

Steering the bus

NORTH SHORE NEWS MARCH 24, 2013

THE report commissioned for the TransLink mayor's council Friday aired conclusions that were little surprise to anyone. The way TransLink is governed is dysfunctional and as the report writers dryly noted "unique, and not in a good way."

Other metropolitan cities around the world apparently have this crazy idea that those who fund and are directly affected by transportation decisions should have some say in them, through elected representatives. This, of course, is not the case with TransLink - ever since the province and local mayors got into a bun fight over which major projects should have priority.

The current system is extremely convenient for the province, allowing Victoria to remain essentially in control while keeping up the appearances of a local organization for citizens to blame in the case of public gripes.

Of which there have been an abundant share.

Understandably, nobody is keen to wear TransLink's many problems. Local mayors don't want to be blamed for property tax increases when they have no say in the decisions that prompted them. The province isn't jumping for joy at the prospect of raising carbon, vehicle or sales taxes on an outraged public either.

But the system needs more money. That's a problem that's not going away anytime soon.

Changing the governance structure would be a good first step.

But the issues of who's going to pay the piper will remain, regardless of which party forms the next government.

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