

CanU



BOARD OF DIRECTORS *March 12, 2015*

Brent Toderian, MCIP
Vancouver, BC
President

Robert Freedman, MRAIC, AICP, LSUC
Toronto, ON
Chairman

Andy Fillmore, LPP, MCIP, AICP
Halifax, NS
Vice-president

Dan Leeming, FCIP, RPP
Toronto, ON
Treasurer

Alexandru Taranu, FCIP, MRAIC, OAA
Toronto, ON
Secretary

Dr. David Gordon, FCIP, RPP, P. Eng, AICP
Kingston, ON

Thom Mahler, MCIP, RPP
Calgary, AB

Pierre St-Cyr, MCIP, OUQ
Montreal, QC

Joyce Drohan, AIBC, AAA, SAA
Vancouver, BC

Nathalie Prud'homme, MCIP, OUQ
Quebec City, QC

Jeanna South, SAA, MRAIC, MCIP, RPP
Saskatoon, SK

Alain Miguezuez, MCIP, RPP
Ottawa, ON

Open Letter to The Metro Vancouver Mayors Council:

RE: Metro Vancouver Mayor's Council Transportation and Transit Plan Plebiscite

The Council for Canadian Urbanism (CanU) is a national non-profit information and advocacy group incorporated in 2009. CanU was founded by and includes many of Canada's leading urban experts, from the fields of city planning, urban design, architecture, landscape architecture, transportation, community development and related disciplines.

We are writing to add our voice to the many organizations, leaders and citizens who are supporting the proposed Mayors Council Transportation and Transit Plan, and a "Yes" in the related Plebiscite. CanU does not generally take positions on local issues in city-building, however we occasionally provide a position or perspective on issues facing a particular city-region that also have implications for other city-regions across Canada. Given the tremendous challenges in achieving successful public transit and transportation planning, and related funding, that are faced by every city in Canada, and further given the fact that this is the first transportation plebiscite that's been held in the Country, we believe that the quality of the related conversation, and the resulting outcome, is of national interest and will have national implications.

CanU does not support the use of plebiscites or referenda for decision-making in complex issues such as transportation planning or funding. However, given that the B.C. Government has chosen to launch such a plebiscite around transportation, CanU believes it is crucial for the future success of the Region and Province that its citizens choose to vote "Yes." A "Yes" means Metro Vancouver will improve significantly in mobility, and will continue to grow in a way that provides smart, sustainable and responsible choices and options for future generations and for the future economy. The negative consequences of a no vote would be tremendous for the local Region and Province, and we believe would also be significant for regions across Canada struggling to develop sound plans for funding much-needed public transit investment.

Metro Vancouver has been a model for smart transit-supported planning and design for the rest of the Country and internationally for many decades. Despite this, Metro Vancouver still faces many significant transportation challenges: roads are congested, transit struggles to meet current and growing demand, and people and goods struggle to efficiently move throughout the region. The effects of this traffic

CanU: Council for Canadian urbanism/Conseil canadien d'urbanisme

website: www.canu.ca

email: info@canu.ca

c/o The Planning Partnership, 1255 Bay Street, Suite 500, Toronto, ON M5R 2A9

CanU



**HONOURARY
BOARD MEMBERS**

Larry Beasley, CM, FCIP
Vancouver, BC

Ken Greenberg, FRAIC, Assoc AIA
Toronto, ON

Joe Berridge, FCIP, RPP
Toronto, ON

Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP
Toronto, ON

Aurele Cardinal, OAQ, OUQ, FIRAC
Montreal QC

David Witty, PhD MRAIC FCIP
Nanaimo, BC

Jack Diamond, OAA, FRAIC, FCIP
Toronto, ON

Mike Harcourt, LL.D
Vancouver, BC

Lloyd Axworthy, PC, OC, OM
Winnipeg, MB

Robert Alsopp, ARIBA, MRTPI,
MCIP, RPP, FCCLA
Toronto, ON

Member Emeritus:
Nancy Shoiry, OAQ
Montreal, QC

congestion affect more than just mobility – it critically affects the Region’s economy, environmental sustainability, social equity, affordability, and public health. In short, it hinders the Region’s success and its citizen’s choices.

The best way to address these mobility challenges is to fund smart public transit investment, while also making decisions, both land use and transportation-related, that support more inviting movement choices through transit, walking and cycling. Given the million plus more people expected to come to Metro Vancouver in the coming decades alone, the failure to strategically invest in public transit and smart mobility would be a huge blow to Metro Vancouver’s ability to address its many needs successfully.

The Mayors Plan, though not perfect, is an excellent package of improvements to position the Region for greater success. Further, the proposed sales tax funding source, though also not perfect, is a reasonable and effective solution to the local circumstances that addresses the usual “regressive” weaknesses of sales tax tools in an overall progressive way (we would encourage the Province to continue to improve the tool by seeking to further adjust the goods and services affected that are particularly important to low income families).

Previous generations of BC and Metro Vancouver leaders made smart choices to invest in public transit in key moments like this, and the current generations of citizens have reason to be very thankful for those past decisions. Those decisions also powerfully inspired cities across Canada to learn from Metro Vancouver’s good example, and to do better themselves. Now it is this generation’s turn.

We have been very impressed with the unprecedented common ground of over a hundred organizations, from all perspectives, political stripes and areas of interest and expertise, in support of a “Yes” vote. We are hard-pressed to think of similar cases in Canada where this has occurred. We are honoured to join that coalition of voices, who are championing a more successful Metro Vancouver, and by extension, a more successful family of Canadian cities. We remain hopeful that a successful outcome in B.C. will have positive repercussions in cities across our Country.

Yours respectfully,

The Council for Canadian Urbanism Board of Directors

CanU’s role is to actively promote more successful, sustainable and healthy Canadian cities and urban areas, and to strengthen the role of good urban design across our Nation.

CanU: Council for Canadian urbanism/Conseil canadien d'urbanisme

website: www.canu.ca

email: info@canu.ca

c/o The Planning Partnership, 1255 Bay Street, Suite 500, Toronto, ON M5R 2A9