

# **NOTICE OF MOTION TO THE CRD PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Meeting of March 18, 2020**

---

## **SUBJECT**

Increasing transit service in the Capital Region

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Capital Regional District Board request that the Board Chair write, on behalf of the Board, to the Premier and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, copying the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the Third Party, MLAs representing constituencies within the CRD, and the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, requesting new investments and reliable annual funding to support increased transit services in the Capital Region.

## **BACKGROUND**

Public transit is a critical service for thousands of people throughout the Region. For many, it is the primary form of transportation to get to and from work, school, and daily activities. It's also a form of transportation that needs to be encouraged in the years ahead in light of climate change. Viable public transportation is a crucial component to lowering the region's GHG emissions, over half of which are attributed to transportation. A single bus can represent tens of cars that are not on the roads. In a region with extremely high housing costs, affordable transportation options that make life viable without vehicle ownership are also critical to maintaining the diverse workforce that supports our vibrant communities and local economy.

Challenges for transit users in the CRD include:

- limited service, forcing some to take indirect routes with numerous transfers and for others, no bus services are available whatsoever;
- a lack of frequency in key routes makes it an unreliable form of primary transportation for many and limits the mode shift the region needs to significantly reduce GHGs and help address growing traffic concerns;
- the cost of transit itself is a barrier for some prospective users or current users who may otherwise use transit more frequently.

New investments into public transit can help fund needed improvements, such as:

- new bus routes to connect the outer communities to one another and the core area,
- higher frequency on key routes,
- more affordable service,
- electrification of bus fleets to help reduce GHGs,

- new bus lanes to support rapid transit and made mode shift more attractive, and
- service into later hours would help ensure more people can get home safely.

Additional funding from the provincial government is absolutely critical for making the necessary improvements to public transit in the region. Relatively minor investments in the Victoria Regional Transit System in the past have yielded significant and consistent growth in ridership. However, in the recently released provincial budget, funding cuts are proposed for public transit in 2021/22, and the Province proposes that BC Transit use reserve funds to maintain service levels.<sup>1</sup> This reduction in funding for public transportation is directly at odds with the Province's own 2018 [CleanBC Plan](#) (p. 13), its greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets set out in the [Climate Change Accountability Act](#), the stated goal in [BC Transit's mandate letter](#) of working with local governments to improve transit services, and a goal of the 2020 Budget itself of making life more affordable for British Columbians.

Our residents in communities throughout the entire Capital Region need better transit service that they can rely on. In order for that to happen, we need more funding from the provincial government, and reliable funding on an annual basis to facilitate planning and service expansion. It's important that the Province hears this message from the local governments representing the Region's residents.

## **CONCLUSION**

Considering that the provincial government has proposed a funding cut for public transit service in their most recent budget despite its many commitments to the contrary, and considering the urgent need for better transit service in the region, we believe it is worthwhile for the CRD Board to write to the provincial government requesting additional investments into public transit service in the Capital Region.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Capital Regional District Board request that the Board Chair write, on behalf of the Board, to the Premier and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, copying the Leader of the Official Opposition, the Leader of the Third Party, MLAs representing constituencies within the CRD, and the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, requesting new investments and reliable annual funding to support increased transit services in the Capital Region.

---

<sup>1</sup> Shaw, Rob. (20 February, 2020). *Budget cuts BC transit funding, government cites agency's surplus*. Vancouver Sun. Retrieved from: <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/budget-cuts-b-c-transit-funding-government-cites-agencys-surplus>

Respectfully submitted,

Director Rebecca Mersereau

Director Jeremy Loveday

Director Ned Taylor