ANMORE

VILLAGE OF  
BELCARRA

BOWEN ISLAND  
MUNICIPALITY

CITY OF BURNABY

CITY OF  
COQUITLAM

CORPORATION OF  
DELTA

CITY OF LANGLEY

ELECTORAL  
AREA A

TOWNSHIP OF  
LANGLEY

VILLAGE OF  
LIONS BAY

DISTRICT OF  
MAPLE RIDGE

CITY OF NEW  
WESTMINSTER

CITY OF NORTH  
VANCOUVER

DISTRICT OF NORTH  
VANCOUVER

CITY OF  
PITT MEADOWS

CITY OF PORT  
COQUITLAM

CITY OF  
PORT MOODY

CITY OF  
RICHMOND

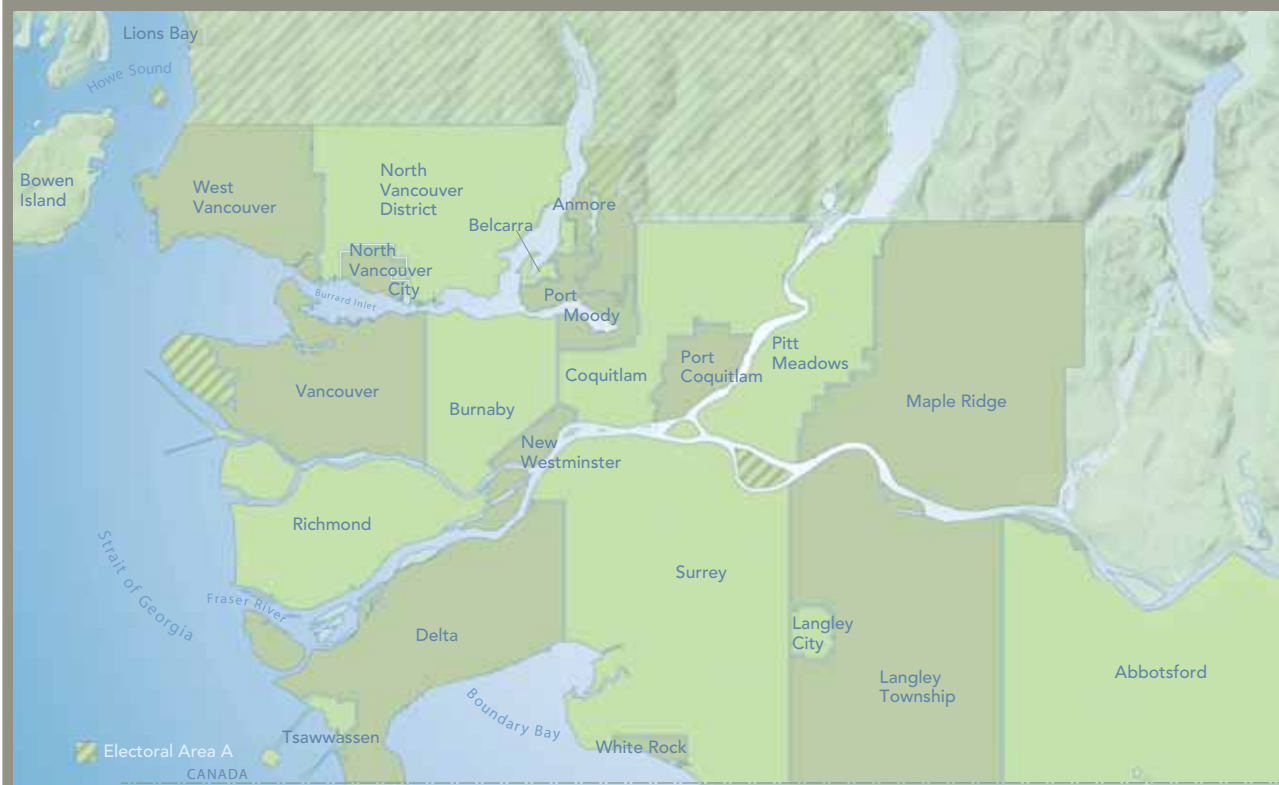
CITY OF SURREY

TSAWWASSEN

CITY OF  
VANCOUVER

DISTRICT OF WEST  
VANCOUVER

CITY OF  
WHITE ROCK



METRO  
VANCOUVER

**Who we are:** Metro Vancouver is a political body and corporate entity operating under provincial legislation as a 'regional district' and 'greater boards' that delivers regional services, planning, and political leadership on behalf of 24 local authorities.

**Population:** 2.3 million

**Members:** 24 local authorities

**Land area:** 287,736 hectares

a regional community  
**working together**  
for SUSTAINABILITY

# Introduction

## METRO VANCOUVER SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

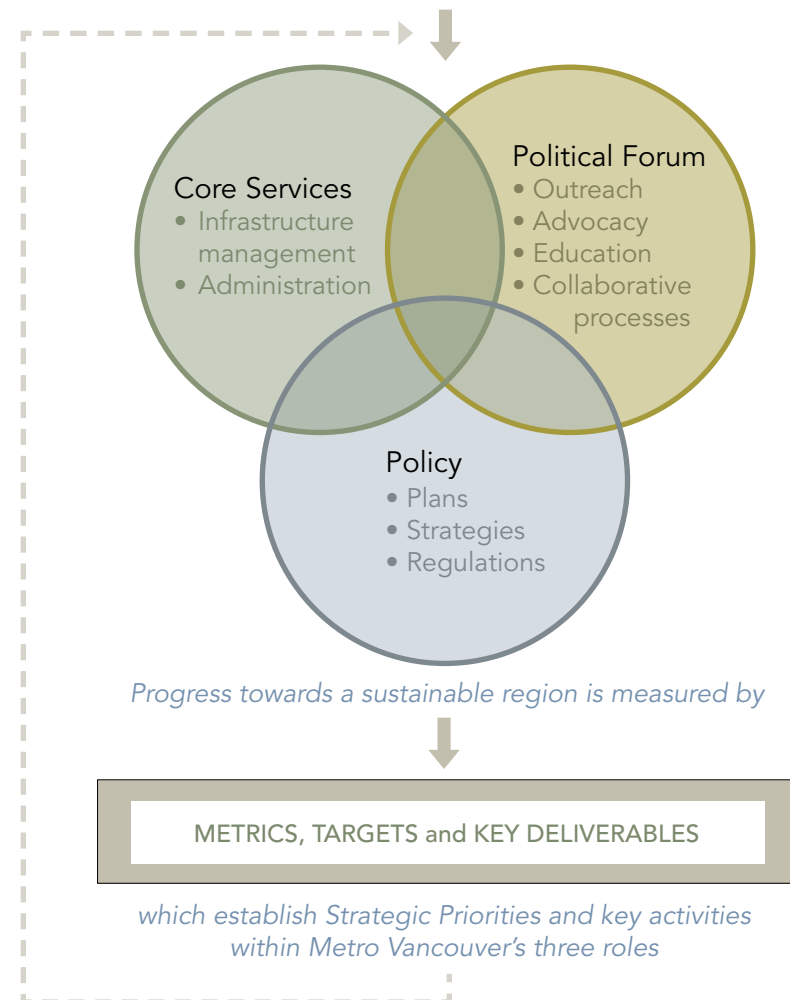
Since 2002, Metro Vancouver has formally put the concept of sustainability at the centre of its operating and planning philosophy and advanced its role as a leader in the attempt to make the region one which is explicitly committed to a sustainable future. This comprehensive endeavour has become known as the Sustainable Region Initiative, or more familiarly as the 'SRI'.

This document, the Metro Vancouver Sustainability Framework, outlines the foundation for Metro Vancouver's operations and planning: a vision for the region, the mission, values, and decision-making principles of the organization, and three fundamental imperatives which drive the process of achieving our vision of sustainability. From this foundation, Metro Vancouver moves towards this vision through its three interconnected roles as a service provider, policy maker, and political forum.

The adjacent diagram provides a snapshot of Metro Vancouver's Sustainability Framework. Each element within it is described in the following pages.



*Vision, mission, values, imperatives and principles are the foundation for Metro Vancouver's **three interconnected roles:***

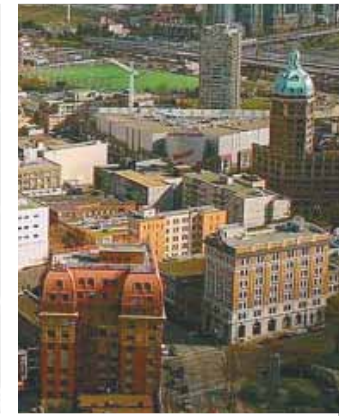


# Vision

Metro Vancouver seeks to achieve what humanity aspires to on a global basis – the highest quality of life embracing cultural vitality, economic prosperity, social justice and compassion, all nurtured in and by a beautiful and healthy natural environment.

We will achieve this vision by embracing and applying the principles of sustainability, not least of which is an unshakeable commitment to the well-being of current and future generations and the health of our planet, in everything we do.

As we share our efforts in achieving this vision, we are confident that the inspiration and mutual learning we gain will become vital ingredients in our hopes for a sustainable common future.



# 3 Roles

## 1. CORE SERVICES

Metro Vancouver's core services, provided principally to municipalities, are: drinking water, sewerage and drainage, and solid waste management. Significant services provided directly to the public include regional parks and affordable housing.

## 2. POLICY

Metro Vancouver's main areas of planning and regulatory responsibility are: regional growth, utilities, air quality, and parks. The Board also carries out strategies on other issues best dealt with at a regional level.

## 3. POLITICAL FORUM

Finally, Metro Vancouver serves as the main political forum for discussion of significant community issues at the regional level. It acts as a facilitator, convenor, partner, advocate and a significant conduit for information and education to the community.

Metro Vancouver's Role in Regional Systems		
WATER	●	●
SEWERAGE	●	●
SOLID WASTE	●	●
PARKS AND GREENWAYS *	●	●
HOUSING **	●	●
GROWTH MANAGEMENT	●	●
AIR QUALITY	●	●
ECOLOGICAL HEALTH	●	●
FOOD	●	●
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY	●	●
CULTURE	●	●
REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	●	●
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	●	●
LABOUR RELATIONS	●	●

\* These are regional parks and greenways. Does not include the many municipal parks in the region.

\*\* Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation owns and operates more than 50 affordable rental housing sites for a mixed range of incomes across the region.

# Mission

METRO VANCOUVER WILL:

## SERVE THE REGION

- Attain the highest possible levels of excellence in meeting its service delivery responsibilities

## PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

- Develop and use an integrated system of plans to manage all activities within Metro Vancouver's legislated scope of authority towards the achievement of a sustainable region

## FACILITATE COLLABORATION

- Build and facilitate collaborative processes, including those that engage citizens, to achieve a robust partnership working together for a sustainable region

# Values

Integrity is our foundation.

Passion for our work and pride in our accomplishments are our drivers.

Respect for the needs, interests, values and opinions of the public and compassion in all our relationships are our guideposts.

*We are Metro Vancouver.*



# SUSTAINABILITY Imperatives & Principles

The Sustainable Region Initiative is driven by the following overarching imperatives necessary for creating a sustainable future:

- Have regard for both local and global consequences and long term impacts
- Recognize and reflect the interconnectedness and interdependence of systems
- Be collaborative

These lead to three sets of sustainability principles for decision making:

1. Protect and enhance the natural environment
2. Provide for ongoing prosperity
3. Build community capacity and social cohesion

## 1. PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- a) protect, restore and enhance natural ecosystems; exercise extraordinary care with ecosystems that contain species which are rare or endangered or are critical to living systems
- b) allow extraneous material to be introduced to ecosystems only in such forms and quantities as can be absorbed by the receiving systems without material harm
- c) use renewable resources at no greater rate than they can be replenished
- d) use non-renewable resources only in ways that permit their beneficial re-use or at rates no faster than the rate of creation of renewable substitutes



## 2. PROVIDE FOR ONGOING PROSPERITY

- a) develop and efficiently use those activities and physical infrastructure that are critical to the long term economic health and creative strength of the region
- b) use pricing mechanisms ('full pricing') which account for economic, environmental and social, short and long term, and local and global costs and benefits
- c) ensure decisions and actions are affordable and do not accumulate liabilities for future generations
- d) ensure the economic benefits and capacities are adequately distributed so as to avoid the development of concentrations of persistent economic hardship



## 3. BUILD COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

- a) develop and apply decision-making processes which are transparent, inclusive and respectful of the interests of all affected parties
- b) identify the determinants of physical and mental health and encourage measures which promote long term health
- c) foster a culture of learning so that successive generations can absorb and build on the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of prior generations
- d) foster social cohesion through an appreciation of and involvement in the civic and cultural life of the community, emphasizing the involvement of young people and those who, through reasons of culture, or economic or physical circumstance, might not be engaged

# STRATEGIC Priorities

Metro Vancouver has identified strategic Board priorities. An aspirational goal and statement of commitment for each strategic priority follows. A companion document called *Metro Vancouver Action Plan* outlines key activities for each calendar year.



## UTILITIES

- DRINKING WATER
- LIQUID WASTE
- SOLID WASTE

## ENVIRONMENT

- AIR QUALITY
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- ECOLOGICAL HEALTH
- ENERGY
- PARKS & GREENWAYS

## REGIONAL PLANNING

- REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT
- AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
- HOUSING
- CULTURE

## MONEY AND PROCESS

- FINANCE
- EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING
- ABORIGINAL RELATIONS
- INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

# STRATEGIC Priorities

## UTILITIES

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### DRINKING WATER

#### *Nature's health drink, always on tap*

We commit to provide clean, safe drinking water and ensure its sustainable use.

### LIQUID WASTE

#### *A zero waste region – no waste, only resources*

We commit to recover energy, nutrients, water, or other usable materials from liquid waste and return water to the environment in a manner that protects public health and the environment.

### SOLID WASTE

#### *A zero waste region – no waste, only resources.*

We commit to protect the environment and public health by minimizing the generation of waste, and maximizing reuse and recycling and the recovery of energy from the waste that remains.

## ENVIRONMENT

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### AIR QUALITY

#### *Clean air for life*

We commit to ensure clean, clear and healthy air for current and future generations.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

#### *A zero net carbon region, resilient to the effects of climate change*

We commit to minimize the region's contribution to climate change and prepare the region for the effects of climate change.

### ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

#### *Healthy and vibrant ecosystems that sustain us all*

We commit to protect and restore an interconnected network of habitat and green space, account for ecosystem services, and enhance the connections between people and nature.

### ENERGY

#### *100% renewable energy in the region*

We commit to minimize energy use and maximize energy recovery from Metro Vancouver operations.

### PARKS & GREENWAYS

#### *Healthy parks – healthy people*

We commit to diverse forms of outdoor recreation for all ages in accessible natural settings throughout the region to promote health, wellness, and strong community engagement.

# STRATEGIC Priorities

## REGIONAL PLANNING

### REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT

***Broad consensus and commitment to a sustainability inspired regional growth strategy***

We commit to help create a livable and sustainable region while maintaining municipal character and diversity by fostering complete communities in a compact urban area, a strong and resilient economy, transportation choices and protecting the environment.

### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

***Ensuring access to a healthy diet for a healthy population supported by local farms***

We commit to work collaboratively to expand the regional food system and its economic opportunities, and ensure healthy communities and healthy ecosystems support and are supported by local food production.

### HOUSING

***Affordable housing for everyone***

We commit to increase the supply of modest cost housing for owners and renters and eliminate homelessness in the region.

### CULTURE

***A vibrant regional culture; conscious, purposeful, and inclusive***

We commit to enhance the livability of the region by connecting arts and cultural organizations to the public across the region and promoting the economic benefits of a vibrant culture sector.

## MONEY AND PROCESS

### FINANCE

***Equitable and sustainable financial foundation, upon which the region can grow***

We commit to provide quality, affordable, equitable services at best value for citizens of today and generations to come.

### EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

***Building understanding, support and engagement in achieving a sustainable region***

We commit to provide leadership and facilitate collaborative processes by providing education and information to collectively build a sustainable and livable region.

### ABORIGINAL RELATIONS

***Collaborative and mutually beneficial relationships***

We commit to building effective and trust-based relationships with First Nations to ensure better alignment and achievement of common objectives.

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

***Share and learn on an international level***

We commit to sharing our expertise with the world and learning from others; a sustainable region helping make a sustainable planet.

# NOTABLE Achievements

## 2001

- Metro Vancouver launched the Sustainable Region Initiative

## 2002

- Board of Directors confirmed sustainability as the region's overarching philosophy
- Metro Vancouver and partners received prestigious International Gas Union Grand Prix award for citiesPLUS 100 year plan
- Initiated campaign to invite the World Urban Forum to the region, participated in the Johannesburg UN World Summit on Sustainable Development
- Won Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Sustainable Community Award for energy co-generation at the Annacis Waste Water Treatment Plant

## 2003

- Turbo-generator installed as an additional source of sustainable energy recovery at the Burnaby Waste-to-energy Facility (WTEF)
- Received FCM Award for Brunette-Fraser Greenway project

## 2004

- Surrey Transfer Station, the first waste transfer station built to LEED standards, is commissioned
- Sustainability Community Breakfast Series launched (with partners International Centre for Sustainable Cities and BC Hydro)
- Metro Vancouver, in partnership with senior levels of government and the Corporation of Delta, acquired Burns Bog, a sensitive ecological area

- FCM Sustainable Communities Award received for turbo-generation project at WTEF
- Award winning television series, *The Sustainable Region*, is launched

## 2005

- Initial suite of Management Plans (Regional Parks and Greenways, Drinking Water, Air Quality) completed, based on SRI principles
- Received FCM-CH2M Hill Sustainable Communities Award – BuildSmart/Green Buildings

## 2006

- Metro Vancouver co-hosted World Urban Forum III
- Future of the Region Sustainability Dialogues launched as a means of engaging the community in an exploration of regional issues and interests

## 2007

- Affordable Housing Strategy announced
- Sustainable Purchasing Policy adopted by the Board

## 2008

- Sustainability Framework adopted, providing an overarching vision for Metro Vancouver as well as core sustainability principles to guide decision making
- Adopted a corporate policy for the design and construction of green buildings
- Held inaugural Future of the Region Discussion Forums and first-ever Sustainability Summit, a region-wide initiative that sought to build consensus on a common vision for the future and set a shared agenda for action

## 2009

- Established a regional facility for organic food waste composting
- First filtered water delivered to areas of Metro Vancouver from Seymour-Capilano Filtration Plant