



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** December 4, 2012
From: Victor Wei, P. Eng.
 Director, Transportation **File:** 01-0157-00/Vol 01
Re: **METRO VANCOUVER BOARD REQUEST - PROJECTS ELIGIBLE FOR
 FEDERAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FUND**

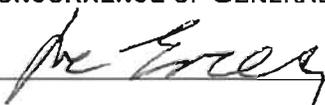
Staff Recommendation

That a letter be sent to all Richmond Members of Parliament, with a copy to the Metro Vancouver Board, seeking the designation of cycling infrastructure as an eligible project under the federal Strategic Priorities Fund.



Victor Wei, P. Eng.
 Director, Transportation
 (604-276-4131)

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Intergovernmental Relations & Protocol Unit.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY SMT SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	REVIEWED BY CAO	INITIALS: 

Staff Report

Origin

On November 2, 2012, the City received a letter (see **Attachment 1**) from the Chair of the Metro Vancouver Board advising of and requesting the City's action on its resolution that member municipalities be encouraged to write to their Members of Parliament (MP) to request that projects eligible for the Strategic Priorities Fund (the Fund) include cycling infrastructure. This report responds to that request and proposes that a letter be sent to local MPs seeking the designation of cycling infrastructure as an eligible project under the Fund.

Analysis

1. Federal Strategic Priorities Fund

The federal Gas Tax Fund is an initiative of the federal government started in the 2005/06 fiscal year to provide predictable, long-term funding via the transfer of federal gas tax revenues for Canadian municipalities to support new and revitalized public infrastructure that contributes to cleaner air and water, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Within BC, the distribution of the funds was divided into two components, the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) and the Community Works Fund; additional funding was also provided for an Innovations Fund. In addition, BC communities were divided into three tiers based on differing characteristics including population density, degree of urbanization and adjacency to urbanized areas. The Metro Vancouver region is collectively classified as a Tier 3 community.

Per the transfer agreement between the federal and provincial governments and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) signed in September 2005, Metro Vancouver chose to direct 100 per cent of its allocation to the Strategic Priorities Fund for transportation investments which, for Tier 3 communities, is limited primarily to the development or improvement of public transit. Under a three-part agreement between Metro Vancouver, TransLink and UBCM, the funds are administered by UBCM through the Gas Tax Fund Management Committee.

Over the past seven years of the Fund, TransLink has used the funds primarily to purchase new transit vehicles (bus, HandyDART, SkyTrain, and SeaBus) as well support infrastructure improvements as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: TransLink Vehicles and Infrastructure Supported by the SPF

Year	Conventional Bus	Community Shuttle	HandyDART	SkyTrain	SeaBus	Supporting Infrastructure
2006	119	-	-	-	-	-
2007	139	-	-	-	-	-
2008	199	-	-	-	-	-
2009	108	19	55	-	-	SkyTrain Maintenance Facility Expansion
2010	32	-	81	14	-	SkyTrain Yard Expansion Expo Line Propulsion Power System Upgrade
2011	41	13	-	114 (refurbish)	1	Compass Card Equipment for Buses
2012	91	69	-	-	-	Hamilton Transit Centre
Total	729	101	136	128	1	

2. Eligible Projects for Tier 3 Communities

As shown in Table 2 below, cycling infrastructure independent of the public transit system is not an eligible project for Tier 3 communities within the category of transportation projects.

Table 2: Eligible Transportation Projects for Tier 3 Communities

Eligible Sub-Categories within Transportation	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Develop or improve public transit system (rapid transit, buses, bus ways, sea-buses, commuter rail, ferries, street cars, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, etc)	✓	✓	✓
Road system improvements that encourage a reduction in car dependency (express bus lanes, HOV lanes, park and ride, bike paths, queue, etc)	✓	✓	
Implement innovative technologies that support environmental sustainability	✓	✓	✓
Rehabilitation of roads and bridges that enhance sustainability outcomes	✓	✓	
Paths and trails	✓	✓	

3. Staff Comments

Staff support the Metro Vancouver Board request as the inclusion of cycling infrastructure as an eligible project could enable TransLink to increase funding levels for its Bicycle Infrastructure Capital Cost-Share (BICCS) Program, which provides up to 50-50 cost-share funding with local municipalities towards cycling facilities. Funding levels for the BICCS program have ranged around \$2.55 million over the past several years but the program is typically over-subscribed and, for 2013, has been reduced to \$1.55 million. Staff recently confirmed with TransLink staff that TransLink is supportive in principle of Metro Vancouver Board's request to include cycling infrastructure improvements as eligible projects.

The City has consistently maximized its grant funding from TransLink towards the implementation of cycling facilities and increased opportunities for external cost-share grants would enable the City to not only undertake more cycling improvements than it could alone but also to expedite some of these projects. The provision of increased cycling infrastructure throughout the city would strongly support progress towards achieving the vision, goals and objectives of the recently approved Official Community Plan.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

A letter from the City to all Richmond Members of Parliament requesting the designation of cycling infrastructure as an eligible transportation project for Tier 3 communities under the federal Strategic Priorities Fund would be a first step towards the ultimate goal of revising the terms of the agreement on the transfer of federal gas tax revenues that specifies the eligible projects. In turn, increased opportunities for external cost-share grants for cycling infrastructure would enable the City to make greater progress towards achieving the goals of the recently approved Official Community Plan.


For: Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner
(604-276-4035)



metrovancover

Greater Vancouver Regional District • Greater Vancouver Water District
Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District • Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation
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TO: MAYOR & EACH COUNCILLOR
FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

pc: Director, Transportation for appropriate action
cc: GM, Planning & Dev

Office of the Chair
Tel. 604 432-6215 Fax 604 451-6614

OCT 24 2012

File: CP-15-03-015

Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Council
City of Richmond
6911 No 3 Rd
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

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	GU	
	KY	
	DR	

Dear Mayor Brodie and Council:

Re: Metro Vancouver Board Decisions Relating to the Strategic Priorities Fund

I am pleased to share with you that at its meeting of October 12, 2012, the Board endorsed the 2012 list of projects that TransLink intends to forward to the Strategic Priorities Fund Management Committee for approval under the Strategic Priorities Fund agreement. Since 2005, Metro Vancouver's Board has endorsed that 100 percent of Federal gas tax funds allocated to the region through the Strategic Priorities Fund be directed to TransLink.

The Board also approved a resolution encouraging municipalities and other local government authorities to write to their local Members of Parliament to include cycling infrastructure as an eligible project under the Strategic Priorities Fund. Currently, funding for local roads, bridges, tunnels, bicycling lanes, walking paths, and sidewalks are not eligible transportation projects under the Strategic Priorities Fund. Cycling is a rapidly growing transportation mode in the region and new infrastructure is required to support it. Encouraging cycling is consistent with reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore should be eligible for Federal gas tax funding.

The Board also directed staff to investigate the future use of Federal gas tax funding for transit operating expenditures, as opposed to capital expenditures only, and to identify the process to make the necessary amendments to the Strategic Priorities Fund agreement between the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, Metro Vancouver, and TransLink and the overarching tri-partite agreement between the Federal government, Province of British Columbia, and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

We encourage your municipality to write to your local Members of Parliament to include bike lane funding as an eligible project under the SPF. We look forward to your support.

Yours truly,

Greg Moore
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board

GM/GR/rk

Encl: Report - dated October 5, 2012, "2012 Board Approval of TransLink Strategic Priorities Fund Application" (orbit # 6613646)

6620323

SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL INITIATIVE

City of Richmond
RECEIVED
NOV 02 2012
MAYOR'S OFFICE

CITY OF RICHMOND
DATE
NOV 02 2012
RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

RECEIVED
IN TRANSPORTATION
Date: Nov 8/12
By: VW/GB/DC/SC
TOPPING IDEAS INTO ACTION