

**CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT
Regional Planning Services Department**

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, October 20, 2004

SUBJECT:

Proposal to Establish a Regional Transportation Investment Commission (RTIC)

BACKGROUND:

- Jan. 23, 2002 The CRD Board authorizes initiation of a project to prepare a regional transportation strategy.
- Sept. 17, 2003 The Regional Planning Committee directed staff to prepare a project description for a consultant study into transportation governance and funding options for the Capital Region, for review and discussion.
- Oct. 15, 2003 A proposed project description was reviewed by the Regional Planning Committee. Committee members concurred that such a study should wait until 2004 and the municipal review of the *TravelChoices* Strategy.
- Apr. 21, 2004 A discussion paper on Regional Transportation Governance was reviewed by the Regional Planning Committee and received as information.

DISCUSSION:

This report outlines a proposed administration model that involves establishing a "*Regional Transportation Investment Commission*" (RTIC) that would be responsible to the Board.

The reason for bringing this proposal forward is that a major initiative is underway by the province and Federal Government to make gas tax available to municipalities and regions. There is the potential of receiving 3¢ per litre annually or more over time. This could generate an annual flow of infrastructure funding of about \$9 million that could then be leveraged to \$18 million or more. The funding details are not known at this time. All indications are it will target investment in new capital infrastructure (non specific) with a major focus on transportation.

For this region, transportation is the number one priority of all major planning issues. This was confirmed through a public survey as the RGS was being developed. The CRD and its member municipalities need to clarify a transportation vision and policy direction soon, to benefit from this potential funding.

Other regions such as the Greater Vancouver Regional District and many municipal jurisdictions in BC are fully prepared to act. Their vision for transportation investment is clear and their priorities have been identified. Most recently, the Province of BC released its planned transportation funding report titled "Opening Up B.C." The GVRD was promised over \$1000 per capita. The Capital Region is expected to receive about \$10 per capita under this plan.

Transportation Strategy Issues

Based on responses to date there are two issues that stand out. These relate to the governance and the implementation recommendations in the *TravelChoices* Strategy. In the companion staff report on this agenda, it is proposed that the implementation priorities in the *TravelChoices* Strategy be removed. This report recommends deferring any broader governance decision due to its complexity and until a real need is identified. However, in light of the possible new funding sources, this report proposes a simple

administration plan that:

1. allows the region to be in a position to act if Federal or Provincial monies become available for transportation investment;
2. provides a committee structure and process to guide the Board annually on transportation funding priorities;
3. uses existing agencies and other existing resources to prepare annual plans for the Board; and
4. ensures that support services are available to deliver the annual investment program.

Administration

The proposed new administration model involves establishing a "Regional Transportation Investment Fund" (RTIF) and a "*Regional Transportation Investment Commission*" (RTIC) to administer this fund. The primary role of the RTIC will be to:

- coordinate and implement the regional transportation strategy as directed by the Board;
- advise the Board on the distribution of any new transportation funding sources;
- focus on advancing the priorities of the regional transportation strategy;
- develop five-year priority programs for approval by the Board ;
- invite jurisdictions to submit proposals for cost-sharing that target regional priority projects;
- negotiate agreements to implement Board approved regional transportation projects;
- undertake ongoing performance reviews of the Regional Transportation Strategy and the RTIC;

The RTIC would not have any powers to tax or administer any programs delivered by existing agencies nor would the RTIC have any input in non-regional transportation initiatives.

The goals of the proposed administration model are:

- to act primarily as a repository to receive gas tax revenues or other senior government funds if they become available;
- to use the strengths of existing agencies to determine regional transportation priorities;
- to limit its duties to receiving cost sharing applications and managing the capital investments in transportation projects as approved by the CRD Board;
- to allow for the coordination of regional transportation priorities;
- to allow this region to raise its transportation investment needs with the Province or the Federal Government; and
- to enable the CRD Board to act now and have time to evaluate the performance of the RTIC while studying other governance options.

The RTIC would be responsible to the CRD Board and through the Board establish annual programs, budgets and processes to involve all member municipalities, the Province of BC and the Greater Victoria Transit Commission. The RTIC voting members would be comprised of those municipalities that participate and would operate in a manner similar to that proposed for the Regional Housing Trust Fund. The RTIC would be appointed by the Board and should include representatives from the key geographic areas (Peninsula, West Shore and Urban core), and the Greater Victoria Transit Commission. These partners are the prime investors in transportation infrastructure in this region.

The RTIC will need administrative, technical and professional support. This can be provided through Regional Planning Services (RPS), consultants and existing regional technical committees and agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and others. The annual work plan for the RTIC and RPS would include requests for operating budgets to providing staffing resources. Technical and professional support would be related to capital programs and could be funded through the gas tax rebate program. Five-year planning programs would be developed that map out the potential resource levels.

If the administration model is approved, the Board will need to establish a bylaw for its existence and an administrative bylaw to implement the program. The attached draft administrative guidelines (Attachment A) further describe the proposed RTIC. A draft service establishment bylaw for the proposed RTIC and Fund is included in Attachment B.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Regional Planning Committee recommend to the Board that it review the proposal to establish a Regional Transportation Investment Fund and Commission and provide direction to staff on this matter.

RGS CONSISTENCY:

Yes. The regional transportation strategy was prepared as an implementation component of the Regional Growth Strategy. The proposals within the regional transportation strategy, referred to as *TravelChoices*, are intended to implement many of the RGS objectives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

Larry Roberts
Manager, Transportation Planning,

Mark Hornell, MCIP
Director, Regional Planning Services

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director
W:\RIS\STAFFRPT\final\2004\oct20sr2_rtsgov.doc