

It's no-go to regional transportation body

The Capital Regional District should abandon its attempt to form a new regional transportation authority, staff say.

The recommendation comes after a survey showed that eight of the 13 Greater Victoria municipal councils were opposed to the idea.

article continues below

View Royal Mayor David Screech, a strong proponent of the new service, called the situation disappointing. “It seems crazy to me that we can all agree that there’s a problem ... but we can’t agree on what are the best steps forward.”

Screech said he would like to see the province agree to work with the CRD in developing a solution and implementing it. He also suggested having a referendum question about a proposed regional transportation service put on municipal ballots.

Colwood Mayor Carol Hamilton said her opposition to the service does not mean she is opposed to looking at regional transportation issues.

“We do not need a bureaucracy dealing with regional transportation when there’s no authority in place for the CRD to be able to do that,” Hamilton said.

“That has been my argument all along. We don’t have to actually start building taxation from folks in an area where they can’t even authorize anything.”

Hamilton said it makes more sense to look at options by establishing a regional transportation task force, perhaps through B.C. Transit, which has a

mandate for regional transportation.

B.C. Minister of Transportation Claire Trevena 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. “The municipalities that comprise the Capital Regional District need to have a shared vision for how to achieve these goals, and how the proposed regional transportation service would operate toward this end.

“The province will continue to work with local governments to help find the right solution that will most benefit the residents of the CRD, and we look forward to further exploring this issue once the municipal elections are complete this October.”

In order to create a new service, the CRD must gain approval through a referendum, through an alternate approval process such as a counter petition or by receiving the approval of all municipal councils and conducting an alternate approval process in the electoral areas.

bcleverley@timescolonist.com

You Might Be Interested In