

# Pair rapid transit with tax incentives

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Now that Victoria city council has endorsed and encouraged rapid transit, the provincial government should step up to the plate to make it more viable – in other words, encourage greater ridership.

Rapid-transit buses or train lines need a critical level of density to achieve ridership volumes to make them viable. That could be encouraged by amending the provincial property purchase tax (landtransfer) to stimulate the construction of high-density and medium-density housing along the Douglas corridor. There are already certain tax exemptions that include first-time home purchases.

I propose an additional exemption based on the proximity to a rapid bus or transit line. This will encourage the required density along these lines.

Young families who want to upgrade to larger accommodations would be better positioned to get into the market, while at the same time moving into environmentally friendly living like larger condominiums, row houses, brownstones and townhouses.

This proposal would also minimize the HST impact on condominium and townhouse purchases. Moreover, this proposal has numerous social, economic and health benefits. For instance, compact communities offers senior citizens a greater ability to retain their mobility over the current urban sprawl model. Apparently, the Canadian Association of Retired People (CARP) agrees with such proposals as they are also advocating age-friendly cities.

The government announced a couple of years ago a \$14-billion investment plan for transit. In order to increase the efficacy of the \$14-billion transit investment, we need to encourage residential development around major transit corridors, which is exactly what this tax reduction proposal will do.

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