

# **Mind the Gap: A Case Study of TransLink's Legislation and the Non-Implementation of the Vehicle Levy in 2001**

**by**

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B.A., Vancouver Island University, 2012

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# Approval

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## Ethics Statement



The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

- a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics

or

- b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University

or has conducted the research

- c. as a co-investigator, collaborator, or research assistant in a research project approved in advance.

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## **Abstract**

The Greater Vancouver metropolitan region has developed a long history of regional collaboration among local municipalities. The 1990s marked a period of highly collaborative intergovernmental planning, which - with the support of the provincial government - resulted in the creation of TransLink, a regional transportation agency that manages major roads, bridges and public transit in the Greater Vancouver metropolitan area.

This thesis investigates the provincial government's decision to not allow TransLink to implement a vehicle levy in 2001. The research uses qualitative methods to examine this decision and the motivating factors that contributed to the provincial government's approach to regional transportation in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The findings are that technical, organizational, and political factors influenced the provincial government's vehicle levy decision. This thesis reveals how the provincial government's political considerations were embedded within a series of events that framed the vehicle levy as a contentious issue. TransLink's approach to the vehicle levy sparked public concern about fairness and equity, which led to cascading political problems and a lack of regional consensus, which thus resulted in the provincial government's non-implementation of the levy.

**Keywords:** Regional planning, transportation finance, public policy, multi-level governance, decision-making, urban politics.

## Dedication

*To my father – for encouraging me to think about cities  
as sustainable places, by envisioning gardens in the  
streets and an abundance of public transportation.*

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## List of Acronyms

AirCare	Air Quality Management Subsidiary
BC	British Columbia
BCTA	British Columbia Truckers Association
CTPF	Canadian Tax Payers Federation
GVRD	Greater Vancouver Regional District (also known as Metro Vancouver)
GVTA	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority
GVTAA	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act
ICBC	Insurance Corporation of British Columbia
LRSP	Livable Region Strategic Plan
LMRPB	Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
NDP	New Democratic Party
SCBCTAA	South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act
STP	TransLink 2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
UBC	University of British Columbia
VRTC	Vancouver Regional Transit Commission

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Throughout the 1990s, the provincial government and the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) worked together to create a new multi-modal transportation authority. In 1999 TransLink became the new regional transportation authority tasked with managing all major road networks and public transportation within the GVRD, and soon after adopted the 2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan (Wales, 2008). To a certain extent, this plan was dependent upon new funding resources. As such, TransLink requested that the provincial government approve new legislation to grant the authority the power to implement and enforce the collection of a vehicle levy. Regarding the power to make regulations, as per Part 5, Section 46(e) of the *Greater Vancouver Transit Authority Act* (GVTA), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulation “requiring the payment of project toll charges, user fees and motor vehicle charges and respecting their collection and enforcement” (Bill 36, 1998). However, in January 2001, the provincial government – led by the New Democratic Party (NDP) – made the decision not to support TransLink’s request. This thesis investigates the decision made by the provincial government of British Columbia in 2001.

As explained by the research, the vehicle levy decision appears to contradict the provincial government’s motivation for creating the GVTA, which was to provide the region with local control over transportation in the Lower Mainland. The aim of this thesis is to understand the motivating factors contributing to the province’s inconsistent approach to transportation policy in the Lower Mainland. Moreover, this thesis will examine TransLink’s vehicle levy proposal as both a transportation demand management tool and revenue source.

This thesis interprets the provincial government’s decision by using principles from the literature review, including public policy decision making, regional governance, and transportation demand management. These ideas and theories are discussed in chapter 3 to highlight the interconnectivity of public policy decision-making and various

influences. This thesis focuses specifically on the tensions that existed at the time of the provincial government's decision in January of 2001, as well as the context leading up to that decision. The research uses 1997-2001 as a timeframe for analysis, and pays specific attention to the methods, events, and actors engaged with the vehicle levy discussions at the regional level. In doing so, the research seeks to understand the tensions that existed at the time between the GVRD, local governments across the region, TransLink and the provincial government. Technical challenges, political influences, and intergovernmental tensions are revealed by the analysis of this decision making process.

## **1.1. Research Question**

The question this thesis seeks to answer is why did the provincial government choose not to support the implementation of TransLink's vehicle levy in 2001? By answering this question, the thesis will also consider inconsistencies in the provincial government's approach to managing transportation governance and planning in the Lower Mainland during the late 1990s and early 2000s. In order to answer this question, this thesis will provide context information about the evolution of regional planning in the Lower Mainland, the origins of TransLink and the GVTAA, and the significance of the vehicle levy. This context information will demonstrate that both the province and the region were motivated to create local control over transportation in the Lower Mainland. This context information demonstrates the significance of the 2001 vehicle levy decision as a divergence from the province's previous efforts to create TransLink.

By determining what factors contributed to the vehicle levy decision in 2001, various tensions that exist between the provincial, local and regional government will be revealed. The analysis will consider the technical and philosophical problems associated with the vehicle levy, as well issues related to governance and politics in the Lower Mainland. The analytical framework does not place blame on any one actor in the decision making process – whether they be the producer (industry), consumer (transportation user), or decision maker (politician) – but instead aims to develop an understanding of how different actions, events, actors cumulatively influence decision-making.

Some literature suggests that automobile associations, vehicle manufacturers, road construction companies, petroleum producers, insurance agencies, suburban developers, and other similar groups have dominated the urban mobility agenda over the last century by influencing transportation policy decisions (Hamer, 1987; Jovanovic, 2015). For example, the BC Truckers Association (BCTA), and the BC Automobile Association (BCAA) did not support the vehicle levy, and instead joined forces to lobby the federal government for funding for transportation improvements in the GVRD (Luba, 2000; McHugh, 2000; Munro, 2000d). The BCAA also collected the signatures of 27,732 Greater Vancouver residents who were opposed to the vehicle levy (Munro, 2000d). The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) also did not support TransLink's efforts to collect an insurance-based vehicle levy (McInnes, 2000; Skelton, 2000b). Beyond the automobile agenda pushed forward by these groups, the thesis finds that other issues more directly influenced the provincial government's decision to not implement TransLink's vehicle levy. For example, the public generally did not favour a vehicle levy (GVRD, 1993b), which in turn influenced the opinion of local elected officials. The NDP's dwindling popularity due to major issues such as "bingogate", the cost of purchasing new BC Ferries vessels, and the "fudge-it budget" (Wilson 2002; O'Neil 1999) resulted in the party facing added scrutiny relating to their financial management and decision making (Carroll and Ratner, 2005; Wilson, 2002). Understanding how the variables listed above affected the final decision about the vehicle levy will be central to the analysis, and discussed in detail in Chapter 5.3.

## **1.2. Significance of the Research**

At the broadest level, this research will be important for urban professionals and academics who are concerned with transportation finance, governance, local and regional planning. The implications of this research will contribute to an understanding of regional transportation policy, specifically for situations where a senior level of government has authority over the local and regional government body that implements transportation planning and services. Specifically, this analysis is most applicable to Canadian cities and urban mobility policy studies because of the specific constitutional

and legislative arrangements that give power to provincial authorities and leave regional and local government to be “creatures of the province” (Hodge & Robinson, 2001; Smith, 2010).

The choice, and ability, that provincial government has to support local and regional counterparts in their planning efforts, specifically around the delivery of transportation infrastructure and services, is the primary dynamic investigated by this research project. Using the case study of the vehicle levy to better understand the barriers to financing transit and transportation in the Lower Mainland will be most important to senior management at TransLink and Metro Vancouver (formerly GVRD), and to those working in government relations. Developing a better understanding of the influences that shape transit and transportation policy in Metro Vancouver might help advance future efforts to develop a more equitable, affordable, and ecologically sensitive multimodal transportation system in Metro Vancouver. This study will also be of interest to the provincial government, and the public.

While the case study focuses on a policy decision made nearly 20 years ago, the topic explored by the research remains important to urban scholars and professionals today. Funding transportation in the Lower Mainland is something that TransLink, Metro Vancouver, locally elected officials, and the provincial government struggle to agree upon to this day. For example, in 2015 residents of Metro Vancouver were asked by the provincial government (governed by the BC Liberal Party) to vote in a plebiscite that would introduce a .5% sales tax increase to fund the expansion of public transportation infrastructure across the region. The proposed tax failed to garner public support with 38.32% of votes in favor, and 61.68% of the 759,869 ballots considered opposed to the tax increase (Elections BC, 2015).

More recently, the federal government has committed \$2.2 billion towards transportation in Metro Vancouver, covering about 40% of the cost for major infrastructure projects such as the Millennium Line Broadway Extension in Vancouver which will extend the existing Millennium Line from VCC–Clark Station to Arbutus Street, adding a total of 6 new stations (TransLink, n.d.b; Zaussman, 2017). However, the distribution of cost sharing for transportation infrastructure construction continues to be

negotiated between the provincial, regional and local governments. For example, in 2016 a former provincial Minister responsible for TransLink, Peter Fassbender of the BC Liberal party, suggested that the region and its Mayors needed to find funding themselves without support of the province (Boynton, 2016). However, following the 2017 provincial election, the BC Liberals announced that the transit funding referendum requirement would no longer be needed, implying a willingness to work with the region on securing new funding (Britten, 2017). With ongoing discussions about transit funding in the region, it is likely that tensions and influences that affected the vehicle levy decision in 2001 will also play a role in shaping the evolution of regional transportation policy moving forward.

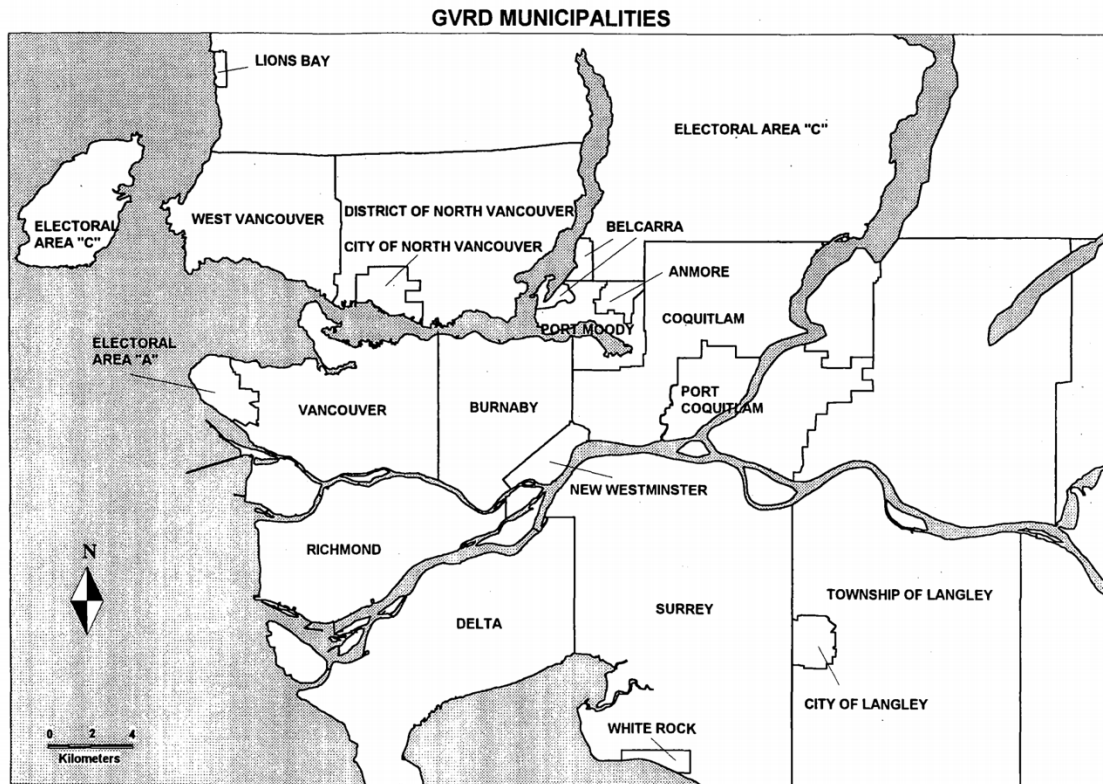


## **Chapter 2. Background & Context**

This chapter provides background information on the vehicle levy as a policy tool. It also provides context information about the evolution of regional transportation and land use planning in the Lower Mainland. In the 1990s, the provincial and regional governing bodies participated in a joint transportation planning process, which produced the *Transport 2021* plan. Subsequently the region and the province negotiated the terms for new legislation that would enable the creation of a Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority. This new authority was mandated to coordinate and oversee the shared goals of the region and the province (MacPhail, 1998b). The provincial government approved new legislation, which included the authority for the regional body to implement a motor vehicle charge as of October 1, 2001. It is important to first understand how a motor vehicle charge fit within the policy objectives shared between the region and the province – and why a motor vehicle charge was included as part of the legislation – in order to consider if, how, and why these shared policy objectives were overlooked by the provincial government's vehicle levy decision in 2001.

### **2.1. The Greater Vancouver Region**

The Greater Vancouver Region (also referred to as the Lower Mainland) is located at the southwest corner of British Columbia (BC). It is a constrained geographical area of 2,877.36 square kilometres, bounded by the Pacific Ocean, the United States border, and the Coastal Mountain range. Figure 1 from *Creating Our Future: The History, Status, and Prospectus of Regional Planning in Greater Vancouver* provides a map of the region's boundaries (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994, p. 2).



**Figure 1. GVRD Municipalities.**

Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994, Retrieved from <http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/library/HarryLashLibraryPublications/Creating-Our-Future-1994.pdf>

As demonstrated in Table 1 Greater Vancouver’s regional population increased from 1.38 million in 1986 to 1.83 million in 1996. Hodge & Robison (2001) highlight that during this period population growth was not evenly distributed throughout the region, and most population growth occurred outside the central cities in suburban and fringe parts of the region – not the urban core. For example, between 1991 and 1996:

The municipalities in the regional core, including the suburban areas north of the Fraser River - the City of Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, the Districts of West and North Vancouver, and the City of North Vancouver – [saw] fairly modest rates of population growth (within the range of 5 percent to 9 percent)... Outside the regional core, and up the Fraser Valley – in Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Surrey, Langley, Coquitlam, and Port Coquitlam – growth rates [were] much higher, ranging from 14 percent to 17 percent for the same five-year period. (p. 315)

Similar growth trends occurred in the 1996-2000 period, with communities outside the core experiencing growth rates of more than 10 percent (Hodge & Robinson, 2001). The City of Surrey alone grew from 300,000 to 340,000 between 1996 and 2000 (Hodge & Robinson, 2001). The social and political consequences of suburbanization will be considered in Chapter 5. As explained in section 2.2, reversing these growth trends and encouraging sustainable, compact forms of development was a top priority for the GVRD in the 1990s.

**Table 1. Population of Canada's three city-regions and their component parts, 1986-1996**

<b>Population of Canada's three city-regions and their component parts, 1986-96</b>				
City-region	Area (sq. km.)	Population (millions) and as % of total region		
		1986	1991	1996
Montreal	3,500	2.92 (100.0%)	3.13 (100.0%)	3.33 (100.0%)
CMA	3,500	2.92 (100.0%)	3.13 (100.0%)	3.33 (100.0%)
Core	500	1.75 (59.9%)	1.78 (56.9%)	1.80 (54.4%)
Fringe	3,000	1.17 (40.1%)	1.35 (43.1%)	1.53 (45.6%)
Toronto	7,200	3.65 (100.0%)	4.13 (100.0%)	4.50 (100.0%)
CMA	5,868	3.43 (94.0%)	3.90 (94.4%)	4.26 (94.7%)
Core	630	2.19 (60.0%)	2.00 (55.2%)	2.38 (52.9%)
Fringe	6,570	1.46 (40.0%)	2.13 (44.8%)	2.12 (47.1%)
Vancouver	2,910	1.38 (100.0%)	1.60 (100.0%)	1.83 (100.0%)
CMA	2,821	1.38 (100.0%)	1.60 (100.0%)	1.83 (100.0%)
Core	113	0.43 (31.2%)	0.47 (29.4%)	0.51 (27.9%)
Fringe	2,797	0.95 (68.8%)	1.13 (70.6%)	1.32 (72.1%)

Note: Reprinted from Planning and Governing City-Regions, by Hodge & Robinson, 2001.

## 2.2. Changes to Regional Governance and Planning

There is a long history of regional collaboration in the Lower Mainland's Greater Vancouver region, which began in 1938 when the Lower Mainland Regional Association was informally established to discuss land use planning (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). Regional planning has been facilitated by encouraging collaboration among local municipalities, instead of forming a single amalgamated governing body. However, regional planning has often been subject to interruption by the "winds of political change" (McDougall et al., 2017). Hodge & Robinson (2001) characterizes two periods of regional planning in the Greater Vancouver emerging post World War II, as means to manage rapid population growth, suburbanization, and economic development. The first period of planning was between 1949 and 1968 when the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) was operating, and the second period was from 1967 onwards under the oversight of the GVRD (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 332).

### Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board

In 1949, the provincial government established the *Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board* (LMRPB) as the regional planning body for the entire Lower Mainland area. The *Town Planning Act* empowered the LMRPB to "conduct planning studies, to provide planning services to constituent municipalities, and to prepare an official regional plan covering the Lower Mainland region" (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 333). As described by Hodge & Robinson (2001) any official regional plan would establish broad land use principles that would help determine the location of new communities, highways, roads, utilities, and regional facilities, and would be subject to the approval of the provincial government (p. 333). In 1966, the region's first plan was adopted, titled *Chance and Challenge*. Eventually, the LMRPB began to threaten provincial authority by "engaging in open criticism of provincial land use policies" (Wagner et al., 2006; also see Oberlander & Smith, 1993). Land use disagreements arose, creating "intergovernmental friction" between the province and the region, which resulted in the dissolution of the LMRPD in 1968 (Hodge & Robinson, 2001).

## **Greater Vancouver Regional District**

In 1968, the LMRPB's planning responsibilities were dissolved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and divided into four regional districts in the Lower Mainland – Greater Vancouver, Central Fraser Valley, Dewdney-Alouette, and Fraser-Cheam (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). The GVRD undertook another planning process, creating the 1975 *Livable Region Plan* to help managed growth and enhance livability in the region. However, following the re-election of the Social Credit government in 1983, all regional districts “were stripped of their planning and zoning authority” (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 336). According to the provincial government, regional planning functions were too hierarchical and therefore “problematic” because municipalities were required by law to comply with regional plans (British Columbia Ministry of Community Services, 2006, p. 1). Bish (1990) found that the provincial government’s rationale for passing Bill 9, amending the Municipal Act to eliminate the planning functions of regional districts, was because they viewed regional plans as a duplication of community plans, and because they thought that regional plans were used to control development in some municipalities (p. 39; see also Wagner et al., 2005).

Even following the dismantling of regional planning legislation, the GVRD continued to offer voluntary regional development services through individual contracts with its member municipalities (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). In 1989 Bill 19 passed, enabling regional districts to provide coordination, research and analytical services related to the development of regional districts (GVRD, 1994). This legislation restored regional development services, but it did not restore planning functions (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994; Hodge & Robinson, 2001). It is important to highlight that the provincial government has been the primary actor in making these changes to the region’s form and function, typically amending legislation or implementing new legislation. As explained by Hodge & Robinson (2001) the region’s “capacity” to plan, and then implement plans, “is made up of the powers that the province is prepared to delegate to the regional planning agency” (p. 120).

However, as explained in Section 2.3, the GVTAA was created by the provincial government through a mutually negotiated process. The 1990s marked an important – though perhaps brief – change in the province’s approach to regional planning in BC.

Regional efforts contributed to a heightened public awareness and concern about the future of growth in the Lower Mainland, especially regarding land use and transportation planning (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). Moreover, growing concerns about uncoordinated and rapid growth placed new attention on regional planning. In 1992, the provincial government began an extensive consultation process to strengthen regional planning institutions in BC. As a result, “the Growth Strategies Act became law on 8 June 1995 and was folded into the existing Municipal Act through the creation of a new part.... [which] provided authority for regional districts to develop regional growth management strategies” (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 343). The Growth Strategies Act is described as legislation that provides:

A framework for interactive planning—a system that relies on a cooperative process, rather than hierarchy, to ensure that plans fit together. It ensures that municipalities and regional districts work to prepare a regional growth strategy as equal partners. And it makes it possible for local government and provincial government to tackle real regional issues in an integrated way. (British Columbia Ministry of Community Services, 2006, p. 1)

Once regional planning functions were rehabilitated, the GVRD undertook two planning processes *Creating Our Future* and the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* (LRSP), and one provincial-regional joint planning process called *Transport 2021*, which helped establish a regional vision and set new planning targets.

### **TransLink**

In the 1990’s transportation was emerging as an important regional planning issue, and a tool to shape urban growth (Wales, 2008). Immediately prior to the creation of TransLink in 1999, transportation was managed by different agencies. Roads had been the responsibility of both the provincial or local government, and transit service was controlled by BC Transit and the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission (VRTC) (p. 17). Public transit service had also been controlled by different organizations previously, including BC Hydro and BC Transit. The region had little input on transportation issues. With a change in provincial leadership, and reinvigorated political support for regional planning, collaborative negotiations between the region and the province led to the creation of the GVTAA.

In 1999 TransLink was given responsibility for the region's major road network (roads that are inter-regional but not provincial highways) and public transit (bus, SkyTrain, West Coast Express, and Seabus), as well as overseeing transportation demand management, active transportation, AirCare vehicle emission testing, and intelligent transportation systems technology. This allowed for strategic network planning at a regional level (Wales, 2008). TransLink's *2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan* (STP) sought to improve transit and transportation conditions in the region, under the strategic guidance of the LRSP and *Transport 2021*. While it was "challenging to decide who should pay, particularly with respect to the supply of road and transit services" (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 2), new financial tools were negotiated and set out for the region in the *GVTAA*, including a motor vehicle charge (the vehicle levy) which would be used to finance the implementation of regional plans.

While TransLink had been equipped with planning and professional resources to help facilitate planning, the agency lacked legislative powers and the political resources to implement new financial tools that would finance service and infrastructure expansion in the region. The creation of TransLink should have characterized a third period of regional planning for the Greater Vancouver region, defined by the provincial governments efforts to extend new regional "financial and regulatory resources" (Hodge & Robinson, 2001) that would have provided "local control" for plan implementation (MacPhail, 1999a). Instead, the provincial government's decision to not implement the vehicle levy reinforced the hierarchal relationship between the province and the region, limiting regional capacity, and enforcing regional dependence upon "the willingness of the province to provide them [resources]" (Hodge & Robinson, 2001 p 121). As such, TransLink's capacity for implementing its plans has been limited by the organization's lack of regulatory, financial, and political resources. As the literature suggests, "without the requisite financial and regulatory resources... plans are essentially advisory" (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 319). However, as observed in the examples above, ongoing intergovernmental friction and provincial constraints upon regional planning capacity predates the case study of the vehicle levy.

### **2.2.1. Overview of Regional Planning Efforts in the 1990s**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, growing concerns about urban growth, air quality, and transportation brought focus to regional planning. As such, the GVRD decided to renew the region's development policy (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). "A growth management planning process, together with a provincial and regional planning process, took most of the attention of the planners between 1991 and 1993" (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 339). Three important planning processes occurred during the early 1990s: *Creating our Future Vision and Program*, the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* (LRSP), and *Transport 2021* plan. At the regional level, these plans and policies laid the foundation for the creation of TransLink, and provided the impetus for a transportation user pay model. However, the provincial government's motivation for creating the GVTAA reveals some variation from the region's motivations, and will be discussed in Section 2.3, and as well in Chapter 5.

#### **Creating our Future Vision and Program**

The *Creating Our Future* program began in 1989 when the GVRD sought out an effort to review previous regional planning objectives. Through public consultation and feedback, the program set some very high goals for realizing the vision of Greater Vancouver's future (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994, p. 23). *Choosing Our Future* was the plan's consultation process, guided by an open and inclusive "search for solutions which could be widely supported by all residents of the region" (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). Extensive public consultation – including seminars with over 400 participants, 1300 completed public attitude surveys, 800 student poster submissions, a forum of 400 people, six community meetings with 700 attendees, special briefings with municipal elected officials, and a region-wide television program and phone-in (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994) – helped shape the ambitious vision for the region's future:

Greater Vancouver can become the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis: a place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approaches that of the natural setting, where the diversity of origins and religions is a source of social strength rather than strife, where people control the destiny of their community, and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security



and useful activity are accessible to all. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994, p. 12)

With this broad vision, a set of actionable steps were identified in *Creating Our Future: Steps to A More Livable Region*, adopted by the GVRD Board in 1990. In this document 36 steps were adopted as principles and policies that generally focused on maintaining a healthy environment, land conservation, serving a growing population, supporting economic development, and managing land use and transportation. Of the 36 steps approved by the GVRD Board, some specific policies indicated the region's strategic vision for gaining more planning, regulatory and financial capacity over transportation. These specific policies include:

- Sustain and develop a cooperative transportation planning process with the provincial government and its agencies based upon the GVRD Board's approved policies.
- Assume sole responsibility for management and operation of the transit system as one of the GVRD's primary functions.
- Advocate an increase in the costs of automobile use to pay for transit initiatives, capital improvements for cyclists and carpooling.

### **Livable Region Strategic Plan**

Some of the most critical policies identified in the *Choosing Our Future* process involved land use and transportation (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). Historic trends in development saw Greater Vancouver's growth take the "form of relatively low density sprawl, interspersed with pockets of higher density that were largely unconnected by effective transportation services" (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996, p. 6). Reversing the trend of sprawling developing was a top priority for the region (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). As such, the GVRD re-examined land use implications for the LRSP by assessing physical development and land use patterns in the region.

While *Creating Our Future* provided the region with a vision for preserving livability by addressing environmental health, growth management, transportation and socio-economic challenges, the LRSP took those ideas one-step further by specifically laying out a strategy for the region's land use and transportation system (Greater

Vancouver Regional District, 1996a). The overall goal was to determine the best way of accommodating an additional million residents by the year 2021, while also sustaining high levels of livability and environmental quality (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994).

The LRSP was adopted by the GVRD in 1996 as the region's growth management plan, which provided a framework for regional land use and transportation decisions (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996a). The LRSP's approach to growth management focused on four fundamental and interwoven strategies to serve the long-term regional goals. These four strategies were (1) to protect the green zone, (2) build complete communities, (3) increase transportation choice, and (4) achieve a compact metropolitan region (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996a).

### **Transport 2021 Medium and Long Range Plans**

*Transport 2021* provided both medium and long-range transportation plans for the GVRD. These two plans suggested policies, set out demand management measures, and determined the top priorities for transportation investment in the region (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993a; Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). The *Transport 2021 Medium and Long-Range Transportation Plans* were linked to the both LRSP and *Creating Our Future* through specific policy objectives. Furthermore, *Transport 2021* was developed in conjunction with the LRSP to ensure that the region's transportation and growth management strategies aligned. *Transport 2021's* medium range plan provided guidance on transportation policies, management and targets for the year 2006, and the long-range plan provided a vision to be realized by 2021.

The LRSP relied mostly on broad improvements to public transit and high-occupancy vehicle facilities to provide additional transportation capacity (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994), whereas *Transport 2021* identified a variety of key transit capacity improvements for the GVRD. These included three LRT lines to be in place by 2006 (Broadway-Lougheed, New Westminster-Coquitlam and Vancouver-Richmond), doubling the region's bus fleet from 950 to 1,900 buses by 2006, and adding new HOV lanes and truck routes throughout the region. Moreover, the medium range

plan proposed a tiered approach that would first enhance area wide bus service, before warranting the implementation of “SuperBus” (transporting 5,000 passengers per hour) along four major corridors (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993a). By 2006, three main transit corridors would receive rapid transit upgrades to serve 10,000 people per hour. These upgrades would prioritize the transit corridors from Coquitlam to New Westminster and Richmond to Vancouver, as a means to shape land use (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993a).

The long-range plan presented a 30-year scenario (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 199b). One priority highlighted in *Transport 2021*'s long-range plan was to implement a user-pay model for financing transit and managing demand. This model requires that a user pay the cost of a utility (in this instance, transportation), as a way to inform the user of the cost of that utility and to discourage overuse (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). The prices paid by users should correspond to their actual costs, and the goal of economic efficiency would therefore support a policy of generally increasing the price of all transport modes – including automobile use – overtime (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). User-pay was suggested to be an essential element of transportation demand management. “User pay will be part of the answer to help curb demand, but also ways to increase efficiency of the transit system” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2000, p. 8).

As highlighted in the long-range plan, private vehicle use is publicly subsidized more than public transit, specifically in non-financial or hidden costs which are imposed on society as a whole. Requiring that auto-users pay into the transportation system, by implementing user pay model, was intended to help correct this imbalance (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). Moreover, the long-range plan also proposed that road or bridge tolls would eventually become commonplace to combat urban traffic congestion and pollution, and to support transport investment (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b).

*Transport 2021* took into account the government's constrained fiscal climate when proposing public sector capital expenditures, so that the magnitude of investment associated with *Transport 2021* would not seem unreasonable (Greater Vancouver

Regional District, 1993b). The estimated public sector capital cost of transportation expenses in Greater Vancouver, as laid out in *Transport 2021*, was approximately \$10 billion (in 1992 dollars) over the 28-year period (1993-2021). This was comparable to the \$3.3 billion (1992 dollars) of public sector capital expenditures incurred during the previous ten-year period of 1983-1992. As explained in *Transport 2021* (1993b): “the plan would require about two thirds of the historical amount – \$149 per capita per year compared with \$231 over the past decade – to be sustained through the period 1993-2021” (p. x). Moreover, if transportation demand management measures, such as tolls, gas taxes and parking taxes, were to be implemented then by 2021 about \$1.1 billion (1992 dollars) of annual revenue could be available for the plans proposed projects.

*Transport 2021* demand management policies proposed a package of mutually supportive measures. The policy suggested that:

Governments should generally use "carrot" measures (persuasion and incentives) to achieve objectives before using "sticks" (penalties and disincentives); however, since "carrot" measures alone are not likely to effect significant change, "stick" measures will be required. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 24)

While *Transport 2021* imagined financial incentives for telecommuting, the development of a regional parking strategy, and the implementation of tolls by the year 2000, it was not until TransLink's STP that the vehicle levy would be discussed as an option for financing the expansion of transportation in the region.

### **Plan Implementation**

The development of these three regional plans, described above, reflected the region's desire to obtain additional resources from the provincial government, to pursue planning and plan implementation. In the LRSP, the GVRD acknowledged the need to work in partnership with people, organizations, member municipalities, the provincial government and its agencies, as well as the federal government and its agencies. The goal of this collaboration was “to plan and deliver a transportation system that supports the protection of the Green Zone, the development of complete communities and the realization of a compact metropolitan region” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996a, p. 23). In order to effectively implement regional plans there would also need to be ongoing “consultation and consensus between the region's citizens and their local

and provincial governments” (GVRD, 1994). This statement reveals that region planners were aware of the region’s limited capacity to implement plans. Therefore, local and provincial leadership, as well as public support and buy-in, would be essential for implementing plans.

An intergovernmental and collaborative approach to planning was emphasized by *Transport 2021* (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994). *Transport 2021* was guided by a joint committee of local, regional and provincial representatives. Their task was to prepare a list of infrastructure projects for consideration in advance of the provincial government's 1994-1995 capital expenditure program (Strachan, 1993). This demonstration of provincial-regional intergovernmental collaboration and planning was unprecedented.

However, as noted by the GVRD, one challenge to the partnership-based planning approach was that organizations vary “in the degree to which they share the vision” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994, p. 20). *Transport 2021* also recognized that public attitudes were vital to policy decision makers for plan implementation. These two specific observations will also prove to be relevant to the non-implementation of the vehicle levy.

### **2.3. TransLink and Transportation Governance**

In the 1990s, Metro Vancouver had the highest rate of automobile ownership per capita in Canada (Wales, 2008). With mounting concerns about the effects of rapid population growth and congestion, increasing access to alternative modes of transportation was a key priority for the region, as identified in the three GVRD plans detailed above. However, with such fragmented control over transportation it was challenging for the GVRD to meet targets set out in *Transport 2021* and the LRSP. As highlighted by Ken Cameron, the former manager of policy and planning at the GVRD:

We arrived there then in the mid-1990s with a very sophisticated plan for growth management and transportation, and some of the ability to implement the growth management side of it because we had the growth management legislation and there were regional context statements, there

was a livable region strategic plan that had formal meaning, but there wasn't any kind of implementation agency on the transportation side that could build the transit vision that the plan needed. (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016)

Throughout the GVRD's history, the responsibility of managing transit and transportation had been divided between multiple agencies and organizations including local government, BC Hydro, BC Transit and the VRTC. The implications of this fragmentation meant that transportation planning was often disjointed, and the region had virtually no stake in transit and transportation planning. As noted by Hodge & Robinson (2001) it had been challenging for regional plans to be implemented without allocated government resources, either professional, financial, regulatory, political, or otherwise.

In order to improve and consolidate the region's fragmented approach to transit and transportation, the province and region worked together to establish a new multi-modal transportation authority better equipped to bring forward transportation enhancements across the region:

In 1996, the GVRD approached the Province and launched an initiative to explore transportation governance and funding alternatives. The initiative was formalized on April 5, 1997, when the GVRD and the Province signed a "Framework Agreement for Negotiations of Transportation Governance and Funding in Greater Vancouver". (Briggs & Jasper, 2001, p. 7)

The GVTA was the "culmination of more than a year of discussions, consultations and negotiations between the province and the GVRD" (MacPhail, 1998b), and in "May 1999, a total of 112 leaders, including 75 elected officials, 28 municipal staff and 5 regional staff, participated in a professionally facilitated decision-making workshop that determined a final approach for the governance structure" (Briggs & Jasper, 2001, p. 7). According to Briggs & Jasper (2001) "the GVRD wanted institutional restructuring that would provide stable, predictable and appropriate financing capabilities; local control and expanded transit service; coordination of the road system; and programs for managing transportation demand" (p.7). Similarly, the provincial government suggested their motivation for creating the GVTA was to provide the region with local control over transportation and transit services (MacPhail, 1998a).

In the second reading of the GVTA, Honourable Joy MacPhail explained the provincial government's motivations for introducing new transportation legislation:

This act, first and foremost, is about better meeting the transportation and transit needs of the people of greater Vancouver. People in and around Vancouver have seen the impact of tremendous growth in the region over the last ten years, most noticeably on transportation services, air quality and general livability within the region. It has become increasingly apparent that the current approach, in which transportation decision making is divided between local governments, provincial agencies and ministries, is not working. So I would say that a new integrated arrangement for funding and managing transit and transportation in the region is needed to deal with the problems of traffic congestion and air pollution and to keep pace with the transit service demands of Greater Vancouver's rapidly expanding population...

The act also ensures that the new authority will have adequate and appropriate funding to carry out its responsibilities, including implementing plans for the expansion of transit services in the region. (MacPhail, 1998b)

In light of these promises, the provincial government's actions and decisions – including the 2001 vehicle levy decision, and the earlier announcement in 1998 of a twenty-kilometre extension of Vancouver's Skytrain System, both were presented without consulting the GVRD or its member municipalities (Hodge & Robinson, 2001). These decisions appear to contradict the provincial government's promise of local control and increased collaborative decision-making.

In 1999, TransLink became the new regional transportation authority. This agency was North America's first multi-modal transportation authority, tasked with managing all major road networks and public transportation within the GVRD (Wales, 2008). TransLink's governing board consisted of 12 locally elected Mayors or councillors, appointed through the GVRD, and three Provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA). In theory, local control over transportation planning and service provision would be enhanced by this new model of transportation governance (MacPhail, 1998b).

The GVTA mandated a governance model based on partnerships, and under the terms of the legislation the regional transportation system would support the regional growth strategy (MacPhail, 1998b; TransLink, 2000). As such, TransLink and the GVRD

would need to work together to establish mutually agreeable plans and strategies. TransLink would also work with municipalities, and consult broadly with interested agencies and the public. Moreover, it was necessary that TransLink's strategic plan support the LRSP, regional air quality objectives and the economic development of its service region (MacPhail, 1998b; TransLink, 2000).

TransLink provided an opportunity to change the province's approach to regional governance and planning in Greater Vancouver, and it provided the potential for greater integration of land use and transportation planning (MacPhail, 1998b; TransLink, 2000). TransLink had newly dedicated professional resources for transportation planning, and the GVTA created new regulatory and financial resources for supporting plan implementation. This included the ability to levy a motor vehicle charge in the region as of October 1, 2001 (TransLink, 2000b). Control over funding opportunities was essential to control plan implementation. In the second reading of Bill 36 (the GVTA) the Honourable Joy MacPhail presenting the Bill acknowledged:

The concept of local control clearly is meaningless unless the new authority is also given control over funding for transit and transportation, including the power to set its own budget and raise its own revenues through existing revenue sources and new funding opportunities. (MacPhail, 1998b)

This would be an important improvement for the region. Prior to the creation of TransLink the region and its member municipalities would have to appeal annually to BC Transit (the provincial government) for funding projects, and the province would have to invest both financial and political capital to support regionally based transportation projects.

However, the model set up in the guiding legislation faced criticism from the BC Liberal party (the official opposition party in BC at the time). Gordon Campbell, leader of the BC Liberal party argued that the GVTA did "not go far enough in establishing a true regional transit authority" and that "the people of greater Vancouver deserve to have a regional transit authority" (Campbell, 1998). During the second reading of Bill 36 Campbell explained his vision of a "true regional transit authority":



Let me give you a couple of examples of what a true regional transit authority would do and what it would prohibit. A true regional transit authority would not have provincial representation on the regional transit board. The evidence is overwhelming that when the provincial government is involved in regional transportation decisions, they stop being regional transportation decisions and they start being provincial political decisions. That's one of the reasons why we've had so much difficulty in managing transportation in the lower mainland over the last number of years.

The other thing that I think is important to note is that the idea of a transit authority is to give true local autonomy and independence, true regional independence, so that those transportation decisions... are integrated and thoughtful, and reinforce the regional plans, the quality-of-life plans that are there for the region. The transportation system must, in fact, put its first dollars towards the most important and top-priority transportation issues that the region faces...

I do believe it's important that we allow those decisions to be made directly by regional authorities as opposed to being imposed, influenced and driven by provincial dollars that, in fact, move away from regional transportation decision making and move towards provincial political decision making.

Here, Campbell's observation seems to foreshadow the non-implementation of the vehicle levy. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, Campbell (1998) also explains that these problems are not unique to the BC New Democratic Party, but instead are systemic institutional problems. Both intergovernmental and political influences are discussed in Chapter 5.

### **2.3.1. TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan 2000 – 2005**

While the GVRD's plans laid out strategic priorities for the region as a whole, TransLink needed to establish specific direction for itself as a new regional transportation authority. As such, the organization immediately began the development of the five-year STP in 1999. The plan was a direct result of the public and stakeholder consultation conducted from January to March 2000 (TransLink, 2000). The STP was also mandated by legislation to support the goals of the LRSP and *Transport 2021* (MacPhail, 1998b). Therefore, the desire to invest in the transportation network was established throughout many stakeholder forums and rounds of public consultation before the creation of TransLink:

The Plan [STP], while aggressive, is financially viable... The need to use these revenue sources was identified in the work leading to the establishment of TransLink, and the public has identified the importance of investment in the transportation system. (TransLink, 2000, p. 53)

The creation of TransLink would assist in the implementation of regional planning objectives by granting access to new financial resources.

TransLink's STP proposed an "ambitious and broad program to maintain quality of life in the region in the face of growth and changing development patterns" (TransLink, 2000, p. 56). The success of this plan was dependent upon making major expenditures and investment in the transportation network. The five-year STP envisioned more than \$1 billion of public transit capital investments. The main goals of the plan were to expand existing services, add new services, improve the Major Road Network (MRN), and to develop systems to implement transportation demand management (TransLink, 2000). The STP was to be funded through transportation demand management, transit fares, and other sources including the introduction of a vehicle charge in 2001. The plan was eventually approved unanimously by TransLink's Board in November 1999. Yet even with the creation of TransLink and the development of the STP, the region was falling behind targets set out in the LRSP and *Transport 2021*. For example, *Transport 2021* called for modal split of 70% of trips by car, 17% by public transit, and 13% of trips by walking or cycling by 2005. However, as highlighted in the STP:

If present trends continue, by 2005, the region's population will be making an additional 500,000 to 600,000 trips per day... and if the transportation mode share remains the same, about 77% of the trips will be made by car, 10% by public transit and 13% by walking/cycling. (TransLink, 2000, p. 8)

The STP met disapproval from some stakeholders and received negative criticism from the press because it appeared to favour investment in public transportation at the expense of automobile use. The revenue sources proposed to fund the plan were controversial, specifically the vehicle levy. The BC Automobile Association (BCAA) requested TransLink scrap the STP, and instead create a plan for the Lower Mainland that used "existing revenue sources or the federal government to cover the cost" (McLellan, 2000). One article claimed that "the billions of dollars TransLink is proposing to spend on transportation over the next six years will not rescue motorists from

mounting traffic congestion” – the plan projected congestion to decline only slightly because traffic volumes would continue to grow overall (Munro, 2000a). The media narrative tended to focus on suburban-based concerns, questions of equity and fairness associated with the cost sharing aspects of the STP, and often criticized the vehicle levy as an attack on automobile drivers (Bohn, 2000; Howell, 2000). According to Taylor (2009), nearly all transportation finance debates concern matters of fairness and equity, and that the way public officials think of equity in transportation finance is far different from the way that most social scientists or transportation analysts would define the term (p.22). One editorial in the *Vancouver Sun* speculated as to what motivated the questions of equity:

The faulty assumptions behind this question [why should people who drive to work have to pay for transit?] can be blamed partly on the media, which have tended to focus on the vehicle levy to the exclusion of everything else in the plan, and partly on TransLink, which, perhaps inadvertently, emphasized the transit improvements in store and underplayed the road system for which it also has responsibility. (The Vancouver Sun, 2000)

Overall, the media narrative suggests that the public reaction to the STP and the vehicle levy was mostly negative (Luba, 2000b), even though TransLink found that nearly 90% of survey respondents supported the \$1.4 billion dollar plan (Lindsay, 2000).

## **2.4. The Vehicle Levy**

TransLink’s STP acknowledged the high cost of transit and transportation, explaining that “transportation is expensive in social, financial, and environmental terms” (TransLink, 2000, p. 48). In addition to increasing transit fares, TransLink had been given the power to implement other possible revenue sources, which included tolling, a vehicle levy, parking taxes, and land-benefiting fees. The STP articulated that the construction of rail transit, the purchase of buses and the expansion of the MRN would require significant capital expenditures, and that plan implementation would be dependent upon new revenue from the sources set out in the legislation to help finance TransLink’s strategic direction. This direction also supported regional planning objectives:

The vehicle levy cannot be divorced from the circumstances that led to the establishment of TransLink and its overall strategic direction. The levy serves as a primary means to implement the Strategic Transportation Plan, which evolved, in large measure, from the values and desires expressed through broad-based community processes that started in 1990 through the Creating Our Future process. (TransLink, 2000d)

For TransLink, a key strategy for managing the transportation system involved sourcing additional revenue from those who used transportation. This embodied a user pay approach, which was included as part of a comprehensive TDM strategy. TDM would improve transportation system performance, specifically in urban areas (Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012; Litman, 2003; MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999). TDM revenue would provide TransLink with greater financial independence because most existing revenue sources (AirCare fees, BC Hydro levy, gasoline tax) provided little opportunity for adjustment and were mostly fixed amounts. Transit fares could be increased and adjusted by TransLink. Increasing property taxes was another option for the region, however this strategy did not align with TDM, and was not politically favored by TransLink's Board (TransLink, 2000). By implementing TDM instead of increasing taxes, transportation would be funded less by general taxpayer revenue and more so by the users of the system. As mentioned in Section 2.2., the user pay model was consulted on and supported during other regional planning processes, including *Transport 2021*.

TransLink had considered various models for applying the fee, including a flat charge, or relating vehicle fees to use, type, or weight (TransLink, 2000). In *Transport 2021* a method for applying the levy was not confirmed, but the policy objective suggested that costs based on ownership or operation should be applied: "Governments should institute methods of converting fixed costs of auto ownership/operation to variable costs, where practical (e.g. pay-as-you-drive insurance)" (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 25).

As will be explored in Chapter 5, the application of the vehicle levy was decided late in the fall of 2000. In November of 2000 TransLink's Board approved a vehicle levy option that would be:

Based on vehicle weight and insurance class, (as a proxy for pollution) with:  
a) a minimum charge of \$40 and a maximum charge of \$120 for

automobiles, as set out in the report dated October 18, 2000 titled "Strategic Transportation Plan Funding Options: Recommendation", and b) an average levy of \$190 for commercial vehicles. (TransLink, 2000c)

The levy intended to recognize and capture the financial impact that vehicles had on both road infrastructure and the environment. While a weight based vehicle levy could have been implemented more quickly than other tools, it would not have the same desired effect on demand management compared to tolling or parking charges (TransLink, 2000). Ken Cameron, the former manager of policy and planning at the GVRD explained:

It wasn't perfect that way because it didn't vary by the amount of use, and it was a bit blunt. It didn't have any impact on demand which is what we were looking for. The plan was a demand management - it was intended to encourage people to travel by efficient means and discourage them from traveling by inefficient means or times. The vehicle levy was what could have been done feasibly. (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016).

In November 2000, TransLink's Board voted 7-5 in favor of approving the vehicle levy. Similarly, in December 2000 the GVRD board voted 56-50 in support of the levy. However, according to the legislation it was the Lieutenant Governor in Council who had the regulatory power to require "the payment of project toll charges, user fees and motor vehicle charges and respecting their collection and enforcement" (Bill 36, 1998). Therefore, the power to implement a vehicle levy was outside the control of the region. As such, TransLink requested the provincial government sign an order-in-council to allow the enforcement and collection of the fee. In January 2001, the provincial government withdrew support for implementing the vehicle levy. Mike Farnworth (then the Minister of Economic Security and Social Development) announced that the provincial government would not make any legislative amendments to allow for the collection of the vehicle levy.

The provincial government's decision went against the shared policy objectives approved in the jointly created *Transport 2021*. Moreover, during the creation of the GVTAA, the province had signed an agreement to work collaboratively with the region to implement and enforce fees and other TransLink regulations:

The agreement between the GVRD and the Province for the implementation of the GVTA Act, signed by Chair Puil and Minister McPhail, recognizes the importance of this point [the importance of cost sharing agreements].

The agreement specifies: “The Transition Committee will recommend and the parties collaboratively implement an effective mechanism for enforcement of fees and other bylaws established and administered by the GVTA or on its behalf. (TransLink, 2000b)

The province’s decision to not support the implementation of TransLink’s vehicle levy contradicted these agreements, the shared goals expressed in *Transport 2021*, and the efforts to provide TransLink and region with “local control” over transportation (MacPhail, 1999b). As such, this decision reveals ongoing systemic and institutional problems. Understanding the provincial government’s decision to shift their approach is central to this analysis. The next chapter will examine literature to help provide context to understand this public policy decision.

## **Chapter 3. Literature Review**

This study examines public policy decision making, regional transportation finance, and specifically the non-implementation of TransLink's vehicle levy in 2001. To understand this public policy decision, I examine three groups of literature. First, I examine literature regarding public policy with specific focus on decision making. Secondly, I consider the complexity of intergovernmental cooperation in politically fragmented regions and how this relates to policy implementation. Finally, I review literature on transportation demand management and mobility management.

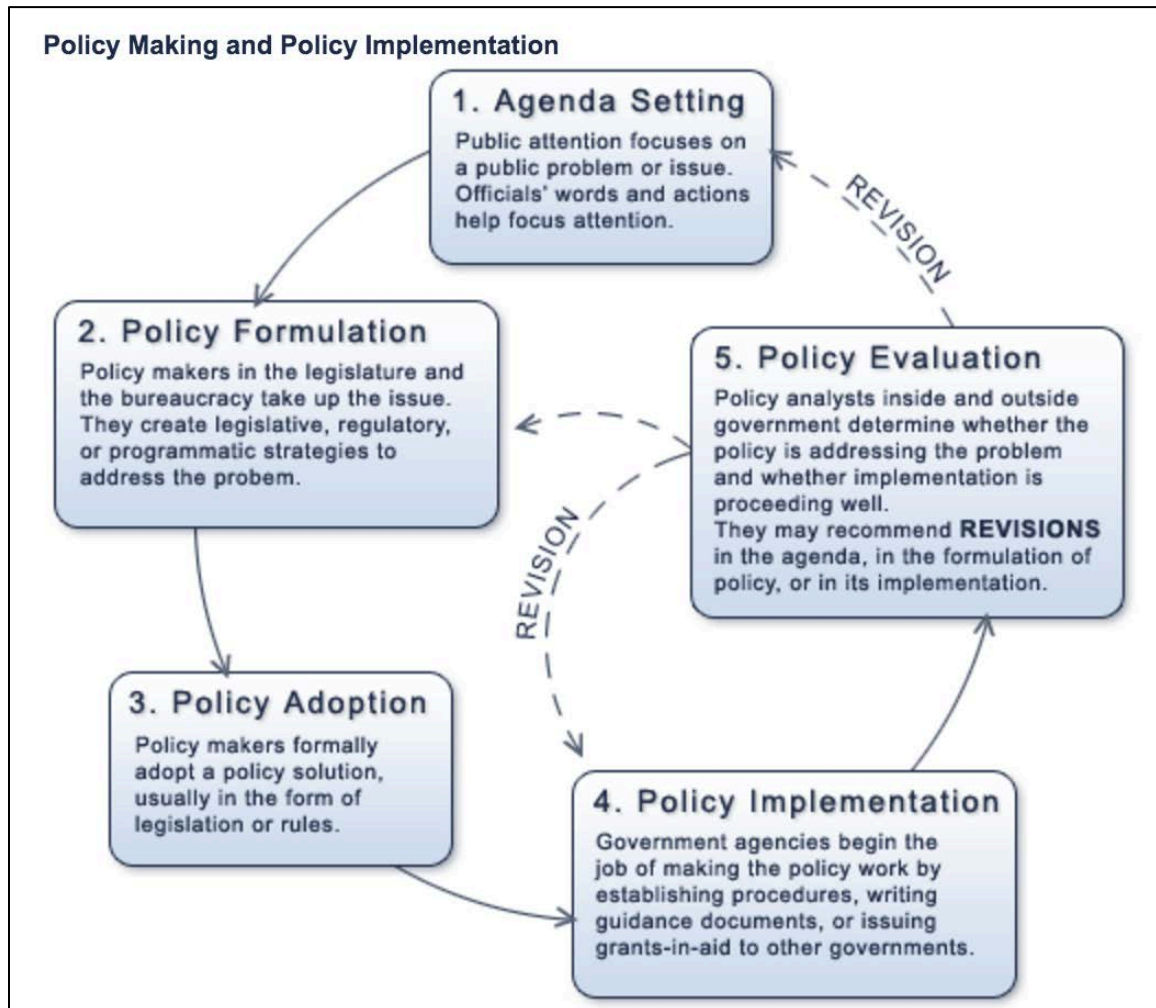
### **3.1. Public Policy Decision Making**

Public policy making can be characterized as a dynamic and complicated process that requires both the identification, consideration, and implementation of solutions that address a problem. Jenkins' (1978) description of public policy decision making acknowledges that a decision is not an independent event, but instead is embedded in a set of interrelated decisions made by political actors or groups. Other scholars tend to agree with the idea that "most policies involve a series of decisions that cumulatively contribute to an outcome" (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 6; also see Stone, 2002). The literature often describes public policy as a system, cycle, or a process, that present as "successive stages" from the articulation of a public problem to the adoption and implementation of expected solution (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 3).

As will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, the provincial government's 2001 vehicle levy decision was not an independent event, but a culmination of events, actions, and decisions. These events and actions include the development and adoption of regional plans; the renewed relationship between local, regional, and provincial governments; the creation of the GVTAA; changes in political leadership; TransLink's timing of policy implementation; and the influence of public, stakeholder, and media opinions. All of these examples make up a complex ecosystem that contribute to the provincial government's decision making outcome.

## The Policy Cycle

As shown in Figure 2, decision making (also referred to as policy adoption) has been identified as one step in a policy cycle. Other stages include agenda setting, formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Howlett et al., 2009).



**Figure 2. The Policy Making and Policy Implementation.**

Source: Texas Politics, n.d., Retrieved from [https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/archive/html/bur/features/0303\\_01/policy.html](https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/archive/html/bur/features/0303_01/policy.html)

In a policy cycle, the decision making stage is distinct from other parts of the process, such as agenda setting and policy implementation. The decision making part of the policy cycle is when a decision maker – or makers – select a course of action that will either support the status quo or alter it (Howlett et al., 2009; Wu et al., 2010). Therefore,



decision making is about choosing action or inaction, typically after considering various options (Howlett et al., 2009). Policy implementation typically follows the decision making stage. Implementation is the “administrative task of transferring policy commitments into practice” (Gerston, 2008, p. 113) and creating “rules of procedure to make a policy work” (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 160).

The case study of the vehicle is about both decision making and policy implementation. While TransLink and the GVRD did have the authority to enact the vehicle levy, once they made that decision, they did not have the capacity to implement it. The regulatory constraints of the GVTAA gave the Lieutenant Governor in Council the power to make regulation requiring the payment of the vehicle levy. This is not unusual, as “most often those who make a decision and those who are responsible for implementing [decisions] are not the same” (Gerston, 2008, p. 115). Hodge & Robinson (2001) explain that because cities and regions do not exist within Canada’s Constitutional agreements the region’s planning and decision making powers are “invented” by the province (p. 319), and therefore the province exercises ultimate decision making authority over the region and TransLink as well.

Agencies and bureaucracies, such as TransLink, “do not have their own sources of revenue or power and thus must be given the resources to carry out their implementation tasks” (Gerston, 2008, p. 118). The vehicle levy could have altered TransLink’s financial independence and ability to implement plans and achieve its strategic vision. Gerston (2008) explains that bureaucracies need resources and power made available to them by policy makers. TransLink was granted the power to adopt a vehicle levy, but not the capacity to implement it. Therefore, the provincial government’s decision was not about policy adoption per say, but instead was a decision about policy implementation on behalf of the region.

However, in a process of multi-level governance different bureaucratic agencies or levels of government each carry particular interests and ambitions that affect the policy implementation process (Howlett et al., 2009). As a result, a constitutional system of shared powers appears to discourage implementation (Gerston, 2008), which will be explored further in Section 3.2. Therefore, the aim of this study is twofold. This thesis

primarily focuses on the decision not to support the region's implementation of the vehicle levy, but also considers how the non-implementation of the vehicle levy represents the province's inconsistent approach to providing the region with local control over transportation, which was promised during the creation of the GVTAA (MacPhail, 1999b).

### **Types of Decisions**

Howlett et al. (2009) offer three ways to categorize different types of decisions. Decisions can either be negative, positive, or non-decisions. A positive decision is defined as a decision that changes or alters the status quo in order to address a policy problem, whereas negative and non-decisions preserve a condition, or set of conditions (Howlett et al., 2009). The difference between a negative and non-decisions is that with a negative decision "the policy process does not move onto the implementation stage but simply confirms that the status quo is appropriate and halts at that point" (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 142). A non-decision occurs when options are filtered out without specific deliberation, before the final decision is made. The provincial government's decision regarding the vehicle levy was a negative decision, because the provincial government made a deliberate choice to maintain the status quo. Moreover, the decision maintained the status quo by reinforcing the region's dependence upon the provincial government for financial policy and thus plan implementation.

The literature offers other frameworks for understanding policy decisions. Peters (2015) views a policy decision in relation to the type of problem the policy is trying to address. For example, he explains that there are technically and politically complex public policy issues, which make for difficult decision making processes (p. 24). Whereas simple policy issues are more predictable and manageable for decision makers. Peters (2015) also explains that sometimes governments are forced to make "tragic choices" which benefit one group in society, while depriving others to some degree. For example, as a transportation demand management policy the vehicle levy was politically challenging to implement because it was perceived to benefit public transportation users at the expense of automobile users (McLellan, 2000a; Munro, 2000; The Vancouver Sun, 2000). However, this perception failed to acknowledge the interconnectedness of mobility, pitting public transportation against automobile use, instead of seeing them as

part of a collective transportation system (Litman, 2003). Peters (2015) also explains that policy makers face “wicked problems” when they attempt to solve unstructured problems that are hard to define. There can also be “super wicked problems” when additional factors such as time and lack of central authority are present. Regional decision makers seeking to approve and implement the vehicle levy in the fall of 2000, such as George Puil who was Chair of TransLink at the time, faced “super wicked problems” because the timing of the policy occurred during the NDP’s party leadership race, and 6 months before the 2001 provincial election.

### **Decision Makers**

The literature regarding public policy decision making often emphasizes the role of a limited number of actors, specifically those holding positions in government, such as senior bureaucrats and elected officials. Wu et al., (2010) considers “officially sanctioned” elite members of government to be the main players in public policy decision making. This small group of high-level officials are “authorized to bind the government to a specific course of action, taking into account a range of political and technical considerations and analyses” (Wu et al., 2010, p. 50). Howlett et al. (2009) also describe policy decision makers as those who hold formal positions with government.

In BC, the provincial government is made up of elected members of the legislative assembly. These members have the right and ability to enact laws, and these laws can impact other levels of government. The majority of the decision making power is exercised by the provincial cabinet, but various ministries and cabinet committees help inform cabinet’s decisions (Bish, 1990). Major policy changes and new legislation are often prepared completely within a ministry (Bish, 1990). Ultimately, it is the provincial cabinet that will decide on whether or not to pursue changes before announcing them to the legislative body for discussion. Bish (1990) describes this process in more detail:

While the cabinet is legally subject to the legislature, party discipline creates a situation where the legislation sought by cabinet is approved provided that the government has a majority. Policy formation, bill drafting, and equally important orders-in-council or non-legislated regulations are the products of ministries and cabinet committees. Members of the legislature who are not cabinet ministers may help determine policy in party caucus and may influence cabinet-drafted legislation during amendment processes. (p. 10)

Policy making may be open to numerous actors but “when it comes time to decide on adopting a particular option, the relevant group of policy actors is almost invariably restricted to those with the authority to make binding public decisions” (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 140). Both non-state actors, such as the public and even elected officials from other levels of government, are typically excluded in the decision making process. However, the understanding of public policy decision making has evolved over time to acknowledge the role that other actors and activities play in influencing decisions (Howlett et al., 2009).

### **Influences on Decision Making**

While the responsibility over public policy decision making may belong to a few centralized positions in government, it does not necessarily mean that decisions are made without the consideration of stakeholders, other levels of government, or citizens. Elected officials function in a political environment; they are strongly influenced by political calculations, such as being responsive to citizens, or interest groups with specific policy goals (Bish, 1990, p. 10). All public policy decision making is conditional (Stone, 2002). Various non-elected actors often can – and do – directly and indirectly influence decision-makers through lobbying or other forms of activities. Elections also contribute to the decision making process, and place time constraints on the decision making. Re-election is often prioritized by politicians over “sound” policy decision making (Wu et al., 2010). As explained in Chapter 5, election timing influenced the vehicle levy decision. Sometimes when decision-makers run up against electoral timetables they “are forced to curtail their policy deliberations and adopt ill-considered or “quick” decisions” (Wu et al., 2010, p. 55).

Indeed, democracy complicates the policy cycle. Business and public interests do not always align in a democratic and capitalist society (Howlett et al., 2009). Decision makers thus not only need to make decisions but also need to learn to constantly balance interests of “the populace who have different and often contradictory interests” (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 58). Wu et al., (2010) further expand the list of actors involved in the decision making process:

There are also other actors involved in decision making, such as professional analysts, issue-specific experts, consultants, and lobbyists,

although their participation can best be categorized as indirect since their influence is felt indirectly through their affiliations or associations with which decision-makers rather than directly upon the adoptions of a policy choice. (p. 52)

Bish (1990) describes a policy making process that allows for citizens, opposition members and even non-ministerial members of the governing party exercise some constraint on government decisions through acts of dissent, though their influence is limited (p. 10). Both Wu et al. (2010) and Howlett et al. (2009) agree that understanding public policy also requires some understanding of institutional setting, and the other types of actors (public, stakeholder, media, interest groups, etc) that can influence decision makers. Often there are processes for the public to be consulted on policy matters. Other times the public express dissent through forms of activism and protest. The media can amplify certain opinions, which can in turn influence both public opinion and decision makers. According to Dearing & Rogers (1996) media coverage does affect the consideration, adoption, and implementation of a policy – specifically when politicians regard the media as a surrogate for public opinion.

Howlett et al. (2009) and Peters (2015) both suggest that the decision making process, institutional actors, structures, as well as the decision itself, all collectively influence what types of decisions get made. Policy decisions reflect both political will and how this “will” interacts “with the constraints generated by actors, structure, and ideas present at a given political and social conjuncture” (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 7). For example, “liberalism, capitalism and democracy form an important part of the meta-institutional and macro-ideational, or ‘political-economic’, context of decision making... and taken together, they greatly influence the actors and ideas on most policy-making processes” (Howlett et al., 2009, p. 58). The political-economic context is important to consider as part of this analysis, and the meta narrative regarding the vehicle levy is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Stone (2002) also concludes that decision makers are not spontaneous, but rather shaped by education and the general process of socialization (p. 25). Policy making would seem to require a high degree of knowledge of both issues, and processes in order to intervene effectively (Peters, 2015). However, “very few government officials possess the necessary training and experience to carry out proper

analysis” (Wu et al., 2010, p. 57). Howlett et al. (2009) also agree, explaining that “decision-makers themselves vary greatly in terms of back-ground, knowledge, and beliefs that affect how they interpret a problem and its potential solution” (p. 141).

In the case of the vehicle levy, the leaders at the regional level and provincial level came from various backgrounds both educationally and professionally. For example, George Puil, who was both a Vancouver City Councillor and the Chair of TransLink, and led the process for approving the vehicle levy, holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and Bachelor of Education from the University of British Columbia (UBC) (The University of British Columbia, n.d.). The City of Surrey’s Mayor who was against the vehicle levy studied commerce at the UBC, but did not graduate from university (Bailey, 2014). At the provincial level, Minister Joy MacPhail studied economics at the University of Western Ontario, and earned a degree in labour studies at the London School of Economics (“Joy MacPhail”, 2017). Former Premier Glen Clark holds a university degree in Resource Planning from Simon Fraser University, and a Master’s degree in Community and Regional Planning from the UBC (Mortgage Investment Association of British Columbia, n.d.). Comparably, former BC Liberal Party leader Gordon Campbell completed a degree in Urban Management and English at the University of Dartmouth, and completed a Masters of Business Administration at Simon Fraser University (“Gordon Campbell”, 2017). Moreover, during the time of the vehicle levy decision there was a leadership race for the provincial NDP underway, which resulted in cabinet positions turning over to different leaders. For example, those provincial leaders who had helped the region negotiate the creation of the GVTAA (such as Joy MacPhail) were no longer in Executive Council decision-makers. The new provincial leaders may have had a different knowledge of, and perspective on, regional transportation planning in the Lower Mainland.

As highlighted by Horak (2013), the varying ideological orientation of political leaders plays a significant role in determining how regional rescaling occurs. With new decision makers emerging at the regional and provincial level, the relationship between the region and the province would have changed, as would the approach to empowering the region with local control over transportation. As discussed in Chapter 5, the timing of the 2001 provincial election was a top priority for most provincially elected officials. Wu

et al. (2010) suggest that when policy decisions are determined by the politics of public affairs, as opposed to evaluating expert opinions for example, then policy proposals with true potential in achieving policy goals often get overlooked by decision-makers.

In summary, decision makers have to balance many conflicting interests in a democratic society. Many elected officials do not have the expertise or understanding of how to steer a public policy process. Many policy problems can be technically and politically complex, with multiple vague and amorphous solutions to consider. Both institutional structures and election timing impose limits on policy adoption and implementation. With all things considered, it is understandable why decision makers might produce less than ideal public policy solutions. The next section of literature will focus on institutional and structural considerations of policy making, specifically focusing on the intergovernmental complexity of regional governance.

## **3.2. Intergovernmental Complexity of Multi-Level Governance**

### **Decision Making Hierarchy in Multi-Level Governance**

The literature on multi-level governance that discusses intergovernmental relations articulates that there is a hierarchy of power between local, regional, provincial and federal governments. As set out by the Canadian Constitution, local government, regional districts and special purpose governments are to be administrative extensions of the provincial government, and therefore operate under provincial rule (Hodge & Robinson, 2001; Horak, 2013). Howlett et al. (2009) describe the multi-level system of government as one where regional districts and municipalities owe their existence to the provincial government. Tindal & Tindal (2004) also agree that local forms of government depend on provincial government for everything including their form, function and finances. Similarly, Gerston (2008) explains that bureaucracies do not have their own sources of revenue, or power, and therefore rely on policy makers to carry out policy implementation. Hodge & Robinson (2001) also acknowledge that the province gets to specify the type and extent of powers and responsibilities it is willing to delegate to local and regional government, or special purpose agencies such as TransLink, to enable them to plan and govern (p. 319).

Under this multi-level system of government, municipalities and regional districts provide what Bish (1990) considers to be a “dual role”. These organizations undertake functions as dictated by the province, but also perform functions decided upon by locally elected officials. Bish (1990) explains that this is often a source of conflict because both local and provincial forms of government tend to see their role as the most important (p. 5). Bish (1990) also explains that this tension can lead to the provincial government changing laws to put itself in a superior legal – or political – position.

Based upon their subordinate position to both the provincial and federal government, the jurisdiction and resources of municipalities and regions are constrained (Tindal & Tindal, 2004). Ultimately, the authority over decisions is centralized within the provincial cabinet and the elected officials who hold cabinet positions. As such, lower levels of government are interdependent and “increasingly entangled with the senior levels of government” (Tindal & Tindal, 2004, p. 181). As highlighted in Chapter 2, historically there has been a tendency for the provincial government to impose control over the GVRD, often by changing regional planning legislation (Hodge & Robinson, 2001, p. 319).

While this overtly hierarchical relationship was to be changed by the creation of the GVTAA, and local control over transportation was to be granted to the region, the 2001 vehicle levy decision further demonstrates the ongoing institutional struggle between the region and the province. Even with the GVTAA, TransLink and the region were constrained by a lack of regulatory capacity to implement the vehicle levy. The province and the region had both agreed upon the importance of local control and shared a strategy to secure TransLink with regulatory and fiscal resources (MacPhail, 1998b). New provincial legislation, or major changes in policy, required Cabinet approval. According to per Part 5, Section 46(e) of the GVTAA, the Lieutenant Governor in Council was responsible for making regulation to enforce collection of TransLink’s vehicle levy (Bill 36, 1998) and therefore Cabinet was required to sign off on the vehicle levy’s implementation as an order-in-council. As explained in Chapter 5, this struggle resulted in “political decision making” instead of “regional transportation decision making” (Campbell, 1998).



## **Provincial Downloading and Disentanglement**

Tindal & Tindal (2004) suggest that the structure of local government, special purpose bodies, and bodies operating at the regional level, act as a “form of decentralized provincial administration” (p. 4). However, when it comes to decision making, the provincial government has considerable freedom to affect local governments and regional districts (Bish, 1990). The province establishes legislation for lower levels of government to organize, and dictates the roles and activities they must perform. Bish (1990) explains that “most of the rules for enabling local self-government are set forth in the Municipal Act, or other acts administered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Recreation, and Culture” (p. 9). Tindal & Tindal (2004) expand on the notion of provincial control by suggesting that in Canada there has been a pattern of increasing provincial intervention influencing provincial-local relations.

Across Canada in the 1990s, provincial government “emerged as the country’s main urban policy makers” (Sancton, 1992, p. 283). Wichern (2004) provides some context to understand the emergence of provincial intervention in municipal issues during the 1990s, explaining that “there was continued downloading and devolution of programs and funding responsibilities from Ottawa [the federal government] to provincial governments, and from provincial governments to municipal governments and local or regional service providers” (p. 50). Tindal & Tindal (2004) add that provinces faced fiscal limitations as a result of federal cuts, which created the cost cutting conditions for “reducing the duplication and overlap in provincial and municipal service delivery” (p. 182). Tindal & Tindal (2004) explain that these conditions lead to a number of “provincial initiatives to reallocate and disentangle responsibilities” (p. 182), such as the disentanglement of transportation planning and service provision with the creation of TransLink.

In BC the “approach to local government reform has been very pragmatic and directed to specific problems as perceived by the provincial government” (Tindal & Tindal, 2004, p. 86). Arguably, disentangling regional transportation was also a response to the increased demand for regional policy solutions. The late 1980s and early 1990s brought forward concerns that were inherently embedded in a regional context, such as growth management, air quality, and transportation. These issues required either a

consolidation of government and functions at a regional level, or the creation of special purpose regional organizations that emphasized decentralized decision making and self-governance (Fieock, 2004). As such, the provincial government “strengthened the functions of the GVRD by expanding its boundaries to include several urbanizing municipalities and by giving it control over a new regional transit and transportation authority” (Wichern, 2004, p. 52). The restructuring process could help address problems by enhancing regional governance and securing new funding opportunities for plan implementation, and in turn reducing the region’s dependence upon the provincial government for both finances and policymaking.

The constitutional conditions described above ensured that any process of local or regional reorganization be managed by the provincial government (Nelles, 2012). The provincial government decentralized transportation decision making to the regional level with the approval of the GVTAA. This move towards disentangling transit and transportation policy would allow decision makers closest to the problems to “weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various options and make their choices accordingly” (Bish, 1990, p. 147).

Tindal & Tindal (2004) list some advantages of disentangling provincial and local responsibilities, which include simplified arrangements, less regulation and overlap with senior levels of government, increased local autonomy with an implied sense of clearly assigned services, and access to revenue (p. 189). They also note that regional governments are typically interested in taking on more responsibilities and service provision – specifically “if commensurate financial resources are also provided” (Tindal & Tindal, 2004, p. 193). However, the disentanglement process can hinder conditions for policymaking, because “disagreement between different levels of government leads to contradictory policies that are mutually destructive” (Wu et al., 2010, p. 2; also see Howlett et al., 2009). During or proceeding a restructuring processes, policymaking becomes increasingly challenging in a constitutional system of shared powers (Greston, 2008).

### **The Role of Neoliberal Ideology in Restructuring Efforts**

The process of disentanglement, downloading, or restructuring is often assumed

to be associated with the rise of neoliberal ideology that “emphasizes state support for the unfettered operation of capitalism” (Horak, 2013, p. 313), privatization, fiscal austerity and deregulation. Tindal & Tindal (2004) believe that this specific provincial-regional disentanglement process was “driven and shaped by the deficit and debt reduction measures that preoccupied the senior levels of government in the 1990s” (p. 195). At the time “there was a lot of suspicion that [the creation of TransLink] was just a NDP plot to load more financial burden onto the municipalities and local tax payers” (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016). Wichern (2004) suggests that indeed the GVTA legislation did not adequately empower the region. Instead, the restructuring process was a means to download responsibilities and costs to local government and to “force more of the costs of services onto local property taxes” (Wichern, 2004, p. 51).

According to Horak (2013) regional restructuring and rescaling can be driven by either political motivations or neoliberal ideology, and that “the varying ideological orientations of political leaders play a significant role in determining which issues spur rescaling responses” (p. 324). Neoliberal ideology was not likely the primary reason why the provincial government restructured regional transportation in the Lower Mainland, though political-economic factors may have influenced the province’s motivations. During the second reading of Bill 36 (GVTA) the provincial government cited the need to “deal with the problems of traffic congestion and air pollution and to keep pace with the transit service demands of Greater Vancouver's rapidly expanding population” (MacPhail, 1998b). Moreover, as explained by the Honorable Minister Joy MacPhail during the second reading of Bill 36:

The province will continue to pay 100 percent of the debt servicing on SkyTrain guideway and West Coast Express infrastructure. I also want to reiterate that the province will continue to take full responsibility for the provincial highway network and will assume a substantial share of the cost of the new rapid transit project, and we will negotiate cost-sharing arrangements with the GVTA for other major new or replacement transportation infrastructure projects. In other words, the province retains the lion's share of debt -- about \$1 billion worth; the new authority, on the other hand, gains 100 percent effective control and the funding powers it needs to fulfil its responsibility, including tax points transferred from the province. (MacPhail, 1998b)

These commitments suggest that the creation of TransLink was not motivated by neoliberal ideology, but instead motivated by the shared policy objectives of the province and the GVRD. However, by shifting the source of transportation funding from consolidated general tax revenue to a user pay system, there would be an increased financial burden on some individuals. This shift could suggest an underlying neoliberal ideology. The literature on transportation demand management is discussed in the following section.

As discussed in Chapter 5 and 6, the non-implementation of the vehicle levy reveals structural and intuitional problems of the GVTAA, and that the restructuring process that did not go far enough to provide the region with the powers promised. As such, the adoption of Bill 36 and the creation of the GVTAA resulted in more downloading and less disentangling, with the overall arrangement being just as entangled as it was before (Tindal & Tindal 2004).

### **3.3. Transportation Demand Management**

#### **Growing Support for Transportation Alternatives**

Public concerns regarding climate change, sustainability, congestion, and air quality have grown in recent decades (Richter et al., 2009) and in response there has been a growing movement of support for sustainable transport, and increased demand for investment in a transportation options alternative to the automobile. Other issues such as increased congestion, noise, safety, land use, as well as time management and socio-economic impacts have drawn attention to sustainable and efficient transportation practices (MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999 & Richter et al., 2009). According to Famoso & Lanafame (2013) sustainable transport are modes of transportation that are in line with protecting the environment and reducing the negative social and economic effects of mobility.

In Vancouver, resistance to traditional car oriented planning can be traced back to the widespread public resistance to the proposed freeway project in the 1960s (Senft, 2009). Growing public concern over air quality, growth, and congestion in the 1990s brought new focus and attention to sustainable transportation and transportation policy

solutions. As such, these ideas were reflected in the strategies of regional plans (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994).

Senft (2009) suggests that increased rates of congestion have helped shift the transportation planning paradigm, noting that congestions can be a catalyst for sustainable transportation. However, this transition is not always easy because traditional transportation planning has relied on increasing automobile capacity to relieve congestion:

Congestion is traditionally addressed through capacity expansion, which leads to additional low-density development, limiting the effectiveness of transit and the attractiveness of other transportation alternatives. This approach ultimately leads to an auto-dependent transportation system in which travel distance and frequency increases, eventually leading to more congestion. In this context, traffic congestion feeds the “spiral of sprawl”, and reinforces and expand the auto-oriented status quo (Senft, 2009, p. 95).

According to the literature, implementing TDM and MM measures improve transportation conditions, specifically in urban areas (Kepaptsoglou et al. 2012; Litman, 2003; MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999). These policies typically seek the reduction of automobile use, and encourage a shift to public and active transportation (Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012) which typically “can benefit everybody... including people who must drive” (Litman, 2003, p. 1). For example, Litman (2003) explains that TDM is often more likely to reduce congestion than adding new capacity for roadway expansion. Litman (2003) concludes that:

Mobility management can provide multiple benefits including congestion reduction, road and parking facility cost savings, consumer savings, improved consumer choice, road safety, environmental quality, community liveability, efficient land use, and equity. Mobility management can provide significant savings to consumers and society by reducing and deferring roadway capacity expansion costs. (p. 6)

Moreover, the literature suggests that increasing road capacity is not an effective policy solution for managing congestion, nor is it particularly sustainable. Famoso & Lanafame (2013) explain that “the growth trends of mobility and the increasing transportation demand cannot be satisfied only by a physical expansion of the transport networks” (p. 164).

Finally, the literature also concludes that “the total costs of increased automobile dependency [is] far higher than the total costs of providing good public transit services” (Litman, 2003, p. 1) because of externalities, such as pollution or health costs, that aren’t included up front. As such, investment in alternative modes of transportation are more cost effective than road and parking investments overall. The literature suggests that a primary goal of TDM is to produce cost savings (Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012; Majumdar & Len, 2013; MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999) which can in turn allow for fiscal austerity. Other goals, such as efficiency, cooperation, accessibility, and sustainability are also central to TDM and MM strategies (Famoso & Lanafame, 2013; Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012; Litman, 2003; MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999).

### **Transportation Demand Management**

In response to growing social, economic and environmental concerns there have been various policy measures and programs developed to create a more functional and sustainable system. One approach has been to reduce the demand for transportation, which is commonly known as “transportation demand management” (TDM) or “mobility management” (MM). As a broad policy effort TDM “tries to attain a balance through assessment of the transportation needs of the community, planning and coordinating transportation with infrastructure development, and evaluation of land-use policies” (Majumdar & Len, 2013, p. 281). Famoso & Lanafame (2013) define mobility management as “enhancing efficient transport measures like walking, cycling and public transport with the aim to achieve the best transportation planning objectives” (p. 166).

Beyond influencing land use, the GVRD expressed the desire to influence and reshape the demand for travel in plans such as *Transport 2021*, and TransLink’s STP. In *Transport 2021* TDM is described as:

A variety of techniques to change the behaviour of travellers in order to make better use of the existing transport system. It encourages off-peak travel and discourages single-occupant vehicles, incorporating measures such as tolls, gas taxes and parking management. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. v)

Litman (2003) uses four broad categories for understanding TDM and MM strategies: improving transit options, providing incentives to reduce automobile use, parking and

land use management, programs and policy reforms. For example, congestion pricing, distance-based pricing, pay-as-you-drive insurance, and vehicle or fuel taxes would be examples of TDM that is intended to reduce automobile use by incentivising behaviour change. Litman (2003) also offers some other examples of TDM, such as “pedestrianized streets, evening road closures, widened and attractive newly-paved walkways, tree-planting for shade, more parking restrictions, [and] transit improvements” while Kepaptsoglou et al., (2012) provide other examples, including advertising campaigns for sustainable transportation and travel awareness, information systems aiding travelers in planning their trips, measures that promote the use of public transportation, mobility education of travelers, and the like” (p. 239). Often the goal of these strategies is to “influence the pre-trip mode choice” (MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999, p. 10).

### **Implementation**

In order to be effective, TDM should be implemented as part of a toolbox of strategies, not as ad hoc initiatives. This means strategy and timing are important for the implementation of TDM. Mobility management and active transportation management fall within TDM’s larger set of goals and tools for shifting mobility habits and transportation choice to create a more balanced transportation system. Litman (2003) explains that “mobility management strategies can have cumulative and synergetic impacts (their total impacts are greater than the sum of their individual impacts), so it is important to evaluate a mobility management program as a package, rather than as individual strategies” (p. 3).

A motor vehicle charge was included as one of several TDM strategies proposed in TransLink’s STP, with the intended goal of helping manage demand. As highlighted by the STP the vehicle levy would play a dual role by also generating revenue:

Pricing use of the transportation system in a way that will limit the growth in single occupant vehicle travel is a powerful tool for overall management of the transportation system. It also provides revenue for the development and operation of the system. (TransLink, 2000, p. 33)

Litman (2003) confirms that a vehicle levy, road pricing, or congestion pricing would typically be implemented to generate revenue and manage congestion (p. 18). The

STP's demand management strategy also included parking management and expanding alternative modes of transportation (TransLink, 2000).

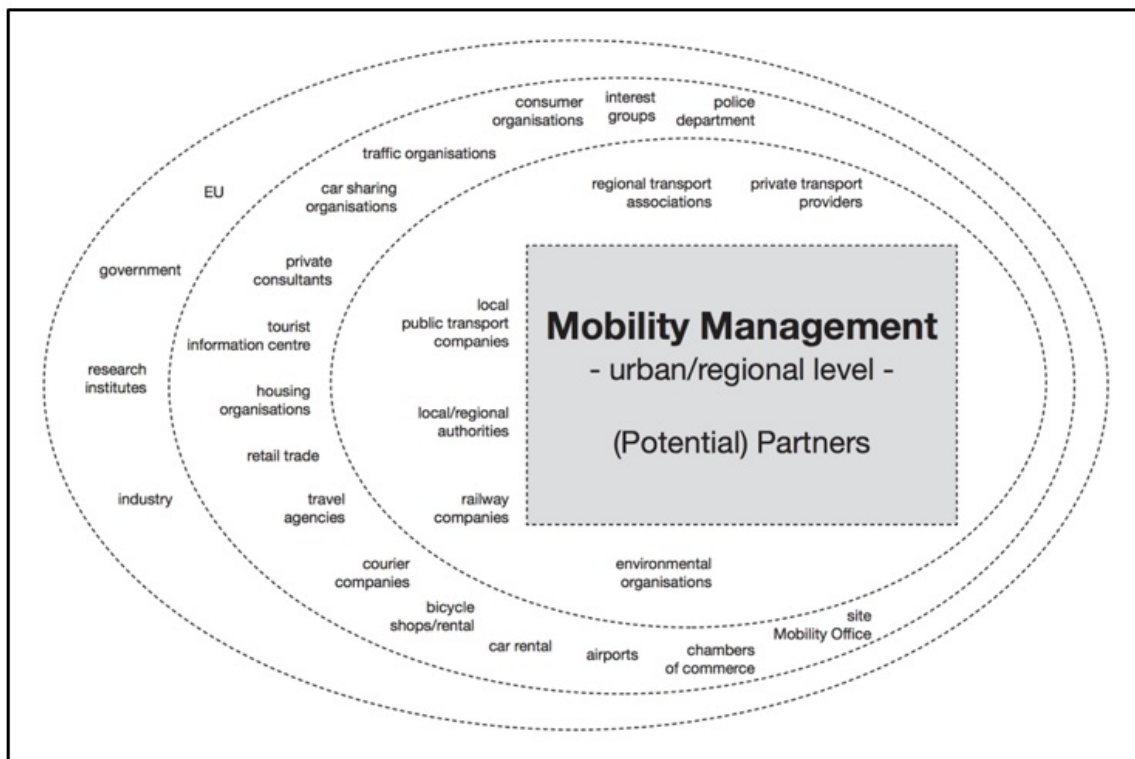
It is important to highlight that the literature distinguishes a difference between “hard” and “soft” TDM measures. According to MOMENTUM/MOSAIC (1999) hard measures are infrastructure, laws, regulations, tax and pricing schemes and are often mandatory to the user, whereas “soft” measures emphasize organization, service, and information. Richter et al., (2009) offer a similar definition of “hard” measures, suggesting that anything related to increased cost for car use, such as congestion charging or a vehicle levy, would fall into that category. Mobility management consists of mostly soft measures that primarily focusing on shifting behaviors instead of building infrastructure. These policies are “largely based on information, communication and organizational activities and other sustainable practices, which can enhance the performance of transportation systems and infrastructures, without the need for extensive infrastructure investments” (Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012, p. 239).

TDM and MM measures are often referred to as “carrots and sticks” (Litman, 2003). Similarly, “pull policies encourage the use of non-car modes by making them attractive to car users... and push policies are those that discourage car usage by making it less attractive” (Habibian & Kermanshah, 2013 p 230). The most effective programs usually simultaneously provide both carrots and sticks that will pull individuals to use alternative modes, and push them away from driving (Litman, 2003). Otherwise the “stick” measures will be perceived as limiting personal freedoms.

TDM measures “often meet public disapproval, are politically infeasible, and may alone be insufficient” (Richter et al., 2009, p. 1). This is why cooperation, collaboration, and strong leadership are important aspects of planning and implementing TDM strategies (Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012). In order for the implementation of TDM to be successful, the “creation of alliances is crucial” (MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999, p. 44). The ecosystem of potential partners at an urban/regional level is depicted in figure 3 below. These partners can offer support, insight, and raise awareness about the values of TDM and MM. “The most likely promoters are public bodies, particularly local/regional or central government, but also transport providers such as public transport companies



which are trying to establish themselves as companies providing services for all mobility needs” (MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999, p. 46). Even though organizations such a Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST) supported the levy because it aligned with their organizational mandate to create safe, environmentally sound, efficient transit system (The Province, 2000), there is no evidence of an alliance or coalition forming in support of TransLink’s vehicle levy. There is more evidence to suggest an anti-vehicle levy alliance between organizations such as BC Automobile Association, Insurance Corporation of BC, BC Truckers Association, the BC Taxpayers Federation, and Mayors from South of Fraser River (Richmond, Langley, Surrey) (Luba, 2000c; McInnes, 2000; Munro, 2000a; Munro, 2000d; The Province, 2000).



**Figure 3. Urban/Regional Ecosystem of Potential Mobility Management Partners.**

Source: MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999.

### **TransLink’s Approach to TDM**

*Transport 2021* proposed a package of mutually supportive measures including both “sticks” and “carrots” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. v). It was

suggested that such a package could decrease rush hour vehicle trips by 10% and increase transit ridership some 25% compared with projected trends for the year 2021 (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1999). A motor vehicle charge was included in *Transport 2021's* long-range plan, and was presented as part of a package of mutually supportive measures.

However, as will be explained in Section 5.1.2, TransLink's approach to implementing a vehicle charge changed after *Transport 2021* and TransLink's STP had been adopted. TransLink's shift to applying a vehicle levy contradicts the best practices laid out in the literature. As explained by Kitchen & Slack (2016):

Vehicle levies are fixed charges on vehicle ownership that do not vary with usage, and could be based on features such as age and engine size – older and larger vehicles generally contribute more to pollution – or emissions, with low emission vehicles charged less than high-emission vehicles. Location could also be a factor (cars in cities add more to pollution and to congestion) or axle weight (heavier vehicles do more damage to roads and require more costly roads to be built). A levy could be limited to residents living in areas that are well served by public transit. Such a levy might increase the incentive to use transit, but it would have a narrower base. (pp. 18-19)

TransLink's STP acknowledged “tolls and parking charges are superior to annual charges” because the best sources of revenue are those directly associated with use of the transportation system, rather than charges that are separated in time (annual charges) (TransLink, 2000, p. 33).

A vehicle levy is a “crude instrument for handling traffic congestion” because it does not vary with time of use, traffic volume, distance travelled, or the area in which vehicles travel (Kitchen & Slack, 2016, pp. 19). Distance based insurance was highlighted as part of *Transport 2021's* road pricing strategy had the potential to influence mode choice, whereas implementing an annual fee would not have the same intended effect on mode choice. The literature confirms that a vehicle levy would have little impact on vehicle ownership or usage:

A modest levy has little if any effect on ownership, and virtually none on usage. A fee based on fuel efficiency might have some influence on choice of vehicle type as would an *ad valorem* [in proportion to the value] fee

based on vehicle purchase cost. Nevertheless, small, fixed levies do not modify travel behaviour because they are unrelated to usage. (Kitchen & Slack, 2016, pp. 19)

The opinion research and consultation conducted by TransLink and the region also “revealed a public preference for the implementation of system tolling over a flat vehicle charge” (TransLink, 2000, p. 33). The literature suggests that when a vehicle levy is dedicated to funding roads and transit implementation is more likely to be accepted by the public compared to other new taxes or fees (Kitchen & Slack, 2016). However, many people in the region perceived the vehicle levy proposal to be an attack on automobile ownership (The Vancouver Sun, 2000).

The next chapter will provide an overview of the methods used to gather and interpret information for analysis. By performing qualitative analysis grounded in the literature reviewed above, the objective is to understand a series of collective actions that led to the provincial government’s final decision not to implement the vehicle levy.

## Chapter 4. Methodology

The focus of this thesis has been to investigate and understand a specific transportation policy decision, while considering what influences led to the non-implementation of TransLink's vehicle levy in 2001. The methods of investigation are qualitative in nature, and include document and content review, and in-depth interviews with key informants. The findings of this thesis are largely based on the research interviews conducted with nine former local, regional, and provincial employees and elected officials involved with regional transportation planning discussions, the analysis of local media stories, planning reports, official meeting minutes, and other documents. Using a mixed-methods process to combine different data sources has helped validate the research findings by triangulating, crosschecking, and comparing information sources throughout the analysis.

The research has focused on a timeframe of 1997 to 2001. The document collections process primarily focused on gathering documents from this period, and the timeframe has been used for the purpose of selecting interview participants. This timeframe marks the creation of GVTA Act (1997) and the provincial government's decision about the vehicle levy (2001). The timeframe helps to focus conclusions by paying specific attention to the methods, events, and actors engaged with the decision making process, leading up to the provincial government's vehicle levy decision made in January 2001. However, the thesis also references information from before 1997, though primarily for providing additional context.

For this thesis, concepts from the interview analysis were cross-analyzed against the findings from the document and content review phase. The three broad categories that emerged from the methodological process were technical, organizational, and political decision making influences, which is in line with what Wu et al., (2010) describe as the tripod of public policy decision making considerations (p. 52). For example, technical complexity involves a situation when "the underlying causal processes in the problem are not understood fully, or they involve a number of interactions of individual and social factors" (Peters, 2015, p. 23). Political complexity involves conflicting interests and ideas regarding both policy problems and solutions. Organizational complexity refers to the structure of institutions, and in this case government institutions.

## 4.1. Document and Content Review

Gathering documents was the first step in data collection process. The document and content review has provided a foundation and understanding of the major events and key actors involved with the vehicle levy decision. Media content, public planning documents, and reports that discuss the vehicle levy have been reviewed. All documents were collected from publicly available sources. Theoretical saturation was applied as a selection parameter. In qualitative data collection theoretical saturation means that sampling and analysis concludes once clear themes emerge, and once new information had stopped being uncovered (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2010). The following documents were reviewed and analyzed as part of the research:

**Table 2. Documents Reviewed**

Document	Type of Document	Year Published
Select Council meeting minutes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrey</li> <li>• Langley City</li> <li>• Richmond</li> <li>• Vancouver</li> <li>• Burnaby</li> </ul>	Local	1997, 1999, 2000
GVRD Meeting Minutes	Regional	1999, 2000
GVRD Consultation and Survey Documents	Regional	1993, 1994, 1995
Transport 2021 Plan	Regional	1993
Livable Region Strategic Plan	Regional	1995
TransLink Meeting Minutes and Reports	TransLink	1999, 2000, 2001
TransLink 2000-2005 STP	TransLink	2000
BC Legislative Assembly Minute Records	Provincial	1997, 1998, 2001
GVRD Special Reports (Council of Council) on Vehicle Levy	Regional	2000
TransLink Annual Budget	TransLink	1999-2002
Auditor General Reports	Provincial	2000, 2001
Articles related to “vehicle levy” and “TransLink STP”	Media	1997-2001

Articles related to “NDP government”, “NDP scandals”, and “NDP leadership race”	Media	1993-2001
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To interpret and analyze the documents, a systematic approach was taken to reveal patterns and themes to build a foundation of knowledge about what influenced the provincial government’s decision. The document’s content has revealed themes that have been grouped into different categories, through constant comparing of observations during the process of examination. Therefore, data was collected and analyzed simultaneously. Babbie & Benaquisto (2010) describe this approach as including three stages:

- open coding, when labelling of concepts and categories occurs;
- axial coding, where specific concepts and categories are refined and explored more in depth; and
- selective coding, where categories are integrated and relationships among a few particular categories to become the focus of analysis.

Opening coding has been used to review and process raw qualitative data, which created many initial codes. The initial codes have been categorized by creating a word indicator that summarizes the spirit of the observation. For example, “policy timing” was a category for any reference that mentioned the timing of the vehicle levy. Throughout the analysis process each code was labelled and provided a description of qualification or exclusion parameters. Axial coding, followed by selective coding, was used to reassemble these initial concepts into larger categories that put similar events, actions, and ideas together (Babbie & Benaquisto, 2010). These classified groups were then defined by common characteristics and related meaning, for example codes such as “BCTA” and “BCAA” were later be recoded into “automobile groups”. The broadest classified groups created were “technical”, “organizational” and “political”. Memos were also used throughout this process to keep track of various insights, ideas, and questions about the themes and potential relationships between the themes. Throughout this process an excel spreadsheet was used to classify, sort, and arrange information, establish patterns, interpret text, and cross-examine information.

### **4.1.1. Media Articles**

Examining newspaper articles and editorial commentary on the vehicle levy has provided a better understanding of the information that was primarily available to the public, and the overall discourse regarding the vehicle levy. Moreover, these documents have been used to identify a list of key people involved in the decision making process, and key events that led up to the final decision.

Media articles were gathered using the BC Newspaper Index (ProQuest) database. ProQuest was selected as the primary database for media scans because the scope of content in this database is focused primarily on BC political, social, and economic issues. The LexisNexis database, which has a broader international and American focus, was also used to search for additional material.

A search was conducted using these two databases, using the term “vehicle levy” and the timeframe January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999 – December 31, 2001. This generated 405 articles, reports, and other types of documents demonstrated in. Extending the timeframe by two years to December 31, 2003, while using the same search term, only generated an additional 70 results. Any information published after January 2001 might provide interesting insight into the impact of the vehicle levy decision, but was not included as part of the analysis. Information, reports, and documents released after January 2001 are outside the scope of analysis because the primary goal of the study is to focus on the variables that effected the provincial government’s decision in January 2001. A “vehicle levy” media scan used the years 1999 to 2001, whereas media scans for other supplementary topics such as “TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan” and “NDP scandal” used customized timeframes for analysis.

### **4.1.2. Reports and Planning Documents**

Reviewing various reports, meeting minutes, and planning documents containing information describing and/or discussing the vehicle levy has been central to the analysis. First, these documents have led to an understanding of the technical aspects of the vehicle levy, which created policy implementation challenges. Second, these documents provided valuable information about the working relationship between various levels of government, and also the engagement between government and the

public. These documents were also used to identify a list of potential interview candidates. A list summarizing the documents analyzed has been included above in Table 2.

Regional documents were gathered from two sources. TransLink's Online Library was used for gathering documents using similar search terms and timeframe for collecting media articles. The online library was also used to gather TransLink's meeting minutes, special reports, budgets, and planning documents. Documents regarding the GVRD, such as meeting minutes, consultation reports, and planning documents were collected either online, or in person at Metro Vancouver's Harry Lash Library. Metro Vancouver's Harry Lash Library also provided access to GVRD board meeting minutes, GVRD planning documents.

Provincial documents were gathered online through the BC Legislative Assembly, and by using other online search engines. The methodology initially included an Freedom of Information request for provincial communication documents that referenced the vehicle levy. However, since the provincial government's decision was made in cabinet nearly twenty years ago, other avenues and mechanisms for document collection were prioritized. Auditor General Reports were reviewed to provide additional information. However, insight into the actual decision made by the Provincial Cabinet is mostly dependent upon information provided by interview participants.

## **4.2. Qualitative In-Depth Interviews**

The second phase of data collection consisted of nine in-depth interviews, held with former municipal, regional and provincial planners and politicians. Table 3 below provides a list of the study's interview participants. Conducting interviews has served the analysis by providing additional insight into the decision making process. Appendix B provides a list of some guiding interview questions used to open a discussion with participants. The questions were structured around theoretical concepts identified in the literature review, and base on the information collected during the first phase of document analysis.



As explained by Davidson (2009), transcription involves translating sound recordings to text. All interviews were recorded and then transferred onto an encrypted USB. Once transcribed, the interviews were stored on the encrypted USB, and the audio data was securely deleted. All transcripts will be kept for two years and then securely deleted. Notes were made during each interview to assist in the process of transcription. “Because it is impossible to record all features of talk and interaction from recordings, all transcripts are selective in one way or another” (Davidson, 2009, p. 38), and as such the notes also were used to capture observed non-verbal information. All notes were destroyed after the interviews were transcribed.

Once transcribed, interview data was read over before being coded, classified and categorized. From here, concepts from multiple interviews were further distilled into overlapping themes. Initial themes were noted in the document, and afterward these ideas were regrouped into concepts. The process involved regrouping ideas into new categories, the end result being slightly broader categories that represent similar concepts. These concepts were then linked back to the themes generated through document analysis and the literature review. The analysis of interview transcriptions was facilitated by the use of excel spreadsheets, which was used to help code and group specific concepts.

The information gathered from qualitative interviews has been used to supplement the information gathered from the document and media content review. The interview data has also been used to help validate, dismiss, or expand on the ideas explored in the literature review, and the knowledge generated through the document and content analysis.

#### **4.2.1 Research Participants**

The document and media content review was used to create a list of potential interview participants. Prospective participants included former staff, planners and elected officials involved with regional transportation governance during 1997-2001. Potential interview candidates were contacted first by e-mail, then by phone. Each candidate was provided information about the intent of study, followed by an invitation to

participate. Of all the interview candidates contacted only two declined to participate, and one could not be reached. All interview participants were provided the option to have their identity remain anonymous, though none chose to do so.

A list of interview participants is provided in Table 3. Former elected provincial politicians were prioritized and contacted first because of their proximity to the vehicle levy decision. Regional staff, planners, and former politicians also provided critical information about the vehicle levy and its significance to the region, as well as their opinions on what might have influenced provincial decision makers.

**Table 3. Study Interview Participants**

<b>Interview Participant</b>	<b>Position Held</b>	<b>Perspective</b>
Glen Clark	MLA; Premier (resigned 1999)	Provincial
Joy MacPhail	MLA; Minister of Transportation (resigned 1999)	Provincial
Mike Farnworth	MLA; Minister Social Development and Economic Security (2001)	Provincial
Pat Jacobsen	CEO of TransLink (2001)	Post-decision
Gordon Price	Vancouver City Councillor, TransLink Board of Directors	Local / Regional
Ken Cameron	Manager of the GVRD Policy and Planning Department	Regional
Bob Paddon	GVRD - Manager of Communications and Education	Regional
Marvin Shaffer	GVRD Negotiator for GVTAA Legislation	Regional
Doug McCallum	Mayor of Surrey, GVRD & TransLink Director	Local

In summary, the methodological approach supports the research by gathering different – yet similar – information from multiple sources in order to triangulate and legitimize the findings. By combining the information from the document and content review, the qualitative interviews, and the literature review, the objective is to provide an overall account of what influenced the provincial government’s vehicle levy decision in 2001. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the technical, organization, and political constraints on provincial government. Multiple events, actors, and ideas influenced the

provincial government's decision, which reveals the complex nature of public policy in situations involving multi-level governance.

## **Chapter 5. Analysis**

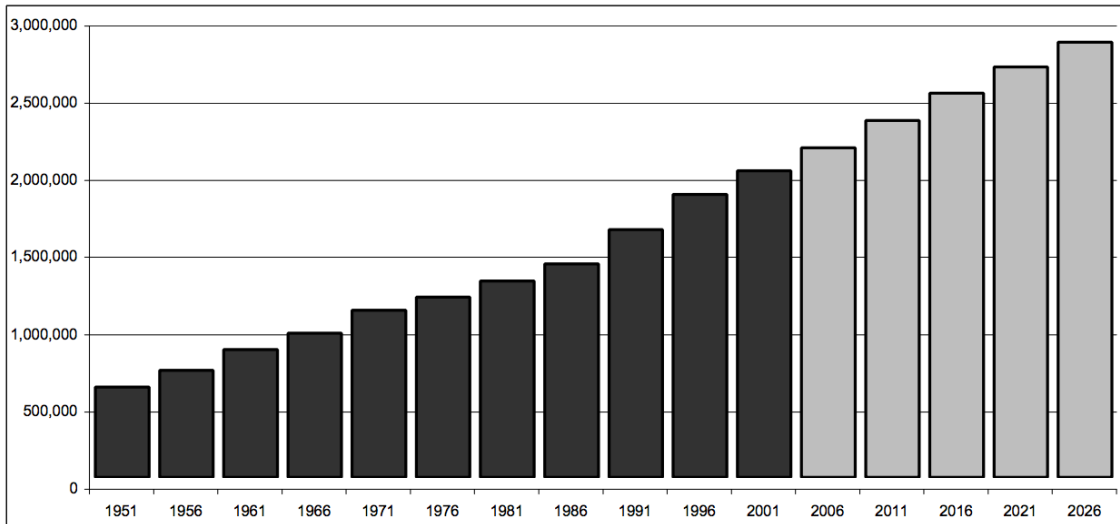
### **5.1. The Approach to Applying the Vehicle Levy**

In order to understand why the provincial government did not implement TransLink's vehicle levy in 2001, the analysis will first review TransLink's vehicle levy proposal and consider how the perception of this approach influenced the decision-making outcome. Section 5.1.1 will review the GVRD's proposed approach to TDM strategies. Section 5.1.2 will compare the TDM strategies originally proposed by the GVRD with TransLink's proposed implementation of the vehicle levy, and will consider why these two strategies differed. Section 5.1.3 proposes that TransLink's timing and approach to implementing a vehicle levy created a policy paradox, and considers the consequences this had on policy implementation. The paradox created by the TransLink vehicle levy is considered to be the catalyst for subsequent events that are explored in Section 5.2 and 5.3. The observations and conclusions drawn in section 5.1 suggest that the contradictions of the vehicle levy led to cascading political problems that connect to, and resulted in, the provincial government's intervention and the non-implementation of the levy.

#### **5.1.1. GVRD Proposed Timing and Implementation of TDM**

High population growth in the 1980s and 1990s contributed to regional concerns about congestion and air quality in the Lower Mainland. According to 2001 Census data released by Statistics Canada, Metro Vancouver's population grew 14.3% from 1991 to 1996, adding 229,075 new people to the region. The region then added another 8.5% between 1996 and 2001, with an additional 155,300 living in the region, reaching a total population of 1,986,965 (Greater Vancouver Regional District Policy and Planning Department, 2002). As discussed in Chapter 2.1, this growth was not evenly distributed across the region and overall most population growth occurred in suburban parts of the region south of the Fraser River. Population growth and urban development was also largely constrained by the geography of the region (Hodge & Robinson, 2001).

Figure 4 further illustrates the amount of population growth Metro Vancouver had experienced up until 2001, and the amount of growth the region was anticipating in the coming years.



**Figure 4. Historical and Projected Population Growth in Vancouver Metropolitan Area, 1951-2026**

Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District Policy and Planning Department, 2002.

While this growth occurred, “the number of cars used for commuting [was] growing faster than the population and the average person [was] travelling more” in the region (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993, p. i). Between 1996 and 1999 traffic volume along major roads, bridges and highways increased significantly region-wide by approximately 8%, which was nearly twice the rate of population growth, and was particularly high in the context of relatively low economic and employment growth (Greater Vancouver Regional District Council of Councils, 2000c). Rapid increase in traffic volumes were primarily along east-west corridors, in Burnaby and along the Fraser River (Greater Vancouver Regional District Council of Councils, 2000c). Hodge & Robinson (2001) describe transportation in the Lower Mainland as being “dominated by bridges (as many as fifteen and one tunnel) [and] the approach to these bridges and tunnel, are not surprisingly, the location of major congestion” (p. 309).

Overall, the rate of car ownership was about 1.5 cars per household (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2000, p. 30). However, rates of car ownership varied considerably across the region. For example:

In Vancouver 22% of households [did] not own a car, while in Surrey and Delta only 5% of households [did] not own a car. The number of households with two or more cars in Vancouver was 26% while in Surrey and Delta it was double this percentage at 52%. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2000, p. 30)

Discouraging vehicle use was a strategic priority for the region, as established in *Transport 2021*. While there was a desire for “greater choice” in mode of transport, the strategic expansion of public transit, and the desire to develop communities designed for walking and bicycling, the region was still becoming more dependent on cars (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993a). TDM was introduced in *Transport 2021* as part of a strategy to help “reverse the past planning practices of favouring the automobile” and steering the region toward desired transportation goals (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. i).

As highlighted by the literature, TDM strategies help address congestion, poor air quality, and environmental sustainability (Kepaptsoglou et al., 2012; Litman, 2003; MOMENTUM/MOSAIC, 1999), which was important to many residents in the Lower Mainland. One GVRD progress report highlighted that “roughly 9 out of 10 GVRD residents [felt] there is a “serious” air pollution problem in the region and most of [the public] attribute that to SOV use” (GVRD, 1996 p 4). TDM would play a large role in addressing these issues and concerns. The overall goal of TDM was to produce “a 10% reduction in the number of peak-hour vehicle trips by 2021” by encouraging modal shift from automobiles to alternative and sustainable modes of transportation (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 3).

The development of a regional *TDM Implementation Strategy* began in 1995, which was a joint project established between the provincial and regional government. The team examined travel reduction, comprehensive parking management, financial incentive for reduced automobile use, tolling/road pricing, and the encouragement of non-motorized modes as mechanisms part of a TDM Implementation Strategy (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b). The immediate short-term and medium term

strategies focused on trip reduction programs, and comprehensive parking management plans. The medium term and long-term strategies recommended implementing financial incentives, which later could lead to road pricing or tolling as long-term strategies. Functionally, road pricing would be similar to distance based insurance.

All stages of the TDM strategy needed to be implemented in order to achieve the 10-percent reduction in peak hour automobile trips by 2021 (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997b). Policy tools that would be used to discourage driving were recommended as long-term strategies, not for immediate implementation:

The phasing scheme is consistent with the objectives to implement incentive-based ‘carrot’ measures first before the disincentive-based ‘sticks’. The notion here is that the effectiveness of these ‘incentive’ measures would be monitored and determined prior to the disincentive-based measures being considered. Unless the estimated effectiveness of the incentive-based measures is much more effective than anticipated, it is unlikely that disincentives can be avoided. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997b)

Similarly, the *Transport 2021* plan recommended specific stages to introduce TDM programs. This plan recommended that incentive measures should be started immediately, while “disincentives should be started when significantly better alternatives to solo driving are actually available” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996, p. 31). *Transport 2021* did not reference a flat fee vehicle levy, but instead recommend that “pay as you drive” vehicle insurance be implemented. “The charge will be lower for those who drive less and higher for those who drive more” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 53). This was classified as an incentive measure by the plan, because it would financially reward those who chose to drive less. As explained in the next section, TransLink’s proposal for the vehicle levy presents a divergence from the GVRD’s proposals.

### **5.1.2. TransLink’s Approach to TDM and the Vehicle Levy**

Section 5.1.2 explores why TransLink required the vehicle levy, and how the agency proposed to implement the vehicle levy. It also explains how and why TransLink’s approach varied from the GVRD’s previously adopted TDM strategy. Section

5.1.3 will then provide an analysis of why TransLink's approach to the vehicle levy created an overwhelmingly negative public response.

During the development of the LRSP and *Transport 2021*, the GVRD conducted consultation to understand how the public felt about various financial mechanisms that could be used for transit and transportation. For example, in 1992 and 1993 there was “a widespread interchange of ideas about transportation tolls and taxes through the media and public meetings in metropolitan Vancouver” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 27). In 1993, focus groups and public opinion surveys were conducted to gather public input on growth management and transportation policy. These outreach efforts determined that disincentives – parking controls, vehicle charges, tolls and taxes – were not popular, but varied in their degree of acceptability (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). For example, parking controls were considered to be unacceptable by 60% of vehicle users and 40% of transit users, peak hour tolls were more acceptable than 24 hour tolls, and a gas tax was not popular became more acceptable when targeted to fund system improvements (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). A “vehicle levy” was not consulted on during any of these processes.

With the creation of the GVTAA, TransLink was provided with the financial capacity to secure adequate and appropriate funding that would allow the agency to expand infrastructure and service hours (Acuere Consulting et al., 2013). This included the ability to charge both car and transit users:

A vehicle levy, in particular a distance-based charge, would begin to address the congestion and other problems caused by failing to signal vehicle operators the full costs of their use of the transportation system... The fee will be structured to capture as much TDM effect as possible. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, pp. 51-53)

The vehicle levy “was the first of the [region's] desired ways of achieving the funding goals of TransLink” (G. Price, personal communication, 2016). The implementation of the vehicle levy would provide the region with local control over its own transportation funding mechanisms. While existing revenue sources had been transferred to TransLink, the vehicle levy was a new source of revenue dedicated to expanding the transportation system and achieve the region's strategic vision. Several



interview participants confirmed that the vehicle levy was dedicated for the expansion of infrastructure and services (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016; G. Price, personal communication, 2016; B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016;).

A main priority for TransLink, as laid out in the STP, was to increase bus service and infrastructure. Overall, approximately \$1 billion would “be dedicated to transit improvements over the next five years” (Greater Vancouver Regional District Policy and Planning Department, 2000, p. 30). TransLink’s STP identified a spending program for roads and bridges between 1999 and 2005, which included \$208 million for road maintenance and repair, \$173 million for small capital road improvements, \$160 million on major new road and bridge construction. Appendix D shows some of the maps included in TransLink’s STP that detail planned infrastructure and service improvements across the region. Collectively, the STP’s funding priorities focused on investing in efficient goods movement and transit as a priority (Greater Vancouver Regional District Policy and Planning Department, 2000).

Prior to the creation of TransLink, *Transport 2021* emphasized that funds were short and that implementing TDM would generate revenue for funding infrastructure improvements (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 30). One GVRD report describes the situation the region faced as “emerging for around a decade” and that the solution was a higher level of investment in transportation, under local control (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2000a, p. 8).

By the time TransLink began operation in 1998, the region was facing “considerable drift” from the *Transport 2021* plan (Acuere Consulting et al., 2013). As such, TransLink pursued the vehicle levy as a means to finance the region’s plans in order to keep pace with targets set out in the LRSP, *Transport 2021* and the STP. Public engagement with over 4,000 Lower Mainland residents conducted by TransLink – including public meetings, regional surveys, forums, telephone outreach, and advisory committees – determined that the two most widely accepted revenue sources to fund the STP were an increase to the gas taxes or a vehicle license fee that would be applied those who owned vehicles in the region (TransLink, 2000e). As such, TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan “recommended that a combination of vehicle charges,

parking charges, and transit fare increases be used to help pay for transportation improvements and help reduce car travel” (GVRD, 2000, p. 32). In April of 2000, TransLink’s Board approved the STP which stated that:

The Plan will be financed through existing and new sources of revenue: a transit fare increase averaging 25 cents on a one zone fare and similar proportional increases in other fares in 2000 and again in 2003; an automobile levy averaging \$75 per vehicle increasing annually by 5%, beginning in October 2001; and an additional charge of 14% to fees paid for off-street commercial parking starting in 2005. (TransLink, 2000e)

In November of 2000, TransLink approved a weight-based vehicle levy. The vehicle levy did not target mode choice, and would have little influence on congestion (Kitchen & Slack, 2016). The levy would be collected through the AirCare program, which connected the levy to air quality management. With changes made to the policy the vehicle levy was inconsistent with the *TDM Implementation Strategy* and the goals detailed in *Transport 2021* that recommended implementing “pay as you drive” insurance.

Logistically a kilometer-based insurance charge was challenging to implement. Any changes made to insurance policy would have required organizational support from ICBC for implementation. However, ICBC refused to collect the proposed vehicle levy. As reported by the *Vancouver Sun*, “ICBC chairman Bob Williams said while the board supports the strategic transportation plan, ICBC is not in a position to collect or enforce the vehicle levy” (McInnes, 2000). Another article suggested:

If it weren't for ICBC scurrying for political cover, a natural solution would be to tie the transportation improvement charge to a mileage based insurance charge. Study after study has argued for moving away from fixed auto insurance rates to charges that vary directly with use. Tying insurance (and the levy) to a mileage charge would increase the incentive to carpool, or bus, or simply drive less. (Schaffer, 2000)

However, both the public and regional leaders were uncertain about whether or not leisure travel should be included in the calculation of distance travelled, or if only local and regional commuter travel would be calculated. Disapproval of kilometer-based insurance also stemmed from the belief that public transit or carpooling was untenable, often expressed by stakeholders and the public during consultation meetings:

Those respondents who believed they had no alternative but to drive because of the lack of viable alternatives, deemed this rate structure [charges based on kilometers driven] unfair. They felt they would not be able to reap the economic incentive, not because they did not want to drive less, but because taking public transit or carpooling was an untenable alternative. Those who lived south of the Fraser River found this proposition especially unfair, and, rather than being an incentive, was a punishment for not living near well-developed public transit. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 5)

In response, TransLink considered other ways to collect a vehicle levy fee. The GVRD conducted research on other Canadian cities and found that in Montreal the Agence Métropolitaine de Transport (the Metropolitan Transportation Agency) – which was created by the province of Quebec in 1996 to coordinate, plan, and fund public transportation in the Montreal region - received funds through a \$30 vehicle licence surcharge (Transport Canada, 2001). This surcharge generated about \$39 million (1996 dollars) in annual revenue for the agency (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997). The City of Toronto also introduced a \$60 levy on passenger and light commercial vehicles, but the revenue from the levy was not dedicated to transportation infrastructure (Kitchen & Slack, 2016). Research and consultation conducted by the GVRD and TransLink found that public preference was for the implementation of system tolling (TransLink, 2000). However, a vehicle levy would be inexpensive to implement and administer, compared to a distance based charge (Kitchen & Slack, 2016).

Another problem was that the vehicle levy did not vary by use, which had been the GVRD's planned intent for introducing TDM pricing schemes. This observation is supported by the quotes below:

Vehicle license fees could be charged annually on vehicles registered in the region, and collected at the time of registration. With over one million vehicles in Greater Vancouver in 1997, the revenue potential can be high but the impact of travel behaviour will be minimal. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997b, p. 27)

[The vehicle levy] wasn't perfect that way because it didn't vary by the amount of use, and it was a bit blunt. It didn't have any impact on demand which is what we were looking for. The plan was a demand management plan - it was intended to encourage people to travel by efficient means and discourage them from traveling by inefficient means or times... It was what

could have been done feasibly. (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016)

While TransLink's approach to the vehicle levy was different from previously adopted strategies, the timing also varied from plans and strategies that had detailed the implementation of TDM. *Transport 2021* recommended that a "mutually supportive" TDM strategy be implemented by 2021. This strategy included policies that would both encourage and discourage certain types of travel behavior (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 26). The plan suggested that TDM could postpone the need for capital investment, decrease rush hour vehicle trips by 10%, and raise \$1 billion per year in user charges by 2021 (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 26). Implementing TDM by a "pick and choose" approach would not work (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b). The literature confirms the importance of an integrated TDM strategy, in order to maximize effectiveness and benefits to users (Broaddus et al., 2009; Litman, 2003).

TransLink's STP also recognized that the public's acceptance of TDM would increase if pricing was "coordinated with incentives for transportation alternatives" (TransLink, 2000, p. 34). The literature also confirms that vehicle levies are "generally perceived to be fair on the basis of benefits received" (Kitchen & Slack, 2016, p. 18). However, when only "push" incentives are implemented drivers may be frustrated and react negatively against policy makers (Broaddus et al., 2009, p. 23). Litman (2003) also discusses why TDM strategies face confrontation, and offers insight on how to overcome opposition:

Consumers tend to oppose any new fee, and motorists can be a strong political lobby against road pricing... Road pricing must therefore be presented as a package that provides a variety of benefits, and as a substitute for other equally unattractive taxes or fees... Road pricing should be implemented in conjunction with improved transportation options, so consumers have viable alternatives. (p. 18)

The vehicle levy proposal was offered in conjunction with improved transportation options. The levy was intended to fund TransLink's STP infrastructure and service improvements, which included the extension of the Skytrain to Coquitlam, a 48% increase to the bus fleet by the year 2005, an 30-40% increase in frequency of services

on many existing bus routes, and the replacement and expansion of the trolleybus fleet by 2002 (TransLink, 2000f). According to the literature, coupling the vehicle levy with TransLink's STP infrastructure and service improvements should have helped secure public support for the new fee. However, the vehicle levy triggered opposition and criticism. These criticisms are discussed in more detail in the following section.

### **5.1.3. The Vehicle Levy as a Policy Paradox**

As summarized in the previous section, TransLink's vehicle levy proposal contradicted the strategies adopted by the GVRD in *Transport 2021* that recommended implementing distance-based insurance as a motor vehicle charge. The vehicle levy was chosen over distance-based insurance by TransLink because it was easier to implement compared to other tools, and because the agency was eager to implement a new revenue source to fund the STP. By choosing a vehicle levy, TransLink's approach to TDM introduced a "stick measure" before pursuing "carrots" (Litman, 2003). Moreover, TransLink's shift in strategy created a paradoxical situation – the vehicle levy was needed to finance the expansion of the transportation system, but improved service and infrastructure was needed for automobile users to justify a switch to alternative modes, drive less, and forgo car ownership. As acknowledged by one GVRD report, in order to increase ridership transit service would "have to be greatly improved and expanded before GVRD residents use it regularly, however, the public consistently prefers low levels of taxation to support it" (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 6).

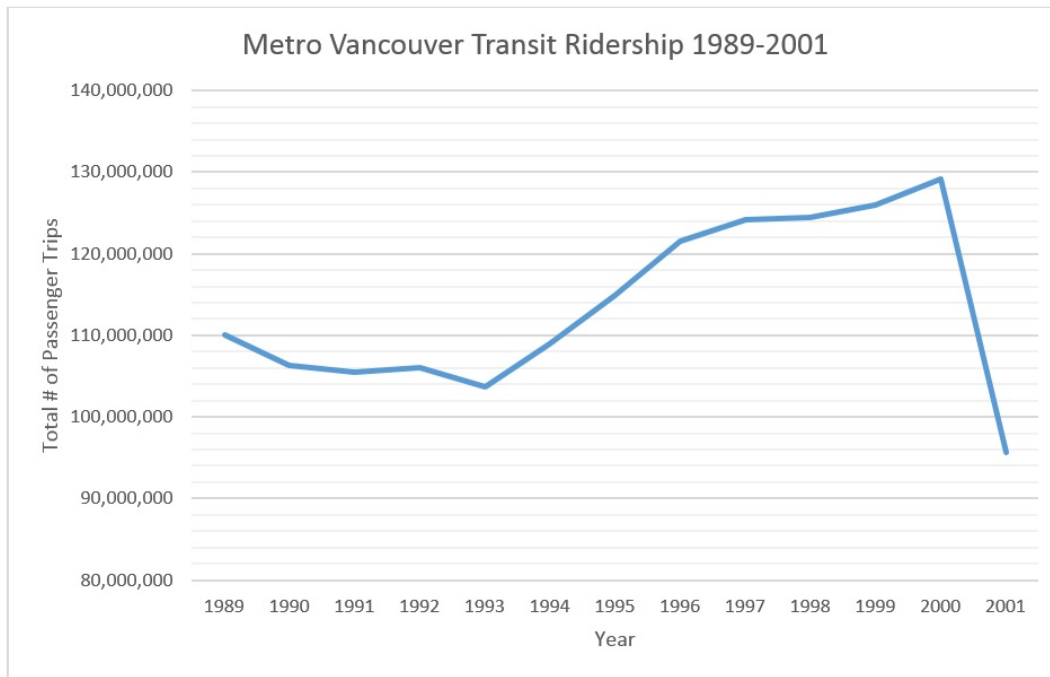
This paradox spurred political disagreement amongst the region's leaders, citizens and stakeholders. Without "positive incentives" (Litman, 2003) to encourage transit use (for example, improving transit service in suburban areas), many automobile users perceived the vehicle levy to be unfair. It is not that the public was unwilling to change their behaviour, but that there were perceived barriers to changing behaviour:

There is considerable incentive for change, and a public willingness to change, but no ability to change due to lack of reliable alternatives, particularly transit. Moreover, until we play 'catch-up' with transit expansion, strong TDM measures will not be supported by the public. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997a, p. 7)

As explained by the GVRD, in the year 2000 many major public transit improvements had not yet been realized:

Throughout the 1990s capacity in transit had not kept pace with population growth. In 1993/94 there were 811 buses serving the Vancouver region in peak periods. By 1998/99 the number had risen to 872. The number of SkyTrain cars had increased from 116 to 136 cars. (Greater Vancouver Regional District Policy and Planning Department, 2000, p. 30).

Figure 5 demonstrates that from 1993 to 2000 transit ridership increased a total of 25%, from 103,676,696 annual passenger trips made in 1993 to 125,123,275 trips made in 2000 (Metro Vancouver). This increase would have added pressure to the transportation system. Comparatively, as of 1999 there were 1.2 million registered motor vehicles in Greater Vancouver, and that number was expected to increase by 60% over the next 20 years (Environment Canada, 2001). Both on public transit and on roads congestion was increasing.



**Figure 5. Metro Vancouver Transit Ridership 1989-2001<sup>1</sup>.**

Adapted from Metro Vancouver, n.d., Retrieved July 1, 2017 from <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:3BLbAlZyBeQJ:www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/TransitRidership.xls+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca>

Bob Paddon, former GVRD Manager of Communications and Education, also observed that:

The culture of time was quite different, in terms of transportation and public transit. It was not really highly regarded by a lot of people, particularly in parts of the region, such as Langley and elsewhere that had very low service at the time. [Those areas were] very car oriented, car dominated. (B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016)

Residents of auto-oriented suburban municipalities in the region did not regard transit positively, and perceived the vehicle levy as a tax on their lifestyle. Litman (2003) and Richter (2009) both speak to the perception of TDM when “stick” measures are

<sup>1</sup> The ridership drop that occurred in 2001, as seen in figure 5, was a direct result of the Coast Mountain Bus Company strike. Due to the strike approximately 675,000 bus riders were forced to find alternative transportation, but the SkyTrain and West Coast Express were still allowed to run (Wales, 2008).

implemented without, or before, “carrot” measures. They both conclude that in these situations it is politically challenging for decision makers to move forward with implementing TDM. “Both motor vehicle charges and parking taxes [are] more readily justified with the existence of more attractive transit alternatives” (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 51; also see Kitchen & Slack, 2016). Most media articles that discussed the vehicle levy focused on issues of equity and fairness (Munro, 2000; Schaffer, 2000; Skelton, 2000). Municipal politicians in “some of the region's more car-dependent suburbs [said] their residents should not pay a levy until transit improves enough to be a viable option to driving” (Munro, 2000).

According to research conducted by the GVRD, the phasing and implementation of TDM was important to residents and users of the transportation system (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997b). Specifically, residents tended to support a phased introduction of TDM measures if additional service and infrastructure would be provided before TDM measures were implemented (GVRD, 1993b). *Transport 2021* stated upfront that “public attitudes” were the primary consideration in staging the introduction of the TDM package (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 27). According to Kitchen & Slack (2016) when a vehicle levy is coupled with transportation improvements it is usually publically acceptable. Even though TransLink’s vehicle levy was coupled with the STP’s transportation improvements, the public buy-in and support for this approach to TDM appears to have been low (Richter et al., 2009). One media article describes these conflicting opinions:

A majority of Lower Mainland residents want better transit and immediate relief from traffic congestion, and they're willing to pay extra if that's what it takes, a new poll suggests... Concerns about traffic congestion, inadequate bus service, difficulty in getting around are frustrating motorists and travelers alike... For them, the status quo is no longer acceptable; something needs to be done...

The residents are less enthused about TransLink's plan to pay for improvements by raising transit fares, increasing parking taxes and placing a levy on motor vehicles, the poll shows. For instance, 51 per cent of residents supported the improvements, but opposed a \$75 annual levy on motor vehicles. (Kines, 2000)



In summary, the vehicle levy was perceived by the public and many stakeholders to be problematic, which sparked political tensions across the region. Section 5.2 and 5.3 will focus on how the region's institutional and jurisdictional constraints only further complicate the vehicle levy's adoption and implementation.

## **5.2. Conflicts in Multi-Level Governance**

Chapter 5.2 considers how TransLink's structural aspects of multi-level governance challenged the implementation of TransLink's vehicle levy. First, both the GVRD and TransLink are politically fragmented organizations that operate to represent the interests of 21 individual municipalities. Second, these regional organizations lack what Hodge and Robinson (2001) call "political resources" because they are run by boards members who have been appointed instead of directly elected by the public. Third, the hierarchical relationship between the province and the region is discussed with consideration as to why the disentanglement of regional transportation planning did not give more powers and resources to the region for policy implementation. These three challenges are discussed in detail below as the organizational obstacles to the implementation of the vehicle, and will also be connected to the political constraints discussed in Section 5.3.

### **5.2.1. Regional Fragmentation**

As discussed in Chapter 2, during the 1990s, changes to regional governance were aimed at helping enhance local control over transportation planning in the Lower Mainland. To start, in 1995 the provincial government returned regional planning functions to the GVRD. The GVRD undertook various planning initiatives – specifically the LRSP and Transport 2021 – that focused on growth management, air quality, and transportation. The GVRD was aware that the diverse and complex institutional context made planning challenging:

The diverse institutional context within which decision making is made, particularly with respect to transportation and land use, makes it much more difficult to deal effectively with the problems. Greater Vancouver is probably one of the more challenging cases from an institutional point of

view, with twenty individual municipalities and numerous provincial transportation agencies directly or indirectly involved in transportation. In most other Canadian metropolitan areas there is a regional role in the delivery of 'regional' transportation services. This is not the case in Greater Vancouver, with program delivery being handled by municipalities and several mode-specific provincial agencies. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996a, p. 14)

With the leadership of Vancouver City Councillor and GVRD Chair, George Puil, the region approached the province to create the GVTA (Acuere et al., 2013). Puil later became TransLink's first Chair. In 1999, the creation of TransLink brought transportation planning and service provision together at the regional level.

TransLink's leadership consisted of a board of representatives, as did the GVRD's board. For the GVRD, representatives were locally appointed from each municipality, and therefore were not directly elected by the public to the GVRD. The number of voting directors that were appointed from each municipality was based upon a municipality's population. "The formula is one vote for every 20,000 people, up to a maximum of five votes" (Metro Vancouver, n.d.a). Similarly, TransLink's board was a group of locally elected officials who were selected from the GVRD's board, as well as three provincial representatives who were appointed by provincial cabinet. This was an improvement from its predecessor, BC Transit, which had a board comprised of unelected provincial appointees.

For this case study, representation and board structure are important considerations for policy adoption and implementation, as it becomes particularly challenging to implement *regional* policy when political leadership is typically drawn from elected officials who are appointed by their respective *local* municipal councils (Metro Vancouver, n.d.a). Both GVRD and TransLink board members were accountable (through an election process) to the municipality from which they were elected, more so than the regional organization they were appointed to. As such, these representatives have often been inclined to prioritize their own local interests ahead of regional ones (Artibise & Meligrana, 2003; Kellas, 2010). According to Paget et al., (2013) this type of regional set up can create contention, conflict, and fragmented goals. Local politicians struggle when the "incentive of mutual benefit cannot overcome differences of interest"

(Paget et al., 2013, p.156). Therefore, many of the elected officials who were also representatives of the GVRD or TransLink were inclined to serve the concerns of their constituents instead of endorsing the adoption of the vehicle levy.

TransLink's timing and approach to implementing the vehicle levy amplified suburbanites' frustration regarding the distributional differences of transportation services and investments across the region. A media scan revealed certain reoccurring discussion themes in the media: TransLink equated to higher taxes for local residents, suburban communities were inadequately served by TransLink and public transit, and road users were ignored by both TransLink and the GVRD (Munro, 1997; Munro, 2000a; Munro, 2000d; Simpson, 2000). TransLink's approach to the vehicle levy also seemed to divide urban and suburban parts of the region. This divide was described in one media article:

The strategic plan, the first of its kind for the region, offers lots of details on bus fleet expansion and proposed road improvements, but stops short of addressing the thornier issues of how to apply the vehicle levy and parking taxes. These are the questions that divide politicians across the region... How the TransLink board, which includes civic politicians from across the region, bridges this urban-suburban gap over transportation-related charges would appear critical to the success of the six-year plan. (Munro, 1999c)

As previously discussed, "pay as you drive" insurance could have influenced mode choice because people would have been incentivised to drive less. The vehicle levy was not a fee based on use, instead it placed an additional financial burden on vehicle ownership, and therefore had little influence on mode choice (Kitchen & Slack, 2016). What remained the same was the fact that the vehicle levy was intended to fund a transportation plan that did attempt to bridge the urban-suburban gap by envisioning a regionally integrated transportation network that provided service to more than just the City of Vancouver's downtown core:

The concept for the year 2021 features a transit system less oriented to downtown Vancouver, it has greater presence over the denser areas; it links regional centres and permits travellers to connect between several origins and hub destinations without having to travel via the downtown hub... the system shows more intensive transit services in the Burrard

Peninsula, the North East Sector, and in North Surrey and North Delta.  
(Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993b, p. 31)

However, adopting and implementing the vehicle levy before increasing the supply of transportation infrastructure and service did not seem fair to many, specifically those who were living or working in more auto-dependent parts of the Lower Mainland. Some of the GVRD and TransLink board members who represented auto-oriented parts of the region were opposed to the vehicle levy. One *Vancouver Sun* article described leaders who opposed the annual vehicle as standing up against the “hardship on their car-dependent constituents” (Munro, 2000b).

At the time, Doug McCallum was the Mayor of Surrey. He was also appointed as a representative to TransLink’s board and the GVRD’s board. McCallum was strongly opposed to the vehicle levy, and actively orchestrated an alliance with other suburban Mayors to influence the adoption and implementation of the levy. McCallum described his alliance as being driven by concerns about equity and fairness:

Cities south of the Fraser - Delta, Surrey, Langley - were all livid at TransLink trying to put it [the vehicle levy] through. The main argument against it was they [residents south of the Fraser] have no choice but to drive their cars... We spoke very loudly against it, saying that is not a fair tax and Vancouver is getting all the money for transit and [south] of the Fraser was getting nothing, not even busses. (D. McCallum, personal communication, 2016)

However, according to the GVRD “all residents, no matter where they live, can benefit from transportation improvements made in any part of the region” (Greater Vancouver Regional District Council of Council, 2000c, p. 11). For example, high ridership routes tend to require less subsidization and are overall more profitable, which can in turn help fund the expansion of public transit into less dense, lower ridership areas. Moreover, residents from less dense parts of the region – such as Surrey, Coquitlam and Delta – each had a higher proportion of regional person-kilometres by automobile than their shares of the region’s population, compared to the City of Vancouver that accounted for 28% of the region’s population, but only 18% of the person-kilometres by automobile (Greater Vancouver Regional District Council of

Councils, 2000c, p. 8). Therefore, residents from certain parts of the region were already benefiting more from the subsidization of roads and highways.

In September 2000, one GVRD report titled *The Distribution of Costs and Benefits of TransLink Programs* was given to regional representatives to provide information about the costs and benefits for particular municipalities and their residents. The paper noted that the complexity of such analysis isn't an effective way of interpreting the value of regional transportation service:

These questions might appear to be simple, but given the fact that most commuter travel is 'regional' rather than 'municipal', the issue is complex and it is not possible, or even necessarily particularly appropriate, to try to allocate revenues and costs by municipality. (Greater Vancouver Regional District Council of Councils, 2000c, p. 8)

None the less, the perception of distributional differences remained unchanged, and the regional leaders who disagreed with the vehicle levy continued to protest it. The media, the public, and stakeholders continued to focus on the costs and benefits for particular municipalities, and their residents' concerns regarding issues of equity (Munro, 2000a; Munro, 2000b).

Even though many TransLink and GVRD representatives remained unsatisfied with the vehicle levy proposal, TransLink and the GVRD proceeded to move forward:

There were people from certain parts of the region – [both of] the Langleys in particular - that were very opposed. The District of Langley was quite opposed to it at that time, as was the Mayor of Surrey - Doug McCallum - so you had a lot of opposition politically... But the region held its ground and made the political decision to proceed with it (B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016).

The vehicle levy was brought forward separately to the two Boards to be voted on. In November of 2000, TransLink's Board of directors approved the following motion that stated:

That the Board approve the vehicle levy option based on vehicle weight and insurance class, (as a proxy for pollution) with:

A) a minimum charge of \$40 and a maximum charge of \$120 for automobiles, as set out in the report dated October 18, 2000 titled "Strategic Transportation Plan Funding Options: Recommendation", and,

B) an average levy of \$190 for commercial vehicles.

And that the Board continue to pursue as its first priority and preference, a Federal government contribution in support of funding for the Strategic Transportation Plan and that a formal request be forwarded to the Provincial government for an increase to the gas tax in this region (1 cent per litre in 2001, 4 cents per litre additional in 2002) and that the vehicle levy be eliminated, or reduced to the extent that federal support and/or Provincial government approval for a gas tax increase is forthcoming. (TransLink, 2000b; see also Appendix C)

The vote was split, with 7 out of 5 TransLink Directors voting in favor of the modified vehicle levy. In December of 2000 the same motion went forward before the GVRD's board for approval, and the vote was split 56 to 50 in favor of adopting the levy. Figure 6 shows the specific vote breakdown for the vehicle levy.

The vehicle levy only narrowly passed with 58% and 52%, and there was not a clear sense of regional consensus regarding the adoption and implementation of the vehicle levy. At the municipal level there was also disagreement within cities internally. For example, Mayor Doug Drummond and Councillor Derek Corrigan both represented the City of Burnaby but voted differently at the GVRD board, and while six Vancouver representatives voted for the levy, one did not.

	<b>Directors Against Levy</b>	<b>Directors For Levy</b>
<b>TransLink Board Vote</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grinnell, Langley City</li> <li>• Hunt, Surrey</li> <li>• Kumagai, Richmond,</li> <li>• McCallum, Surrey</li> <li>• Randall (MLA rep)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sparkes, New Westminster</li> <li>• Price, Vancouver</li> <li>• Clarke, Vancouver</li> <li>• Puil, Vancouver</li> <li>• Kingsbury, Coquitlam</li> <li>• Drummond, Burnaby</li> <li>• Bell, North Vancouver</li> </ul>
<b>GVRD Board Vote (and number of votes per Director)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberts, Langley Township (5 votes)</li> <li>• Broughton, Lions Bay (1 vote)</li> <li>• Corrigan, Burnaby (4 votes)</li> <li>• Durman, West Vancouver (3 votes)</li> <li>• Higginbotham, Surrey (4 votes)</li> <li>• Hunt, Surrey (4 votes)</li> <li>• Jackson, Delta (5 votes)</li> <li>• Kingsbury, Vancouver (3 votes)</li> <li>• Kumagai, Richmond (4 votes)</li> <li>• Martin, Langley City (2 votes)</li> <li>• McCallum, Surrey (4 votes)</li> <li>• McNulty, Richmond (4 votes)</li> <li>• Trasolini, Port Moody (2 votes)</li> <li>• Steele, Surrey (4 votes)</li> <li>• Weinberg, Anmore (1 vote)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrett, Bowen Island (1 vote)</li> <li>• Bell, North Vancouver District (1 Vote)</li> <li>• Blom, Electoral Area A (1 vote)</li> <li>• Clarke, Vancouver (4 votes)</li> <li>• Drew, Belcarra (1 vote)</li> <li>• Drummond, Burnaby (5 votes)</li> <li>• Hogarth, Maple Ridge (3 votes)</li> <li>• Sullivan, Vancouver (4 votes)</li> <li>• Lee, Vancouver (4 votes)</li> <li>• MacLean, Pitt Meadows (1 vote)</li> <li>• Owen, Vancouver (5 votes)</li> <li>• Price, Vancouver (4 votes)</li> <li>• Puil, Vancouver (5 votes)</li> <li>• Sharp, North Vancouver City (3 votes)</li> <li>• Sparkes, New Westminster (3 votes)</li> <li>• Stangier, Coquitlam (3 votes)</li> <li>• Staub, White Rock (1 vote)</li> <li>• Wright, Port Coquitlam (3 votes)</li> </ul>

**Figure 6. TransLink and GVRD Vote Breakdown For or Against the Vehicle Levy.**

Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District (2000), TransLink (2000b).

The level of consensus and support for the vehicle levy in 2000 had changed significantly compared to February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1999 when the GVRD passed a motion stating:

That the Board endorse the proposed GVTA financial strategy, including relying on the transition fund to help cover expenses in 1999/2000 and the adoption of the necessary combination of fare increases/parking taxes/vehicle levies and an extra levy on benefitting properties as a revenue stream, pursuant to the legislative provisions, in 2000 and beyond. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1999; also see Appendix C).

The only Director who did not vote in support of the GVTA financial strategy motion was Councillor Scholtens (Director from Langley Township). By comparing the GVRD's February 26, 1999 vote to the December 5, 2000 vote there was nearly a 50% reduction in support among GVRD board members for a vehicle levy, compared to the near unanimous support for the GVTA financial strategy which also referenced implementing a vehicle levy. The difference between the 1999 vote and the 2000 vote emerged because of the change in leadership at the regional level. According to Ken Cameron, the former Manager of Policy and Planning at the GVRD:

It [the vehicle levy] had great credibility - until the year [1996] that Doug McCollum defeated Bob Boes for Mayor of Surrey and really got going on this thing [the vehicle levy] and worked against it [the region]. [We] had a senior mayor opposing this thing for essentially political reasons. (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016)

According to Cameron's anecdote "McCallum barged onto the regional scene" and was "against everything" (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016) because of disputes between the GVRD and the City of Surrey. As discussed in section 5.1 the approach to the implementation of the vehicle levy also changed, which was also a source of dispute.

The political disagreement over TransLink's vehicle levy at the regional level did not encourage the provincial government to support the vehicle levy. During an interview with Glen Clark, a former Premier of BC who was involved with the creation of the GVTA, he explained that without a greater degree of regional consensus it was challenging for the provincial government to justify implementing the vehicle levy:

If you are going to establish a brand new tax that has never existed before dedicated to a body that is unelected, then you really have to do your homework to try to make sure that there is as broad of consensus as possible - and they hadn't done that... They hadn't built [unanimous] consensus. And these are big potentially creeping taxes, because the cost of transit is large... If you are a politician you are prepared to take a move to raise taxes you think is important, then people can pass judgement on you and they can reverse it. You can't do that at TransLink so it takes another level of cooperation and consensus before you can proceed to a whole new tax. (G. Clark, personal communication, June 21, 2016)

However, a requirement for broad consensus was not built into legislation, and therefore not required. According to Hodge & Robison (2001) it is the institutional arrangement of



a City-Region that creates a “cautious political atmosphere” in which the provincial government is “reluctant to impose regional planning and governance structures without first building a consensus among their suburban constituencies” (p. 300).

To summarize, the region’s governance model allowed for inter-municipal alliances to form in opposition to the vehicle levy. An urban-suburban divide, and overall lack of consensus regarding the vehicle levy created a political atmosphere that made it challenging for the provincial government to implement TransLink’s vehicle levy. Regional disagreement regarding the vehicle levy is evidenced by the slim majority of TransLink and GVRD Board representatives voting to approve it. However, voting against the levy was only one way that regional representatives expressed their disapproval of TransLink’s vehicle levy proposal.

### **Regional Dissent & Threats to Restructure the Greater Vancouver Region**

As noted above, a small coalition of Mayors and Councillors who were strongly opposed to the vehicle levy formed with the intent of blocking the vehicle levy’s adoption. This coalition was made up of Surrey’s Mayor Doug McCallum, Delta Mayor Lois Jackson and Langley Township Mayor Kurt Alberts. This frustrated coalition of municipalities also wanted to separate from the GVRD and TransLink. These Mayors represented three out of the five GVRD municipalities south of the Fraser River. However, the two other municipalities south of the Fraser River were not part of this separatist movement. Neither Hardy Staub, the Mayor of White Rock and vice-chair of TransLink, or Langley City Mayor Marlene Grinnell had intention of leaving the GVRD and TransLink (Skelton, 2000a).

The attempt to separate from the GVRD was not a short lived effort, either. This initiative also arose around the time the GVTAA was created by the provincial government. In October 1997, Surrey Councillor Pam Lewin brought forward a motion to investigate the viability of Surrey’s separation from the GVRD. As reported by *Vancouver Sun*, the inquiry to separate was a response to the GVRD’s changes made to the formula used to assess sewerage costs, and because of Surrey’s concerns that higher taxes might come as a result of the (then) proposed regional transportation authority (Munro, 1997). The motion that passed, with only one Councillor opposed, read:

That staff be instructed to review all options for withdrawal of the City of Surrey from the GVRD including cost, legal implications, a strategic plan and an implementation plan and further that we explore options including creating a new Fraser Valley Regional District. (City of Surrey, 1997)

Surrey's second push for regional separation began in April 2000, and was coordinated with the support of Delta and Langley Township. The formation of the separatist group was described as a "visceral movement" driven by the opposition to the vehicle levy (Munro, 2000). As TransLink and the GVRD continued to move forward with adoption of the vehicle levy, the region's political fragmentation created an opportunity for municipalities to publically discuss leaving.

In April of 2000, the Langley Township Council authorized staff to create a report investigating separation from the GVRD. By May of 2000, Doug McCallum had formed "a new alliance of municipalities south of the Fraser River" (Bailey, 2000) to orchestrate resistance to the vehicle levy and separation from the GVRD. These Mayors met and had preliminary discussions about forming their own regional district south of the Fraser River. The alliance continued to push forward media messaging about the idea of restructuring, although the media's critique of the coalition should be noted. The cost of leaving the GVRD surpassed the cost of residents paying the vehicle levy, and explained by one Vancouver Sun article:

A conservative estimate for independence -- based on an assessment of only the most easily quantifiable costs -- is \$1.1 billion, or \$2,200 for every man, woman and child just to get the South of the Fraser regional district started. Compared to that, the \$75 transportation levy begins to look like a bargain. (Munro, 2000b)

The high cost of restructuring was noted in another article, stating that "Langley Township taxpayers could face higher regional taxes if the township leaves the Greater Vancouver Regional District and joins the Fraser Valley regional district" (Claxton, 2000). Even with the risk of higher taxes, by June of 2000 almost 3,000 Langley Township residents had signed a petition demanding that Langley leave the GVRD as a response to the proposed vehicle levy charge (Staff Reporter, 2000).

As TransLink and GVRD moved forward with the levy it gave the new alliance opportunity to mobilize around the issue, and “strengthened their resolve to get out” of the GVRD (Skelton, 2000a). By the end of 2000 Richmond had also been invited to join the alliance. In December of 2000, Surrey Councillor Marvin Hunt brought forward a motion to examine regional restructuring, that was approved by Council with seven in favor and two opposed. The motion read:

That Council request the Provincial Government establish a task force to examine various restructuring options for the Lower Mainland (specifically south of the Fraser) to provide effective and efficient delivery of local government services, some of which could include rethinking municipal boundaries to recognize service delivery efficiencies without losing focus on local community needs and challenges (City of Surrey, 2000).

Also in December of 2000, the alliance of the three Mayors requested to meet with Jim Doyle, the province's Minister of Municipal Affairs. Only a few weeks after this request the NDP decided not to implement TransLink's vehicle levy.

The alliance's threat to leave may not have been the determining factor for the NDP, specifically because the process to restructure the region would be highly complicated. According to section 780 of Municipal Act the alliance would first need to petition the provincial government in order to restructure the GVRD and form their own regional district. This would be followed by extensive regional consultations between the GVRD and the Fraser Valley Regional District. The most complicated part of the process would be withdrawing from the GVRD's various services, which would require several legislative amendments, as explained by this one *Vancouver Sun* article:

Casting off membership in the regional water and sewerage district would be more difficult because both are governed by provincial legislation that does not contain exit provisions. Legislative amendments to both acts would be required to leave. Nor is there a clause in the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act that allows a municipality to opt out of TransLink. Here again, new legislation approved by a majority of MLAs would be needed to get out. The South of the Fraser region would need to buy its own bus fleet, or contract to a private operator, to provide transit service. And it would need to assume responsibility for the care and maintenance of roadways that now get TransLink dollars. (Munro, 2000b)

This opt-out process, and the legislative amendments required to enable it, would be time consuming and complicated. The reality of restructuring seemed unlikely. If the threat of regional restructuring was not a likely possibility, then what aspect of separatism influenced the provincial government's decision to not support the implementation of the vehicle levy?

As described in one media article, the City of Surrey's Mayor Doug McCallum often had problems with the GVRD's leadership:

McCallum and Puil have repeatedly crossed swords on regional issues ranging from transportation to the cost of sewerage treatment and land-use planning. McCallum opposed a series of recent decisions by the GVTA board, starting with the hiring of former Vancouver city manager Ken Dobell as chief executive officer of the authority.

The Surrey mayor has long accused Puil and Vancouver council of trying to dominate regional affairs -- both at the GVTA and Greater Vancouver regional district -- at the expense of suburban municipalities such as his (Munro, 1999).

As previously noted, McCallum was described as someone who barged onto the regional scene and was against everything (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016). McCallum, and other Surrey Councillors, were described in one *Vancouver Sun* article as "among the most vocal critics of the GVRD strategic planning department - the Mayor complains regional planners are trying to wrest control over land-use issues away from the municipalities" (Munro, 1997). According to McCallum (2016), he opposed the vehicle levy on behalf of his constituents in the City of Surrey. These constituents would likely vote in the 2001 provincial election, which took place six months after the region's vote on the vehicle levy. According to McCallum, the NDP chose to side with Surrey (and therefore, the alliance) to attempt to retain some political popularity in that part of the region:

You have to weigh the advantages of doing something with how unhappy the public is going to be with it. [The unhappiness of voters] was a big influence with the NDP. As far as provincially, [the NDP were] saying "well we have a whole number of seats [south] of the Fraser, we want to protect them, and those people are really upset, so we better be careful". (D. McCallum, personal communication, 2016)

The NDP's desire to remain politically favourable in Surrey was also highlighted by Joy MacPhail, a former NDP MLA. MacPhail concluded:

We were leading into an election period, and we were in a leadership race, and how individual MLAs thought about a particular was taken into account regionally... Surrey was a big factor. One, they wouldn't have benefited from it so much, and two they weren't our allies... Surrey MLAs were very supportive of TransLink but not of the vehicle levy. (J. MacPhail, personal communication, 2016)

Overall, the region's politically fragmented structure created opportunity for division. This division was primarily defined in terms of urban (transit oriented) and suburban (non-transit oriented) needs. The separatism alliance between Delta, Langley Township, and the City of Surrey drew extra attention to the vehicle levy. Moreover, the City of Surrey's large suburban population was a target for the provincial government's consideration, with a provincial election only six months away. Without strong regional consensus and support for the implementation of the vehicle levy, provincial decision makers were swayed by the desire to remain popular with the electorate south of the Fraser River. Elections and policy timing will be further explored in section 5.3.

### **5.2.2. Empowerment vs. Downloading Responsibilities: Levels of Misunderstanding**

In Canada, the role and purpose of regional government can vary from province to province. In Ontario and Manitoba, new systems of metropolitan government were formed for major cities such as Toronto and Winnipeg. In BC, the province has used an approach built upon the existing municipal government structure, encouraging planning and collaboration, first through agencies such as the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (1949) and later through the creation of regional districts (1965) (Bish, 1990). A former BC Municipal Affairs Minister emphasized that regional districts were not to be "conceived as a fourth level of government, but as functional rather than a political amalgamation" (Smith, 2006, p. 156). Historically, the role of regional government has been focused on water, sewerage and solid waste services. Later regions in the province became more engaged with the provision of regional land-use and transportation planning (Bish, 1990).

As explained in Chapter 2, throughout the 1990s significant changes came to the region's form and function. In 1995, the provincial government amended the Growth Strategies Act to renew regional planning functions. The impact renewing these planning functions is explained below by Ken Cameron, former Manager of Policy and Planning at the GVRD:

The way [TransLink] evolved was that the transportation plan and the growth management plan were evolved together - because transportation produces patterns of land use and land use will differ depending on transportation. Two sides of the same coin. So we did that, and the livable region plan and transportation 2021 were adopted in 1996, and at the same time the provincial growth management legislation that gave all of this formal meaning.

So [the region] arrived there then in the mid-1990s with a very sophisticated plan for growth management and transportation, and some of the ability to implement the growth management side of it because we had the growth management legislation and there were regional context statements, there was a livable region strategic plan that had formal meaning, but there wasn't any kind of implementation agency of the transportation side that could build the transit vision that the plan needed. So that is how we got to the point of trying to say we should negotiate a new system of transportation governance and funding.

And again, this would have been when Glen Clark was the premier. Joy McPhail was the Minister. There was an openness because the Provincial government was putting \$250 million of provincial income tax dollars into transit for the lower mainland, which didn't make a lot of sense to them, so they were interested in a new system of funding and governance. (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016)

As noted by Cameron above, it was important for the region to be able to plan and manage both growth and transportation together. Cameron suggests that following the reinstatement of regional planning functions the GVRD realized there was a need for localized power in order to achieve regional planning objectives. Prior to the creation of TransLink in 1999, transportation governance was divided between multiple agencies and various levels of government. This created various challenges, as described by the GVRD in 1996 when the organization made a case to the provincial government for a new regional transportation authority:

Greater Vancouver is probably one of the more challenging cases [of governance] from an institutional point of view, with twenty individual

municipalities and numerous provincial transportation agencies directly or indirectly involved in transportation. In most other Canadian metropolitan areas there is a regional role in the delivery of 'regional' transportation services. This is not the case in Greater Vancouver, with program delivery being handled by municipalities and several mode-specific provincial agencies. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996b, p. 14)

The region's frustration with the province's control over transportation was also articulated in several media articles:

Politicians in the region have long decried Victoria's control over local services, and have been frustrated by the lack of funding for expansion of the bus system and the often arbitrary way provincial governments have selected and financed road and bridge construction around Greater Vancouver. (Simpson, 1998)

Politicians in the region have been pushing the provincial government since 1990 to give them more control over transit, citing the inadequacy of the B.C. Transit bus system as evidence that a senior government situated in Victoria is ill suited to deal with local transportation problems. (Simpson & Bula, 1998)

Once the new regional transportation authority was created, it assumed control over some roads, transit, vehicle emissions testing and other transportation services. TransLink also gained the financial capacity to levy taxes, tolls, and other charges. The region's new funding capacity was described by the GVRD as:

Constrained only, but quite properly, by ratification of the municipalities through votes at the GVRD. If the member municipalities endorse infrastructure and services planned by the Authority, they have the ability to ensure it can be funded. If they [municipalities] do not want the added charges, they have the ability to say no and accept lower levels of service. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997b, p. 24)

With the creation of the GVTAA and TransLink, the region would gain "local control" over transit and transportation planning (MacPhail, 1998a). Decision making would be shifted away from the provincial government to the region. Unlike the previous arrangements regarding transportation management, the new "Authority will not have to seek provincial government budgetary approvals, nor will provincial financial circumstances constrain total spending." (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1997a, p. 2). However, as evidenced by the vehicle levy, legislative constraints were still placed upon the region's overall capacity.

Considering Cameron's description of events above, the GVRD's motivation for the creation of TransLink seems to differ from the province's motivations. Even though the MacPhail cited the desire to provide the region with "local control" during the reading of Bill 36, the province's attempt to provide the region with local control was stunted by the legislative requirement for the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make legislative changes to require toll charges, user fees and motor vehicle charges on behalf of the region (Bill 36, 1998). According to former Premier Glen Clark, the province's motivation for TransLink was not actually to provide the region with local control over transportation:

That was the whole point of it [the creation of TransLink] - trying to push it down to the municipalities to have them put up [money] or shut up. They'd have to get involved in managing and running it, but it hasn't really worked out in a very pragmatic way. You need the provincial government to make the bigger decisions like I did on the Millennium Line... the province has to take on those bigger initiatives, and then the relatively smaller, lower cost initiatives, are managed by the regional authority who effect the region. (G. Clark, personal communication 2016)

For the GVRD, the creation of TransLink was about local control and empowering legislation that would help the region achieve land use and transportation planning goals. However, according to Clark (2016), the purpose of TransLink was a way to download some decision making and cost to the region, in order to have local government pay for transit, while still allowing the province the ability and freedom to impose financial and infrastructure decisions upon the region. As Cameron (2016) mentioned, it didn't make sense to the provincial government to spend \$250 million of general revenue income tax dollars for transit in the Lower Mainland.

The province and the region's subtly contrasting viewpoints about the purpose and role of TransLink are actually significant, specifically with regards to the pursuit of the vehicle levy. As demonstrated by Bob Paddon's (former GVRD Manager of Communication and Education) reflections below, the region went into the process of adopting and implementing the vehicle levy with the belief that they had gained local control over transit and that the province would support the region's decisions:

Nobody [at the regional level] thought the provincial government of the day would not implement what we had done. The whole concept of TransLink was to have local control. We [the region] had taken local control, and made



local decisions. Not easy decisions, but they had been done following very transparent due process. So to have a political decision happen at the provincial level that undermined that. [The vehicle levy decision] was just something no one really expected would happen. (B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016)

As evidenced by the next quote, the region made these assumptions because they were working with the same provincial government who had created and approved the GVTA:

The mistake we made locally was assuming that we didn't need that alignment with the provincial government. Because we just had had the government of the day [NDP] who had created TransLink, they knew we were going to do this, we just assumed they were going to let us do it. We really didn't line up the politics perhaps as much as we should have. (B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016)

Without understanding that the two bodies of government had very different perspectives about TransLink's role, and the overall approach to regional governance, the region's adoption of the vehicle levy did not focus on establishing a political alignment with the provincial government.

Martin Schaffer, the primary negotiator for the GVTA, provided further reflection upon the discord between the province and the region. He suggested that the negotiations should have required clearer terms between the two parties:

What we should have done is negotiated much harder and not even agreed to the devolution without the implementation being cast in stone. But people wanted to make the change and they saw great value in having transportation planned in an integrated way at the regional level. There is all sorts of good reasons for that. They wanted to secure that first and the principles by which that would be done and the powers and responsibilities under which that would be done, and then deal with the tax separately because what was important was that the legislation provided for that tax to be implemented. It wasn't the region that got cold feet and was afraid to implement it, it was the province. (M. Schaffer, personal communication, 2016)

The literature suggests that an intergovernmental disentanglement process can weaken the conditions for policymaking, as "disagreement between different levels of government lead to contradictory policies that are mutually destructive" (Wu et al., 2010,

p 2). In this instance, the region's attempt to gain local control over transportation failed because even though the provincial government had similar priorities to region, politics became more important than policy implementation. Former Vancouver City Councillor and GVRD and TransLink board member, Gordon Price, clarifies that the region's predicament was due to legislative challenges:

It's provincial legislation, they are the masters of any regional or local government, and so hence if they could have embedded [the vehicle levy] within the legislation and the automatic approvals so it never [would have] had to return either to a particular cabinet minister or the legislature. (G. Price, personal communication, 2016)

The province continues to withhold power over major financial and infrastructure decisions that affect the region, and as Clark (2016) noted above, this was their intent. Therefore, without a greater degree of political alignment between the region and the province the research concludes that the vehicle levy was simply not a political priority for the province. The implications of election and policy timing are further explored in the following section.

### **5.3. Politics and Timing**

As explored in Section 5.2, the vehicle levy proposal aroused an urban-suburban divide. Several Mayors formed a political alliance and threatened to leave the GVRD in response to TransLink's vehicle levy proposal. Moreover, because the province hadn't given the TransLink legislative control to implement new funding mechanisms, the vehicle levy decision reveals inconsistencies in the provincial government's approach to managing transportation. By assessing the political landscape in the 1990s, and by considering the influence of the NDP's leadership race, Section 5.3 will assess the NDP's vulnerability going into the 2001 provincial election and consider how the party's political motivations connect to the vehicle levy's technical issues and the region's jurisdictional obstacles.

### 5.3.1. The NDP's Scandals

As described by (Wilson, 2002) from 1991 to 1999 the NDP government was rocked by one scandal after another, to the point that they were constantly under attack. Specifically, in the early 1990s the scandals focused on the province's mounting debt, upset in regard to financial and land-use management issues, the management of environmental issues, as well as the misconduct in charitable gaming controversy (also known as "bingogate"). Collectively these scandals would lead to Mike Harcourt's resignation as premier in 1995 (Wilson, 2002). However, when Glen Clark came onto the political scene as candidate for premier, the emergence of a new leader brought life and hope back to the party, though only by a narrow margin (Carroll & Ratner 2005; Wilson 2002).

Even with Glen Clark as the new party leader, the NDP continued to be plagued with emerging scandals. In 1996 there was a BC Hydro scandal that was concerned with overseas investment "structured to result in significant profit for NDP friends and BC Hydro insiders" such as Glen Clark who was the former Minister responsible for BC Hydro (Wilson, 2002, p. 30). "The scandal was meant to define the new Clark regime, and to some extent it did, but not as the Liberals had hoped" (Wilson, 2002, p. 31). Also in 1996, various actions taken by the RCMP turned the media's focus toward a criminal investigation of two New Democrats with 20-year-old allegations of bribery, breach of trust, and criminal conspiracy. Even with these scandals in play, Clark's populist "On Your Side" campaign approach contrasted Gordon Campbell's "You Deserve Better" (which seemed elitist to the public) led the NDP back to victory for a second term (Wilson, 2002).

The 1996 "polls did show that there was one policy area where Clark had an identified weakness, while Campbell rated "strong" - this was economic policy, particularly dealing with debts, deficits, and the economy" (Wilson, 2002, p. 42). The NDP "failed to develop an alternative vision of economic management for social democratic purposes under the new conditions of contemporary capitalism" (Carroll & Ratner, 2005). Following the 1996 election there was an uptake of publications in the

media with stories and editorials challenging the credibility of the Clark government in terms of economics and corruption (Wilson, 2002).

One of the most damning scandals was the “fudge-it budget” scandal (a reference to the 1996 pre-election NDP budget, which was tabled in the legislature as a balanced budget prior to the NDP dropping the writ) which produced an unbalanced budget (O’Neil, 1999; Wilson, 2002). The media, the opposition and some of the public claimed that this alone should have been enough reason to launch another election, since Clark had “misled them by fudging the budget numbers so that he could campaign on a balanced budget, and then adjusting the numbers afterward once he had a renewed mandate” (Wilson, 2002, p. 58). This scandal elevated public concern in regards to the NDP’s ability to make financial decisions, and became a filter to judge all the NDP’s decisions.

One other decision that further branded the NDP’s financial track record poorly was the catamaran ferries (fast cats) commissioned and constructed by the BC Ferry Corporation. This scandal would go on to be dubbed a “fast ferry fiasco”, to describe the NDP’s decision which produced poorly constructed ferries that came in \$240 million over budget (O’Neil, 1999). Wilson (2002) explains that “when added to the fudge-it budget discussions, the decision to build three high-speed high-cost catamarans reinforced the public image of the NDP as a fiscally irresponsible government” (Wilson, 2002, p. 118).

Regardless of the policy initiative or astute leadership, the NDP continued to be seen as corrupt, unaccountable, and fiscally irresponsible. This messaging was used strategically by the Liberals, explains Wilson (2002), noting:

The one area that was consistently identified as Clark’s weakness was fiscal policy. It was predictable that the Campbell Liberals and their supports would launch a campaign that targeted Glen Clark based on his personal credibility, and that this would focus almost exclusively on fiscal policy. (p. 55)

Wilson (2002) explains that “controversies had a profound effect on the Clark government’s ability to receive credit for public policy initiatives... they also opened the door to a widespread feeling of contempt for the Clark government and to a general

culture of disrespect” (p. 101). As characterized by Lunman (2000) Clark’s NDP was a “scandal-scarred government” that was falling behind in the polls:

The NDP is sitting low in the polls behind the opposition Liberals and has come under repeated attack over the past 3½ years over high deficits, so-called "fudge-it" budgets and overspending on megaprojects, including the \$400-million fast ferry, which cost twice as much as initially projected and has been plagued by problems. (Lunman, 2000)

These scandals framed an ongoing narrative and critique about the party’s leadership and financial stewardship, which became a lens the party eventually adopted to assess the vehicle levy decision. The levy – just like the provincial government itself – was not able to withstand the critiques of the BC Liberals, the media, and the opposition alliance of regional leaders, interest groups and the public. One *Vancouver Sun* article highlighted that the vehicle levy proposal was “difficult to sell to a tax-weary public” (Munro, 2000d). Media discourse had framed the levy as an additional tax burden at a time when many Metro Vancouver residents already felt they were over taxed with the Air Care program, photo radar, and gas taxes (Munro, 2000d). As explained by Farnworth:

Another tax, another levy, that was part of the public narrative that was out there... tied in with photo radar for example, that was viewed as a cash cow for government, and that the vehicle levy would be a cash cow for government, and there was no real discussion in terms of actually what it was for. (M. Farnworth, personal communication, 2016).

Furthermore, Farnworth explains how the anti-tax agenda interfered with the vehicle levy’s implementation:

At that time levels of taxation in this province were very much an issue of discussion. You had the business community organizing these forums on what we need to do in this province which were really geared toward defeating the government (NDP) but the focus was very much on taxation and what people were paying... So that was the environment in which it was being discussed. People were already paying enough - that would be the prevailing attitude. (M. Farnworth, personal communication, 2016)

The issue of democratic accountability was also a criticism of TransLink’s Board of Directors, who was not directly elected by the public. To the NDP, the vehicle levy appeared to be a new tax collected by an authority not elected by tax payers:

Another part of the issue is that people were all so upset because it was the GVRD which is not directly elected and [TransLink] was not directly accountable [to the electorate]. That was also a problem in the eyes of the public (M. Farnworth, personal communication, 2016).

The issue of “taxation without representation” was an issue that had not been reconciled by the creation of the GVTA (Campbell, 1998; G. Clark, personal communication, 2016; Munro, 2000c). Glen Clark described this aspect of TransLink’s to be philosophically challenging for him with regards to implementing a vehicle levy:

TransLink has a fundamental flaw that continues to this day, and that is that it is not accountable and not elected. We have a fundamental premise that is taxation without representation, which is a terrible thing and it causes all kinds of problems. (G. Clark, personal communication, 2016).

Accountability would have mattered both to the public, and to elected officials. If the province implemented the levy, the government would have been seen as giving the organization new taxation powers. Because the NDP was already being met with a lot of criticism, TransLink’s governance structure was one more factor that influenced provincial decision makers. This is further explained by Clark, who described his personal opposition to the vehicle levy:

I was opposed to the vehicle levy because it was an attempt to oppose a tax by a body that couldn't be held accountable for that tax as a source of revenue. I felt strongly against a new tax, for a new organization, from a new source, that would have been imposed by a provincial government and the spending would have been done by this other body, the fact that there was an election coming up would absolutely have had an impact on this. Again, for the exact reason, we'd be taking the heat for the tax and not getting the benefit of the spending which is never a comfortable position to be in. (G. Clark, personal communication, 2016)

Even though Glen Clark had stepped down from his role as Premier in 1999, prior to TransLink’s adoption of the vehicle levy in 2000, he was still a Cabinet Minister at the time the vehicle levy was rejected by the provincial government in 2001. According to Clark’s recollection of events, he had expressed concerns about accountability to his colleagues:

Really, I was probably one of the very few people in the government who felt strongly about the philosophical question. I think - and I don't want to

sound arrogant or simplistic - but I think in reality it was mostly me that killed it. Sometimes... you can analyze history in retrospect looking at the documents but you can't underestimate the influence of individuals in the process. George Puil was the protagonist on the other side and he would probably blame me entirely for not doing it, and he'd be mostly right. (G. Clark, personal communication, 2016)

Interestingly, Clark's opinion about TransLink appears to have changed over time. One article by the *Vancouver Sun* captured (then) Premier Glen Clark's thoughts, suggesting that in 1999 he believed the GVTA did have the ability to implement and collect the levy:

I don't support the GVTA's transit levy, and I certainly don't want to see ICBC collect it. The whole purpose of moving it [the authority over Greater Vancouver transit] to the region was to allow regional control, and not to have it come back on the provincial government or a provincial agency like ICBC for collection. (Munro, 1999)

In this quote, Clark's description of TransLink's authority is technically inaccurate, which is peculiar since Clark would have been directly involved in crafting the GVTA legislation. As noted, Clark has a stated preference for provincial approval over major transportation decisions, and the belief that TransLink is not directly accountable to the public. Therefore, it is possible that Clark influenced the vehicle levy in two ways. First, by ensuring that TransLink's legislation required provincial government approval for the vehicle levy, and then again by reinforcing his opinions with his colleagues (about the vehicle levy and TransLink's accountability) after TransLink had adopted the vehicle levy. Regardless of Clark's personal influence, it is clear that the political needs of the provincial government were likely prioritized over the region's planning and policy efforts.

In summary, the ongoing scandals of the 1990s and the public criticism of the Clark government put NDP leaders in a politically difficult situation, specifically regarding taxes and accountability. The Liberals were organized and continued to attack the NDP on financial and economic issues, including the vehicle levy. Party leaders, like Clark and Farnworth, were aware of how the vehicle levy played into the party's ongoing struggles. As such, the vehicle levy was politically challenging to implement, and it presented few benefits for the provincial government. Leading into a provincial election, and a party leadership race, the party's decision making was focused on strategies to retain support.

### **5.3.2. The NDP Leadership Race & the 2001 Provincial Election**

The timing of the region's adoption of the vehicle levy occurred approximately six months before the 2001 provincial election, and also during a NDP leadership race that was triggered when Glen Clark stepped down from his role as Premier in 1999. The political ethos of the late 1990s, the NDP's record on matters such as transportation, financial issues, and accountability, combined with the timing of the vehicle levy created less than ideal conditions for sound public policy making (Wu et al., 2009).

Once the "Casinogate" scandal put Clark under the microscope for the allegation about receiving a bribe in the form of free home renovations, he resigned from the position of Premier in August 1999. The NDP was launched into a new leadership race right before the 2001 general election. Ujjal Dosanjh emerged as one of the most likely candidates to become the new leader of the NDP (Lunman, 2000). Even though Dosanjh ran for Vancouver-Kensington riding, the party's hope that Dosanjh could secure a strong relationship with the Indo-Canadian community in places such as Surrey. At the February convention in 2000, Ujjal Dosanjh won the leadership race "becoming the first Indo-Canadian premier in Canada" (Wilson, 2002 p 175). Because the party was mindful of their relationship with Surrey (O'Neil 1999; J. McPhail, personal communication, 2016; Wilson 2002), the NDP's decision to not implement the levy was part of a larger strategy to secure a base of supporters for the MLA's in Surrey's suburban ridings. This understanding of the NDP's decision and strategy was confirmed by one source:

The vehicle levy was done at the cabinet table when I wasn't in cabinet. I resigned as minister of Finance in 1999, Glen Clark resigned as premier in summer of 1999, and we (NDP) were thrown into a leadership race. Ujjal Dosanjh as I recall... specifically being very worried about what that would do politically for the leadership race and particularly him. I remember that from the caucus discussions. (J. McPhail, personal communication, 2016)

Moreover, the political timing of the levy was poorly planned because the provincial election was only a six months away when TransLink requested the province sign an Order In Council to implement the levy. At the time "the NDP was trying to muster favour with the population that was against the tax, it was crass politics" (M. Schaffer, personal communication, 2016). As Wu et al. (2010) explains that even policy proposals with true potential often get overlooked when decisions are made purely



based on politics.

Gord Price, a former TransLink board member also acknowledged the difficult timing of the vehicle levy, explaining: “Should we have waited? Yes, obviously. Would it have mattered? Probably not. Leading into an election is just about the worst time to ask anybody to take political risks” (G. Price, personal communication, 2016). However, the region was not positioned to wait to implement the levy. For one, if the region waited until after the 2001 election the BC Liberals likely would not have supported the levy, either. In fact, the BC Liberal Party was campaigning on holding a regional referendum to decide if the levy should be implemented. The political uncertainty put pressure on the region to get the levy implemented before the 2001 election. One interview participant explained the region’s urgency to move forward with the vehicle levy:

We were well aware that the Liberals were running on opposition to it as well. We certainly wanted to have it in before government changed, so that they couldn't force a referendum on it. There were some real timelines. All these things are hugely political. (B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016)

The timing of the provincial election forced the region to act on implementing the vehicle levy. The NDP’s low popularity (O’Neil, 1999) continued to grow at the same time as the region pursued the vehicle levy. By 2001, “the NDP was all but written off as a contender for government in the coming provincial election. The media coverage and polling had been negative for so long that few people could remember a time when the NDP was popular” (Wilson, 2002, p. 29). As reported by O’Neil (1999), in the polls “the B.C. Liberals [were] far ahead among decided voters, with 58% support; the NDP were a distant second at 16%”. Another *Globe and Mail* article, published in January 2000, indicated that support for the NDP hovered below 20% in public opinion polls (Mickleburgh, 2000).

The falling popularity of the NDP was mentioned by several research participants as a factor that influenced the provincial government’s decision:

It basically was a questioning of timing of that particular initiative, the timing of the forthcoming provincial election because at that time we had gone to fixed election dates. So the election date was set and the NDP were in the

tank in the polls. As I have been told the Premier was presented with this proposition: "you are at 16% in the polls, if you want to go to 1.6% then just approve this vehicle levy." They were in death spiral anyways - but it would have been political suicide or self-immolation. (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016)

We just chalked it up to the politics of the day. It was clear that the NDP was losing the election. I remember the announcement - it very much used saying "we've heard from the public and we aren't going to be supportive of this" to garner some political votes. (B. Paddon, personal communication, 2016)

Unfortunately, we were going into an election with a party that was in pretty rough shape... I'd suspect that it didn't take them very long to decide that "no way are we going to be hung with collecting from every driver another tax to benefit an agency for which we [NDP] only had some responsibility for." I think that was basically it. It was a political decision. And fair enough, you can't ask politicians to knowingly commit political suicide. I suspect they felt that was pretty close to it. (G. Price, personal communication, 2016)

As such, the NDP chose not to support the levy's implementation.

In January of 2001, Mike Farnworth (the MLA and Minister of Social Development and Economic Security) announced the NDP's decision to not sign an Order in Council to implement the vehicle levy. At the time he explained in his announcement that "there's no support for it -- not from the public, not from their own Board members" (McCellan, 2000). In an interview with Farnworth, he later reconfirmed those same sentiments:

The government was unpopular, it was facing an election in a few months, and the public hated the idea of the vehicle levy. Cabinet was like "we aren't going to approve it then." It is as simple as that. (M. Farnworth, personal communication, 2016)

Farnworth's statement has demonstrated the importance of election cycles and the timing of public policy decision making, but it fails to provide any deeper insight into the technical aspects, sequencing of events, or the actors that made the vehicle levy unpopular in the first place. These influences were described in sections 5.1. and 5.2. None the less, when analyzing the immediate influences on the provincial government the vehicle levy failed to move forward because of election timing and the falling popularity of the NDP. Farnworth explains the situation from his perspective, candidly

stating: “Every decision [the NDP made] at that time was influenced by the impending election... The election cycle influences everything.” (M. Farnworth, personal communication, 2016). The literature also confirms that election timing does influence public policy and political decision-making (Stone 2002; Wu et al., 2009; Peters 2015).

Unfortunately, for the NDP, the decision about the levy likely made no impact on their political positioning. In retrospect, with regards to the vehicle levy, MacPhail (2016) mused about what might have happened if the NDP had allowed the levy to be implemented:

[Implementing the vehicle levy] couldn't have harmed us any more than that election. We went down to two seats. We might have got credit for taking a stand on something. It couldn't have harmed us any more than the present political environment in terms of the 2001 election outcome. (J. McPhail, personal communications, 2016)

The NDP lost the provincial election to the Gordon Campbell's Liberals in the 2001 provincial election. The NDP's seat count at the legislative assembly fell from 39 to 2. The Liberal's “landslide victory was a result of many factors, including the promise to cut taxes and provide fiscal responsibility – including balanced budgets” (Wilson, 2002, p. 312).

## Chapter 6. Conclusions

Throughout the 1990s, the provincial government and the GVRD worked together to establish TransLink, a new multi-modal transportation authority that was intended to consolidate the region's fragmented approach to transit and transportation. The region and the province both expressed and shared the desire to enhance local control over transportation in the Lower Mainland (K. Cameron, personal communication, 2016; MacPhail, 1998b). In 1999, TransLink became the new regional transportation authority tasked with managing the major road network and all public transportation within the GVRD (Wales, 2008), soon after successfully adopted the 2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan. To a degree, this plan was dependent upon the implementation of the vehicle levy to fund infrastructure and service improvements across the region. After several months of consultation with regional stakeholders and the public, TransLink requested that the provincial government approve new legislation to provide TransLink with the authority to implement and enforce the collection of the vehicle levy. In January 2001, the provincial government made the decision not to support TransLink's request.

Based upon the analysis presented in Chapter 5, this thesis concludes that technical, organizational, and political considerations influenced the provincial government's decision to not implement the vehicle levy. The analysis has interpreted these factors as entangled and interwoven events that exerted influence upon one another and the final decision to not implement the vehicle levy. As the literature suggests, public policy decision making is an iterative and ongoing process, often a combination of multiple decisions that culminate into a final verdict (Howlett 2009; Jenkins 1978; Stone 2002).

This thesis has found that the approach and rushed implementation of the vehicle levy resulted in various problems, and ultimately the loss of political support, which reaffirms the need for strategic implementation of TDM policies (Litman, 2003; Richter et al., 2009). TransLink's approach to the vehicle levy changed overtime, and was different from the distance-based insurance approach that had been proposed in the GVRD's *Transport 2021* plan. The proposed application of the vehicle levy was

problematic because it did not affect mode choice or influence congestion (Kitchen & Slack, 2016). Moreover, even though the vehicle levy was committed to fund TransLink's STP, the predominant media narrative suggested that infrastructure initiatives and service increases should have been delivered before the levy was implemented. So, while the vehicle levy was needed to fund transit, transit was needed to garner public support for the levy – specifically the support of suburban residents. Overall, these findings reaffirm the value of prioritizing incentive based policies before penalties. TransLink's continued efforts to implement TDM should focus on coupling incentives with penalties. Further research is needed to re-evaluate the effectiveness of the user-pay model as a demand management tool and as a financing tool, which should be the first step in reconsidering what other alternative mechanisms could be used to fund transportation, such as progressive taxes.

The thesis finds that TransLink's approach to the vehicle levy sparked urban-suburban tensions that were frustrated by the distributional differences in transportation coverage. Surrey's Mayor Doug McCallum led an organized campaign against the vehicle levy, and regional civic leaders were politically divided on the issue. The lack of consensus at the regional level did not inspire the provincial government to support the vehicle levy, and instead resulted in a status quo approach that emphasized a hierarchical relationship between the province, the region, and local municipalities. Moreover, TransLink's vehicle levy request was made in the midst of the NDP's leadership race, and only six months ahead of the 2001 provincial election. The NDP's political popularity was falling, which heightened their vulnerability to contentious issues such as the vehicle levy. Most research participants confirmed that the provincial government's decision was politically driven by the lack of public support for the vehicle levy. However, this understanding alone does not provide sufficient insight into why and how the vehicle levy became such a politically contentious issue. It was the contradictions of the vehicle levy that led to cascading political problems that connect to, and resulted in, the provincial government's intervention and the non-implementation of the levy.

This thesis also concludes that the provincial government's approach to managing transportation governance and planning in the Lower Mainland during the late 1990s and

early 2000s was inconsistent. TransLink was created to provide the region with enhanced local control over transportation in the Lower Mainland (MacPhail, 1998b; TransLink, 2000) yet the structure of the GVTAA constrained TransLink's ability to implement the vehicle levy without final approval from the provincial government. The concept of local control was "meaningless" to TransLink because the authority was never given the power to implement the necessary revenue sources it needed to achieve its strategic vision (MacPhail, 1998b). The vehicle levy is just one case study that helps to reveal certain jurisdictional challenges of the GVTA. Because various provincial interventions in regional transportation continue to occur, further research is needed to assess TransLink's overall impact on transportation demand management to understand how the agency contributes to regional planning and strategic goals.

Moving forward, TransLink must demonstrate a genuine interest in public opinion through their engagement programs and consultations in order to help counter balance negative political criticisms. This is particularly important because TransLink's Board of Directors is not elected by the public, and therefore the agency must demonstrate strong public support for its initiatives. Instead of rushing the implementation of the vehicle levy, a more deliberative consultation process might have generated a different degree of public – and therefore political – support. Further research is needed to evaluate TransLink's stakeholder and public engagement initiatives regarding the vehicle levy to determine what level of public support existed for this policy.

Finally, the provincial government will need to return focus and attention to TransLink's governance model. To this day, regional decision makers wrestle with the provincial government for control over financial tools and decision-making power. Recent examples include the 2015 Regional Transportation Plebiscite, the Massey Tunnel Replacement Project, and the BC NDP and BC Liberal 2017 election campaign promises to eliminate/cap tolling on the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges. In the region, transportation decisions are often effected by provincial political considerations. Intergovernmental interference is not unique to the GVRD and the NDP, but instead is characteristic of the ongoing institutional struggle for power between the province and the region:

I want to be clear about this: it [the lack of local control provided through the GVTAA] is not a problem that is unique to the New Democrats; it was a problem that took place with previous governments as well. In fact, I think it's an institutional problem that we have to overcome to make sure that transportation decisions are made so they reflect the best interests of the region. (Campbell, 1998)

Further examination is needed to confirm how significantly the vehicle levy decision – or subsequent provincial interventions in regional transportation – undermined TransLink's ability to plan, manage, and expand transportation in the Lower Mainland. For example, figure 5 appears to suggest that TransLink's total number of annual passenger trips fell below 1989 levels, around the time of the vehicle levy decision and when a Coast Mountain Bus Company strike occurred. An analysis of service hours, ridership, and financial information could determine the exact impact the non-implementation of the vehicle levy had on TransLink.

This thesis confirms that under the current system of multi-level governance, developing a comprehensive, sustainable, multi-modal transportation network in Metro Vancouver will only be achievable if decision makers can learn to set aside their differences to collaborate on solutions and develop innovative policies that take action to reduce automobile dependency. The time and effort required to reach that level of consensus across local, regional and provincial decision makers might be outpaced by the many challenges that the growing metropolitan region faces. Instead, the literature suggests that it is now time for Canadian cities and regions to have access to a wider range of tax choices and powers that will assist in addressing the needs and desires of their communities (Kitchen & Slack, 2016). This thesis demonstrates the provincial government is responsible for deciding when and how to empower cities and regions, and that the provincial government could have embedded controls into the legislation that would have allowed for the region to implement the vehicle levy, but instead chose not to. The provincial government will need to return focus and attention to TransLink's governance structure in order to provide the agency with the power it was explicitly promised by the provincial government in 1997. Arguably, these powers are equally important to the region today as they were 20 years ago.

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## Appendix A.

### Chronological Summary of Events

<b>Chronological Summary of Events</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Event</b>
1949	The provincial government establishes the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) as the regional planning body for the entire Lower Mainland area.
1966	The region's first plan is adopted, titled Chance and Challenge
1968	The LMRPB's planning responsibilities were dissolved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, and divided into four regional districts in the Lower Mainland.
1983	Following re-election of the Social Credit government all regional districts were stripped of their planning and zoning authority.
1989	Bill 19 was passed, enabling regional districts to provide coordination, research and analytical services related to the development of regional districts.
1992	The provincial government begins an extensive consultation process to strengthen regional planning institutions in BC.
June, 1993	Transport 2021: Long and Medium Range Strategic Transportation Plans are approved by the GVRD.
1994	GVRD publishes Creating our Future: The History, Status, and Prospectus of Regional Planning in Greater Vancouver.
1995	The Growth Strategies Act becomes law, providing authority for regional districts to develop regional growth management strategies - but only on a voluntary basis.

1995	A joint project was established between the provincial government and the GVRD called the TDM Implementation Strategy.
1996	Livable Region Strategic Plan adopted by GVRD.
1996	Montreal's Metropolitan Transportation Agency is created by the province of Quebec and receives revenue from a vehicle license surcharge of \$30 per vehicle in the region.
1996	The GVRD approached the Province and launches an initiative to explore transportation governance and funding alternatives.
April 5, 1997	The GVRD and the Province sign a Framework Agreement for Negotiations of Transportation Governance and Funding in Greater Vancouver.
October, 1997	City of Surrey Councillor, Pam Lewin, brings forward a motion to investigate the viability of Surrey's separation from the GVRD over sewerage costs and the GVTAA proposal.
June 19, 1998	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act (Bill 36) First Moved in the BC Legislative Assembly.
June 29, 1998	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act (Bill 36) Second Moved in the BC Legislative Assembly.
October, 1998	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority created through provincial legislation. Organization was given responsibility for the region's major road network and public transit, as well as overseeing transportation demand management, active transportation, AirCare vehicle emission testing, and intelligent transportation systems technology.
April 1, 1999	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority begins operations, and is known as TransLink.
Fall of 1999	TransLink begins consultation on the 2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan.

August 25, 1999	Premier Glen Clark resigns from his position but stays on as an MLA. Dan Miller becomes the interim Premier.
February 24, 2000	At the NDP convention Ujjal Dosanjh is elected by party membership to be the leader of the party and the interim Premier.
April 19, 2000	TransLink board approves \$7 billion STP, which requires that a vehicle levy be implemented to fund the plan.
April, 2000	The Langley Township Council authorized staff to create a report investigating separation from the GVRD.
May, 2000	City of Surrey's Mayor Doug McCallum forms an alliance with other municipalities south of the Fraser River who wish to separate from the GVRD.
June, 2000	TransLink board votes to spend \$400,000 on public relations program aimed at convincing motorists to accept a \$75 vehicle levy.
June, 2000	BCAA launches a petition denouncing TransLink's proposed \$75 vehicle levy or new gas tax.
June, 2000	Almost 3,000 Langley Township residents sign a petition demanding that Langley leave the GVRD as a response to the proposed vehicle levy charge.
October, 2000	500 Langley Township residents arrive at the Langley Civic Centre to protest vehicle levy.
October, 2000	TransLink releases the results of a poll by Ipsos-Reid which found 74 per cent of Greater Vancouver residents support its five-year strategic transportation plan -- even if it means paying a vehicle levy. The poll also found that 55 per cent of respondents support a pollution-based vehicle levy -- the highest level of acceptance among the various levy options that also included a flat \$75 annual fee.
November, 2000	City of Richmond is invited to join the alliance to separate from the GVRD.

November, 2000	BCAA and BCTA join forces to lobby the federal government for funding for transportation improvements in the GVRD.
November, 2000	TransLink directors defer vote on the vehicle levy.
November, 2000	UBC students come out in support of TransLink's vehicle levy.
November, 2000	TransLink's board of directors votes 7-5 in favor of approving vehicle levy (a modified plan that would assess motorists based on a combination of the weight of their vehicles and insurance classification) and to request that the federal and provincial governments for an additional share of gas tax.
November, 2000	Federal Finance Minister Paul Martin rejects the TransLink's request for federal gas tax.
December, 2000	City of Surrey Councillor, Marvin Hunt, brings forward a motion to examine regional restructuring. Motion is approved by Council with 7 in favor and two opposed.
December, 2000	Gordon Campbell (Leader of the Liberal Party) and other Liberal MLAs come out against the vehicle levy, suggest that if elected in 2001 there will be a "referendum" required to approve it.
December, 2000	By a vote of 56 to 50, the GVRD board approves the vehicle levy.
December, 2000	The Mayor of Delta, Surrey and Langley Township ask for a meeting with Jim Doyle, the province's Minister of Municipal Affairs, to discuss separating from the GVRD and TransLink.
January, 2001	MLA Mike Farnworth makes an announcement on behalf of the provincial government, stating that they will not support the vehicle levy collection. Vehicle levy does not go into effect.

## **Appendix B.**

### **Sample Interview Questions**

1. What was the purpose of the vehicle levy as a policy tool?
2. What can you tell me about the provincial government's decision to withdraw support of TransLink's vehicle levy in 2001? What was your involvement with this decision?
3. Can you tell me about what kinds of stakeholders or interest groups were involved in the decision making process? How did they influence the final decision?
4. Can you tell me how residents from different municipalities across Metro Vancouver responded to the vehicle levy proposal? Was there a noticeable difference between urban and suburban areas?
5. Did the 2001 provincial election influence the decision about the vehicle levy? If so, how and why?
6. What would have been required to implement the vehicle? What else would have been needed to retain the provincial government's support?
7. What do you think would have happened if the vehicle levy had been implemented?
8. To the best of your knowledge, how has the decision about the vehicle levy affected the financing of sustainable transportation infrastructure in Metro Vancouver?
9. Do you have anything else that you'd like to tell me about the TransLink's vehicle levy, or the financing of sustainable transportation in Metro Vancouver?

## Appendix C.

### TransLink and GVRD Board Motions

<p><b><u>It was MOVED and SECONDED</u></b></p> <p>(1) That the Board endorse the proposed GVTA program as consistent with the broad strategic objectives of the GVRD.</p> <p>(2) (a) That the Board endorse the proposed GVTA financial strategy, including relying on the transition fund to help cover expenses in 1999/2000 and the adoption of the necessary combination of fare increases/parking taxes/vehicle levies and an extra levy on benefitting properties as a revenue stream, pursuant to the legislative provisions, in 2000 and beyond to maintain the cost of the proposed program; and</p> <hr/> <p>Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Board of Directors held Friday, February 26, 1999 Page 4 of 18</p> <p>012</p> <hr/> <p>(b) That the Board recommend that the GVTA Board make an explicit endorsement in principle of the financial strategy underlying the proposed budget.</p> <p>(3) That the Board:</p> <p>(a) acknowledge the transfer of the "tax room" created by the demise of the hospital planning function to the GVTA, and direct staff to delete the budget for hospital planning included in the GVRD provisional budget from the GVRD final budget; and</p> <p>(b) request the GVTA to include in its one-time transition cost payment to the GVRD the amount required to cover the 1999 costs incurred by the GVRD for the final operation and wind up of the hospital planning function in 1999.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><u>CARRIED</u></b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Director Scholtens voted in the negative. Directors Kennedy, Littlemore and Villeneuve absent at the vote.</p>
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Figure C1. GVRD Motion to Endorse GVTA Financial Strategy

Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District Meeting, 1999.



**3.8 Strategic Transportation Plan**

Report dated April 6, 2000 from Larry Ward, Senior Vice-President, Planning and Service Contracts, and On Table Item 3.8 Attachment.

In response to concerns raised by the Board, Mr. Dobell noted that while the Plan is for a five-year term, the Board will be provided annually with a three-year budget projection and ten-year trend, to allow for any necessary adjustments in programs and revenues. The Board requested that a number of specific issues be considered at the time of the public consultation on the vehicle levy.

**MOVED AND SECONDED**

- A. That the Board approve the Strategic Transportation Plan; and
- B. That the Board forward the Strategic Transportation Plan to the GVRD Board for review and ratification.

**CARRIED**

Figure C2. GVRD Motion to Endorse TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan  
Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2000a.

**Main Motion**

**It was MOVED and SECONDED**

That the Board approve the vehicle levy option based on vehicle weight and insurance class, (as a proxy for pollution) with:

- a) a minimum charge of \$40 and a maximum charge of \$120 for automobiles, as set out in the report dated October 18, 2000 titled "Strategic Transportation Plan Funding Options: Recommendation", and
- b) an average levy of \$190 for commercial vehicles.

**Amendment to the Main Motion**

That the main motion be amended, by adding to the end of the main motion, the following phrase:

“And that the Board continue to pursue as its first priority and preference, a Federal government contribution in support of funding for the Strategic Transportation Plan and that a formal request be forwarded to the Provincial government for an increase to the gas tax in this region (1 cent per litre in 2001, 4 cents per litre additional in 2002) and that the vehicle levy be eliminated, or reduced to the extent that federal support and/or Provincial government approval for a gas tax increase is forthcoming.

**CARRIED**

Directors Grinnell, Hunt, Kumagai  
McCallum and Randall voted in the negative.

**Deferral Motion**

**It was MOVED and SECONDED**

That consideration of the main motion (the vehicle levy option based on vehicle weight and insurance class) be deferred pending the opportunity for Director Randall to discuss the matter concerning an increase to the gas tax with caucus by no later than December 15, 2000.

**DEFEATED**

**Question on the Main Motion as Amended**

Question was then called on the main motion as amended and it was

**CARRIED**

Directors Grinnell, Hunt, Kumagai  
McCallum and Randall voted in the negative.

*The main motion as amended now reads as follows:*

*That the Board approve the vehicle levy option based on vehicle weight and insurance class, (as a proxy for pollution) with:*

- a) a minimum charge of \$40 and a maximum charge of \$120 for automobiles, as set out in the report dated October 18, 2000 titled "Strategic Transportation Plan Funding Options: Recommendation", and*
- b) an average levy of \$190 for commercial vehicles.*

*And that the Board continue to pursue as its first priority and preference, a Federal government contribution in support of funding for the Strategic Transportation Plan and that a formal request be forwarded to the Provincial government for an increase to the gas tax in this region (1 cent per litre in 2001, 4 cents per litre additional in 2002) and that the vehicle levy be eliminated, or reduced to the extent that federal support and/or Provincial government approval for a gas tax increase is forthcoming.*

**It was MOVED and SECONDED**

That the report dated November 17, 2000 from Robert H. Moncur, Chair, Regional Administrative Advisory Committee titled "Strategic Transportation Plan Funding Options - Response to TransLink Board Resolution" be received for information.

**CARRIED**

Figure C3. TransLink's Board Motion Approving the Vehicle Levy  
Source: TransLink, 2000d.

**It was MOVED and SECONDED**

That the Board approve the vehicle levy option based on vehicle weight and insurance class (as a proxy for pollution) with:

- a) a minimum charge of \$40 and a maximum charge of \$120 for automobiles, as set out in the report dated October 18, 2000 titled "Strategic Transportation Plan Funding Options: Recommendation;"
- b) an average levy of \$190 for commercial vehicles; and
- c) that the proposed vehicle levy be eliminated or reduced to the extent that federal support and/or provincial government approval for a gas tax increase is forthcoming.

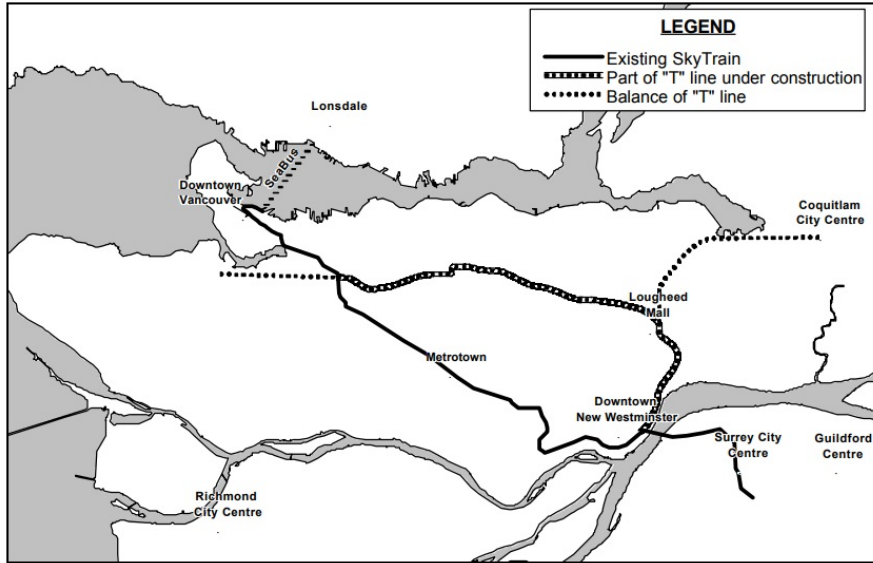
**Figure C4. GVRD Board Motion Approving the Vehicle Levy**

Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2000b.

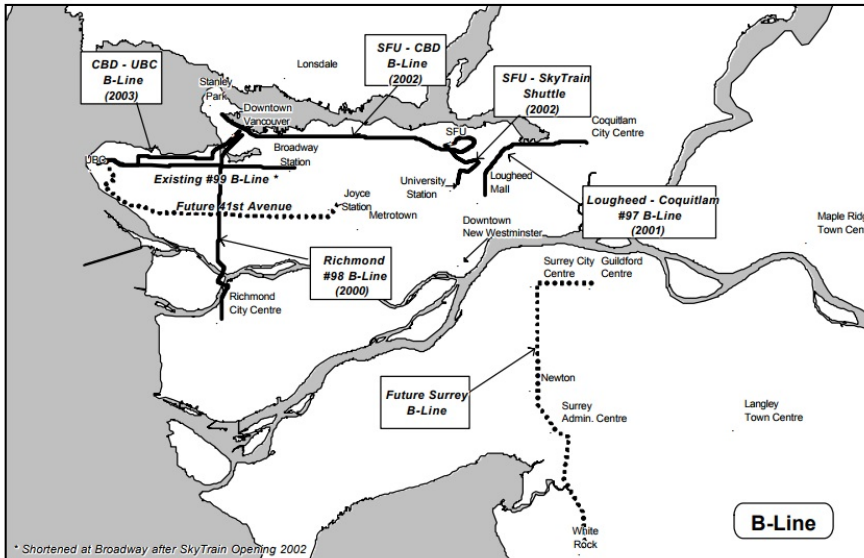
# Appendix D.

## TransLink's 2000-2005 STP Infrastructure and Service Improvements (Maps)

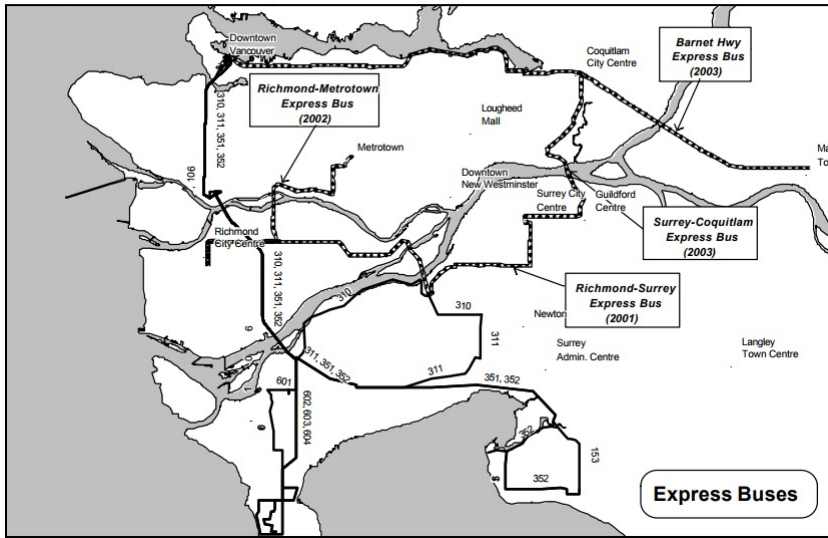
*Existing SkyTrain Line and the Planned "T-Line"*



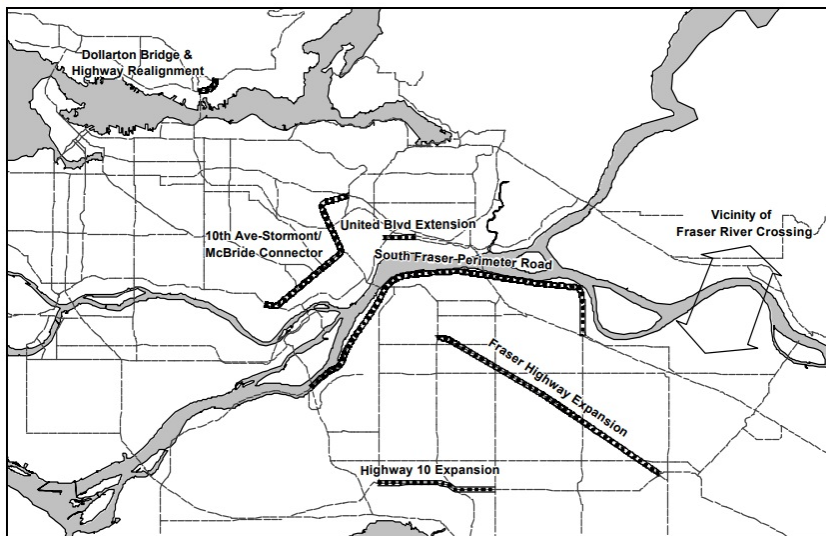
*B-Line*



**Existing and Proposed Express Bus Routes**



**Potential Major Capital Projects**



Source: TransLink, 2000f.

## Appendix E.

### Elections to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia (1986-2001) - Seats Won by Party

Party	Government In Power			
	Social Credit	New Democratic		Liberal
	1986	1991	1996	2001
Social Credit	47	7	-	-
Liberal	-	17	33	77
New Democratic Party	22	51	39	2
Reform	-	-	2	-
Progressive Democratic Alliance	-	-	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>79</b>

Source: Politics in British Columbia, n.d.