



SOUNDING BOARD



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GVBOT opposes mobility pricing scheme

TRANSPORT | Plan could harm Vancouver businesses

In November Vancouver City Council voted to advance consultations with an aim to implement a road toll to enter and exit the Metro Core by 2025.

While the battle against climate change is essential, the plan caused controversy thanks to the inclusion of mobility pricing that would see traffic entering the Metro Core charged an as-yet-to-be-determined toll.

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade has real concerns over the scheme, which could spell disaster for downtown businesses that are already struggling with COVID-19. The plan also ignores goods movement and the vital access to port terminals in the region.



ISTOCK/JOSEFHANUS

We should be focussed on survival

COVID-19 has already ravaged businesses across Greater

Vancouver. To date, more than 6,500 companies have been forced to close their doors as a result of the pandemic, and many more are struggling to stay afloat as we face a second wave of the virus.

If implemented, the city's proposals would only make things worse for these "Main Street" businesses who, pre-COVID-19, were already contending with increased costs, regulations, property tax and fees. Put simply, it's the exact opposite of what needs to be done right now.

Mobility pricing cannot be implemented in a vacuum

GVBOT is also concerned that the city-centric transport pricing

strategy fails to deliver a holistic approach that serves the entire region. After all, if we are going to enhance our regional competitiveness and avoid unintended consequences, Greater Vancouver's mobility pricing cannot be implemented in a vacuum. Instead a regional approach is required, one that optimizes the flow of goods and people throughout the entire region.

The GVBOT has been, and continues to be, in favour of a form of regional mobility pricing – at a more appropriate time – that provides a replacement revenue source to replace declining gas and parking taxes. But without that regional approach, in its

current form, the city's plan is simply adding costs, and running the risk of creating an uncoordinated patchwork of systems that could have the opposite effect of increasing congestion and emissions.

Make your voice heard

On behalf of its more than 5,000 Members, GVBOT has repeatedly voiced its opposition to the proposed plans. In November, we presented a letter to the city outlining our objections, we have also held discussions with key figures including Mayor Stewart.

We are continuing to act in order to ensure this vital subject remains at the forefront of the public agenda. **SB**

Remembering John Collings

RECOGNITION | Long time GVBOT Member passes away

John Collings took his passions and his commitments seriously. Many will remember the sight of this man—an unmistakable silhouette at six foot four—striding into a GVBOT event, greeting colleagues with an affable smile and a wave; or sliding into the chair's seat at the head of the committee table still wearing his soaking wet bike rain gear. For more than three decades,

John was heavily involved in numerous policy committees. He variously chaired the Community Affairs Committee and all four iterations of the Regional Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, working tirelessly with Members and the executive of GVBOT to provide policy input to local, provincial and federal agencies on a wide range of transportation issues.

The fact is, if there was a major infrastructure project underway in the region that the Transportation Committee was exploring, it was more than likely that John, in his professional capacity with Delcan or Collings Johnston Inc., had worked on some aspect of it. If you have driven the Sea to Sky Highway, experienced the George Massey Tunnel counterflow lanes, or traveled the SFU ring



road you have enjoyed the benefit of John's passion for highway

John was never afraid to roll up his sleeves and tackle a problem. This ethic made him a highly valued Member of the GVBOT, his profession and his community. John died October 9, his spirit undiminished. Each of us may ask, how going forward we can replicate this dedication to giving back. **SB**



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ENERGY | The road to success for B.C.'s energy industry

Opportunity to electrify B.C. economy

BY RADHA CURPEN

A strong energy industry will continue to be critical to B.C.'s economic recovery, and its future will be defined by much more than the current health and economic challenges.

Three factors that will keep B.C.'s energy industry growing in the long-term are: a sharp focus on ESG, innovation and embracing the new energy economy, and successful relations with Indigenous communities

Here is a closer look at these three areas.

A sharp focus on ESG

It is essential that B.C.'s energy industry continues to view and demonstrate through concrete actions that ESG objectives are an integral part of their strategy. Indigenous communities, and stakeholders such as shareholders, investors, lenders, regulators, and communities all expect this.

The bar for what constitutes best practices is rising and access and cost of capital depends on getting the systems and processes in place to demonstrate transparency, action and accountability.

The ESG momentum has been building for decades. Its pace in Canada may appear to be accelerating, but in reality it's catching up to our international counterparts. The momentum is too advanced to stop.

Innovation and the new energy economy

The province is home to world-leading electricity, battery, carbon sequestration and hydrogen technology companies, all technologies at the heart of the new energy economy growing globally.

B.C. continues to have major opportunities to electrify its economy, and to export surplus energy and the energy storage capacity afforded by its unique hydroelectric assets. In terms



Radha Curpen

For B.C.'s energy future to be realized, the regulatory innovation gap needs to be narrowed

of producing more energy in a world moving to carbon neutrality, B.C. also has world class wind resources, and was amongst the first provinces in Canada to have

geothermal-specific legislation, with the application process for geothermal projects recently streamlined. New technology is driving these areas as well as continued LNG development to take advantage of B.C.'s abundant natural gas and the role LNG can play in electrifying economies globally.

For B.C.'s energy future to be realized, the regulatory innovation gap needs to be narrowed to match industry's ambitious agenda. Governments need to focus on the opportunity costs and losses to other jurisdictions as part of their policy response. This is the only way to ensure B.C.'s competitiveness in fast evolving regional and global markets for energy technology and energy commodities.

Indigenous rights and relations

New energy projects will continue to have an important part to play in advancing reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada. Apart from being rights holders, Indigenous peoples are also proponents and investors. A

successful natural resources sector depends upon their participation. Governments at all levels, Indigenous communities, industry, and the wider community all have a role to play.

Ensuring early engagement, being alive to the aspirations (economic and social) of the communities, to facilitating partnerships through innovative and responsive capital sources, are all means of achieving a successful partnership.

Our province is privileged to have many natural competitive advantages sought after by the rest of the world – including access to clean sources of power, a highly-skilled workforce, being a strategic gateway to Asia and the United States, and a stringent environmental and regulatory framework. We need to ensure we capitalize on these natural advantages by fostering an environment that attracts smart, innovative, and sustainable growth. **RC**

Radha Curpen, Vancouver Managing Partner, Bennett Jones LLP and 2020-21 Vice-Chair Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

DIVERSITY | Foundations in diversity and inclusion certification

Virtual courses available in 2021

The Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council is pleased to announce a program of virtual instructor-led training on diversity and inclusion.

Presented in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI), the program is designed to help businesses better understand why diversity and inclusion are key to success, as well as how to implement respectful practices into the workplace

Taking place over three separate days, participants will enjoy expert-led instruction from a qualified CCDI facilitator, alongside breakout opportunities and brainstorming activities to create a truly immersive and collaborative educational experience.

Each of the three sessions tackles key issues surrounding diversity and inclusion such as unconscious bias and respect in

Presented in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)

the workplace, as well as an exploration of the role that equality plays in successful business.

Finally, at the culmination of the course, participants will receive a CCDI Foundation Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion.

We are currently accepting registrations for our next course beginning January 26, 2021, as well as further dates in March and May. For more information, or to register for an upcoming course visit boardoftrade.com/diversity. **SB**

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