

My Upcoming Meetings

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

Friday, April 7, 2017

Metro Vancouver Board

Friday, April 28, 2017

Council of Councils

Saturday, April 29, 2017

Electoral Area Committee

Wednesday, May 3, 2017

Climate Action Committee

Wednesday, May 3, 2017



Metro Vancouver Board and Committee Agendas & Minutes

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/search/>

Property-based Taxation Inequity

On April 4, Metro Vancouver called on B.C.'s four main provincial parties to commit to implement substantial changes to the B.C. Home Owner Grant, Property Transfer Tax and School Property Tax to ensure property taxation is fairer and more equitable for residents and businesses across the region.

The recommendation follows a Metro Vancouver-commissioned independent analysis, "Provincial Property-Based Taxes in the Metro Vancouver Regional District," by Cascadia Partners, which found regional homeowners pay a disproportionate share of property taxes – compared with the rest of B.C. – because of an antiquated property tax system that pegs taxes to property assessments.

Higher property assessments throughout Metro Vancouver are not reflective of the homeowner's ability to pay, and property taxes do not rise or fall in direct correlation to assessed values. Instead, rates vary each year depending on growth of assessed value across property classes.

Metro Vancouver residents pay three times as much School Property Tax per household as the rest of B.C., while Property Transfer Tax growth in Metro Vancouver has outpaced the rest of the province by 85 per cent since 2011 – in two years, Metro Vancouver's contributions are estimated to have generated additional Property Transfer Tax revenue of \$900 million. At the same time, a meteoric rise in house prices means fewer homeowners are eligible for the full Home Owner Grant.

Metro Vancouver is recommending B.C.'s four main political parties commit to implement the following measures to achieve fairness in property taxation throughout the province, specifically in the areas of Home Owner Grant eligibility, the outdated Property Transfer Tax brackets and application of the School Property Tax:

- Set the Home Owner Grant threshold within Metro Vancouver to match the provincial average, currently at 91 per cent for residential properties that fall below the threshold, to reflect increased values within the region and protect homeowners facing tax increases without corresponding income growth.

- Calculate the School Property Tax annually on a regional basis to reflect the provincial average threshold of school district expenditures, which were 46 per cent in 2016.
- Invest the unbudgeted revenue generated within the Metro Vancouver Regional District from the Property Transfer Tax collection back into local government infrastructure, transit and affordable housing within the Metro Vancouver region.

Provincial Property-based Taxes in the Metro Vancouver Region is available on [LocalGovernmentMatters.com](http://www.localgovernmentmatters.com)

<http://www.localgovernmentmatters.com/Documents/ProvincialPropertyBasedTaxesInMetroVancouver.pdf>

Ecological Restoration Team Cleans Up Regional Parks

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks' Ecological Restoration Team – affectionately known as the “Pullers and Planters” – has grown to more than 1,180 volunteers since it was created in 2013.

The team, along with the Park Associations and other volunteers, is active throughout the region, including at Pacific Spirit Regional Park. In just a few years, the team has organized 1,051 work parties with volunteers, contributing close to 58,000 hours to help restore and maintain green spaces.



This effort has resulted in the removal of more than 175 tonnes of invasive plants and the planting of 56,000 native plants in regional parks.

Through a dedicated page on Meetup.com, Park Associations, partners and park staff are able to easily organize stewardship work parties. The growth and impact of the team and overall stewardship program has been tremendous, building long-term relationships with the community and connecting citizens with nature.

For many volunteers, it's their first exposure to regional parks and the program has fostered a new appreciation for green spaces, human impacts on the environment and personal ways to care for them.

Video: <http://bcove.me/5nqgnaku>

For more information and event listings: <https://www.meetup.com/Regional-Parks-Connect-Metro-Vancouver>

Salt Spring Island Incorporation Vote

A referendum is being held on September 9th in which Salt Spring Island voters will be asked whether they are in favour of incorporating as a municipality. The process leading up to this referendum provides an interesting contrast to the lack of action in response to the UEL's request for an incorporation study and an indication of what might occur if the province does eventually act on the request.

In 2002, a full municipal incorporation study was completed for Salt Spring Island, and was followed by a referendum in which incorporation was defeated. Ten years later, in 2012, Salt Spring's local elected officials for the Islands Trust and the Capital Regional District requested a governance study. The province agreed to fund a study to "engage the public in a review of all governance structures on Salt Spring Island and to outline the general differences between rural (unincorporated) and municipal (incorporated) local governments". The governance study was completed in November 2013. A survey from that study showed that a majority of residents wanted more information on the impacts of incorporation.

The province then agreed to fund an incorporation study to examine in detail the financial, governance and other implications of municipal incorporation for Salt Spring Island. A Salt Spring Island Incorporation Study Committee was formed in May 2015, consisting of a volunteer group of about a dozen local residents, to guide and manage the research, analysis and public discussion of the implications of municipal incorporation. The Committee engaged a consultant to undertake the incorporation study, and the final, almost 400-page report was delivered in November 2016. Based on that report, the Committee recommended to Minister Fassbender – the Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development – that an incorporation referendum be held and the Minister agreed.

The UEL Community Advisory Council (CAC) made its request for an incorporation study for the UEL in November 2013. So far, not much has happened as a result of this request: there have been a few meetings with the minister, and the province has prepared a set of factsheets that, according to the CAC, provide very little information relevant to the CAC's request. In addition, the province asked residents to complete a feedback form that accompanied the factsheets. Minister Fassbender has promised that a governance study for the UEL will be undertaken, most likely in the fall of 2017.

Transportation and Public Transit

Mobility Pricing Independent Commission

Recruiting is currently under way for members of the Metro Vancouver Mobility Pricing Independent Commission. This is an opportunity to contribute to the livability of the region. For information, see page 5 of the March issue of The Campus Resident, and for application details, visit www.boyden.ca and search for "Mobility Pricing Commission".

The Commission is being established to further the commitment of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, in its 10-Year Vision for Transit and Transportation in Metro Vancouver, to work towards the implementation of comprehensive mobility pricing for the road network. Mobility pricing encompasses various forms of pricing for road usage, including tolls, fuel taxes, and distance-based pricing. The objectives in introducing comprehensive mobility pricing include addressing traffic congestion and raising funds in an efficient, fair and consistent manner to help pay for the transportation and transit system.

The Commission will undertake research, public consultation, and analysis in order to develop a short list of mobility pricing alternatives for consideration by the Mayors' Council and the TransLink Board of Directors. The Commission will operate at arm's length from governments.

Grow Green

On March 4, Metro Vancouver staged the first-ever Growing Green Forum in collaboration with UBC Botanical Garden to support sustainable horticulture practices in our region.

Seventy-five representatives from a broad spectrum of the horticulture industry came to UBC Botanical Garden to learn about the latest innovations in sustainable horticulture and water conservation approaches. Presentations by experts focused on regional policies supporting sustainability, the importance of plant diversity in maintaining healthy gardens, irrigation practices that conserve water, and garden designs suited for our region's communities.



The garden designs highlighted during the presentation are available through Metro Vancouver's Grow Green website.

The website is a free resource for residents to grow an eco-friendly garden, regardless of gardening skill or space constraints. It offers practical tips and ideas to help residents grow sustainable and water-wise lawns, gardens, and containers of all shapes and sizes. The website also features a step-by-step guide to help you design, plant, grow and nurture your garden.

With spring's arrival, it's the right time to start looking up design ideas and getting tips.

www.growgreenguide.ca

Events & Media

Earth Day BBQ

UHill Elementary School (5395 Chancellor Boulevard, University Endowment Lands)
April 20, 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

University Hill Elementary hosts its annual Earth Day BBQ in partnership with UBC Let's Talk Science, The UBC Michael Smith Laboratories, Metro Vancouver Regional Parks, UBC Botanical Garden, UBC Farm, Kits Neighbourhood House, and many more. Kids' activities include seed pot making, crafts, card games, and educational displays.

The event is part of WAV – Wild About Vancouver – a free public outdoor education festival offering practical ways to get children and adults outdoors regularly.

<http://www.wildaboutvancouver.com/event/earth-day-bbq/>

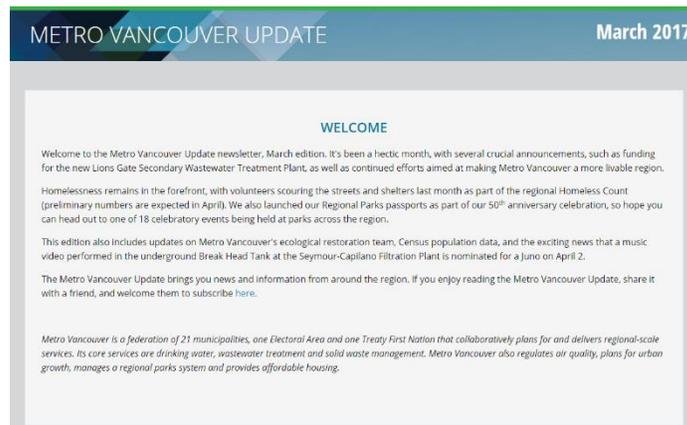
Metro Vancouver Close Up



Metro Vancouver Close Up shows how municipalities and community groups are promoting sustainability and shared regional goals. New videos are posted each month. To see sustainability stories about Metro Vancouver, you can search “Metro Vancouver Close Up” at metrovancover.org or follow metrovancoverblog.org.

For More Metro Vancouver News and Updates

<http://www.metrovancover.org/metroudate/>



Links & Connections

[Metro Vancouver](http://www.metrovancover.org)

www.metrovancover.org

[Maria Harris, Electoral Area A Director](http://www.mariaharris.ca)

www.mariaharris.ca

[@EADirector Twitter](https://twitter.com/EADirector)

[www.twitter.com/EADirector](https://twitter.com/EADirector)

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://www.translink.ca/en/About-Us/Governance-and-Board/Mayors-Council.aspx)

www.translink.ca/en/About-Us/Governance-and-Board/Mayors-Council.aspx

[Union of BC Municipalities](http://www.ubcm.ca)

www.ubcm.ca

[University Neighbourhoods Association](http://www.myuna.ca)

www.myuna.ca

[University Endowment Lands Administration](http://www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca)

www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca

[UEL Community Advisory Council](http://www.uelcommunity.com)

www.uelcommunity.com

[Metro Vancouver Media Releases](http://www.metrovancover.org/media-room)

www.metrovancover.org/media-room

[Metro Vancouver Videos](http://www.metrovancover.org/media-room/video-gallery)

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