

ELECTORAL AREA A Director's Update

FEBRUARY
2015

From Maria Harris, Electoral Area A Director

Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming meetings I will attend:

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

Thursday, February 12, 2015

Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

Thursday, March 5, 2015

Metro Vancouver Board

Friday, February 13, 2015

Metro Vancouver Board

Friday, March 6, 2015

Climate Action Committee

Wednesday, February 18, 2015

[Metro Vancouver Board and Committee Agendas & Minutes](http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/search/)<http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/search/>

2015 Metro Vancouver Board of Directors and Committees

As the Metro Vancouver Board begins its first four-year mandate, Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore and Vancouver City Councillor Raymond Louie were again acclaimed as Board Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. In January, the 2015 Metro Vancouver Board committees were announced.

Highlights include:

- **Performance and Procurement Committee** to ensure the best value for money for all Metro Vancouver operations and services.
- **Climate Action Committee** to enhance important regional initiatives with respect to air quality, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reductions.
- **Regional Economy Task Force** that will work collaboratively with our municipal partners, other levels of government, and the private sector to strengthen our economy and expand business and economic opportunities.
- **Federal Gas Tax Task Force** that will provide advice and recommendations to the Metro Vancouver Board on the use of funds available to the region through the Greater Vancouver Regional Fund, which provides funding for regional transportation investments.

I will serve as:

- Chair of the **Intergovernment & Finance – Electoral Area Sub-Committee**
- Member of the **Mayors Committee**
- Member of the **Climate Action Committee**

I will also continue to represent Metro Vancouver on the **Fraser Valley Regional Library Board**.

News & Issues

Regional Planning Advisory Committee

At its meeting of January 9, 2015, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) endorsed changes to its Terms of Reference to add Electoral Area A as a member of RPAC.

This request was linked to the dual role that Metro Vancouver performs for Electoral Area A – namely, as regional government as well as provider of local government services. While the RPAC membership currently includes a position to represent the regional government perspective, no equivalent has previously existed to represent Electoral Area A as a member local government. The addition of this position to RPAC is intended to ensure that the local government perspective for Electoral Area A is contributed to the Committee, and that Committee discussions and deliberations are integrated into Electoral Area A decisions and processes. The RPAC position for Electoral Area A will be filled by the Manager of Electoral Area and Environment, a new Metro Vancouver staff position that will be filled in early 2015.

2015 Community Works Fund

Under the terms of the 2014 Administrative Agreement on the Federal Gas Tax Fund in British Columbia, all local governments receive a portion of federal gas tax funds, by way of the Community Works Fund (CWF), to support a wide range of local infrastructure projects. For Electoral Area A, Metro Vancouver will receive funds for each of the next ten years. In 2015, the amount to be received will be approximately \$110,000.

It is proposed that the Community Works Fund monies be used for projects in the more heavily populated, urban portion of the Electoral Area, namely the UBC/UEL area. This proposal reflects the fact that the fund amount is determined by population, and that the vast majority (98%) of Electoral Area A's population lives in the UBC/UEL area. A process for the distribution of these funds is currently being developed, and will include opportunities for input from residents of the UNA and UEL.

Food Waste Banned From Garbage in 2015

As of January 1, new rules are in place to encourage residents and businesses in Metro Vancouver to separate food waste from regular garbage. The first six months will be an education period when no penalties will be charged in order to give residents and businesses additional time to implement effective plans for separating food waste from the garbage.

In July, penalties will be applied to loads of garbage with excess food waste. As with other Metro Vancouver disposal bans, the rules are enforced when waste haulers deliver garbage to regional facilities for inspection. Initial enforcement will focus on large generators of food waste like supermarkets, major restaurants, and hotels.

Food waste comprises about 40 percent of residential garbage, and almost a third of the food we buy ends up in the garbage. So by simply reducing the amount of food we waste and recycling our scraps we can keep tonnes of food out of the landfill.

Food waste rots in the landfill because there is inadequate oxygen to help it decay. This slow rate of decomposition creates methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Wasted food is one of the largest sources of methane in the region.



I encourage UNA/UEL residents and businesses to connect with their waste hauling companies and condominium strata councils, to see what options are available for disposing of food scraps. More information is available at www.metrovancouver.org/foodscraps and the Recycling Council of BC hotline at 604-RECYCLE (604-732-9253).

Plebiscite on Sales Tax to Fund Transit and Transportation Plan

In my December Update, I reported that the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation was about to propose one or more sources of regional funding for its 10-year transit and transportation plan. I also noted some of the plan's service improvements to UBC and gave reasons why it is important for the plan to be implemented.

Much has happened since early December. As the developments have been extensively reported in the media, I will limit my update to a few points. The Mayors' Council proposed that the region's contribution to the funding of the plan take the form of a 0.5% sales tax, i.e., 50 cents for each \$100 of purchase price.

The provincial government quickly agreed to this proposal. Then, on January 31, the Minister of Transportation sent a letter to the Mayors' Council providing further information. If the sales tax is approved, it will be administered as an addition to the provincial sales tax (PST) within the Metro Vancouver region. This means that it will apply to the same tax base as the PST, consumers will see a combined sales tax totalling 7.5% at the point of sale, and businesses will not have to separately identify the tax on receipts and invoices.

As is well known, the provincial government will enact the proposed sales tax only if it is approved in a regional referendum—now called a plebiscite. Voting is to be by mail-in ballot, with ballots to be sent out starting March 16 and returned no later than May 29. Residents who are eligible to vote must contact [Elections BC](#) to register if they are not already on the provincial voters list. The regulations setting out the voting procedure rules are expected to be published soon. www.elections.bc.ca

Money raised by the proposed sales tax is to be dedicated to the Mayors' Council plan. This will ensure that it cannot be used for anything else. Furthermore, plan revenues and expenditures will be subject to annual independent audits and public reporting. The provincial government is expected to announce details of these accountability mechanisms in the next few days.

The [Mayors' Council](#) is taking an active role in ensuring that voters are aware of the transit and transportation improvements in its plan and their necessity for the region, and also [why](#) it has proposed a regional sales tax over other funding options. On February 2, the Mayors' Council launched its "Vote Yes for Better Transit" campaign and issued a news release (attached). mayorscouncil.ca mayorscouncil.ca/how-do-we-pay/

A coalition of over 90 business, labour, student, environmental, and other groups—called the [Better Transit & Transportation Coalition](#)—is campaigning to encourage voters to vote "yes" in the plebiscite. www.bettertransit.info

Upcoming Events



Stormwater Management in the Region - Sustainability Community Breakfast

February 19, 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

BCIT Downtown, 555 Seymour St., Vancouver

Stormwater in our region is a resource that, when managed properly, helps to sustain watershed health. With population growth leading to more development and densification, and climate change resulting in more severe storms with larger and faster volumes of water, there is increasing pressure to protect urban watersheds from runoff.

Join us to learn how regional stormwater management has evolved over the last 20 years, and how Integrated Stormwater Management Plans can be powerful tools for municipalities.

[Register:](http://www.metrovancouver.org/events/community-breakfasts/) <http://www.metrovancouver.org/events/community-breakfasts/>



Winter Watershed Snowshoe Tours

Enjoy a moderately strenuous snowshoe tour while learning about the role our mountains play in collecting and storing our drinking water. Learn about plants and animals that call the Seymour watershed home. Must be physically capable of hiking up and down steep terrain with snowshoes. Enjoy a cup of hot cocoa at the end of the tour.

\$18 with own snowshoes; \$25 includes snowshoe rental. Registration required. Ages 18+

Sundays: 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

February 15, 22; March 8, 15

[Register:](http://www.metrovancouver.org/events/watershed-tours/) <http://www.metrovancouver.org/events/watershed-tours/>

Thursdays: 6:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

February 19, March 12

For More Metro Vancouver News and Updates

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



Links & Connections

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

www.metrovancouver.org/

[Metro Vancouver Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/metrovancouver)

www.facebook.com/metrovancouver

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

www.mariaharris.ca

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

twitter.com/EADirector

[Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation](http://mayorscouncil.ca/information-centre/)

<http://mayorscouncil.ca/information-centre/>

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

<http://www.ubcm.ca/>

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

myuna.ca

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

www.universityendowmentlands.gov.bc.ca

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

uelcommunity.com

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

<http://www.metrovancouver.org/media-room/>

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

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Mayors' Council Kicks Off "Vote Yes for Better Transit" Campaign

Transportation and Transit Improvements Critical to Prepare for One Million More People

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2015

Vancouver, BC – Members of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation gathered this morning at Waterfront Station to launch a region-wide campaign for a successful outcome on the upcoming transportation and transit vote.

"A „yes" vote means more buses, better roads and more transit options all across the region. We are expecting one million more people over the next 30 years. A „yes" vote will reduce commute times, protect the clean air we breathe and keep people and the economy moving," said Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, chair of the Mayors' Council. "I'm campaigning for „yes" because we need to take action now."

"It's time for communities south of the Fraser to get better access to transit and better roads. Our communities are growing fast and we need solutions," said Surrey Mayor Linda Hepner, vice chair of the Mayors' Council. "I've made this a top priority because we need to give people more travel choices and help keep goods and services moving to market."

The mayors are working alongside the Better Transit and Transportation Coalition, which is leading the "Vote Yes for Better Transit" campaign. Over the coming weeks, people all across the region can get involved in and learn more by:

- Attending community meetings to learn more about what's in the plan
- Visiting our website, and Facebook and Twitter to get more information and to get involved
- Watching for us on transit and in your communities
- Encouraging family, friends, coworkers and neighbours to learn more about the Plan
- Signing on to the "vote pledge" launched by the Better Transit and Transportation Coalition, www.bettertransit.info

"Our constituents have told us to fix the transit and transportation problems plaguing our growing communities. Wasted time sitting in traffic jams, pass-ups by full buses or having no buses at all costs everyone. The mayors worked hard for months to come up with this plan that addresses these concerns and now it's time to get these improvements funded," said Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore, chair of Metro Vancouver Board of Directors.

All registered Metro Vancouver voters will receive ballots in the mail beginning March 16, and must return them by mail by May 29. To register, or update your information, please contact Elections BC [here](#) or call 1-800-661-8683.

The Mayors' Council will continue to share information and updates on activities at www.mayorscouncil.ca.

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Media Contact:
604-818-7985
media@mayorscouncil.ca
[@yesfortransit](#), [#yesfortransit](#)



What do we get with a “Yes” Vote?

Voting “yes” in the transit referendum will protect our environment, strengthen our economy and improve our quality of life. The Plan includes:

New and Expanded Rapid Transit Service

- 2 new LRT lines in Surrey and the Langleys
- Millennium Line extension tunneled to Arbutus
- Expanding capacity and frequency of Expo, Millennium and Canada Line
- Additional West Coast Express service

Road and congestion Improvements

- New, safer 4-lane Pattullo Bridge
- Maintaining and upgrading 2,300 km of major roads to keep people and goods moving safely and efficiently
- Improvements to intersections, signalling and lanes to reduce congestion on major roads
- Transit improvements will mean more drivers will take transit, reducing the number of cars on our roads

Bus and SeaBus Service:

- 25% increase in bus service throughout the region
- Increase from 3 to 14 B-Line routes: fast, frequent, reliable, limited-stop bus service
- More frequent all-day bus service, running every 7 1/2 minutes on average
- 50% more SeaBus service and 10-minute rather than 15-minute service during rush hours
- Service to new and growing communities
- 80% more NightBus
- 30% more HandyDART service

Cycling and Walking:

- Add 2700 km of bikeways, including 300 km of fully traffic -separated routes
- Better connections to transit
- Improved walking and waiting facilities near transit stops and stations

What do we get with a “No” vote?

“No” will leave us stuck in increasing traffic, hurt jobs and our economy and reduce transit service as one million more people arrive over the next 30 years.

- more congestion and longer commute times for drivers and transit riders
- businesses and jobs suffering as it becomes harder to move goods and provide services
- cutbacks in transit service
- roads and bridges won't be maintained as needed
- more pollution and poorer air quality across the region