

# Copy Vancouver's funding for transportation

Re: "Region transport authority push riles some mayors," Jan. 10.

The need for a regional transportation authority seems self-evident. The current model of 13 municipalities responsible for roads within their boundaries, Capital Regional District ownership of trails, Victoria Regional Transit and the province (managing highways) is not serving our needs well.

## ***article continues below***

How would this new service be funded? Eliminating the hospital-district property tax, as was done in 1998 in Metro Vancouver, would provide a painless way to do so. Regional-district boards (except Metro Vancouver) are also hospital-district boards, charged with collecting hospital-district taxes.

In 1998, the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act was proclaimed, and the debts and assets of the Metro Vancouver Hospital District were transferred to the province. All Metro Vancouver municipalities stopped collecting hospital tax.

This gave TransLink room to increase its property taxes without increasing overall property taxes. By creating a transportation authority, the capital region should be entitled to the same taxation arrangement as Metro Vancouver.

In 2016, the Capital Regional Hospital District collected \$26,529,624 within the 13 municipalities, plus \$2,130,708 from the three electoral areas.

Many improvements to local transportation could be achieved with this reallocated funding. A transportation authority could set "regional" priorities,

including a regionally funded major-road network (as TransLink does) and speak with one voice when seeking funding from senior governments.

Governance of the new authority would be a concern, if it remained under the CRD, which lacks broad accountability to residents across the region. We need an improved governance model to achieve better regional results.

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