

## Summary

Metro Vancouver is undergoing a regional discussion on Mobility Pricing as a method of addressing traffic congestion, promoting fairness and funding future investment in the region's transportation networks. A Mobility Pricing Independent Commission was created to lead the discussion and is tasked with providing recommendations to the Mayors' Council and TransLink Board of Directors in the spring of 2018.

This paper sets out the City's perspective on the work and objectives of the Mobility Pricing Independent Commission in creating recommendations for the region. It outlines initial considerations, questions and perspectives on the topic of mobility pricing and key issues and concerns that are important for the city.

## 1. Introduction

### What is the Mobility Pricing Independent Commission?

The Mayor's Council and the TransLink Board of Directors created the **Mobility Pricing Independent Commission (IC)** to provide recommendations on Regional Transportation and key matters related to mobility pricing in Metro Vancouver. The Commission, comprised of 14 community leaders from across Metro Vancouver, has a mandate to *engage with the diverse users of Metro Vancouver's road system in a fair, unbiased and transparent process, and provide recommendations on how to improve the way the region prices transportation – including roads and bridges – to reduce congestion for everyone.*

The Independent Commission is supported by a staff secretariat which is responsible for managing the activities of the Commission including research and analysis, production of information and materials, coordinating meetings, and public and stakeholder engagement.

Three advisory panels of users, stakeholders and peers will be created to provide feedback and advice to the Commission throughout the process with the goal of identifying key issues, opportunities, needs and considerations in order to inform the Commission's approach, work and activities.



Columbia Street

The Commission's recommendations will be guided by three key objectives:



**Reducing traffic congestion on roads and bridges** across the region, so people and goods can keep moving and business can thrive and be competitive



**Promote fairness** to address concerns around the previous approach to tolling some roads and bridges but not others, as well as providing affordable transportation choices



**Support transportation investment** to improve the current transportation system in Metro Vancouver for all users

Source: Mobility Pricing Independent Commission. [Itstimemv.ca](http://Itstimemv.ca)

## What is the Independent Commission aiming to achieve and by when?

Decongestion charging is one component of what mobility pricing could be within the region. The *It's Time* stakeholder engagement program will explore decongestion charging as part of a plan for the future of mobility pricing in Metro Vancouver. A final report summarizing the work of the Commission, the advisory panels, and input from public and the resulting recommendations is anticipated at the end of April 2018. It is anticipated the report will include:

- Recommendations on a number of detailed community-based principles for designing a decongestion charging policy, including:
  - Policy design
  - Privacy and affordability considerations
  - The need for transportation alternatives
  - Next steps in the process
- Illustrative scenarios of mobility pricing for Metro Vancouver describing how key principles and objectives might be achieved

## How does the work of the Independent Commission align with or support New Westminster's Official Community Plan, Master Transportation Plan and Envision 2032?

New Westminster is a Regional City Centre situated in the heart of Metro Vancouver and centred at the crossroads of a regional transportation system of rapid transit and bus lines, regional greenways, highways, major roads, truck routes, rail lines and marine routes. The city is home to five SkyTrain stations and two of the six bridges crossing the Fraser River. All of this results in a significant number of regional trips on the City's transportation networks. The forecasted growth for New Westminster as well as the neighbouring communities on both sides of the river will add even more pressure on the City's transportation networks. New Westminster, through the *Official Community Plan* (2017) and *Master Transportation Plan* (2015) and *Envision 2032* (2013), has outlined a vision for a multi-modal transportation system to support the development of a compact, sustainable, and resilient community to meet the city's needs into the future. This vision supports the work within the region through alignment with the *Regional Growth Strategy* and *Regional Transportation Strategy*.

Strategies within the *Official Community Plan*, Regional Context Statement:

- Contain urban development within the urban containment boundary (1.1)
- Focus growth in urban centres and frequent transit development areas (1.2)
- Promote land development patterns that support a diverse regional economy and employment close to where people live (2.1)
- Develop healthy and complete communities with access to a range of services and amenities (4.2)
- Coordinate land use and transportation to encourage transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking (5.1)

Alignment with *Envision 2032*, Transportation & Accessibility Policy Area Scope:

- Movement of residents and materials to, from and within the community in a safe, efficient, low-impact and sustainable manner
- All modes of local and regional transportation
- Promoting connectivity within the City and Region
- Vehicles, roads, sidewalks, paths, trails, transit, supportive technologies
- Accessibility for all needs, including residents, employees and visitors
- Target: Half of all trips to be made by walking, cycling, and transit
- Target: Reduce the distance people drive by one-third

Alignment with the *Master Transportation Plan*:

- Transportation hierarchy that considers the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transit, ride share and goods and services movement before that of private automobiles.
- Target 1: Increase Sustainable Transportation (Increase the mode share for trips by walking, cycling and transit from 35% to 60% by 2041)
- Target 2: No Additional Increase in Regional Through Traffic
- Target 3: Reduce Distance Driven
- Target 4: Increase Safety

Alignment with *Regional Transportation Strategy* goals and targets:

- Goal 1: Provide sustainable transportation choices
- Goal 2: Support compact urban areas
- Goal 3: Foster safe, healthy and complete communities
- Goal 4: Enable a sustainable economy
- Goal 5: Protect the environment
- Target: Half of all trips to be made by walking, cycling, and transit
- Target: Reduce the distance people drive by one-third

## 2. New Westminster's Perspectives on Mobility Pricing and Decongestion Pricing

The work of the Independent Commission aligns with the vision, goals and strategies outlined by New Westminster to create a walkable, transit-oriented city that enhances safety and livability while also recognizing the importance of facilitating vehicle and goods movement. Through the City's creation of strategic policies and initiatives, such as:

- implementing measures that promote walking, cycling and transit as the preferred method of transportation;
- supporting transportation facilities and programs to reduce car ownership and use while improving accessibility to destinations
- implementing Transportation Demand Management practices that support creation of low-impact transportation options

New Westminster continues to support and facilitate thoughtful use of available road space, and a shift in how people move—to sustainable and active transportation modes—in and around and through the city.

While New Westminster works on initiatives within city boundaries, there remains significant pressure on the City's arterial street network as a result of regional travel through the city. The three key objectives of the Commission on reducing traffic congestion, promoting fairness and supporting transportation investment directly influence these external pressures that may affect safety, livability, and connectivity within and between New Westminster's many neighbourhoods. In October, the Independent Commission launched their public consultation program under the banner *It's Time*, with a focus on "decongestion pricing". The *It's Time* project is the Commission's primary avenue of public engagement to hear from residents and businesses about what decongestion charging means from a local perspective.

New Westminster's objective is to contribute constructively to the process set out by the Independent Commission and bring forward considerations, questions and concerns, as related to the City's key policy documents, reflecting the current and future needs of the city to support the development of a compact, sustainable and resilient community.

The work being undertaken by the Independent Commission on mobility pricing, and the *It's Time* consultation program which is focused on decongestion pricing, aligns with the goals and objectives of New Westminster in supporting a shift to more sustainable and active modes of transportation. Congestion management, addressed on a regional scale, will help address the pressures of regional traffic on the City's transportation network, including for goods movement and personal travel. Investments in sustainable and active transportation are essential to develop a fully integrated and seamless network to move people safely and comfortably within the city and throughout the region. Addressing congestion on the road network requires a significant shift to transit and other sustainable modes. Reducing congestion will improve reliability on the road network.

The focus of the Independent Commission's *It's Time* public consultation program align particularly well with three of the City's core priorities:

- Travel Demand Management
- Truck Route Strategy
- Social Equity

Master Transportation Plan Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Mobility and Access

Goal 2: Health and Safety

Goal 3: Social Diversity

Goal 4: Sense of Place and Social Cohesion

Goal 5: Land Use and Transportation Integration

Goal 6: Sustainable Transportation System

## Travel Demand Management

New Westminster is a highly urbanized, compact community that is well served by five SkyTrain stations and frequent transit bus routes. The city has an extensive sidewalk network, and is connected to regional greenway and cycling networks which contribute to a high percentage of people using sustainable modes of transportation to get around<sup>1</sup> in our densely populated neighbourhoods. While many of the city's residents choose to travel by sustainable modes, and many travel by SkyTrain and bus through the City, there remains a large number of motor vehicle trips in New Westminster that have neither an origin or destination here—nearly 70% of motor vehicle trips in the City every day are simply traveling through, making it challenging for residents and businesses to get around New Westminster in a reliable and efficient manner. Additional tools are needed to shift travel behavior region-wide. In order to support the goals and objectives outlined in the Regional Transportation Strategy and the City's Master Transportation Plan, decongestion pricing is a compelling tool to aide in shifting the dial on travel behavior and supporting people in making more sustainable choices.

*Consideration 1: Mobility pricing should be implemented as a tool to compel people to shift to sustainable modes of transportation*

There are many factors that lead to a shift in travel behavior and which mode people choose to use for their destination and need. With further investment and improved accessibility to more sustainable transportation infrastructure and services, the City anticipates a shift to more sustainable and cost effective modes of travel.

*Consideration 2: Mobility pricing should be implemented as a tool to deal with congestion and to compel people to shift some trips to off-peak periods*

Mode choice is influenced by convenience and reliability of travel times for people moving within the city and throughout the region. Travel behavior impacts which routes are used to travel by vehicle, which increases traffic volumes on select routes at peak times, causing congestion which in turn causes bus delays and impacts to livability in our city. With further analysis and recommendations from the Commission, the City anticipates there to be more clarity on regional travel choices and where there is flexibility to shift some trips to off-peak periods.

1 - Transportation mode share for Auto as passenger or driver (69%), Transit (21%), Walk (9%), Bike (0.7%) in the Burnaby/New Westminster sub-region as outlined in the 2011 Metro Vancouver Regional Trip Diary (2013).

## Truck Route Strategy

New Westminster's central geographic position and proximity to regional routes and gateways provides strategic advantages, and it also means that the city deals with significant truck and rail traffic en route to other destinations. The City seeks to balance access and mobility on local roads for residents, businesses, emergency services and the transport of goods and services. The City envisions mobility pricing as a tool to aide in managing regional flow-through traffic on our road network.

*Consideration 3: Mobility pricing could be used as a tool to keep the right traffic on the right roads and encourage truck through-movements to use the Provincial highway network*

New Westminster has a long term Goods Movement Strategy that aims to see regional truck through-movements shift to the Provincial highway network where it makes sense to do so. Road pricing could be structured so that it supports goods movement while protecting livability in the Region's key urban centres, including New Westminster's central core.

## Social Equity

As indicated by the Commission, "fairness" is a key objective of mobility pricing and needs to address equity in how transportation costs are shared by all road users. New Westminster shares this view. We also highlight the concerns that transportation costs or decongestion pricing could be carried by specific roads users who do not have convenient access or who may have fewer choices for how they can move around the city or the region. The work of the Independent Commission must consider the implications for social equality.

*Consideration 4: The Mobility Pricing Independent Commission must account for people with limited resource and fewer available choices, and they may be impacted to a greater degree by decongestion charges*

Availability and access to sustainable and cost effective transportation choices is not equal across the region or even within each city and neighbourhood. People with limited resources, including those with disabilities and those experiencing the effects of poverty, may have fewer available choices when it comes to transportation, and they should not be penalized for making the most appropriate choice for their circumstance.

### 3. Composition of the Independent Commission

The work being undertaken by the Mobility Pricing Independent Commission incorporates a number of layers within the program structure to ensure that diverse perspectives and voices are included in the process. The Independent Commission itself is comprised of 14 individuals who were selected through an extensive recruitment process in early 2017. Interested individuals applied and were selected with the intent of providing a balanced group representing various demographics, social and economic perspectives, experiences, and geographical locations within the region. The work of the Commission is supported by the creation of three advisory panels of users, stakeholders and peers to provide feedback and advice with the goal of identifying key issues, opportunities, needs and considerations to help inform the process. Phase 1 of the *It's Time* consultation process is underway and geared towards engaging the public in the region to help define a “made-in-Metro-Vancouver” strategy in addressing the three key objectives.

New Westminster recognizes that First Nations, disability groups, and anti-poverty groups are not represented in the composition of the Mobility Pricing Independent Commission. With the extensive consultation process already identified and underway, New Westminster wishes to emphasize the importance of ensuring that these groups are well-represented and incorporated into the discussion, and that their perspectives and voices are not lost in the overall process.

*Consideration 5: Ensure that the voices of First Nations, disability groups and anti-poverty groups are well represented throughout the discussion and integrated into the work of the Independent Commission*

There are a number of important considerations that are found in the Metro Vancouver region. Many cities within the region have been fostering close connections and partnerships with local First Nation communities and building relationships through reconciliation activities. The regional transportation networks are utilized by people of all ages and of varying levels of ability and mobility, whom are confronted by a number of challenges throughout the systems. Metro Vancouver has also become a region where housing costs have increased substantially impacting cost of living for many, especially those living on a fixed income or earning below a living wage. The inclusion of these voices, as a guiding hand in the development of the project, would provide a meaningful integration of these perspectives into the discussion ensuring a lens of the key issues impacting these segments of the community are carefully considered throughout the process.

Since the composition of the Independent Commission does not include representatives from First Nations, disability groups and anti-poverty groups, these voices will need to be incorporated in a strategic and meaningful way throughout the consultation process outlined by the Commission.

## 4. Summary of Considerations

New Westminster has outlined a number of initial considerations, key issues and concerns that are important for the city as the Independent Commission continues the discussion on mobility pricing within the region. The City will be sharing this perspective through the *It's Time* engagement process and directly with the Independent Commission, ensuring that the issues important to the City are heard.

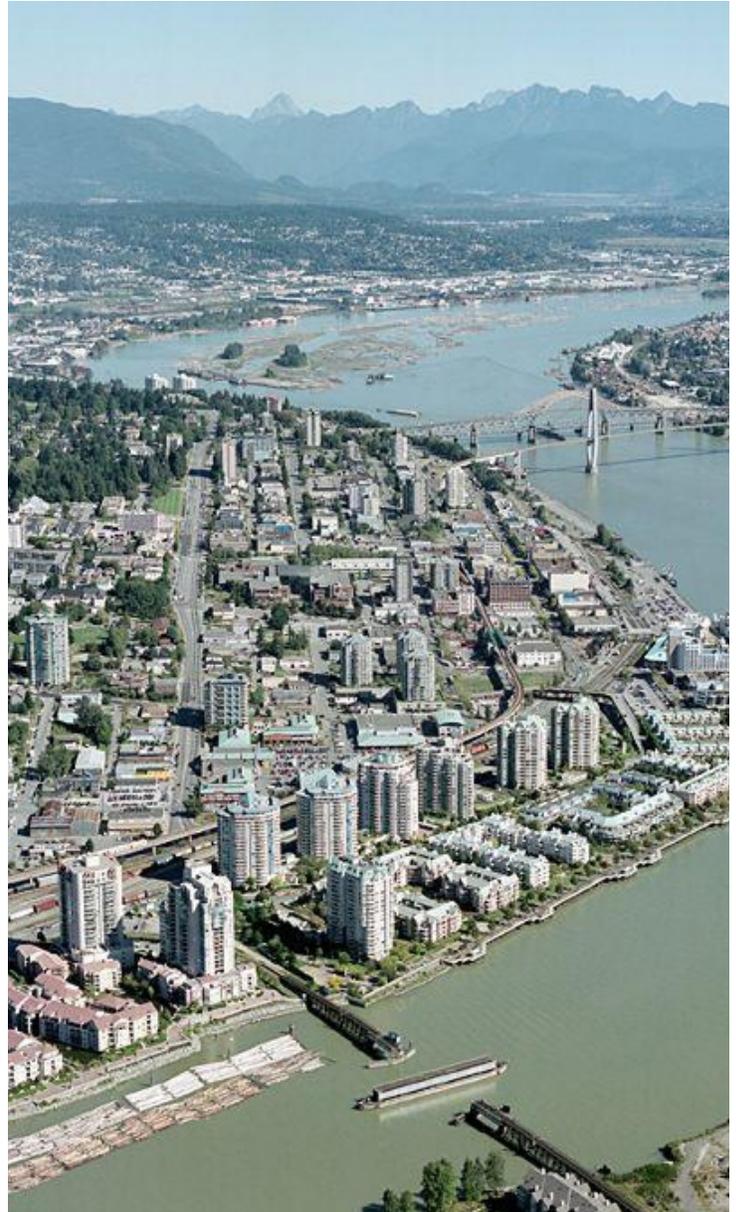
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Downtown New Westminster

### References

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