

"I'm very troubled by this," says Victoria Coun. Geoff Young, "It's very disconcerting to be spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to build "a railway crossing that may never be used." The parks committee recommended the CRD spend \$1.2-million on the E & N Rail Trail including \$440,000 on a railway crossing.

Grumpy Taxpayer\$ of Greater Victoria

'Almost' The Best Place on Earth | grumpytaxpayers.com | Feb. 2017



Federal grants anchor municipal finances

Esquimalt, Metchosin and Colwood biggest beneficiaries

In 2015, federal payments in lieu of taxes in the Capital region totaled \$29-million or 4.33 per cent of the total municipal revenues including surplus, according to Public Works Canada figures.

"Remember, there's only one taxpayer," says John Treleaven, 1st vice-president of Grumpy Taxpayer\$. "These payments in lieu of taxes point to the complexity of the tax system in the region and also contribute significantly to the finances of several municipalities."

At \$11.6-million or 37.5 per cent of its revenues, the lion's share of payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) for municipal purposes goes to Esquimalt in consideration of the naval presence at Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt.

Unknown to the general public, federal grants also form a substantial portion of the budgets of Metchosin (44.7 per cent), Colwood (17.36 per cent) and North Saanich (12.60 per cent).

Metchosin hosts the William Head Institution (Correctional Service Canada)

and Rock Point DND lands. Colwood is home to Royal Roads University, the Colwood DND fuel dump and so on. North Saanich has the Victoria International Airport, the Agricultural Farm and the Pat Bay Ocean Sciences facility.

View the PILT's of all 13 municipalities in the capital region, gross payments prior to disbursement to other local governments.

[READ MORE, TABLE 1 >>](#)

The \$11.6-million grant received by the municipality of Esquimalt, home of Canada's naval base and other DND assets, is one of the largest grants in lieu of taxes in Canada,

[READ MORE TABLE 2 >>](#)

Sewage board leaders to get \$20,000 a month

In mid-January the CRD board of directors approved spending \$20,000 a month for each of the chair and vice-chair of the sewage treatment board. Trouble was the directors made the decision without any accompanying documentation or written staff report to aid in the decision and for the public record. With this kind of board oversight, bets are now being made on whether the final bill for the sewer treatment project will be closer to \$765-million or \$1-billion! **READ**

MORE>> http://crd.ca.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=1&clip_id=860

Grumpy Taxpayer\$ has a theme song >>



DEBT IN REGION CLOSER TO \$527-MILLION

The debt at the CRD and the 13 municipalities is less than figured - more than \$500-million, but it's an amount set to escalate during the next few years.

BC is likely the only jurisdiction in Canada and the US where municipalities must go through a regional government for capital borrowings approval and then to the Municipal Finance

Authority, says Diana Lokken of the CRD. (While convoluted, the advantage is municipalities large and small borrow money cheaper for the taxpayer). Bizarre as it may seem, the same debt shows up on the financials of the 13 municipalities AND also collectively on the CRD financials.

Bottom line is that the outstanding debt is \$377,241,427 at end 2015 which included the CRD, the 13 municipalities, and the Capital Regional Housing Corporation. On top of that, the Capital Region Hospital District had a debt of \$150,910,000.

Limitations to estimates: This **debt estimate** does not reflect the wealth, assets, or ability of the jurisdiction to manage that debt. It does not reflect any population or tax base growth or loss that might occur in a municipality. Typically, of course, larger jurisdictions can assume more debt, and smaller jurisdictions less.

Stay tuned: Any additional debt taken on regionally in 2016 as part of its \$104-million capital budget will be available for viewing by the public in mid 2017. The estimates also do not reflect any additional debt taken on in 2017 as part of the current capital budget request of \$132.7-million, for the planned sewer treatment program, the 911 unified call answer service, the E and N Rail Trail Humpback Connector, a landfill gas-utilization facility, and affordable housing.

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

Local elections need big changes, according to a **task force report done for Vancouver city council**. It recommends a proportional representation system, for its civic election, allowing immigrants who are not yet citizens to vote, and placing tighter controls on campaign finances....Victoria city council is considering a **motion to request a 15 per cent foreign buyers tax be implemented by the CRD** similar to the one implemented last year to cool down the Vancouver real estate market The motion was introduced by Couns. Ben Isitt and Jeremy Loveday.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Members and viewers are welcome to send along their story and issue ideas. It could be a question or view on municipal governance or maybe you just want to get something off your chest. We will take a look at your ideas and suggestions. Send along to grumpytaxpayers@telus.net, thanks.

WHAT'S COMING UP

Donations have ranged from \$25 to \$450, gifts in kind and sponsorships welcome. With your help Grumpy\$ has now **reached the 80% mark** of our start-up goal of \$5,000. 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. Also join us **Tuesday, Mar. 7 from 12 to 2 pm** for lunch and meeting at location TBA. Partners and interested supporters are welcome to sit in, RSVP to grumpytaxpayers@telus.net ...

Help us inspire better local government.

Sincerely,
The Grumpy Taxpayer\$ Team



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A non-profit, unaffiliated, non-partisan, citizen's advocacy group dedicated to lower taxes, less waste and more accountable municipal government.



CRD Budget up 8% ? !

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