

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee  
From: Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning

Date: 2020-03-10  
File No: 8330-02-01

**Subject: Fraser Valley Regional District Long-Range Transportation Needs – Throne Speech and Provincial Budget**

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### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board by letter, under the signature of the Chair, request that the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (responsible for TransLink) provide more information about the proposed "*Fraser Valley Integrated Transportation and Land Use Plan*";

**THAT** the letter reiterate the Board's position that the Province must expedite the widening of Highway 1 to support HOV/bus lanes as a means of improving the viability of transit, improving public safety and supporting the broader Fraser Valley and provincial economy;

**AND THAT** the Province work in collaboration with the Fraser Valley Regional District and member municipalities to ensure that Fraser Valley interests and requirements are fully reflected in the plan.

### STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Environmental Stewardship  
Foster a Strong & Diverse Economy  
Support Healthy & Sustainable Community  
Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

### PURPOSE

To discuss the recent Throne Speech and provincial 2020 Budget and Fiscal Plan in relation to transportation and land use planning in the Fraser Valley.

### BACKGROUND

In the February 11, 2020 Throne Speech and the provincial budget and fiscal plan introduced on February 18, 2020, the provincial government introduced a number of initiatives with relevance to the Fraser Valley. This report will focus on the announcement of a "*Fraser Valley Integrated Transportation and Land Use Plan*." There is very little information about this plan outside the information reflected in several newspaper articles on the topic (attached), and even then the information is limited.

The Throne Speech alludes to TransLink's 2050 plan. TransLink is undertaking its Transport 2050 planning process, and while staff from the FVRD and some member municipalities have participated in aspects of the process, that planning exercise is from a Metro Vancouver perspective that does not necessarily reflect this region's needs. It is important that the Province work with the FVRD and member municipalities to ensure that the FVRD's short and long-term requirements will receive the same consideration as that given to Metro Vancouver.

## DISCUSSION

### Throne Speech Excerpt:

"...B.C. will add one million people to its population over the next ten years, putting pressure on B.C.'s transportation and trade corridors. British Columbians are already spending too much time in gridlock. This government is getting people moving.

Government's partnerships with local governments mean that work is already underway on a long-term vision for transit and transportation in the Lower Mainland. **British Columbians can look forward to more options like rapid transit, HOV lanes and commuter rail out to the Fraser Valley**, and high-speed rail connections with our neighbours to the south."

### 2020 Provincial Budget Excerpt (Page 46):

**"Fraser Valley Integrated Transportation and Land Use Plan:** The Province, through the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will lead a broader transportation and development study that will build an inclusive multi-modal transportation and development strategy for the Fraser Valley. Findings and recommendations will inform transportation, development and housing investments that consider provincial and national trade corridor needs and impacts. The study will be undertaken in partnership with TransLink and BC Transit, and will involve extensive engagement with local governments, Indigenous communities, key stakeholders and the general public."

The proposal to undertake long-term transportation planning in the Fraser Valley is generally consistent with the Board's wishes expressed in its resolution of July 23, 2019 where it was resolved:

**"THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board remain focused on its priority of strongly encouraging the province to expedite the widening of Highway 1 to support HOV/bus lanes as a means of improving the viability of transit, improving public safety and supporting the broader Fraser Valley economy;

**AND THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board recognize increased and diversified rapid transportation options need to be considered for the long term by the Province, including the potential for rail transit opportunities in this rapidly growing region;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board request that TransLink directly engage the Fraser Valley Regional District, member municipalities, BC Transit and

the province on those aspects of the Transport2050 Plan that consider inter-regional linkages and policies that may impact this Region.”

Having said that, there has been no discussion with the Province as to the nature of the proposed planning initiative and the role the regional district and member municipalities will have in its development and implementation. The Province is wrapping up a similar initiative called the *South Island Transportation Plan* which appears to have been undertaken over a fairly compressed timeline (one year). One of the differences between the South Island plan and Fraser Valley plan is that the Fraser Valley plan specifically speaks to land-use and it is unclear what the Province’s intentions are in this regard. It is also unclear as to the definition of “Fraser Valley”, although we assume this likely includes eastern portions of Metro Vancouver.

Transportation and infrastructure challenges facing this region go beyond the provision of public transit. As population in the lower mainland and rest of the province continues to grow, transportation bottlenecks are becoming more apparent and with that, economic pressures. The broader economic impacts of Highway 1 congestion cannot be ignored and need to be addressed sooner rather than later. Westcoast Express and other transportation improvements that will better serve the north side of the Fraser River and the District of Mission also must be considered.

The FVRD and member municipalities successfully collaborated with the Province, BC Transit and TransLink in the “*Strategic Review of Transit in the Fraser Valley*” which was released in 2010. Many of the initiatives identified in that strategy have been implemented, and local governments in this region have made significant transit investments since that time. We look forward to working with the Province on this initiative but it is important not to lose sight of the more immediate challenges that need to be addressed.

## **COST**

No cost at this time

## **CONCLUSION**

In its recent Throne Speech and provincial budget and fiscal plan, the Province has announced a “*Fraser Valley Integrated Transportation and Land Use Plan*”. There has been limited information as to the timing, scope and local government’s role in the development of the terms of reference and oversight of the project. It is also important however, to emphasise that while a long-term plan is a welcome initiative, it should not delay Highway 1 improvements that are so desperately needed today.

**COMMENTS BY:**

**Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services:** Reviewed and supported.

**Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services:** No further financial comments.

**Jennifer Kinneman, Acting Chief Administrative Officer:** Reviewed and supported.