



# City of Port Moody

## Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: September 4, 2019

File No. 01-0530-01

Submitted by: Councillor Hunter Madsen

Subject: Information Requests to Help Council Track and Manage Port Moody's Growth

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### Purpose / Introduction

This report proposes to initiate a semi-annual process of information-gathering and input from staff that will assist Council in tracking, managing, and helping the City to prepare effectively for growth and development in Port Moody, so that we can keep future densification in best possible balance with the city's desirable quality of life.

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### Recommended Resolutions

**WHEREAS** providing attentive management and proactive oversight of Port Moody's coming growth is among the foremost responsibilities and key challenges of City Council;

**AND WHEREAS** Council's Strategic Plan for 2019-2022 calls upon Council to rigorously manage "growth in strategic balance with quality of life" and, to this end, directs Council to "develop tools to help us plan and prepare for the future" and "review proposed development projects and updated population projections on a regular basis";

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** staff be directed to provide Council and the Executive Leadership Team semi-annually with two reports: a Development Horizon Update and a Growth Impact Review. The Update will present a deep-dive look at general market trends and potential real estate projects on the City's 20-year development horizon; and the Review will work from the latest Update to present a cross-departmental assessment of likely cumulative-growth impacts that will help Council to anticipate possible growth issues, shape its community vision and development strategies, and plan for adjustments in municipal capacities and amenities, as recommended in the report dated September 4, 2019 from Councillor Hunter Madsen regarding Information Requests to Help Council Track and Manage Port Moody's Growth;

**AND THAT** the first of these semi-annual Updates and Reviews be scheduled to take place in December 2019.

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### **Executive Summary**

Over the next two decades, Port Moody is expected to grow its population by 50% and introduce comparable increases in housing units and local jobs, bringing changes that could strain quality of life in our famously livable city unless this growth is tracked carefully, managed adroitly, and kept in constant balance with services and amenities. This report recommends that staff be directed, on a semi-annual basis, to provide Council with a detailed overview regarding upcoming and potential development activity in the city, along with an assessment of potential growth impacts that considers the cumulative effects of likely building projects, taken altogether.

### **Background**

Regional pressures to build may have cooled off somewhat from their torrid highs of the last couple of years, yet we still have a multiplicity of large projects on our horizon, projects that, taken together and across many dimensions, will have a big impact on living in Port Moody. Managing both new building and economic development effectively to meet our community's needs for suitable housing, clean industry, and good local jobs, while keeping overall growth in line with Official Community Plan (OCP) targets and in balance with City services and local amenities, and bargaining astutely on behalf of the city – these preeminent challenges are still job #1 for our Council.

As one of the region's most desirable residential property markets, Port Moody will see substantial growth in building construction over the next 20 years, and our City has set the goal of boosting residential population by +50% by the year 2041. Many of the City's most far-reaching decisions regarding development will be made by Council within the next few years. How well our Council governs urban densification and keeps it in balance will largely determine the fate of Port Moody, and whether this community can hold onto its famously desirable "small city quality of life."

Public input from Port Moody residents has reached us at Council sessions, via email, in the local press, and in our biennial citizen satisfaction survey, suggesting broad concern about the accelerating pace of real estate development in the City and about the potential impact of coming growth on local quality of life. Some have questioned whether our Council is exercising sufficiently close oversight of the changes under way.

Residents have expressed the worry that our governing panel tends to approach each new real estate development proposal one at a time and in isolation, considering each project's merits and requested OCP/zoning variances on a stand-alone basis, and without paying sufficiently informed attention to how the proposed development, in combination with other potential major developments in the pipeline, could result in unintended cumulative impacts for Port Moody that might strain municipal services and compromise local quality of life. The recommendations of this report, which revisit and refine some concepts first suggested during the previous Council term, are designed to help address such concerns, and to place Council in a highly informed position to effectively manage the city's coming growth.

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### Discussion

#### *The Challenge of Balancing Future Growth with Quality of Life and City Service Planning.*

The earlier report, presented to Council on May 8, 2018 (*Managing Port Moody's Growth as Job #1 – Proposal to Affirm the OCP's Growth Targets, Initiate Development Horizon Updates, and Conduct Growth Impact Reviews, by Councillor Hunter Madsen with Councillor Rob Vagramov*), documented a number of reasons why, unless development were planned and managed with great care, our city could be on track to grow population and expand residential housing stock at a pace that would significantly exceed the approved growth targets summarized in the Regional Context Statement of our OCP. That report noted that, unless changes in land use were tightly managed toward clear city-building objectives, they could very easily result in an excess of housing stock that was not an optimal fit for the kinds of housing (such as rentals, family-sized units, affordable housing) that our community will actually need the most in coming decades.

The 2018 report reasoned that adhering to the OCP's formal growth plan was vital; and noted, for example, how the plan's intention to reach a 50,000 population by 2041 has been adopted as the key metric driving capacity planning in the City's master plans for Transportation and for Parks and Recreation, as well as for Library Expansion. The report also pointed out how Metro Vancouver, School District #43 (SD#43), TransLink, as well as real estate developers and local businesses, have all calibrated their own growth plans to be in line with the commitments to projected population and residential growth that our City has made. So delivering growth that is in line with OCP projections helps the City and its partners keep growth in balance with quality of life.

#### *Growing at the Pace Approved by Our Community*

In the 2018 report, we recognized that developing Port Moody in line with OCP targets is a bond of trust that we have made with our public, which engaged in years of intense debate and consensus-building in order to align around the growth vision of the 2014 OCP. Our residents have not consented to any specific growth targets besides those listed in the current edition of the OCP, and they have entrusted Council and the City with attaining them.

In any case, the fact is that respecting the OCP's targets is also a legal mandate. Section 478 of the *Local Government Act* requires that "...All bylaws enacted or works undertaken by a council... after the adoption of... an official community plan... must be consistent with the relevant plan."

So what targets should we be delivering for Port Moody? Here are the top-level growth targets that our OCP directs us to pursue:

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### Port Moody Growth Targets

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2031</u>	<u>2041</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>%</u>
Population	33,551	39,660	44,820	50,000	+16,449	+49%
Dwellings	13,318	14,896	16,994	19,170	+5,852	+44%
Local Jobs	7,300*	9,814	10,585	11,527	+4,227	+58%

Source: Port Moody Official Community Plan (2014/5), Regional Context Statement (p.118), Canada Census 2016, 2011\*

Since the 2014 OCP was adopted, these goals have been considered settled and not controversial. In March 2018, the City distributed a report titled *Growth and Development in Port Moody* reassuring residents that our city remains on track to reach 50,000 in 2041. At the May 8, 2018 meeting, Council voted unanimously to reaffirm the commitment of “Council and the City... to manage growth in line with the stated targets of the Official Community Plan.”

#### Still Needed – Better Tools and Processes to Manage Growth toward these Targets

Hitting these various targets on time and in correct proportion will require that our Council and City leadership maintain a deep and continuously updated understanding of local growth trends and their likely impacts. With timely information in hand, Council is in the position to conduct properly-focused, comprehensively-informed, and effectively-structured discussions about key growth-related issues. Council has far too few, highly informed deliberations of this sort today, and I believe this confounds the ability of our governing body to do a superior job of growth management. Now that a new Council is in place and has approved our go-forward Strategic Plan, it behooves our panel to take a second, closer look at the tools proposed during the previous term, and to reconsider some pragmatic suggestions for improved governance that are adapted from last year's proposal.

#### New Information Tools to Assist Council in Growth Management

This report recommends that Council and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meet on a semi-annual basis to consider emerging growth trends and discuss their implications based on staff assessments – here, dubbed *Growth Impact Reviews*. Staff would build these Reviews, in part, off a companion report, to be called a *Development Horizon Update* that would afford Council and ELT a broad and comprehensive view of local development interest and activity.

Building off the latest Development Horizon Updates, staff's Growth Impact Reviews would help Council apply its deepened perspective to craft better policy, unite around more effective strategies for managing growth to plan, make better-informed decisions regarding proposed OCP/zoning changes, and oversee more effective cross-departmental and long-range planning in response to growth and development.

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This report recommends that staff present its first Development Horizon Update and Growth Impact Review by year-end 2019.

What information would we expect to find in Development Horizon Updates and Growth Impact Reviews? While the ultimate format of these reports is up to staff, what follows here is an overview of information and analytics that would be helpful to start tracking and assessing on an ongoing basis.

#### Development Horizon Updates – Possible Information and Metrics to Collect

- a. Development Horizon Updates should provide timely reconnaissance on general market trends, emerging issues, and the status of City projects under way in response to growth. These reports should also update Council on the status of all significant projects for which developers have initiated discussion with the City, tracking these discussions from the project's earliest stages, not merely from the date when a formal development application has been received. The function of these regular updates would be to equip Council decision-makers with the broadest, most comprehensive, and most long-range view of development forces on the city's horizon.
- b. Planning staff would be encouraged to use the diverse presentational tools at their disposal to bring the development picture to life in the Updates. These tools would probably include detailed charts and maps that provide a comprehensive visual overview of all lots in the city for which potential or actual development is under active discussion between developers and staff, whether or not a development application or formal proposal has been filed.
- c. Updates should focus our attention on larger development projects, defined in some way (e.g., summarizing any project that entails more than 20 new residential units or more than 2,000ft<sup>2</sup> of commercial/industrial space).
- d. Updates should also summarize any status changes regarding the City's own development initiatives, including, but not limited to, Coronation Park, Moody Centre Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Area, the City Lands, and the Oceanfront (Flavelle/Mill and Timber) development.
- e. The report for each listed development project should summarize whatever may be known or supposed regarding the following, plus any additional information that staff feel could be helpful:
  - Property location;
  - Lot size;
  - High-level development concept/vision;
  - Developer's timeline: targeted dates for build start and completion;
  - Project stage;
  - Building forms, tower heights;
  - Required OCP/zoning changes;

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- If residential: summarize maximum proposed number/type of units, number of residents, ownership (freehold strata, co-op, rental, sub-market...);
  - If commercial or mixed-use: provide salient details;
  - Status of negotiations re DCCs, CACs, levies, amenities contributions;
  - Known project issues and roadblocks;
  - Key expected impacts (for ramp-up of City services, for neighbourhood, etc.); and
  - URL links to additional developer information as needed.
- f. Updates should provide updated estimates of cumulative population, housing, and jobs impacts for Port Moody, under alternate assumptions, and compare these estimates to the OCP's targets. Ideally, staff would create two new, cumulative metrics for reference:
- Maximal Population Impact: This metric would estimate the total likely population of Port Moody in the years 2021, 2031, and 2041 if all open projects covered in the Update were to go forward and get built according to the developer's vision and timeline or, in cases where the City has directed changes to that vision, according to whatever the City has directed for this development; and
  - Adjusted Population Impact: The Update would also generate an Adjusted Impact estimate that adjusts the Maximal Population Impact figures downward to account for risk and uncertainty in light of project stage. For example, the impact of very early stage projects entailing high uncertainty would be discounted heavily by some ratio compared to the impact of projects fully approved and under construction.

### What Questions Could Growth Impact Reviews Explore?

The 2018 report identified a series of 13 important questions that staff's Growth Impact Reviews might be expected to investigate:

#### Tracking growth carefully and managing it toward clear goals

1. In light of everything the City knows today about potential development projects on the horizon, does it look like Port Moody is basically on track to hit the established long-term growth targets for population, residential units, and good new jobs that are specified goals in Port Moody's Official Community Plan – or not?
2. Regarding residential units, exactly which types and forms of housing across the continuum does our community need most, in what relative numbers, and are developers on pace to deliver these? If not, then what levers will we deploy to get development into line with our community's actual needs?

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3. Regarding the OCP's imperative to enable the creation of thousands of additional, well-paid jobs in Port Moody over the next couple of decades, how much space of the right kinds and competitive pricing should we be setting aside, and in which neighbourhoods of the city, such that we can attract and house sophisticated, sustainable new industries (deploying industrial-grade infrastructure) with enough room for them to grow?
4. Viewing all pending development projects as a whole, if it appears as though our community is at risk of significantly overshooting or under-delivering its growth targets, then what initiatives might the City take to help get us back on track?

#### Assessing cumulative impacts

5. If we sketch out the anticipated construction/move-in timelines of proposed major developments and lay them side-by-side, then what critical, cumulative impacts on Port Moody, its current residents, services, and amenities can be anticipated, and when might these impacts take place?
6. What is the cumulative impact of projected growth on usage of our parks, and how would such growth affect our targeted parks-to-people ratio (hectares/1,000)?
7. What would be the impact of these new developments on the range and share of housing types available in Port Moody, and are changes moving our community in the overall direction that our OCP envisions?

#### Capacity planning

8. Looking out 5/10/20 years, what are staff's latest working plans to meet expected long-term, cumulative growth with expansion of infrastructure, services, police and fire/safety, parks, amenities, transportation capacities, and changes to financing/tax base? Has our administration worked up suitable capacity-growth plans for each of these vital municipal sectors, to handle the swift +50% explosion in local population over the next two decades?
9. How well do these capacity-expansion plans line up, year to year, against anticipated demand coming from new building projects between now and the year 2041?
10. If there are foreseeable gaps and shortfalls, then what are the specific plans to close these?

#### Covering costs of growth

11. Taking into account all the various kinds of revenue (DCCs, CACs, levies, etc.) that we might expect developers and incoming residents to contribute, do we expect that these revenues will be covering all of the growth-related expenses that new developments are generating for Port Moody?

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12. If not, then what are staff's specific proposals for how the gaps in growth expense can be closed by the City? What plans may we need to put into place, either to ratchet up requirements from developers, and/or ratchet down our per capita service levels and quality of life as the city grows, and/or seek additional funding at provincial/federal levels, and/or take on debt, and/or raise taxes on current residents in order to maintain/expand service levels so as to stay ahead of incoming demand?
13. Most of our financial plans currently look forward no further than five years out, and they are concerned mostly with budgeting for capital asset replacement under steady-state assumptions regarding required service levels. Is this approach sufficient? What additional planning conversations should we begin having now to anticipate changes in growth-related demand over the next ten years? Or the next 15 or 20 years?

All these questions about the city's development prospects are obvious and urgent ones for our City to be asking and to be answering, on behalf of the public it serves. Simply to continue voting thumbs-up or thumbs-down on the individual development proposals and OCP/Zoning change requests that reach Council Chambers, as our body has been doing apace, will not get us the best answers to the overarching issues that these projects present. And unless and until our Council is more deeply informed by staff about these questions, we should doubt whether we have sufficient knowledge to safely give our thumbs up to any big new projects.

In my view, it will not suffice to delay discussion of these complex issues for another year or two, to be broached over the course of our coming exercise in OCP revision. With each passing month, our Council continues to make development decisions of consequence, so now is the time to start deepening our grasp of the unfolding development scene, not a year from now.

To assemble these strategic information reports twice per year will indeed take some time and effort. But considering that effective growth management to protect and enhance Port Moody's amazing quality of life is surely a foremost priority of both our Council and the City's executive leadership, these detailed overviews should give us, at last, the information and insight we need to do our jobs better and to think and plan together, as a team, on behalf of Port Moody's future.

## **Other Options**

THAT the report dated September 4, 2019 from Councillor Hunter Madsen regarding Information Requests to Help Council Track and Manage Port Moody's Growth be received for information.

## **Financial Implications**

There may be incidental meeting and materials costs. Staff may seek contractor help in formatting and gathering the initial Update and Review.



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### **Communications / Civic Engagement**

The recommended new procedures are intended, in part, to address and mitigate public concerns about the pace of development and its careful regulation and oversight by Council, and to raise public confidence in Council's approach to development issues. Development Horizon Updates and Growth Impact Reviews may provide the City with new information and reviews that could be shared with the public to increase awareness and support regarding the City's growth initiatives.

### **Council Strategic Plan Objectives**

The recommendations in this report directly serve Council's approved Strategic Plan regarding Community Evolution, where the priority is to "Plan and develop, for future generations, a vibrant, connected and livable city, with distinctive places and spaces, where growth is managed in strategic balance with quality of life."

To this end, the Strategic Plan calls more specifically upon Council to take the following actions that would be advanced by the recommendations in this report:

- Develop tools to help us plan and prepare for the future;
- Review proposed development projects and updated population projections on a regular basis;
- Look for creative ways to enable diverse housing forms and heritage revitalization; and
- Ensure City assets are optimized, maintained, and funded for current and future needs.

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**Prepared by:**



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Hunter Madsen  
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