Metro Vancouver & TransLink Update

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Municipalities strategize around promised federal & provincial housing money

The implications of new funding for housing promised by the federal and provincial government was the topic of extensive discussion at the February Metro Housing Committee meeting.

BC Non Profit Housing Association CEO (BC NPHA) Tony Roy presented at the meeting, and noted that Metro is largest member of the BC NPHA. Roy said it would be important for both the province and Metro to be in a position to leverage federal money.

Roy said he expects federal housing programs of about $1 billion annually across the country to focus initially on renovations of existing stock and 'shovel ready' new housing projects. Roy hopes federal funding will stabilize the social housing sector, and noted that during the recent election the federal housing advocacy coalition called for 100,000 new social/affordable units over 5 years. However, Roy was not sure if the capacity presently exists to build at that pace. He also noted the urgent need for immigrant and refugee housing.

Roy also discussed the provincial announcement of $350 million in spending on social housing over 5 years, using revenue from the recent 'transfer' (i.e. sale) of provincially owned housing land assets to non-profit providers. Roy said the money has helpful, but that it was a one-time spend and would likely not be enough to even match the promised new federal money. He noted the provincial money is enough to build in the range of 300-350 units per year, when BC actually needs around 3,000 per year. Roy also told the committee that the non-profit sector couldn't on its own meet forecast housing needs in Metro over next 5 years. Burnaby Director Colleen Jordan expressed concerns that province may use the promised assets sales money to displace existing general revenue funding for rent supplements and other programs previously funded through general revenue.

When asked by Metro directors what role Metro should play regarding opportunities for new federal and provincial funding for housing, Roy suggested being

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"aggressive and visionary," and looking at partnerships with non-profit housing providers. Roy also suggested that municipalities consider tax exemptions for non-tax subsidized social housing, such as fully paid-off/'off agreement' units that have been transferred to the non-profit sector.

In discussions following Roy's presentation Metro's director of housing, Don Littleford, asked for direction from the committee about how to approach the funding opportunities. Directors noted challenges, including Metro's lack of a formal mandate around affordable housing and the danger that municipalities across Metro could end up directly competing with each other for federal funds if they don't coordinate around regional housing priorities. However, some noted that building a coordinated approach would require rapid movement to secure mandates from Metro member municipal councils, as well as action at the Metro board level.

Metro housing director Littleford mentioned plans to meet directly with federal officials to find out how the new federal money will be allocated, and whether the federal government may be bypassing the province and instead working directly with local governments.

Burnaby Mayor Jonathan Cote proposed that the Housing Committee send a motion to the Metro board focused on coordinating regional efforts to access new federal and provincial housing funding.

Metro preparing call for proposals for renewal of Homeless Partnering Strategy

Staff reported to Metro's housing committee in February that the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is in the final quarter of fiscal year two and Metro (as the 'Community Entity' responsible for managing the HPS program and administering funds) is preparing its final open call for proposals in late spring 2016 for a contract period of October 2016 – March 2019.

Established in 2000, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a federally funded program to support the work of communities across Canada to reduce and prevent homelessness. The HPS funds projects identified locally through a community planning process involving government, community stakeholders, private and voluntary sectors. The current 5-year funding cycle, 2014-2019, provides nearly $42 million (just over $8.2 million annually) to the Metro Vancouver region focusing on a Housing First approach to move homeless persons directly into permanent housing. This includes support services to assist clients with housing, recovery and reintegration into their community.

Staff say that while the program is proceeding well, the Community Advisory Board awaits a reply from the federal government on whether unspent funds can be utilized for other initiatives.

Metro Vancouver & Municipal News

Additional negotiator to be hired by Metro Collective Bargaining Services

In February, Metro amended the budget for the district's Labour Relation Function to allow the addition of a negotiator position to Collective Bargaining Services. This comes after the City of Richmond in December entered into a formalized agreement to engage Labour Relations for Collective Bargaining Services. The new position will be funded by reallocating $62,000 from the Collective Bargaining consulting budget and $83,000 additional revenue from the City of Richmond for collective bargaining services.

This will result in three full-time negotiators to provide services for 16 local government and associated entities, and 8,020 employees under 49 collective agreements.

Under the Labour Relations function all Metro Vancouver members participate in base services, while 16 members participate in both collective bargaining and job evaluation services. Base services are funded by requisition based on population while collective bargaining is apportioned based on number of employees and collective agreements with job evaluation services on the number of reviews.

Metro Labour Relations also requested the carry forward of $85,000 of the anticipated 2015 surplus to expedite some of the technology-based five year goals previously established and endorsed in 2016 Labour Relations Function Oversight Committee (LRFOC) work plan. In particular, this funding would accelerate the implementation of a number of multi-year projects including the development of a secure members' only website, online access to data and reporting tools and enhanced human resources and workforce metrics for municipalities based on client needs and workforce trends.

BC emergency management legislation revision plans raises concerns at Metro

Metro staff and directors raised concerns about the danger of costs and responsibilities being downloaded as the province moves to revise the legislative framework for emergency management in BC.

On January 11, 2016 a letter was sent by the Minister of State for Emergency Preparedness to local authorities seeking input and feedback on the provincial discussion paper titled "A Discussion paper on the Legislative Framework for Emergency Management in British Columbia". The Provincial Discussion Paper reviews the current *Emergency Program Act*, and sets out the key responsibilities and authorities to guide and enable experts at the local and provincial levels in preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

The Act was last updated in 1993 and, since then, best practices in Emergency Management have evolved significantly, with a new emphasis on preparedness and mitigation of hazards, which was inadequately addressed in the Act. The Province is considering changes in the Act and is looking for stakeholder feedback by April 22, 2016.

Discussion areas listed in the consultation paper include:

A. Modernizing fundamental concepts and structure of the Act:

- Restructuring the Act so that all phases of emergency management (prevention, preparedness, response and recovery) are reflected;
- A clear and consistent definition of emergency and disaster; and
- A clear and consistent definition of local authority.

B. Clarifying roles and responsibilities:

1. Establish Emergency Management BC in legislation;
2. Clarify the rolls and responsibilities of Provincial emergency planning, response and recovery;
3. Establish Ministerial authority to direct emergency planning; and
4. Establish Provincial authority to ensure proper emergency planning exists for critical private sector and non-government agencies.

C. Supporting emergency response and recovery:

1. Identify Shared responsibilities for emergency response;
2. Consider criteria or tests for the declaration of a State of Emergency;

3. Expand the authority of police during an Evacuation order; and
4. Consider expanding the Protection against loss of Employment in Section 25.

To respond effectively, Metro staff recommend that the document be reviewed with REPC (Regional Emergency Planners Committee) and RAAC (Regional Administrators Advisory Committee) to ensure that Metro's response represents the regional position and is coordinated with the responses from member local governments.

B.C. on pace to meet water conservation goals

B.C. is on pace to reduce water consumption 33 per cent by 2020, a key goal of the Water Sustainability Act that came into force on Monday.

Total water use — including residential, industrial and agricultural consumers — is down 18 per cent since 2009, from an average of 606 litres per person per day to 494, according to research led by Jordi Honey-Rosés, a professor in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of B.C.

http://goo.gl/TBc332

New Cache Creek landfill waiting on certificate from Victoria

http://goo.gl/ItV2cz

Surrey, Vancouver mayors urge B.C. to protect film, TV production tax credits

http://goo.gl/8fd2XL

Sadhu Johnston named as the new city manager for Vancouver

http://goo.gl/WSYtKI

Richmond moves to require English on bus shelter ads

http://goo.gl/T1XXSd

How an iconic Kingsway motel became a temporary Syrian community

http://goo.gl/uTShjx

UBCM, BC Attorney General Discuss Approach to Missing and Murdered Women Inquiry

http://goo.gl/P1AYVh

BCGEU supports BC NDP private member bill that would recognize PTSD as a presumed first responder workplace injury

http://goo.gl/WzBvb8

Rash of suicides by B.C. first responders sparks calls for more help for PTSD

http://goo.gl/Alz9vv

Vancouver firefighters get new mental health awareness program

http://goo.gl/NvMZzz

Metro Vancouver firefighters get new weapon in battle against drug overdose deaths: ***More first-responders now can inject life-saving drug naxolone***

http://goo.gl/5tZ30V

Naloxone kits distributed to Metro Vancouver homeless shelters

http://goo.gl/Y7AUIp

Changes for farm uses in Port Coquitlam: ***Port Coquitlam farm owners invited to an open house in March to talk about new provincial and municipal rules***

http://goo.gl/RSeVnY

Surrey struggles to keep agriculture from withering: ***Council adding programs to help keep farmland from being eroded in real estate boom***

https://goo.gl/zJDC5M

Infrastructure in the news

How big will Ottawa's infrastructure cheques be?

http://goo.gl/QOZaQH

Sohi hopes infrastructure cash for Alberta will flow in time for construction season

http://goo.gl/tCuw2R

B.C. budgets $12 billion for infrastructure

http://goo.gl/MTAeUJ

Capilano water main project hits delay: ***Concrete mass, gas line among surprises***

http://goo.gl/0o8gvQ

White Rock's plan to treat arsenic in water supply to cost $13 million

The city of White Rock held a public meeting to discuss ways to improve its water supply, including plans to spend $13 million to treat it for arsenic and manganese. The move follows an order by the Fraser Health Authority last year that the city add chlorine to the water supply by June 30. The city, which took over the water supply from private utility Epcor in October, has decided to continue running its own system rather than signing on with the regional water system operated by Metro Vancouver.

http://goo.gl/uJgBPy

School of hard shocks: how to protect key infrastructure during the big one

https://goo.gl/uMiI5U

Worker killed after sewer-line trench collapses in Coquitlam

http://goo.gl/wknUPt

Environment & climate change news

Commercial power washing and chafer beetle control get limited exemption from water shortage restrictions

The Greater Vancouver Water District board in February amended the region's Water Shortage Response Plan to allow water to be used by commercial cleaning services for aesthetic cleaning during Stage 2 restrictions. The board also amended stage 3 restrictions to allow previously issued local government exemption permits to water new lawns or for treatment to control the European Chafer Beetle to remain valid.

The amendments came after representatives from power washing businesses presented to the board regarding the impact on their industry of restrictions during the 2015 summer drought. Industry representatives said some businesses in the sector went bankrupt because of the restrictions, while others laid off most of their employees and accumulated significant debt.

Metro staff said commercial power washing accounted for significantly less than 1% of regional water use, but noted that other industries have also expressed interest in exemptions.

The amendments passed after debate. City of Vancouver GVWD directors opposed the amendments, arguing that government and businesses need to better plan water use around the likelihood of droughts in the context of climate change. The Vancouver directors said power washing and similar activities should be planned for when the water supply is high, and not during low water/drought periods, and that the GVWD restrictions deliver a signal to industry and the public on proper water use.

Industry raises concerns over Metro air quality permit term limits

Term limits for Metro Vancouver air quality permits have been raised as a concern by industry during consultations regarding proposed amendments to GVRD Air Quality Management bylaws. However, term limits are not the intended focus of Metro's proposed amendments, which are meant to address:

- definitions, processes and permit application fees proposed for air quality permit renewals;
- new administrative fees for specific tasks;
- fee adjustments to account for inflation;
- an increase to the natural gas/propane comfort heating exemption to reduce the number of commercial/industrial heating units requiring explicit authorization; and
- the definition for residential fireplace fuel.

From November 2015 to January 2016, Metro Vancouver undertook a formal engagement and consultation process. Most respondents commented not on the proposed amendments, but instead on the use of term limits in the

air quality permitting system. Term limits require permits to be reviewed periodically, and in so doing provide an opportunity for regulators to ensure that new and emerging information is taken into account in the setting of authorized emission levels.

A representative of Neptune Terminals told the Climate Action Committee in February "the proposed by-law amendment will adversely affect our business interests. The imposition of term limits seriously impairs the future viability of our operations through the curtailment of investment and the addition of new onerous administrative burdens."

Similarly, the BC Chamber of Commerce wrote, "it does not believe the current proposed permit length of 2 to 20 years represents an adequate understanding of the long-term nature of these significant capital investments. This proposed amendment will create tremendous uncertainty for future operations and likely have a negative impact on our industrial and port-related businesses to secure financing and/or justify further capital investments."

The Chamber's submission went on to say that it is "equally concerned that Metro Vancouver's concept around permit renewals will have the likely outcome of further freezing investment. Businesses making large industrial and infrastructure investments are looking for certainty before they commit funds to a given project."

Similar input was submitted by G3 Terminal Vancouver, Port Metro Vancouver, the Vancouver Board of Trade and Western Stevedoring. Delta Mayor Lois Jackson echoed industry concerns at February Metro board meeting.

In their report to the Board and the Climate Action Committee, Metro staff proposed to continue discussions with stakeholders on the term limits issue, but emphasized that the use of term limits in the permitting system is a practice that Metro Vancouver has had in place for several years, and has used consistently since at least 2008 to promote ongoing improvement in air quality. Staff noted that Metro Vancouver's authority to establish term limits is clear, and that the regional district has not proposed any amendments related to its existing authority.

Climate committee updated on environmental reviews of major projects

Metro's climate action committee received a staff update on environmental reviews of major projects, including several involving the energy and natural resources sectors.

Trans Mountain Expansion

Metro Vancouver presented its oral summary argument during the National Energy Board (NEB) hearings, which have now concluded and Trans Mountain was eligible to file a written reply argument until February 17, 2016. The NEB has until May 20, 2016 to reach its conclusion and release its report to the Federal Government.

On January 27, 2016 the federal government announced that the upstream greenhouse gas emissions associated with pipeline projects will be taken into consideration when federal cabinet makes its decisions on pipeline projects. The announcement also mentioned that a federal decision will not be made on the Trans Mountain pipeline project until December of this year.

WesPac Tilbury Marine Jetty

WesPac is proposing to construct and operate a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) marine jetty at Tilbury Island on the Fraser River in Delta, adjacent to the existing Fortis BC Tilbury LNG Plant. This project is subject to a provincial review process led by the BC Environmental Assessment Office (BC EAO).

The BC EAO has established a stakeholder working group. Metro Vancouver staff are represented on the working group, as well as representatives from the City of Richmond, the Corporation of Delta, senior government departments and First Nations. Through this working group, Metro Vancouver has provided comments on the proposed valued components (e.g., fish and wildlife habitat, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, river processes) and methodologies for the assessment. Staff also attended a tour to view the proposed site and adjacent land uses. It is expected that the proponent will submit their draft application information requirements in early March.

Burnco Aggregate Mine

BURNCO Rock Products Ltd. has proposed to develop the BURNCO Aggregate Mine Project, formerly the McNab Valley Aggregate Project, a sand and gravel mine located on the northwest shore of Howe Sound, approximately 22 kilometres southwest of Squamish. This project is subject to a provincial review process led by the BC EAO.

On March 14, 2013 the Metro Vancouver Intergovernmental and Administration Committee received a staff report and Notice of Motion from then Director Brenda Broughton to oppose the Burnco Aggregate Mine Proposal. Although outside Metro Vancouver, staff were directed by the

Committee to "make a formal request to be consulted during the environmental assessment process and provide further comments at that time".

Metro staff have received notice from the BC EAO that this project will soon be moving into its application screening phase, and staff should expect to receive the assessment by the end of February 2016. It is expected that Metro Vancouver and other stakeholders will have 45 days to submit comments, during which time the BC EAO will host two public information sessions.

Aircare program replacement options being investigated by Metro

Metro staff told directors that they were continuing to look at approaches to reducing emissions from light and heavy-duty vehicles to fill the gap left by the province's cancellation of the Aircare program in 2015. Staff told the Climate Action Committee in March that they were in discussions with the province around policy and program options, and noted that more old vehicles are remaining on the road in the region since Aircare ended. Staff said that all of the consultant studies commissioned by Metro showed that continuing the Aircare program would have produced cost-effective environmental benefits for the region until at least the 2020s.

Metro critical of BC Climate Leadership Process

Staff briefed the Climate Action Committee in March on Metro's engagement in the Provincial Climate Leadership Plan.

After Phase I consultations in 2015, staff intend to submit Phase II technical comments on the Climate Leadership Plan Consultation Guide by the March 25, 2016 deadline. In its submission staff will raise concerns about the consultation process, highlight the alignment of the public feedback, recommendations from the Climate Leadership Team (CLT), and Metro Vancouver's previous submission.

While the Province had originally indicated that a draft CLP would be released in late 2015, it instead released a high level Consultation Guide in place of a draft plan. The Consultation Guide summarizes broad directions from the first Discussion Guide, the feedback from the public, and the recommendations from the CLT, but does not provide detailed policies that would make up what Metro staff would consider "an effective and meaningful plan. "

According to the consultation process that has been outlined by the Province, there will not be an opportunity to review and comment on a detailed plan. Instead, the Province has indicated that the Phase II Engagement related to the January Consultation Guide will be the last consultation opportunity before the release of the final plan. Both Metro Vancouver staff and municipal staff have identified the lack of a consultation process on the final plan as a concern.

In their report to the committee, staff provided an evaluation of alignment between the CLT Consultation Guide and Metro's own submissions to the process, grouped under 5 categories:

- ***Urban Form that Supports Walking, Cycling, and Transit***

  Metro staff report that the CLT did not provide detailed policies or recommendations, funding or other support for local governments to encourage them to adopt land-use and transportation policies and make investments in walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure.

  Staff said that CLT members recognized the limited attention they gave to transit, active transportation and land-use as opportunities to reduce transportation related fossil fuel use, but acknowledged they should be given further consideration in the final plan.

  Staff noted that in the Mayors' Council transportation vision, sustainable transportation and the supporting urban form are key regional priorities, and wrote that the CLP needs to place a strong emphasis on enabling policies that support the creation of, and investment in, compact walkable, transit oriented communities.

- ***Low/Zero Carbon Vehicles***

  Metro staff wrote that many of the CLT recommendations align well with Metro Vancouver recommendations, particularly in setting the targets and requirements for zero emission vehicles.

- ***Low Carbon Buildings***

  While the CLT recommendations are relatively non-specific, they do not seem to contradict Metro Vancouver's recommendation of policies that "outline a clear pathway to net zero buildings and using tools and data such as home energy labeling, energy benchmarking, and incentives to support this market transformation."

- ***Carbon Pricing***

  Staff report that the CLT spent the majority of its

time and effort coming to agreement on an effective and fair carbon-pricing scheme. The CLT supported an increase in the carbon tax and broadening of the tax to cover all emissions sectors. It also supported using the incremental revenue to lower the PST, eliminate PST on electricity, and to fund technology and innovation and local government projects. Similar to the CLT, Metro Vancouver recommended an incremental increase in the carbon tax and the use of that increase to fund local government projects and to offset impacts on vulnerable populations and address other unintended consequences.

- ***Climate Adaptation***

  The CLT recommendations regarding climate adaption focused on specific resources and tools to support planning and investment in climate adaptation actions such as hazard mapping, monitoring of climate impacts, and a policy framework to address climate impacts in communities. Metro Vancouver submitted an extensive list of policy recommendations to support both planning and action related to climate adaptation. Like the CLT, hazard mapping was identified as a need, but Metro Vancouver also included recommendations for specific research on, and investment in infrastructure including urban green infrastructure (e.g. green belts, street trees, etc.), agricultural drainage systems, and climate-ready road infrastructure.

Vancouver approves $1M funding for retrofit program

Vancouver City Council has approved the creation of a $1 million Building Energy Retrofit Fund to support and expand programs that result in energy efficiency upgrades for buildings.

http://goo.gl/1OLcfX

Trans Mountain criticizes interveners in reply argument to National Energy Board

http://goo.gl/ACdCKf

Housing & affordability news

Rental housing research on agenda at Metro

Four research projects were announced in the Metro Housing Committee's 2016 work plan, including:

1) Demographic trends in regional city centres

2) A best practices report called "What Works for Purpose Built Rental Housing"

3) Potential for Transit Oriented Mixed Income Development Study

4) Rental Housing Inventory Update

Syrian refugee families housed by Metro

The Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (MVHC) has worked with the Immigrant Services Society (ISS) to house 10 Syrian refugee families, as of February 2016.

ISS coordinates with the federal government to temporarily house government-assisted refugees, and then find more permanent housing for them in the region. Working with BC Housing and the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, they have implemented a system for non-profit housing providers to identify Syrian families using the 'Housing Registry'. Non-profit housing organizations, like the MVHC, identify individuals and families on the Registry that match subsidized housing vacancies in their portfolios.

Metro to consider providing land for new women's and children's housing in PoCo

Metro's Housing Committee directed staff to look at providing land for a women and children focused housing project in Port Coquitlam.

Atira Woman's Resource Society (Atira) is interested in securing a partnership with Metro Vancouver Housing, the City of Port Coquitlam and a group of community stakeholders that would see Metro Vancouver contribute a development site at nominal cost to build a mixed–use housing development, targeting women and children. Specifically, Atira and its community partners are interested in acquiring the sites located at 2115 – 2127 Prairie Avenue, Port Coquitlam.

Port Coquitlam City Councilor Glen Pollock brought together community stakeholders to develop an affordable housing proposal for the property. The contribution of the site at a nominal cost will contribute to the project viability and ultimately leverage contributions from other levels of government, the private sector and philanthropic organizations.

The proposed development will provide mixed-use housing, 66.6 per cent of which will be nonmarket, for women and children in Port Coquitlam and the Tri-Cities area, addressing a specific and urgent need identified in the 2015 BC Rental Housing Index, which shows:

"Single mothers in Coquitlam are the most financially challenged demographic of all, with 75 per cent falling into the "severe" affordability measure of spending 30 per cent of gross income on housing.

About half of single mom renters in Coquitlam spend a "critical" 50 per cent or more of their income on housing, putting them at risk of homelessness, according to housing advocates. On top of that, index measures show 30 per cent of single moms in Coquitlam raise children in overcrowded conditions, compared to 24 per cent of single mom renters across B.C."

There are preliminary plans for a community health centre on site, as well as a 55 to 60-space day care.

The proposed development will embrace a mix of women including single women, women and children (including women- headed families, where there may be a male partner), single women who are older, and young women who are aging out of care;

The housing will be for women of all ages and intergenerational partnerships (mentorships) will be encouraged. All leases will be in women's names.

MVHC looks at redeveloping properties to increase housing units

The Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (MVHC) is evaluating its portfolio for properties most suitable for expansion and redevelopment.

The evaluation will involve looking at each development under a set of criteria to be approved by the MVHC Board in

a policy that will be provided in April 2016. Staff and directors are developing criteria including mitigating tenant relocation impacts, density potential, number of new units to be created, age and condition of existing housing, transit orientation, capital and cash flow projections, ability to raise seed capital through the sale of density, local housing need, and municipal expectations, approvals and incentives.

A report from Metro staff emphasized that not dislocating tenants from their community should be a threshold criteria for any MVHC redevelopment – effectively a 'go' or 'no-go' condition. Either the site should allow a phased redevelopment, or the MVHC should be able to secure 'bulk', temporary rental accommodation nearby in new rental developments.

http://goo.gl/u3z5Gf

Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council releases housing report

In December 2015, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council (MVAEC) issued a report entitled "Towards an Urban Aboriginal Housing and Wellness Strategy for Metro Vancouver 2015- 2020." MVAEC is comprised of 23 off-reserve Aboriginal organizations that aim to provide a unified voice for the approximately 50,000 Aboriginal people living in Metro Vancouver. Noting an inadequate supply of housing and cultural supports for Aboriginal residents, and the rapid population growth rate of the urban Aboriginal population, it calls for a 5-year strategy for immediate development of 1,500 housing units regionally as a starting point. It also calls for a 10-year regional plan for urban Aboriginal housing in Metro Vancouver. Metro's Regional Planning and Agriculture Housing Subcommittee had a presentation from the MVAEC Executive Director and City of Vancouver planning staff in 2015.

Housing in the headlines

B.C. to spend $355M on affordable housing, premier says

http://goo.gl/sI7THB

BC budget falls short of addressing affordability crisis: experts

http://goo.gl/DXQmo8

A generation of young people may leave Vancouver because they can't afford to stay: poll

http://goo.gl/fw80G0

Vancouver's housing market pushes young workers into long commutes

http://goo.gl/mUywxO

New Westminster's incentives encourage affordable rental housing, says mayor

http://goo.gl/9P1dOj

More Vancouver rentals for families on the way, says housing officer

http://goo.gl/lo0qby

Vancouver nonprofit answers need by older single women and seniors for affordable rental housing

http://goo.gl/PJ43mb

Court rules in favour of plans for 178 secured market rental housing units in Vancouver's West End

http://goo.gl/5R5hUY

New federal mortgage rules may be too late for Metro Vancouver

http://goo.gl/NFRfuW

Vancouver real estate: is it supply and demand, or foreign capital?

https://goo.gl/Hs1yJF

Proposed bill seeks to track information involving B.C. real estate buyers

http://goo.gl/GyZjp0

Seven people named to investigate real estate flipping in B.C.

http://goo.gl/yOc0KG

How would property tax changes affect B.C. homebuyers?

http://goo.gl/xQoRfM

Vancouver's property transfer tax revenues are one-quarter of B.C.'s $1.15 billion total

http://goo.gl/TTu53D

One chart shows how unprecedented Vancouver's real estate situation is

http://goo.gl/qwCnqq

Vancouver and Toronto housing markets 'increasingly, dangerously unaffordable,' RBC says

http://goo.gl/hh4pgg

http://goo.gl/DDEvYu

Breaking the law? Company charges Vancouver renters extra fees

http://goo.gl/wYnz79

B.C. lacks political will to tackle housing prices

http://goo.gl/1yWY9K

Opinion: Vancouver needs more towers

http://goo.gl/n6FJTr

BC Liberal MLA: "Stop expecting the provincial government to make Vancouver housing more affordable"

http://goo.gl/3xuKm9

Industrial & commercial land issues

Metro produces new study on office space development

Metro staff in February presented a new Metro Facts in Focus Policy Backgrounder on Office Development in Metro Vancouver. The Metro Vancouver "Facts in Focus" policy backgrounder series is designed to offer information that can promote understanding of the key issues and opportunities related to Metro's regional growth strategy.

The study found that Vancouver, and specifically the Central Business District in the downtown area, holds 51% of the regional office market. Outside of downtown Vancouver, but within the City of Vancouver, there is a strong office market along the Broadway corridor, both in the central Broadway area, and at Broadway Tech (located at the Renfrew SkyTrain station in east Vancouver). Burnaby/New Westminster is the second largest sub-regional office market, with 20% of the regional market. Surrey and Richmond were the next two largest office markets. The study also examined factors that influence office development and how the pattern of development fits with rapid transit planning and other priorities in the regional growth strategy.

Discussion of the document at the Regional Planning Committee focused on how to spread office development more evenly across regional centres to reduce commuting times, create more 'complete' communities and more widely distribute the economic benefits of office developments across municipalities. Some directors felt office development was overly concentrated in the City of Vancouver, and expressed concerns that this undermined aspects of the regional growth strategy.

http://goo.gl/WsafqC

Metro Vancouver jobs space lagging behind Seattle-Tacoma area

https://goo.gl/gb0sQC

Industrial park proposed adjacent to Burns Bog

http://goo.gl/3ElXHr

http://goo.gl/yl0Hx5

East Vancouver's historic Cedar Cove port district undergoing change

A final report by a citizen's assembly has recommended residential towers of up to 20 storeys in Cedar Cove on the north side of Hastings at Clark.

http://goo.gl/vcO6Pa

Foreign speculation hits Metro commercial real estate: *Trend skewing prices in multi-family market moves into retail, industrial sectors*

https://goo.gl/wvkp8g

Transit news

British Columbia to cap contribution to transit infrastructure at one-third

The province has told Canada's federal Infrastructure Minister that British Columbia absolutely will not contribute more than a third of the money needed for major transit projects, even though Ottawa has hinted that it may increase its traditional one-third share.

And, says B.C. Community Minister Peter Fassbender, the province expects Lower Mainland cities to come up with whatever is needed to cover the remaining cost for big rapid-transit projects proposed in Surrey and Vancouver.

The share from cities could come from a new one-time development cost levy on projects around transit lines, a permanent additional property tax on those projects or just a general increase in property taxes for everyone, he said.

"I think a property lift around transit corridors is a good way to contribute," he said. "But a one-time contribution on property lift will only help you with building." He said a long-term property-tax increase on corridors might be necessary.

http://goo.gl/nyqpaU

Minister backtracks after saying no referendum needed for vehicle levy

Peter Fassbender has retracted earlier comments today that Metro Vancouver mayors can impose a vehicle levy to fund regional transit expansion without holding a new referendum.

His statements in a Black Press interview – repeatedly insisting a vehicle levy would not trigger a referendum because it's already enabled in TransLink's legislation – surprised Metro Vancouver mayors, some of whom said they wouldn't have forced a referendum on a regional sales tax had they been told that in 2014.

"I misspoke when it came to the vehicle levy, and I do apologize for that," Fassbender said, adding that in addition to the need for the province to enable ICBC to collect an annual vehicle registration fee, "it is also a new tax, therefore it would be subject to a plebiscite or a referendum with the public."

That's back in line with the BC Liberals' consistent position on the transit referendum requirements since it was imposed by Premier Christy Clark as part of the party's 2013 election platform.

http://www.mapleridgenews.com/news/371116161.html

Metro and TransLink working on North Shore Integrated Land Use and Transportation Study

Metro Vancouver and TransLink are working together with three municipal partners and the Squamish First Nation to explore integrated land use and transportation connections along a North Shore corridor spanning from Dundarave to Maplewood Village. The study will explore future transit vision scenarios (short, medium, and long term) along the Frequent Transit Network to develop a shared understanding of the requirements for achieving the vision reflected in Metro's regional growth strategy, the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS), the Mayors' Council Transportation and Transit Plan, and the North Shore Area Transit Plan.

A kickoff meeting for the study was hosted by the District of West Vancouver the week of January 18, 2016. Metro Vancouver and TransLink staff are currently developing the next steps of the study.

Surrey residents strongly favour LRT: poll

Surrey residents overwhelmingly favour bringing Light Rail Transit (LRT) to their city, according to a recent poll.

The telephone survey of 600 adults, conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs between January 25-29, found that 80 per cent supported LRT.

http://goo.gl/3c3P3M

TransLink can't close gates until access issues addressed says minister

The provincial government says TransLink can't close fare gates until it addresses accessibility issues for those who aren't able to open the gates by tapping in and tapping out with a Compass card or ticket.

http://goo.gl/a7M7mp

Federal budget key to future of local transit funding: Peter Fassbender

http://goo.gl/dJzFle

FOI documents reveal TransLink escalator and elevator maintenance costs

Documents that have been provided through a Freedom of Information request have shown how much TransLink has spent on repairing and maintaining escalators and elevators.

In 2015, TransLink spent $6.4-million to maintain the 78 escalators and 59 elevators on the Expo and Millennium Lines.

In 2014, the same work cost $5.6 -million.

http://goo.gl/E7SYlK

Evergreen Line continues to spur development

http://goo.gl/YUNgyv

Coquitlam details Evergreen park-and-ride plan

http://goo.gl/cpirmj

Transportation news

Massey tunnel replacement needs additional review, says Metro board

Then Metro Board voted in late February to send a letter to the BC Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure requesting that an additional two months, from the date of Board approval, be granted to review the Project Definition Report for the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project and to assess the impacts of the proposed Project on Metro Vancouver infrastructure and services. The resolution also calls for the Board to send a letter to the appropriate federal Minister responsible for the Environment, requesting that the George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project be referred for a federal environmental assessment review.

Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan expressed dismay that the province announces major projects like the proposed bridge before doing proper assessments and reports. He said this is not adequate consultation by the province, and that the project needs a thorough study of downstream cost implications. He also raised concerns regarding senior governments' reliance on paid consultants to handle studies, and lack of in-house capacity to do independent, arms-length assessments to protect the public interest. In this context, he emphasized the importance of Metro speaking out on the need for thorough assessments of major projects.

Corrigan also noted that provincial actions on a number of major bridge projects have contradicted Metro's growth plans, and in some cases left TransLink subsidizing toll bridges. The Burnaby mayor also noted rumours that the province was considering other bridges to cope with increased traffic from the Massey tunnel replacement bridge, including one between Richmond and Burnaby. Corrigan said the City of Burnaby is very opposed to idea of another bridge being built to deal with increased traffic from south of the Fraser.

North Vancouver Mayor Mussatto said the bridge's potential for major impacts on Metro utilities requires further study, especially around potential relocation of water lines.

Richmond directors Steves and Brodie emphasized their city's longstanding opposition to the proposal, and said an FOI request by Richmond shows that the Province met with Port Metro Vancouver, Deltaport, and others to plan the Massey Tunnel replacement. According to Steves, the FOI shows port expansion is driving project, and that PMV wants to remove the tunnel to dredge the Fraser to allow bigger ships. Mayor Brodie said the bridge will mean tolls, public debt and increased traffic, and suggested more provincial investment in rapid transit serving communities south of the Fraser as an alternative.

Delta Mayor Lois Jackson was the most outspoken proponent of the proposed bridge on the Metro Board. She said enough studies had been done, and that Metro's critical position didn't reflect the existing research. She felt Metro and municipal governments had been adequately consulted already, and there was no need for further review.

Metro Chair Greg Moore told the meeting sources had suggested to him that the new federal minister of infrastructure, Amarjeet Sohi, was not enthusiastic about the prospect of federal funding going to the Massey bridge project.

http://goo.gl/dm6F1u

http://goo.gl/aQM2Ml

http://goo.gl/HhwHPA

http://goo.gl/I6jrS4

Delta MLA demands review on Metro Vancouver's tolling policy, says it's late

http://goo.gl/bo4zRu

B.C. truckers group call for tolls on all major Metro water crossings: *Blanket tolling would reduce congestion as people stop detouring to avoid paying*

http://goo.gl/pCu24d

Pattullo Bridge agreement sets out tolling

http://goo.gl/JdBurg

Vancouver councillor wants city to prepare for driverless cars

http://goo.gl/3Bd4mG

Vancouver eyes bike share system roll out within months

http://goo.gl/mW2Nfc

Vancouver's density helps it reach car-sharing milestone

http://goo.gl/3aqpzu

City of Vancouver and CP agree to landmark agreement for the creation of the Arbutus Greenway

http://goo.gl/zoVgHc

Uber & ridesharing in the headlines

Uber's decision to retreat from BC market may give time for a sane ride-sharing solution

http://ift.tt/1TmeW8L

Daughter of chief of staff of Peter Fassbender, Minister responsible for Translink, was lobbyist for Uber

http://goo.gl/PUhTQB

Uber CEO Travis Kalanick uses TED stage to attack regulations

http://goo.gl/vh09ai

How Uber's shadow looms over Metro Vancouver's troubled taxi industry

http://goo.gl/PhaJAA

Vancouver Board of Trade calls for provincial ride-sharing strategy

http://goo.gl/mdS3V3

Vancouver Board of Trade pumps tires for ride-for- hire

http://goo.gl/Zh65Pa

Even before Uber arrives in B.C., it has the taxi industry in disarray: *Taxi licences once worth $1 million "no value at all"*

http://goo.gl/nAxRgg

Port News

Port denies immediate plans for shipping channel dredging in the Fraser

A letter from Port Metro Vancouver received by Metro's Climate Action Committee in March denies that the Port currently has plans to dredge the Fraser River for larger ships, but doesn't rule it out in the future based on "Canada's trade interests." A number of Metro municipalities have raised concerns about the possibility of dredging the Fraser for larger vessels, especially in relation to the proposed height of the Massey tunnel replacement bridge.

In the letter to Metro, PMV writes:

"While we are aware that some port users are interested in deepening the maximum draft, there are currently no plans to do so."

"Should it be determined in the future that Canada's trade interests require the shipping channel to be deepened, we will contact Metro Vancouver regarding any potentially impacted crossing agreements."

Record grain, potash exports cushion commodity crash at Port Metro Vancouver

http://goo.gl/srWN91

http://goo.gl/8tOZHo

Port Metro Vancouver sees huge decline in coal exports to China

http://goo.gl/cI2F8z

New Metro Vancouver container trucking commissioner named

Labour lawyer Duncan MacPhail has been appointed Metro Vancouver's new container trucking commissioner.

Transportation policy specialist Michael Crawford will serve as MacPhail's deputy.

http://goo.gl/lQWXxR

https://goo.gl/GE9zzG

Several container-trucking companies launch legal fight against fair wages

http://goo.gl/hEI5o9

Vancouver port's drayage imitative cuts truck turn times

http://goo.gl/sS5ttZ

Container-terminal expansion concerns Crab Park supporters

http://goo.gl/XbYF8d

Jet fuel facility gets permit from Port Metro Vancouver

http://goo.gl/sNNxVE

Port Metro Vancouver CEO defends not accounting for climate change in reviews of coal-export facilities

http://goo.gl/RlKfHV

Port Metro Vancouver expansion would boost container capacity by two-thirds: *$320-million project proposed for Centerm terminal*

http://goo.gl/hzQ454