



Governance and Priorities Committee Report

Date: March 31, 2014 **From:** Brad Dellebuur, Manager of Transportation
Subject: Regional Transportation Plan Referral – Comments/Recommended Changes

Executive Summary

At its October 30, 2013 meeting, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board referred the draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to Mayor and Council for final comment, prior to consideration for adoption by the CRD Board in March 2014.

The CRD Board Strategic Plan 2012-2014 identified regional transportation and planning as a strategic priority. The draft RTP was developed through a cooperative partnership with staff from the region's municipalities, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Transit, and representatives of the electoral areas. The RTP identified immediate priorities, governance options, and long-term strategies to guide planning and development of a multi-modal transportation system that meets future growth demands and is focussed on sustainability.

A key component of the RTP was an extensive stakeholder engagement process, which included regular meetings of an inter-municipal Technical Advisory Committee, presentation to relevant CRD committees and commissions, and engagement opportunities with stakeholder organizations. Further consultation with municipal Councils associated with the Regional Sustainability Strategy and a discussion at the May 2013 Forum of Councils shaped RTP principles, outcomes and recommended actions.

Staff comments in this report are forwarded for Council's consideration.

Recommendation:

That Council forward the comments contained in this report on the draft Regional Transportation Plan to the Capital Regional District Board for consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Dellebuur'.

Brad Dellebuur, Manager
Transportation

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dwayne Kalynchuk'.

Dwayne Kalynchuk, P. Eng.
Director of Engineering and
Public Works

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. E. Day'.

Deborah Day, Director
Sustainability Planning &
Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

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Jason Johnson

Date:

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April 1, 2014

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to consider comments and recommended changes on the Capital Regional District's draft Regional Transportation Plan, to be forwarded prior to consideration for adoption by the Capital Regional District Board.

Background

At its October 30, 2013 meeting, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board referred the draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (<https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/regional-planning-pdf/rtp2013.pdf?sfvrsn=0>) to municipalities, electoral areas, Victoria Regional Transit Commission, BC Transit Board of Directors and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for final comment prior to consideration for adoption by the CRD Board in March 2014. A letter to Mayor and Council from the CRD Board Chair was received November 18, 2013. Staff subsequently met with CRD staff in early 2014 to review initial staff comments, and requested and received an extension for responding, to allow City staff to forward recommended comments to Council for consideration.

The 2003 CRD's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and 2005 Travel Choices plans lay the foundation for a vision of more sustainable development patterns and a regional transportation system that enhances mobility and transportation choices while setting high mode share targets for transit, walking, and cycling by 2026. Expanding on these strategy documents, other regional plans have identified mode-specific transportation priorities: the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP), the draft Salt Spring Island Cycling Master Plan (SSI-CMP), the emerging Southern Gulf Islands Trails & Cycling Plan (SGI-TCP), the Phase 1 Transportation Corridor Plan (TCP), and BC Transit's Transit Future Plan.

In recognition of the vital role that transportation has and will continue to have on the future of the region, the CRD Board Strategic Plan 2012-2014 identified regional transportation and planning as a strategic priority. The RTP provides an opportunity to integrate the various plans and accelerate progress on key actions that will kick start real change towards a more sustainable future and meet the region's corporate goals.

The draft RTP was developed through a cooperative partnership with staff from the region's municipalities, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Transit, and representatives of the electoral areas. The RTP identified immediate priorities, governance options, and long-term strategies to guide planning and development of a multi-modal transportation system that meets future growth demands and is focussed on sustainability.

A key component of the RTP was an extensive stakeholder engagement process, which included regular meetings of an inter-municipal Technical Advisory Committee, presentation to relevant CRD committees and commissions, and engagement opportunities with stakeholder organizations. Further consultation with municipal Councils associated with the Regional Sustainability Strategy and a discussion at the May 2013 Forum of Councils shaped RTP principles, outcomes and recommended actions.

The Regional Transportation Plan was guided by a series of underlying Principles:

- Taking a coordinated and engaged approach to planning
- Prioritizing strategic investments that serve regional mobility needs
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and preparing for changes
- Integrating transportation and land use planning
- Capitalizing on the potential for alternatives to driving alone
- Enhancing the role for public transit
- Maximizing efficiency of existing transportation corridors for multiple modes

Aligned with the Principles, eight Regional Outcome Statements were developed to articulate the type of regional transportation system envisioned for the CRD. The Regional Outcome Statements (numbered below) were grouped into the following five themes:

Integrating Land Use and Transportation:

1. Movement between communities, mobility hubs and major destinations is facilitated through a network of regional multi-modal transportation corridors (Regional Multi-modal Network, or RMN).
2. Mobility hubs align with the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) and provide people with access to housing, employment, services, amenities, and transportation choices at local, sub-regional, and regional scale.
3. Transportation and land use planning tools are integrated at the local and regional levels.

Creating Exceptional Environments for Walking and Cycling:

4. Cycling is an appealing, safe and viable transportation option for residents and visitors of all skill and confidence levels.
5. Walking is an increasingly popular and desirable mode of transportation that is supported by safe, convenient and accessible pedestrian infrastructure.

Taking Transit to the Next Level:

6. Public transit is a preferred choice of transportation in the region, attracting new riders through comfortable, safe, accessible and convenient service.

Getting the Most out of Our Roads and Trails:

7. Existing regional transportation infrastructure is optimized and enhanced by new technology where appropriate.

Influencing Travel Behaviour:

8. Regional programs and initiatives provide residents and visitors with the tools, confidence, and knowledge to use active transportation, public transit, car share, taxis and high-occupancy vehicles.

Each of these eight Regional Outcome Statements included a series of actions to be carried out over the coming years. The actions are concrete steps to make the vision of the Regional Transportation Plan become a reality. Priority action items identified in the Plan are marked in bold. The actions are:

- 1.1 **Establish an expanded regional transportation authority and funding service, to facilitate improvements to the Regional Multi-modal Network (RMN), implement demand management programs, influence land use adjacent to regionally significant transportation corridors and mobility hubs and advocate for and source federal and provincial funding.**
- 1.2 **Incorporate the RMN into all relevant future regional plans, official community plans, local area plans and local transportation plans.**
- 1.3 **Establish an ongoing Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) to identify RMN priorities, coordinate complementary local planning activities and implement priority projects through the new regional funding framework.**
- 1.4 Develop and implement a Multi-modal Level of Service (MMLOS) model and determine targets for all RMN corridors to balance trade-offs between modes.
- 1.5 Establish, monitor and report on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- 1.6 Base the new regional funding framework for improvements on the RMN off approved MMLOS and KPI targets.
- 1.7 Through TAC, take an active role in regional public consultation strategies around transportation projects affecting RMN corridors.
- 1.8 Undertake a risk assessment of critical transportation services and infrastructure in the RMN associated with a changing climate.
- 1.9 **Conduct a service review of transportation in the Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island including the identification of alternate water-based links and associated infrastructure requirements.**
- 1.10 Expand the Car Stop rideshare program for rural sections of the RMN.
- 2.1 **Incorporate mobility hubs into all relevant future regional plans, official community plans, local area plans and local municipal transportation master plans.**
- 2.2 Prepare mobility hub guidelines to guide planning and development, ensuring integration of new technology such as electric vehicle infrastructure.
- 2.3 Fund municipalities to develop detailed master plans for each mobility hub.
- 3.1 **Identify density ranges for centres in the Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS) settlement typology, mobility hubs and frequent and rapid transit corridors.**
- 3.2 Promote land use policies to balance the jobs to workers ratio within the CRD four sub-areas (Core, Westshore, Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands).
- 3.3 Develop a "complete streets" guideline as a tool for adoption and implementation by area municipalities/EAs that have not already adopted equivalent policies.
- 3.4 Develop parking best practices guide with an emphasis on supporting development of complete streets.
- 3.5 Through the TAC, identify, protect and manage existing and future transport sites and corridors (e.g. E&N, rights of way along RMN corridors and water access points).
- 4.1 **Implement Pedestrian and Cyclist Master Plan, Salt Spring Island Cycling Master Plan and Southern Gulf Islands Trails and Cycling Plan recommended cycling facilities and amenities in all four sub-regions through the regional funding program.**
- 4.2 Enhance existing regional, municipal, and Electoral Areas trails, and continue to fund the expansion of new trails, in line with the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan design guidelines, with a focus on connectivity.
- 4.3 Expand and harmonize regional cycling data collection program.
- 4.4 Identify and market circle routes to increase cycle tourism in region.
- 4.5 Fund initiatives for community bicycle recycling and reuse programs.

- 5.1 Produce a series of walkability maps to be used as a tool to encourage walking as an everyday mode of transportation. Maps will showcase separated trails and pathways and emphasize connectivity between key land uses and multiple modes.**
- 5.2 Fund pedestrian realm audits at mobility hubs and other key locations on the RMN or as identified in the Electoral Areas transportation studies.
- 5.3 Through the TAC, work with advocacy groups and existing accessibility advisory committees within the region to identify areas on the RMN in need of improvements for people with mobility challenges. This information will inform the pedestrian realm audits.
- 6.1 Embed consultation and engagement with the region within Victoria Regional Transit Commission (VRTC) governance model.**
- 6.2 Implement transit priority measures for all RMN priority transit corridors.
- 6.3 Implement the Transit Future Plan prioritizing the Rapid and Frequent Transit Networks.
- 6.4 Prioritize and expand deployment of improved customer information systems including real-time transit information technologies.
- 6.5 Develop, implement and report on service standards and performance guidelines that complement priorities outlined in the Transit Future Plan.
- 6.6 Update the cost benefit analysis for Light Rail Transit (LRT). Pending the outcome of cost-benefit analysis, advance the LRT designs and funding strategies or pursue alternatives.
- 6.7 Expand and enhance Salt Spring Island transit service.
- 6.8 Establish local transit service on Southern Gulf Islands, pending recommendations of feasibility studies.
- 6.9 Establish a working group with inter-regional and tourism-based transport service providers to coordinate and align convenient travel to and from major tourist destinations with transit.
- 7.1 Identify, prioritize and encourage the Province to implement solutions for highway interchanges in need of safety, efficiency, and transit access improvements or reconfiguring to improve cyclist or pedestrian accommodation.**
- 7.2 Through the TAC, develop a set of principles to form the basis of setting KPIs for the RMN, agreed to through exchange of MOUs.
- 7.3 Develop and implement a consistent way-finding strategy to enhance connectivity on roads and trails, and to support clear navigation for all modes.
- 7.4 Undertake a region-specific feasibility study on user pay strategies, such as road pricing, and how they will help influence travel choices.
- 7.5 Apply and improve upon the existing transportation model and data collection program in line with changing regional priorities.**
- 7.6 Establish an on-going Goods Movement Committee to collectively address regional**

goods movement challenges.

- 8.1 **Establish and implement a region-wide Travel Demand Management (TDM) program including a marketing and branding strategy to support businesses, institutions, municipalities/Electoral Areas and government agencies in implementing policies and initiatives.**
- 8.2 Undertake workplace and institutional incentive programs aimed at decreasing congestion at peak hours and increasing employee use of active transportation and public transit.
- 8.3 Partner with other agencies to develop and deploy a region wide Mobility Pass or Smart Card for residents and tourists that can be used for seamless integration between modes (i.e. ferries and bus transit on one pass).
- 8.4 Through the TDM program, establish and expand partnerships with car-sharing operators to increase coverage into all sub-areas of the region.
- 8.5 **Develop and maintain a comprehensive web portal for regional travel information, including a multi-modal journey planner and news on regionally significant transportation projects.**
- 8.6 Identify partnership opportunities to accelerate Active and Safe Routes to School programs.
- 8.7 Fund existing programs such as Bike to Work Week and Commuter Challenge, and identify new events and initiatives to promote active transportation.
- 8.8 Implement pedestrian and cycling skills courses for residents.
- 8.9 Organize training of CRD and municipal staff in best practices of facility design.

Issues & Analysis

The themes expressed in the draft Regional Transportation Plan are consistent with Victoria's Official Community Plan. Integrating land use and transportation planning, encouraging improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and transit, optimizing our existing transportation network, and influencing travel behaviour can contribute to a strong downtown economy, vibrant public realm and improved community health.

The following staff comments (in bold italics) on the Action Items are forwarded for Council's consideration:

- 1.1 Establish an expanded regional transportation authority and funding service, to facilitate improvements to the Regional Multi-modal Network (RMN), implement demand management programs, influence land use adjacent to regionally significant transportation corridors and mobility hubs and advocate for and source federal and provincial funding.

This Action Item advocates for the CRD acting as a transportation authority, similar to that of Translink in the Lower Mainland. However, this governance model excludes transit from this proposed new transportation authority's mandate and associated responsibilities and funding for expanding transit service.

As with Translink, funding of a regional transportation authority may be challenging. No new CRD funding is indicated in the Plan. Most of the City's existing transportation capital budget is

currently dedicated to maintaining existing infrastructure (i.e. major and local streets improvements identified by the Pavement Management Program), while the remaining transportation capital budget is dedicated to minor spot improvements, such as crosswalk upgrades, and implementation of the City's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plans. ***It would be challenging to reallocate existing City capital funds to assist with projects identified by the Transportation Advisory Committee on the RMN***, as suggested on page 30 of the Plan. Council currently directs the allocation of capital funding on an annual basis; the impact to governance and decision-making authority would need to be fully considered by Council prior to delegating this responsibility.

- 3.2 Promote land use policies to balance the jobs to workers ratio within the CRD four sub-regions (Core, Westshore, Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands).

The action calls for a better match of jobs to population by creating more jobs in the Westshore, and by increasing working-age residential populations in the Saanich Peninsula. While there is a clear transportation and sustainability rationale for this action, it also needs to take into account the regional settlement hierarchy and Victoria's role as the Metropolitan Centre of the region. Details are currently under discussion through the parallel Regional Sustainability Strategy (RSS). As a result, ***Victoria does not support a blanket policy that calls for a "balance of jobs to workers ratio", but rather one that reflects the targets specific to particular types of settlements, to be detailed through the RSS process.***

- 3.4 Develop a parking best practices guide with an emphasis on supporting development of complete streets.

Parking issues present a very real challenge to land use and transportation changes in the CRD and staff question the effectiveness of this action. An abundance of parking best practices guides already exist on-line, and developing one that serves the interests and contexts of 13 different municipalities will be a lengthy process.

As the text identifies, it is up to the local municipalities to implement parking regulations. The barrier facing municipalities is not a lack of knowledge of the possibilities, but rather the lack of resources for the needed technical studies, public process and updates to zoning and other bylaws. As an alternative, ***staff proposes the CRD providing funding to individual municipalities to conduct research and public consultation to develop their own workable parking policies and regulations.*** If this or another similarly meaningful action is not possible, we recommend removing the action altogether.

- 4.4 Identify and market circle routes to increase cycle tourism

The City of Victoria encourages the CRD to expand this action beyond circle routes to all routes identified in the PCMP, by providing funding to municipalities for capital investments and soft costs associated with way-finding for municipal networks. Regional tourism will benefit from readily identifiable networks across the region, not just on the circle routes.

- 7.1 Identify, prioritize and encourage the Province to implement solutions for highway interchanges in need of safety, efficiency, and transit access improvements or reconfiguring to improve cyclist or pedestrian accommodation.

While the Plan mentions increasing walking, cycling and transit mode share in several locations, the only specific infrastructure projects mentioned in the document are four proposed interchanges at the intersections of Highway 17 at Keating Cross Road, Beacon Avenue, and Sayward Road, and at the Highway 1/McKenzie Avenue intersection.

To maintain consistency with the Regional Outcome Statements, ***it is imperative proposed designs for these significant infrastructure projects include elements that support the redistribution of mode share to walking, cycling, and transit***, and not simply increase sprawl and congestion in the urban core, or relocate traffic bottlenecks.

Actions 8.1- 8.8

Staff recommends supporting the range of programs and initiatives listed in Section 8, such as Safe Routes to School, bike skills, Bike to Work Week and Transportation Demand Management. These actions play an important role in raising awareness and shifting behaviours to support more sustainable transportation. ***The delivery of these programs and initiatives is a much-needed role for the CRD to play.***

- 8.4 Through the TDM program, establish and expand partnerships with car-sharing operators to increase coverage into all sub-areas of the region.

The RTP advocates expanding car-sharing to sub-areas of the region; however, this model has been unsustainable for the Victoria Car-Share Co-op in the past (VCSC have recently been relocating vehicles to the core, to ensure the financial viability of their program). ***Public funds may be required to support car sharing in less dense areas of the region.***

Other staff comments:

- 5.1 A Partnership Opportunity (p.71):

"The CRD Board has repeatedly promoted a change in governance that would impart the CRD with leadership and authority for transit and transportation decisions affecting the region, and decisions concerning land use adjacent to major transit/transportation corridors." This statement is complemented by Exhibit 5.1., which indicates that the CRD will have a "Primary Role" for Land Use Adjacent to Regional Corridors and Network Nodes principally through land use and transportation policy planning, the Regional Growth Strategy and Electoral Area OCPs.

Staff would like to express concern regarding the wording of these statements, and emphasize that decisions concerning land use adjacent to major transit/transportation corridors remain the jurisdiction of the municipality. The CRD has a role in land use planning through the Regional Sustainability Strategy and Regional Context Statements in Official Community Plans. Other decisions for land uses adjacent to corridors and nodes are the jurisdiction of the municipality, with the CRD involved in a collaborative capacity.

The CRD's Transportation Planner has subsequently clarified that the CRD's principal mechanisms for influencing decisions concerning adjacent land use would be through the RSS and associated Regional Context Statements in each municipality, and acknowledged that municipalities have authority over land use decisions. ***The City of Victoria recommends the wording be clarified accordingly, to avoid confusion.***

- 5.1 Proposed Role (p.73):

Staff supports using performance metrics and pre-established targets to strategically identify and implement regional transportation priorities.

Recommendations

That Council forward the comments contained in this report on the draft Regional Transportation Plan to the Capital Regional District Board for consideration.