

**STUCK IN GRIDLOCK: AGENDA-SETTING AND AGENDA MANAGEMENT— A
CASE STUDY OF TRANSLINK- THE GREATER VANCOUVER TRANSPORTATION
AUTHORITY**

by

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Title of Thesis

Stuck in Gridlock: Agenda-Setting and Agenda Management—A Case Study of TransLink—The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority

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Abstract

On July 30, 1998, the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act* received assent from the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The Act, held up by urban planners as an exemplar for its unambiguous linkage of urban land use planning and transportation issues, established the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (TransLink) as the coordinating agency for transportation planning, the delivery of transit services, major arterial roads, and air quality programs that support the Greater Vancouver Regional District's (GVRD) Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP). The Act also provided TransLink with revenue sources that are the envy of other urban metropolitan regions across Canada, including gasoline, property, and parking taxes, as well as the ability to establish tolls on new roads in the region.

Yet despite these unprecedented powers within the Canadian urban context, TransLink has experienced significant problems in implementing its initial regional transportation agenda. This thesis presents the hypothesis that during preparations of its Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005, TransLink failed to consider the potential for outside actors to formulate an alternative transportation agenda for the region. With respect to outside actors, this thesis hypothesizes that there exists more than one type of outside actor, which deviates from scholarly work to date. In this case, this thesis proposes that outside actors can be categorised on the basis of resources and motivations for action.

Stemming from the mobilization of outside actors, this thesis hypothesizes that institutional actors can use a variety of substantive and procedural instruments to influence an institutional agenda. In this case, it is evident that TransLink deployed a variety of instruments against outsider actors: first, to discredit the outside organizations, and second, to incorporate the agendas presented by outsiders following the collapse of a proposed funding mechanism to pay for urban transportation improvements.

Dedication

To my father Herbert, who taught me to question everything;
To my mother Margaret, who taught me question everything rationally; and
To my wife Terri, who taught me that if I question everything, I'll wind up with a
headache.

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Chapter 1: The transportation, land use, and urban governance conundrum

The provision of an efficient metropolitan transportation system is a key component towards the development of any sustainable urban region.¹ Transportation systems are the essential backbone of urban regions, allowing for the movement of commuters, goods and transit through and across municipal and regional borders.² Urban regions lacking short, medium and long-term coordinated transportation and transit planning are likely to spiral downwards in a mire of gridlock, increased air pollution from automobile emissions, longer commutes, and suburban sprawl.³ As developed countries such as Canada continue along a trend of urbanization,⁴ increasing pressure is exerted from commuters, industry, and environmentalists for inter-governmental cooperation to 'solve the urban transportation problem.' The predicaments faced by transportation planners include defining what exactly the problems are, how to pay for solutions, and who is ultimately responsible for prioritising transportation and transit infrastructure investments. As Hall and Bannister lamented in their breakthrough volume on transportation public policy, "(a)lthough the influence of transport may appear to be simple, the reality is complex."⁵

The early 1990s marked a significant time in the planning, delivery and governance of urban transportation and transportation infrastructure. It was during this time that urban

¹ See, for example, Mark Roseland, Towards Sustainable Communities: A Resource Book for Municipal and Local Governments, (Ottawa: National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 1992), Don Pickerell, "Transportation and land use," and John F. Kain, "The urban transportation problem: a re-examination and update," in Essays in transportation policy: a handbook in honour of John R. Meyer eds. Jose Gomez *et al.* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1999), 403-406, 359-402. See also Eric Kelly, "The transportation land-use link," Journal of Planning Literature, 9, no. 2 (1994): 128-145; and David Banister and Nathaniel Lichfield, "The key issues in transport and urban land development," in Transport and Urban Development, ed. David Bannister (London: E& FN Spon, 1995).

² For example, the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, a peak association consisting of senior executives from industry and government involved in various aspects of transportation in Greater Vancouver (be that rail, shipping, long haul trucking) estimates that the regional transportation industry contributes more than 65,000 jobs and has a total economic output of \$8 billion per year. Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, A Vision for the Future. (Vancouver: Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, 1999),6.

³ While TransLink argues that the Greater Vancouver Regional District is "the envy of many American and some Canadian cities... (in that) the proportion of trips made by the automobile has not increased in recent years," Greater Vancouver has been faced with the situation in which the number of cars on Vancouver roads is increasing at a rate of 14% per year. TransLink calculates that at this rate, approximately 23,000 new registrations for automobiles are added to the region each year. TransLink, Strategic Transportation Plan, 2000-2005, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000), 1. Also TransLink, Strategic Transportation Plan, 2000-2005 (Appendices). (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000), 7.

⁴ The 2001 statistical analysis of the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area, indicates that the Lower Mainland and Southern Vancouver Island urban regions experienced a growth rate of 7.3% since 1996. These two regions represent 69% of the Province of British Columbia's population, and are home to approximately 9% of the Canadian total. See Statistics Canada, "A profile of the Canadian population: where we live." 2001 Census Analysis Series (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2002), 7.

⁵ David Bannister and Peter Hall, Transport and Public Policy Planning, (London: Mansell Publishing, 1981), 1.

transportation became an important component of sustainable urban development and representative regional governance. In the United States, federally-mandated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were given enhanced powers to develop and implement regional transportation objectives under the *Intermodal Surface Efficiency Act-1991* (ISTEA) and its legislative successor, the *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* (TEA-21). MPOs were to bring together representatives of various levels of governments, private sector interest groups, as well as the public in developing regional transportation plans and objectives.⁶ Depending upon the metropolitan region, these plans included such objectives as enhancing public transit, developing public-private partnerships for increasing roadway capacity, and or improving urban air quality.⁷

The United States' experience with expanding planning functions of that country's 339 metropolitan planning organizations typifies the problems with urban transportation governance.⁸ While the MPOs, under the spirit of the *ISTEA* legislation were supposed to enhance metropolitan planning, the reality was that the increased capacity granted to MPOs often stepped on the toes of both state and local officials.⁹ State Departments of Transportation can often implement transportation projects much faster without federal involvement, because "they are not encumbered by the many requirements, processes, data collection and analysis, public involvement, and the necessity for consensus that the MPOs face."¹⁰ Hence, the United States' experience with MPOs produced situations of competition over the jurisdiction to provide transportation services, thus miring many U.S. cities in a quagmire of competing governance models, with different levels of government staking jurisdictional claims over various public

⁶ For an overview of the MPO transportation planning program in the United States, see Todd Goldman and Elizabeth Deakin, "Regionalism through partnership? Metropolitan planning since ISTEA," *Berkeley Planning Journal*, no.14 (2000), 46-75.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ For a comprehensive review of the problems associated with MPOs in the United States, see Paul Stephen Dempsey, Andrew Goetz & Carl Larson, "Literature review and summary: metropolitan planning organizations," vol. 3 section 2, *Metropolitan Planning Organizations: An Assessment of the Transportation Planning Process*, (Denver: Intermodal Transportation Institute, University of Denver, 2000). See also Crain & Associates and Pacific Consulting Groups, *Institutional Barriers to Intermodal Transportation Policies and Planning in Metropolitan Areas*, (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1996).

⁹ Dempsey, Goetz and Larson, "Literature review," 1-2. In the U.S. case, the creation of MPOs meant that state Departments of Transportation no longer had exclusive control over the allocation of funds, as the MPOs could outside funding from the federal government. Dempsey, Goetz and Larson state: "at least some level of conflict between state DOTs and MPOs, and at times, conflict has escalated to outright animosity and a breakdown in communication and coordination between the two entities."

¹⁰ Ibid., 2

transportation and highway construction projects.¹¹ The results of this exercise leave MPOs in many urban regions with the capacity to plan urban transit and transportation systems, but not the ability to fund and implement strategic plans.¹²

Major metropolitan transportation planning: the Canadian experience

The Canadian experiments with major metropolitan area transportation planning may be construed as more 'organic' in nature. In Canada, the federal government has typically had little interest in developing and coordinating transportation projects in urban regions.¹³ Instead, the impetus for urban regional transportation coordination has come as a result of provincial downloading of transportation services to regional governments, or as a metropolitan uploading of responsibilities to regional governments.¹⁴ Nonetheless, the broad-based policy objectives of regionally-integrated transit and transportation for major urban centres mirrors the coordination

¹¹ For more information on Metropolitan Planning organizations, see also U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, MPO Capacity: Improving the Capacity of Metropolitan Planning Organizations to Help Implement National Transportation Policies, (Washington, D.C: The Commission, 1995).

¹² State and local laws impede the implementation of intermodal projects in the following states: Maryland, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Georgia, and Missouri. Intermodal projects in these states are limited in that gasoline and automobile taxes are restricted to highway-related construction projects. Crain & Associates and Pacific Consulting Groups, Institutional Barriers, 4.

¹³ In June, 2001, the *Canada Transportation Act* was scheduled for its five year legislative review. The review panel, in releasing its report, noted that, "The Panel's terms of reference mention urban public transport only obliquely, in directing the Panel to consider 'the advisability of specific measures designed to preserve urban rail corridors for future mass transit use in the rail line abandonment process.'" The Panel, not satisfied with this direction, included an entire chapter on the importance of urban transportation with respect the Canadian economy. See Brian Flemming *et al.*, Vision and Balance: Report of the Canada Transportation Act Review Panel. (Canada: Government of Canada, 2000). Supplementary to this report, a committee member specifically detailed urban transportation problems in Canada. See Richard M. Soberman, "Public transportation in Canadian municipalities: Implications for the *Canada Transportation Act* and the federal role in transit," Unpublished report prepared for the Report the Canada Transportation Act Review Panel, (2001). The synopsis of this report is found on the compact disc that accompanied the Review Panel's report. Stemming from review of the *Canada Transportation Act*, Prime Minister Chretien announced the formation of the Prime Minister's caucus task force on urban issues. Within the mandate of this task force is an examination of the federal government's role in urban transportation. Among the recommendations made was the establishment of a National Transportation Program that 1) provides long term sustainable funding for public transportation systems, 2) invests strategically in integrated multi-modal transportation systems and 3) invests in high-speed rail service to connect major centers. See Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, Canada's Urban Strategy: A Vision for the 21st Century: Interim Report. (Ottawa: The Task Force, 2002).

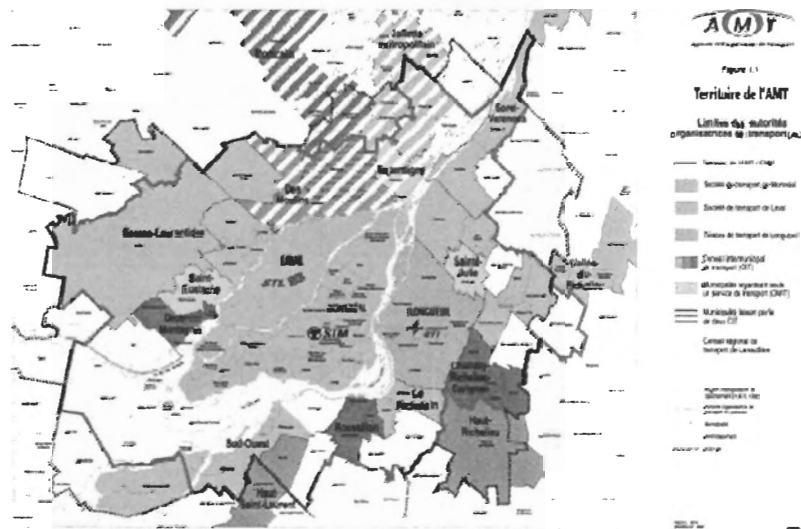
¹⁴ In Canadian centres, there is little correlation between city size and the planning coordination of metropolitan areas. For example, the Capital Region District (Victoria), Calgary and Edmonton Regional Planning Commissions, and the Office of the Greater Toronto Area, are perceived as having relatively weak powers in that they serve strictly an advisory role in planning, while municipalities within these regions retain control over infrastructure investment. Accordingly, their municipalities cannot 'upload' responsibilities to the regional governance institutions in these regions. Conversely, the GVRD permits uploading of responsibilities to the regional level. See Ira M. Robinson and Gerald Hodge, "Canadian Regional Planning at 50: Growing Pains," Plan Canada, May, 1998, 12.

functions of MPOs in the United States, particularly in areas where governance of the metropolitan area is fragmented across multiple municipal councils.¹⁵

Metropolitan Montreal

Transportation integration and coordination were the buzzwords of the mid to late 1990s in Canada’s major metropolitan centres. However, the implementation and coordination of an entire metropolitan transportation system has varied across the country. For example, l’Agence Métropolitaine de Transport (AMT) was established to harmonize and deliver public transit services to 63 municipalities within the Greater Montréal Area as well as the Kahnawake native reservation in 1996 (Figure 1).¹⁶ Prior to its formation, regional transportation services in the metropolitan Montreal area consisted of a hodgepodge of local services: larger, ‘sub-regional’ transit service; separate programs for commuter rail and subway systems and several paratransit services.

Figure 1: Map of Transit Services in Greater Montreal



Source: l’Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, Révision du plan stratégique de développement du transport métropolitain, (Montreal: : l’Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, 2002), 15.

¹⁵ In smaller Canadian metropolitan centers such as Calgary, Winnipeg, and Halifax, the need to coordinate urban transportation is less intense given the presence of a large central city. While issues relating to urban transportation are as pressing as in larger centers such as Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, the smaller centers do not face the patchwork of independent municipal councils found in larger urban centers. Please see Edmund Fowler and Jack Layton, “Transportation policy in Canadian cities,” in Urban Policy Issues: Canadian Perspectives, 2nd edition, Edmund Fowler and David Siegel, eds. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2002), 108-138.

¹⁶ Dennis A. Kar, “Metropolitan transportation agencies: three case studies of multi-jurisdictional transportation planning in Canada.” Paper presented at the 2001 Bus and Paratransit Conference, (Calgary: American Public Transportation Association, May 5-10, 2001). Available online at <http://www.entraconsultants.com/Papers%20Presentations/DKpaperapta.pdf>. See also l’Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, “Mandate, territories, and clients.” Available online at <http://www.amt.pq.ca>. (Translation used Google: <http://www.google.ca>.)

The AMT's ability to influence Greater Montreal's transportation policy is grounded in its mandate to plan and manage the metropolitan transit network, metropolitan transit equipment and provide regionally integrated fare collection. All public transit agencies in the region are legislated under the *Loi sur l'Agence métropolitaine de transport* to harmonize the provision of local transit services in accordance with directives issued by the AMT to ensure co-ordination of both local and regional transit services.¹⁷

The AMT is designed to guide rather than directly manage the day to day operations of transit services in the region. The AMT does not own or operate transit services directly: rather it provides funding to transportation companies, regional transit services and municipal services to provide services in accordance to guidelines established in the AMT's Strategic Transportation Plans.¹⁸ To this extent, the AMT has planning and funding authority over the suburban rail system (and associated infrastructure including rolling stock, terminals and parking facilities), the metro (subway) system on the Island of Montreal, local transit services (to ensure larger regional connectivity), and paratransit services. In addition, within the mandate of the ATM is the ability to development regional transit service, as well as the management of 60 kms of dedicated busways in the region.

In terms of land use/transportation coordination, the AMT has limited formal capacity to influence transportation decisions in the region. AMT has no control over highway infrastructure developments (other than with respect for transit implication) as this is largely provincial jurisdiction. However, the AMT does informally work with the Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC), the organization responsible for regional land use planning in the service area of the AMT, to identify major corridors for transit investment, and using transit services as a means of urban renewal.¹⁹

Greater Toronto

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is a region consisting of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, plus the four surrounding regional municipalities of Durham, York, Peel

¹⁷ Gouvernement du Québec, *Loi sur l'Agence métropolitaine de transport*, L.R.Q., chapitre A-7.02. Available online at <http://doc.gouv.qc.ca>. Accessed June 18, 2003.

¹⁸ l'Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, Revision du Plan Strategique de development du transport metroplitain, (Montreal: l'Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, 2002).

¹⁹ Dennis A. Kar, "Metropolitan transportation agencies: three case studies of multi-jurisdictional transportation planning in Canada." Paper presented at the 2001 Bus and Paratransit Conference, (Calgary: American Public Transportation Association, May 5-10, 2001), 6. Available online at <http://www.entraconsultants.com/Papers%20Presentations/DKpaperapta.pdf>

and Halton. This area covers more than 7200 km² and contains a total of 30 local area municipalities, and is home to 5.081 million people. (Figure 2)²⁰⁻²¹ It is a region which has experienced much political reform and jurisdictional reconfiguration with respect to transportation and transit policy over the last decade.

Figure 2: Map of the Greater Toronto Area



Source: Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, <http://www.greater.toronto.on.ca>. Accessed June 16, 2003

In the mid-1990s, several forces were at work to create regional governance within the GTA from the province-down perspective. First, in April 1995, the Province of Ontario struck a task force to “provide direction for the future governance of the Greater Toronto Area, including the potential restructuring of the responsibilities and practices of municipal and provincial governments.”²² The Golden Commission, as the Greater Toronto Area task force came to be called, was charged with the responsibility of examining all matters relating to clarifying provincial and municipal responsibilities, including regional planning, transportation, education, public health, as well as governance within the Greater Toronto Area. Among the 51 recommendations made in this report, the Golden Commission called for the development of a ‘Greater Toronto Council,’ to replace the five region municipalities within the GTA. The Greater

²⁰ Greater Toronto Area Task Force, *Report of the Greater Toronto Area Task Force*, (Toronto: Publications Ontario, 1996), 23.

²¹ The updated population for the region, based on the 2001 Census is 5,081,826. This figure is based on the populations of the four regional municipalities (Halton Peel, York and Durham) plus the City of Toronto and native reservations. Source: Statistics Canada, *Community Profiles Search Engine*. Available online at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/profil01/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm>. Accessed June 16, 2003. Note that the Census Metropolitan Area for Greater Toronto does not align with political borders of the Greater Toronto Area

²² Greater Toronto Area Task Force, *Report of the Greater Toronto Area Task Force*, (Toronto: Publications Ontario, 1996), 229.

Toronto Council would be directly responsible for regional planning, economic development, management of regional assets and the construction and maintenance of regionally significant highways and Metro expressways, as well as the oversight of police, transit, water and sewer, waste disposal, and commercial vehicle licensing.²³

Prior to 1996, transportation planning in the GTA region was conducted independently by a hodgepodge of organizations, municipal and provincial. In terms of municipal transportation services, local transit and road service planning was at the discretion of each municipality, ranging from small municipal transportation departments and bus transit operators in suburban communities within the Greater Toronto Area, to the Toronto Transit Commission- the largest multi-modal transportation agency operating in Canada. Additionally, the Province of Ontario was a key player in transportation planning, responsible for the construction and maintenance of major numbered arterial highways, the management of a public-private partnership highway (Highway 407), and the regional commuter rail and bus system, GO Transit.

In response to the Golden Commission, the Province of Ontario introduced Bill 56, *The Greater Toronto Services Board Act*.²⁴ The Greater Toronto Services Board (GTSB) was charged with the responsibility “to promote and facilitate co-ordinated decision making among the municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area.”²⁵ The coordination to be provided by the GTSB was based on the development of strategies to ensure for the optimal provision of ‘infrastructure’ as well as the development of a countryside strategy to protect rural and agricultural areas within the GTA and a regionally based strategy for social housing.²⁶ The GTSB came into force January 1, 1999.

However, while the GTSB was set up to conduct regional metropolitan planning, it was a highly dysfunctional organization. With respect to economic development, rural area protection, and social housing, the GTSB was not allocated provincial funding for project development; hence, disputes emerged within the Board as to how to fund these programs.

In terms of transportation planning, the GTSB was granted legislated control and funding responsibility solely over *GO Transit*, the regional rail and bus network in a ‘revenue-neutral’

²³ Greater Toronto Area Task Force, “Governing the City Region,” Report of the Greater Toronto Area Task Force, (Toronto: Publications Ontario, 1996), 229.

²⁴ Legislative Assembly of Ontario, “Bill 56: An Act to establish the Greater Toronto Services Board and the Greater Toronto Transit Authority and to amend the Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority Act,” 2nd Session, 36th Legislature, Ontario, 47 Elizabeth II, 1998. Available online at http://www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/36_Parliament/session2/B056.pdf.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

swap for education funding that had previously been funded by the regional municipalities.²⁷ However, this swap in jurisdiction did not include any additional money for growing capital needs for the regional service, including new buses, railcar sets, or other regionally important transportation infrastructure. As such, the members of the GTSB were in the unenviable position of having to fund the revenue shortfalls faced by *GO Transit* through increases to municipal taxes, make up for shortfalls in municipal and regional transit services, and pay for the close to 5000 km of 'local purpose' highways downloaded by the province to regional municipalities in 1997 and 1998.²⁸

The GTSB, however, was short-lived. In September, 2001, the Province of Ontario announced that it was to 'repatriate' *GO Transit* as a Crown Corporation under the *GO Transit Act*.²⁹ Given that *GO Transit* was the primary responsibility for the GTSB, the board ceased to exist as of January 1, 2002. While the justification behind this change in transportation policy was never made clear by the Province, speculation at the time was that the governing Progressive Conservatives were seeking to solidify their electoral support in the suburban ring around Toronto (known as the 905 [area-code] belt) through greater control of infrastructure investments in the area.³⁰ To a large extent, this speculation has been correct, as the province announced in June 2003 expenditures of \$645 million over five years to enhance commuter transit primarily in the suburban ring around Toronto,³¹ while stalling assistance in paying for existing transit plans within the City of Toronto.³²

Hence, transit and transportation planning in the GTA looks today much like it did prior to the creation of the GTSB: fragmented between local, regional, and provincial politicians and bureaucracies each striving to provide the 'best' transportation options within their own limited mandates. What regional planning that take place is conducted through provincially appointed 'Smart growth' panels, which are dominated by suburban interests.

²⁷ Ian Urquhart, "Battle is brewing over control of GO Transit," *Toronto Star- Ontario edition*, 18 Jul 2001, A21.

²⁸ For complete review of King's Highways downloads in Ontario, see Cameron Bevers, (2003), *January 1, 1998: The day that Ontario's Highway Network Died*. Available online at <http://www.thekingshighway.ca/jan11998.html>. Accessed June 13, 2003.

²⁹ Province of Ontario, Ontario Laws and Statutes, "GO Transit Act 2001", *S.O. 2001, Chapter 23*. http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/01g23_e.htm

³⁰ See, for example, Ian Urquhart, "Battle brewing over GO Transit," *Toronto Star, Ontario Edition*, 18 Jul 2001; Gail Swaison, "Regional services board expected to get the chop," *Toronto Star, Ontario Edition*, 27 Sep 2001, B03; Ian Urquhart, "Decision to scrap GTSB misguided," *Toronto Star, Ontario Edition*, 1 Oct 2001, A17; Editorial, "Reinventing the wheel," *Toronto Star, Ontario Edition*, 8 Nov 2001 A 32

³¹ Kevin McGran, "Eves lays out transit plan but TTC chief sceptical," *Toronto Star, Online edition*, 7 Jun 2003.

³² Kevin McGran, "Pay up, or GO won't go to T.O., city told," *Toronto Star, Online edition*, 16 Jun 2003.

The Greater Vancouver Regional District as Transportation Governance Case Study

Much like Toronto and Montreal, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the Province of British Columbia have actively pursued the development of a regional transportation system. Like Toronto and Montreal, the retraction of the provincial government in funding the urban transportation system left municipalities cutting transit services while at the same time increasing fees for transit users. Whereas these problems were compounded by the provincially-forced amalgamation of the urban municipalities into administrative mega-cities in Ontario and Quebec, municipalities within the GVRD, along with the provincial government have instead opted for a system of regional governance and coordination of major transportation services at the regional level. Unlike municipal and provincial politicians in both Toronto and Montreal, the downloading of responsibilities for transit and roads in Greater Vancouver was perceived as a 'normative good:' that is, the combination of provincial downloading of transit and arterial highways coupled with the uploading of major municipal arterial roads was a key component of strengthening regional control over land use, transit and transportation planning.

Geographically, the Greater Vancouver Regional District occupies a territory of 329.2 km² of land and fresh water wedged between the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Pacific Coast Mountains to the north, the American border to the south, and the Fraser Valley Regional District to the east.³³ The region is intersected with several major waterways that impede transportation access, including the Fraser River and Burrard Inlet, which act as barriers to north-south transportation, and the Pitt River, which cuts through the north-east sector of the region. (Figure 3).

Politically, the Greater Vancouver Regional District was formed in 1967 to deliver utility services, such as water, sewage and waste disposal on a regional, rather than local level in order to minimise costs at the local level.³⁴

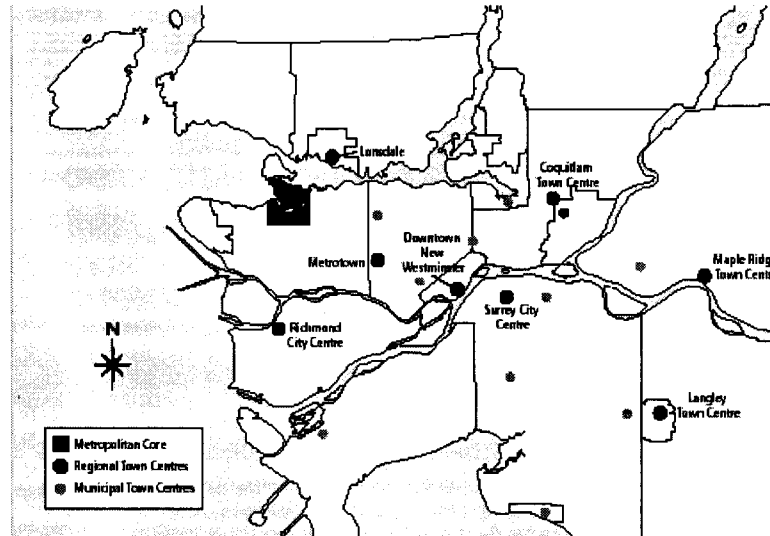
The region is home to 2.11 million residents, residing in 21 municipalities and one electoral district ranging in population from the Village of Belcarra (682) to the City of Vancouver with a population of 546,671. (Table 1) Each municipality elects its own mayor and councillors to manage local government affairs and does so under a provincially-mandated three year electoral cycle. The GVRD Board of Directors is an indirectly elected board made up of all

³³ Greater Vancouver Regional District, Key Facts: Greater Vancouver at a Glance. (Burnaby: GVRD, 2002). <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca>. (Date accessed: June 25, 2003).

³⁴ Greater Vancouver Regional District, ...The Livable Region, (Burnaby: Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1998), 4.

mayors in the region, plus municipally-selected councillors based on a system of representation by population.³⁵

Figure 3: Political Map of the Greater Vancouver Regional District



Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District, (2003). 2002 Annual Report: Greater Vancouver Regional District. (Burnaby: GVRD, 2001). <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/lrsp/lrsp-report2002.pdf>

In 1996, the GVRD ratified the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), a plan that outlined the primary objectives of protecting the region's green zones, building complete communities, achieving a compact metropolitan region, and increasing transportation options for the region.³⁶ The Livable Region Strategic Plan's vision for obtaining these objectives is through a federation of municipalities that promotes:

A place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approached 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 diversity of their community, and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security and useful activity are accessible to all.³⁷

Although the LRSP, was predicated on the implementation of a four pillar approach, the provision of transportation and transit 'choices' was deemed to be the primary means to support the objectives of protecting green zones, achieving a compact metropolitan core and building

³⁵ Add weighted voting reference

³⁶ These four fundamental objectives for the region are outlined in Greater Vancouver Regional District, Livable Region Strategic Plan, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1996), 2-3.

³⁷ This statement represents the vision statement adopted by the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board in 1990. As quoted, *Ibid.*, 2.

complete communities.³⁸ Such improved transportation choices that would compliment the other three pillars include improved coordination between municipalities on roads management and construction, improved inter-regional and local transit options, a inter-regional rapid transit network, bicycling programs, automobile-emission control programs, as well as transportation demand management programs.³⁹

Table 1: Municipal Population Estimates, 2002

Municipality	2001 Population
Anmore	1,344
Belcarra	682
Bowen Island	2,957
Burnaby	193,954
Coquitlam	112,890
Delta	96,950
Electoral Area 'A'	8,034
Langley City	23,643
Langley Township	86,896
Lions Bay	1,379
Maple Ridge	63,169
New Westminster	54,656
North Vancouver City	44,303
North Vancouver District	82,310
Pitt Meadows	14,670
Port Coquitlam	51,257
Port Moody	23,816
Richmond	164,345
Surrey	347,825
Vancouver	545,671
West Vancouver	41,421
White Rock	18,250
Indian Reserves	6,543
Vancouver CMA	1,986,965

Source: Adapted from GVRD Policy and Planning Department, 2001 Census Bulletin #1: Population and Dwelling Counts, (Burnaby: GVRD, 2002).

Traditionally within the GVRD, each of these programs lacked regional coordination as each municipality, as well as the province was responsible for the delivery of the service only within each territorial area. However, the LRSP, recommended that the GVRD member municipalities

³⁸ Ibid., 7.

³⁹ Ibid. The coordination of the transportation 'system' represents what Todd Litman refers to as a 'paradigm shift in the reconciliation of transportation and sustainability objectives.' TransLink's coordination of metropolitan transportation planning represented the first example of a paradigm shift in transportation planning in Canada. See Todd Litman, Reinventing Transportation: Exploring the Paradigm Shift Needed to Reconcile Transportation and Sustainability Objectives. (Victoria: Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 1999).

enter into 'partnerships' to harmonize efforts to manage the transportation system and to increase transportation options within the region.⁴⁰

This desire to coordinate transportation as a means to an end within the politically-fragmented GVRD, rather than as an objective in and of itself, represented a dramatic shift in thinking as to how to manage the region's transportation system. This concept of transportation supporting the other pillars of regional development, rather than standing as a pillar in and of itself is an important distinction that will be clarified later in this thesis.

Overview of Research Agenda

The purpose of the paper is to examine the interplay between inside, institutional actors and outside actors in setting the transportation infrastructure agenda in the Greater Vancouver Regional District since the inception of the institutional governance structure known as the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, or commonly referred to by its branded name, TransLink. TransLink was established in 1999 as a subordinate board to the Board of the Greater Vancouver Regional District, in order to develop, plan and implement a comprehensive, multimodal, transit and transportation system to support the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Livable Region Strategic Plan. To this extent, two hypotheses are tested.

First, contrary to the existing literature on pressure groups, I wanted to test to see if more than one type of outside actor exists within the local transportation policy network. Second, should I find that more than one type of outsider exists, I am interested in examining whether institutional actors can deploy a wide array substantive and procedural instruments in efforts of agenda management. To accomplish the objective of exploring the influence between actors and agenda setting, this thesis is divided into four sections

Chapter 2 provides the methodological framework for transportation agenda setting in a local governance framework. The chapter begins with an examination of agendas and agenda-setting based on the development of an agenda-setting typology developed by Cobb, Ross, and Ross.⁴¹ What is of particular interest here is what Cobb, Ross, and Ross categorized as the *outsider initiation* model of agenda-setting: that is, how groups lacking institutional authority and/or recognition can promote issues and ideas onto the formal institutional agenda.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Roger Cobb, Jennie-Keith Ross and Marc Howard Ross, "Agenda building as a comparative political process." American Political Science Review, 70, no. 1 (1976), 126-138.

However, the success of outside actors is determinant upon two variables: the resources the organization has in hand, as well as its motivation for becoming involved in the agenda-setting process. Resources available to outsider actors, for our purposes, are measured on a dichotomous, HIGH/LOW scale. Resources may either be tangible (number of members, an advertising budget, human resources, membership fees), or intangible, such as the social position of the group, the extent to which it is organized, or the skills and organization of the leadership.

In terms of motivation of the actors, these range from a desire to become insider (or institutional) member, to promote a specific set of ideas over time onto the agenda, or to promote one idea onto the agenda at one period in time. Based upon these variables, a typology of outside actors present within a local governance framework is presented. This contribution is important because by distinguishing between the types of outside actors confronted by inside actors, different policy instruments can be deployed by institutional actors to limit or accommodate their presence in agenda setting.

Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of the instruments at the disposal of inside actors to manage agendas at a regional level. Stemming from the instrument classification work undertaken by Howlett and Ramesh and Klijn and Teisman, as well as the instruments of agenda denial work developed by Cobb and Ross,⁴² this chapter highlights agenda management strategies at the disposal of insiders to manage both actors and their ideas.

Based upon the interplay between insiders and outsiders, the focus of Chapter 3 is an examination of the development of the transportation governance institution within Greater Vancouver. This chapter will begin with an assessment of the historical origins of transportation governance in the region and review the transportation programs administered by TransLink. In addition, Chapter 3 will investigate the relationship between TransLink, the Greater Vancouver Regional District and senior levels of government in transportation planning. Finally, Chapter 3 will explore the initial institutional agenda for the region, as contained within TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan of 2000.

Chapter 4 will examine in detail the role of five prominent outside actors that have emerged since the creation of TransLink in 1999, predicated on the typology discussed in Chapter

⁴² E.-H. Klijn and G.R. Teisman, "Strategies and Games in Networks," in Walter J.M. Kickert, Erick-Hans Klijn, and Joop F.M. Koppenjan (eds) Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), p.106; Roger W. Cobb and Marc Howard Ross, "Denying agenda access: strategic considerations," in Roger W. Cobb and Marc Howard Ross (eds.), Cultural strategies of agenda denial, (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1997), pp.25-48; and Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems 2nd edition. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003) pp: 87-116, 194-196.

2. While these outside organizations do not represent the entire sphere of outsiders with an interest in urban transportation in Greater Vancouver, they are the groups that both constructed alternative transportation agendas on a regional scale, and received the bulk of media coverage on three key issues that faced the regional transportation: the vehicle levy debate in 2000, the allocation of revenues from gasoline and property taxes in 2001, and the decision to accelerate the planning and construction of the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver Rapid Transit Line (RAV Line) as the first priority in terms of dedicated transit infrastructure ahead of a rapid transit line to Coquitlam Centre. Based on their involvement in setting a transportation agenda in the region, the six groups studied include the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, the Vancouver Board of Trade, the British Columbia Automobile Association (BCAA), the British Columbia Trucking Association (BCTA) and Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST), and the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver Project Group (RAV).

Rooted in the theoretical framework of outsiders discussed in Chapter 2, the role of each of these six outsider actors in formulating alternative regional transportation agendas will be assessed. First, a historical overview of each organization will be provided. Included in this section will be the past roles, if any, of these organizations in formulating a regional vision of the transportation system. Second, this chapter examines the motivations behind each of these organizations for becoming involved in regional transportation policy. Third, this chapter reviews the alternative policies promoted by these organizations, with particular attention being paid to respective positions on the proposal for the vehicle levy, as well as their positions on expenditures for private automobile versus public transit. Fourth, this chapter appraises the resources available to each of these groups, paying particular attention to venues used to promote their respective policy positions; their level of success in having their ideas adopted on to the institutional agenda; or in the case of RAV, the degree to which inside actors have created a strategy of network management. Finally, each group's agenda is compared against the original Strategic Transportation Plan, to assess the success of each group in having their particular agendas adopted onto the formal transportation agenda. Based on the theory developed in Chapter 2, Chapter 4 will conclude with an analysis as to why some outside actors, particularly the Vancouver Board of Trade and BCAA had greater success in altering the regional transportation agenda, while other organizations had less of an impact.

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to review the lessons drawn from the theoretical and practical implications of the role that outside actors have had in agenda-setting. In terms of theoretical lessons, this study suggests that the typical dichotomous model of outside versus inside actors lacks sufficient nuances to explain why some outside actors are more likely to have

their issues promoted onto the institutional agenda. One must first consider both the motivations for action as well as resources available to outside actors in order to explain this success and failure and why some issues are promoted onto the institutional agenda over others.

The second theoretical implication from this work is that intangible resources available to outside actors, such as systemic power, play a key role in the regional governance setting. While the concept of an *urban regime* has been traditionally confined to a single municipal jurisdiction, it is clear that this intangible resource may also be applied to regional level politics.

Third, as evident in this case, agenda-setting is a dynamic process. The Greater Vancouver case in particular illustrates the movement of the regional transportation agenda from one dominated by a single state actor, to one in which the institutional agenda is significantly formulated through outsider initiation. The ability of outsiders to alter a well-developed institutional agenda has serious practical repercussions for regional land-use and transportation planning and policy making. With respect to the GVRD, this case study suggests that the present governance structure, in its efforts to manage regional growth and transportation is incapable of implementing medium and long terms strategic plans. Instead, those responsible to implementing the plans must constantly be mindful of the municipal implications of their actions within a relatively short, three-year electoral cycle. Furthermore, despite having formal control over transportation planning and a much envied transportation funding formula, this case shows that greater attention must be paid by senior levels of government in order to ensure sustainable long-term growth in urban regions. To this end, this chapter concludes with a suggestion that the GVRD take seriously calls for democratic reform with respect to regional and transportation governance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review- Agendas, Outsider Actors, and Institutional Responses in the Context of Local Governance Policy Network

Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to explicitly examine the inter-play between the emergence of new interest groups (or actors) and a newly-created regional transportation governance institution within the Greater Vancouver Regional District. This thesis examines the process of agenda-setting through three iterations: the creation of a governance institution and an institutional agenda; the creation of 'outside' actors and alternative policy agendas in response to the institutional agenda; and the institutional reactions to alternative policy agendas.

First, it necessary to define the key terms and concepts introduced in the proceeding chapter. In terms of concepts, this chapter will focus on the public administration literature to assist in the examination of types of agendas and the agenda-setting stage within policy development. To this extent, this chapter will begin with a review of the different historical models of agenda setting proposed by Cobb, Ross and Ross⁴³ and Baumgartner and Jones.⁴⁴

Second, this chapter examines the role that outside actors play in the agenda-setting process. This section first provides a definition of outside actors, based on the work of Grant⁴⁵ and Maloney, Jordan and McLaughlin.⁴⁶ The British literature on outside actors and agenda setting is of great use to this research agenda, in that these authors explicitly examine actors involved in setting transportation policy in Great Britain. Their work, therefore, is readily transferable to the research agenda proposed for this thesis.

This section will examine the types of resources available, and the venues or 'arenas' available for outside actors to influence institutional agendas. The proposal to look at all actors, including institutional actors *and* outside actors arises from Klijn's proposal that

⁴³ Cobb, Ross, Ross, "Agenda building as a comparative political process." 126-138.

⁴⁴ Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, "Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems." *Journal of Politics*, 53, no. 4. (1991): 1044-1074; Baumgartner and Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Baumgartner and Jones, "Attention, Boundary Effects, and Large Scale Policy Change in Air Transportation Policy," in D.A. Rochefort and Walter Cobb, *The Politics of Problem Definition: Shaping the Policy Agenda*. (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1994): 50-66.

⁴⁵ Wyn Grant, *Pressure Groups, Politics and Democracy and Britain*, (Hemel Hempstead: Philip Alen, 1989).

⁴⁶ William A. Maloney, Grant Jordan, and Andrew M. McLaughlin, "Interest groups and Public Policy: the insider/outsider model revisited." *Journal of Public Policy*, 14 (1) 1994, 17-38.

instead of arguing that one of the goals at stake (those of politicians) should prevail, it may be more productive to look at how various conflicting goals can be linked to each other to reach satisfactory outcomes for all, or at least many, of the actors for all.⁴⁷

Based on these theoretical labels, it shall become perceptible that the current explanations of ‘outsiders’ are insufficient in explaining the types of groups that exist to influence urban transportation policy. Whereas Maloney, Jordan and McLaughlin’s work expanded the types of ‘insider’ groups, similarly, this thesis will develop a typology of outsider groups.⁴⁸ With respect to these variables, it shall become apparent that ‘outside actors’ are not homogenous with respect to their resources or motivations for actions. Thus, this chapter will contribute to the outside actor literature by identifying six categories of outside actors.

Third, this chapter will shed light on response strategies available to core institutional actors in light of a growing assemblage of outside actors. This section will also examine the tools available to institutional actors to control or ‘manage’ policy agendas with particular attention to urban regional policy networks.

Agendas and Agenda-setting: Concepts and Models

The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate upon the resources, opportunities, and influences of outsider-groups on agenda-setting in a regional urban governance framework. To achieve this goal, it is first necessary to discuss the concept of agenda-setting.

The agenda-setting literature attempts to seek out explanations as to the processes associated with how information on certain issues or policy alternatives reach the public; how public opinions are shaped; and why specific issues are acted upon while other fade into the background.⁴⁹ An *agenda*, as defined by Dearing and Rogers is “a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchical of importance at a point of time.”⁵⁰ Conversely, an *issue* is a particular ‘social’ problem that is often conflictual, receive mass media coverage, and can be exploited to political advantage.⁵¹ Issues, thus, are specific in nature and are concerned with the allocation of scarce resources to distinct projects, programs, or interests: agendas are the big-picture frameworks which establish the limits in terms of expenditures and institutional policy

⁴⁷ Erik-Hans Klijn, “Analysing and managing policy processes in complex networks: a theoretical examination of the concept policy network and its problems.” *Administration and Society*, 28 no. 1 (1996), 97.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ James W. Dearing and Everett M. Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 1996), 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3.

objectives. To this extent, Cobb and Elder describe agendas as “a general set of political controversies that will be viewed at any point in time as falling within the range of legitimate concerns meriting the attention of the polity.”⁵²

It is important to highlight the temporal aspects associated with the concepts of agenda-setting. An agenda is a static entity which is necessarily viewed at a particular moment in time: however, agenda-setting is dynamic: tracing the public’s interest in particular issues and the activities of actors in either promoting or renegotiating issues on the agenda.

Cobb, Ross, and Ross, are widely credited for making provisions in their in agenda-setting model for outsiders to promote specific issues from the public or *systemic agenda*⁵³ onto the formal or *institutional agenda*.⁵⁴ In their discussion of groups involved in the process of policy formation, Cobb, Ross, and Ross identify three models as to how issues can move from the public agenda to the formal agenda. First, issues can be *internally mobilized*: that is, agendas as brought forward internally by key decision makers within a policy community. Second, under the *mobilization* model, individual governmental actors mobilize support from the broader community to promote their personal issues from the public to the formal agenda.⁵⁵ However, the governmental actors hold tightly the reigns of debate on the formal agenda.

Similarly, the *insider access* model illustrates agenda-setting procedures originated by groups with preferential access within the policy community. Insiders, are groups with ‘easy and frequent access to political decision makers,’ they ‘promote issues as a means to include particularly influential groups in policy development’ or, conversely, to ‘*limit* issue expansion to the public.’⁵⁶ In this sense, insider access and mobilization models can be construed as largely internal mechanisms in which governments (or governance regimes) can promote issues internally for public (or private) discussion.

⁵² Roger Cobb and Charles Elder, *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda-Building*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins University, 1983), 14.

⁵³ *Systemic or public agenda* refers to “all issues which (1) are the subject of widespread attention or at least awareness; (2) require action, in the view of a sizeable proportion of the government; and (3) are the appropriate concern of some governmental unit in the perception of community members.” (source-Howlett)

⁵⁴ *Institutional or formal agenda*: “The list of items which decision makers have formally accepted for serious consideration.” Cobb, Ross and Ross, (1976): 126. Howlett and Ramesh, in reviewing the Cobb, Ross and Ross, redefine public and formal agendas as *systemic* and *institutional* agendas for the purpose of clarity. See Howlett and Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems*, 112-113.

⁵⁵ Cobb, Ross and Ross. 132-135.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 134. Emphasis included. See also Maloney, Jordan, and McLaughlin, “Interest groups and Public Policy: the insider/outsider model revisited,” 17-38.

Cobb, Ross and Ross' third contribution to the agenda-setting literature is that of an *outsider initiation* model. The outsider initiation model is most useful for establishing a baseline as to how actors, lacking the institutional authority to promote issues to the formal agenda or the capacity to partake in a pluralist policy debates,⁵⁷ can promote specific issues onto the institutional agenda forum. Cobb, Ross, and Ross' model assumes a pluralistic policy community, in which they perceive agenda-setting as a "twofold process involving competition among political elites and bargaining among interest groups."⁵⁸ In order for issues to be adopted by core actors controlling the formal agenda, the *outside initiation* model details a four-stage process as outlined in Figure 4.

First, a visible policy issue is co-opted by a group outside the formal government structure. In other words, an issue requires *initiation* by a credible societal actor and promoted with a degree of salience to interested parties working with and within that organization. As the issue and possible ways of dealing with the issue are developed by the pioneer outside organization,⁵⁹ other organizations may organize in an attempt to articulate other means in which to handle the issue, and promote other policy alternatives. Accordingly, during the second, *specification* stage, "members of groups which share grievances may or may not be united in their articulation of them."⁶⁰

Once policy issues are interpreted and alternative positions put forth, outsider organizations must then work towards a third phase, *expansion*; or adoption of their ideas within the general public in order to "create sufficient pressure or interest to attract the attention of decision makers."⁶¹ Cobb and Elder identify that the process of interest expansion may require the targeting of four distinct groups within society beyond the initial actors, depending on the level of societal consensus needed to persuade government actors to adopt the issue on the formal agenda. The four inter-dependent groups that may require mobilization through concerted effort by the outside organization(s) include *identification* and *attention* groups and the *attentive* and

⁵⁷ By pluralist policy debate, I mean one in which a variety of different views are discussed.

⁵⁸ William Keslo, *American Democratic Theory: Pluralism and its Critics*. (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1978). 12-29. Reprinted in Daniel L. McCool, ed., *Public Policy Theories, Concepts and Models: An Anthology*. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995). 41. Much of the early United States agenda-setting is premised on this implicit bargaining process between political elites and groups articulating different interests. While Cobb, Ross, and Ross explicitly state "the movement between the two agendas is far from automatic," (130) the underlying premise is that groups with sufficient interest in an issue will have the necessary resources to articulate different positions.

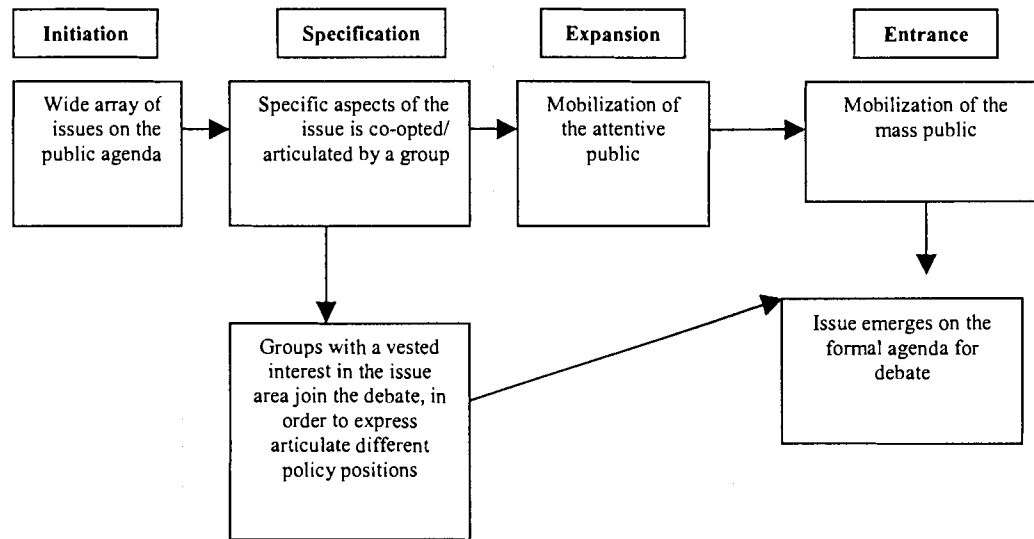
⁵⁹ That is groups with the capacity to promote alternative policy agendas as issues arise.

⁶⁰ Cobb, Ross, and Ross. 128.

⁶¹ Ibid.

general public.⁶² Whereas identification groups are organizations that have strong ties to those who raise the issue and have a vested interest in the outcome, attention groups tend to be more broad-based issue coalitions whose participation is dependent on the level of public conflict that may be generated *vis-à-vis* 'insider' decision-makers.

Figure 4: Cobb, Ross, and Ross' Model of Outsider Initiation⁶³



While this coalition of outside issue-generators, close allies and attention-generating groups may be sufficient to move some issues onto the formal agenda, it is often the case that issues must be further promoted and adopted by the public as a prominent public policy issue. Cobb and Elder identify that issues are most likely to be picked up on by the attentive public, “who comprise a small minority of the population...who are most informed about and interested in public issues.”⁶⁴ Finally, if issues remain off the formal agenda, an effort must be made by outsiders to mobilize the mass general public, who tend to have short attention spans and little interest in a prolonged struggle to place items on the formal agenda.⁶⁵

⁶² See Cobb and Elder, *Participation in American Politics: The Dynamics of Agenda Building*, 112-113.

⁶³ Cobb, Ross, and Ross. 128-132.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 129.

⁶⁵ Cobb and Elder, 107-108.

Outsider Groups

From the outset of this chapter, outside actors have been treated as a homogenous entity as to illustrate the theoretical relationship between outsiders and insiders in terms of agenda-setting and policy development. Outside actors, also referred to within the literature as *pressure groups* or *interest groups*, are “organizations which seek as one of its functions to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy, public policy representing a set of authoritative decisions taken by...local government...”⁶⁶ Accordingly, the study of these external agencies lobbying for or against specific policy agendas vis-à-vis governmental institutions has followed the growth of interventionist government policies in the second half of the twentieth century.⁶⁷ Within the literature, non-governmental actors have been categorized using the dichotomous narrative of *insider* groups and *outsider* groups.⁶⁸ These concepts became useful to explain booming phenomenon of interest groups lobbying for both political recognition and the public’s ear.

However, outsiders take on many different roles and forms. If one were to treat outsiders as a homogenous entity, two critical variables that determines the likelihood for effectiveness in promoting alternative policy agendas would be overlooked: resources available to outside actors, and the interest group’s motivation for articulating alternative courses for action. By categorizing interest groups based on these variables, it possible to develop a typology of outsider actors. When categories of outside actors are developed and combined with the information given on policy venues, it becomes evident that certain types of interest groups in the urban transportation sector will favour certain types venues dependent on their motivations and resources.

Variable 1: Agenda-setting resources of outside actors

In terms of resources available for effective promotion of an alternative policy agenda, interest groups possess different levels of both tangible and intangible assets. Tangible assets include items such as money, technology, information, time, expertise, and other necessary

⁶⁶ Grant, *Pressure Groups and British Politics*, 14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁸ Maloney, Jordan and McLaughlin trace the origins of this dichotomy back to E.E. Schnattschneider (1935), who identified that “insiders knew very much and outsiders knew very little. And this is way might have been expected, for the groups which knew their way about also knew about where to go for information on their own initiative, and knew how to get it.” As quoted in “Interest groups and Public Policy: The Insider/Outsider Model Revisited,” 18.

commodities.⁶⁹ Smith (summarising Truman and Eckstein) suggests that intangible assets that outside interest groups must develop include:

the social position of the group; the extent to which it is organized; and the skills and organization of the leadership. Pluralists also stress the importance of the size of the organization and the degree of mobilization and the level of the group's legitimacy.⁷⁰

It is important to note that while it is theoretically possible for any interest group to have both tangible and intangible assets, "few (will) have a significant *influence* over substantive outcomes."⁷¹ Influence, according to Grant, is the ability to

deploy certain political skills...it has to show civil servants that it can, and is prepared, to talk their language; that it knows how to present a case, and how to bargain and accept the outcome of the bargaining process.⁷²

However, within the scope of urban governance, there is a strong likelihood that those interest groups associated with the 'business community'⁷³ will have much greater influence in agenda-setting than groups based on post-materialistic values.⁷⁴

Urban Regime Theory and Systemic Power

Urban regime theorists take a particular interest in the study of urban politics, interest groups and the active business community within cities. Urban regime theorists, largely working under the banner of community pluralism articulated by Dahl⁷⁵ and Waste,⁷⁶ have undertaken

⁶⁹ Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire (1999). "Managing in network settings." *Policy Studies Review*. 16 (1). 28.

⁷⁰ See Martin J. Smith, *Pressure, Power and Policy: State Autonomy and Policy Networks in Britain and the United States*, (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 16. See also D. Truman *The Governmental Process*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 267-269; and H. Eckstein *Pressure Group Politics*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960).

⁷¹ Maloney et al., (1994), 25.

⁷² Grant, *Pressure Groups and British Politics*, 21.

⁷³ By business interest groups, I am referring to organizations that represent and articulate positions on behalf of what Elkin calls "controllers of productive capital" within cities. See S. Elkin, *City and Regime in the American Republic*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 17. For example, in the case of Vancouver transportation, the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council and Vancouver Board of Trade represent 'the controllers of productive capital.' See below.

⁷⁴ I use post-materialistic interest groups as juxtaposition to 'the controllers of productive capital.' Inglehart defines post-materialists as "giving a higher priority to non-material needs, such as a sense of community and quality of life... an increasing emphasis on environmental protection, and placing a markedly less emphasis on economic growth than do those with materialist or mixed values." See Richard Inglehart, "The renaissance of political culture." *American Political Science Review*. 82 no.4 (1988), 1203-1229.

⁷⁵ R.A. Dahl, *Who governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); Dahl, "Rethinking *Who Governs?* New Haven revisited," in R.J. Waste (ed.) *Community Power: Directions for Future Research*. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1996).

⁷⁶ Robert J. Waste, "Community power and pluralist theory," in R.J. Waste (ed.) *Community Power: Directions for Future Research*. (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1986); Waste, *Power and Pluralism in American Cities*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

considerable research projects to elaborate upon the symbiotic relationship between business organizations and government, and the ramifications that result because of this relationship within the urban setting.⁷⁷ However, while urban regime theorists have traditionally avoided articulating arguments in terms of agenda-setting literature,⁷⁸ several lessons may be gleaned from the work done in this field.

Regime theorists take as a given:

A set of government institutions subject to some degree of popular control and an economy guided mainly but not exclusively by private controlled investment decisions. A regime is a set of arrangements by which this division of labour is bridged.⁷⁹

Urban regime theorists argue that the 'bridge' between private, urban capital investment and the ability of local politicians (core inside decision makers at the local and regional level) to be elected, affords business organizations to have a special relationship with decision makers not available to other outside actors. Business, as a collective entity, has the power to invest physical capital into local communities, employ local workers, and contribute significantly to the local tax base; conversely it may also withdraw capital, employment opportunities, and tax revenues for the community. As politicians are the 'local face of the community,' their political success is intrinsically linked to the success of the local business community. Accordingly, urban regime theorists argue that if the business community articulates alternative policy positions, local politicians will likely attempt to develop work in tandem rather than in an adversarial role. In other words, if

⁷⁷ For a detailed case study of the convergence between corporate interests and local politics, see Clarence Stone (1989). *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press). For a more theoretical discussion on the concepts and applications of urban regime theory see: Stone, "Urban regimes and the capacity to govern: a political economy approach." *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 15 no. 1, 1993: 1-28; Gerry Stoker, "Regime theory and urban politics," in David Judge, Gerry Stoker, and Harold Wolman (eds.) *Theories of Urban Politics*. (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage, 1995), 54-71; K.G. Ward, "Coalitions in urban regenerations: a regime approach." *Environment and Planning A*. 29 (1997), 1493-1506; David L. Imbroscio, "Reformulating urban regime theory: the division of labor between state and market reconsidered," *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 20 no. 3, 1998: 233-248; Stone, "Regime analysis and the study of urban politics, a rejoinder." *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 20 no: 3, (1998): 249-260; David L. Imbroscio, "The necessity of urban regime change: a reply to Clarence N. Stone." *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 20 no. 3 (1998) 261-268; Jonathan Davies, *Partnerships and Regimes*. (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2001), 1-70; Karen Mossberger and Gerry Stoker, "The evolution of urban regime theory: the challenge of conceptualization." *Urban Affairs Review*. 36 no. 6 (2001), 810-835.

⁷⁸ The reluctance of urban regime theorists to articulate the politicized relationship between business organizations, is a major flaw with the urban regime school. While authors such as Elkin that there is an inherent conflict between 'the private ownership of a city's productive assets,' and publicly elected officials responsible for 'inducing economic performance,' this conflict has yet to be elaborated upon using the dialogue of policy scientists. See S. Elkin, *City and Regime in the American Republic*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 18. Two other studies which applied urban regime theory to urban regeneration projects, (Stone, *Regime Politics and Atlanta*, and Davies, *Partnerships and Regimes*, which examined several urban development regimes in the United Kingdom) also avoided making the correlation between urban regime and agenda-setting literature.

⁷⁹ Stoker, "Regime theory and urban politics," 56. See also Stone, "Urban regimes and the capacity to govern," 3.

A capacity to govern is achieved, if things get done, then power has been successfully exerted and to a degree it is irrelevant whether the mass of the public agreed with, or even knew about the policy initiative.⁸⁰

This power exerted by business interests vis-à-vis local government agenda setters is referred to as *systemic* power, or

That dimension of power in which durable features of the socio-economic system confer advantages and disadvantages on groups in ways predisposing public officials to favour some interests at the expense of others.⁸¹

Systemic power, therefore, can be viewed as a powerful, if not dominant force at the disposal of business associations looking to promote policy alternatives, in that it may bias elected officials' actions towards framing debates in a manner in which may garner business community support. While urban regime theorists recognize that "any group is unlikely to be able to exercise comprehensive control in a complex world,"⁸² the structure of local capital control "privileges the participation of certain interests in coalitions."⁸³ Accordingly, business interest groups may enjoy *presumptive rights* in "identifying, defining, and acting on policy issues given their established access to policymakers and traditional roles in policy subsystems."⁸⁴ This ability to exploit presumptive rights vis-à-vis elected officials, grants those who speak for organized business a high level of intangible resources in setting the policy agenda.

Urban regime analysis is often used as a counter-approach to the concept of policy networks in urban settings. As a framework for examination of the relationship between core institutional actors and owners of financial capital within communities, urban regime analysis tends to marginalize vocal outsider interest groups pressuring municipal or regional politicians. While undoubtedly, groups with capacity to make dramatic investment decisions may have the ear of politicians more readily than the average citizen groups, I suggest that the other groups may have at their disposal other resources which may as great ability to influence decision makers. Within the discipline, research of possible resources available to non-business outsider groups at local level is limited.

⁸⁰ Stoker, "Regime theory and urban politics," 60.

⁸¹ Clarence N. Stone, "Systemic power in community decision making: a restatement of stratification theory." American Political Science Review. 74 (1980): 978-990. The summary of this article quote is from Davies, Partnerships and Regimes 19.

⁸² Stoker, "Regime theory and urban politics," 59.

⁸³ Stone, Regime Politics, 36.

⁸⁴ Bruce K. Berger "Private issues and public policy: locating the corporate agenda in agenda-setting theory." Journal of Public Relations Research. 13 no.2 (2001), 94.

Variable 2: Motivation for Action

Outsider interest groups have many different motivations for developing and promoting problems and agendas which differ from the positions of policy insiders. As Rochefort and Cobb indicate, this largely has to do with whether groups see their involvement in agenda-setting as end in and of itself, or a means to an end.⁸⁵ Essentially, this debate asks: by articulating possible policy alternatives, what benefit does the outside interest group hope to accrue?

On the one hand, outside interest groups may become involved in agenda-setting in order to solidify its position as a legitimate stakeholder within the policy community. Outsiders may articulate a radically different agenda from that created by the institutionalized core actors in an attempt to become institutionalized within the inner sanctum of the policy community. By creating a different, yet plausible alternative to the formal agenda, these outsider actors are attempting to be considered as serious actors whose concerns are relevant to the day-to-day operations of the policy community. By articulating policy positions outside of normal venues controlled by the institutionalized core, outside actors employ a dual strategy in which their ultimate goal is to be included in the decision making process in the future. By bringing forth their demands in a non-traditional manner, the outsiders, as Baumgartner and Jones indicate, are attempting to alter the roster of the policy community; and are permitted to do so because “there are no immutable rules that determine which institutions in society will be granted jurisdiction over particular issues.”⁸⁶

Conversely, outsider actors may only be interested in promoting an alternative agenda as a means to draw attention to a particular issues at a given time. Rochefort and Cobb suggest that issues which are less severe, have low levels of incidence within the public, are novel in nature, or originate out of a crisis, are less likely to become issues that require interest groups to become institutionalized within the agenda-setting core.⁸⁷ Rather, in the above-mentioned cases, the objective of the outside interest groups is raise issues onto the formal agenda, so that they may be dealt with sooner rather later. In this manner, the goal of outsiders is to change the policy discussion, but not become involved in policy implementation and evaluation.

Finally, outside actors may wish to become involved, not because of a desire to promote alternative courses of action; but rather as a means to promote increasing uncertainty and instability within a policy community. As Heinz *et al* articulate, when outside interest groups

⁸⁵ Rochefort and Cobb, “Problem definition, agenda access, and policy choice.” 67.

⁸⁶ Baumgartner and Jones, “Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems,” 1047.

⁸⁷ Rochefort and Cobb, “Problem definition, agenda access, and policy choice,” 64-66

utilize non-institutionalized policy venues, they “contribute to the development of a more complex and rapidly changing policy environment.”⁸⁸ With more non-traditional outside actors taking an interest in specific policy areas outside of their traditional domain, the result produces:

Policy communities and networks... linked in a rather messy and unpredictable chain of actors, who do not know each other well and who do not speak the same language...they may bring...very different policy or cultural frames through which they view the real world.⁸⁹

Summary: Types of Interest Groups

Based on the previous two sections, a typology of interest groups can be constructed by comparing the resources available to outside interest groups and their motivations for participating in agenda-setting. In Table 2, six types of outside interest groups may be identified.

Table 2: Types of Local Politics, Outside Interest Groups

		Access to Tangible and Intangible Resources ⁹⁰	
		High	Low
Strategy for Action	Institutionalization	Urban Regimists	Pluralist Stakeholders
	Ongoing, Single Interest Groups	Specialist Outsiders	‘Marginalized’ Stakeholders
	Single Issue-articulation	Episodic Actors	Venue Shoppers

First, outside interest groups with high levels of tangible and intangible resources but the motivation to promote only a specific issue are classified as *episodic actors*. Such actors have at their disposal high levels of tangible, and most importantly, intangible assets available at their disposal, given their control of key productive assets in the community. However, these

⁸⁸ J.P. Heinz, E.O. Laumann, R.L. Nelson, and R.H. Salisbury (1993). The Hollow Core. Private Interests in National Policy Making. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press), 371.

⁸⁹ Jeremy Richardson, “Government, interest groups and policy change,” Political Studies, 48, no. 4, (2000): 1008. Richardson premises this work on D. Schön and M. Rein, Frame Reflection. Towards a Resolution of Intractable Policy Controversies. (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), and A.L. Fligstein, “Social skill and institutional theory.” American Behavioural Scientist. 40 (1997), 397-405.

⁹⁰ This table borrows from the work of Maloney *et al*, who use the variables of ‘status’ (that is, a position that is “conditional upon government granted legitimacy, [it is] ascribed by policymakers to the group [p. 28]), and ‘strategy’, (that is, an opportunity structure “selected by the group.” [p. 28]). However, Maloney *et al*, work is predicated on the idea that interest groups within society or preordained to be either insiders or outsiders: their work does not discuss *how* groups shift between outsider and insider groups when new institutions and institutional networks are created. Thus, this table explicitly is focussed on types of outside actors. See Maloney *et al*, “Interest groups and Public Policy: the insider/outsider model revisited,” 27-32.

organizations do not believe that it is advantageous to become active, institutionalized members within the policy community. Instead, these actors seek out new venues in order to promote a specific issue onto the formal agenda, and may form 'peak associations' with groups with similar interests.⁹¹ Primarily, such interest groups promote policy alternatives as result of crisis in management, in which "groups actively seek to expand or contain issues after a focussing event."⁹²

Groups that fall into the *specialist outsider* category, have an enduring interest in a particular policy area, and have the capacity to articulate the interest to insiders over a prolonged period of time. Such organizations may not be interested in all aspects of the formal agenda promoted by policy issues, but may instead articulate specific concerns over one issue. The difference between specialist outsiders and what Maloney *et al.* call 'specialist insiders,' is the level in which the material produced by the organization is seen as "reliable and authoritative source of information with particular niche of policy."⁹³

Urban regimists, on the other hand, are interest groups which have at their disposal high levels of tangible resources, and are more likely to be perceived as valuable contributors by inside members. The objective of urban regimists is to not necessarily affect the agenda-setting process at the given time; but rather, by articulating an viable alternative position, to be adopted by insiders into the inner core of decision makers: complete with all the trappings of limiting access to other outsiders, shaping the future agendas, and controlling policy development and implementation.

Similarly, *pluralist stakeholders* also seek to become institutionalized in the agenda process by articulating the interests different from those on the formal agenda, in the hopes that they will be adopted into the inner core of decision makers. Unlike urban regimists however, pluralist stakeholders lack the intangible asset of *systemic power*: accordingly, it is much more difficult for these outsiders to have ideas adopted onto the formal agenda and to become a stable member within the policy community.

Marginalized stakeholders, like outsider specialists, have a vested interest in promoting a specific issue onto the policy agenda. Such groups target a relatively small portion of a larger

⁹¹ For a more thorough discussion on peak associations, see William D. Coleman, *Business and Politics: A Study of Collective Action*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

⁹² A focusing event is an event is one that is "sudden: relatively uncommon; and can reasonably be defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potentially greater harms; has harms that are concentrated in a particular geographical area or community of interests; and that is known to both policy makers and the public simultaneously." Thomas Birkland, (1998). "Focusing Events, mobilization, and agenda setting." *Journal of Public Policy*. 18 no.1 (1998), 53.

⁹³ Maloney *et al.*, "Interest groups and Public Policy: the insider/outsider model revisited," 30.

policy agenda, and take ‘great pains to present the issue in a relatively uncontroversial way...advocating technical changes rather than bold sweeps in policy.’⁹⁴

Finally, *venue shoppers* are outside interest groups or concerned individuals, with few resources at their disposal and whose goal is to articulate a specific issue in short time period in the hopes of persuading inside actors to adopt rapid policy change. Venue shoppers, by definition, work outside of the institutionalized venues established by inside actors. By seeking out the “*correct arena for its activity, and effectively transmitting its message, (venue seekers) may by indirect means have a significant effect on the policy network and policy itself.*”⁹⁵

Multiple venues as instruments of outsider initiated agenda-setting

In the previous sections, a straightforward model of the process involved for outsiders to initiate movement from the public to formal agenda was introduced. In that model, the underlying assumption is that there is exists a relatively linear progression through the stages of initiation, specification, expansion, and ultimately entrance onto the formal policy agenda. The model makes the assumption, however, that there is present just one formal or institutionalized venue available for outside actors articulate policy positions vis-à-vis the formal agenda; no other venues are available for outside interest groups to lobby. Clearly, such analysis belies the notion that there are indeed several forums for which outside-interest groups articulate policy positions differing from those on the formal policy agenda. To this extent, further clarifications on the alternative venues available for outside interest groups are necessary.

Before proceeding, it is essential to define what is meant by a policy venue. According to Berger, a policy venue is any place where “political actors set priorities and act upon an agenda of social issues which influences policy formulation, definitions, alternatives, and outcomes.”⁹⁶ Furthermore, for Baumgartner and Jones venues are issue and context dependant:

Depending on the issue and how it is understood by those potentially involved, it may be assigned to an agency of the federal government, to private market mechanisms, to state and local authorities, to the family, or to any number of institutions.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Ibid., 31. Maloney *et al.* identify the lobbying conducted by the Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society to lower the definition of a stillborn from 28 to 24 week as an example of an issue-orientated outsider.

⁹⁵ Geoffrey Dudley and Jeremy Richardson. “Why does policy change over time? Adversarial policy communities, alternative policy arenas and British trunk roads policy 1945-95.” *Journal of European Public Policy*, 3, no. 1, (1996a): 75. Emphasis in the original.

⁹⁶ Berger, “Private issues and public policy: locating the corporate agenda in agenda-setting theory,” 92.

⁹⁷ Baumgartner and Jones, “Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems,” 1044-1074.

Baumgartner and Jones, in their review of dramatic shifts in nuclear policy, pesticides, and anti-tobacco initiatives,⁹⁸ identified the paradox where rapid bursts of policy change occur despite relative stable institutional membership.⁹⁹ To explain this phenomenon, Baumgartner and Jones postulate that, on the one hand:

Political actors are capable of strategic action by employing a dual strategy...control(ling) the prevailing image of the policy problem through the use of rhetoric, symbols and policy analysis. On the other hand they try to alter the roster of participants who are involved in the issue by seeking out the most favourable venue for the consideration of their issues.¹⁰⁰

This identification of venues outside of the ready control of inside, institutional actors is an important contribution as to how outside actors can promote important public issues onto the formal agenda without the necessary acquiesces of institutional actors to introduce new policy alternatives. This model also illustrates how, in systems with a predilection towards incremental decision-making, or at worst, agenda gridlock, can paradoxically support rapid and dramatic policy change.

In their studies of British trunk road policy,^{101, 102} Dudley and Richardson make two important contributions to the Baumgartner and Jones model of agenda-setting. First, Dudley and Richardson, building upon the idea that there are both institutional and informal venues for political actors in which to partake, review how outside actors can promote radical policy change onto the formal agenda despite an institutionalized policy community desire for incremental policy change. Dudley and Richardson argue that when given an impetus to articulate alternative policy positions, outsider actors can have a dramatic impact on agenda-setting by venue shopping.¹⁰³ Thus, the demand for venue-shopping is created when an outside actor is faced with

⁹⁸ See also Donald Studlar (2002), Tobacco Control: Comparative Policy in the U.S. and Canada. (Toronto: Broadview, 2002).

⁹⁹ See for example Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, Agendas and Instability in American Politics. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁰ Baumgartner and Jones, "Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems," 1045.

¹⁰¹ A trunk road is a major, multi-lane arterial freeway, which serve an inter-regional purpose. Trunk roads are administered and maintained by the British Ministry of Transport.

¹⁰² Dudley and Richardson. "Why does policy change over time?" 63-83; Dudley and Richardson, "Promiscuous and celibate ministerial styles: policy change, policy networks, and British roads policy." Parliamentary Affairs. 49 (1996b): 566-583; Dudley and Richardson, "Arenas without rules and the policy change process: outsider groups and British roads policy," Political Studies, XLVI, (1998): 727-747.

¹⁰³ Dudley and Richardson use venues and arenas is synonymous with the North American terminology of policy communities. Wilkes and Wright state: "Policy community identifies those actors and those potential actors drawn from the policy universe who share a *common* policy focus." (emphasis added). This concept differs from a 'policy network' in that a "Network is the linking process within a policy community or between two or more communities." In Stephen Wilkes and Maurice Wright, "Conclusion: Comparing government-industry relations: States, sectors and

choice where it must “bridge the gap as a means of achieving its aims (within the existing institutional framework), or try to bypass an arena where rival interests are strong, in order to influence the final locus of power.”¹⁰⁴

Second, when reviewing possible venues for issue articulation, outsider organizations will be partial to shopping for venues that lack institutional processes that do not ‘enable them (outside stakeholders) to raise, effectively, new issues which challenge the policy core beliefs of the hegemonic policy community.’¹⁰⁵ Essentially, outside interest groups will ‘shop’ for forums in which there is a strong likelihood that they may articulate alternative policy options with the hopes of adoption onto the formal agenda.

Intrinsically, actors not institutionalized into the policy development core are searching for policy ‘arenas without rules.’¹⁰⁶ Three such arenas are commonly discussed within the literature. First, an arena without rules may emerge as a result of a “conscious rejection of the policy community approach to policy making – either by choice or by necessity – on the part of interest groups.”¹⁰⁷ In this example, a coordinated group of inside interest groups isolates themselves from the institutional powers of legislators, bureaucracies, and the courts, in order to promote conflict between inside and outside actors. Thus, an arena without rules is formed in which the outside actors do not have to abide by the formal rules of agenda-setting established by the inside actors.¹⁰⁸

Secondly, an arena without rules may form as a result of a mistake or ill-planned consultation process initiated by inside actors within a policy community. For example, in an attempt to convey a sense of legitimacy, insider actors often present actors with an opportunity to comment on various options on a policy agenda through various consultation processes. Traditionally, firm rules are established as to who may make submissions, what alternatives the participants may discuss, and the length of presentations to the review committees. However, when the consultation processes lack these rules, they may be subject to exploitation by outside actor. A prime example is the case of the Highway Inquires in Britain, in which environmentalists

networks,” *Comparative Government-Industry Relations: Western Europe, the United States and Japan*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). 296-298. As cited in Howlett and Ramesh, 128.

¹⁰⁴ Dudley and Richardson, “. “Why does policy change over time?,” 64.

¹⁰⁵ Dudley and Richardson, “Arenas without rules and the policy change process: outsider groups and British roads policy,” 728.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Jeremy Richardson, “Government, interest groups and policy change,” 1010.

¹⁰⁸ The best example of this is the case of alteration of the tobacco venue in the United States, as articulated by A.L. Fritschker, *Smoking and Politics*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1975).

exploited the quasi-judicial system of reviewing highway construction projects into a trial between the institutionalized 'roads-lobby' and the public's concern over the environmental degradation caused by the construction of freeways.¹⁰⁹

Third, an arena without rules may emerge as a result of disrespecting any form of institutional authority in agenda-setting, and instead revert to civil disobedience as a means to articulate an alternative policy issue or agenda. The use of civil disobedience is the ultimate arena without rules in that members of interest groups or the attentive public knowingly disregard societal rules in order to capture the attention of the general public. While critics such as Robinson argue that the role of outsiders are limited because they have "only an arm's length relationship to the policy making and agenda-setting process,"¹¹⁰ one must not be so strictly focussed on the 'ends of policy development,' but also how those ends are achieved. By relegating outside interest groups as background noise to the agenda-setting formal agenda-setting process, it essentially over-estimates the role that institutions play in controlling political debate.

Internal constraints: Institutional and network design impacts on agenda control

Up to this point, this chapter has examined strategies and variables available to outside actors to influence decision makers and promote their ideas onto the institutional agenda. However, the ability of interest groups to have either their positions adopted by institutional decision makers, or for the groups themselves to be brought into the decision making process, is still largely dependant upon recognition from insider, institutional actors. Hence, the success of outside actors to influence policy is strongly dependant upon the permeability and responsiveness of governance institutions to manage societal actors. This intermingling of a plurality of insiders

¹⁰⁹ See Dudley and Richardson, "Why does policy change over time?" 63-83; Dudley and Richardson, "Promiscuous and celibate ministerial styles: policy change, policy networks, and British roads policy," 566-583; Dudley and Richardson, "Arenas without rules and the policy change process: outsider groups and British roads policy," 727-747, and Richardson, "Government, interest groups and policy change," 1012.

¹¹⁰ Nick Robinson, *The Politics of Agenda-setting: The Car and the Shaping of Public Policy*. (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2000). 28. Whereas Dudley and Richardson argue that the mere presence of outsiders has a dramatic impact on policy development and agenda-setting, Robinson presents an alternative hypothesis that outsiders have a relatively small role in changing public policy. According to Robinson, the results generated by outside interest groups are not sufficient to warrant credit. While outside actors may influence public perception on a particular issue, ultimately "they had much less effect on the private perception of the transport issue which remained dominated by the interaction between government and erstwhile insider groups." 150. Robinson indicates that is more relevant to use a stylized model Sabatier's advocacy coalition framework, in which "shared beliefs provide the principal 'glue' of politics; that core beliefs are 'quite resilient to change;' and that the 'line up of allies and opponents tends to be relatively stable over periods of a decade or so.' 244. Based on P.A. Sabatier, "Policy change over a decade or more." P. A. Sabatier and H.C. Jenkins (eds.) *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993). 13-39.

and outsiders within the local political sphere is of prime interest of both the 'new institutionalist' school of urban politics and the policy network approach.

New institutionalists seek to explain "the relationship between the structure and democracy and the ways in which rules, procedures and formal organization succeed or fail in constraining political behaviour."¹¹¹ Similarly, from the policy network approach, Marsh argues that public policy making

is about cooperation and consensus building; it involves the exchange of resources between actors. Policy failure may result from the absence of key actors, the lack of commitment to share goals by one or more of the actors, or insufficient information or attention.¹¹²

Hence, from an urban governance perspective, both the new institutionalist and policy network approaches seek to bridge the study of the institutional arrangements and actors within society – through an examination of the

informal conventions as well as the formal rules and structures; they pay attention to the way in which institutions embody the values and power relationships; and they study not just the impact of institutions on behaviour, but the *interaction* between individuals and institutions.¹¹³

Urban regional governance presents added complexity to the study of inside and outside actors. In fragmented governance regions, inside actors not only need to manage agendas put forth by outside actors, but in addition need to supervise interactions and voting strategies within the inside core actors. Hence, while outside actors seek venues favourable to gaining access to the inner core's agenda, the inner core decision-makers may be in a constant state of bargaining, negotiation and games.

Inside actors' agenda maintenance- muddling through?

Charles Lindblom's seminal works, "The Science of Muddling Through," and "Still Muddling, Not Yet Through," examines how institutional actors, when confronted with an issue derivative of a scarcity of resources, make decisions on the allocation of resources. Lindblom

¹¹¹ R.A.W. Rhodes, "The institutional approach," Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability, (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997), 79.

¹¹² David Marsh, "The development of the policy network approach," in David Marsh (ed), Comparing Policy Networks, (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1998), 9. See also W.J.M. Kickert, E.-H. Klijn, and J.F.M. Koppenjan, "Introduction: A management perspective on policy networks," in W.J.M. Kickert, E.-H. Klijn, and J.F.M. Koppenjan (eds), Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector, (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997), 9-10.

¹¹³ Vivien Lowndes, "Rescuing Aunt Sally: taking institutional theory seriously in urban politics," Urban Studies, 38 no. 11 (2001): 1953. See also Lowndes, "The institutional approach," in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds) Theory and Methods in Political Science, 2nd edition. (London: Macmillan, 2001) and R.A.W. Rhodes, "The institutional approach," Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability, (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997), pp. 63-86

questions the assumption that decision-makers, when confronted with a complex problem, employ a 'rational comprehensive' model of planning, policy formation, and decision-making.¹¹⁴ The rational comprehensive model requires decision makers to "separate means and ends:"¹¹⁵ that is, authorities arrive at or make decisions only after a gathering of all possible data, carefully weighing the possible alternatives, and then choosing the best solution.

Lindblom proposes that rational choice methodology, while useful in explaining the theoretical relationships between decision making, institutions, and allocation of resources, fails in its understanding of how these factors interact in the 'real world.' Lindblom proposes alternative model of decision-making: the successive limited comparisons model.¹¹⁶ This model is predicated on five presuppositions, which speaks directly against rational choice tenants.

First, actors, when confronted with decision-making opportunities, lack the ability to separate personal values and beliefs in order to effectively propose alternative courses of action. Instead, alternative agenda items are put forth which effectively mirror individual values: "one chooses among values and among policies at the same time."¹¹⁷ Accordingly, while an institution may attempt to impose a set of normative values for decision makers to consider; ultimately, policy is developed bases on one's own experiences and values.

Second, as decisions are made primarily relying on personal experience and personal values to arrive at decisions, it is difficult to evaluate policies as it is unclear whether the policies are the means of arriving at the decision or are the end decision. Because of the tautological nature in which policy is derived (that is, administrators choose policy alternative based on what past experience, rather than fully examining an issue and seeking other possible alternatives), one may not be able to evaluate whether a policy succeeded or failed as a result of inappropriate selection of alternatives, or a result of a deeper, systemic values.¹¹⁸

Third, Lindblom argues that the test of whether a policy 'good,' is not based on whether a policy best serves the public's interest; but rather, if the policy can be agreed upon by enough decision makers so as to say that core actors are legitimate in their making of policy. In this sense, legitimacy is achieved whenever the rules of the institution permit a decision to be carried out (such as majority vote).

¹¹⁴ Charles Lindblom, "The science of muddling through." Public Administration Review. 48 no. 3 (1959): 81.

¹¹⁵ John M. Pfiffner,). "Administrative Rationality," Public Administration Review. 20. 125-132. Reprinted in Tadao Miyakawa, The Science of Public Policy: Essential Readings in Policy Sciences. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 307.

¹¹⁶ Lindblom, "The science of muddling through," 81.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

In order to achieve 'good,' policy, it is necessary to propose alternative of courses of action that are most likely to be readily adopted by the group. Given that institutionalized groups a) promote items onto the formal agenda based on the limited collective experiences and interests within the group, b) have an established pattern of selecting alternatives based on previous selection endeavours, and c) are leery of radical policy shifts that deviate from past experience, good policy represents not what meets societies needs, but rather what alternatives are likely to pass.¹¹⁹

Fourth, because present and future decisions are based on precedence, there is strong a likelihood that possible alternative courses of action, outcomes, and important effected values are neglected.¹²⁰ Thus, the actions undertaken by the institutionalized actor may have unforeseen consequences on both affiliated and unaffiliated organizations. Accordingly, affected organizations must adopt strategies to force issues onto the formal agenda to ensure that such actions do not adversely affect their interests.

Finally, because decisions are predicated on past practices of the institutional actors, bad policy decisions affect how future policy decisions are made. Because outside alternatives are not admittedly sought after, there is a tendency for institutional actors to "overlook excellent policies for no other reason than that they are not suggested by the chain of successive policy steps leading to the present. (Accordingly,)... policies will continue to be foolish as they are wise."¹²¹

While Lindblom was not specifically speaking to agenda setting, his analysis does provide some interesting insights into agenda management, particularly when taken in the context of urban governance. First, the identification of institutional agendas as being an amalgam of differences voices and positions put forward by inside actors assists to explain how inside members may be co-opted into permitting voices from outside actors to be heard. If inside actors are unsatisfied with the formal institutional agenda, they can seek out like minded outsiders to give credence to alternative positions.

Second, Lindblom permits the possibility the decisions concerning the institutional agenda may be subject to games being played in order to enhance bargaining positions. However, unlike a rational choice perspective of urban governance games,¹²² Lindblom recognizes that

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 84-85

¹²⁰ Ibid. 81.

¹²¹ Ibid. 88

¹²² See for example, Keith Dowding, Patrick Dunleavy, Desmond King, Helen Margetts and Yvonne Rydin, "Understanding urban governance: the contribution of rational choice," in Gerry Stoker (ed.), The New Politics of

these games are most likely being played by institutional actors who lack perfect information; may be unwilling to pursue 'rational' strategies which may have adverse affects on the careers as local (rather than regional) actors; and seek to maintain existing arrangements and strategies at the expense of a rational policy development.

Third, embedded within Lindblom's analysis is the idea that inside, institutional actors are unlikely to embark on radical agenda shifts without acceptance from larger societal actors. If a strategy is controversial, as is often the case in transportation planning and infrastructure development, inside actors will allow items to be 'pushed' onto the institutional agenda and force outsiders into accepting proposals, *if* outsiders can mobilize societal, or in the case of urban infrastructure investment, financial backing for particular projects.

Managing outsider agendas: instruments of network administration

Despite the internal bargaining pressures faced by inside actors working inside a regional governance framework, inside actors largely retain the controlling ability to manage the policy agenda. However, depending on the resources and motivations of outside actors, inside actors have two overarching strategies to manage the policy agenda: agenda denial or agenda acceptance.

Inside actors have a variety of substantive and procedural policy instruments at their disposal in order to accept or deny and outsider agendas. Substantive instruments, as defined by Howlett and Ramesh, are instruments that affect "the substance of policy outputs," while procedural instruments are directed to "alter or manipulate aspects of the policy subsystem or network behaviour in the policy process."¹²³ In other words, the use of substantive policy instruments attempts to *directly* alter the policy positions or status of actors through the provision or denial of resources and state recognition; whereas procedural instruments are deployed to *indirectly* manage a network through the altering the rules of engagement with outside actors.

In terms of agenda and outsider management, inside actors have at their disposal the ability to deploy a spectrum of both substantive and procedural policy instruments to either deny

British Local Governance, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 91-116. See also Keith M. Dowding, Rational Choice and Power. (Brookfield, VT: Edward Elgar, 1991).

¹²³ Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems 2nd edition. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 195-196. Howlett and Ramesh choose to classify substantive instruments based on 'the level of state activity involved in goods and service production and delivery,' based on a scale ranging from low levels of involvement to high levels of involvement. As an alternative, Klijn, Koppenjan and Termeer consider substantive instruments as instruments of game management, which "influence the interaction process between actors, (through) anticipating the limitations and opportunities which occur in the network." Similarly, procedural instruments are labeled instruments of network structuring, which "are aimed at effecting change in the network." See, Erik-Hans Klijn, Joop Koppenjan and Katrien Termeer, "Managing networks in the public sector: a theoretical study of management strategies in policy networks," Public Administration, 73 (1995): 442.

or accept an outsider initiated agenda. In terms of substantive policy instruments designed for agenda management, this spectrum is based on the costs incurred by institutional actors to preclude or include specific actors within the agenda setting process.



Costs, in this case, represent the aggregate expenditure of tangible resources and intangible resources. Tangible resources may include financial costs associated with directing public relations organizations to design a campaign to discredit an outside actor, costs associated with ensuring compliance through enforcement, or costs associated with organizing and funding good works undertaken by outsiders. Similarly, the costs associated with the use of procedural instruments range from low to high, based on the expenditure of resources by the inside actors to reconfigure the policy network. However, costs may also be difficult to measure, such as those associated with a loss of institutional legitimacy amongst the public based upon a poor decision, and costs associated with a decline in the ability to manage a policy network.

Inside actors may use actor-specific, substantive tools to minimize the ability of outside actors of obtaining a position of prominence. These strategies vary in scale from 'low cost' strategies, such as issue and group avoidance, to medium cost strategies, such as discrediting groups and issues, symbolic placation or the denial of resources; to high cost strategies such as the threat of legal sanctions.¹²⁴ Second, insiders may attempt to deny outsider agendas through the use of procedural instruments; such as a rigid adherence to the pre-existing rules of the institution to others, or by reconstituting the institutional rules and or structure to exclude the participation of other outsider organizations.

If, however, an outsider organization's positions are tenable, insiders may utilize substantive and procedural policy instruments to incorporate either their positions or the groups themselves into the policy network. In terms of substantive instruments of agenda acceptance, inside actors may choose strategies such as symbolically recognizing the outsider agenda, to co-opting the agenda as their own, to providing resources to the outside actors to further articulate their alternative agenda. In terms of procedural instruments, insiders may develop ad hoc arrangements to work with the outsiders, to actual inclusion of the group into the agenda setting process. These two concepts are discussed below and summarised in Figure 5.

¹²⁴ Cobb and Ross, "Denying agenda access: strategic considerations," 25-48. See also, J.A. de Bruijn and E.F. ten Heuvelhof, "Instruments for network management," in Walter J.M. Kickert, Erick-Hans Klijn, and Joop F.M. Koppenjan (eds) Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997): 126-132.

Figure 5: Institutional Agenda Management Strategies ¹²⁵

	Outsider Agenda Denial		Outsider Agenda Acceptance
	<i>Substantive Instruments</i>		
Responses to outside actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue avoidance • Discrediting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Groups ○ Issues • Symbolic placation • Regulatory barriers of entry • Denial of resources • Legal sanctions 	Costs Low  High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic recognition of outside agenda(s) • Co-optation of an agenda • Resource allocation
		<i>Procedural Instruments</i>	
Institutional design responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective activation of other outsider groups • Limiting outsider participation altogether 	Costs Low  High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating ad hoc arrangements/sharing of ideas • Changing rules to incorporate outsiders in to insider position

Outsider Agenda denial

Agenda denial, as defined by Cobb and Ross, are the “tactics used to keep a grievance off the public, or more often, formal (institutional) agenda.”¹²⁶ These tactics used by insiders can be targeted at specific actors or activities within the network, or denial through a reconstitution of the operating structure of the network. Agenda denial may occur in order to minimize the external challenges to the legitimacy of inside actors. By reducing potential external conflicting agendas from appearing on the public’s radar, inside actors may have an easier time in steering components of a policy agenda through the policy cycle, as voices of opposition are suppressed.

Second, denying an outside actor the ability to formalize an alternative agenda at the outset may serve to minimize future expenditures of agenda management. An initial attack posture to contain outside voices may serve to minimize the use of a more dramatic, expensive

¹²⁵ Table adapted from E.-H. Klijn and G.R. Teisman, “Strategies and Games in Networks,” in Walter J.M. Kickert, Erick-Hans Klijn, and Joop F.M. Koppenjan (eds) *Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), p.106; Cobb and Ross, “Denying agenda access: strategic considerations,” in Roger W. Cobb and Marc Howard Ross (eds.), *Cultural strategies of agenda denial*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1997), pp.25-48; and Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* 2nd edition. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003) pp: 87-116; 194-196.

¹²⁶ Cobb and Ross, “Agenda setting and the denial of agenda access,” in Roger W. Cobb and Marc Howard Ross (eds.), *Cultural strategies of agenda denial*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1997), p. 19.

instrument (in terms of political capital) as the agenda proceeds through the policy cycle.¹²⁷ Hence, insiders may deploy a strategic attack as a means of conserving resources down the road.

Third, insiders may launch an attack on an outsider's agenda in order to change the network structure, as to allow more constructive but minimized actors into the inner circle of policy development. Changing the network structure may be precipitated by a search for new ideas, new capital sources, or desire to marginalize long-standing actors. However, attacking an outsider's agenda may also be undertaken as a means to provide balance of opinions available to insiders, particularly if one group has become overly powerful in mobilizing public opinion against the institutional actors.

Substantive instruments of outsider agenda-denial

In terms of substantive instruments of agenda denial, the lowest cost strategy available for insiders is to ignore an outsider's agenda completely. By not acknowledging an alternative agenda, the onus is placed in the hands of the outsiders to expend resources to push the agenda forward. This strategy is becomes particularly effective when dealing with 'nuisance' groups; that is, groups which lack the financial and human capital to garner enough of the public's attention to make their proposal an issue for discussion.¹²⁸

Inside actors may also choose to deploy one of three 'medium-cost' strategies, largely concerned with the distribution of information to either the general public or to specific actors within the network.¹²⁹ Insiders may assume an attack posture, designed to discredit either the ideas of the outsiders, or the outsiders themselves. A strategy of attacking the ideas of others is chosen in circumstances where the outside initiator maintains a high level of legitimacy within the public eye.¹³⁰ Attacking an outsider's ideas can be achieved through disputing the agenda's merits by discrediting the facts surrounding the issue; or stating that by the adoption of the recommended course of action proposed by outsider, many more people would be harmed in the long run.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Ibid, 17.

¹²⁸ Cobb and Ross, "Denying agenda access: strategic considerations," 27-28.

¹²⁹ Howlett and Ramesh, using typology of instruments developed by Christopher Hood, would consider this kind of institutional resource as *nodality* instruments: that is, instruments designed to produce or distributed information concerning a particular subject to a target audience. See Howlett and Ramesh, Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems 2nd edition, 91-92; and Christopher Hood, The Tools of Government, (Chatham, NJ: Chatam House, 1986), 124-125.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Alternatively, if an outsider organization lacks legitimacy based on either a history of marginal past performance or lack of public recognition, agenda denial may be achieved through attacking the group's credibility. This can be achieved through the distribution of information discrediting the group's motives for desiring involvement, discrediting the activities or interests of key figures within the leadership of the opposing group, or blaming the group for seeking illegitimate attention.¹³²

A second, medium cost strategy at the disposal of inside actors is that of symbolic placation. Symbolic placation occurs when insiders "admit the existence of a problem but block any consideration of the initiator's proposed solution, citing reasons such as cost or the remedy is hopelessly naïve."¹³³ The objective of this strategy is to defuse and weaken potential conflicts with outside organizations while maintaining and promoting the institutional agenda. Symbolic placation may be achieved through a variety of means, including establishing committees to examine the problem, 'showcasing' possible solutions through the use of pilot programs in areas of interest to outside actors, or co-opting key members of the outside organization by involving them in ad hoc decision making bodies.¹³⁴

Third, inside actors may choose to invoke rules against participation of particular groups by developing barriers to entry onto the formal agenda. This can be achieved by developing onerous requirements for participation, such as limiting the response time that groups have to respond to a particular project or by imposing monetary requirements for upon specific groups to participate in discussion.¹³⁵ The objective behind this kind of instrument usage is not to publicly discredit an organization, but to establish disincentives for group involvement.

High cost instruments which can be employed by insiders include threats of denying financial resources to specific groups or threatening legal sanctions if the outsider activities persist. The objective behind the use of these instruments is to force outsiders into a position where they need to expend a great deal of resources in order to remain active. Examples of high-cost instruments include the use of incarceration or threats of incarceration, passing laws or bylaws restricting the involvement of particular groups at meetings, or declaring membership in

¹³² Cobb and Ross, "Denying agenda access: strategic considerations," 42.

¹³³ Ibid, 34.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 34-36.

¹³⁵ J.A. de Bruijn and E.F. ten Heuvelhof, "Instruments for network management," in Walter J.M. Kickert, Erick-Hans Klijn, and Joop F.M. Koppenjan (eds) Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), pp 126-129.

specific groups illegal.¹³⁶ At a local governance level, the use of high-cost substantive instruments is likely minimal, given the closeness of elected officials to the public they serve.

Procedural instruments of outsider agenda denial

Procedural instruments of agenda denial are designed to target the composition of a policy network, rather than focusing in on one particular actor. Instruments alter the arrangement of outsiders in a policy network, and therefore, seek to introduce new actors into the agenda-setting stage, or conversely, preclude their activities. To this end, inside actors can choose to selectively activate collaborative groups in order to provide balance in the voices of outsiders, or deactivate the entire network as to prohibit competing agendas altogether.

Selective activation of actors is a strategy designed to limit the strength of a particularly vocal outside actor, by creating an actor who legitimizes the opinions of the insiders. Activation, in this sense, may involve the insiders providing critical information to specific groups, allocating research dollars to an outsider to examine the topic, thus creating an 'expert' in the field, or by introducing regulatory requirements to solicit the opinions of a specific groups other than those already involved.¹³⁷ Activation, however, requires an arms-length approach from the insiders: specifically, the new group(s) should have some degree of independence from the institutional actors in terms of key decision makers and financial resources. Activation of a dependent actor may lead to charges of bias and/or favouritism.

An alternative strategy of network management to deny an outside agenda is to deactivate the entire network and seek out a new network: or, to use the language introduced earlier in this chapter, to seek out an entirely new institutional 'venue.' This strategy entails a lateral or horizontal shift of the management of an agenda from one institutional agency to another. By shifting the venue for the management of a particular agenda, new insider actors with different strategies and rules for handling outside interventions come into play. Accordingly, this strategy will force outsiders to reassess their positions and activities as to best deal with the new situation facing them. As one shall see with respect to transportation planning and management in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, shifting portions of the transportation planning agenda to the GVRD exemplifies this venue-shifting strategy.

¹³⁶ Cobb and Ross, "Denying agenda access: strategic considerations," 38.

¹³⁷ J.A. de Bruijn and E.F. ten Heuvelhof, "Instruments for network management," in Walter J.M. Kickert, Erick-Hans Klijn, and Joop F.M. Koppenjan (eds) Managing Complex Networks: Strategies for the Public Sector, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997),pp 126-132.

Outsider agenda acceptance

In previous sections in the chapter, the presence of six different types of outside actors categorised on the basis of resources and motivations for action in articulating an alternative agenda was examined. As evidenced, some outside actors may possess legitimate grievances about the direction of an institutional agenda. Such grievances may include an inappropriate ranking of priorities for institutional actors, a disproportionate allocation of financial resources to particular projects, or ignorance of a particular issue which has direct impact on a particular outsider organization.

While some of the issues brought forward by outsiders may be frivolous, and thus make worthy candidates for agenda denial, some outsiders will present legitimate alternatives courses of action that must be addressed by the inside actors. Furthermore, some outside groups will possess valuable resources, such as financial capital, development power, or insight into a particular issue which would make them a difficult actor to ignore. Agenda acceptance, therefore, may be considered as recognition of the legitimacy of ideas, resources or a combination thereof, at the disposal of outside actors. Instruments of agenda acceptance, consequently, are used to either manage the ideas and resources of particular actors, or to administer a policy network as to deliver amenable relationships between insider and outside actors.

Like outsider agenda denial, the reasons why inside actors may choose to incorporate either the ideas of the outside actor onto the institutional agenda or elevate the outside actor to inside actor status are varied. First, like agenda denial, agenda acceptance may be used as somewhat deceitful delaying tactic. An outsider's agenda may be symbolically adopted as a means of postponement until insiders have a chance to respond to an idea. Since developing an agenda is the first stage in the policy cycle, issues may be initially adopted but dropped at a later stage.

Second, additional actors may be able articulate different positions which may shed light on particular issue, by bringing attention to technical difficulties or ways in which the problem should be framed. While insiders may not be interested in developing formal relationships, they may perceive the resources and expertise of particular groups as being particularly valuable. This is especially the case when an organization may have a high degree of public recognition and creditability.

Another strategy in agenda acceptance is for the insiders to legitimize a specific outside organization by allocating resources to the group to study a particular problem. This is a common delaying tactic: by funding outside organizations who have expressed an interest in a given area,

insiders can essentially purchase the loyalty of specific groups, while maintain the ultimate control of setting the agenda.

Outsider agenda acceptance has the potential to place institutional actors in a quandary. On the one hand, accepting outsiders has the benefit of providing additional resources and insights on agenda. On the other hand, acknowledging the presence of outsiders can be risky in that it may be seen as poor agenda management by inside actors. If groups are perceived to bring issues to the forefront with relative ease, the effectiveness of the institution may be brought into question.

Substantive instruments of outsider agenda acceptance

There are a number of instruments at the disposal of insiders which incorporate outside actors' agendas including symbolic recognition of an outsider's agenda, co-optation of the agenda, or allocating resources to outside actors. Like instruments of outsider agenda denial, a varying cost structure is associated with the instrument chosen.

Symbolic recognition of an outsider's agenda can be considered the low cost option. Symbolic recognition means that an alternative issue requires attention; however, the issue is adopted on the formal agenda with the tacit understanding that the issue will likely be regarded of low importance. As such, programs will likely be developed and administered as per the insider's policy agenda. This strategy may be effective against small organizations with few resources to mobilize opposition, or against issues that lack salience within the general public.

An example of a medium cost instrument which may be targeted at specific outside actors is the co-optation of an outsider's agenda. Co-optation involves insiders shifting priorities on the formal agenda in order to take control of an outsider's agenda. Co-optation may occur when an outside has the capacity to garner wide-ranging support for a particular issue, but may lack the capacity or the will to carry an issue through the policy cycle. Co-optation also allows for inside actors to retain tight control on the agenda setting process, by limiting outside actor involvement.

An example of a high cost strategy of agenda management would be to allocate resources, such as money or information, to an outside actor to further promote an agenda. Allocating resources to study a particular issue is a tacit recognition that a problem exists. However, by providing resources to study the problem, insiders may ultimately lose control, if the targeted outsiders can effectively use the resources to make a case as to why an issue is worthy of acceptance onto the formal agenda. Conversely, providing resources may also assist in acquiring the outsider's loyalty.

Procedural instruments of outsider agenda acceptance

Procedural instruments of outsider agenda acceptance are designed to activate outside actors into the inner core of agenda setting and policy development. Incorporating outsiders into

the inner circle can be achieved through either ad hoc relationships between insiders and outsiders or by altering the institutional rules to provide formal recognition of a particular actor or actors.

Creating ad hoc relationships can serve a number of purposes. Creating one-off relationships with outsiders allows for groups with particular knowledge or expertise to assist in agenda and project development, without altering the network constitution over the long-term. This instrument is of particular use when applied against specialist outsiders, who have access to key resources such as information, technical expertise or financial capital, but do not want to commit to a long term institutional relationship.

Second, ad hoc relationship may be cultivated as a way of steering controversial issues forward on an agenda. Insiders can devolve the management of particularly contentious issues to outside actors, as a means of insulating themselves from criticism. Insiders may provide funding grants, staffing, and other resources to particularly valuable interests in order to spread out the number of fronts on which unfavourable outsider groups must attack.

An additional procedural instrument available is to alter the internal rules of the network to provide formal recognition to the insiders. This strategy may be deployed when an outsider has demonstrated the ability to effectively promote an alternative agenda and is seen as a legitimate actor by both insiders and the public at large. In terms of rule changes, insiders will afford these outsiders special provisions in terms of consultation privileges, voting recognition, and or veto power.

Summary: outsider, insiders, and agenda management

This chapter establishes the methodological framework for analysing the relationship between inside and outside actors in the agenda setting within a local governance framework. It is important to consider agenda setting as the first stage negotiations of the policy cycle between insiders and outsiders within an urban policy network.

This chapter began by examining different models of agenda setting including inside initiated and outside initiated agenda setting. Stemming from the model of outside initiated agendas, the concept of outsiders in agenda setting was then broadened in order to develop a classification system for types of outsiders present within the context of local government, using the twin variables of resources and motivations. Using these criteria, six distinguishable kinds of outsiders are observable: urban regimists, pluralist stakeholders, specialist outsiders, marginalized stakeholders, episodic actors and venue shoppers. At the disposal of outside actors in agenda setting is the ability to seek out alternative venues to promote their ideas. These venues include working within the institutional rules, seeking out more favourable institutional actors, or acts of civil disobedience.

Next, this chapter examined the role that institutional actors play in agenda management. As evidenced by Lindlom, the internal politics of agenda setting are complex, and not necessarily rational in terms of agenda development. However, despite the internal ‘muddling’ of institutional actors, insiders have a variety of substantive and procedural instruments at their disposal to either deny or accept both outside organization and/or outside initiated agendas, depending upon the strength of the institutional agenda.

Using this methodological framework, Chapter 3 will examine the historical development of an institution designed to control transportation governance in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Chapter 3 will also explore the institutional rules that presently exist to include or exclude outside actors.

In turn, Chapter 4 will examine five outside actors involved in transportation agenda setting in Greater Vancouver. The transportation agenda put forward by these groups will then be discussed. In addition, each group will be analysed in terms of their resources and motivations for action, the venues they sought out to alter the transportation agenda, and their level of success in altering the transportation agenda for the region.

Chapter 3: Historic origins of a transportation governance institution in Greater Vancouver

Introduction

As stated earlier, many authors believe that sustainable urban development requires the integration of mass and local transit, roadways and highways and land use planning, coupled with the institutionalization of a governance or government structure with an appropriate mandate to implement said plans. This last component is critical: as Porter states,

Most regional agencies are almost powerless to steer any other course than the status quo, and few are capable of determining or implementing metropolitan development strategies. With no one in charge, public guidance of metropolitan development is fragmentary, discontinuous, and ultimately ineffective.¹³⁸

However, much like many other jurisdictions in the Canada and the United States, such a coordinating body was lacking within the Greater Vancouver Regional District up until the mid 1990s. The history of Greater Vancouver regional planning has been well documented by Oberlander and Smith, Meligrana, and Ginnell.¹³⁹ However, queries into the politics and interactions of insider and outsider actors in shaping regional transportation policy have been lacking within the literature.

The objectives of this chapter are threefold. First, this chapter will examine the historical interplay between the Province of British Columbia and the Greater Vancouver Regional District with respect to transportation planning in the region. This chapter examines the two major urban transportation documents developed during the 1980s and early 1990s (Freedom to Move, and Transport 2021) in order to present the impetus for a regionally-based transportation governance body. Particular attention is devoted to the documents produced by the Transport 2021 workgroup, given this body's framing of the narrative associated with transit and transportation infrastructure as a coordinated system of *policy levers* rather than as a strict transportation dialogue. The importance of this shift in narrative is that Transport 2021 set in motion the idea that transit and transportation infrastructure investments can be used not only as a means to increase road capacity, but also as a series of *policy levers* to restrain or enhance regional growth

¹³⁸ Douglas R. Porter, "Regional governance of metropolitan form: the missing link in relating land use and transportation." Transportation, Urban Form and the Environment. December, (1990). 64.

¹³⁹ See for example, H. Peter Oberlander and Patrick J. Smith, "Governing Metropolitan Vancouver: Regional Intergovernmental Relations in British Columbia," Metropolitan Governance: American/Canadian Intergovernmental Perspectives, eds. Donald N. Rothblatt and Andrew Sancton, (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies Press, 1993), 329-373; Patrick J. Smith and Peter Oberlander, "Restructuring metropolitan governance: Greater Vancouver-British Columbia Reforms," in American/Canadian Metropolitan Intergovernmental Governance Perspectives Revisited, eds. Donald N. Rothblatt and Andrew Sancton (Berkeley: University of California, 1998). 371-405; John Meligrana, "Towards regional transportation governance: a case study of Greater Vancouver." Transportation. 26 (1999), 359-380; Kevin J. Ginnell, Democratic governance in metropolitan Vancouver : the case of Greater Vancouver's regional institutions : lessons from and for Canada, (Burnaby: Unpublished thesis, 2001).

management targets. Furthermore, Transport 2021 recommended that the control over these policy levers be delegated to an agency more closely aware of regional growth concerns.

Second, stemming from the Transport 2021 reports, this chapter explores the political negotiations that occurred between the Province of British Columbia and the Greater Vancouver Regional District leading up to the creation of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority in 1999. Using a combination of Freedom of Information requests, informal interviews, newspaper reports and publicly available documents, this chapter traces the origins of the GVTA's governance structure and its responsibilities vis-à-vis transportation infrastructure management and investment.

Third, this chapter explores the GVTA from an institutional perspective: examining its internal operating rules and procedures; its symbiotic connection with the Greater Vancouver Regional District; and its relationship with senior levels of government.

Review of mass transit regional coordination

Early Years of Transportation in Vancouver

Mass transit in Greater Vancouver has been operated both privately and publicly. In the early years, the British Columbia Electric Railway Company was the dominant provider of mass transit for Vancouver from 1897 to 1961. The company negotiated exclusive agreements with several municipalities throughout the region and was responsible for constructing and maintaining a network of streetcar tracks throughout the region.¹⁴⁰ In the post World War II years, BCER began to replace the streetcar network with modern buses and trolleys: the remnants of which are still actively in use today for service provision within downtown Vancouver. BCER was later expropriated by the Province of Columbia and merged into the newly formed crown corporation of B.C. Hydro.¹⁴¹

Much like most other urban jurisdictions throughout North America and Europe, transit service was unable to compete against the lure of freedom and mobility provided by the private automobile.¹⁴² In the Greater Vancouver case, however, this problem was exasperated by the

¹⁴⁰ G. Wynn, "The rise of Vancouver," in Vancouver and its Region, eds. G. Wynn and T.R. Oke (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992). 69-147.

¹⁴¹ John F. Meligrana, "Toward regional transportation governance: a case study of Greater Vancouver," Transportation 26 (1999), 369. See also Brian Kelly and Daniel Francis, Transit in British Columbia: The First Hundred Years, (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing Co., 1990), 107-108.

¹⁴² For a sample of studies into the impact of the private automobile on urban development, see Don Pickrell, "Transportation and land use," in Essays in Transportation Policy: A Handbook in Honour of John R. Meyer, eds. Jose Gomez-Ibanez et al., (US: Brookings Institute, 1999). 403-436; and Daniel Carlson, Lisa Wormser, and Cy Ulberg, At Road's End: Transportation and Land Use Choices for Communities. (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1995).

transit system being operated by a Crown corporation whose objectives were to “develop the province’s untapped hydro-electric power potential through the construction of dams and hydro lines...public transit was not a primary function or responsibility for B.C. Hydro.”¹⁴³ While some effort was made to improve the transit system in Vancouver and other urban centres in B.C. during the early 1970s,¹⁴⁴ B.C. Hydro as the primary supplier bus transit was coming under increasing public disapproval.¹⁴⁵

In 1980, the Government of British Columbia passed the *Urban Transportation Authority Act*. The objective of this act was to improve public transportation by introducing new institutional structures responsible strictly for the coordination and planning of services within the GVRD. The act established the GVRD’s Transit Department as the planning authority to set local service levels and fares. Additionally, it was granted the power to collect additional revenues to provide for public transit from increased levies on property taxes, a surcharge on electric power bills and or the implementation of a regional gas tax. However, the Province retained control over the operations and maintenance of buses through the newly create Metro Transit Operating Company, a Crown Corporation which leased the buses back to operators in the GVRD and the Capital Region of Victoria through the Urban Transit Authority (renamed B.C. Transit in 1983).¹⁴⁶

B.C. Transit retained control over the delivery of transit services within the GVRD up until the creation of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority in 1999.¹⁴⁷ Other than bus service, B.C. Transit was also responsible for the Seabus service between Vancouver and North Vancouver, as well as the Skytrain line between Vancouver and Surrey that was built as the transportation centrepiece for the World’s Fair, Expo 86. B.C. Transit also owned the West

¹⁴³ Meligrana, “Toward regional transportation governance,” 369.

¹⁴⁴ Under the direction of the NDP administration, the Province created the Bureau of Transit services, reporting the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in order to oversee public funding and planning. See D. Francis, *Transitions: 100 Years of Transit in British Columbia*. (Vancouver: B.C. Transit, 1990). Also Oberlander and Smith, “Governing Metropolitan Vancouver: Regional Intergovernmental Relations in British Columbia, 336.

¹⁴⁵ Brian Kelly and Daniel Francis, *Transit in British Columbia: The First Hundred Years*, (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing Co., 1990), 94.

¹⁴⁶ Meligrana, “Toward regional transportation governance,” 369.

¹⁴⁷ With the exception of transit provisions in the Greater Victoria, which are funded by BC Transit, but managed locally by the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, BC Transit remains the sole provider of public transportation in the province. BC Transit currently operated 69 transit systems throughout the province, including 24 conventional transit services, 13 custom and 32 paratransit services. Source: BC Transit, *Municipal Systems Program History and Growth*. Available online at <http://www.bctransit.com/corporate/munsys/history.cfm>, accessed June 19, 2003.

Vancouver Blue Bus system; however, West Vancouver retained control over the operations and planning of this service.¹⁴⁸

Highways, Roads, and Regional Planning: 1986-1996: Freedom to Move: Provincial/Regional/Local Cooperation Postponed

Unlike public transit service, the planning and maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges within the GVRD has lacked any coordinating agency with the authority or will to develop a system wide plan for a comprehensive road network prior to the creation of the GVTA. Programs to coordinate regional transportation infrastructure have laid dormant since the 1950s, during which time a complex governance structure concerning the construction and maintenance of roads and highways developed involving the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and local municipalities.¹⁴⁹

In 1988, the provincial government embarked on an ambitious, yet hurried program to review the transportation infrastructure throughout the province. In late 1988, the Province of British Columbia released the eighteen-volume report entitled A Transportation Planning Overview for the Province of British Columbia.¹⁵⁰ While this report examined multi-modal transportation connectivity issues throughout the province, it nonetheless recommended that “many of the recommendations identify issues or projects which require further study and analysis.”¹⁵¹

Accordingly, the Province, with technical assistance from the GVRD and other regional districts in the Lower Fraser Valley, participated in developing a system plan for the Southwest corner of the province. In Freedom to Move: Mainland Southwest Region 2,¹⁵² the concept of a transportation *system* consisting both of public transit and highway infrastructure was considered. The committee explicitly recommended:

That the Provincial Government consider all components of the recommended transportation plan to be of regional significance and therefore the cost of each should be funded on the same basis as provincial highways.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 370.

¹⁴⁹ Province of British Columbia, Greater Vancouver Regional District Task Force, Mainland Southwest Region 2: Greater Vancouver Regional District Transportation Committee Recommendations. (Victoria: Transportation Committee, 1990), 1.

¹⁵⁰ British Columbia. Ministry of Transportation and Highways, A Transportation Planning Overview for the Province of British Columbia. Volumes 1-18. (New Westminster: Delcan, 1988).

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Volume 3. 1.5.

¹⁵² See Province of British Columbia, Transportation Committee, Mainland Southwest Region 2: Summary of the Transportation Committee Recommendations (Volume 1). (Victoria: The Committee, 1990).

¹⁵³ Transportation Committee, Mainland Southwest Region 2 (Volume 1), 5-3.

While many transportation improvements suggested by the committee in retrospect, were overly ambitious given the fiscal climate of the province,¹⁵⁴ many of the recommendations have come to fruition over the last decade. These include dedicated High Occupancy/Bus Lanes throughout the region, the opportunity to dedicate fuel taxes to fund urban transportation, and many upgrades to regional road network.¹⁵⁵

Oberlander and Smith provide an excellent overview of the problems associated with the development of urban transportation master plan in the Vancouver region.¹⁵⁶ The authors categorize this period of provincial and regional negotiation in transportation planning as an era of *postponed cooperation*: that is, while the members of the GVRD board were listed as being involved in the planning contained within the GVRD's transportation subcommittee, there was seemingly little effort on behalf of the province to work with either the GVRD or member municipalities as an equal partner. Oberlander and Smith argue that, "While many municipalities agreed with specific aspects of the report; few found it supportable as a whole."¹⁵⁷ Accordingly, several municipalities disagreed with how the process undercut their ability to develop comprehensive community plans.

Additionally, because of the tight time frame involved with the production of the plan, little public consultation occurred as to the ramifications that the massive infrastructure projects would have on the region. In their summary report on the Greater Vancouver Freedom to Move exercise, the community advisory committee established to provide public oversight of the project stated:

...That the Summary Report was technically a thorough documentation of the transportation needs of the Lower Mainland. The report had been prepared in a very short schedule and perhaps more time is required for this exercise, which should also include public comment.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Among the recommendations that have yet to see any movement: twinning of the Port Mann Bridge, an 8 lane freeway from the Port Mann to 152nd Avenue, a bridge Burrard Inlet from Port Moody to Burnaby, as well as a twinning of the George Massey Tunnel in Richmond. See Transportation Committee 5-2 to 5-10.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 5-3.

¹⁵⁶ Oberlander and Smith, "Governing Metropolitan Vancouver: Regional Intergovernmental Relations in British Columbia," 337-349. See also Smith and Oberlander, "Restructuring Metropolitan Governance: Greater Vancouver-British Columbia Reforms," 371-406.

¹⁵⁷ Oberlander and Smith, "Governing Metropolitan Vancouver: Regional Intergovernmental Relations in British Columbia," 344.

¹⁵⁸ Community Advisory Committee of the Minister of State, Mainland/Southwest. "A summary of the report of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Task Force.: in Transportation Committee (1990). 6.1.

Accordingly, while the Freedom to Move process marked the beginning of cooperation between the province and the affected region with respect to transportation infrastructure investments, the consultative process left much to be desired.

Despite the tight time period imposed on both public and governmental consultation, the Freedom to Move, concept represented the first time in nearly 30 years that the Lower Mainland transportation system was thought to be an interconnected network, rather than a series of one-off projects that only indirectly linked activities within the region. By approaching the GVRD to develop a Task Force to think regionally about transportation within the context of the reformulated objectives of the Livable Region Strategic Plan,¹⁵⁹ the province set into motion the process for devolving integrated transportation policy to the region. In fact, the first recommendation made by the GVRD Transportation Task Force was for the province to establish an ongoing transportation planning process in which all orders of government and all modes of transport would participate.¹⁶⁰

Transport 2021: Cooperation and Consultation without Long-Range Funding

While the provincial government was in the final stages of developing comprehensive transportation plans for the province, the GVRD also began to re-examine the Livable Region Strategic Plan, which was coming under increasing pressure from the anticipated rapid population growth within the region.¹⁶¹ It was clear to municipal planners that the province-initiated process of identifying transportation improvement projects would not satisfy the increasing political demand for transportation coordination in the region. While the province maintained and coordinated many of the primary transportation routes, increasingly the infrastructure assets maintained by the region's municipalities would also need to be evaluated and coordinate to reduce regional transportation pressures. While the Freedom to Move studies did attempt to develop regional road and transit plans, the emphasis was still heavily reliant on the further

¹⁵⁹ In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the GVRD was re-examining its Growth Strategy by reassessing its Livable Region Strategic Plan. A key component of the plan was the placement of the GVRD as regional planning agency, rather than strictly a regional services provider. To this end, the GVRD identified the development and control over various modes of transportation as being critical to its success to act as a regional planning body. See GVRD, Creating our Future: Steps to a More Livable Region. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1990), 18-25.

¹⁶⁰ Province of British Columbia, Greater Vancouver Regional District Task Force, Mainland Southwest Region 2: Greater Vancouver Regional District Transportation Committee Recommendations, 25.

¹⁶¹ Within a thirty year period between 1991 and 2021, the population of the Greater Vancouver Regional District was anticipated to grow from 1.6 to 2.6 million people. The Livable Region Strategic Plan stated was to manage this growth while protecting green zones, building compact communities, achieving a compact metropolitan region and increasing transportation choices. See GVRD, The Livable Region, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1996).

expansion of the provincial elements of the road network, with no mention of how to improve coordination on arterial routes between municipalities.¹⁶²

Picking up where the Freedom to Move reports left off, the GVRD, in conjunction with the Province (under the NDP Premier Mike Harcourt), initiated a detailed review of not only highway infrastructure required to handle the anticipated population growth within the region, but transportation policy ‘levers’ that could be manipulated to achieve the stated objectives of the Livable Region Strategic Plan. Besides increasing transportation supply through increasing roadway and transit capacity, Transport 2021 identified that alternative policies such as controlling land use through zoning, applying transportation demand practices to change driver behaviour, and adjusting transport service levels to worsen congestion should be used to control growth in the region.¹⁶³ These four policy levers are examined below.

Control of Land Use

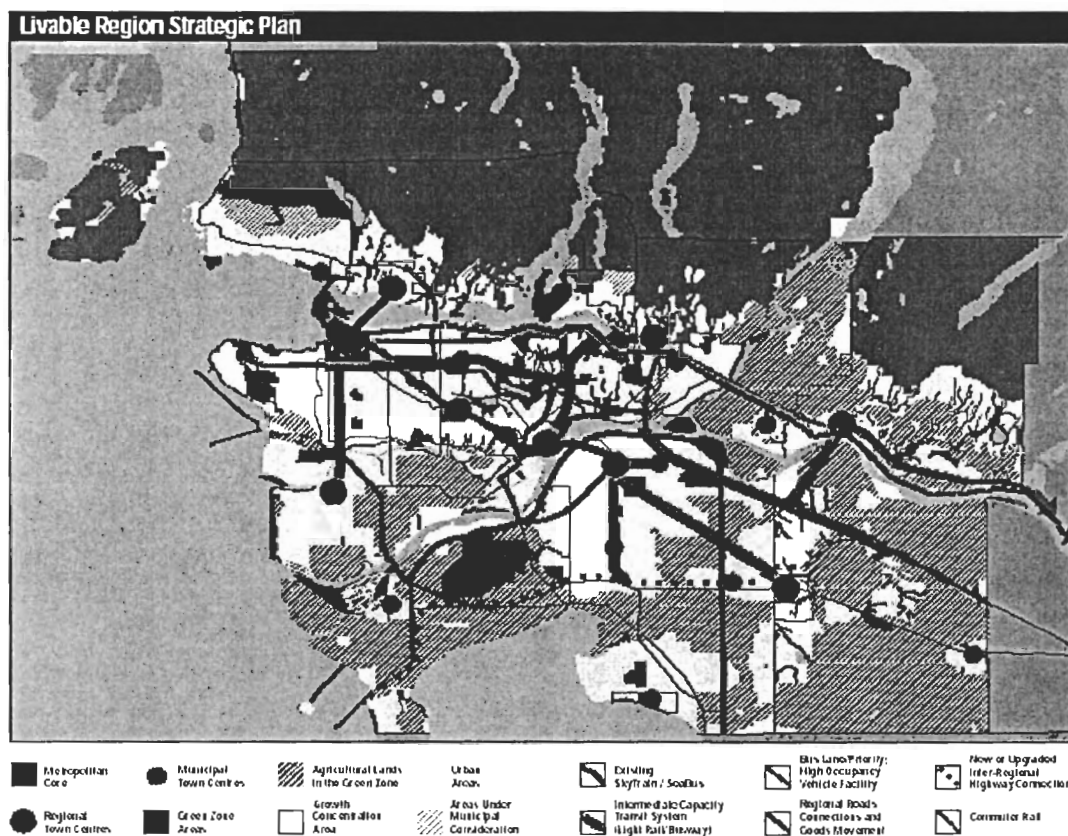
The first policy lever explored in Transport 2021’s Long and Medium Range Transportation Plans for Greater Vancouver, was the imposition of tighter land use controls at both the regional and neighbourhood levels. In terms of regional land use controls, Transport 2021 reasoned that the regional district and member municipalities should work closely together to bridge the seemingly dichotomous commuter relationship between areas of work and residential neighbourhoods. In doing so, Transport 2021 advocated that the region and the municipalities work together to attempt to develop multi-use activity centres and high density close together as to enhance the viability of transit options. These multi-use activity centres (or nodes), would be spread throughout the region, and serve to act in concert with the development of a strong metropolitan core in Downtown Vancouver.¹⁶⁴ The employment clusters would then be linked by a variety of modes of transit: bus, Skytrain, Light Rail, as well as improved highway connections as detailed in Figure 6.

¹⁶² Province of British Columbia, Greater Vancouver Regional District Task Force, Mainland Southwest Region 2: Greater Vancouver Regional District Transportation Committee Recommendations, 16-24.

¹⁶³ A summary of these policy levers can be found in Transport 2021, A Long-Range Transportation Plan for Greater Vancouver, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1993). See also Transport 2021, Transportation Demand Management: A Forecast Modeling Approach, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1993); and Transport 2021, Transportation Implications of Regional Growth Options in Greater Vancouver, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1993).

¹⁶⁴ The principle of the Transport 2021 process was to ensure that a strong, vibrant central city was in place, but that regional centers would also emerge as to distribute employment and residences throughout the region. For a comparison with Toronto’s land use plans, see Pierre Fillion, “Balancing Concentration and Dispersion? Public Policy and Urban Structure in Toronto,” Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 18 no.2 (2000), 163-189.

Figure 6: Employment Centres and Transportation Improvements in Greater Vancouver, circa 1996¹⁶⁵



Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District, *Livable Region Strategic Plan*, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1996) <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/services/growth/lrsp/map/lrsp.pdf>

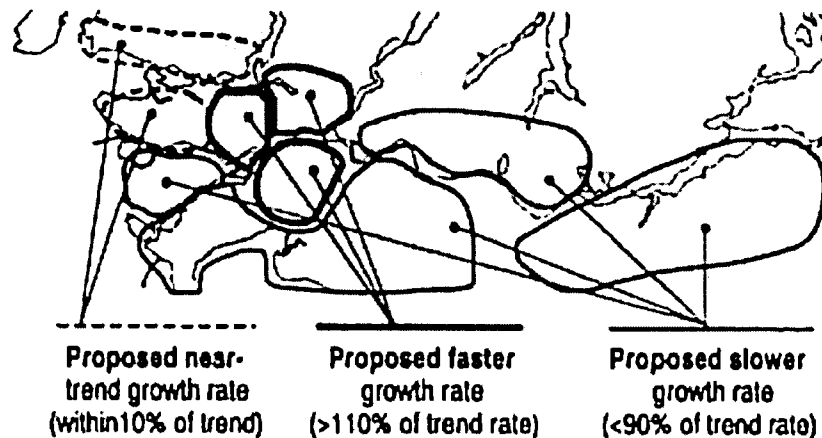
By introducing core areas of activity throughout the region, Transport 2021 was eager to reach “a balance between the workforce and jobs in each sub region, to give people an opportunity to live close to work so that the need for long-haul commuting can be reduced.”¹⁶⁶

In addition to the creation of activity clusters, Transport 2021 provided prescriptive planning recommendations which called for the explicit slowing of growth in eastern suburbs and Richmond, and greater growth rates in central and north-western suburbs. Figure 7 presents a stylized version of proposed growth rates not just through the GVRD, but throughout the Fraser Valley, including the rapidly growing municipalities of Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Figure 8 highlights the Growth Concentration Area specifically within the GVRD.

¹⁶⁵ Transport 2021, *Long Range Plan*, 19.

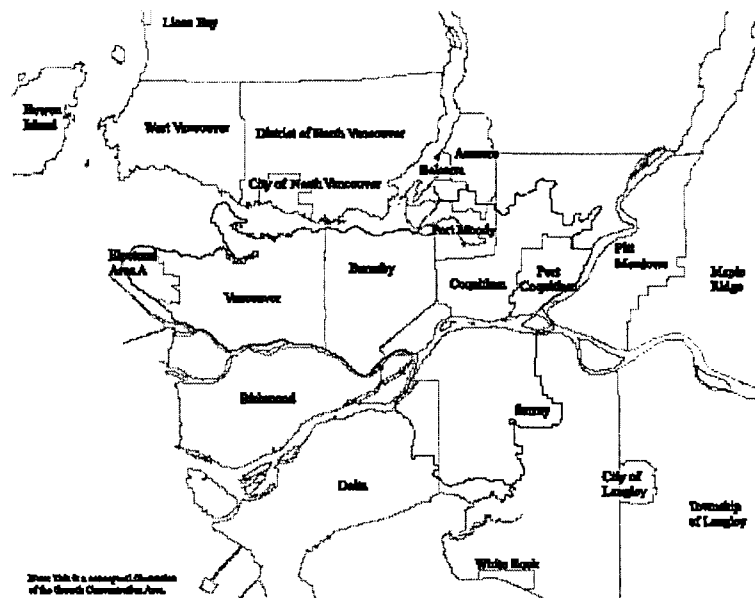
¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

Figure 7: Proposed Growth Rates under the Livable Region Strategy (1993)



Source: Transport 2021, A Long-Range Transportation Plan for Greater Vancouver, (Burnaby: GVRD, 1993), iii.

Figure 8: GVRD Growth Concentration Area



Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District, (2003). 2002 Annual Report: Greater Vancouver Regional District. (Burnaby: GVRD, 2001) p.30 <http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/growth/lrsp/lrsp-report2002.pdf>

Whereas Figures 7 and 8 promote a conceptual regional land use and transportation plan for the GVRD, ultimately, municipalities were responsible for setting out the zoning requirements that would produce the regional clusters and promoting complete neighbourhoods within municipal boundaries. To achieve this goal, Transport 2021 argued that the municipalities should

be involved in greater ‘micro-managing’ of development: that is, require development to have ‘small-town or village street patterns,’ intensifying residential areas by shrinking lot sizing and promoting mixed use of the land; and installing traffic calming devices to minimise automobile traffic through residential neighbourhoods, thereby placing increasing pressure on the arterial routes.¹⁶⁷

Transportation Demand Management

The second policy lever explored by Transport 2021 was the use of transportation demand management. Transportation demand management (TDM) is premised on the ability to coordinate the three layers of travel (inter-regional, regional and local), with three transportation policy objectives: reducing the amount of travel, changing the mode of travel, and changing the times in which commuter travel takes place.¹⁶⁸ TDM options can be based on a carrot and sticks approach: carrots are incentives provided to commuters who switch modes of travel from single occupant vehicles to high occupancy vehicles or transit. Such carrots can include subsidised bus passes, tax incentives for working at home, or priority measures given to transit users. Stick approaches discussed by Transport 2021 were primarily market based mechanisms such as tolling the entire road network and increasing parking taxes throughout the region, rather than regulatory instruments such as travel restrictions and development restrictions.¹⁶⁹

Transport 2021 recommended that in order to coordinate TDM plans through the region, the GVRD should develop a regional agency to coordinate programs such as ride shares and promotion of alternative commuting arrangements.¹⁷⁰ With respect to market based policy instruments, Transport 2021 recommended that this agency also be responsible for educating the public as to the inherent linkage between the introduction of higher regional gasoline taxes and road and bridge tolls and funding improvements in public transit and transportation supply programs.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., iv.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 21.

¹⁶⁹ For further discussion on ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’ as policy instruments, see Marie-Louise Bemelmans-Videc, Ray C. Rist, Evert Vedung, Carrots, sticks, & sermons : policy instruments & their evaluation, (New Brunswick, N.J.:Transaction Publishers, 1998). With respect to carrots and sticks in the urban transportation, see Erik Ferguson, Travel Demand Management and Public Policy, (Burlington VT.: Ashgate, 2000). Ferguson divides transportation demand techniques into *voluntary* (public transit, ridesharing, alternative hours), *market based* (road pricing, parking pricing), and *regulatory* (travel restrictions and development restrictions).

¹⁷⁰ Transport 2021, Long Range Plan, 26.

¹⁷¹ Transport 2021, Medium Range Transportation Plan, 32.

Transport Service Levels

The third policy lever explored by Transport 2021 was to adjust transportation service levels in the region. In this regard, transportation service levels refer to the issues such as vehicular speed, convenience, frequency of service, and levels of comfort. Transport 2021's long term plan indicated that 'adjusting' service levels to promote congestion would be "a necessary evil to encourage other travel options, notably transit and carpooling;"¹⁷² until such time that the entire regional transportation system adopted a user-pay system of road tolls. The idea behind not increasing service levels, particularly to single occupant vehicle commuters was touted as a means to promote alternative modes of transportation.

However, increasing levels of congestion would also have serious ramifications on commercial goods movement throughout the region, to the estimated value of \$110 million per year.¹⁷³ To this end, Transport 2021 also recommended that dedicated truck routes be established throughout the region to facilitate inter-regional trade and protect corridor access to the United States ports of entry.

Transport Supply Alternatives

The final policy lever identified by Transport 2021 was to increase transit supply throughout the region. In the medium range plan, the primary emphasis was placed on improving bus transit corridors and service levels to connect the developing regional nodes, such as along the Broadway/Lougheed and Hastings Street corridors. Importance was to be given to reallocating roadway capacity based on people-carrying capacity rather vehicle-carrying capacity.¹⁷⁴

Interestingly, Transport 2021 did not advocate the construction of any new intra-regional roads to serve the region. For example, Transport 2021 did not recognise the need to construct additional roadway capacity connecting Highway 1 to Twassassen ferry terminal, on what is now referred to as the South Fraser Perimeter road. Similarly, no recommendations were made as to improved connections across the Fraser River at the Albion Ferry. The neglect in promoting these alternatives for commercial transport, despite their apparent need,¹⁷⁵ indicates the bias of the

¹⁷² Transport 2021, Long Term Transportation Plan, 27.

¹⁷³ Transport 2021, Trucking in Greater Vancouver: Demand Forecast and Policy Implications. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1993). The figure of \$110 million is in 1993 dollars. As of April 2001, the Transport Canada estimates that the cost of congestion now approximates \$500 million a year. Speaking Notes for Minister of Transport, David Collenette, to the Vancouver Board of Trade, A Transportation Blueprint for the Next Decade and Beyond, (Vancouver: April 2001). <http://www.tc.gc.ca/mediaroom/speeches/2001/20010411blueprint.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Transport 2021, Long Range Transportation Plan, 33.

¹⁷⁵ See Province of British Columbia, GVRD Task Force, GVRD Transportation Committee Recommendations, 19.

Transport 2021 committee as to promoting transit options at the expense of goods movement through the region. The legacy of this bias against goods movement connecting major ports to inter-regional travel route, as one will see, has been magnified in later years of transportation governance.

GVTA as a Master Plan or a Muddled Mess: The origins of the GVTA

The aftermath of Transport 2021

Despite the efforts of Transport 2021 to promote integration of the region's transit and roads system, no recommendations were made as to how to proceed with such program. It was assumed that while the Greater Vancouver Regional District would take more of a leadership role in transportation and transit planning, other actors such as BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Highways would remain active in funding and maintaining their proportion of the infrastructure within the region.¹⁷⁶ The question was how the GVRD could expand its role in transportation management while lacking the institutional devices of control.

In September 1996, the GVRD's Strategic Planning Committee began to look at measures to implement the four objectives¹⁷⁷ of the Transport 2021 reports within the context of the GVRD's Livable Region Strategic Plan, the region's growth strategy under the provincial government's Growth Strategies Act.¹⁷⁸ In the Summary Report of the Transportation Governance Workshop, the GVRD recognised that its

Current approach to transportation is to combine its knowledge base with its limited mandates in air quality and growth management to forge *partnerships with the province* to advance regional objectives...To date however, the approach has faltered when it moved beyond studies and planning to the delivery and financing of service....¹⁷⁹

The GVRD was put in the situation in which its major components of the transportation system were still under the auspices of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH) and BC Transit. In response to the Transport 2021 program, MoTH prepared the South Coast Transportation System Plan. Under the plan, the ministry worked closely with the GVRD, BC

¹⁷⁶ The Transport 2021 long range plan was predicated on the GVRD's Creating our Future statements as well as the mission statements of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways and BC Transit. See Transport 2021. A Long Range Plan for Greater Vancouver. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1993). 1.

¹⁷⁷ The objectives being: 1. Controlling land use, 2. applying transport demand management 3. adjusting transport service levels 4. supplying transport capacity. Ibid. 12.

¹⁷⁸ See GVRD Strategic Planning Committee, Transportation Governance Workshop: Summary Report. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1996).

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 3. Emphasis added.

Transit, the British Columbia Transportation Finance Authority (BCTFA) and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to

...Develop a highway investment strategy to support other initiatives (sic)...including the LRSP, transit development plans and the regions TDM strategy...by limiting new infrastructure for general traffic and a primary emphasis on projects which support transit, HOV and goods movement, in keeping with the recently established provincial and regional priorities.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, BC Transit published its 10-year transit plan in September 1995,¹⁸¹ in which targets for transit infrastructure were well below the mid-point scenario identified by Transport 2021. While Transport 2021 recommended objectives of 17% region-wide rush hour transit use, with service provided by 1900 buses and three LRT lines,¹⁸² BC Transit was budgeting for providing 1200 buses and only 2 LRT lines by 2006.¹⁸³ The inability of BC Transit to fully participate in funding the transit component of the Transport 2021 plan had the potential to cause significant impacts on the ability of the GVRD to promote transportation alternatives to the single occupant vehicle commuter. As the Strategic Planning Committee pointed out:

On the road side, it is likely that the SCTSP will be very close to the Transport 2021/LRSP vision for the next ten years. However, both the introduction of TDM and the rate of transit expansion must be accelerated in order to achieve the targets of the LRSP.¹⁸⁴

Hence, the Greater Vancouver Regional District was left in a quandary: it had, in conjunction with the province, developed a comprehensive, thirty-year plan that integrated both land use and transportation goals for the region. However, as indicated in Figure 9, the region had very little influence over the shaping of the region through expenditures on major transportation infrastructure, as major arterial roads and the transit and rapid transit system, were all controlled by provincial crown corporations or ministries. The system in place refers to the GVRD as a *weak virtual governance model*, which is 'predicated on the success of ad hoc arrangements with no ongoing formal arrangements for inter-agency co-ordination.'¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 8-9.

¹⁸¹ BC Transit, In Transit. People Moving People, (Victoria: BC Transit, 1995).

¹⁸² Transport 2021, Medium-Range Transportation Plan for Greater Vancouver –Technical Appendix (Technical Report #19). (Burnaby: BC, 1993). The Light rail lines being: Broadway Lougheed corridor, New Westminster-Coquitlam, and Vancouver-Richmond.

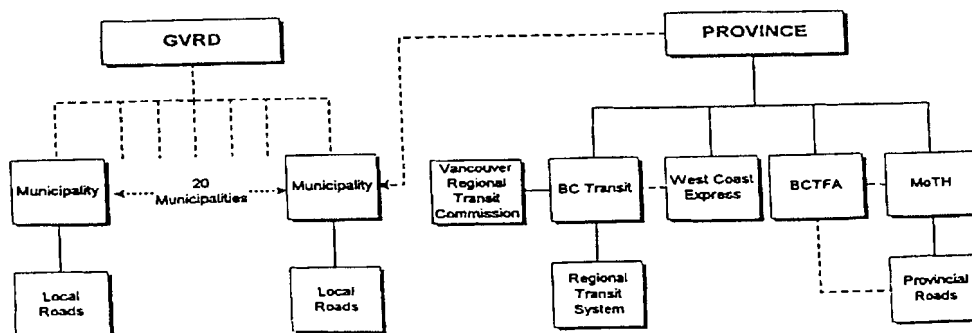
¹⁸³ GVRD Strategic Planning Committee Transportation Governance Workshop: Summary Report, 10.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 11.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. 15.

In order to carry out the LRSP, the region would need to have greater influence on both the day to day operations and long-range planning functions of these agencies.

Figure 9: Institutional Transportation Governance Structure for the GVRD, Fall 1996



Source: GVRD Strategic Planning Department, GVRD Board Report July 26, 1996

Retracting commitments: The devolution of arterial and secondary highways in British Columbia

As evident in Figure 9, the primary assets of the regional transportation system were controlled by directly by the province through MoTH and BC Transit, while the GVRD controlled planning functions for regional transportation. While the GVRD was examining whether it could and should expand its role in transportation, the Strategic Planning Committee recommended that the GVRD should adopt a governance structure that:

Moves forward on transportation on a broad and strategic level

Finds ways of using some of its existing tax sources to buy a place at the table including a realignment of responsibilities with the province, while offering to develop new transportation revenue sources

Pursues a virtual governance model but be willing to work on major institutional changes if the province and municipalities are willing; and

Plays the central role in regional transportation.¹⁸⁶

Thus, while the GVRD was taking steps to assert itself as a major actor in regional transportation management, it proceeded in a cautious and thoughtful manner in negotiations with the province. The GVRD and the province further used the *weak virtual governance* model to develop the *Light Rapid Transit Protocol Agreement* in which developed a joint planning process between the province, the GVRD, and the five directly affected communities. The *Protocol Agreement* provided for the completion of the planning, engineering and public consultation as

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 23.

well as related land use planning that would result from the construction light rapid transit lines.¹⁸⁷

In conjunction with the *LRT Protocol Agreement*, the province also began to work with the GVRD to develop a *Framework Agreement on Transportation Governance and Funding* that established “two party negotiations on all transportation functions (transit and roads/highways) in the region.”¹⁸⁸ The tentative agreement on the guiding principles for negotiations between the GVRD and the province was agreed to on November 1, 1996.¹⁸⁹

However, the member municipalities were not prepared for the next surprising development in transportation policy in the GVRD. While the GVRD was developing models of governance, the Ministry of Transportation and Highways was preparing to dramatically rescind its involvement in management of arterial roads and secondary highways throughout the province, and in particular within the GVRD.

On November 26, 1996, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) announced that it was restructuring local government funding in the province. Tucked into this announcement was the notice the that province was going to declassify more than 1,450 kilometres of arterial roads and secondary highways that no longer served the purpose of interregional trade purpose.¹⁹⁰ MAH, in conjunction with MoTH, were developing a plan in which ‘roads which predominately carry municipal traffic will be targeted for devolution.’¹⁹¹

This unilateral announcement by the province came as a great shock to municipal governments across the province, as “there was no specific consultation with the municipalities concerning the devolution of arterials prior to the announcement,”¹⁹² which “will lead to a major

¹⁸⁷ Oberlander and Smith, “Governing Metropolitan Vancouver: Regional Intergovernmental Relations in British Columbia.”, 384. See also Greater Vancouver Regional District. Protocol Agreement for Light Rail Transit Development in Greater Vancouver. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1997a).

¹⁸⁸ Minister responsible for BC Transit, “Funding and governance of transportation in Greater Vancouver,” Preparation of the Cabinet Submission on Negotiating Mandate, (Victoria: The Minister, 1996). 3. As this document was prepared as a cabinet submission, many sections have been omitted for public viewing; including sections on Negotiating Issues and Related Issues. See Freedom of Information Request: 292-30/THY-01-143

¹⁸⁹ Greater Vancouver Regional District. Board Agenda Item: October 31, 1997-Proposals for Improved Governance and Funding for Transportation in Greater Vancouver. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1997d). 2.

¹⁹⁰ Province of British Columbia. Municipal Affairs and Housing. (1997). “Devolution of Arterial Highways Deferred to 1998.” News Release MAH97-001. <http://142.36.183.50/4dcgi/nritem?456>.

¹⁹¹ Ministry of Transportation and Highways. Public Affairs Branch. Revised Communications Plan to Support Arterial Highway Devolution. (Victoria: MoTH, 1997). 2. This document was made available through an Freedom of Information request number 292-30/THY-01-143

¹⁹² Ibid.

and unmanageable burden on many suburban communities.”¹⁹³ For example, the City of Surrey was expected to take over 115 km of devolved roads, at an estimated annual cost of \$9 million.¹⁹⁴ Within the GVRD as a whole, a total of 27 arterial roads and 14 secondary highways were scheduled for devolution.

Therefore, while MAH, was preparing to pass off maintenance and funding of major transportation corridors through the region, the province was also busily preparing to negotiate with the region a new funding and governance structure. On December 12, 1996, the Minister Responsible for BC Transit and the Minister of Transportation and Highways, outlined to Cabinet the province’s negotiating mandate for transportation funding and governance within the GVRD.¹⁹⁵ Of particular interest in this document was the explicit identification that devolving roads to municipalities, “(w)ill complicate system-level planning under the status quo and the negotiation of a new regional role.”¹⁹⁶

As such, while the province had a tentative arrangement with the GVRD which specified bilateral negotiations on roads and transit, the province proceeded to drop a substantial cost onto the municipalities and held a proverbial gun to their head to rectify the financial problem it had created. Rather than absorbing the costs associated with the devolution of roads, the municipalities looked to the GVRD to alleviate the costs associated with downloaded roads.

The GVTA Negotiations

Following the announcement of the devolution in arterial roads and the signing of the *Protocol Agreement of LRT* and *The Framework Agreement of Transportation Funding and Governance*, the GVRD was left in an unenviable position. On the one hand, the GVRD could walk away from the negotiations on light rail, transportation demand and supply management and transit planning and let the municipalities fend for themselves. On the other hand, they could

¹⁹³ Regional Engineers’ Advisory Committee, Major Road Network: Findings of the REAC Subcommittee-Discussion Paper. (Coquitlam: The Committee, April 1997). 1.

¹⁹⁴ Union of British Columbia Municipalities, “Higher taxes or more potholes?” CivicNet BC. (August 19, 1997). <http://www.civicnet.gov.bc.ca/library/cutbacks/potholes.html>. The Ministry of Transportation and Highways estimated that the total cost of maintenance on all 1400 kms of devolved roads would be only \$8 million dollars a year. The City of Surrey’s estimated that the total of maintaining and upgrading the devolved roads in its territory alone would be \$9 million per year, as the roads requires substantial improvements to capacity.

¹⁹⁵ Minister responsible for BC Transit, “Funding and governance of transportation in Greater Vancouver.” Preparation of the Cabinet Submission on Negotiating Mandate. (Victoria: The Minister, 1996). As this document was prepared as a cabinet submission, many sections have been omitted for public viewing; including sections on Negotiating Issues and Related Issues. See Freedom of Information Request: 292-30/THY-01-143

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 4

negotiate with the province a system in which the GVRD would have greater control and funding over the majority of the transportation system.

On April 6, 1997, the GVRD and the Province agreed to enter into negotiations to establish a new system of governance and funding for transportation with the GVRD. In April and May 1997, the GVRD introduced possible governance and funding options in several venues including Council of Councils meeting as well as at a special Transportation and Funding workshop. The 112 participants who attended the workshop were each given a workbook to complete in which they were to rank order six models of road and transit governance for the region.¹⁹⁷ Out of this meeting came a consensus from GVRD representatives that the region needed to have a greater role in transportation operations. To this end, the GVRD's negotiators were given a mandate to discuss several issues. First, the municipal representatives believed that "the new governance model must provide both opportunities for municipalities to have significantly expand control of both services and funding sources,"¹⁹⁸ and that "regional transportation should be controlled by a body that is comprised of officials elected locally or appointed by local government."¹⁹⁹ Second, there was desire expressed that an integrated transportation management approach was necessary which:

Coordinated transportation and land use planning, to encompass road systems and transit systems, and transportation demand management, to give due attention to the movement of goods and services as well as the movement of people, to provide for both capital and operating costs, and to develop appropriately the existing and potential roles of the public, private and non-profit sectors.²⁰⁰

Furthermore, the GVRD recommended to the negotiating team and that these services should be provided through the establishment of a "single transportation fund...consisting of increased provincial contributions, gas taxes, licensing fees, commuter levies and tolls."²⁰¹

Based on these principles, the GVRD was to negotiate an agreement that would establish governance and funding models premised on a cooperative transit-cooperative roads model. (See Figure 10).

¹⁹⁷ Greater Vancouver Regional District, Transportation Governance Workshop: Workbook. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1997b). The results of this workshop are summarised in GVRD, Transportation and Governance and Funding Workshop: May 24, 1997. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1997c).

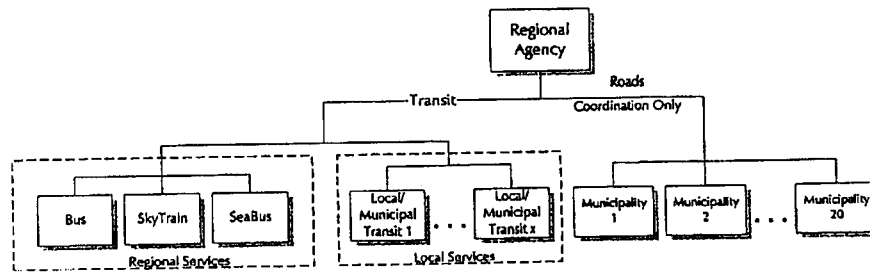
¹⁹⁸ Greater Vancouver Regional District, Transportation and Governance and Funding Workshop: May 24, 1997, i.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 5.

²⁰¹ Ibid. ii.

Figure 10: Cooperative Transit-Cooperative Roads Model of Governance



Source: Greater Vancouver Regional District (1997c).
Transportation Funding and Governance Workshop May, 1997.

Under the Cooperative Transit-Cooperative Roads model of transportation governance, transit service would be coordinated through a new agency, which would operate some services directly or through others, including municipalities or groups of municipalities who wished to undertake such a project. The new agency would also be responsible for coordinating and funding a major roads network for the region, similar to a plan developed by *Regional Engineers' Advisory Committee* in April 1997 as to mitigate the costs associated with devolution of arterial and secondary highways.²⁰² However, the municipalities would remain responsible for the ownership and maintenance of the major roads up to a regional standard, as well as the local roads that feed into the Major Road Network.

The Results: The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority

In May 1997, the province and the GVRD agree to review transportation finance and governance within the Greater Vancouver region, based on the principles established under the *Framework Agreement for Transportation Funding and Governance*. As discussed in the previous section, both the province and the GVRD were entering into negotiations in an effort to provide the GVRD greater control over the two critical components of the transportation system: arterials roads and transit.

In October 1997, an agreement on transportation governance and finance for the GVRD was reached between the parties. The *Recommended Agreement on Transportation Governance and Funding for Greater Vancouver*²⁰³ established the Greater Vancouver Transportation

²⁰² Regional Engineers' Advisory Committee, Major Road Network: Findings of the REAC Subcommittee-Discussion Paper, 4.

²⁰³ Greater Vancouver Regional District, Recommended Agreement on Transportation Governance and Funding for Greater Vancouver. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1997d).

Authority (GVTA) as the dominant governing actor over transportation over all municipalities and unorganized areas within the GVRD. As requested in the *Framework Agreement for Transportation Governance and Funding*, the *Recommended Agreement* granted the region control over the most important elements of the transportation system: transit services and equipment, major arterial roads, and control over air quality programs. The region was also granted control over significant revenues streams discussed below.

Despite the wide ranging powers downloaded to the regional transportation agency, there existed hurdles which had to be cleared in order for a regional transportation agency to be established in Greater Vancouver. Several suburban municipalities, including Surrey, Coquitlam, Richmond and Delta all expressed reservations concerning the *Recommended Agreement*. Among the primary concerns of these municipalities included the level of guaranteed funding for the major road network, alternative municipal public transit options, as well as representation on the Board of Directors.²⁰⁴ On February 27th, 1998, the Greater Vancouver Regional District voted to accept the *Recommended Agreement*. Although the resolution to create the GVTA passed by a considerable 70 to 35 vote margin, the vote highlighted the very real split in the perception of regional transportation problems based in the region's geography. Among those municipalities voting against the *Recommended Agreement* included representatives from Surrey, Coquitlam, Richmond and Langley Township. Surrey Mayor Doug McCallum and Richmond Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt were extremely vocal in their opposition to creation of the GVTA. In the months leading up to the vote on adopting the GVTA, McCallum promoted several reasons to the local media as to why the GVTA should not be adopted. These reasons included that the agency would create an excessive level of bureaucracy and a lack of flexibility in the system to allow municipalities to develop its own municipal transit system. Furthermore, McCallum expressed additional concerns that the City of Surrey's representation on the GVTA Board was less than adequate given its existing and rapidly growing population.

Likewise, the Province of British Columbia passed Bill 36, the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act*. The *GVTA Act* was a relatively uncontroversial piece of legislation, with the Leader of the Opposition stating that "that this bill is a little bit better than some NDP

²⁰⁴ Harold Munro, "Super Board would take wheel from Transit in Lower Mainland," *Vancouver Sun*, 24-Oct-1997, A1; Munro, "Surrey remains roadblock in move to new transit authority," *Vancouver Sun*, 10-Feb-1998, B1; Munro, "Historic vote on regional transit control stalls in Surrey," *Vancouver Sun*, 10-Feb-1998, B1.

bills. There are some things in this bill that actually deserve consideration.”²⁰⁵ The BC Liberal party’s primary objections on the legislation were concerned with the inclusion of three provincial representatives on the GVTA Board, and if there was going to be “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.”²⁰⁶ However, despite BC Liberal opposition, the *GVTA Act* passed on July 29, 1998.

Institutional rules of transportation governance in Greater Vancouver

The institutional rules under which GVTA operates (as agreed upon in the *Recommended Agreement*) are primarily contained within two pieces of provincial legislation: the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act* ²⁰⁷ and the *Local Government Act-Greater Vancouver Regional District Regulation*.²⁰⁸ This section will examine the legislation concerning board membership, proscribed responsibilities under the legislation and regulations, powers over regional transportation, and limitations with respect to financing, revenue generation, and relations with senior levels of government.

Board Membership

Under the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act* (GVTA Act), TransLink’s board of directors consists of 15 members: three members representing the provincial government whose constituencies are located within the GVRD, or represent the provincial ministries of transportation or municipal affairs²⁰⁹; and twelve municipally-elected office holders and current

²⁰⁵ Gordon Campbell, Leader of the Opposition, B.C. Liberals, “Second Reading-Debate on Bill 36- *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act*,” *Hansard*, Volume 12, Number 11: 29 Jul 1998, p. 10698. Available online: <http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/1998-99/hansard/H0729pm.htm#bill36-2r>.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 10699.

²⁰⁷ Ministry of Management Services, “Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act,” *Revised Statutes of British Columbia*, [RSBC 1998, Chapter 30]. Available online: http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/G/98030_01.htm.

²⁰⁸ Ministry of Management Services, “Greater Vancouver Regional District Regulation,” *Revised Statutes of British Columbia*, [B.C. Reg. 195/96]. Available online: http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/reg/L/LocalGovernment/195_96.htm.

²⁰⁹ Provincial appointees were removed from participation in TransLink business on December 12, 2000, through Order in Council 1715, Volume 27, Number 30. Available online at <http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/oic/2000/resume30.htm>. Conflicting reasons were given as to why the provincial appointees removed. The official provincial stance was that the MLAs were retracted from the responsibility in order to enhance local control. However, it is more likely that the BC NDP were looking to score political points by removing their MLAs from the board. The NDP, seeking opposition to the vehicle levy decided to oppose TransLink’s proposal. On November 22, 2000, TransLink moved to implement a vehicle levy on all motor vehicles in the region (see below). In attendance at that meeting the MLA from Burnaby-Edmonds, Fred Randall, who voted against the vehicle levy. Shortly thereafter, the MLAs were removed from the TransLink Board. Following the vehicle levy passing the GVRD Board, Mike Farnworth, the Minister of Economic Security and Social Development announced on January 22 that the vehicle levy would not make necessary legislative amendments to allow for the collection of the levy. See Chad

voting members of the GVRD Board.²¹⁰ The legislation proscribes some degree of intra-regional representation by stipulating that three members must represent the City of Vancouver/Electoral District A; one official from the 'North Shore' communities (including West Vancouver, Lions Bay, North Vancouver, North Vancouver District, or Bowen Island); four representatives from the 'South of Fraser' region (Langley City, Langley Township, Surrey, Richmond, White Rock, or Delta); and three from the 'mid-Fraser' region (New Westminster, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Pitt Meadows, and Maple Ridge). In addition, Section 8 (3) e of the *GVTA Act* allows for one 'at large' member within the GVRD to sit on the board.

The chair of the TransLink Board is elected by secret ballot by the members of the TransLink Board through self-nomination. The position may be filled by any sitting member of the Board, including municipal councillors, and may be from any member municipality of the GVRD. The chair is responsible for ensuring order at the TransLink Board meetings. In addition, the Chair is perceived as the institutional 'voice' of TransLink and its decisions.²¹¹

Mandate of the GVTA

First, in terms of the creation of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, it was given the mandate to improve the quality and availability of public transit and transportation demand programs; support a major road network, as well as provide transportation infrastructure and services.²¹² With respect to responsibilities, the GVTA was granted the authority to make transportation plans that support both official community plans and the LRSP, review 'major' development proposals, as well as take control over the provincial AirCare program and ensure

Skelton, "TransLink levy as good as dead, officials say: Farnsworth says B.C. won't enforce unpopular tax," Vancouver Sun, 22 Jan 2001, A1. Following the election of the B.C. Liberals in April 2001, Premier Campbell announced that the provincial vacancies on the TransLink Board would remain vacant.

²¹⁰ In order to be a member of the TransLink Board, a member must first be selected by his or her municipal council to sit on the GVRD Board. Past nominating practice for membership on the TransLink board has involved self-nomination of GVRD Board members, based on regional considerations. Traditionally, the cities of Surrey and Vancouver nominate their respective mayors and councillor(s), while remaining positions are divided up between the remaining mayors based on geographic territory. The Chief Administrative Officer then puts forward the names of people running for the Board positions as a slate to be voted upon by the GVRD Board. If a candidate wishes to run, but is not included on the slate, he or she can nominate themselves and have a run-off for a position with the slate members within their area. To date, however, the GVRD Board has not been placed in a position of having to conduct a run-off election. See Johnny Carline, "GVRD on-table item 2: Appointment of GVTA Directors," Memorandum for the Special Meeting of the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board of Directors, January 8, 2002. http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/board/agendas/02agendas/GVRD/020111/2_1_gvta_appt.PDF.

²¹¹ One of the reasons cited by the first chair of TransLink, George Puil, to resign from the TransLink Chair was that he perceived himself as the 'lightning rod' for resentment against the Board's transportation policies. See Jeff Lee, "Embittered George Puil quits as TransLink boss: A 'lightning rod' for criticism, Puil says he's upset about breaking his word on taxes," Vancouver Sun, 19 Dec 2001, B1.

²¹² *Ibid.* 1.

that air quality standards were being met within the region.²¹³ To fulfill these responsibilities, the GVTA was granted the authority to raise revenues through the use of user fees, tolls, vehicle charges, and taxes; negotiate cost-sharing arrangements for infrastructure improvements, as well as enter into contracts with private companies or municipalities to establish subsidiary companies.²¹⁴

Infrastructure and Service Delivery

With respect to transit services, the GVTA was handed the ownership and debt responsibilities associated with BC Transit vehicles, real property and equipment assets, excluding the Skytrain guideway and bridge and the West Coast Express infrastructure locomotive capital. With the transit assets in hand, the GVTA became responsible for the coordination the activities of Skytrain (BC Rapid Transit Co. Ltd.), West Coast Express,²¹⁵ as well as all Greater Vancouver Bus and Maintenance operations from BC Transit. Additionally, the GVTA would assume the contracts for District of West Vancouver Blue Bus andfor Handydart operators. (Figure 11).

The operations of the former BC Transit services appeared the most controversial aspect, and provided the greatest exposure of risk to the GVTA in terms of potential revenue shortfalls.²¹⁶ However, the negotiators for the GVRD viewed control over transit services critical to fully implementing the Transport 2021 recommendations.

The major coup for the municipalities in terms of the negotiation was the establishment of the Major Road Network that allowed the municipalities to upload costs associated with maintenance and upgrading of roads that served an interregional purpose. Such roads could be components of the arterial roads and secondary highways downloaded by the province, or roads

²¹³ Ibid.2. See also Smith and Oberlander, (1998). 398.

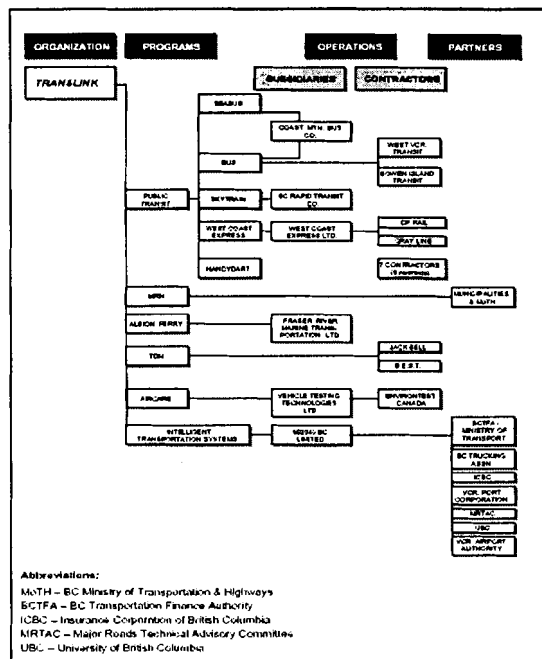
²¹⁴ Ibid. 2

²¹⁵ The costs of associated with the operation of the Westcoast Express had not been made public, as the Canadian Pacific Railway, who owned the rail infrastructure did not want to disclose the rate charged for leasing the track time to Westcoast Express. Following a Supreme Court of British Columbia ruling permitting public disclosure of the running rates, TransLink indicated that CPR was charging rates that averaged to \$4.00 per ticket purchased. TransLink estimates at this rate, the CPR has been making 1000% profit off of the commuter rail service between Downtown Vancouver and Mission. The initial agreement establishing this rate was signed the former NDP premier, Glen Clark, who at the time was the Minister responsible for Transit. See Scott Simpson, "CPR profit 1,000% on West Coast Express," Vancouver Sun, 27 April 2002.

²¹⁶ GVRD, "Review of Transportation Costs and Revenues to be Assumed by the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority under the Proposed Agreement," Transportation: Are we on Board? Fiscal Implications of the Recommended Agreement. (Burnaby: GVRD, 1998a). 18.

previously funded solely by the municipality that linked activity centres, provided for long distance travel, served as transit or freight corridors, or were an integral system link.²¹⁷

Figure 11: TransLink Programs, Operating Subsidiaries, Contractors, and Partners



Source: Booz Allen and Hamilton, "Organizing for regional transportation operations: Vancouver TransLink Case Study," Paper prepared for the Federal Highway Administration: Institute of Transportation Engineers, July 2001. p. 11. Available online: <http://www.ite.org/library/Vancouver.pdf>

The Regional Engineers Advisory Council recommended a major road network consisting of 2,957 lane kilometers of roads, of which 1,084 lane kilometres were still maintained by the province while 1873 lane kilometres of highway were downloaded from the province to the municipalities, or uploaded to the regional level.²¹⁸ This point, in itself, is rather insignificant, until dollar values are assigned to maintaining the roads.

Each municipality receives a grant of \$12,000 per year per lane kilometre to maintain the components Major Road Network from the GVTA for roads that were downloaded from the province as well as a grant of \$8,400 for lane kilometres uploaded by the municipalities.²¹⁹ This figure is derived from the early work done by the Regional Engineers' Advisory committee, which calculated annual maintenance and rehabilitation costs based on 11 cost generators such as

²¹⁷ Regional Engineers' Advisory Committee, Major Road Network, 16.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Translink, Program Plan: 2000. (Burnaby: Translink, 2000). 19.

traffic signals, street lighting, and pavement markings of \$5,000 a year plus and a 'ballpark' figure of \$5,000 per year for road rehabilitation and a contingency fund/administration fund \$2,000.²²⁰ However, in calculating these figures, REAC choose to take the maintenance costs associated with the highest traveled arterial roads in Vancouver and Surrey, and ignored the much lower maintenance costs for several suburban municipalities.

For suburban communities heavily dependent on roads to service a commuter population, this money represents considerable boosts in revenue. While the money is supposed to be spent on the maintenance and upkeep of roads, the money instead goes into general revenue for the municipalities. For municipalities such as Surrey and Langley Township, this money represents \$7.12 and \$2.82 million respectively in additional revenue. Additionally, the municipalities may submit requests for supplementary funding from the GVTA for minor and major capital expenditures to further the quality of the roads. While it is important to consider that the roads serve transit, trade, and commuter purposes, these additional funds undoubtedly benefit suburban single occupant vehicle users and suburban municipalities primarily. This inclusion of the road network further exasperates the conflict between transit users and automobile users, and as one will see in Chapter 4, allows a venue for roads lobbyists to exert further pressure on the GVTA for increased road spending.

Funding

In order to pay for the ambitious transportation system proposed, the GVTA was offered a wide array of funding mechanisms. In addition to revenues raised from the transit system (buses, Skytrain, Westcoast Express, and Seabus), the GVTA received expanded taxation powers within the region. In addition to receiving several existing taxes and levies created by the province within the region, the GVTA was granted the authority to raise motor fuel taxes, develop vehicle levies, and assign taxes to benefiting areas and parking, and charge tolls on Authority and Authority-funded facilities. In total, the existing revenues sources assigned to the GVTA for its first full year of operation totalled \$524 million,²²¹ with revenues assigned as follows in Table 3.

While the \$524 million in annual revenue was adequate to fund the existing transit system and provide minor contribution of \$28 million in road infrastructure improvements, the

²²⁰ Regional Engineers' Advisory Committee, Major Road Network, 20. The road rehabilitation cost assumed a 25-year pavement cycle, in which allowed for two paving overlays (one every 7-8 years) and a pavement reconstruction every 25 years.

²²¹ Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, Consolidated Financial Statements of Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority for the year ended December 31, 2001, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2001).

total was nowhere near the estimated \$814.4 million per year needed to adequately fund the transportation system called for by either the Transport 2021 committee or TransLink's own Strategic Transportation Plan.²²²

Additional funds for the system were to come from a variety of sources. First based on the recommendations made by Transport 2021 for more user pay mechanisms, TransLink was to implement an average \$75 vehicle levy on registered vehicles within the GVRD, with an annual increase in the levy of five percent per year. This program was anticipated to provide TransLink with an additional \$95.4 million in 2001, rising to \$116.5 million in 2005.²²³

Gasoline taxes collected by the Province for the region would gradually increase from four cents per litre pre-GVTA to 8 cents in 1999, up to 11 cents per litre in 2005. For each one half cent increase in fuel tax charged in the region, TransLink benefits by approximately ten to eleven million dollars, for a total annual revenue of approximately \$223 million by 2005.²²⁴ Additionally, TransLink was to increase fares by 25 cents for one zone ticket in both 2000 and 2003, providing an additional \$30 million (from \$241 to \$271 million), and charge additional 14% in parking taxes for a total of \$11 million. Given these revenue sources at its disposal, TransLink appeared to have the necessary tools to actually implement the transportation plan for the region.

BC Transit Debt and Rapid Transit Expansion

The final area of contention between the region and the Province was over the issue of future rapid transit expansion through the region. Given the considerable expense in building a fixed infrastructure such as a rapid transit system, the Province and the region agreed that the Province should assume debt service payments for the construction of both the Westcoast Express (\$125 million) as well as debt servicing for the Phase I, II, and III of the SkyTrain line (\$859 million). The GVTA would assume debt servicing responsibilities for Skytrain vehicles and equipment, (\$216 million) as well as existing transit vehicles, real property and equipment (\$269 million).

²²² Following its creation, the GVTA developed an integrated transportation plan which borrowed liberally from the Transport 2021 Medium and Long Term Transportation Plans, but also included recommendations on improved road infrastructure. The costs of these improvements is found in TransLink, TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan: 2000-2005, (Burnaby, TransLink, 2000), 2.

²²³ TransLink, TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan, 2.

²²⁴ TransLink, Fuel Tax Revenues: Choice 2 Background, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2001). http://www.translink.bc.ca/files/011009_Fuel_Tax_Revenues.pdf. In the annual statements put out by TransLink, revenue is not broken down by source. The \$223 million represents the value of \$181 million collected based on 9 cent/litre charge collected in 1999, as disclosed in the Auditor General Report (Table 3), as well as the public disclosure that an addition two cents per litre equals \$42 million of revenue following the refusal of the provincial government to implement the vehicle levy.

With respect to future lines to Coquitlam, and an extension to Granville in Vancouver, the Province, under the auspices of Rapid Transit Project 2000 Ltd. was to be responsible for the planning, design and construction of future mass transit lines. Costs for the anticipated at-grade light rail transit lines were to be split on the basis that the Province would pick up 60 percent of the costs and the GVTA assuming 40% costs of the anticipated \$1.3 billion cost for the entire T-line connection, to cap of \$600 million.²²⁵

Table 3: Budgeted Revenue Sources for TransLink, 2001.

Source	Budgeted revenue in 2001 (in Millions)
Transit fares and transit advertising	224
Fuel tax	181
Property tax	93
Hydro levy	16
Parking tax and miscellaneous	10
Vehicle levy	Not in use
Benefiting area charges ¹	Not in use
Profits from lease or sale of assets	Minimal
Project tolls ²	Not in use
System tolling, road pricing, etc.	Not included in permitted revenue sources at present in legislation
¹ charges against property benefiting from specific infrastructure improvements ² tolls on specific new TransLink-owned or supported facilities	

Source: Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, Transportation in Greater Vancouver: A Review of the Agreements between the Province and TransLink and of TransLink's Governance Structure, (Victoria: The Office, 2001), 22.

A Return to Subordinated Regional Transportation Governance?: Provincial / Regional Control over the GVTA at formation

Unquestionably, the responsibilities, powers and funding arrangements assigned to the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority are envied by other city-regions across Canada and North America.²²⁶ However, recent interventions (or inactions) by various levels of senior governments raise questions as to the autonomy of the GVTA to make decisions concerning

²²⁵ Scott Simpson and Justine Harper, "New SkyTrain may be \$500 million more than ground line," Vancouver Sun, 04-June-1998, A06.

²²⁶ For a comparison with other regions in Canada, see Gerald Hodge and Ira M. Robinson, Planning Canadian Regions, (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2001), 294-366.

major transportation infrastructure investments. While this thesis examines the role that outside actors have had in shaping transportation policy since the inception of the GVTA, it is important to consider the institutional restraints placed upon TransLink by senior levels of government. To this extent, it is necessary to examine the powers afforded to both the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Province of British Columbia vis-à-vis the GVTA's authority.

Greater Vancouver Regional District's control over TransLink

As mentioned, TransLink was formed to explicitly carry out the region's transportation plan in accordance with the four strategies espoused in the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*. To this extent, all decisions made by TransLink must support a regional transportation system that:

- a) moves people and goods, and
- b) supports
 - (i) the regional growth strategy, and
 - (ii) the air quality objectives and economic development of the transportation service region.²²⁷

TransLink is mandate by the *GVTA Act* to produce a *Strategic Transportation Plan* that details the major projects that are to be undertaken by the authority; specifies the relationship between the transportation projects and the regional growth strategy for the GVRD, and provides details on the GVTA's long term capital and financial plan.²²⁸ Furthermore, TransLink must present its *Strategic Transportation Plan* to the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board for ratification and review the strategic plan every time the regional growth strategy is altered by the GVRD Board.²²⁹

TransLink's board is also subordinate to the GVRD Board in its ability to finance major infrastructure projects. In terms of borrowing capacity, at the time the legislation for the GVTA was crafted TransLink was permitted to borrow, at maximum, \$1.050 billion. However, in order to fund major projects such as trolley bus replacement, and rapid transit projects, changes to TransLink's borrowing limit can only be made following ratification of both the GVRD's Finance Committee and the GVRD's Board of Directors.²³⁰

²²⁷ Ministry of Management Services, "Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act-Section 3," Revised Statutes of British Columbia, [RSBC 1998, Chapter 30]. Available online: http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/G/98030_01.htm.

²²⁸ Ministry of Management Services, "Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act-Section 14," Revised Statutes of British Columbia, [RSBC 1998, Chapter 30]. Available online: http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/G/98030_01.htm.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Following negotiations over the funding of the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver rapid transit line, the GVRD Board of Director's increased TransLink's borrowing limit to \$2.009 billion. See

The ability of TransLink to generate revenue may be curtailed by GVRD in several areas. TransLink has the sole discretion to set and charge user fees or fares on the region's transit system; including bus, heavy and light rail, and ferries. In addition, TransLink receives set amount of \$16 million from an archaic B.C. Hydro levy.²³¹

However, TransLink has at its disposal several other alternative sources of revenue that require specific ratification of the GVRD Board. These include the establishment of property and / or benefiting area taxes, road tolling on new or existing projects associated with the Major Road Network, parking taxes and motor vehicle charges.

With respect to the urban/suburban split found within the GVRD, increases in property taxes and specific vehicle levy charges are controversial, given the propensity for lower tax rate and high levels of vehicle dependence in suburban communities in the GVRD.

Province of British Columbia

TransLink, like the Greater Vancouver Regional District and municipalities are 'creatures of the provincial government.' TransLink's powers are proscribed by provincial legislation: legislation that can be altered or revoked at the whims of the legislative assembly. At any time, the provincial government can refuse to enact requests for funding put forward by TransLink or alter funding commitments for major infrastructure investments.

With respect to denying revenue streams, the province's abilities are derived from its retention of key components of revenue collection. For example, while TransLink can assign charges to vehicles licensed in the region, (under Section 29 [3] of the *GVRTA Act*) it lacks a mechanism to collect such tolls in an efficient manner. While a vehicle levy could be collected when drivers renew their automobile insurance through the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, the province is solely responsible for deciding which fees it is willing to collect on behalf other agencies.²³² Similarly, while TransLink could theoretically use the existing Air Care infrastructure system to collect a vehicle levy (which is under its management), it could not collect a vehicle charge unless the Board can prove that the funds would explicitly enhance air quality within the region (Section 4 [1] of the *GVRTA Act*). The province's current position concerning vehicle charges within the region is that a regional referendum approving such

²³¹ This amount is derived from a \$1.90 charge per B.C. Hydro meter on every housing and commercial unit in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. This charge was established to bolster the revenues of BC Hydro as to offset potential losses of running trolley buses in Greater Vancouver.

²³² If a vehicle levy were to be collected by the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, the province would necessarily need to amend section 7 of the Insurance Corporation Act. See Ministry of Management Services, "Insurance Corporation Act, Section 7," The Revised Statutes and Consolidated Regulations of British Columbia, [RSBC 1996, Chapter 226]. Available online http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/1/96226_00.htm.

charges must occur prior to the government considering changing legislation to alter collection of the levy.²³³

However, the province's most blatant control over the regional transportation system is evidenced in its discretion to plan and fund rapid transit in the region. Under the *GVTA Act*, the province is solely responsible for the "planning, acquisition, and construction of *the* Rapid Transit Project."²³⁴ At the time the GVTA was established, the Rapid Transit Project to be undertaken by the province was the completion of the Millennium Line to Coquitlam Centre as well as an extension of the existing line along the Broadway Corridor in Vancouver. However, the province has since reneged on its commitment to this project, and instead put forward an alternative rapid transit project to Richmond simply by introducing a legislative amendment to the *GVTA Act*. (The elevation in priority of the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver line is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4).²³⁵

Summary

This chapter has traced the evolution of a transportation governance institution in the Greater Vancouver Regional District over the last twenty years. From the evidence presented in this chapter, this institutional arrangement had the blessing of both the Greater Vancouver Regional District— as a means to coordinate transportation planning in conjunction with a comprehensive land use plan; and the Province of British Columbia— as means of offloading services such as the provision of arterial roads, transit services, and air quality monitoring. However, despite enhanced regional controls over the transportation system, questions such as jurisdictional control and authority are still present. As one will see in the next chapter, several jurisdictional quandaries emerge following the GVTA's construction of the Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005. I will show that as a consequence of the GVTA's inability to assert jurisdiction over several major transportation issues facing the region, the GVTA's ability

²³³ This commitment was made in the election platform of the BC Liberal party prior to the 2001 election. See BC Liberal Party, A New Era for British Columbia (Vancouver: BC Liberals, 2001), 9.

²³⁴ Greater Vancouver Authority Act, Section 33 (1). Emphasis added.

²³⁵ On May 14, 2003, the Minister of Transportation introduced the *Transportation Statutes Amendment Act, 2003*, which fundamentally altered the original Strategic Transportation Plan for the region. The amendment allows the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver Rapid Transit Project to be elevated as the primary rapid transit project to be constructed in the region. By introducing the amendment, the Province removed the requirement of the GVRD Board to conduct public hearings on the impacts of this change on priorities with respect to the Livable Region Strategic Plan. The amendment passed through three readings plus committee stage in three days; during which the only comments made on the Bill were provide by a lone member of the opposition, NDP leader Joy MacPhail. See Province of British Columbia, "Bill 64: Transportation Statutes Amendment Act, 2003" [RSBC 2003, Chapter 45]. Available online: http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/37th4th/3rd_read/gov64-3.htm.

to control the institutional agenda concerning regional transportation is greatly diminished by the rise of various outside actors in regional transportation policy.

Chapter 4: Institutional and Outsider Transportation Agendas: A Case Study of Greater Vancouver Regional District

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the origins and mandate of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority were explored. However, while the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act* entrenched the ideals of transportation planning and governance in legislation, the region was responsible for delivering the day-to-day details on how transit and highways infrastructure would be planned, funded, built and managed. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the forces behind transportation policy agenda-setting since the creation of the Greater Vancouver. This chapter will be broken into three sections.

This chapter will first explore the development of a transportation institutional transportation *agenda* for the region: that is, “a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchical of importance at a point of time.”²³⁶ For the purposes of this chapter, TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan: 2000-2005 (STP) will be used as baseline agenda. The use of the STP 2000-2005 as an agenda is of interest for two reasons. As this was the first transportation plan produced by the GVTA, the STP can be perceived as the baseline institutional agenda for regional transportation projects. This first document establishes what the institutional leaders perceive as projects of utmost importance, during their reasonable term in municipal office. Hence, while documents like Transport 2021’s *Long Range Transportation Plan* are instructive as to the transportation vision for the region, the proposed five-year plan details what the institutional leaders perceive as doable.

A written document such as the STP can also act as a heuristic device, establishing the normative priorities for the institution. Based on this principle, the transportation priorities of the region can be ranked on the basis of where they are included in the written document. The STP presented transit options (including expansion of the bus system, rail transit to the North-East Sector and along the Broadway Corridor) ahead of expanded investments in the region’s Major Road Network.

Second, based on the typology of outside actors provided in Chapter 2, the resources and motivations of several actors that have emerged since the adoption of the STP will be explored. For our purposes, five such outsider organizations will be reviewed. These organizations include the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, the Vancouver Board of Trade, the British Columbia Automobile Association, the British Columbia Trucking Association and Better Environmentally

²³⁶ Dearing and Rogers, *Agenda-Setting*, 2.

Sound Transportation. It should be noted here that the first two organizations are linked together through informal networks of research, policy development and communications. The Gateway Council and the Board of Trade in particular represent two organizations with a high level of cooperation and cross-fertilization between key members within each organizations. For example, most, if not all members of the Gateway Council are members in good standing with the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade provides events, such as breakfast roundtables, that give the Gateway Council a friendly public forum for discussing its policy positions. The implicit unified organizational capacity of these organizations makes them formidable players in developing transportation policy in Greater Vancouver.

Finally, this chapter examines the impact these groups have had on altering the initial institutional transportation agenda. Since its adoption in November 2000, key elements of the *Strategic Transportation Plan* have been dismissed, reconfigured, or dropped off the agenda in a matter of three and half years. While certainly many of the problems facing the implementation of the plan originated from when the former NDP government refused to collect the proposed \$75 vehicle levy as a part of insurance renewal on behalf of the region, the above-noted groups have had a significant impact in mobilizing public and business support or opposition to specific transportation projects in the region.

As an addendum, this chapter will also examine the most recent example of agenda-shifts and transportation politics in the region—the elevation of the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver high-speed transit line as the region’s top priority. This case provides an exemplar to transportation planning in the region: presenting the commanding influence urban regimists and specialist outsiders have in altering a transportation agenda.

TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005 as an institutional agenda: actions for transit and road infrastructure improvements

TransLink began work on its Strategic Transportation Plan soon after its formation. In September 1999, the transportation agency released to the public a discussion paper entitled Our Future: Making the Right Moves.²³⁷ Building upon the recommendations put forth during deliberations on *Transport 2021*, the document proposed several key questions for the future of TransLink—such as what priority should be given to various modes of transportation; what pricing mechanisms (such as tolls, vehicle levy, property/parking/gasoline taxes) should be deployed and fundamentally how the region should look in the future. In addition, the document provided three ‘visions’ of the GVRD transportation system in 2005, based on what the

²³⁷ TransLink, (1999), Our Future: Making the Right Moves, (Burnaby: TransLink).

TransLink adopted as its strategic plan. Of note, the worst case scenario envisioned for 2005 (dubbed the ‘wait a minute’ scenario) provided much greater transit service than the present trends indicate.²³⁸

Based on this document, TransLink proceeded to develop a draft and final version of the regional transportation strategy. In April 2000, TransLink released its Strategic Transportation Plan,²³⁹ as mandated by the *GVTA Act*. The STP had three major objectives: to provide a broad context for the plan; to outline the current condition of travel trends in the region in light of the LRSP; to outline the ‘vision’ for the region’s transit, road, management, and financial plans; and to provide an overview of how these plans support the LRSP.²⁴⁰ As the STP indicates: “the visions and objectives set out the key directions for the plan;”²⁴¹ hence, constituting a transportation agenda for the region.

The STP contains 61 ‘actions’ on the institutional agenda, based on the three categories of *Transit Plans, Road and Infrastructure Plans, and Management Plans*. (A complete list of the actions is provided as in Appendix 1). Thirteen of these actions are related to transit plans; eighteen are related to road and infrastructure improvements and 29 are related to various the various management functions undertaken by the GVTA. However, not all of these actions are equal in weight in terms of their social and economic impacts on the region. With respect to this thesis, the balance of building, funding and managing transit and road infrastructure on the institutional agenda requires further discussion.

In regards to transit infrastructure, the STP envisioned a regional transit system that was integrated and diverse. Both TransLink and the GVRD agreed that increasing the capacity and efficiency of the transit system was the best way to achieve the goals set out in the *LRSP*. With respect to bus service, TransLink envisioned as its top priority a fleet of 1,600 city, B-Line, and express highway buses complimented by a feeder community bus system in suburban areas. The variety of buses was deemed necessary to increase ridership levels, particularly in suburban communities, where traditional city bus service has failed in capturing a significant percentage of

²³⁸ The ‘wait a minute’ scenario is describes the situation in which “we find ourselves unwilling to be adventurous and restrain spending on both transit and roads, similar to the pattern of recent years in terms of transit bus fleet expansion.” *Ibid.*, 69. Under this scenario, there would be little in the way of regional road construction: however, a full compliment of 1300 transit buses would be in place, as well as a completed retrofit of the trolley buses by the end of 2003. *Ibid.*, 78.

²³⁹ TransLink first released a *draft Strategic Transportation Plan* for public comment. The final Strategic Transportation Plan was adopted by the TransLink Board in April 2000 following three months of public and private consultations. TransLink, (2000), Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005, (Burnaby: TransLink).

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

ridership. While the B-Line and Express bus services would primarily serve long-haul commuters to the central business district, city bus and community shuttles would service intra-city travel.

With respect to rail transit, the STP specifically lays out the regional priority. With respect to the Coquitlam and Richmond Airport line, the following language was used:

Action 7: Work with the Provincial Government to complete the "TLine" as defined in the GVTA Act by 2005.

Action 9: Begin preliminary planning and design work for the Richmond/Airport rapid transit link to Vancouver.²⁴²

Looking at these actions, several items are apparent. First, the completion of the 'T-Line' (the extension of the Millennium Line to Coquitlam / Central Broadway corridor) was listed as first in order. Being listed first is generally assumed to be a ranking of higher importance.

Second, the Coquitlam line was focused on 'completion' rather than 'preliminary planning and design.' Under the auspices of the Rapid Transit 2000 offices (a provincial Crown corporation established under the NDP to design and build the complete 'T-line') preliminary design guidelines and geotechnical studies were completed for an extension of the Millennium Line from Lougheed Mall to Coquitlam Centre via Port Moody. The next step in the process was a complete environmental impact assessment, which was never completed. At the time the STP was released, serious discussions concerning a rapid transit line to the Airport were only beginning.

Further discussions on the merits of these two 'competing' lines within the STP are also illuminating:

The SkyTrain project currently being built by the provincial Rapid Transit Project Office is comprised of parts of two of the lines identified by both the Province and the GVRD as high priority. These are the New Westminster to Coquitlam Centre line and the Central Broadway to Lougheed Mall line and together are referred to as the 'T'-Line. The completion of these two lines, particularly the connection to Coquitlam Centre, is critically important to the achievement of the goals of the Livable Region Strategic Plan.

Completion of these arrangements, as well as planning and implementing the extensions to Coquitlam and Central Broadway, are high priorities. TransLink will continue to work with the Province to achieve agreement on these issues, with particular emphasis on the Coquitlam extension.

The current expansion of SkyTrain will address a portion of the regional need for intermediate capacity rapid transit. Regional plans identified development of the rail transit link from Richmond and the Airport to Vancouver as equal in priority.²⁴³

²⁴² Ibid., 21.

²⁴³ Ibid., 23.

Although the Richmond line was defined as being ‘equal in priority,’ the high capacity ‘T-Line’ project was deemed by both the region and the Province as a ‘high priority’ of ‘critical importance.’ Furthermore, regional visions for the Richmond Line indicated a preference for an intermediate capacity system (street level light rail) rather than a heavy-rail subway-like system.

According to the *STP*, the construction of new roads to compliment the major road network work were to be built on the principle of providing “priority to transit, goods movement and high occupancy vehicles ahead of single occupant vehicles.”²⁴⁴ Such measures would include constructing queue-jumping and dedicated bus lanes, priority signal controls, and enhanced bus stop locations, as taking precedence over the construction of new highway lanes.

Looking at the *STP* as a heuristic device, it is apparent that transit alternatives are of primary importance. The transit plan and its accompanying actions are the first section discussed; followed by infrastructure investments plan and the management strategy. Presumably, the creators of this first institutional agenda perceived transit infrastructure as the primary attention item.

The creators of the *STP* understood that they had proposed an ambitious transit and transportation agenda for the region: paying for the proposed improvements was another matter. Within TransLink’s budget, existing revenue streams such as transit fares, gasoline taxes, the B.C. Hydro levy, and property taxes would barely pay for the provision of existing transit services—no additional funding could be provided to the funding of the major road network without cuts to the transit system.

To provide the transportation agency with additional revenue, the Province during negotiations with the GVRD, gave TransLink (at the request of the GVRD) four additional revenue streams: the ability to implement a vehicle charge, control over on- and off street parking taxes, the ability to increase transit fares, and the ability to levy tolls and benefiting-area charges for any major capital projects. All of these revenue streams were suggested as being viable sources of income within the *STP*.

Despite significant media coverage leading up to the passing of the *STP* in October 2000, TransLink’s *Strategic Transportation Plan* flew largely under the radar with respect to business organizations, environmental organizations, and the public at large. While the British Columbia Automobile Association began to mount a campaign in which the organization asked its members to sign a petition demanding the removal of a proposed \$75.00 vehicle levy from the table, TransLink’s internal polling indicated that while 84 percent of the public knew that it was

²⁴⁴ TransLink, *Strategic Transportation Plan*, 41.

responsible for bus service (of which service provision had been contracted out to Coast Mountain Bus Company), only four percent identified TransLink as being responsible for the management of the major road network, and two percent for transportation planning in general.²⁴⁵ However, based on this limited understanding of the role and powers afforded to the transportation agency, 90 percent of those surveyed supported TransLink proceeding with implementing the Strategic Transportation Plan.²⁴⁶

To TransLink's credit, the organization did give the public, politicians, and business and other groups interested in transportation policy the opportunity to weigh in on the STP. From the release of the draft *Strategic Transportation Plan* in April 2000 to its ultimate adoption as a planning document in November 2000, TransLink hosted numerous 'front-line' and public forums, attended a Board of Trade panel discussion, set up a website containing the STP and a feedback section, and sent out 750,000 mailers containing an executive summary of the plan. It organized a weekend 'Council of Council' meeting, in which every elected municipal representative in the region could ask questions about the organization and responsibilities of TransLink under the plan. However, in response to all this promotion material, TransLink calculates that it only actually 'consulted' with a very generous 4,000 people: roughly the population of Bowen Island.²⁴⁷ From this analysis, it is clear that the STP, as a theoretical transportation agenda sounded reasonably plausible in terms of its ability to address the long-standing transportation issues in the region. It would not be until TransLink started to seriously examine additional funding sources that the public and outside interest groups would become active in their involvement in trying to modify TransLink's institutional agenda.

Internal institutional opposition: the vehicle levy as a mobilizing event for outsiders

As a planning document, TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005 was rather benign. It contained tens of 'Actions' to assist in providing greater transit options, reduce regional transportation congestion and assist in delivering transportation solutions in line with the region's LRSP. To the public, TransLink's polls indicated that there was a great deal of support for the entire plan, with 90 percent of those polled either supporting, or somewhat supporting the STP prior to adoption.²⁴⁸ With such strong levels in polling data, TransLink appeared confident

²⁴⁵ Angus Reid, Strategic Transportation Plan Resident Survey: Prepared for TransLink, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000), 5.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴⁷ TransLink, TransLink's Vision and Values, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000), 8.

²⁴⁸ Angus Reid, Strategic Transportation Plan Resident Survey, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000), 13.

that the public would support all components of the strategic plan. Only a few of those surveyed expressed any concerns about issues relating to costs, or thought that the proposed vehicle levy was an additional, unjust form of taxation.²⁴⁹

While TransLink was consulting with the public on the transportation plan, it was also busy working to remove potential roadblocks with respect to legal control vis-à-vis the Board of Directors of the GVRD. In May, 2000, a proposal to provide legislative authority to TransLink to consider implementing a vehicle charge was debated at the May 26 meeting.²⁵⁰ At this meeting, the divisions between suburban and urban communities within the GVRD over how to pay for transportation improvements became apparent: with Surrey, Delta and Langley Township threatening to leave the GVRD should any form of a vehicle levy be implemented.²⁵¹ While the legislative amendments allowing TransLink to deliberate over the how a vehicle levy would function passed easily, this internal schism within the GVRD Board would effectively put an end to the political niceties around the transportation plan. By voicing opposition at the Board meeting, suburban Board members effectively opened up debate over the legitimacy of the plan; thus, creating a possible venue for outsiders to voice opposition to the Strategic Plan. This opposition displayed by institutional actors thereby acted as a conduit for outsiders to mobilize opposition: a conduit that was ready to be exploited by outsiders who felt that their interests were not being seriously considered by the institutional actors. Such groups waiting for this opportunity included the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, the Vancouver Board of Trade, BCAA, the BC Trucking Association and Better Environmentally Sound Transportation. The window afforded these groups for mobilization was short: a seven-month period between April and October 2000. Although failing to block the vehicle levy from being passed by both the TransLink and GVRD boards, the issue of the vehicle levy served to draw institutional attention to these groups. While some groups, such as BCAA and BCTA were satisfied by drawing attention to the vehicle levy, the debate offered greater opportunities for groups such as the Board of Trade and the Gateway Council, to ultimately become more involved in shaping regional transportation priorities. The next section provides an overview of these groups—their resources and motivations for activity, in light of this emerging venue for action.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 15. Of the 629 people surveyed by the Angus Reid Group, only 8 people expressed concerns relating to costs, after the plan was explained to them.

²⁵⁰ The GVRD is responsible for approving TransLink's financial statements and plan. In order for TransLink to charge a vehicle levy, the levy must first be approved by the GVRD Board.

²⁵¹ Petti Fong and Nicole Bailey, "Vehicle levy splits GVRD communities," Vancouver Sun, 27-05-2000, A07.

Greater Vancouver Gateway Council as a specialist outsider

Background

The Greater Vancouver Gateway Council (GVGC) was formed in 1994 in order to promote Greater Vancouver as a world transportation gateway both domestically and with the international marketplace.²⁵² The Gateway Council is composed of senior executives from the 'gateway' transportation industries: rail, air, sea and air ports, which shape and implement transportation policies within both governmental and corporate capacity. Corporations represented as voting members on the Gateway Council include Chief Executive Officers from the Vancouver International Airport Authority; the Vancouver, Fraser River, and North Fraser Port Authorities; BC Rail Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways; Air Canada; and the BC Terminal Elevator Operators Associations. Additionally, the Gateway Council has 'resource' access to senior officials within the Greater Vancouver Regional District, TransLink, the transportation ministries of the four western provinces, as well as Transport Canada. This convergence of industry and multi-level governmental officials make the GVGC a unique actor within transportation sector within the region.

The mandate for the Gateway Council is "to build and act on a vision for Greater Vancouver as a world transportation gateway, able to meet global challenges and capitalize on opportunities for growth from expanding world trade and tourism."²⁵³ Building upon this mandate, the Gateway Council produced a report in 1999 outlining the problems and solutions for transportation issues at a regional, provincial, and federal levels.

In 1999, the Gateway Council released its big-picture, transportation policy wish-list, Vision for the Future of the Greater Vancouver Gateway.²⁵⁴ In this report, the Gateway Council details the importance of a comprehensive transportation infrastructure, in terms of employment, goods movement, economic output, and tourism for Greater Vancouver. The report identifies 11 areas of concern vis-à-vis transportation policy. While many of the concerns such as the growth of world trade, increased continentalization, deregulation within the transportation industry, new technologies, and volatile economic conditions are primarily areas which require attention from senior levels of government, three key concerns such as a lack of attention paid by all levels of government in the importance of transportation infrastructure, fragmented transportation planning and urban congestion speak directly to transportation planning in Greater Vancouver.

²⁵² Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, Mandate, <http://www.gvgc.org/home.html> Accessed April 6, 2002.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, A Vision for the Future of the Greater Vancouver Gateway, eds. Keith McPherson and Paul Ouimet, (Vancouver: The Council, 1999).

To assist in reducing these transportation problems, the Gateway Council argues a three pillar, multi-stakeholder solution: 1) the development of a fair competitive framework, 2) infrastructure and facilities investment, 3) service expansion and improvements.

In terms of developing a fair and competitive framework, the strategy looks to all levels of government to bring transportation policies in line with the United States. Regarding capital investment costs, the Gateway Council lobbies for senior levels of governments to permit transportation agencies to issue tax exempt bonds as a means to fund major infrastructure improvements, as well as increasing the rate of depreciation permitted capital goods purchased to service the transportation industry (such as locomotives, ships, and tractor-trailer units). With respect to taxation, the Gateway council position is that municipal taxation rates are too high to compete against the U.S. ports of entry such as Seattle. Additionally, the transportation industry in Greater Vancouver is faced with an increasing number of special taxes, such as the GVRD Air Tax, which applies to port terminal operations, and provincial taxes on fuel for aircraft and railway locomotives.²⁵⁵ Additionally, the Gateway Council argues against the growing use of industry specific fees for traditionally 'free' government services, such as air navigation fees, Coast Guard Marine Services, and dredging costs.²⁵⁶

With respect to service expansion, the Gateway Council promotes positions such as an increase in the number of 'open skies' air passenger agreements be signed with countries other than the United States, as well as service and functionality improvements for primary points of entry for tourists, such as the Vancouver International Airport or the cruise ship terminals at the Port of Vancouver. Additionally, the Gateway Council has argued for increasing harmonization of trade, security, and customs policy with the United States.

In regards to the issues of a competitive framework and service expansion, the Gateway Council primarily works with the federal government and Transport Canada. To this end, the Gateway Council produced a submission for the Canada Transportation Act Review Panel highlighting these very concerns.²⁵⁷ However, in order to develop infrastructure and facilities investment, the Gateway Council needed to become a substantial actor in terms of articulating local transportation needs to enhance connectivity between the various ports of entry in Greater Vancouver, so to strengthen inter-regional and international trade.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. 13.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, "Serving the Nation's Trade: Towards a Transportation Policy for the 21st Century." Submission to the Canada Transportation Act Review Panel. CD-ROM. (Canada: The Review Panel, 2001).

Policy Positions and Motivations for Action

As mentioned above, GVGC has, until very recently, taken only minor interest in the work conducted by TransLink with respect to urban transportation. Instead, it has primarily been associated with work particularly at the federal government level, targeting federal politicians and committees with respect to trade policy and the need more funding for highway infrastructure improvements. However, since 2001, the organization has also become a vocal critic of the priorities established by TransLink for the regional transportation. It presents the position that within the GVRD alone, there exists an ‘infrastructure deficit’ of greater than \$7.4 billion dollars,²⁵⁸ (Figure 12) and that the current funding allotment to upgrading road infrastructure was not nearly enough to meet the demand of expanding commercial trading sector.

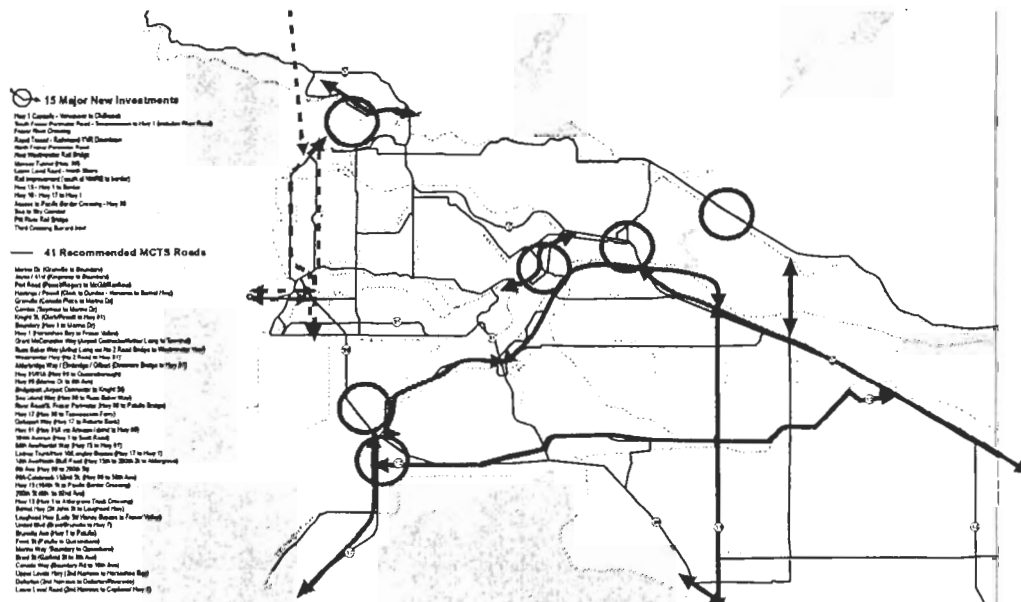
With respect to ‘selling’ the additional expenditures on the Major Commercial Transportation Network, the Gateway Council argues that the development of the Livable Region Strategic Transportation Plan has ignored how goods would move through the region from the critical economic generators of the ports. The GVGC’s plan serves as template to correct this oversight in planning, thereby enhancing the regions economic sustainability.

However, at the regional transportation level, while the GVGC’s concerns are seen as legitimate,²⁵⁹ much of their proposed infrastructure involves expanding vehicle capacity on major intra-regional highways, such as 12 laning the Trans-Canada Highway between Chilliwack and Vancouver, the expansion of the Massey Tunnel, Highway 10 and 15. Such projects speak directly against all concepts of sustainable transportation planning developed previously within the region.

²⁵⁸ This figure is based on estimates of expenditures for 55 road projects identified in Figure 9 and was given in speech by Larry Berg, Chair of the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, “Presentation to the Vancouver Board of Trade,” September 26, 2001. http://boardoftrade.com/events/presentations/Berg_26sep01.pdf.

²⁵⁹ The viewpoint that the development of a major commercial transportation network is a necessary component of any regional transportation plan has been given increased credibility since the hiring of Pat Jacobsen as the Chief Executive Officer of TransLink in April, 2001. Prior to the introduction of Jacobsen as CEO, TransLink paid scant attention to the enhancing road infrastructure for commercial and trade purposes. However, in a speech to a Greater Vancouver Regional District Council of Councils meeting in September, 2001, Jacobsen directly quoted statistics from the Gateway Council’s, *Vision for the Future*, on the importance a commercial road network. See Pat Jacobsen, “Remarks to the Greater Vancouver Regional District Councils.” (Burnaby: TransLink, September 8, 2001). http://www.translink.bc.ca/files/0908_TransLink_Speech.pdf.

Figure 12: Greater Vancouver Gateway Council Proposed Infrastructure Improvements



Source: Tony Nardi, Chair of the Gateway Council Subcommittee on the Major Commercial Transportation System. "Regional Transportation: Gridlock of What?" Presentation to the Vancouver Board of Trade. September 26, 2001. <http://www.boardoftrade.com/events/presentations/Nardi-map26sep01.pdf>

Finally, with respect to transportation governance, while the GVGC supports the idea of regional transportation body, it argues that the present resources available are incapable of delivering on its needs. It sees two areas in which governance can be improved as to provide a 'better' transportation system.

First, the GVCC contends that the Board of Directors needs to be revamped to encourage board members to think of long-range regional 'transportation' (rather than transit) planning, rather than short-term, political infighting. While the GVGC is vague with respect to specific recommendations on governance, it would likely favour governance a structure in which a much smaller number of elected officials serve a longer three year term to the Board. Additionally, recognised business groups, such the Board of Trade and the GVGC would become incorporated as insider actors, with voting privileges on transportation decisions.²⁶⁰

Second, the GVGC posits that TransLink must actively lobby the provincial government to allow it to issue tax exempt bonds to fund infrastructure improvements as well as a dedicated commitment to spend these additional revenues on highway capacity improvements that link the

²⁶⁰ Larry Berg, Chair of the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, "Presentation to the Vancouver Board of Trade," September 26, 2001. http://boardoftrade.com/events/presentations/Berg_26sep01.pdf.

various ports of entry first and foremost. Additionally, the Major Road Network already in place by TransLink should be expanded to include more roads, and should be better funded in terms of improving coordination of traffic signals, left hand turn bays, and other investments to enhance inter and intra-regional trade.²⁶¹

The Gateway Council perceives involvement in urban transportation as a means of protecting and promoting a competitive advantage in commercial trade. The members of the Gateway Council describe themselves as an airport and seaports that “are essentially islands of efficient infrastructure connected to each other by an increasingly congested urban road system.”²⁶² The Gateway Council sees the gateway of Vancouver as losing its competitive advantage to U.S. competition, as the U.S. and state governments invest billions of dollars in improving road and rail access to major commercial ports. As TransLink is the major governmental actor in terms of providing access to the major points of entry through the establishment of the Major Road Network, the Gateway Council must necessarily work with TransLink in order to ensure the viability of the commercial gateway of Vancouver.

The interest in Greater Vancouver transportation policy is seemingly tangential: while the Gateway Council recognizes that TransLink is responsible for the end delivery and maintenance of the public road infrastructure necessary for the Gateway concept to thrive, it sees TransLink as largely unable to deliver upon its needs. While representatives of both TransLink and members of Gateway Council have in the past worked extensively on projects such as the 1999 Lower Mainland Truck Freight Study,²⁶³ to research infrastructure needs of the commercial transportation industry, the Gateway Council seeks out partnerships with senior of government for both additional funding and construction of transportation infrastructure. For example, the GVGC was recently given \$350,000 under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement to study “long-range planning to improve commercial transportation in Greater Vancouver.”²⁶⁴ Listed as partners in the study were the Vancouver International Airport Authority, the Vancouver Port Authority, BC Ferries, the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway: ironically, TransLink, the governmental agency responsible for the actual implementation of the road network was not listed as partner in the agreement. Thus, it can be seen the Gateway Council has sought out another institutional venue in which its economic

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, A Vision, 14.

²⁶³ TransLink, Lower Mainland Truck Freight Study, (Burnaby: Translink, 2000).

²⁶⁴ Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise, “Greater Vancouver Transportation Study Funded,” March 8, 2002. <http://os8150.pb.gov.bc.ca/4dcgi/nritem?5013>.

concerns over congestion are more likely to be heard. Rather than tip-toeing around local political/transportation issues, the GVGC has instead directed its attention to the only level of government that has the fiscal resources and seeming will to invest heavily in the urban highway infrastructure, the federal government.

Resources

The Greater Vancouver Gateway Council is in a unique position in terms of bargaining position vis-à-vis various levels of government involved in transportation. The Gateway Council estimates gateway industries generate more than 65,000 direct and indirect jobs within the Vancouver region, with an annual payroll of more than \$1.3 billion per year.²⁶⁵ Additionally, the combined gateway economic output is greater than \$8 billion per year, with taxes paid to the various levels of government exceeding \$850 million per year.²⁶⁶ Given the economic importance to the region, province, and nation, the Gateway Council has significant clout in terms of articulating its needs.

Because the economic interests of the GVGC impact directly on regional, provincial, and federal government, it is able to draw upon high level officials within these governments as 'resource members.' For instance, the GVGC, lists key officials within TransLink and the GVRD, deputy ministers of transport for the western provinces, as well as the regional director for Transport Canada, as resource members. This ability, as an outside actor, to draw upon the expertise and knowledge of key officials within fragmented transportation governance structure, is unparalleled with respect to other outside actors and even core, institutionalized insider actors within the urban transportation policy network. As such, its articulated policies and concerns are more likely to be seen as legitimate areas for action at the various governmental levels.

Additionally, the GVGC works extensively to share its ideas with like-minded business groups within the region, such as the Board of Trade and B.C. Trucking Association. The GVGC presents its findings using the workshop forums provided by the Board of Trade to promote its concept of commercial transportation network. As well, it regularly consulted with Board of Trade transportation committee members during the development of the road network plan.

Summary

The Greater Vancouver Gateway Council is still a relatively new actor with respect to Greater Vancouver Transportation Policy. The organization works largely behind the scene to develop policy that is in the best interest of its constituents, that is, major national and multi-

²⁶⁵ Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, *A Vision*, 6.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

national corporations conducting trade and tourism functions within the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Because of the economic clout held within the power structure of this organization, it has the ear and support of senior levels of government to develop transportation policy recommendations. The organization treats transportation issues within the GVRD in the context of Vancouver being a global 'Gateway' city, that is; urban transportation is one crucial factor which must be in place in order to solidify Vancouver's role as a major commercial port of entry on the international scale. Accordingly, the GVGC attempts to promote regional transportation strictly in terms of economic efficiency-supporting infrastructure investments which explicitly benefit port operations, and presumably, the bottom line on member corporations that operate at these ports. In producing its own regional transportation network, the GVGC is attempting to reconstruct the policy agenda away from issues of publicly accessible transit, and instead in terms of increased road capacity in the name of regional economic prosperity.

In terms of classification as an outside actor, the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council may be seen as *specialist outsider*. The GVGC has an explicit interest in the development of a specific set of policy outcomes in mind, when it entered into the debate over regional transportation, namely, increased spending on transportation infrastructure to link ports of entry. While the executive of the Board has indicated that it would like to see greater emphasis placed on business representation on the Board of Directors of the regional transportation governance body, it does not explicitly seek to become involved in the day to day operations of running both transit and transportation system.

Additionally, the GVGC entered into the regional transportation debate with a high level of tangible (control over the import and export of goods to the Canadian economy) and intangible (political support for policy positions) assets at its disposal. Because of the access to substantial resources and a desire to promote only one cohesive position onto the institutional agenda, the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council is a specialist outsider.

Vancouver Board of Trade-Urban Regimist

Background

The Vancouver Board of Trade (VBT) has been an active participant in representing business interests within the local, provincial, and federal policy arenas since 1888. The Board's mission statement is to conduct "works in the enlightened interest of its members to promote,

enhance and facilitate the development of the region as a Pacific centre for trade, commerce and travel.”²⁶⁷

As national and international trade is the primary *raison d’etre* for the Board’s existence, issues relating to the transportation of goods to and from the port areas have been of primary concern. The Board of Trade, for example, has long history of promoting enhanced transportation connectivity options such the construction of the Trans Canada Highway and the expansion of the Vancouver International Airport.²⁶⁸

The VBT serves two primary yet interconnected functions within the community. First, the Board of Trade provides what is best described as membership services. The Board arranges a multitude of events for its members and the larger community which allow corporate officers to network and discuss day to day business. Such events include evening networking sessions, a series on successful management practices, as well as a distinguished speakers series. The VBT also maintains a wide array of economic information on the region, to assist corporations and small business to relocate or expand within Vancouver.

The second area in which the VBT is active is in the area public policy. The VBT actively critiques government policy at the federal, provincial, and local levels, as to ensure that the best interests of businesses within Vancouver. To this extent, the VBT has established committees and task forces to examine issues such as the federal and provincial budget, international and community affairs, as well as a small business council. The VBT has also set up committees to promote specific infrastructure investments such as the proposed Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre and Vancouver Airport expansion. Within the last 3 years, it has also established two active policy committees to examine issues relating to regional transportation as well transportation issues specifically within the City of Vancouver. The policy aspects relating transportation are of primary interest.

Policy Positions and Motivations for Action

The Vancouver Board of Trade’s interest in urban transportation has largely been a reactionary response to the transportation policies that have emerged since the creation of TransLink. Prior to the creation of TransLink, the Board of Trade took little formal interest in urban transportation policy. Under the auspices of the Community Affairs Committee, the VBT would establish committees on an ad hoc basis to study significant transportation projects (such

²⁶⁷ Vancouver Board of Trade, Mission Statement, (Accessed: April 20, 2002)
http://www.vancouver.boardoftrade.com/vbot_page.asp?pageid=83.

²⁶⁸ Vancouver Board of Trade, History, (Accessed April 20, 2002).
http://www.boardoftrade.com/vbot_page.asp?pageid=82.

as the Expo Skytrain line) and provide recommendations to the City of Vancouver on its 10 year transportation plans. However, these committees tended to be short term- with a duration of six months to a year. After carefully reviewing plans and hearing from planning officials, the committees, with approval from the Board's executive would issue a report for to governmental agency responsible, detailing the Board of Trade's position. An example the work done by this committee includes the recent review and recommendations on the City of Vancouver's proposals for a new Downtown Transportation Plan.²⁶⁹ The Urban Transportation Committee expressed concerns over the increasing preference of city planners to treat the area as a residential enclave, "focus(sing) on the residential and recreational aspects of downtown, placing little emphasis on business activity."²⁷⁰

With respect to regional transportation policy, the Vancouver Board of Trade became involved after seeing a void in TransLink's strategic vision for transportation in the region with regards to commercial goods movement.²⁷¹ Working lockstep with the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, the VBT came out in favour with the GVGC proposal for a Major Commercial Transportation Network based on the Council's Vision for the Future proposals. The Board of Trade assembled what is called the Regional Transportation Taskforce, which consisted of a 'senior level group' of representatives from the province and federal governments, Chambers of Commerce, the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council and VBT staff.²⁷² The Task Force was charged originally with examining the challenges and promises of Vancouver as a transportation gateway, obtaining quantitative information on the costs of congestion with respect to commercial trade, and to identify new, innovative, and potentially rewarding solutions to transportation requirements to support the GVGC's gateway strategy.²⁷³

Liking what was proposed under the Gateway Council's infrastructure proposals, the VBT assumed the role of promoting the GVGC's infrastructure projects and policies within the

²⁶⁹ The Downtown transportation plan was put forward by City of Vancouver staff as a means to address significant upcoming transportation issues such as downtown streetcars, bus and rapid transit, cycling and walking, and commercial goods movement. The plan attempted to balance the demands of the increasing residential population on the Burrard Peninsula, with the real circumstances that economic health of the city is predicated on an accessible transportation plan. See City of Vancouver, Final Draft: Downtown Transportation Plan, (Vancouver: City of Vancouver), <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/dtp/>.

²⁷⁰ Vancouver Board of Trade, Response on the Proposed Recommendations of the Draft Downtown Vancouver Transportation Plan, March 6, 2002, (Vancouver: Vancouver Board of Trade, 2002), 2. <http://www.boardoftrade.com/policy/reports/2002mar06DowntownTransp.pdf>.

²⁷¹ Dave Park, Chief Economist, Vancouver Board of Trade, Personal Communication, May 17, 2002.

²⁷² Vancouver Board of Trade, Regional Transportation Task Force: New Terms of Reference, (Vancouver: Vancouver Board of Trade, 2000), 3.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

community. In May 2000, the regional transportation taskforce released its report on commercial transportation in the region. Like the Gateway Council, the Board of Trade called on TransLink (which by then was well into developing the region's Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005²⁷⁴) to consider a more "balanced, open process to deal with all of the transportation challenges facing Greater Vancouver."²⁷⁵ The Regional Transportation Task Force stated that it "supports increasing public transit," but under the auspices "that this will only partly remedy the impact which inadequate transportation co-ordination and infrastructure is having on the region's economy."²⁷⁶ Hence, in May 2000, the Board of Trade was initially, albeit marginally in favour with the actions of TransLink, and suggested that there should be a reassessment as to how budgets are allocated between road and transit infrastructure. However, it remained behind the scenes with respect to the actual development, planning and funding of the Major Commercial Road Network.

The Vancouver Board of Trade's role in shaping and articulating alternative transportation agenda came to the forefront following the collapse of the transportation vehicle levy which would have provided TransLink with an estimated \$100 million in revenues per year. While the Board of Trade was publicly neutral during the 22 month time period from when the vehicle levy was first proposed (March 8, 1999)²⁷⁷ until the final votes of approval by TransLink (November 22, 2000)²⁷⁸ and the GVRD, (December 1, 2000)²⁷⁹ and its ultimate collapse when the Province refused to collect the vehicle levy through ICBC on behalf of the transportation agency (January 21, 2001),²⁸⁰ it expressed major concerns over TransLink's priorities and governance structure during TransLink stage in collecting secured funding.

When TransLink announced on September 8, 2001 that it was seeking additional revenues through a combination of higher transit fares and increased fuel and property taxes, the VBT's regional transportation taskforce mobilized action for a new direction for TransLink. The Board of Trade agreed with TransLink that it would support increasing fares and taxes, as long as the direction of TransLink paid greater attention to the road network. The VBT, taking a lead

²⁷⁴ TransLink, TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan, 2000-2005, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000).

²⁷⁵ Vancouver Board of Trade, Report of the Regional Transportation Task Force, (Vancouver: Vancouver Board of Trade, 2000), http://boardoftrade.com/vbot_page.asp?pageid=163.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Brian Morton, "Transit body endorses new levies on vehicles," Vancouver Sun, 09-Mar-1999, A03.

²⁷⁸ Scott Simpson, "Vehicle levy of up to \$120 okayed by TransLink board," Vancouver Sun, 23-Nov-2000, B01.

²⁷⁹ Glen Bohn, "It's official," Vancouver Sun, 02-Dec-2000, A01.

²⁸⁰ Chad Skelton, "TransLink vehicle levy good as dead," Vancouver Sun, 22-Jan-2001.

from the public's dissatisfaction with vehicle levy, stated publicly that TransLink was "too preoccupied with transit," and that

Dedicated financing and capital expenditure commitments must be part of any solution to the TransLink financial problem. The financial concentration of TransLink on transit must be relaxed to allow a reasonable level for road improvements, without the risk of that funding being diverted to transit purposes.²⁸¹

On September 26, 2001, the Board of Trade held a policy forum entitled "Regional Transportation: Gridlock or What?" The meeting, attended by major officials from Transport Canada, the Province, TransLink, and the GVRD, provided a public platform for the Gateway Council to reiterate its demands for a comprehensive commercial road network. However, also presenting at the morning meeting was the new CEO of TransLink, Pat Jacobsen, who chose this forum to announce TransLink's shift in focus towards road infrastructure. Jacobsen detailed six major road projects that TransLink was scheduling develop in conjunction with the affected municipalities, despite being in a financial conundrum.²⁸² While Jacobsen's chosen venue for making this announcement is largely symbolic, it did confer a sense of legitimacy that road spending in the region did need to increase in order to ensure the economic viability of the region.

Following the adoption of the increases in fares and taxation on November 23, 2001, the VBT continued to lobby TransLink with respect to altering its governance structure. On February 4, 2002, the Regional Transportation Taskforce released its report on TransLink governance structure. Stating that TransLink board was "preoccupied with transit," resulting from "a group of local politicians who do not have direct accountability to the public for the activities of the organization,"²⁸³ the VBT recommended that TransLink adopt a governance structure that incorporated 'substantial' board representation from key stakeholders, some, but limited

²⁸¹ Vancouver Board of Trade, Report Concerning TransLink Financial Shortfalls and Potential Solutions, (Vancouver: Vancouver Board of Trade, September 20, 2001), 5.

²⁸² The September 8, 2001 announcement stated that TransLink was facing a \$40 to \$50 million deficit if it could not find additional funding for the transportation authority. In the initial public information bulletin, which ran in community newspapers as well as the Vancouver Sun and The Province on September 8, TransLink indicated that indicating that should the public accept Choice 2 (that is increases in transit fares, gasoline and property taxes), TransLink would commit to doubling the funding of the major road network to \$18 million and increasing major capital expenditures from \$17.5 million to \$35 million. To be included with these projects are the completion of the North Fraser Perimeter Road, River Road, 16th Avenue, Columbia Street, and the Fraser River Crossing. Source TransLink, "It's time choose" Newspaper Insert-Vancouver Sun, (Burnaby: TransLink, September 8, 2001); Pat Jacobsen, CEO of TransLink, Recommended MCTS Roads and 2002 Potential MRN Roads, Presentation to the Vancouver Board of Trade, (Vancouver: September 26, 2002.)

http://boardoftrade.com/events/presentations/Jacobsen_26sep01.ppt

²⁸³ Vancouver Board of Trade, The Governance of TransLink, (Vancouver: Vancouver Board of Trade, 2002). http://www.boardoftrade.com/vbot_page.asp?pageid=526.

representation from elected officials from the GVRD, as well as representatives from the province and the federal governments.²⁸⁴ While not stated in the report on governance, the VBT advocates a governance model which would see the TransLink board be depoliticised, essentially removing the public's ability to even indirectly elect representatives onto the Board. Instead, the VBT recommended that the transportation system be run along the lines of the Vancouver Port Authority or the Vancouver Airport Authority, where key stakeholders decide how to best manage the system. However, unlike an airport or seaport, which are essentially private good managed to benefit private corporate interests, a transit and transportation network are essentially public goods, requiring an appropriate level of control over use, access, and construction. Under the Port Authority models suggested by the VBT, there is little if any means of substantial direct or indirect control available to the general public.

Resources

The primary resource available to the Board of Trade is its perceived political legitimacy within the community. It is a large organization, with 1,500 corporate and 4,500 individual members. Policy for the board is developed by the membership of the Board in various committees and task forces, then vetted through the executive committee before becoming board policy. Because it is a member driven organization, the policy developed reflects the real concerns of the business community. Its legitimacy as a critic to government policies, from a business perspective, has been bolstered in recent years by its work on federal and provincial budgets, health and early child-hood education programs as well as the *Spirit of Vancouver* campaign.

Organization is another key resource variable that the VBT has at its disposal. The Board has a consistent and active membership base willing to sit on committees and meet on a monthly basis to discuss specific policy issues. Because of the relative stability of the mandate of these committees and the length of service provided by members, the committees are able to request key bureaucrats at the local and regional level to attend the committee meetings and discuss ongoing transportation planning programs.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ With respect to stakeholders, the VBT went as far as listing who they felt were key stakeholders, with heavy emphasis on allied associations: BEST (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation), the British Columbia Automobile Association, the British Columbia Trucking Association, the Lower Mainland Regional Chambers of Commerce Transportation Planning Panel, The Vancouver Board of Trade and the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council. With respect to the GVRD, the VBT recommended elected members be included on the TransLink board, but that their numbers "should not be so large as to control the board." Ibid.

²⁸⁵ For example, the Urban Transportation Taskforce, during the development of the Downtown Transportation plan, were able to invite the key planners involved in the formation of the plan to discuss what elements were up for negotiation before the plan was released to the public. This exchange of ideas regarding the plan allowed the planners

Because of its ongoing ties to the local community, the VBT is one of the few organizations with respect to transportation that is consulted during the planning stages of major projects. For example, following the resignation of Ken Dobell as CEO of TransLink in January 2001, the Board of Trade was asked to sit on a TransLink committee to select the new CEO (Pat Jacobsen).²⁸⁶ It also has an appointed spot reserved on the infrequently used Public Advisory Committee established by TransLink.²⁸⁷ Additionally, with respect to organizational capacity, the VBT can organize well attended 'policy forums,' which give invited stakeholders a platform for publicly expressing their ideas. With respect to regional transportation, the Board of Trade has held two such forums, in which TransLink representatives were given prominence to promote positions favourable to the business community, and in turn, groups such as the Gateway Council and the Chair of the Richmond/Vancouver Rapid Transit Committee can express their infrastructure wants and desires.²⁸⁸

Summary: The Vancouver Board of Trade as an Urban Regimist

Based on the resources and motivation criteria, the Vancouver Board of Trade, as an outside actor should be classified as an urban regimist. The Board has adequate resources at its disposal to develop and promote alternative policy positions to both the inside actors and to the public as a whole. However, its motivation for doing so, has less to do with a specific policy issue, rather than asserting itself as an institutional insider. In explicitly spelling out its ambitious desire to become institutionalized as a core actor solidifies this position.

This, of course, should not be unexpected. Urban regime theory, by definition "assumes that the effectiveness of a local government depends greatly on the cooperation of nongovernmental actors and the combination of state capacity with nongovernmental resources."²⁸⁹ I argue that regional government structures when subjected to a politically charged subject such as regional transportation are also at the whims of urban capital holders. What the

to consider the VBT's concerns while giving the VBT a heads up as to the direction the planners were likely to present to council. Personal observation made as member of the Urban Transportation Taskforce, 2001-2002.

²⁸⁶ Scott Simpson, "New transit boss vows to win over the public," Vancouver Sun, April 21, 2001. B5.

²⁸⁷ One of the reasons given for the Board of Trade's public persona has escalated because of the failure of the Public Advisory Committee to adequately address VBT regional transportation concerns. Without this 'insider' mechanism, the Board of Trade argues that it necessarily needed to work outside of the institutional framework in order for its concerns to be heard at the Board level. Dave Park, Chief Economist, Vancouver Board of Trade, Personal Communication, May 17, 2002.

²⁸⁸ See, for example, Jane Bird, Project Manager-Vancouver/Richmond Rapid Transit, Vancouver / Richmond Rapid Transit. Presentation to the Vancouver Board of Trade, April 18, 2002. <http://boardoftrade.com/events/presentations/Bird18apr02.ppt>

²⁸⁹ Clarence Stone, "Urban regimes and the capacity to govern: a political economy approach." *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 15 (1) (1993), 6.

Vancouver Board of Trade is attempting to do by actively articulating alternative positions on capital expenditures and on governance is to set the stage for greater involvement from the institutional core. By promoting a governance structure in which their position is solidified as a primary actor, the Vancouver Board of Trade is stating publicly that any changes to the governance regime must include VBT representation. By including VBT in agenda-setting exercises, the Board is attempting to become a catalyst for change rather than a reactionary entity.

British Columbia Automobile Association and British Columbia Trucking Association: Specialist Outsiders

Background

The British Columbia Automobile Association has been in existence for 95 years. The organization is best known for its roadside assistance programs, travel and insurance services. BCAA is a not-for profit member services organization with more than 715,000 members in British Columbia and the Yukon, and is funded by annual membership dues as well as net revenues from its subsidiary organizations.²⁹⁰

With respect to its role as an articulator of transportation policy positions, BCAA opened its government affairs office in Victoria in 1989. The mandate for governmental affairs branch was driven by the longstanding purpose of the association to represent the interests of vehicle owners and drivers. To this end, the purpose of the governmental affairs was:

- 1.) To protect the interests of motorists generally...
- 2.) To promote rational legislation governing the use of motor vehicles...
- 3.) To assist in and encourage the maintenance of good highways throughout B.C., and
- 4.) To educate the users of motor vehicles and the public at large in the principles of traffic safety.²⁹¹

In 2001, BCAA decided to amalgamate Government Affairs with Corporate Communications and relocate the function to Burnaby. This decision was motivated in part by the retirements this spring of BCAA's previous government affairs director, John Ratel, and his assistant, Annlyn Lambrick. Since May 1, government affairs has been fully integrated into the Corporate Communications branch.²⁹² This unit, ironically is run by Trace Acres, a former media spokesman for BC Transit during its turnover to TransLink in Vancouver.

The British Columbia Trucking Association is a province-wide, non-profit, motor carrier association formed solely to advance the interests of British Columbia motor carriers. Founded in 1913, BCTA members include for-hire and private carriers hauling every conceivable type of

²⁹⁰ BCAA, [Membership-About BCAA](http://www.bcaa.com/member/member_aboutb.html), http://www.bcaa.com/member/member_aboutb.html.

²⁹¹ Email Communication with Trace Acres, Director, Corporate Communications, BCAA. May 9, 2002.

²⁹² Ibid.

freight including manufactured goods, heavy specialized commodities, bulk products, household goods and general freight. In total, the BCTA represents 700 corporate members, representing 12,000 vehicles and employs approximately 16,000 people.²⁹³ Its mission, with respect to transportation policy is to “promote a prosperous, safe, efficient and responsible commercial road transportation industry which contributes to the economy of British Columbia.”²⁹⁴

Policy Positions and Motivations for Action

BCAA and the BCTA became involved transportation policy in response to two controversial plans for transportation revenue generation. While both BCTA and BCAA were in favour of the creation of the regional transportation agency, the organizations quickly became disgruntled with respect to its perceived bias towards public transit over “infrastructure requirements for car and truck traffic in the region.”²⁹⁵ Both organizations cited while that the proposed vehicle levy would raise \$450 million, the approximate ten percent expenditures on roads would not nearly be sufficient enough to meet the needs of an anticipated \$530 million road infrastructure deficit over the next five year (2000-2005). Additionally, the BCTA argued that the major road investments planned (a Fraser River crossing and the South Perimeter road) would likely be completed by tolls paid, hence, vehicle levy money would not be invested in those facilities.²⁹⁶ Thus, while considerable money was being invested in transit, with only an anticipated marginal improvement usage from eleven percent to 12.5 percent, both the BCTA and BCAA argued that TransLink was “promoting additional congestion to encourage miniscule transit growth.”²⁹⁷ Based on the “obvious imbalance between planned transit investment vs. possible spending for roads and bridges,”²⁹⁸ BCAA called for an immediate halt of TransLink’s 2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan.

The second area of consternation between BCAA, BCTA and TransLink was over the escalation of an additional two cents per litre gasoline tax that followed the failure to implement the vehicle. Both BCAA and BCTA presented positions to the public that additional motor fuel taxes were unacceptable, given that all level of governments already collect more than \$600

²⁹³ British Columbia Trucking Association, *About BCTA*, <http://www.bctrucking.com/corporate.html>.

²⁹⁴ British Columbia Trucking Association, *Mission and Vision*, <http://www.bctrucking.com/mission.html>.

²⁹⁵ Trace Acres, Director Corporate Communication, British Columbia Automobile Association, Personal Communication, May 9, 2000.

²⁹⁶ BC Trucking Association, “TransLink vehicle levy ‘unacceptable,’ says BCTA,” November 20, 2000. <http://www.bctrucking.com/cgi-bin/press.cgi?n=001123>.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ John Ratel, as quoted on Canada Newswire, “BCAA calls for halt of TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan,” December 28, 2000, <http://www.bcaa.com/advoca/newsrelease/00transpl.html>.

million in gas taxes from the region each year. Instead of raising taxes, BCAA and BCTA recommended that TransLink should more aggressively seek a return of the \$350 to \$400 million gasoline taxes collected each year by the federal government.²⁹⁹

Resources

Like the Vancouver Board of Trade and the Gateway Council, the BCTA and BCAA represent large membership driven constituencies. However, their involvement in setting transportation policy in the GVRD focuses on representing particular interests of their members; namely increased expenditures on road infrastructure. Unlike the Vancouver Board of Trade or the Gateway Council, the members of BCAA and BCTA are not particularly concerned if transit investments have to be reduced in order to build greater capacity. BCTA and BCAA reject the premise that the region must increase congestion levels in order to encourage transit ridership—thereby justifying TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan mix of transit and roads investments. BCAA and BCTA argue that marginal improvements in proposed transit ridership do not offset the huge economic toll on the region that increased congestion will cause. The BCTA estimates that already, congestion in the region costs its members \$500 million per year in downtime.³⁰⁰

The primary mechanism used by these organizations to shape transportation policy debates in the region is through media releases. During the vehicle levy debate, representatives of both BCAA and BCTA actively issued press releases to both major and local newspapers promoting the GVRD electorate to reject the vehicle levy. BCAA in particular, developed an online petition urging residents opposed to the vehicle levy to register their complaints. This petition, which received a good deal of local media play, recorded 27,732 signatures against the vehicle levy and increases to regional gasoline tax, over a two and a half month period.³⁰¹

In order to mobilize support against the vehicle levy, the policy directors (John Ratel, BCAA and Paul Landry BCTA) made several public statements encouraging the public to voice concerns to their elected officials. During the months leading up to the decision on the vehicle

²⁹⁹ The estimate comes from TransLink, “Public wants federal gas tax money for transportation improvements – failing that, a “green” vehicle levy to fund TransLink plan,” TransLink Press Release, October 11, 2000. http://www.translink.bc.ca/Whats_New/News_Releases/Archives/00_oct11.asp.

³⁰⁰ As an interesting aside, the \$500 million in ‘congestion costs,’ was first released by the BC Trucking Association in 2000. The figure is an estimate based on the information provided to TransLink’s 1999 Lower Mainland Truck Freight Study (Burnaby: TransLink, 2000), but the methodology used to develop the remains a mystery. Accordingly, there no mechanism available to test the validity of the BCTA’s claim. This, however, has not stopped both the CEO of TransLink as well as the federal minister of Transportation to repeat this figure in public as a reliable source. See Pat Jacobsen, Remarks to the Greater Vancouver Regional District Councils, (September 8, 2001); David Collenette, “A transportation blueprint for the next decade and beyond,” Speaking Notes for Minister of Transport David Collenette to the Vancouver Board of Trade, April 11, 2001. <http://www.tc.gc.ca/mediaroom/speeches/2001/20010411blueprint.htm>.

³⁰¹ BCAA, “BCAA presents results of anti-vehicle levy petition campaign,” Press Release, October 4, 2000. <http://www.bcaa.com/advoca/newsrelease/00petition.html>.

levy, (March 1, 2000 to November 21, 2000) BCAA officials wrote or were sourced for comment in major newspapers 17 times, asked for comment on major news radio 8 times, and appeared on television 10 times to discuss the 'transportation funding issues.'³⁰² BCTA officials were sourced for comment in major newspapers three times, major radio stations 7 times, and on television twice.³⁰³ This extensive coverage conveys legitimacy upon the actors, despite being unelected and actually representing the narrow interests of specific segments in society.

Following the adoption and subsequent rejection of the vehicle levy by the provincial government, both BCAA and BCTA have retreated to the background with respect to transportation planning in Greater Vancouver. While both organizations publicly remain against increases in the gasoline taxes,³⁰⁴ they perceive the current board and bureaucracy of TransLink as being receptive to their proposals to increase spending on road infrastructure. Both organizations prefer to work behind the scenes promoting specific infrastructure priorities such as the completion of the South Fraser Perimeter Road and the construction of a bridge to replace the Albion Ferry.³⁰⁵ Both organizations have been identified by TransLink as being 'must consult' organizations before major projects and budgets proceed. However, unlike the Vancouver Board of Trade, both BCAA and BCTA appear to remain relative outsiders in transportation policy development; become involved only to voice concern of commuters and truck traffic in the region. BCAA for example, is proud of its "close, consultative relationship with TransLink, and hopes to be able to play a constructive role in planning and funding discussions,"³⁰⁶ but does not

³⁰² This information was collected using the Province of British Columbia's news monitoring service Today's News Online. TNO monitors all media reports on issues affecting British Columbia's on all major media sources. Information was found by using a search engine and typing in the words BCAA and levy or transportation. Articles were then checked by the author to determine whether a BCAA representative actively promoted a position regarding the vehicle levy. A BCAA-identified official was sourced 6 times by the Vancouver Sun (including one editorials written by BCAA staff [March 29, 2000]), 11 times in the The Province, (including three editorials written by BCAA staff [July 28, September 15, and November 3, 2000]). With respect to radio commentary, BCAA representatives were quoted on CKNW's newscasts 5 times, and on CBC Radio 3 times. In terms of television news commentary, BCAA quoted on BCTV (twice), CKVU (4 times), and CIVT (4 times).

³⁰³ Same methodology used as above. A BCTA official (Paul Landry, President of the BCTA) was sourced once in the Vancouver Sun and four times in the The Province. With respect to radio news, the BCTA was sourced four times on CKNW, twice on CBC Radio, as well as ½ hour interview with Rafe Mair on CKNW (Sept. 27, 2000). In television news commentary, Paul Landry appeared only once on BCTV to discuss the vehicle levy.

³⁰⁴ British Columbia Automobile Association, "Vancouver region pump prices to rise April 1 with addition of two cents for TransLink," March 28, 2002, <http://www.bcaa.com/advoca/newsrelease/02fueltax.html>.

³⁰⁵ For example, the BC Trucking Association members were invited to participate in a question and answer forum in which TransLink presented information on the construction of the Albion/Fraser River Bridge. See TransLink (Karyo Communications), Summary Report Fraser River Crossing Consultation Process: December 2001 – March 2002, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2002), Appendix 2.

³⁰⁶ Trace Acres, Director Corporate Communication, British Columbia Automobile Association, Personal Communication, May 9, 2000.

desire to be involved in the day to day operations of regional transit and transportation governance. Instead, both organizations will continue to represent the interests of the paying members and their desires for improved roadway capacity in the region.

Summary

Both the British Columbia Automobile Association and the British Columbia Trucking Association may be considered as specialist outsiders, based on the framework given in the previous chapter. When faced with transportation policy agenda that, from their organizational perspective, was explicitly biased in favour transit over roads, sought to mobilize the public against TransLink's vehicle levy funding option. BCAA's very public campaign against the vehicle levy effectively mobilized a large segment of the commuting public within the region against the proposal. By driving home the message that the vehicle levy would only yield marginal improvements in the transit system while worsening congestion for day-to-day commuters, BCAA was able to cultivate a large, coordinated opposition against the vehicle levy. In doing so, BCAA publicly polarized the transportation debate between suburban, car dependent individuals, and transit reliant, urban neighbourhoods. While the vehicle levy was passed by both the TransLink and GVRD Board's, (based on a urban/suburban split), BCAA's petition was cited as an indication of a lack of public support within the region; thus, grounds for the Provincial government to refuse to collect the toll through ICBC.³⁰⁷ BCTA's opposition, while less public orientated, nonetheless was also effective in presenting a united voice for motor carriers against the vehicle levy. The decision to exploit an arena outside the formal institutional venue in this case proved highly successful.

These organizations, however, represent specialist outsiders because of their unwillingness to become involved in the complete management of the transportation system. Both organizations have at their disposal the resources (media support, recognition of political legitimacy, capital holders within society) necessary to make policy impacting directly upon their membership base, but are content to remain on the sidelines with respect to the day to day management of the transportation system. Thus, their mobilization and response to transportation policy is contingent upon specific issue areas: the budgeting balance between transit and road construction, lobbying for additional transportation dollars from the federal government, and the planning and construction of specific highway projects.

³⁰⁷ Chad Skelton, "With demise of transit levy, TransLink deciding what to cut," *Vancouver Sun*, 23-Jan-01, B03. Then minister responsible for TransLink, Mike Farnsworth stated: "There's no support for it -- not from the public, not from their own board members," said Farnsworth, who is the minister for social development and economic security. "The public has said loud and clear they don't want it."

BEST: Pluralist stakeholder-alternative venues

Background

Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, or BEST, was founded in 1991 as an organization of Vancouver area cyclists dedicated to improve cycling facilities in Vancouver. Started as a small *ad hoc*, volunteer cycling committee, BEST has consistently expanded from a narrowly-based cycling advocacy coalition, to a major alternative transportation actor in Vancouver. BEST's transportation advocacy expansion has been due in large part from funding it receives for developing alternative transportation plans for municipal, provincial and regional governments. Presently, BEST operates an office in downtown Vancouver with 14 paid staff and 'around a thousand' dues paying members.³⁰⁸ Its present mandate goes well beyond cycling; focusing on multi-level transportation planning in order "make our communities healthier places to live by promoting sustainable transportation, and land-use planning, and pedestrian, cycling, and transit oriented neighbourhoods."³⁰⁹

BEST's operations are divided into three distinct areas: transportation demand management, local and regional cycling development, and alternative transportation advocacy and policy development. In terms of transportation demand management, BEST has received since 1996, annual grants from both BC Transit and later TransLink, to develop ways of reducing regional commuting trips. Under the Go Green banner, BEST has developed for TransLink information for public distribution (web site, pamphlets) on alternatives to automobile commuting. In addition, Go Green has developed a program that trains interested employees in medium and large sized corporations to act as Go Green coordinators. These coordinators, with technical support from BEST, are provided with tools to develop workplace trip strategies such as conducting surveys, presentations to management, developing trip reduction plans, and assisting in implementation of programs.

In terms of local and regional cycling development, BEST actively promotes cycling options for commuters. It has, with some success, lobbied TransLink to equip the bus fleet in the GVRD with bicycle racks, bike lockers at major transit hubs, as well as permitting bicycles on board Skytrain in non-peak hours. However, BEST's greatest success in terms of cycling has been with persistent lobbying of the City of Vancouver for better cycling facilities. It is cited by the Vancouver as being a major contributor to the development of the city's 1999 Bicycle Plan:

³⁰⁸ Ray Staatsma, Communications and Campaign Coordinator, BEST. Personal Communication. (May 17, 2002). Membership fees are \$120 per year and as BEST is non-profit organization are tax deductible.

³⁰⁹ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, Mission Statement, <http://www.best.bc.ca/profile/index.html>.

Reviewing the Past, Planning the Future³¹⁰ as well as persistent lobbyist for improved cycling infrastructure (bike lanes and bike routes) within the Vancouver's transportation plan.³¹¹

BEST main focus with respect to cycling in the GVRD is the development of the Central Valley Greenway project, which would provide cyclists and pedestrians a relatively unobstructed 20 km transportation corridor from False Creek to New Westminster. The route would consist of bike paths adjacent to major east west-streets, below Skytrain rights-of way, and through parks and underutilized industrial lands. BEST is acting as the lead coordinating agency in the project, after receiving a one million dollar grant from VanCity community development award.³¹² The grant affords BEST the opportunity to coordinate public meetings, do design work, and leverage additional funds and land grants from corporations, governments and volunteer organizations. The estimated completed cost of the Greenway is ranges from \$8-12 million, and is highly dependent upon support from the four partner municipalities: Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, and Coquitlam. While each of these municipalities has committed to protecting and developing at least portions of the greenway, the complete integration of the envisioned greenway is still far from certain as portions of the greenway (such as the False Creek Flats section) is largely dependant upon private sector buy-in in terms of right-of way usage or buy-outs.³¹³

While BEST remains active in terms of cycling advocacy, the organization finds itself less involved with respect to the day to day cycling programs within the community. Organizations such as the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition has recently formed to become the primary voice for cycling-specific activities in the region. The purpose of this organization (of which BEST is a founding partner) is to specifically promote "cycling as integral part of the transportation culture."³¹⁴ BEST, in turn, has instead focused on developing integrated alternative transportation options within the region.

³¹⁰ City of Vancouver, 1999 Bicycle Plan: Reviewing the Past, Planning the Future, (Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 1999), 3. Available at <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/1999plan.htm>

³¹¹ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, "New surveys show support for downtown cycling lanes," Press Release, June 3, 2002.

³¹² VanCity, "Lower Mainland Greenway Project First Recipient of \$1-Million VanCity Award," VanCity Press Release, November 15, 2001, http://www.best.bc.ca/Central_Valley_Greenway/vancitypr.htm

³¹³ The False Creek Flats section was recently transferred from the Finning Corporation to a consortium of Universities and Colleges in Vancouver, including UBC, SFU, Emily Carr, and BCIT. Following the transfer of this land, the City of Vancouver has attempted to rezone the land in this area, and the status of the Greenway through this section remains unclear. See Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, Central Valley Greenway-False Creeks Flats, <http://www.vacc.bc.ca/centralvalley/>.

³¹⁴ Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, Mission Statement, <http://www.vacc.bc.ca/corporate/index.htm> (May 31, 2002).

Policy Positions and Motivations for Action

The third area in which BEST is actively engaged is in regional alternative transportation policy development. BEST's interest in the field emerged during the debate over TransLink's proposal for the vehicle levy in 2000. BEST perceives its involvement out of necessity: the failure to adopt the vehicle levy would serve to exasperate the divide between the planned transportation improvements under the Strategic Transportation Plan, and what was being implemented on the ground. However, when scanning the political environment, BEST saw that no organizations (including the GVRD and TransLink) were actively communicating on behalf of either transit users or the transportation plan itself.³¹⁵ Thus, while not completely agreeing with TransLink's proposals under the Strategic Transportation Plan, the alternative of cutting services which provide alternatives to single occupant automobile were less than tenable.

BEST's involvement in regional transportation policy was precipitated by TransLink's inability to expand funding for transit services in the region through the implementation of the vehicle levy. BEST predicates its involvement based on the following transportation ideals.

1. The LRSP and the Strategic Transportation Plan calls for increasing transportation and transit options, while not perfect, are realistic plans for coping with increasing pressures placed upon the local transportation infrastructure
2. That, based on the STP, transit users in good accepted substantial fare increases, in return for transit improvements outlined under STP.
3. That, based on the recommendations under the STP, motorists would be subject to financial disincentives to drive, such as increases in licensing, parking and commuting costs (tolls). The revenues collected from these programs would assist in funding both better transit and road infrastructure, while providing a cost incentive switch to transit.³¹⁶

BEST's position during the debate was that levy proposal was 'flawed but necessary as a means to send an important market signal to motorists.'³¹⁷ Without such revenue generating disincentives, maintenance and expansion of the transit system would not occur, while single occupant vehicle commuters would continue to proliferate, as TransLink was committed to maintaining upgrades to regional road network.

³¹⁵ Ray Staatsma, Communications and Campaign Coordinator, BEST. Personal Communication. (May 17, 2002).

³¹⁶ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, Making Better Choices: Moving Forward on Regional Transportation, (Vancouver: BEST, 2001), 5. Available online at http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/position_paper_oct01.pdf.

³¹⁷ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, "December 2000: Vehicle Levy Update: An imperfect but necessary vehicle levy," Press Release, December 2000. http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/position_paper_dec15.htm. See also Chad Skelton, "With demise of transit levy, TransLink deciding what to cut," Vancouver Sun, 23-Jan-01, B03.

It is important to note that BEST entered into the transportation debate not as a 'pro-transit/anti-road lobbyist,' as some commentators have indicated,³¹⁸ but rather to articulate that TransLink was pursuing policies that would ultimately result in neither the transit system nor roads infrastructure being adequately funded. With respect to spending TransLink dollars on roads, BEST has consistently stated that:

BEST is not opposed to road investment per se... We have spent many decades and countless dollars developing an automobile-oriented region. There continue to be significant expenditures at the municipal, regional and provincial levels. Our road network certainly may require 'maintenance' funding and strategic capital investment – TransLink has demonstrated those commitments through road project partnerships with other levels of governments. (However), In our view, TransLink is clearly moving away from the transit priorities clearly outlined in the Strategic Transportation Plan. The STP's emphasis on public transit and other sustainable modes, such as cycling, had wide public support. Those efforts should not be abandoned.³¹⁹

BEST took the position that while the collection of the levy would be politically unpopular, it was necessary in terms of fairness (in that transit fares had already increased in conjunction with TransLink's 2000-2005 Strategic Transportation Plan), and for achieving the overall goals of increased transit usage, reduced road congestion, and improving regional air quality.³²⁰ BEST correctly identified that should the vehicle levy fail, transit users should expect to pay more while at the same time having transit services such as late night bus service scaled back and outright service cuts to highly subsidised routes.³²¹

Building upon its involvement from the vehicle levy debate, and its apparent success in providing an opposing viewpoint to groups such as the Vancouver Board of Trade and BCAA, BEST advocacy for transit users carried over into a critique of TransLink's subsequent policies. BEST issued press releases condoning TransLink's four percent cut in transit services and encourage the public to voice dissatisfaction with TransLink's decision.³²² Additionally, BEST has spoken out against a TransLink decision to further study the Vancouver/Airport/Richmond

³¹⁸ See, for example Editorial, "Give BEST a rest," The Province, 07-Nov-2000, A22. Damian Inwood and Frank Luba, "Gateway for Goods," The Province, 16-Oct-2001,

³¹⁹ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, Making Better Choices: Moving Forward on Regional Transportation, (Vancouver: BEST, 2001), 5. Available online at http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/position_paper_oct01.pdf.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, "Political Gridlock puts transit 'plan' in reverse, says transit advocates," Press Release, 15-Feb-2001. http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/pr_feb15_01.htm. ---. "TransLink's bus cuts signal serious transportation crisis in the Lower Mainland," Press Release, 15-Mar-2001. http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/pr_mar15_01.htm.

Rapid Transit line without public consultation, given the financial shortcomings of TransLink, and that a Richmond line is a second tier priority in terms of rapid transit proposals.³²³

However, BEST's most valuable contribution to regional transportation policy development occurred during TransLink's "Transportation Choices" campaign. Whereas TransLink established that given the failure of the vehicle levy, taxpayers in the region could expect a dichotomous choice between cuts in services or modest improvements in both roads and transit infrastructure, BEST published a report as to how TransLink could generate enough revenue to support the Strategic Transportation Plan, without relying on the dreaded vehicle levy. BEST put forward three alternative proposals for additional transportation funding that would not result in additional transit fare increases. The proposal, like TransLink's proposal would see revenues generated from mixed sources: increases in property and gasoline taxes, as well as the previously implemented transit fare increase in 2001. However, instead of an additional fare increase of \$0.50, BEST argued that same of level of revenue generated by increased fares could be accomplished through a combination of an increase parking sales tax, and a marginal property tax increase of an \$33.00 per household, up from TransLink's proposal of \$22.00. By using these mechanisms, the Strategic Transport Plan's recommendations for a more market based approach to motor vehicle costs would be obtained, while encouraging greater growth in both transit service and road infrastructure improvements.³²⁴ Despite these realistic and tangible alternatives, and that 53 percent of respondents to a TransLink sponsored survey objected to the fact that only two possible alternatives were available for funding,³²⁵ the alternative funding proposals put forward by BEST fell on deaf ears at the TransLink Board. TransLink decided to alleviate its short term funding woes through a combination of increased transit fares, gasoline and property taxes under Choice 2.

³²³ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, "TransLink's Latest Plans for Richmond Rapid Transit Ignore High Potential Costs to Taxpayers and Lack Public Input," Press Release, 18-Apr-2001, http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/pr_april18_01.htm.

³²⁴ Better Environmentally Sound Transportation, Making Better Choices: Moving Forward on Regional Transportation, (Vancouver: BEST, 2001). Available online at http://www.best.bc.ca/hottopics/position_paper_oct01.pdf.

³²⁵ Leading up to the decision on the 'Choices' funding debate, TransLink commissioned a Ipsos-Reid poll on both the funding options provided by TransLink, as well as public perception poll on how impressions of TransLink. When asked the question: "Overall are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the two choices provided by TransLink?" 53 percent of respondents were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the options. When asked why they dissatisfied, 36 percent stated that there should be a '3rd option' available for funding. However, when asked about what the third option should be, no consensus could be obtained. (Responses ranged from more federal funding, improved management, more user fees, or improved management: no mention of BEST's proposal of increased property or parking taxes was inferred.) Source TransLink, TransLink Funding Options: Prepared for Newspaper Groups and TransLink (Vancouver: Ipsos-Reid, 2001). 37. Electronically available at http://www.translink.bc.ca/files/ipsosreid_b.pdf.

Resources

BEST's work in alternative transportation policy development has emerged both out of funding necessity as well as a valid concern for environmentally-positive alternatives to single occupant vehicles. Like the Vancouver Board of Trade, BCAA, and BCTA, BEST is a membership based organization that promotes specific policy options that have been vetted by their Board of Directors. The membership assists in providing office space and small policy development staff. However, unlike these organizations, BEST has established itself as the lead agency in Greater Vancouver to provide resources and actual programs for alternative transportation options. Such programs, such as GO GREEN Choices, Bike Month, the Central Valley Greenway project and *offramp*, a high school-focused alternative transportation program are completely sponsored through the use of government and non governmental grants. For example, the offramp program is funded through a two-year, \$98,000 grant from the Government of Canada's Climate Change Action fund, as well as smaller grants from Van City credit union, the North Shore Insurance Brokers, and BC Transit-Victoria. Similarly, the GO GREEN Choices program contracted to BEST by TransLink, with funding coming from federal government, TransLink, and the B.C. Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection.³²⁶

Seeing a niche for an agency to coordinate transportation demand programs, BEST has capitalized on seeking out alternative venues for promoting policy, at least at on a small scale. Agencies such as TransLink, Environment Canada, and the B.C. Ministry of Water, Land, and Air protection realise the need for transportation demand programs, but lack the will or desire to carry out the programs. BEST, in turn provides these agencies with marketable product, while maintaining control over program and policy development as well as staffing. From its position as contractor to these governmental agencies, BEST attempts to both implement alternative transportation options, while at the same time is developing a platform to lobby for greater change. However, despite the valuable role these services play in the community, there exists a tenuous relationship between funding and service delivery. Although BEST has received from TransLink consistent funding for the GOGREEN choices program, there are no guarantees that service will not be contracted out to another organization. While core funding for BEST's program tends to be stable, auxiliary funds for program expansion are more difficult to manage; requiring organizational effort to seek out short-term and typically smaller grants. Given that transportation demand projects require 'a good deal of time to develop partnerships with business

³²⁶ The dollar values for the federal contribution to these programs can be found at Government of Canada, Climate Change Action Fund, Index, http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/english/actions/action_fund/index.shtml. (Accessed May 15, 2002).

and other organizations,' an inconsistent pool of financial resources dramatically impacts BEST's ability to expand and promote their contracted programs.³²⁷ These delivery functions that BEST has taken on over the last eight years provide practical foundation on which it can promote alternative regional transportation policy.

Like BCAA and the BCTA, BEST is heavily reliant on media coverage to promote its message. In 1999, BEST hired Ray Straatsma to serve as BEST's full time communications and campaign coordinator. As communications coordinator, Mr. Straatsma serves as the primary contact for media and public inquiries, and is responsible for communicating BEST policy to public. During the TransLink debates on funding, Mr. Straatsma appeared in media reports as a foil to representatives from BCAA and BCTA. Since the collapse of the levy, Mr. Straatsma has been sought by the media to comment on everything from City of Vancouver's Downtown Transportation Plan, Granville Mall, rapid transit in the Arbutus corridor, Skytrain expansion to Richmond, the regional transit strike, and proposals improvements to cycling infrastructure crossing False Creek.

While positive media coverage is valuable to BEST, it remains active in promoting face to face contact with both local and regional politicians. For example, during the funding debate in November 2001, BEST sponsored a community forum in which its members and interested citizens could discuss with elected and bureaucratic official of TransLink the two funding options. Additionally, BEST recently put on a successful conference which brought together professionals in urban transportation from throughout North America to examine best practices in transportation demand management. Such venues permit BEST to show regional officials that alternative forms of transportation are successful throughout the world, and should be adopted in the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Summary

Based on the framework given in the previous chapter, Better Environmentally Sound Transportation may be classified as a *pluralist stakeholder*. In terms of motivation for actions, it is evident that BEST has clearly staked out a position as an agency that desires involvement in setting transportation policy in the GVRD. While it's motivation for institutionalization may exist as a means to ensure continued funding for alternative transportation programs, BEST sees that such programs are doomed to failure unless they are part of a larger regional transportation plan.

³²⁷ Cheryl Mackniak and Samantha Hartley-Folz, GO GREEN Program Managers, "Go Green Choices – A Regional Employer TDM Program," (Proceedings of Moving Beyond Planning: Implementing Transportation Solutions, Vancouver, March 2002).

BEST's policy positions are not by any means radical. Rather, BEST's involvement is to remind politicians and the community of the larger objectives of TransLink's creation: that is to promote alternative transportation choice to discourage urban sprawl and promote a compact, livable region.

However, BEST's success has been tempered by the actual costs of implementing a diverse transportation system. Despite efforts to extract itself from being a strictly cycling-oriented agency, this image still largely remains in the minds of many.

Initial forays into institutional agenda control: medium-cost substantive instruments

In terms of a strategy for agenda management, it appears the TransLink initially was unprepared to deal with objections raised by outsider organizations. The layout of the Strategic Transportation Plan, emphasised the benefits in terms of transit and road improvements, and minimized the financial mechanisms that would need to be implemented in order to pay for the project. Relying on the past research conducted for *Transport 2021*, TransLink worked under the assumption that the public was prepared to finance large-scale transportation projects transportation pricing and revenue generators such as vehicle charges and tolls. Accordingly, TransLink entered into public consultation without a comprehensive strategy to manage both its institutional members objections (voiced by the suburban mayors) and outside actors such as BCAA, BCTA and the Vancouver Board of Trade.

As opposition to some form of vehicle levy coalesced, TransLink appeared to be caught off guard. TransLink proceeded to adopt a management strategy that sought to deploy 'medium-cost,' substantive instruments in response to alternative agendas promoted by outside actors. Such instruments included discreditation of groups and ideas promoted by BCAA and the BCTA, to symbolic placation of groups such as the Board of Trade and the Gateway Council

Responding to criticism put forward by the British Columbia Automobile Association, the TransLink (and GVRD) Board Chair, George Puil particularly attempted to discredit positions offered by the BCAA with regards to how the vehicle levy would be spent. In an April 5, 2000 opinion column in the Vancouver Sun, Puil writes:

The answers, particularly details about TransLink's proposed operating budgets, have been available to BCAA and the public from the date the plan was release....There is little doubt that the intent of the plan is to put the bus out there rather than build the equivalent amount of road space. It's cheaper, it's less harmful to the environment and it's a better solution.

BCAA failed to note other road investments. In the last 12 months, TransLink has earmarked \$20 million to help municipalities upgrade major roads in the

region and another \$27 million for maintenance and rehabilitation. That's \$47 million invested well before any vehicle charge may come into effect.³²⁸

This kind of discreditation represents a medium cost strategy in two ways. First, by attacking the observations made by an outsider, the TransLink Chair gave tacit recognition to the legitimacy of concerns expressed by BCAA. In drawing to the concerns made by an outsider organization, the Chair invited observers to compare and contrast the two positions presented concerning the vehicle levy. In doing so, the Chair immediately invited the public to pass judgement as to whether the vehicle levy made economic sense in light of their individual situations. Hence, this strategy gave legitimacy to arguments that the vehicle levy did not make financial sense in light of personal contexts. Second, discrediting the proposal made by BCAA represents a medium-cost strategy because it involved resources (time, money and personnel) be devoted to counterarguments rather than promoting a singular vision.

TransLink also deployed the tool of symbolic placation in an attempt to manage the agenda. Following the release of the draft STP, TransLink board members and senior officials travelled extensively around the region promoting the institutional agenda. These officials held information session with every municipal council in the region; held numerous public forums, and attended meetings with interested organizations including the Board of Trade and the Gateway Council. However, despite attending the meetings and 'listening to the public,' not a single recommendation was changed, deleted or added between the draft and final Strategic Transportation Plan.

In terms of rating the success of TransLink in controlling the institutional agenda from outsider meddling, TransLink did succeed in a limited manner. The TransLink Board managed to pass the Strategic Transportation Plan, including a recommendation for a vehicle levy on April 19, 2000.³²⁹ On May 26, 2000, the GVRD passed a motion that would permit Translink to collect and manage revenues collected from vehicle levies. The TransLink Board approved a vehicle levy that would assess charges to vehicles based on a combination of vehicle weight and insurance classification on November 22, 2000,³³⁰ and the GVRD again approved a form of the vehicle levy on December 2, 2000.³³¹

³²⁸ George Puil, "Driving the fine line between road and transit." Vancouver Sun, 05-Apr-2000, A19. This letter was in response to a forum piece published in the Sun by Michele Penz, "BCAA says TransLink is shortchanging motorists," Vancouver Sun, 29-Mar-2000, A23.

³²⁹ The motion to approve the Strategic Transportation Plan passed unanimously

³³⁰ The motion to approve the vehicle levy was approved by a seven to five vote.

³³¹ Under the weighted voting system used by the GVRD, the vehicle levy passed by a vote of 56-50. Source: Glenn Bohn, "It's official," Vancouver Sun, 02-Dec-2000, A01.

However, what the institutional leaders failed to accomplish in agenda management is the prevention of interference from the provincial governments. As stated, TransLink did not have an apparatus to collect any imposed vehicle levies: such tools as collecting with ICBC insurance renewals required the provincial government to change regulations to permit such an activity. While BCAA, the BCTA and the Board of Trade were ultimately unsuccessful in their objective of preventing TransLink and the GVRD from passing provisions for a vehicle levy, their ability to mobilize public opposition to this proposal ultimately swayed the provincial government to renege on their commitment to “negotiate, in good faith, cost sharing arrangements on major new or replacement transportation infrastructure projects proposed by the Authority.”³³² Hence, these outsiders’ abilities to exploit other arenas in order to promote their transportation agendas proved to be ultimately successful.

The Aftermath: agenda management in crisis

Once it was clear that the provincial government had no intention of capitulating with TransLink’s request for the vehicle levy to be collected by ICBC during insurance renewal,³³³ TransLink was backed into financial corner. Without the revenues generated by the vehicle levy, the contingent transportation improvements would not happen. In fact, because the organization was projecting an operating deficit for the following year, TransLink was forced to cut \$5 million dollars in bus service, rescind an order for replacement trolley buses, put on hold indefinitely any proposed expansion to the bus fleet, and cut \$2 million from its road improvement budget as a consequence of “a \$100 million hole in the budget.”³³⁴

During this time, the upper management of TransLink was also in a crisis. The Chief Executive Officer responsible for delivery of the transportation improvements resigned shortly after the failure to implement the vehicle levy. His replacement, although familiar with transportation issues, was about to take over an organization that was politically divided along urban/suburban cleavages, nearing bankruptcy, and was increasingly perceived as a poorly

³³² Greater Vancouver Regional District, Recommended Agreement on Transportation Governance and Funding for Greater Vancouver. Unpublished document, 9.

³³³ The province did not officially kill off a proposal for the vehicle levy: that is, there was no official press release of government document associated with this proposal. Rather, the indication that the vehicle levy would not be collected by the Province came in the form of an off-the-cuff statement by Mike Farnsworth, the Minister responsible for transit, while he was visiting his home riding of Port Coquitlam.

³³⁴ Chad Skelton, “With demise of vehicle levy, TransLink deciding what to cut,” Vancouver Sun, 23-Jan-2001, B03, See also Scott Simpson, “TransLink eyes big cuts after levy flop,” Vancouver Sun, 16-Feb-2001, B01 and Sarah Galashan, “TransLink okays cutting services to save \$5 million,” Vancouver Sun, 02-Apr-2001, B04. With respect to the ‘cut’ to the road improvements package, this was not actually a cut: rather it was a promise retain the current expenditures on regional road improvements, rather than increasing the budget.

managed organization. Confounding the budgetary shortfalls, the company contracted to provide bus service for the entire region (Coast Mountain Bus Company), entered into a four month long transit strike, which shut down the entire bus transit fleet.

Despite trimming its budget of 40 redundant and poorly used transit services in April 2001 (including the popular Owl late night service), the TransLink Board was faced with the prospects of \$40 to \$50 million budgetary shortfall.

In light of its failed attempt to win over the public over its previous transportation agenda, as well as the harsh criticism it was receiving over its (non) handling of the transit strike, TransLink launched a new, 'interim' proposal for funding regional transportation improvements. Accepting that it had left the ramifications of funding alternatives to be defined by outsiders, TransLink designed a communications strategy that would effectively box in opponents as being supporters of rapidly deteriorating transportation system. It presented for public consumption a document called A Time to Choose: Road and Transit Choices:³³⁵ a document dichotomized transportation funding alternatives as being either:

- Choice 1: Cut services to match existing revenues; or
- Choice 2: Maintain and continue to improve regional road and transit services with additional revenue.³³⁶

By painting Choice 1 as an unparallel service cut both in terms of transit and road funding, it insured itself that public, politicians, and outside actors would at the very least, grudgingly accept a funding proposal that would collect an additional two cents per litre in fuel tax within the Greater Vancouver Regional District, a regional property increase to raise an additional \$20 million, and an increase in transit fares. In return, the public would see a dedication of the two cent gas tax to spending on roads, and implement an expansion of the mini bus fleet. This choice did not however, offer transit users additional 'big' buses.

Although TransLink was, for the most part, despised by the public for its bungling of the vehicle levy and the bus strike, it successfully manage to 'manage' the implementation of this funding proposal: a proposal that still hit car users with additional taxes for fuel, as well as homeowners. It did so by altering its agenda management strategy displayed during the implementation of the STP.

Whereas in the past, TransLink had used a 'take it or leave it approach' to promoting its agenda, this time around it sought out to engage outsiders like BCAA and the BCTA, the Board

³³⁵ TransLink, A Time to Choose: Road and Transit Choices, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2001)

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

of Trade and the Gateway Council. Stated as goals within the communications strategy for the Time to Choose debate, TransLink stated the following.

This consultation is intended to determine the public's preference for funding the region's road and transit system. The consultation plan has three objectives:

1. That the public understand the current and future transportation needs of the region;
2. That the public make an informed choice on funding options to sustain the regional transportation network or to reduce road and transit programs to meet expenditures; and
3. That all stakeholders are actively involved in the public dialogue.³³⁷

To this extent, TransLink officials met with 27 stakeholder organizations, 18 municipal councils and had received more than 8,000 comments on the proposal via phone, fax, and email. Interestingly, after meeting with the Gateway Council, Board of Trade, BCAA, and BCTA in early October, the CEO (Pat Jacobsen) announced that TransLink was going to deviate from its initial options of dedicating the majority of funding to transit improvements, and would dedicate all revenues collected by the additional gas tax to fund road improvements only.³³⁸

This declaration that TransLink would guarantee additional funding to expanding highway capacity is important for several reasons. First, this pronouncement that TransLink would become more involved in soliciting and listening to the demands of outsider actors is important because it marks a shift agenda management away from substantive agenda denial instruments, to the adoption of low cost, procedural instruments to incorporate outsiders as ad hoc insiders. TransLink now perceives the groups studied in this thesis not as outsiders; but rather as insiders who, when working together, can bring together a wide array of transportation policy interest. TransLink has recognized that by incorporating their views into the development of transportation plans, it is more likely that transportation projects will go forward.

Second, as I have argued in Chapter 3, the creation of TransLink was not just a means of delivering regional transit solutions as often cited in the media: but rather it was created as a means for municipal politicians to offload funding commitments for major arterial roads to another level of government. The final recognition that adding capacity to highway infrastructure is a necessity for the transportation system dispels the myth presented in planning documents

³³⁷ TransLink, Board in Brief- September 14, 2001: Item 3.13, (Burnaby: Translink 2001). Available online at http://www.translink.bc.ca/files/board_files/board_in_brief/010914_Board-in-Brief.pdf.

³³⁸ Jeff Lee, "TransLink boss wants gas tax spent on roads," Vancouver Sun, 20-Oct-2001, B01.

such as *Transport 2021* that the public would happily pay for transit improvements without additional highway capacity.

Finally, as an heuristic device, the recognition of the importance of roads funding is important because it has ultimately changed the way TransLink displays information in its public documents. Whereas in Strategic Transportation Plan listed transit improvements first in the document (thus being more important), documents produced since this announcement emphasize road improvements ahead of transit improvements. Clearly, a marked shift in the understanding of the regional priorities has occurred both with Board and within senior levels of the bureaucracy of TransLink.³³⁹

Conclusion: Agendas and agenda management in urban transportation

This chapter examined the dynamics of agenda management as they pertained to the development of a regional transportation agenda for Greater Vancouver. This chapter examined the elements of TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan, and discussed its importance and legitimacy as regional transportation agenda. One component of this agenda—the vehicle levy—is explored, as it represents a possible venue ripe for interested parties to exploit to promote their own positions.

This chapter then looked at five such groups that used the debate that developed concerning the vehicle levy, as means to champion alternative transportation solutions. Using the typology of Local Politics, Outsider Groups provided in Chapter 2, these groups are categorized on the basis motivations for action as well as their resources. Using these criteria, three types of groups are found present within the Greater Vancouver transportation policy network: specialist insiders, urban regimists, and pluralist stakeholders.

Finally, this chapter observed how the institutional actor (TransLink) responded to the threat of losing control over its transportation agenda. Using the typology Agenda Management Strategies presented in Chapter 2, it is apparent that TransLink has shifted its agenda management style from deploying substantive, medium cost instruments to deny outsiders' agendas (namely, through discreditation and symbolic placation), to the usage of low cost procedural instruments designed to create ad hoc relationships with these former outsiders.

³³⁹ See for example, TransLink, Transportation Plan 2002, (Burnaby: Translink 2002), TransLink, Three Year Transportation and Financial Plan, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2002), TransLink, 2002 Annual Report, (Burnaby: TransLink, 2003).

Chapter 5: Urban Transportation in Greater Vancouver at a Crossroads: The Insider / Outsider Conundrum—An Area for Future Study

A review: policy dynamics in urban transportation

Urban transportation policy, and urban policy in general, represents an under-explored area which, to date, has largely been left to urban geographers, transportation planners, and civil engineers to mine. While these disciplines have contributed greatly to an understanding about how people can and should move through cities, the politics associated with urban transportation planning has largely been ignored. This under-representation should be especially underscored: since it is vitally important to understand why politicians—who ultimately control the financial purse strings of the nation at all levels—act the way they do. To understand why some transportation plans are implemented and others are not, one must know how decisions are made within institutions; how institutional transportation agendas are formed and shaped; how these agendas are put to the public; and how institutional actors attempt to manage debate. Furthermore, one must know how other actors within the policy community will respond to an institutional agenda.

To this end, the objectives of this thesis have been threefold. After finding that the existing literature relating to the role of ‘outsiders’ in setting, developing, and promoting agendas within the context of a local institutional governance insufficient, Chapter 2 presented a typology of outside actors present in a local governance system. This thesis identified six hypothetical types of actors, classified on the basis of access to resources and motivations for action. Stemming from the identification of possible outside actors, Chapter 2 explored the existing public policy literature relating to how groups can promote their agendas through the utilization of multiple venues. Finally, Chapter 2 examined the tools at the disposal of institutional actors to control the presence of outside actors to either dismiss outsiders’ agendas, or conversely, accept outsiders’ positions. Rooted in the work of Cobb and Ross, and Howlett and Ramesh, I present a typology of agenda management strategies available to discount positions put forward by outsiders.

The purpose of Chapter 3 was to provide the historical context of transportation governance in the Greater Vancouver region. Chapter 3 highlighted the role of the provincial government and the regional district in shaping the current transportation institution. This chapter highlights the often-neglected role that the Ministry of Transportation and Highways’ downloading of arterial highways had on compelling the GVRD and the Province to develop the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, as well as an examination of the negotiations up to the creation of the GVTA. Furthermore, Chapter 3 provides an overview of the institutional rules

that govern the GVTA, as well as the internal institutional politics that have emerged since its creation.

Chapter 4 provides the case study for analyzing the effect that transportation policy ‘outsiders’ can have on influencing an institutional agenda. For the purposes of this thesis, TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan 2000-2005 is used as a baseline institutional agenda. The STP was the first ‘vision’ for a comprehensive regional transportation system linked with an appropriate governance structure and funding arrangement—providing 61 actions for the board to carry out over the first five years of its mandate. The STP provided recommendations on everything from bus transit, rapid transit, road infrastructure investments, to financing and corporate governance. The attempt by TransLink to implement a proposed \$75.00 vehicle levy served as a mobilizing event for organizations displeased with the institutional agenda.

Using the methodology developed in Chapter 2, the motivations, resources, and agendas of five ‘outsider’ organizations were explored. Based on this examination, three types of actors were found to be present within the policy network: *specialist outsiders* (Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, British Columbia Automobile Association, and the British Columbia Trucking Association), *pluralist stakeholders* (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation), and an *urban regimist*. (Vancouver Board of Trade).

Finally, Chapter 4 provided an overview of instruments used by the institutional actor to control the institutional agenda. Based on the typology of Agenda Management Strategies provided in Chapter 2, it is evident that TransLink has shifted its agenda management style from deploying substantive, medium cost instruments to denying outsiders’ agendas (namely, through discreditation and symbolic placation, to the usage of low cost procedural instruments designed to create ad hoc relationships with these former outsiders). The ramifications of such a shift in agenda management style are still under scrutiny.

Hypotheses tested and lessons learned

Hypothesis 1) That more than one type of outside actor exists within the local transportation policy network.

Traditionally within the policy literature, outside actors (or pressured groups) have been treated as homogenous entities. Because they were ‘outsiders,’ analysis into their composition and motivations for actions were largely irrelevant; until such time as they were considered ‘insiders.’ This left a sizeable break within the literature: how do outsiders become insiders, particularly with respect to urban political systems.

To test the hypothesis that there are in fact many different types of outside organizations, I chose to examine the variables of resources available and motivations for action. While

admittedly the resources variable could use further clarification with respect to quantification, these variables do provide a reasonable template for disaggregating outside actors.

To this extent, this thesis found that there are six types of outside actors plausible with a theoretical urban government policy network. Such groups include: urban regimists, specialist outsiders, episodic actors, pluralist stakeholders, 'marginalized' stakeholders, and venue shoppers.

In applying this theoretical typology of outside actors to the study of transportation policy in Greater Vancouver, three types of outside actors were observed. Each of these groups actively became involved in attempting to set transportation policy in the region after finding that the institutional agenda for transportation infrastructure investment in the region was less than satisfactory. Many of the groups that activated had at their disposal a wide array of tangible and intangible resources: resources such as an active and engaged membership, an intricate knowledge on the subject, staff to promote their particular positions, as well as access to media in the region. What differentiates groups like the Board of Trade and BCAA from BEST—in terms of resources—was primarily the degree of access to key decision makers in the region. Groups like the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council and the Board of Trade, who often work closely with elected officials at the local, provincial and national level, readily have the ear of elected officials: grassroots organizations such as BEST often do not.

What permits a further differentiation of outsider groups are their motivations for actions. In this case, it is evident that both the Board of Trade and BEST sought institutional status in participating in the transportation debate. These groups want to do more than alert the public of their transportation policy decisions: these groups wanted to be on the inside and be actively engaged in formulating future transportation policy. Groups like BCAA, BCTA, and the Gateway Council, conversely, did not seek out institutionalization; rather, their involvement was designed to promote their specific group's transportation proposal as an alternative way of thinking about solving the region's transportation problems.

In this particular study, three possible types of outside actors were not observed: *Episodic Actors, Marginalized Stakeholders, and Venue Shoppers*. This is not to say that these groups are not present: in fact, one may hypothesize that the longer the institutional actor is present shaping the transportation agenda, the more likely that it is that different types of groups would emerge. For example, community groups opposed to the construction of a rapid transit line in their neighborhood would likely fall into the category of venue shoppers. Such groups would generally lack resources to mount an effective opposition to a multi-million project, and would not be interested in counter-acting a complete institutional agenda. Similarly, should TransLink pursue

implementation of collecting taxes on parking spaces, it is highly likely that a group such as mall owners— who have vast financial resources at their disposal—would unite to fight such a proposal. A further examination of whether these groups emerge, both within Greater Vancouver and elsewhere may be beneficial to the study of outside actors.

Hypothesis 2) That institutional actors can deploy a wide array substantive and procedural instruments in efforts of agenda management.

To test this hypothesis, this thesis merged the work on strategies for agenda denial by Cobb and Ross, with the work undertaken by Howlett and Ramesh on substantive and procedural policy instruments. Using these scholars as a guide, this thesis proposes a classification system for possible tools of agenda management at the disposal of institutional actors. These instruments range from low cost, substantive instruments such as issue avoidance—to prevent giving credence to an outsider’s agenda, to high cost procedural instruments such as altering the membership criteria for entry into the institutional body—as to incorporate the outsider’s knowledge and power within the institutional apparatus.

In this thesis, it was observed that TransLink deployed three types of instruments against outside actors. First, TransLink attempted to ‘discredit’ the opinions offered by specialist outsiders such as the British Columbia Automobile Association and the BC Trucking Association. It also attempted to ‘symbolically placate’ urban regimists and pluralist stakeholders (both of whose motivation for action was to become institutionalized), such as the Board of Trade and BEST. Following the collapse of the financial formula, TransLink sought to deploy instruments that would effectively alter the institutional design in an ad hoc manner, by formally recognizing all the groups presented in this thesis as being legitimate stakeholders in the urban transportation policy network.

As the transportation policy network in Greater Vancouver is relatively new, the deployment of these institutional instruments represents the first iteration of TransLink’s attempt at agenda management. One would expect that given the success these groups have had in frustrating TransLink’s ability to transform their agenda into deliverables, senior management of TransLink will have to actively seek out vocal outsiders to either get them on side, or discredit their ideas all together.

Areas for future study: managing outsiders and agenda control in an urban policy environment

This thesis was ambitious in nature, given the absence of policy analysis literature relating to how transportation policy decisions are made in the context of local and regional governing institutions. This thesis has shown that political scientists can contribute greatly to the

study of urban transportation: whether by analysing historical agreements between different levels of government, exploring the internal dynamics at play within transportation governance institutions, providing descriptions about the formations of outside interests and examining the successes/failures of outsiders in altering institutional agendas, or providing insight as to how institutions can cope with a ‘threat’ posed by outsiders vis-à-vis the institutional agenda. That being said, there is still much work to be done in this field.

First, this case study is narrow in scope: examining the dynamics of agenda setting within one urban location—with a total of six actors examined. The dynamics present in the GVRD are somewhat unique— a new institution was established to implement a regional transportation program; the institution had the discretion to develop an institutional agenda with very little input from outside actors; and the agenda was managed by a dual, yet complimentary regional governance structure. Accordingly, the likelihood of finding similar cases to study is quite small within the North American context.

That said, the hypotheses tested in this thesis—namely: 1) that there exists more than one type of outside actor present in influencing policy within a policy network and 2) that institutions will use a variety of instruments to affect outsiders’ abilities to influence agendas— can, and should be tested vis-à-vis other large urban areas with coordinated transit and/or transportation systems. Two such Canadian examples would include a study of the transportation policy networks in Greater Toronto (or perhaps the ‘Golden Horseshoe’) and the amalgamated megacity of Montreal. While the transportation agencies in these cities lack the degree of control granted to TransLink, the Toronto Transit Commission and the l’Agence Métropolitaine de Transport, as institutional actors, would likely experience similar difficulties in agenda implementation and management.

The Toronto and Montreal case studies would also shed light on the dynamics of agenda management in a developed policy community. The Greater Vancouver case is unique in that TransLink, upon its creation, was the primary actor within the transportation network: other outside actors were not prepared to publicly challenge TransLink’s agenda, given its vast powers. However in both Toronto and Montreal, the main institutional actors have been present in the policy network for a considerable length of time. Accordingly, one would expect that associated policy networks have developed and are at, or nearing, maturity. It would be interesting to compare the composition of these networks, as well as the network management tools deployed by the institutional actors, to the experiences found in Greater Vancouver.

Another area for future study is methodological in nature. Political scientists have traditionally ignored ‘the politics of the local:’ whether that be because the case studies produced

would be too small in number to constitute a representative sample, or because of the fear that local politics may be too susceptible to the will of a 'charismatic leader.' While governance at the local/regional level provides an interesting and engaging study unto its own, it is possible to transfer the lessons learned by academics studying national and international institutions and policy networks to the metro-urban level. In both cases, one is analysing the rules that govern how decisions are made, how institutions translate ideas into policy, and how institutional actors provide, or deny access to outsiders. In order to prove the value of studying local governance institutions, more work must be done to quantify these hypotheses, and examine a sufficient number of cases as to provide statistically relevant results.

Finally, this thesis purposes significant questions concerning the best governance structure for delivering on a transportation infrastructure agenda. In Chapter 3, the historical development of TransLink was presented: it is clear that there exists within the regional governance structure a clear fracture between urban and suburban mayors with respect to how to effectively manage the transportation system. Currently, representation on the Board is weighted towards municipalities falling outside of the regional Growth Concentration Area, and is chaired by a mayor who stated that he was not in favour of the organization being created. Clearly, this fragmentation of interests between car-dependent suburban communities, and transit-favourable areas in the urban communities, has allowed outsiders who favour car orientated development, a greater opportunity to voice their opinions. While unquestionably the region requires greater investments in road infrastructure, the fact remains that it is the individual municipalities who are responsible for constructing and maintaining the roads: not TransLink. The recent emphasis placed on building roads in the region (including dedicating the increase in the gasoline tax), further entrenches the ability of municipalities to extract revenues from a non-elected, non accountable body. This shift away from transit investment, both in terms of buses and rapid transit service to Coquitlam, raises serious questions about TransLink's ability to manage the transportation agenda. Although not addressed in this thesis, the question of what governance structure would be best to carry through the commitments made in the Livable Region Strategic Plan, needs to be resolved.

Conclusion

The politics behind the development and management of urban transportation systems is an under-explored field of urban study. This thesis presented a comprehensive overview of the history of transportation governance in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, from the early 1980s to the implementation of TransLink's first strategic transportation plan. In particular, this thesis examined the role that key outsiders played in shaping regional transportation policy in

early 2000, and what instruments were used by the institutional actor in an effort to manage the regional transportation agenda. This study will provide a strong foundation for future research in urban politics and urban transportation in Canada, as well as the study of the influence and tactics of outside actors in any urban policy network. To build effective urban *transportation* networks requires billions of dollars; however, to build effective urban *policy* networks takes time, communication, and the willingness to support creative ideas from outsiders.

Appendix: TransLinks's Institutional Agenda, as detailed in the Strategic Transportation Plan – 2000-2005.

Transit Agenda	Roads and Infrastructure Agenda	Management Agenda
<p>1. <i>Expand and improve the quality and diversity of the region's bus service to better meet the different needs of each market in a timely and cost effective fashion.</i></p> <p>2. Maintain an ongoing cycle of community-based transit planning processes that identify specific implementation requirements for transit improvements.</p> <p>3. Provide adequate operating facilities in strategic locations to support the storage and maintenance needs of an expanding bus fleet.</p> <p>4. Provide sufficient SeaBus capacity to meet the existing and future needs on the North Shore.</p> <p>5. Explore new ferry services where they are more cost effective than land-based alternatives and are compatible with the region's growth management strategy.</p> <p>6. Maximize the use of the existing SkyTrain line by providing increased capacity and improved safety and security.</p> <p>7. <i>Work with the Provincial Government to complete the "TLine" as defined in the GVTA Act by 2005.</i></p> <p>8. Develop an overall plan for a network of Intermediate Capacity Transit Systems which are affordable and offer a</p>	<p>14. Maintain the integrity of the Major Road Network by including only roads that meet approved criteria.</p> <p>15. Implement maintenance standards and cost tracking to ensure that the Major Road Network is maintained to acceptable standards and in a cost-effective manner.</p> <p>16. Maintain TransLink-owned structures to acceptable standards and in a cost-effective manner.</p> <p>17. <i>Improve the efficiency of the Major Road Network by funding annual programs of minor capital projects on the network and maximize the investments by establishing cost-sharing arrangements with municipalities.</i></p> <p>18. Develop partnerships with municipal, provincial and federal governments and the private sector in the planning, funding and implementation of major capital projects.</p> <p>19. <i>Establish a capital allocation of \$5 million in 2000, rising to \$40 million in 2004, for provision of new major road facilities in partnership with other agencies.</i></p> <p>20. Act, in consultation with the municipalities, to establish a clear process for assessing environmental and community impacts of major transportation projects.</p> <p>21. Work with municipalities to develop a comprehensive program for providing priority to TransLink buses on the Major Road Network.</p> <p>22. <i>Operate the Albion Ferry service in an efficient and cost-</i></p>	<p>32. Move toward road pricing, with tolls on new facilities to recover cost as permitted under the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act, and a request to the Province for authority for system tolling to manage use.</p> <p>33. Implement an annual vehicle charge, with the structure of the charge – e.g. flat, mileage based, pollution based – with further public consultation, as a move toward transportation pricing and as part of the Financial Plan.</p> <p>34. Implement a parking tax, established within an overall parking policy, as part of a transportation pricing program to limit the growth of single occupant vehicle travel and as part of the Financial Plan.</p> <p>35. Ensure that transit users pay a fare that reflects the benefit they receive from the transit system and overall recovers at least 50% of the system operating cost, while maintaining fares at a level which will promote use and a fare structure which will maintain affordability for the economically disadvantaged.</p> <p>36. Develop a fare strategy by the end of 2001, including technology plan. Develop a comprehensive program to minimize transit fare evasion and maximizes fare compliance and revenues while maintaining system operating efficiency. Consider the application of benefiting area charges in the development of new transportation facilities.</p> <p>37. As matter of priority, establish through the Regional Administrators Advisory Committee (RAAC) a process to develop Regional Parking Strategy by the end of 2001</p> <p>38. Expand vanpool and carpool programs, encourage the development of shared use vehicles, and promote these alternatives and teleworking as alternatives to the single occupant vehicle.</p> <p>39. Work with municipalities and the Province to provide a range of cycling programs, services and infrastructure that increase the use of cycling as a mode of transport for all trip purposes. Construct pedestrian-friendly transit interchanges.</p> <p>40. Work with municipalities to establish design criteria for major road capital programs to ensure that full attention is paid to pedestrian amenity.</p> <p>41. Give priority to finalizing the process whereby TransLink reviews Official Community Plan amendments and "major development proposals."</p> <p>42. Work with municipalities to establish criteria for developments which support the Livable Region</p>

Transit Agenda	Roads and Infrastructure Agenda	Management Agenda
<p>level of service which is capable of fully supporting the needs of the Livable Region Strategic Plan.</p> <p>9. <i>Begin preliminary planning and design work for the Richmond/Airport rapid transit link to Vancouver.</i></p> <p>10. Work with the City of Vancouver and Canadian Pacific Railways to preserve the Arbutus railway corridor for transportation purposes.</p> <p>11. Expand the West Coast Express when it achieves a level of cost-recovery commensurate with the quality, cost and level of service provided relative to other components of the regional transit system.</p> <p>12. Increase the variety and number of travel opportunities available to people with disabilities by increasing handyDart services and moving towards a barrier free transit system usable by all members of the community.</p> <p>13. Provide safe, convenient and comfortable off-vehicle facilities for passengers to access and use the transit system.</p>	<p><i>effective manner and develop a strategy to implement a fixed link crossing.</i></p> <p>23. Implement a program for the development of cycling infrastructure and supporting facilities.</p> <p>24. Develop a vision and strategic plan for Intelligent Transportation Systems in the region in 2000, and implement initiatives based on that plan in subsequent years.</p> <p>25. <i>Give priority to transit, goods movement and high occupancy vehicles ahead of single occupant vehicles and develop a regional road use priority plan with municipalities by the end of 2001.</i></p> <p>26. Pursue municipal support for early implementation of expanded transit priority measures on the region's road system to provide attractive, faster, more reliable and safer transit services.</p> <p>27. Achieve co-ordination of network signal operation to facilitate regional movement needs.</p> <p>28. Plan and implement Intelligent Transportation Systems where there is a demonstrated increase in efficiency, safety, productivity, cost-effectiveness, support for goods movement, accessibility to timely information, or support for alternative modes of transportation; or where Intelligent Transportation Systems provide significant decreases in delays, emissions, and energy use.</p> <p>29. <i>Facilitate goods movement on the regional transportation system through selective implementation of road improvements that will benefit goods movement, road priority measures, and implementation of technology.</i></p>	<p>Strategic Plan from a transportation perspective and seek the cooperation of municipalities through their development approval processes to ensure development supports the Strategic Transportation Plan.</p> <p>43. Conduct market research to determine customer needs prior to the implementation of new transit and alternative transportation services and evaluate customer satisfaction after the services are in place.</p> <p>44. Pursue improvements to personal safety and security in and on transit services through the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Principles and the evaluation of the cost-benefit of barrier systems and additional staffing at key locations.</p> <p>45. Improve road safety by working with municipalities to maximize safety through the design and management of transportation infrastructure and services and through partnerships with public and private organizations.</p> <p>46. Support the shift to preferred transportation options through improved access to accurate, timely and user-friendly service information.</p> <p>47. Provide information to the public and seek public input broadly on major decisions, both in a variety of ways.</p> <p>48. Develop a comprehensive marketing and information program with an emphasis on reducing single occupant vehicle use and increasing transit ridership and revenues.</p> <p>49. Develop a strategy to communicate to the public the full range of TransLink's mandate/responsibilities with regard to regional transportation.</p> <p>50. Identify the potential for 'premium fare products' that offer greater comfort and convenience to new markets of transit passengers.</p> <p>51. Establish a mechanism to evaluate the impacts of specific TransLink transportation decisions on air quality, linking these to Greater Vancouver Regional District-adopted air quality principles.</p> <p>52. Complete the approved capital expenditure program to upgrade the AirCare stations and test equipment and deliver an enhanced, self-funded, vehicle inspection program that identifies vehicles emitting excessive pollutants and requires effective repairs prior to re-licensing.</p> <p>53. Continue testing and evaluation of bus technology, and consider emissions and potential future regulation on fine particulates as criteria in the selection of engine technologies for the transit system.</p> <p>54. Develop prudent financial policies to ensure TransLink's long term financial health.</p> <p>55. Pursue operating efficiencies through investigation of alternative services and service</p>

Transit Agenda	Roads and Infrastructure Agenda	Management Agenda
	<p>30. Provide a co-ordinating role in the development of supportive policies and infrastructure for goods movement.</p> <p>31. <i>Work towards the definition of a 'Major Commercial Network' that identifies a network of routes for the efficient distribution of goods in the region.</i></p>	<p>delivery mechanisms and the achievement of internal efficiencies.</p> <p>56. Develop terms of reference for consultant services to review the organization and operations of TransLink and its subsidiary organizations for consideration by the Board.</p> <p>57. Develop a comprehensive management program recognizes the interdependence of the actions proposed in this Plan monitor progress on the Plan and objectives through an annual progress report to the Board.</p> <p>58. Implement comprehensive monitoring and evaluation regional transportation system to ensure that it supports regional objectives and optimizes future transportation investments.</p> <p>59. Conduct and maintain ongoing route-level performance monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effective and efficient transit resources, including trial use of automatic passenger counting technology.</p> <p>60. Work with the Greater Vancouver Regional District, municipalities, the Province of BC and other government and non-government agencies to seek a direct federal role in the funding of urban transportation in metropolitan areas.</p> <p>61. Identify suitable revenue sources consistent with the Transportation Pricing and Revenue Generation and strategy to fund the Plan, in a manner that complies with the Corporate Policy – Financial Management strategy.</p>

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