

TO: CITY MANAGER 2001 November 01

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING OUR FILE: 01.232

SUBJECT: **ADVANCING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES IN URBAN REGIONS-DRAFT GVRD POSITION PAPER**

PURPOSE: To provide a proposed City of Burnaby response to the draft GVRD position paper on how the Federal Government can contribute to the implementation of Regional growth management, transportation and environmental plans in Greater Vancouver.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the GVRD Board be advised that Burnaby agrees in principle to initiating dialogue with the Federal Government in advancing Regional growth management, transportation and environmental plans as generally outlined in the GVRD position paper "*Advancing Federal Government Objectives in Urban Regions*".
2. **THAT** the GVRD Board be requested to identify with member Municipalities involvement, those projects and programs that Federal involvement and/or partnership would specifically help address Regional growth management, transportation and environmental issues.
3. **THAT** following the approval of the recommended projects and programs referred to in the above recommendation, the GVRD Board be requested to initiate discussions with the Federal and Provincial Governments to develop a joint process to ensure the most effective means to address, monitor and implement the recommended projects and programs.
4. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to The Honourable Greg Halsey-Brandt, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations; Burnaby's MP's and MLA's.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of June 29, 2001, the GVRD Board directed its staff to prepare a draft position paper on how the Federal Government can contribute to the implementation of Regional growth management, transportation and environmental plans in Greater Vancouver.

On 2001 October 3, the GVRD Chair wrote to Mayor Drummond indicating that, at its September meeting, the GVRD Board of Directors had received a copy of the draft position paper, *Advancing Federal Government Objectives in Urban Regions*. The letter stated that the Board was inviting comments on the draft paper from Municipal governments and other parties, with the intent that Regional staff would submit a revised draft for approval by the Board in 2001 November.

In turn, at its 2001 October 15 meeting, Council asked staff to prepare a report on the GVRD position paper. This report responds to Council's request.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF POSITION PAPER

The position paper attempts to show why and how the Federal Government should play a greater role in addressing urban issues in Canada generally, and the GVRD specifically. With respect to the latter, it focuses on contributions that the government could make towards implementation of Regional growth management, transportation, and environmental plans in Greater Vancouver.

The following discussion provides a brief synopsis of the various components of the paper.

Introduction:

In its introduction, the paper states that, around the world, policies and actions have demonstrated that urban regions are a necessary focus for fulfilling national agendas. The introduction also indicates a growing interest that has emerged in Canada concerning urban issues in recent years.

Section 1: Federal Responsibilities in the Vancouver Region and Public Policy Challenges

With respect to Federal responsibilities, this section makes a case that (1) the Federal Government has a significant presence in Greater Vancouver, (2) since the 1980s, the Federal Government has withdrawn from most urban programs that provided direct support for urban infrastructure, and (3) the Federal Government has recently taken action on selected urban issues facing Greater Vancouver (i.e., homelessness, concerns in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside).

With respect to challenges, the paper notes that the Federal Government is not adequately structured to deal with urban issues. Quoting Maurice Strong, the paper contends that "*the availability of finances is one of the principal constraints on effective management and control of urban growth everywhere and one of the greatest sources of tension and conflict.*"

It also notes that (1) major metropolitan areas do not receive their “fair share” of taxes collected from their residents (e.g., through income tax, fuel taxes), and (2) federal funding programs tend to focus on major capital projects or time-limited initiatives and have not generally addressed concerns of sustainable funding.

Section 2: Principles for Building the Federal Role

This section proposes that five principles be used as the basis for building a Federal role in urban regions:

- work towards the attainment of Federal objectives through investment in the nation’s urban regions
- respect jurisdictional responsibilities
- recognize the importance of “made in the region” approaches
- tripartite cooperation is essential to achieving common objectives
- an integrated approach to fiscal, social, economic, and environmental policy is needed to deliver a cohesive urban policy

Section 3: Proposals for the Future Federal Role in Urban Regions

This section puts forward eight proposed roles for the Federal Government in urban regions:

- support planning strategies at the regional scale
- support for initiatives that advance Federal economic objectives at the Regional level
- advance the development of human and social capital
- pursue harmonization of environmental management and public health responsibilities
- support for sustainable urban transportation
- invest in innovations in urban infrastructure delivery
- support for the voluntary sector
- support for objective-based funding programs

Section 4: A Federal Agenda for Greater Vancouver

The position paper outlines a more specific agenda of opportunities for the Federal Government to advance its objectives through cooperation with initiatives in Greater Vancouver as follows:

1. Support the Sustainable Region Initiative

The GVRD Board has launched its Sustainable Region Initiative by way of a resolution to the review of the Livable Region Strategic Plan and Air Quality Management Plan within the context of social, economic and environmental sustainability as a

fundamental objective. This review will offer many opportunities for Federal involvement. For example, the review can provide the opportunity to test the establishment of Regional environmental initiatives to support the Kyoto Protocol, embark on a joint community engagement program, and support implementation of the Liquid Waste Management Plan.

2. *Support Implementation of Regional and Gateway Transportation Plans*

Taken together, the long-range and strategic transportation plans adopted by the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, along with the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council's proposal for a Major Commercial system, provide a mutually supportive framework for improvements to the region's urban transportation, goods movement, trans-border and related transportation systems. With attention focusing on sustainable solutions to the transportation challenges of the 2010 Winter Olympic bid, Federal support on an ongoing funding basis for this framework will be essential.

3. *Support Social Capital Initiatives*

The Federal presence in Greater Vancouver could reflect and support Federal involvement in a wide range of initiatives to continue to build social capital. These include assisted housing programs, helping address the leaky condominium problem, implementation of the regional homelessness strategy, substance abuse remediation programs, and cultural development programs.

4. *Support Human Capital Initiatives*

Employment and training programs, including mid-career re-training programs, will continue to be important to increase the region's global competitiveness, avoid shortages of skilled workers, support the new economy and contribute to individual and community well-being. Federal assistance in supporting research programs, encouraging innovation in industry and building links between post-secondary training and industry labour requirements are priorities.

4.0 STAFF COMMENTS

As indicated in the draft paper, the Greater Vancouver Region has a population of 2,050,000 and now makes up 49.5% of the entire population of the Province. The region has 1.1 million jobs and its labour force constitutes 53% of the Provincial labour force.

During the 1990s, an average of 40,000 additional people made Greater Vancouver their home each year. From 1991 to 2000, the Vancouver Region grew at a faster rate than all other Canadian metropolitan regions with a 28% increase in population. The population of the region is forecast to grow by more than 800,000 in the next 20 years.

Given the above, and Greater Vancouver's strategic location relative to the Pacific Rim, the future of the Region from a economic, social and environmental perspective is vital.

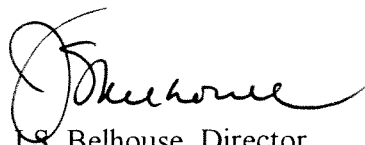
The GVRD position paper broadly describes those initiatives in which the Federal Government and the Region could co-operate. In general, Burnaby staff concur with the paper's overall directions. However, in reviewing the draft position paper, it is realized that the Provincial, Federal and indeed, global contexts have shifted dramatically since its preparation. Following the events of September 11, Canada and the world have become much different, with the economy becoming shakier, security concerns growing, and competition for Federal funds increasing. While the new uncertainties and changing context must be acknowledged, they should not be seen to diminish the GVRD's call for an increased Federal Government role in urban matters. Indeed, given the foregoing, the challenges and demands faced by urban areas and local governments may be expected to rise. As such, the case for increased Federal support should be given additional credence - particularly in light of the strategic partnership role that urban areas can play in helping to address Federal policy objectives.

In the opinion of Burnaby staff, the nature of Federal/Provincial/Regional/Local relationships is extremely complex. As such, a key to the success of the Regional Plan is a commitment from the Federal Government to be a significant contributing partner to the implementation of Regional initiatives.

The principles and Federal role put forward in the Position Paper provide a sound basis on which to engage the Federal Government more directly in matters of livability important to the Region. It is therefore recommended that the GVRD be advised that the City of Burnaby agrees in principle to initiating dialogue with the Federal Government in addressing Regional growth management, transportation and environmental plans as generally outlined in their position paper "Advancing Federal Government Objectives in Urban Regions."

It is recognized that the position paper is a broad policy paper. Its intent was not to define specific projects and/or programs that the Federal Government could be requested to specifically partner at this time. However, it is recognized that for the Federal Government to meaningful contribute to the Livability of the Region, specific projects and/or programs beyond what has been identified in the paper will need to be defined. As such it is also recommended that the GVRD identify with member municipalities involvement those

projects and programs that would specifically address the Regional growth management, transportation and environmental issues from a Federal perspective. It is further recommended that following the approval of the recommended projects and programs, the GVRD Board be requested to initiate discussions with the Federal and Provincial Government to develop a process to ensure the most effective means to address, monitor and implement the recommended projects and programs. Reference to the development of this process with the Federal and Provincial Governments should be referenced in the GVRD Position Paper.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

BLS/JF/sla/sa

cc: Director Engineering
Director Finance
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

R:\Long Range Clerical\DOCS\JOHN\Council Reports\fedurbanagenda01.rpt.wpd