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The Voice of the Residential Construction Industry in the Greater Vancouver Area

Memo

To: GVHBA Board
From: Bob de Wit
Date: February 17, 2015
Re: Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax Plebiscite

At GVHBA board meetings on December 16, 2014 and January 20, 2015, the GVHBA board of directors considered whether or not GVHBA should pledge its support to the Better Transit and Transportation Coalition (BTTC). Current membership of BTTC is listed at the end of this memo.

Although every board member recognized the value that an improved transit system would bring to the community and to our industry, the following reservations to becoming a supporter of BTTC were raised:

1. Administration: Concern that the new tax proceeds would not be prudently managed and expended as proposed in the plebiscite;
2. Sunset clause: Concern that there is no declared end-date for the new tax; and
3. Use of funds: Concern that TransLink may ultimately use the proceeds for operating rather than capital expenses, as publicly declared.

On February 4, 2015 a group of GVHBA board members met with Metro Vancouver Chair and Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore to discuss the above concerns. Moore, who is also a leading member of the Mayor's Council on Regional Transportation, responded to the concerns as follows:



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1. Administration: An arms length oversight entity will be created that will annually review a performance audit of the envisioned capital expansion and will have the powers to stop the release of funds for subsequent years of the plan upon non-performance. Details about how such powers would be enshrined are still being worked out, but it is expected that the oversight entity would be lead by a majority of independent representation;
2. Sunset clause: It was explained that although the proposed plan involves a 10-year capital expansion, the project is financed over a 25-year horizon therefore the near-term value of a sunset clause loses its importance. During the next 25-years TransLink and the Mayor's Council will review alternative funding sources to supplement and/or replace the new tax proceeds should they arise;
3. Use of funds: It was pointed out that the new equipment – buses, trains, etc. – would necessitate an increase in operating costs and that part of the new funds raised would have to be put to that use, particularly in the period beyond the initial 10-years of expansion.

On balance, I felt that the GVHBA board members presented a breadth and depth of questions that Mayor Moore handled well, and I left the meeting more comfortable with a “yes” vote than when I arrived. I would, therefore recommend the board approve the following draft motion:

“Be it Resolved that the GVHBA Board of Directors supports a “Yes” vote in the upcoming Metro Vancouver Congestion Improvement Tax Plebiscite, approves a formal statement of support for the Better Transit and Transportation Coalition, and urges its member companies, employees and associates to vote ‘Yes’ in the coming plebiscite.”

Bob de Wit
CEO



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Members, as of February 5, 2015, of the "Better Transit and Transportation Coalition:"

Alma Mater Society of UBC Vancouver
Amalgamated Transit Union
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 134
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1724
AMS Bike Co-op
Assn. of Consulting Engineering Companies
BC Building Trades
BC Healthy Living Alliance
BC Chamber of Commerce
BC Federation of Labour
BC Institute of Technology Students' Association
BC Ready-Mixed Concrete Association
BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association
BEST (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation)
British Columbia Cycling Coalition
British Columbia Golf
British Columbia Hotel Association
Building Owners and Managers Association of BC
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Canadian Federation of Students
Canadian Office & Professional Employees Union Local 378
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society - BC Chapter
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 4500
Capilano Students' Union
Car2Go
Car Sharing Association
Clean Energy BC
Clean Energy Canada
Connecting Environmental Professionals - Vancouver
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 7000
David Suzuki Foundation
Delta Chamber of Commerce



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Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association
Downtown Vancouver Association
Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association
Ecofish Research Ltd.
ForestEthics Advocacy
Fraser Basin Council
GetOnBoard BC
Graduate Student Society at Simon Fraser University
Greater Langley Cycling Coalition
GreenJobs BC
Greenpeace Canada
HandyDART Riders' Alliance
HASTe (Hub for Active School Travel)
Hospital Employees' Union
HUB Cycling
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 115
Joint Council of Unions at TransLink/Coast Mountain Bus Company
Light Rail Links coalition
M. K. Ince and Associates Ltd.
Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Chamber of Commerce
Medical Health Officer - Dr. John Carsley
Medical Health Officer - Dr. Lisa Mu
Medical Health Officer (Chief) - Dr. Victoria Lee
Metro Vancouver Alliance
Modo
National Association of Industrial and Office Parks Vancouver
New Westminster Chamber of Commerce
North Shore Tourism
North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce
Pembina Institute
Gordon Price, director of SFU's City Program
RAIC Architects Canada (Vancouver chapter)
Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver
Richmond Chamber of Commerce



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Sierra Club BC
Simon Fraser Student Society
Smart Progressive Alliance for Responsible Extraordinary Change
Social Planning and Research Council
Students' Union of Vancouver Community College
Surrey Board of Trade
Sustainable SFU
Tourism Industry Association of BC
Tourism New Westminster
Tourism Richmond
Tourism Vancouver
Tourism White Rock Association
Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce
UBCC350
Urban Development Institute
Unifor
Unifor Local 111
Unifor Local 2200
Vancouver AM Tourism Association
Vancouver Board of Trade
Vancouver Public Space Network
Vancouver-Burnaby Chapter of the Council of Canadians
Vancouver Electric Vehicle Association
Voters Taking Action on Climate Change
Watershed Watch Salmon Society
Wilderness Committee
Zipcar



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