

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

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Regional Transportation
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March 15, 2012

Via email: minister.transportation@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Blair Lekstrom, MLA
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
PO Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Lekstrom,

Subject: Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation March 7, 2012 Motions

The TransLink Mayors' Council thanks you for your attendance at our March 7, 2012 meeting. Your willingness to attend our meetings and engage directly with us on issues saves significant time and allows us to better understand each other's issues and identify resolutions.

There were a number of Motions passed in the latter part of the meeting and they are included in the body of this letter. We also provide additional comments to clarify the intent of each motion. We look forward to more detailed discussions on or before our next meeting on April 10, 2012 and are hopeful that you will be able to join us.

Motion #1

The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation requests changes to legislation to:

- require the approval of both TransLink's base and supplementary budgets by the Mayors' Council;
- enable a Graduated Vehicle Registration Fee or a new Regional Carbon Tax in order to avoid the short-term property tax increase; and
- provide for review of TransLink by the Provincial Auditor General or the new Local Government Auditor General.

The first point relates to governance and addresses the concern that while the Mayors' Council represents the taxpayers of the region, it does not have the legislated authority to have direct input or influence over TransLink's budgeting process, which is key in establishing short and longer term transportation priorities for the region.

The second point relates to the need to establish additional revenue sources that could be introduced through legislation in the current session with a view to replacing the interim property tax component of the 2011 Moving Forward TransLink Supplemental Plan. As you know, a vehicle levy is currently enabled in the TransLink legislation; however there is a need to establish the collection mechanism through ICBC in legislation. The legislation should provide flexibility for the enabling of a graduated vehicle levy (based on engine size, fuel consumption or emissions rating) and should apply to both passenger and commercial vehicles. A new Regional Carbon Tax, which also needs more clarification, is suggested for inclusion.

The third point addresses the need for ongoing and regular independent reviews of TransLink's performance with regard to both value for money and efficiency of operations. We recognize that there are currently auditing exercises initiated by the TransLink Board and the Commissioner under existing legislation that address some of our and the public's concerns. Some of the current audit exercises are normal business practices or are part of the requirements under the responsibilities of the TransLink Commissioner, which have a fairly narrow focus. It is the intent of the Mayors' Council that a system for ongoing performance reviews be required under legislation. Our position is that these reviews be done by an independent body thereby ensuring public confidence in the outcome of such reviews. As TransLink is receiving public tax dollars, it is clear to us that sound public policy dictates an ongoing level of public accountability.

We also want to emphasize that in the discussions after you left the meeting there was consensus that doing an in-depth audit was not seen to be as much of a priority as may have previously been stated. There was agreement that the Commissioner's work currently underway, which will be presented to the Mayors' Council at our meeting on April 10, 2012 may satisfy the immediate need for assurance of fiscal efficiencies within TransLink. The Mayors' Council was clear that it does not wish any delay in the introduction of legislation to establish and implement a new funding source to replace the additional property tax.

Motion # 2

The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation requests that:

- a) the Provincial Government of BC amend or introduce legislation prior to June 2012 to enable the following long term revenue sources:
 1. Comprehensive road pricing to be built on sound demand management strategies and consistent with the principles adopted by the Mayors' Council on May 3, 2011;
 2. New Regional Carbon Tax;
 3. Allocation of future or restructured Provincial Carbon Tax revenues;
 4. Graduated Vehicle Registration Fee based on engine size, fuel consumption, emissions rating;
 5. Additional Fuel Tax;

6. Flexibility to add other best practices from around the world; and
- b) clarify that any new funding changes are to be implemented by the Mayors' Council subject to public engagement.

This motion recognizes that the discussions within the region toward achieving a long-term sustainable funding model for both the movement of goods and people requires a high level of research, review of best practices and collaboration between all levels of government. Specifically, it will ultimately require enabling legislation to effect or transfer other sources of revenue, such as those mentioned in Motion #2 above. We are well aware that there needs to be broad and effective dialogue with the public and the business community to effect these changes. We also believe that the engagement should be region-wide, and include a broad spectrum of stakeholders as well as the Province of BC, TransLink Board, and the Mayors' Council. We also believe that we need to seek the advice and perspectives of transportation planning academics and other experts, in this very open and public process. Motion #2 clearly emphasizes the need to commit to this long-term public planning and engagement process in the near future and asks for preliminary legislation committing to both the tools and engagement.

Motion #3

The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation authorizes the release of the motions from the Mayors' Council March 7, 2012 In-Camera meeting, and the resulting draft letter to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, to local councils.

Motion #4

The Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation:

- a) requests changes to legislation to:
 - add Electoral Area A Director as a full member of the Mayors' Council;
 - allow the Mayors' Council to call regular or subcommittee meetings when required and for remuneration in a manner consistent with Metro Vancouver to be funded within the Mayors' Council funding envelope;
- b) wishes to engage an independent, third party governance consultant and undertake a process that will review past and current public transportation governance models and best practices from other jurisdictions, with a view to recommending future changes to legislation based on the following principles:
 - Openness and transparency to the shareholders (taxpayers) as exemplified by more public meetings;
 - More direct involvement of the region in planning, funding and establishment of long term vision for transportation; and

- Review and establishment of long term funding options and allocations based on agreed on plans and vision.

Discussion around Motion #4 point (b) suggested that a number of options be explored including the referral of this issue to the Metro Vancouver's Intergovernmental Advisory Committee seeking its perspective. Concepts such as redefining the Mayors' Council as a standing subcommittee of Metro Vancouver or it being combined with the Metro Mayors Committee might be considered as part of the independent third party process.

The Mayors' Council recognizes that the Legislature is currently sitting and there is a relative urgency in preparing legislation for consideration. We emphasize that enabling the additional sources of revenue to replace the interim property tax identified in the Moving Forward Plan is our highest short-term priority. Furthermore, any clear steps that can be taken to move forward on the other items mentioned, especially the long-term sustainable funding model, would be very well received.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Walton', written in a cursive style.

Mayor Richard Walton, FCA
Chair, Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation