

**REPORT TO TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2024**

SUBJECT **Regional Transportation Governance – Workshop Outcomes and Next Steps**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide an update on the Transportation Workshop with local government, electoral areas and First Nations and receive direction to continue advancing the regional transportation governance initiative by drafting a transportation service establishment bylaw.

BACKGROUND

Transportation is a priority for residents and the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board. The region has three transportation goals: reduce carbon pollution, support higher rates of walking, cycling and transit use, and address congestion. A 2023-2026 CRD Board strategic priority is to present options for transportation governance change so residents can access convenient, green and affordable multi-modal transportation systems to enhance livability. This priority shifts focus from goal setting to implementation through a new CRD transportation service.

The purpose of the transportation governance initiative is to create more tools to advance regional connectivity and integrated mobility. CRD's existing transportation functions are focused on a coordinating and monitoring role, limited to planning, data collection and analysis, and policy support, collaboratively working with local governments, the Province and partner agencies to advance actions in the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The immediate goal is to establish a regional transportation service. This new transportation service would consolidate existing CRD transportation functions, with additional scope to develop new programs in approved service categories that the CRD can deliver without requiring legislative change.

This new service would grant the CRD expanded authority to provide offerings to drive transformative changes in transportation behaviour and advance the development of a robust Regional Multi-modal Network (RMN). Unlocking new functions through establishing a regional transportation service will lead to better and more reliable services, unified advocacy and messaging, enhanced regional consistency, better integration between land use and transportation and efficient service delivery through economies of scale and removal of repetition.

While a longer-term goal is to further integrate the transportation functions best delivered at a regional scale through a new regional entity, both the immediate service establishment and long-term entity phases require ongoing cooperation between the CRD, local governments and other partner agencies, such as BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI).

In the summer and fall of 2023, the CRD engaged with member local governments, electoral areas and partner agencies to solicit feedback on regional transportation categories and governance. The feedback provided the CRD with a baseline understanding of the aspects of transportation governance that local governments are interested in exploring further.

On December 13, 2023, the CRD Board directed staff to initiate concept development and analysis work on an inclusive list of potential transportation service categories. The Board also directed staff to plan for engagement activities and schedule a workshop for Q2 2024.

Staff from each of the local governments, electoral areas, BC Transit, MoTI, BC Ferries and Victoria Airport Authority have been engaged in ongoing discussions related to this work through the Transportation Working Group and/or one-on-one meetings.

Regional Workshop – Establishing a Transportation Service

Input from mayors, councillors, electoral area directors, First Nations, and senior local government staff was sought at a transportation workshop hosted by CRD on May 24, supported by senior staff from BC Transit, MoTI and Island Health. Workshop participants gained clarity and discussed the benefits and concerns of potential new functions related to establishing a regional transportation service. Through roundtable discussions, input was provided on eight potential service categories:

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| ❖ Active Transportation and Road Safety | ❖ Multi-modal Network and Connectivity |
| ❖ New Mobility | ❖ Data Management and Traffic Analysis |
| ❖ Behaviour Change | ❖ Grants and Funding |
| ❖ Transit and Mobility Hubs | ❖ Transportation Plans |

Appendix A - Summary of Categories provides more detail on each service category.

Feedback received at the workshop indicated that participants generally supported the eight categories. Taking a broad approach to drafting a transportation service establishment bylaw would allow for all eight categories to be implemented over time. It was recognized that there were significant dependencies between each category. As such, all eight play a vital role in meeting the region's integrated transportation aspirations.

Appendix B - What We Heard Report provides a summary of the workshop. Six common themes were identified throughout the breakout discussions of the eight transportation categories. The six themes that encapsulate the most significant and recurring points include:

- 1) The notion of CRD establishing a service for all eight categories is generally supported.
- 2) The CRD's governance model must demonstrate how jurisdictions will benefit.
- 3) The financials need to bring value to both larger and smaller municipalities.
- 4) A regional service should complement and support, not impede local progress.
- 5) The region needs a unified voice where the CRD could act as the coordinating advocate.
- 6) A regional service requires a phased approach to address current and future challenges.

These findings were used to inform the recommendations in this staff report, particularly the general support for the CRD to establish a regional transportation service, with no significant reservations raised through the workshop on any of the eight potential categories.

Transportation Governance Study

Concurrent with the engagement efforts related to establishing a transportation service, the CRD has engaged KPMG to undertake a study of regional transportation governance and operating model options. This report will be more technical in nature and provide potential frameworks for the CRD to consider moving forward with its short- and long-term transportation goals. This forthcoming report will also provide financial information related to service establishment specific to the guiding direction recommended by the CRD Board. KPMG will continue this work throughout the summer before bringing their findings back in the fall.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Transportation Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That staff draft a broad transportation service establishment bylaw that allows for the implementation of all eight service categories, bringing it back for readings by Q4 2024.

Alternative 2

The Transportation Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information based on Transportation Committee direction.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

A CRD Board priority for 2023–2026 is to present options for changes in transportation governance, including the Electoral Areas. Initiative 4a-1 in the CRD Corporate Plan is to develop governance options, including consideration of a new transportation authority. Confirmation of categories and direction to proceed with drafting a service establishment bylaw within the CRD's current legislative ability is the immediate next step to advance this initiative.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

CRD plans and strategies will inform concept development and analysis. Relevant plans are the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), the RTP, the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, the Regional Trails Management Plan, the Climate Action Strategy, and the Intergovernmental Relations Policy. The service establishment bylaw will align with the overall visions, objectives, and actions of CRD's existing plans. The bylaw will enable efforts to be actively directed towards new regional transportation functions, which in some cases could not have been actions or programs done under existing authorities.

Environmental and Climate Action

The CRD Board has declared a climate emergency. In 2022, on-road transportation accounted for 42% of all carbon pollution in the region. New travel behaviours are one solution to get more people taking transit, walking and cycling. In turn, this will reduce carbon pollution. CRD staff would have more behaviour change tools to advance this solution with an expanded regional role.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The needs of equity-seeking groups will be considered through concept development and analysis work for specific programs.

Financial Implications

The 2024 provisional budget includes a one-time budget adjustment of \$422,000 to complete concept development, host a workshop and undertake a bylaw approval process. Costs to implement governance change will be identified through concept analysis. Decisions about incremental funding would be made through the annual service and financial planning processes. A preliminary Initial Business Case (IBC) has been drafted for 2025 to support service implementation, with the caveat that these funds will only be operationalized if a regional transportation service is established.

The forthcoming regional transportation governance and operating model options study will provide financial information related to service establishment specific to the guiding direction recommended by the CRD Board. KPMG will continue this work throughout the summer before bringing their findings back in the fall, informing the recommended bylaw requisition limits.

Intergovernmental Implications

By bringing together both political and staff leadership, engagement supported discussion, hearing benefits and concerns from each other, and provided an opportunity for input from all 13 local governments, participating electoral areas and First Nations. The workshop offered additional input that will help inform a decision on what is included or not in the scope of the bylaw.

Engagement will continue at the staff level as the scope of the new transportation service is refined and integrated into a service establishment bylaw. MoTI, BC Transit and Island Health will continue to be engaged as subject matter experts and partners as CRD staff refine the service scope and draft the service establishment bylaw.

First Nations Relations Implications

Staff will continue to inform and engage with First Nations through government-to-government meetings and will be considering additional outreach later this year.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The RGS (and the RTP) are the key expressions of the region's long-term vision. The current process is focused on confirming the scope of a new transportation service. Discussion of a new vision and updating long-term goals are best addressed in future updates to the RGS and RTP.

Service Delivery Implications

The project timeline assumes that the implementation of a new regional transportation service will begin in the second half of 2025. To meet this timeline, the concept development of new or expanded functions and analysis of service categories must conclude by Q2 2024.

Regional Trails will continue to operate its current mandate under CRD Regional Parks until a transportation service is established and a transition process has been finalized. This approach includes all capital projects such as CRD Regional Trail Widening and Lighting. Updates to the CRD Regional Trail Management Plan will occur after a decision is made about service consolidation.

CRD's Legislative Services, Legal, Finance and Regional Parks divisions are supporting this initiative.

Legal Implications

A regional district may operate any service it deems desirable, provided that it receives participating area approval upon establishing the service through a bylaw. A recommendation regarding the elector approval process will be presented to the Committee in September as part of a report on a service establishment bylaw.

CONCLUSION

Transportation is a priority for residents and the CRD Board. The purpose of the transportation governance initiative is to create more tools to advance regional connectivity and mobility by establishing a new regional transportation service. Providing direction for staff to draft the service establishment bylaw enabling the implementation of the eight service categories (to be phased in over multiple years) is the next step to advance this initiative. Pending Board approval, staff anticipate bringing a draft bylaw to the CRD Board by Q4 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

The Transportation Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That staff draft a broad transportation service establishment bylaw that allows for the implementation of all eight service categories, bringing it back for readings by Q4 2024.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Summary of Categories

Appendix B: What We Heard Report