

TransLink Governance Review



March 2013

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March 20, 2013

Mayor Richard Walton
Chair, Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation
c/o TransLink
1600-4720 Kingsway (MetroTower II)
Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2

Dear Mayor Walton and Members of the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation

Re: Report on TransLink Governance Review

On behalf of the consulting team, we are pleased to submit the attached report and appendices on the TransLink Governance Review. We hope you will find the information contained therein to be useful to you in your review of the governance arrangements for urban transport in Metro Vancouver.

Our ability to complete this assignment has been greatly assisted by the cooperation and support we have received, not only from you and Mayor Wright, but also from staff and other contacts, both locally and in the agencies we consulted for the international review. While we appreciate this assistance, the content and accuracy of the attached report are the sole responsibility of the consulting team.

This assignment has been both an honour and a pleasure for us, because we have found widespread interest in, and commitment to, better urban transport governance both here and abroad. We hope this report will make a small contribution to the advancement of knowledge in this area.

We look forward to the opportunity to present this report to you and your colleagues and to respond to your questions and comments.

Yours truly,



Clark Lim, P.Eng.



Ken Cameron, FCIP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews the current urban transport governance arrangements in Metro Vancouver, including TransLink, the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation and the TransLink Commissioner, in relation to:

- Basic criteria of good governance, as identified through a literature search and a survey of best practices, both in respect to governance in general and in respect to urban transport governance in particular;
- Governance arrangements in other broadly comparable urban regions in the world, with a particular focus on those considered 'leader regions;' and
- The views of people closely associated with the previous and current arrangements in Metro Vancouver.

The results of the review are that the current urban transport governance arrangements:

- Are less than ideal in relationship to the six major criteria of *accountability, transparency, responsiveness, clarity of purpose, advocacy and productive relationships*. The most critical of these is *accountability* to the population being served, which is almost completely missing from the present arrangements;
- Are unique in the world and not in a good way, in that the governance arrangements in other 'leader' regions, while showing a considerable diversity, have common features to ensure accountability, effectiveness and efficiency in decision-making and service delivery that are not found in Metro Vancouver; and
- Are seen as satisfactory by few, if any, of those who are closely associated with TransLink locally.

The review highlighted the need to distinguish the governance arrangements from other aspects of the architecture of urban transport in Metro Vancouver. In particular:

- The scope and mandate of TransLink, including not only transit, but roads, cycling, goods movement and transportation demand management, are still seen as 'state of the art' internationally;
- TransLink's funding sources are enviable in the eyes of many others because they are diverse and appropriate in that they reflect the 'user pay' principle (even though the adequacy of the funding may not be sufficient and the processes for accessing the funds may be restrictive); and
- The achievements of the present structure, in the form of the development of the urban transport system, are considerable and a source of justifiable pride.

The literature review and international 'scan' revealed the following optimal 'division of labour' between the various elements of a governance system:

- *Policy level* strategic decision-making on policies, plans, funding and relationships to broader plans and public purposes is the responsibility of elected representatives;
- *Management level* translation of policy decisions into operational plans and programs is the responsibility of persons and/or bodies skilled in management, administration, service provision and financial control, including the selection of service delivery modes and structures; and
- *Implementation level* decisions are the responsibility of staff or contractors hired and paid for this purpose.

The report discusses a number of models that could be considered for applying this framework in Metro Vancouver. It is the view of the consulting team that the most important need is to rectify the accountability gap, which would then provide the stimulus for governance arrangements that better reflect the criteria identified in current thinking and best practice. This would include the ability to develop productive relationships with those responsible for spatial planning and economic development.

Urban transport and its close cousins, spatial and economic planning, are crucial functions in maintaining the livability and prosperity of urban regions. Where these functions are carried out at the local government level, successful governance structures must have the ability to take a regional perspective and have strong accountability links to the people served. Where such local government structures are not present, the default is to the state/provincial level where governance approaches, to be successful, must be comprehensive, directive and ongoing under the broad accountability provided by the parliamentary form of government.

TRANSLINK GOVERNANCE REVIEW

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In December 2012 the consulting team of Acuere Consulting Inc., Silex Consulting Inc., and Steer Davies Gleave was awarded a contract to undertake the TransLink Governance Review Project. This report presents the findings of the review.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

As stated in the request for proposals (RFP), the prime purpose of this project is to provide the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation with more information on "global best practice with respect to the purpose/functional role of transit agencies, governance structure (i.e. elected vs. professional vs. hybrid boards; nature of representation), reasons/purpose of structure and the impacts of the structure (successes and failures)."¹

The report presents and evaluates examples of governance structures and their potential applicability for TransLink based on the evaluation. The research has included a literature review, a review of TransLink's governance history, a review of governance practices from other jurisdictions, and consultation with key people associated with TransLink. As stipulated in the RFP, the report has been prepared for discussion purposes and does not make recommendations.

2 HISTORY OF TRANSLINK GOVERNANCE

2.1 Overview

The scope of transport governance, as it has come to be understood in Metro Vancouver, consists of the oversight of the following functions:

- The planning, design, construction and operation of roads;
- The development, operation and financing of transit services, including bus services, SkyTrain, West Coast Express and HandyDart; and
- Transportation planning for individual services as well as the system as a whole, including programs to promote more efficient transportation choices than the single occupancy vehicle.

Appendix 1 gives a detailed summary of the evolution of transportation governance since the early 1970s. For the purposes of this report it is worth noting that the prime impetus for creating TransLink came from the Greater Vancouver Regional District in the mid-1990s when the region approached the Province to restructure transportation. This was because, even though the Province and Region had jointly prepared the Transport 2021 Medium and Long-Range Transportation Plans in 1993, over time it became clear that there was considerable 'drift' from the Plans' direction. Moreover, the Transport 2021 Plans were seen as essential to implementation of the Livable Region Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the GVRD in 1996

¹ TransLink Request for Proposal Q 12-113, TransLink Governance Review Project, 2012.



with the formal support of all municipalities, and deemed by the Province to be an approved Regional Growth Strategy under the Growth Strategies Act.

The Province agreed to the process and after negotiation and ratification of a successful agreement, legislation was passed in 1998. The first TransLink Board took over from BC Transit in April 1999 and the region's Major Road Network (MRN) also came into being. The TransLink Board was appointed by the Board of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (now known as Metro Vancouver) and consisted of mayors and members of the Board of Directors of the Greater Vancouver Regional District selected in accordance with a formula in the legislation for sub-regional representation. The legislation also included provision for provincial members (MLAs or ministers) on the Board, but these positions were not filled on a regular basis.

Summary of Governance Milestones

Before 1970 - Province/municipalities did roads and BC Electric did transit
 1972 – BC Bureau of Transit Services established
 1975 - Livable Region Proposals identified the key role of transit in livability and growth management
 1979 – Urban Transit Authority, Metro Transit Operating Company, GVRD
 1982 – BC Transit, Vancouver Regional Transit Commission
 1999 – 'TransLink I' (major roads, transit, TDM, AirCare) under a board appointed by GVRD (now Metro)
 2007 – 'TransLink II' (board of non-elected people; legal connection to Metro (GVRD) board and planning severed)

2.2 The 2007 Governance Change

In the ensuing period, there were several instances of significant disagreement between the TransLink Board and the provincial government, including the implementation of an annual vehicle levy and the phasing of rapid transit. These issues came to a head when the Canada Line was brought before the TransLink Board for approval. While the Canada Line was eventually approved, the then Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure commissioned an independent panel to undertake a review of TransLink's governance. The three-person panel's recommendations covered a range of issues, however the most significant from the perspective of this report were:

"To encourage future-focused planning for an integrated transportation system, we recommend a new three-stage planning framework. The first stage includes a 30-year provincial vision for transportation in an expanded region. The second stage consists of a 10-year TransLink strategic plan that is consistent with the provincial vision and the third stage consists of a three-year TransLink operating plan based on the 10-year strategic plan. This hierarchy of planning ensures that economic, social and environmental goals are considered and that provincial and regional interests are integrated.

In addition to a new planning framework, we recommend a new three-part governance structure. We recommend a new Council of Mayors who will be accountable for approving TransLink's 10-Year Strategic Plans, including revenue measures. We recommend a new, non-political TransLink Board of 11 directors. This Board will be responsible for planning, constructing and operating the regional transportation system.

*To further improve public accountability and confidence in TransLink, we recommend the establishment of an independent TransLink Commissioner responsible for approving fare increases, for assessing and reporting on the consistency of TransLink's 10-year strategic plans with the provincial vision (as well as the reasonableness of the financial assumptions included in the 10-year plans) and for auditing TransLink's customer satisfaction performance."*²

The Panel's recommendations were implemented in legislation in 2007, with the main variance being the reduction of the size of the TransLink board to 9 members from the recommended 11.

2.3 Independent Commentary on 2007 Changes

Since 2007 little has been published about the effects of the changes. However one document that has partly dealt with transportation governance within Metro Vancouver is "*The Challenges of Regional Governance in the Greater Vancouver Region of British Columbia: Discussion Paper*" which was published by the Local Government Institute and Centre for Public Sector Studies at the School of Public Administration of the University of Victoria in April, 2011. This paper noted that:

*"In the Vancouver Region, where regional transportation planning and service delivery, for example, have been severed from the GVRD/Metro Vancouver and most recently have been made the purview of TransLink (an independent body constituted by the Provincial Government in 2007 and governed by an appointed nine member board), and where regional economic development has effectively not been taken on by any regional body, there have been concerns that the existing governance structures, perhaps in ways that are unique among BC Regional Districts, are not capable of meeting the challenges of increasingly complex issues in the Greater Vancouver Region."*³

2.4 Concluding Observations

Two observations can be made about this history:

1. The governance arrangements have been quite volatile, with significant changes at relatively frequent intervals; and
2. The Province has exercised a dominant interest, feeling free to impose its priorities on the region and reluctant to provide a role in transit for local government institutions it did not directly or indirectly control.

² TransLink Governance Review Panel (B.C.) "TransLink governance review: an independent review of the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority," Victoria: 2007.

³ Jim McDavid, Emmanual Brunet-Jailly and Thea Vakil, "The Challenges of Regional Governance in the Greater Vancouver Region of British Columbia: A Discussion Paper," Victoria: Local Government Institute and Centre for Public Sector Studies, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria, 2011.

3 OVERVIEW OF URBAN TRANSPORT GOVERNANCE

3.1 The Nature of Urban Transport and Why Governance is Important

The total transportation movements in an urban region can be seen to be at three levels:

- 'Inter-regional' or 'to and through' movements involving the interface of marine, rail, air and road travel of goods, services and passengers as part of larger systems which are the responsibility of federal and provincial agencies;
- 'Local' movements within a community for shopping, school, recreation and local delivery of goods and services, which are mainly the responsibility of local municipalities; and
- 'Regional' movements from one municipality or sector to another on a daily basis for access between work, higher education or cultural and recreational activities and regional goods movement. These movements are the focus of the urban transport system and generate the need for services and infrastructure for which TransLink is primarily responsible in Greater Vancouver.

Obviously, the efficiency and effectiveness of all transportation services are improved when those responsible for these three levels of movement try to reinforce each other's objectives rather than working at cross-purposes. For many decades the challenges of urban transport were often approached as rather like an industrial operation, with the various modes simply seen as being facilities, services and pieces of infrastructure that should be 'optimized' to move as many people and goods as possible. Addressing urban transport in this 'silo' mentality led to what is sometimes referred to as a 'project and provide' approach, when demand was simply forecast and facilities (usually roads) were provided to meet the demand, albeit temporarily until travel volumes rose to meet available capacity.

Thinking based upon the broader urban context has for several decades seen the situation rather differently. Urban transport has been seen as a 'derived demand' that arises from how people and activities are arranged in urban space. In turn, the types of transportation services and infrastructure influence the arrangement of people, activities and its generation of origins and destinations for travel. The interaction of urban transport and land use highlights the need for transport planning to be undertaken within a broader context than traditional 'project and provide' planning.

Today, what may be described as 'leader' urban regions adopt a 'debate and decide' approach to transport - the linkages between transport, communities, environment and the regional economy are explicitly explored, desirable outcomes are established, and then transport plans and services are developed to help to achieve these desired outcomes.

This serves to highlight why the 'governance' of the urban transport system can only be optimally undertaken if there is a close linkage between transport and spatial planning. As discussed later in this review, this is one of the most challenging issues associated with the current transport governance structure in Greater Vancouver because the links to the urban region and its communities have effectively been severed at the governance level.

3.2 What is ‘Governance’?

A core consideration in this governance review is exactly what is meant by the word ‘governance.’ One definition which is commonly cited in the literature is a definition from the Canada Institute on Governance:

“Governance is the process whereby societies or organizations make important decisions, determine whom they involve and how they render account.”

For the purposes of this review, the above definition of governance has been adopted and it is clearly separate from ‘corporate governance’ in the private sector which, while involving some of the same considerations, is a different concept. It is also worth noting that in a public policy context such as urban transport, governance can also sometimes be confused with government. As is clear in the definition, governance is about: how governments, institutions and other social organizations interact; how they relate to citizens; how decisions are made in complex systems; who are involved in processes; and how accountability is ensured.

Because governance is, to a large degree about processes which are hard to observe, the report focuses on the overall systems, frameworks and relationships between the various players within which the governance processes occur. Despite the rather arcane nature of the subject, ‘Governance’ is important and the system of governance can perhaps be seen as resembling the rudder on a ship: a relatively small component, but absolutely critical to reaching a desired destination or set of outcomes, particularly over the longer term. In using transport as a tool to both shape and serve the urban region there is a need to ensure that sustainable choices are available at an acceptable cost, and that the system ensures that it contributes to the broader economic, social and environmental well-being.

3.3 Levels of Governance

In undertaking this review, governance has been viewed as covering three main groups of activities within a transport authority or agency. These can be described as covering the following levels:

- Policy Level
- Management Level
- Implementation Level

For the purposes of this review, the focus is on the upper ‘Policy’ level and is concerned with the nature of the bodies, whether elected or appointed, that make decisions regarding matters such as: strategic plans, policies, finance and funding, etc.

This relatively simple framework and colour-coding is used later in Section 4 of this review to illustrate the structures in other comparator urban regions.



3.4 Dimensions of Governance

Within the context of the top level or tier of governance as illustrated in the preceding section, there are several dimensions of governance that can be considered. The literature review undertaken for this report suggests that various dimensions of governance may substantially be captured in six criteria:

- **Accountability** - Degree to which the governance structure has political, administrative, environmental and social accountability linkages
- **Transparency** - Accessibility of information to those affected by decisions and visibility of governance process
- **Responsiveness** - Extent of citizen orientation, public friendliness in decision-making and redress if needed
- **Clarity of Purpose** - Degree to which the prime agency understands and acts on its direct and indirect purposes
- **Advocacy** - Speaking out, leading and encouraging public dialogue on major relevant public policy issues
- **Productive Relationships** - Relative strength of relationships and recognition of dependencies with other entities

Collectively these may be seen as reflecting the overall ‘fitness for purpose’ of the governance system or framework.

An analogy is to see these as a series of interlocking gears in a ‘Governance machine’ and ideally that all have to be fully functional and synchronized for optimum results.

Appendix 2 provides further discussions on the roles and relationships of governance.



4 INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

4.1 Overview

The consulting team has investigated governance arrangements in a total of 13 urban regions:

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| • Toronto | • New York | • Manchester | • Stockholm |
| • Montreal | • London | • Newcastle | • Perth |
| • Seattle | • San Francisco | • Vienna | • Brisbane |
| • Portland | | | |

In some cases, the entity investigated was a transportation agency like TransLink (e.g. Transport for London), while in other cases it was a transit agency (e.g. Wiener Linien in Vienna). This is because the type of multi-modal agency that TransLink (including not only transit but roads, cycling, goods movement and transportation demand management) is does not exist in many metropolitan areas worldwide. The investigation of each area involved two components:

- I. Initial research on agency websites and other sources regarding the agency functions, institutional context, scope, governance structures, etc.; and
- II. Direct contact (usually a telephone interview with a senior official) to find more detail on the agency and its governance structure, relationships to other entities, successes and challenges, etc.

4.2 Regions Considered in this Report

It is beyond the scope of this main report to detail all of the agencies examined;⁴ moreover the research has shown that Canadian and US agencies are not particularly useful comparators for TransLink in terms of governance. In Canada, Metrolinx (Toronto) and l'Agence métropolitaine de transport AMT (Montreal) are both provincial government agencies. Beneath them are a large number of municipal transit systems and the overall structures are seen as inferior (even by some of the contacts in these areas) to what exists in Metro Vancouver. There are relatively weak processes for spatial planning in each region and the primary policy body is in effect the provincial government. Nonetheless Metrolinx is included later due to aspects of its Board structure.

The US agencies are also not as suitable in terms of governance comparators for TransLink. A major consideration is that the nature of the entities is, to some degree, significantly shaped by the US Federal Government's strong role in transit through the Federal Transit Administration. Moreover the US Federal requirement for there to be a Metropolitan Planning Organization in place which has to meet federally prescribed procedures makes the comparators less useful. In addition, the reality is that the performance of most US urban transport systems does not compare favourably with Metro Vancouver's.

As a result, this part of the review includes examination of agencies in Vienna, Stockholm, and London, each of which are seen as being leading urban regions when it comes to urban transportation in general and transit and cycling in particular. In addition, the example Brisbane in Australia is provided, not because it is 'leader' regions, but rather because it is an example where the provincial or state level of government takes a very active role with direct ministerial accountability for spatial and transport planning in a metropolitan area.

4.2.1 London (Transport for London)

Transport for London (TfL) was set up in 2000 a short while after TransLink was established⁵. It is the integrated agency responsible for the London transport system and serves 32 London boroughs (municipalities) and the Corporation of London. Its main roles are to implement the Mayor's Transport Strategy for London and manage transport services across the Capital for which the directly-elected Mayor has responsibility.

⁴ Summaries of each of the agencies is provided Appendix 3 - Results of International Review of Urban Transport Governance.

⁵ Prior to TfL being set up, then Metro Chair George Puil met with the UK Government Minister, Glenda Jackson, to discuss the new agencies that were to be set up in the two urban regions.

The Mayor is in charge of setting the overall vision for the capital and draws up strategies and policies to deliver the vision. He or she has a duty to set out plans and policies for London covering:

- Transport
- Planning and development
- Housing
- Economic development
- Culture
- Health
- A range of environmental issues including climate change, biodiversity, ambient noise, waste disposal and air quality.

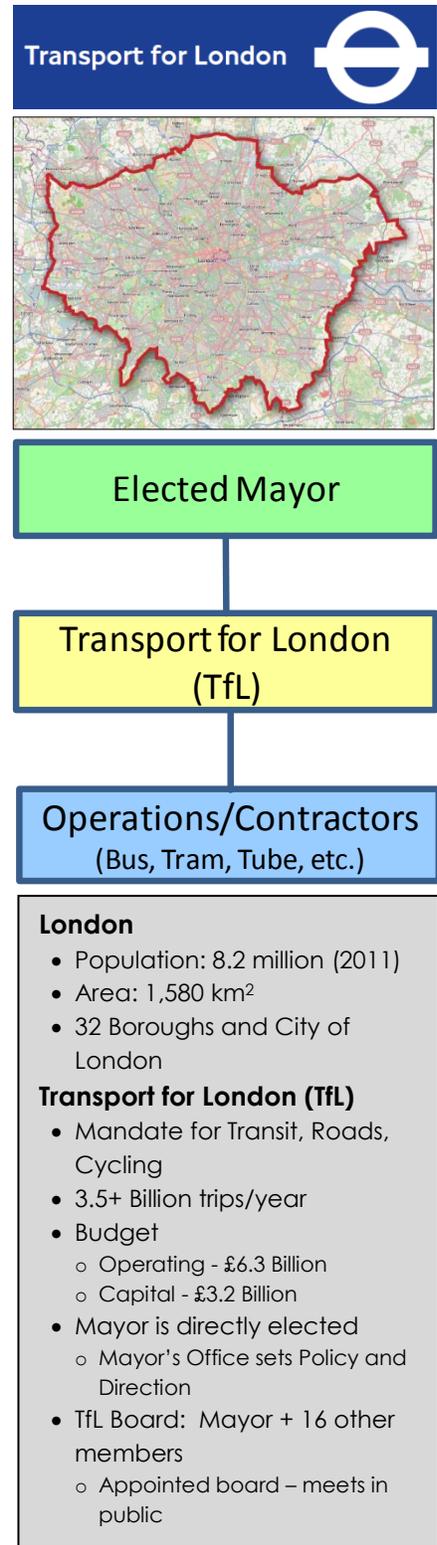
The Mayor's Transport Strategy sets out plans for improving the city's transport over the next 20 years and provides the overall framework that the boroughs must use for guidance in developing their own plans. The enabling legislation for TfL created a two-tier structure:

- *Mayor's Office sets Policy and Direction:* the Mayor of London has a general duty to develop and implement policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities and services to, from, and within Greater London.
- *TfL acts as the Implementation/Operating Agency:* TfL has its own Board of Directors (chaired by the Mayor) and has the power to provide or secure the provision of public passenger transport services, to, from or within Greater London. As the authority for strategic roads in Greater London, TfL also regulates the way in which the public uses roads.



London Mayor Boris Johnson on a 'Boris Bike'

The appointed board is drawn from a broad spectrum and currently include the CEO of British Airways and a licensed taxi driver. The Deputy Chair is the appointed Deputy Mayor for Transport. Mayor Boris Johnson has been a strong advocate for TfL to the point that London's bike program is referred to as 'Boris Bikes'. His predecessor Mayor Livingston was responsible for the introduction of London's 'Congestion Charge'.



4.2.2 Vienna (Wiener Linien)

The City of Vienna is both the national capital of Austria and one of Austria's federal provinces (Bundesländer). It is the largest municipality in the country, and serves as the seat of many international organizations.

The 100 members of the Vienna City Council are at the same time members of the Vienna Provincial Parliament. The Mayor is elected by the City Council, with a term of office equivalent to the City Council's legislative period.

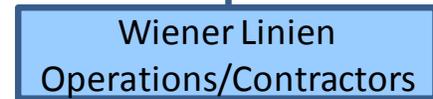
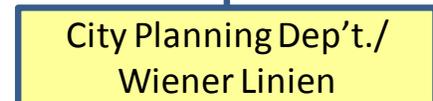
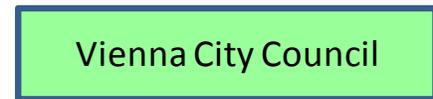
According to international surveys, Vienna is routinely judged to be one of the cities with the highest quality of life as well as being one of the 'greenest' worldwide. The transit agency is Wiener Linien which operates about 120 lines of subways, buses and trams.

An Executive City Councillor is responsible for oversight of Wiener Linien which comes under the city's 'Administrative Group for Urban Development, Traffic and Transport, Climate Protection, Energy and Public Participation'.

Wiener Linien GmbH & Co KG is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wiener Stadtwerke Holding AG (the city's utility company). Wiener Linien is responsible for subway, streetcar and bus services. There is a 65:35 split of private vs. public bus operations.

The overall mode shares achieved in Vienna are: 29% auto; 39% transit, and 32% walk and cycle. In 2011 Wiener Linien achieved a new passenger record with almost 875 million passengers. On average, around 2.4 million passengers use Wiener Linien per day.

Planning for Wiener Linien services is shared with the City Administration. Large-scale projects (e.g. new subway lines) are undertaken by the city's administrative group in the planning department, while more day-to-day decisions and plans are prepared by Wiener Linien itself.

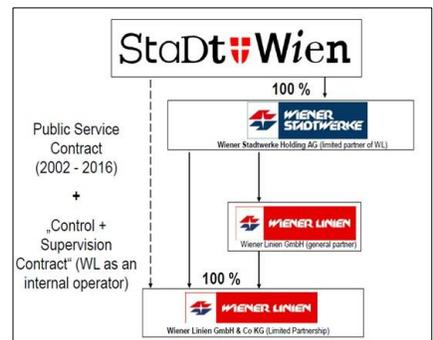


Vienna

- Vienna is a City and Province
- Population: 1.7 million (2011)
- Area: 415 km²

Wiener Linien

- Mandate for Subway, Streetcar, and Bus Services
- 65:35 split of private vs. public operations
- Mode shares:
 - 29% auto
 - 39% transit
 - 32% walk and cycle



4.2.3 Stockholm (AB Storstockholms Lokaltrafik)

Stockholm has a county government. The transit agency is AB Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (Stockholm PTA) and is by far the largest in Sweden. Transit comes under the direct control of the County Council.

The County Council is responsible for all publicly-financed health care and public transport in Stockholm County. The County Council is also responsible for other overall issues within the county, such as regional planning and cultural subsidies.

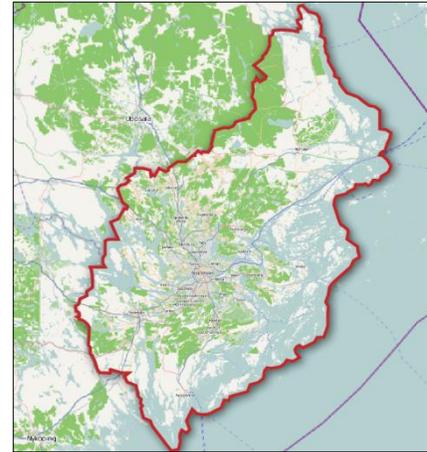
Public transport in Stockholm County is designed to be easily accessible, reliable and environmentally friendly.

On weekdays, more than 700,000 people travel by public transport in Stockholm. The various means of transport – buses, metro, commuter trains and local rail services – are coordinated within a constantly-growing transport network.

SL plans, develops, commissions and markets public transport within the county. Transport services are run by both municipalities and private transport companies under contract. SL has approximately 500 employees while the bus, rail tram and other contractors employ an estimated 13,500 people.

SL carries out comprehensive environmental work, and is constantly seeking new, environmentally friendly solutions. SL has the world's largest fleet of ethanol buses. Since 2004, there have also been buses that run on biogas, a renewable energy source.

The share of trips made by transit is reported to be 78% rush-hour and 40% all day – more than three times the share of trips made by transit in Metro Vancouver.



Stockholm County Council

Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL)

Contractors
(Bus, Tram, Subway, Facilities)

Stockholm

- Population: 1.9 million (2009)
- 26 Municipalities
- Area: 6,500 km²

Storstockholms Lokaltrafik

- Largest transit system in Sweden: 725,000 pass./day
- Transit mode share:
 - 78% AM peak
 - 40% all day
- Funding
 - 50% taxes: 50% fares
 - Budget 1,300M Euro/yr.
 - Capital 500M Euro/yr.

4.2.4 Brisbane (TRANSLink)

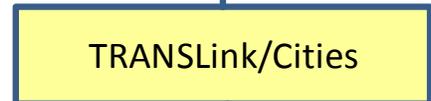
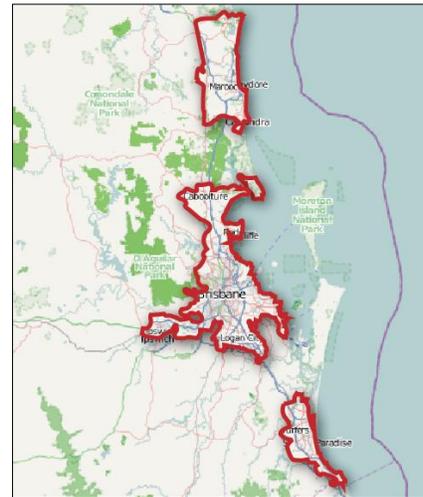
TRANSLink is a division of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, and is responsible for leading and shaping Queensland's overall passenger transport system. The agency facilitates passenger transport services for Queenslanders and aims 'to provide a single integrated transport network accessible to everyone'.

TRANSLink's service area of 10,000 sq. km. is approximately five to six times the area served by TransLink in Metro Vancouver; it contains Australia's third (Brisbane) and sixth (Gold Coast) largest cities.

TRANSLink works with the various cities to plan services, but ultimately the decision-making authority rests with the Minister responsible. There are 19 different public and private transit operators, including the City of Brisbane bus service.

TRANSLink's performance in terms of market share for transit is relatively modest, but not atypical of Australian systems, and attracts around 178 million rides per year.

Unlike Metro Vancouver (where most funding comes from local taxes and fees), the majority of funding comes from the state government with a total of \$1.1 billion (approximately \$1.15 billion CDN) in 2011/12. (This illustrates one of the odd aspects of TransLink's current governance where a quasi-provincial agency uses funding raised almost entirely from regional sources, including the use of property taxes).



Brisbane

- Population: 3.1 million (2009)
- 11 Municipalities, including Australia's 3rd and 6th largest cities
- Area: 22,420 km² (10,000 km² service area)

TRANSLink

- TRANSLink Transit Authority (Part of Queensland Dept. of Transport and Main Roads)
- State responsible for:
 - Regional Planning
 - Transport (main roads & transit)
- 19 public/private operators
- 178 million rides/year
- Budget: 1.5 Billion (1.1 Billion from state)

4.2.5 Toronto (Metrolinx)

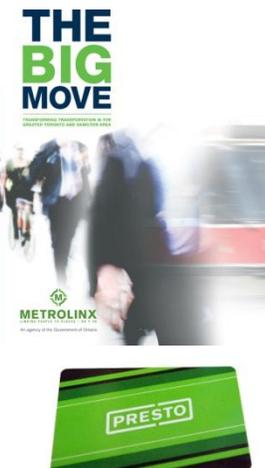
Metrolinx is a Crown Corporation and an agency of the Government of Ontario. Created in 2006, Metrolinx is tasked with improving the coordination and integration of all modes of transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). In 2008, Metrolinx launched *The Big Move*, the regional transportation plan, which provides a blue-print for the development of a well-integrated, multi-modal transport system, while enhancing regional prosperity and quality of life.

Metrolinx's two primary functions are:

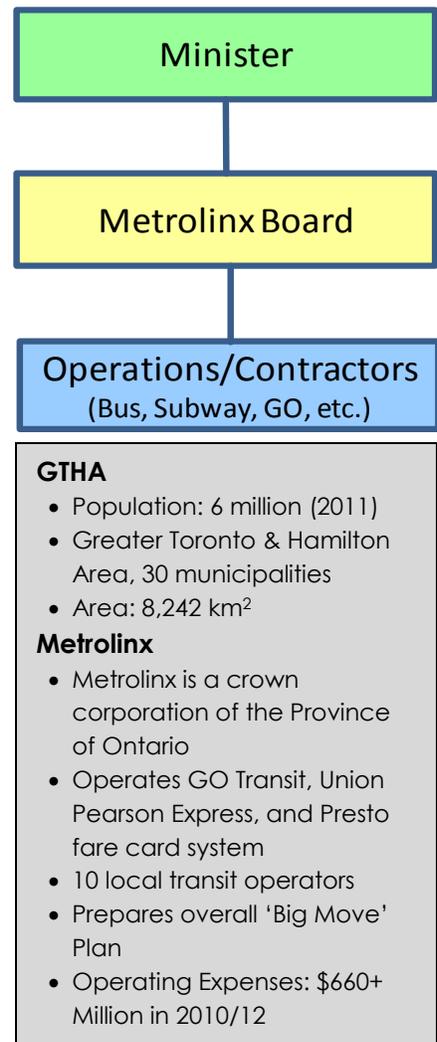
- To ensure all regional transportation projects conform to growth plans prepared and approved under the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, and comply with provincial transportation policies and plans; and
- To act as the central agency for the procurement of local transit system vehicles, equipment, technologies and facilities and related supplies and services on behalf of Ontario municipalities.

Upon its creation in 2006, the Metrolinx Board was appointed by the Ministry of Transportation and included three elected Mayors, regional chairs and elected councilors. Following integration of GO Transit into Metrolinx in 2009 the composition of the Board was changed to comprise a number of highly recognized community leaders but no elected representatives.

Metrolinx receives all its financing from the Province of Ontario and unlike TransLink, does not have a financial strategy in place. Metrolinx is, therefore, beholden to the annual budget set by the Province. In 2009, the federal and provincial governments provided Metrolinx with \$9.55 billion to pursue five long-term transit projects.



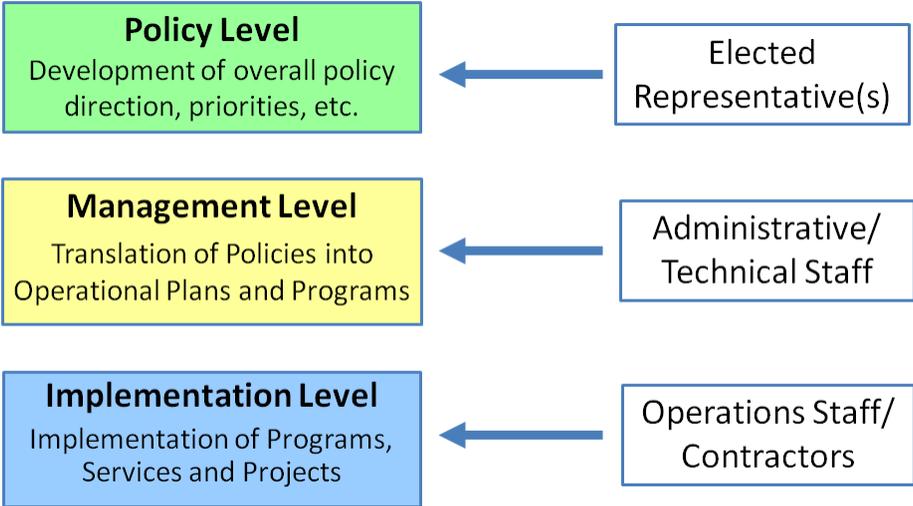
When working with GTHA municipalities and transit providers, Metrolinx provides the regional planning focus, coordination role and, depending on the project, financial backing. In certain instances, the appointed Metrolinx Board also acts a 'Policy' Board to some degree, although ultimate accountability rests with the Provincial Minister.



4.3 Observations on Comparator Examples

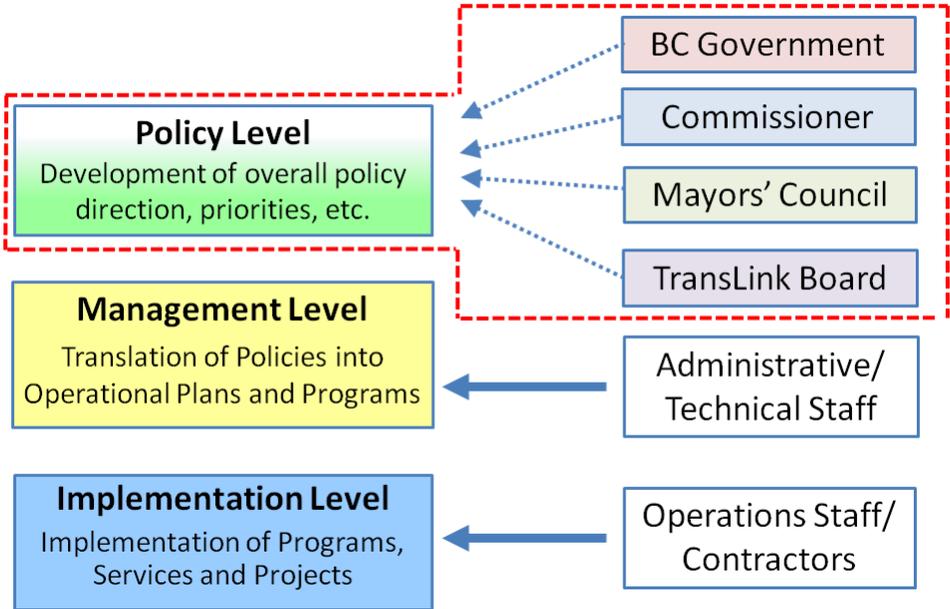
Superficially there is a wide-range of options described in the comparator regions of Vienna, Stockholm, Brisbane, London and Toronto/Hamilton, however as shown below, all of the examples have direct political accountability at the ‘Policy’ level – either to Provincial/State Ministers or to county/city/regional elected officials:

Governance – Who Does What? International Examples - Similarities



The diagram below shows that the arrangements for Metro Vancouver is considerably more complex. Moreover it is the consulting team’s view that the functions at the Policy level are not being fully undertaken:

Governance – Who Does What? Metro Vancouver



4.3.1 Elected Representatives Ultimately Responsible for 'Policy' Decisions

In all the comparator examples 'policy' decisions are made by elected representatives:

- **London** Elected Mayor
- **Vienna** Elected City Council
- **Stockholm** Elected County Council
- **Brisbane** Elected State Minister
- **Toronto/Hamilton** Elected Provincial Minister

4.3.2 TransLink's Governance Structure is Unusual

The review team were unable to identify any 'leading region' where the transport governance structure is even similar to the structure in Metro Vancouver.

4.3.3 Clarity on Framework for Policy Decision-Making

Policy decision-making responsibility in each of the international examples is assigned to an identifiable, accountable, and elected person or body. In Metro Vancouver there is a substantial lack of clarity as to who is responsible. For example, each rapid transit expansion decision has had its own unique history of decision-making leading to the Province having the final say. Both the Province and TransLink have the power to implement tolls, but only within the context of Provincial tolling policies that are not appropriate in an urban context. Although the provincial highway system is an integral part of Metro Vancouver's urban transport infrastructure, it is not included within the scope of TransLink's planning mandate.

4.3.4 Transport Plans are Integrated with other Plans

In all of the examples, transit planning and transport plans are integrated with spatial and other plans in each metropolitan area. This stands in contrast to Metro Vancouver where these links have effectively been severed. One of the better examples is London where the Mayor's Transport Strategy is one of three plans for greater London with the other two dealing with Spatial Planning (Land Use) and London's Economic Strategy.

5 LOCAL OBSERVATIONS ON PRESENT STRUCTURE

5.1 Approach

Included in the scope of the governance review project was consultation with key individuals associated with TransLink, including past and current Board members, current and former senior staff, provincial officials, etc. In total, 15 individuals were interviewed. Furthermore, there were several less formal discussions with municipal staff to assess the current state of the relationship between TransLink and municipalities at the staff and working level. The information gathered, while entirely qualitative, allowed an assessment to be made of how Metro Vancouver's current transport governance arrangements compare with those in other regions. The dialogue revealed a broad range of both 'positives' and 'challenges.'

5.2 TransLink's Scope and Mandate

It became clear from the interviews that most participants viewed TransLink's 'Scope and Mandate' separately from its 'Governance.' In summary a number of positives were identified:

- i. **Integrated System:** The integration of Transit, Roads, Transportation Demand Management, Cycling and Goods Movement remains one of the best arrangements in any metropolitan area;
- ii. **Funding Sources:** TransLink's range of funding sources remains second to none (i.e. the use of fuel taxes, parking taxes, property taxes, etc. is considered to be diverse, appropriate, efficient and broadly consistent with the 'user pay' principle for financing public utilities). Whether the existing funding sources are sufficient is a matter outside of the scope of this project. Furthermore, must be recognized that challenges remain with any changes to many of these funding sources due to the need for Provincial concurrence or approval in many cases;
- iii. **A Leader Agency:** Few, if any, transportation agencies are seen as better in North America, and most are seen to be far behind compared to TransLink;
- iv. **Sense of Pride:** There was a significant sense of pride among most of the interviewees in relation to TransLink and the region's many achievements and leadership role in North America; and
- v. **'More Right than Wrong':** Overall, as one respondent stated, there is much 'more right than wrong' with the scope and mandate of the agency.

5.2.1 Observations on Governance Structure

In contrast to the comments made on TransLink's Scope and Mandate, the comments regarding governance structure, while not unanimous, were generally more critical. Comments on different aspects of governance are presented below:

- i. **Current Structure:** The current structure, with an appointed TransLink Board, the Mayors' Council and the Commissioner, is almost universally seen as having many flaws as follows:
 - The system is unaccountable;
 - There is a lack of transparency with a private TransLink Board;
 - There is little or no advocacy or a clear 'Champion';
 - TransLink is seen as disconnected from the remainder of the region's governance; and
 - Few of the respondents believe that the current structure has improved decision-making or efficiency.
- ii. **TransLink Board:** The Board is seen as being made up of skilled and competent individuals. However the Board as currently constituted is generally seen as not being suited to a policy role which would involve issues such as the setting of regional priorities and funding strategies.
- iii. **Policy Decisions:** Most respondents see a need for a body of elected representatives for 'policy' decisions such as regional plan approvals, budgets, funding, priorities, etc.
- iv. **Role of the Commissioner:** Views were largely mixed on the value of the office with the preponderance of the opinion being that it does not enhance decision-making or accountability.
- v. **Mayors' Council:** The scope of decision-making allowed for the Mayors' Council is seen as highly constrained. It is also viewed that the Mayors' Council is significantly under-

resourced. There was some concern about the ability of the Mayors' Council to be effective in decision-making due to its large size and diverse membership.

- vi. **Provincial Government:** The Province is seen as having a dominating influence, sometimes resulting in decision-making that is at variance with regional and local objectives. This is combined with a sense that 'the Province can't let go.' It is also seen that complex policy issues, such as an appropriate tolling regime for an urban area, are challenging to address, particularly because of the Province's policy which is not suitable in an urban area.
- vii. **Potential expansion of TransLink's Service Area:** The potential for expanding TransLink's service area to encompass the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's South Coast Region (Pemberton to Hope) was seen as illogical for an urban transport entity and lacking support from the areas that would be added.
- viii. **TransLink Roles and Relationships:** Most respondents saw that strong links to municipalities, Metro Vancouver, and the Province are important but difficult to achieve under the current arrangements. Moreover there is a sense from some senior municipal staff that TransLink staff relationships with municipal staff are less interactive than in past. In particular it was observed that the role of the Major Road and Transportation Advisory Committee has become largely an 'information out' exercise for TransLink with limited dialogue or engagement of senior municipal staff.
- ix. **Links to Regional and other Plans:** There is a sense that there is not enough integration between TransLink's plans and those of other local governments, and that better linkages are not easy to achieve given the nature of TransLink today.
- x. **Metro Vancouver:** There were a significant number of comments regarding Metro Vancouver/GVRD as a political entity:
 - Metro Vancouver's proven record in developing regional utilities and parks was widely recognized;
 - Comments were made that Metro Vancouver is considerably more challenged in dealing with divisive issues, and appears to default to respecting individual municipal perspectives rather than functioning with a truly 'regional perspective'; and
 - Concerns were expressed that any alternative TransLink board re-arranged as a subset of the Metro Vancouver Board would also have difficulty taking a 'regional perspective' on challenging and potentially divisive issues.

6 COMPARISON OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

6.1 Context

The previous sections of this report have described:

- What 'Governance' means in the context of this review;
- Six criteria for a good governance structure;
- The attributes of the governance structures in place in some other metropolitan areas around the world; and
- Observations made by people familiar with TransLink's governance structure as it has evolved over the past few years.

6.2 Range of Potential Governance Models

There is a very wide range of potential governance models that are possible for the regional transportation system. However for the purposes of this review, six broad possible options have been identified based on the urban regions which have been examined. These are listed below and shown as diagrams overleaf:

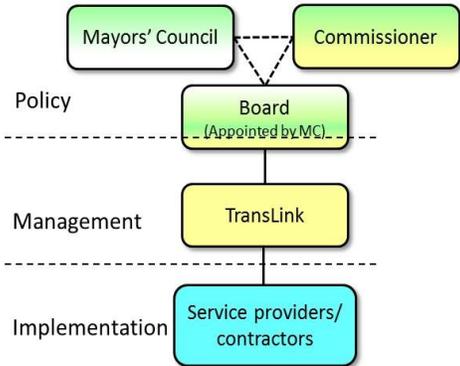
1. **Current Model:** A combination of the appointed TransLink Board, Mayors' Council and the Commissioner. Policy decisions would remain under the shared and somewhat 'muddled' remit of the Board and Mayors' Council, with periodic interventions by the Commissioner and the Province.
2. **Original Model:** The TransLink Board would be mayors or directors appointed by the Metro Vancouver Board (with provision for provincial appointees) and would make most of the policy decisions.
3. **'Brisbane' Model:** This would be the local application of a Brisbane-type model where the State (Provincial) Government takes charge of the system with responsibility resting with a Minister. TransLink would cease to exist in its current form and become a Provincial government department.
4. **'Toronto' Model:** This has some similarity to the 'Brisbane' model except there would be a Provincial Agency like Ontario's 'Metrolinx' with an appointed board which also shares some role in policy-making (as shown in the diagram). The Board would be more broadly based on community members than the current TransLink Board.
5. **'Stockholm' Model:** This model would see the Metro Vancouver Board as the policy body. However, it should be noted that the Metro Vancouver Board, as currently constituted, may not be as resolute in taking a regional perspective on challenging issues as the directly-elected Stockholm County Council (this model is similar to Vienna, with the role of the County Council played by Vienna as a city and a state government).
6. **'London' Model:** This would see a reformulated TransLink Board comprising mayors and directors appointed by Metro Vancouver. The Board would make all major policy decisions such as overall strategy, finance, links to other Metro Vancouver plans and the Province, etc. A Management Board comprising the Chair and Vice-Chair of the new TransLink Board plus a broad cross-section of perhaps 9 or so members of the community, with a wide range of expertise and perspective, would take responsibility for operational issues. This Management Board would also provide direct oversight of management with a specific focus on efficiency, effectiveness, customer service, alternative analysis, etc.

Clearly variants are possible with Governance Models 3 to 6; but it is the consulting team's view that these sufficiently embrace the range of options. The colours used in the graphic are intended to show which of the functions are undertaken at which level within the structure. In some instances two colours are used to convey a partly dual function within the structure.

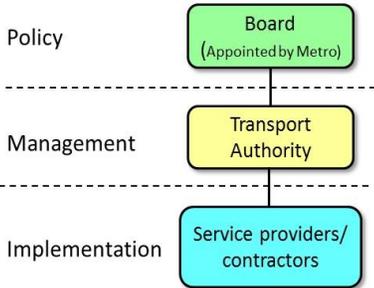
For example in London, while the overall strategic direction is set by the Mayor, the TfL Board is also involved in some policy matters. In the case of the structure involving TransLink, the combined colours, or a lack of colour, are intended to convey a missing or incomplete function.

Governance Models⁶

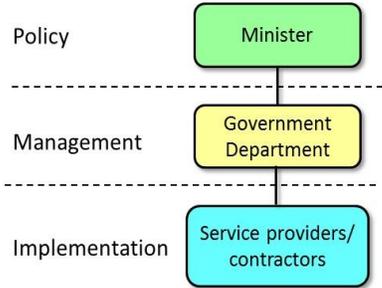
1. Current Model



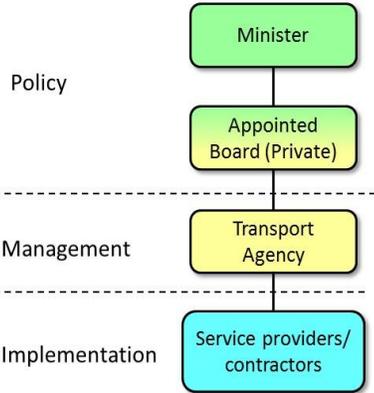
2. Original Model



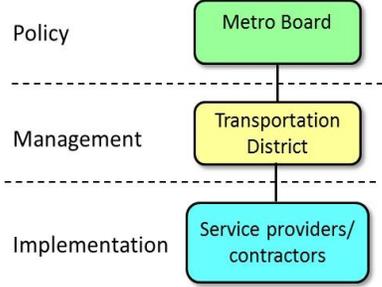
3. 'Brisbane' Model



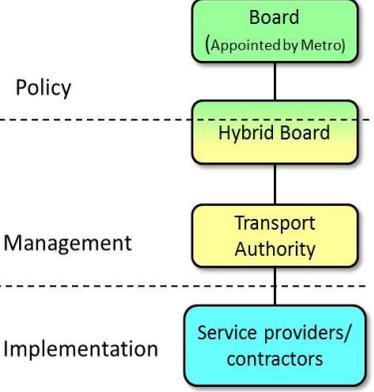
4. 'Toronto' Model



5. 'Stockholm' Model



6. 'London' Model



⁶ NB: The diagrams are intended to be representative of the governance structures in place and not a full organization chart.

6.3 Evaluation of Alternative Structures

The matrix below evaluates the alternatives relative to the six governance criteria discussed earlier.

Governance Model	Governance Criteria					
	Accountability	Transparency	Responsiveness	Clarity of Purpose	Advocacy	Productive Relationships
1. Current						
2. Original						
3. 'Brisbane'						
4. 'Toronto'						
5. 'Stockholm'						
6. 'London'						

The rankings in the table above are substantially based on the results of the local feedback in the case of the Current and Original TransLink models and the consulting team's research in the case of 'Brisbane,' 'Toronto,' 'Stockholm' and 'London' models. They are the result of the team's effort to understand the various structures and their applicability to this region. While none of the models is perfect, it would appear that models similar to those used in Stockholm and London reflect the six governance criteria to a greater degree than the others. This does not suggest, of course, that such models can simply be adopted and transferred to the Metro Vancouver context, if for no other reason than the particular institutional situation in each case reflects local factors. In particular, Stockholm and London have representatives who are directly elected at the region wide level⁷.

6.4 Transportation and 'Joined-Up Thinking'

It is clear that the current governance model has produced in an institutional 'disconnect' between TransLink and Metro Vancouver. It is apparent from the examples of Stockholm, London and Vienna that considerable benefit can be gained through more 'joined-up' planning of transportation, spatial planning and economic planning.

It is the consulting team's view that the approach taken to transport governance could be a stepping stone towards allowing the region to adopt a much more 'joined-up thinking' approach to these three critical aspects of how the region develops. As noted in the 2011 University of Victoria Discussion paper "*The Challenges of Regional Governance in the Greater Vancouver Region of British Columbia: Discussion Paper*", it can be observed that:

⁷This is also substantially true in Vienna which is a city and a province in Austria, i.e. the single city is effectively an urban region.

“.....regional economic development has effectively not been taken on by any regional body, there have been concerns that the existing governance structures, perhaps in ways that are unique among BC Regional Districts, are not capable of meeting the challenges of increasingly complex issues in the Greater Vancouver Region.”

In other words, the very nature of Metro Vancouver may need to be reviewed and adjusted for the region to start to function as a single economic unit and leverage the synergies of planning the regional economy, transportation system and spatial development as a whole.

7 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VANCOUVER REGION

There are some similarities in the governance structures in the ‘Leader’ examples of Stockholm, Vienna and London in that each have ‘Policy’ decisions made by elected representatives. Superficially, perhaps the closest model to Metro Vancouver, in a political sense, is Stockholm with its County Council, although the Metro Vancouver Board is indirectly elected.

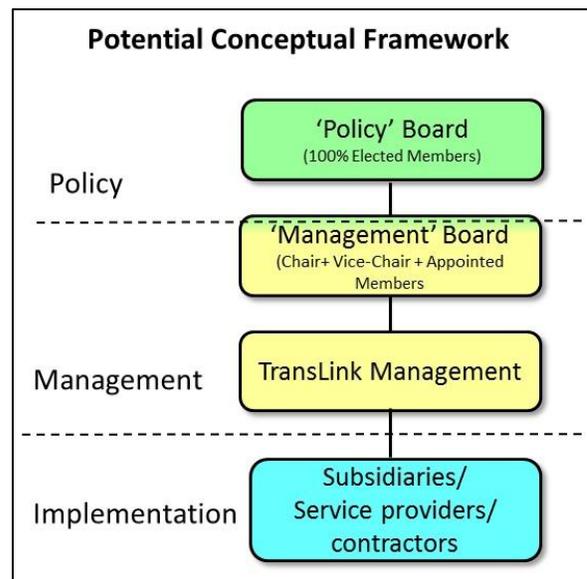
It is clear from the review of other regions and the consultations with local participants that the major shortcoming of the current structure of transport governance in Metro Vancouver is *insufficient accountability* to the residents of the region. Rectifying this shortcoming requires adjustments to put in place a body of elected representatives with the full range of ‘Policy’ powers. This could be done in one of three ways:

- Assign transport governance to the Metro Vancouver Board and/or one of its committees;
- Assign the full range of ‘Policy’ functions to the Mayors’ Council; or
- Create a new transport governance entity of workable size that is appointed by either the Metro Vancouver Board or the Mayors’ Council from among their number.

Such a structure would still require a ‘Management’ level board to oversee, on behalf of the ‘Policy’ board, the day-to-day operations of the transport system. This board should be comprised of people with management expertise who are able to generate the pressure for cost control, efficiency and customer service needed in a large public-service organization.

The arrangements for London would appear to support the idea that the Chair, and perhaps the Vice-Chair, of the ‘Policy’ board should also perform these functions at the ‘Management’ level board⁸.

Fixing the accountability gap would enable the transport governance system to perform better in



⁸ A ‘Management Board’ would still undertake some non-strategic ‘Policy’ decisions, but its main role would be concerned with dealing with efficiency and effectiveness.

relation to the other criteria for good governance, including clarity of purpose, advocacy, and productive relationships. It would obviate the need for the Regional Transportation Commissioner. It remains true, however, that the entire structure would continue to be only indirectly accountable to the voters.

8 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The core findings of this review of governance are as follows:

- The scope, mandate and funding sources of TransLink are still seen as ‘state of the art’ internationally and its achievements are a source of pride locally (even though the adequacy of the funding may not be sufficient and the processes for accessing the funds may be restrictive);
- The governance structure, comprising TransLink, the Mayors’ Council and the Commissioner of Regional Transportation, is not found elsewhere in the world;
- The current governance structure has few, if any, supporters within the region;
- Any effort to revise the governance structure should reflect the basic criteria for good governance as found in the literature and in best practice in leader regions, namely:
 - General good governance criteria:
 - Accountability
 - Transparency
 - Responsiveness
 - Good governance criteria specific to urban transport:
 - Clarity of Purpose
 - Advocacy
 - Productive Relationships
- The literature review and international ‘scan’ revealed the following optimal ‘division of labour’ between the various elements of a governance system:
 - Strategic decision-making on policies, plans, funding and relationships to broader plans and public purposes is the responsibility of elected representatives;
 - Management policy is the responsibility of persons and/or bodies skilled in management, administration, service provision and financial control, including the selection of service delivery modes and structures; and
 - Implementation is the responsibility of staff or contractors hired and paid for this purpose.
- Urban transport and its close cousins, spatial and economic planning, are crucial functions in maintaining the livability and prosperity of urban regions. Where these functions are carried out at the local government level, successful governance structures have the ability to take a regional perspective and have strong accountability links to the people served. Where such local government structures are not present, the default is to the state/provincial level where governance approaches, to be successful, must be comprehensive, directive and ongoing under the broad accountability provided by the parliamentary form of government.