



Committee of the Whole Report For the meeting of October 7, 2021

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** October 1, 2021
From: Philip Bellefontaine, Director, Engineering & Public Works
Subject: CRD Regional Transportation Priorities

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. Receive this report for information.
2. Endorse the creation of a CRD Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and;
3. Direct staff to work with municipal, electoral area, and agency partners through the TAC to advise on regional transportation matters requiring coordination and reporting through the CRD Transportation Committee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2021, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board endorsed several Regional Transportation Priority Areas to address three core issues directly related to mobility: congestion, mode share, and climate change. These priority areas were developed through an expedited process led by the CRD with input from municipalities and agency partners.

In addition to advocacy efforts at the local and regional levels, the establishment of a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has been identified as an important next step to help formalize and coordinate efforts among municipal and agency partners.

The City of Victoria is a regional leader in delivering innovative transportation programs, policies, and projects. Staff see considerable value to the City in taking an active role in participating in the TAC to inform, shape and contribute to regional transportation priorities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to share information on the CRD's recently approved regional transportation priorities, the creation of a new regional Transportation Advisory Committee, and confirm the participation of the City of Victoria within this.

BACKGROUND

In December 2020, the CRD Board directed their staff to work with municipalities, electoral areas, and agency partners (BC Ferries, BC Transit, Island Corridor Foundation, Ministry of Transportation

& Infrastructure) on an expedited process to develop a list of regional transportation priorities, informed by the CRD's declaration of a climate emergency and the value of the region having greater alignment in order to more successfully secure transportation investments from higher levels of government. The CRD Board also directed staff to consider options to improve coordination and governance for transportation. Three core transportation issues (congestion, mode share, and climate change) were identified as the basis for gathering priority recommendations.

City staff made contributions to this process that were aligned with approved plans and policies such as the Official Community Plan and GO Victoria. They included RapidBus implementation, investments in active transportation (walking, rolling, and cycling), general public transit enhancements, transportation demand management, and road safety.

Victoria already has alignment with several of our municipal neighbours on mobility priorities including the expansion of the regional trail network, reduced speed limits on local roads and the advancement of RapidBus. Staff also agree on the value of having a formal structure to advance these priorities on a regional scale. This alignment has been helpful in facilitating both the nature of the municipal input on priorities and the future regional representation.

Recommendations from municipalities and agency partners were compiled by the CRD to identify priority areas, determine lead and supporting roles, and evaluate the impacts based on their performance in addressing congestion, mode shift, climate action and safety.

Through these discussions, it was confirmed that creation of a formalized regional structure would allow for similar collaboration and prioritization of regionally significant projects, which would align with other successful CRD structures such as the Inter-Municipal Climate Action Working Group, and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

In June 2021 the CRD Transportation Committee, a standing committee of the CRD Board with representation from two Victoria Directors, endorsed a draft set of Regional Transportation Priority Areas. In July 2021, the CRD Board formally adopted these Priority Areas (Appendix A) and communicated these to the Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure (Appendix B).

The CRD also responded positively to recommendations from the City of Victoria, District of Saanich and others to form a CRD Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) with representation from municipal staff as well as agency partners such as the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure and BC Transit. This welcome approach is supported by staff to advise the CRD Transportation Committee on regional transportation priorities.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The City's Role in Regional Mobility

As home to 23% percent of the region's population and 42% of regional jobs, many trips start or end in Victoria. The City is a regional leader and innovator in both local and regional mobility whether through parking pricing, investments in complete streets, or the close integration of land use and transportation decisions. GO Victoria, adopted in 2019, identifies the City's values, policy positions, key initiatives, and strategies for supporting and shaping mobility in Victoria. While developed to shape local decisions, the strategy sets the stage for improvements to achieve road safety, climate action, equity, and affordability which can be applied with a regional lens.

Through consistent policy implementation and corresponding capital investment programs, the City has continued to see notable gains in mode share over the past decade with 49% of trips to work by transit, cycling and walking, just behind Vancouver at 50% and tied with Montreal (2016 Census). Region wide progress, however, has been limited with both traffic volumes and travel times continuing to increase. Sustainable mode share across the region has modestly increased from 22.4% in 2011 to 26.6% in 2017, but the pace of progress does not match ambitious regional climate and mode share targets adopted by the CRD and necessary to support a sustainable region.

By 2038, the Capital Region is projected to grow by approximately 86,000 people with 50,000 new jobs when compared to 2018. Moving people, goods and services while continuing to support new economic opportunities and traditional industries such as tourism, will become increasingly difficult unless continued investments are made in public transit, shared, and sustainable mobility to give residents and visitors options beyond the private motor vehicle. While investments will continue to be made in our road network for motor vehicles, more space over time will need to be dedicated to goods movement, transit, and shared vehicles to support a growing and vibrant community.

CRD Transportation Advisory Committee

To achieve the region's climate, transportation and livability targets, the CRD Board has committed to formal advocacy efforts and collaboration with senior levels of government on potential funding streams and implementation opportunities to advance these priorities. Within this context, one of the important first steps identified is the creation of a new governance structure developed around a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to support the coordination required to progress work on:

- A regional approach to transportation demand management (TDM);
- A regional approach to safety policy; and
- Implementation of a connected and consistent active transportation network.

Other regions including the Lower Mainland (through Translink) and the Central Okanagan have similar structures to allow the exchange of information, draft policies and proposals, and receive municipal and agency perspective and advice. The TAC is welcomed by staff and will result in improved regional coordination and help ensure regional mobility priorities are consistently evaluated and advanced. Other CRD working groups such as the Inter-Municipal Climate Action Working Group and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, have been successful in fostering collaborative working relationships and deliverables between municipal and regional staff, other organizations and key stakeholders.

The TAC will be established in Fall 2021 with senior staff representation from the CRD, municipalities, as well as electoral area, and agency partners. The City anticipates playing an active role in defining the terms of reference for the TAC and has identified several desired outcomes in preparation for its first meeting. Staff see several benefits to this model for enhancing collaboration on mobility and building momentum between jurisdictions.

Staff's support for the new TAC is also informed by other anticipated benefits including:

- An enhanced likelihood of securing funding commitments and schedules to deliver both the Transit Future Plan (including RapidBus implementation) as well as expanding local and regional active transportation infrastructure
- Municipal involvement in the operational review of the CRD Traffic Safety Commission and regional road safety policy

- The scope and speed of regional Transportation Demand Management efforts including the involvement from institutions and large employers, as well as addressing issues like parking pricing and supply
- An earlier understanding for any local resource “asks” towards regional projects for consideration by Council through the Financial Planning and budget process
- Enhanced planning, coordination and prioritization of City of Victoria capital programs and priorities which contribute to regional priorities.

CONCLUSIONS

The significant amount of work undertaken by CRD staff in developing the Regional Transportation Priorities and the responsiveness to recommendations from Victoria and others on establishing an appropriate governance structure are much welcomed. GO Victoria sets the stage for improvements to achieve road safety, climate action, equity, and affordability goals through local leadership and strong regional collaboration.

The approval of regional transportation priorities by the CRD Board along with formation of the TAC is an important structural step in supporting the advancement of several regional initiatives focused on reducing congestion, improving sustainable transportation mode share and addressing climate change.

Respectfully submitted,

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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.

List of Attachments

Appendix A: CRD Action Priorities Summary Table
Appendix B: Letter to the Minister