

# Regional transportation authority rejected by CRD directors

In the face of only lukewarm political support, Capital Regional District directors unanimously voted Wednesday to abandon a bid to form a regional transportation authority.

Only five of 13 area municipalities supported the idea even though proposed funding for the service had been reduced to about \$2 million from \$10 million.

## ***article continues below***

Those in support argued that a new transportation authority would enable the identification of regional transportation priorities and speak with a unified voice to senior governments when seeking funds.

Those in opposition, primarily in the West Shore, worried their priorities might be overshadowed by core municipalities' wants and that a new CRD service would only add another level of bureaucracy. Regional needs would be better served through an existing agency such as B.C. Transit, they said.

Saanich Coun. Susan Brice, who spearheaded efforts to get a buy-in for the service, said that while the timing wasn't right, she hopes in the future "we will once again look to find that strong, strong consensus in the region about what our [transportation] solution will be."

The failure to reach consensus on a new transportation authority might spark action on regional governance issues, said Victoria Coun. Geoff Young. "Maybe this will convince the people of the region and the provincial government that something really fundamental has to be done about governance in this region," Young said.

“I’m more in favour of an authority that breaks down the borders, that can look at the issues beyond our borders,” said Saanich Mayor Richard Atwell.

“If we can get the province involved and we can get some motion on this, we do need a borderless voting system to be able to advance this cause,” he said.

Sooke Mayor Maja Tait said booming construction is having a major impact on commute times. The newly approved increase in gas-tax funding for transit will in time lead to a transportation mode shift.

“There’s construction everywhere and I think everyone is doing their utmost to make it better for commuters,” Tait said. “It’s just right now it’s a long haul because of all the work that’s underway.”

B.C. Minister of Transportation Claire Trevena has said she will consider taking action after the municipal elections in October.

“We have the same goals as local governments — to alleviate traffic congestion and deliver reliable, efficient transit service to help people get around with ease,” Trevena said in a letter to CRD chairman Steve Price.

Directors agreed to have Price respond to Trevena, saying they look forward to her “presenting a detailed road map to move forward” after the municipal elections.

[bcleverley@timescolonist.com](mailto:bcleverley@timescolonist.com)

**You Might Be Interested In**