

# BC Transit indicted for poor management

Despite that, gas tax likely to be hiked 57 per cent this fall

Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria likes the irony in its work.

A couple of weeks ago a damning indictment of management at BC Transit was released in a Review of BC Transit by the sober bean-counters at Ministry of Finance.

The internal audit makes 28 recommendations concluding BC Transit and the Victoria Regional Transit Commission has wasted your tax money and has done a poor job of managing your assets.

It goes even further by concluding the quality of management information make it difficult to assess performance, adding, "there are opportunities for cost savings as well as improving effectiveness and efficiency across the business."

So, most taxpayers thought that any notion of increasing the gas tax from 3.5 to 5.5-cents-a-litre - local drivers already pay one of the highest gas taxes in Canada - to support public transit expansion was a non-starter. After all, why would the province approve another \$6.8-million annually given the state of management and room for cost-savings?

**But, now the province will probably approve that 57 per cent hike in the gas tax this fall. Plus, Victoria Regional Transit Commission is also due to receive about \$6-million in federal money earmarked for such things as new buses and infrastructure, plus a portion of the \$68-million from the province due to be distributed for transit service.**

What assurances are there that a management revolution at BC Transit will allow for wise spending of the new-found windfalls compliments of the municipal, provincial and federal taxpayers? Otherwise, what's the incentive to improve management?

**BACKGROUND:** [Review of BC Transit, Ministry of Finance, 2016](#)

## **MORE TENANTS STILL SOUGHT**

The CRD has two tenants to help pay the bills on the Viewfield property that was prematurely purchased in October 2015 for a regional sewage biosolids facility and then nixed by Esquimalt town council.

The new tenants are Flying Squirrel and Axis Trampoline Park which plan to operate an indoor trampoline park and hire 50 to 60 employees, along with Spinaakers, which currently operates a gastro brew pub. Two thirds of the facility though is still unoccupied.

The CRD is now looking for additional tenants to help pay the bills on the 4.2 acre, \$17-million site while still trying to sell the property.

## **MUNICIPAL MATTERS**

**PEI has introduced a bill that would force municipalities to amalgamate.** The move would give the Minister of Land, Communities and Environment the ability to initiate amalgamation in municipalities where local councils might be unwilling. [See CBC News story](#) ....**Kerri Milton**, formerly from Downtown Penticton, is the new executive director of the Downtown Victoria Business Association....**Tectoria Venture Partner**, a Victoria-based investment management initiative, is launching an angel fund in the city. The \$20-30-million fund is supported by angel investors such as **Hannes Blum, Todd Dunlop and Elton Pereira**, reports the Victoria News....Municipality of North Cowichan councillors voted last month to move forward with a process that could see the municipality and the City of Duncan amalgamate. The \$145,000 cost of the **amalgamation study** will be split three ways with the province....

## **CRD UPSIDE DOWN STILL SPELLS CRD**

On Feb. 1, 1966, the Capital Regional District was created as part of the provincial government's effort to establish the regional government concept of local government throughout BC. At this point the 50th anniversary activities are limited, just as well considering the public anger and controversy over spending \$65-million plus so far to deliver wastewater treatment to the region and having nothing to show for it. There will be geocaching adventures, a coffee table book commemorating milestones, and an unspecified 'summer celebration.' If you take the quiz on its website, you will learn that **CRD is an ambigram**, as it reads the same if turned upside down. The CRD has told Grumpy\$ that the budget is "very modest and low key," although a dollar figure has not been attached to the celebration.

## Saanich administration scores b-i-g pay raises >>

### **NEW VANCOUVER HOME TAXED 107 TIMES**

Home construction in Vancouver is subject to at least 107 government taxes, fees or levies, driving the cost of a new condo up by at least 37 per cent, according to an analysis done by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF). The impact on a similar Victoria property may not be all that different.

The 37 per cent built-in tax rate means that a \$403,809 real-world condo price includes \$109,118 in government costs: \$41,615 to the federal government, \$16,928 to the provincial government, \$50,575 to municipal and regional governments.

"Politicians are very good at pointing the housing affordability finger at everyone but themselves," said Jordan Bateman, the CTF's BC Director. "It's time they admitted that they have their hand in the housing till too, and that their red tape and taxes are a huge cost driver." [MORE >>](#)

### **WHAT'S COMING UP**

OPEN BOARD MEETING - With your help Grumpy\$ has now **reached the 65% mark** of our start-up goal of \$5,000. Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$450, and have included gifts-in-kind. To make it easier for our supporters we've added a PayPal button at the bottom of this page that accepts all major credit cards. Thank you for your generous support. Join us **Tuesday, Aug. 9 from 12 to 2 pm** for lunch and meeting at location TBA. Partners and interested supporters are welcome to sit in, but please RSVP to [grumpytaxpayers@telus.net](mailto:grumpytaxpayers@telus.net) ...

**Grumble or join us and be part of the solution. See you in August, and find out how much money a politician can really make.**

Sincerely,  
The Grumpy Taxpayer\$ Team