
SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE BC TRANSIT INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present findings of the BC Transit Independent Review Panel with respect to transit governance in the greater Victoria area to the Commission for **INFORMATION.**

BACKGROUND

On March 15, 2012, the B.C. Government appointed a three-person independent Review Panel to review BC Transit performance and operations. The review was in response to comments from some local governments about aspects of BC Transit operations that affect their communities. The independent panel held 25 meetings with 40 local governments across the province, and received 30 submissions from local government and other key stakeholders. The panel delivered the report, including 18 recommendations, to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure on August 1, 2012.

The government immediately published the report online giving local governments and the general public the opportunity to review the recommendations. The full report of the Panel is available here:

http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/BC_Transit_Review/documents/Report_BCTransit_Independent_Review_Panel_Aug2012.pdf

In its response to the independent Review Panel report, the government accepted all the recommendations of the Panel. Since the acceptance of the report, BC Transit, MoTI, UBCM and partner local governments have been working towards implementation of the recommendations.

The Commission has requested information with respect to one specific part of the Panel's terms of reference; the governance of transit within the greater Victoria area.

DISCUSSION

The terms of reference for the Panel included 4 areas of investigation: Operations and Performance, Governance, Funding Relationship, and Consultation and Communications.

The Panel report contains several recommendations with respect to governance of transit. Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 address the size and appointment process of the BC Transit Board of Directors Recommendation 4 (page 32) addresses the value of transit commissions and recommends that:

“The provincial government should amend the BC Transit Act to allow local government to appoint all members of a transit commission and allow the transit commission to hire its own clerical and technical staff. In the interim, Cabinet should accept nominations from local

governments for appointment to transit commissions and BC Transit will continue to provide clerical and technical staff to transit commissions.”

Within the terms of reference for the Governance area the following specific questions was posed relative to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission:

“The Capital Regional District has requested that they perform the functions of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission. Identify the pros and cons of implementing this request. “

The Panel focused on three main areas in its assessment: governance, service planning and decision making. The panel compared three options:

- Status Quo, governance by the Victoria Regional Transit Commission
- Governance by the Victoria Regional Transit Commission with members appointed by local government
- Governance by the CRD

The Panel summarized the findings of this comparison on page 57 of its report:

“The Review Panel has identified the pros and cons of transferring public transit responsibilities to the CRD and compared this option with the pros and cons of remaining with the current governance structure. In addition, the Panel has made recommendations in this report that would result in local governments being responsible for appointments to regional transit commissions. As a result, the Panel has also identified the pros and cons of responsibility remaining with the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, but with members appointed by local governments, and without the membership as prescribed in the current legislation. Under this option the size of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission could be expanded, although the Panel would not recommend a commission larger than 11 members. Both the CRD option and the Panel’s revised appointment process would require changes to existing legislation. “

The Panel did not make a specific recommendation as there was no consensus among the local governments in the Capital Region.

The government response to the Panel Review report indicated that *“The Government of British Columbia expects local governments in Great Victoria will continue their discussion and is prepared to re-examine this issue once a consensus is reached.”*

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the VRTC receive this report for **INFORMATION**

Respectfully,



Manuel Achadinha
President and Chief Executive Officer