Province of British Columbia's Supplement to the Gas Tax Fund and Public Transit Fund Reporting System Recipient User Guide (March 12, 2009)

<u>Introduction to Gas Tax/Public Transit Reporting and the Reporting System</u>

All recipients of Gas Tax or Public Transit funding are required to report annually on the use of those funds. These reports are due **July 1**, in relation to the previous fiscal year, which for most recipients ends December 31. Reporting is managed through the Government of Canada Gas Tax Fund and Public Transit Fund Reporting System.

The reporting website address is: https://gtpt-tetc.infrastructure.gc.ca

Essentially, the system is a secure online database where you input three types of information: details of the projects that you have used Gas Tax/Public Transit funds towards; the interest you earned on Gas Tax/Public Transit Funds and the amount of that interest that you used towards administration costs; and the considerations you made in making your incrementality certification. When you are ready to submit your report to UBCM, the system will take the information you have entered, along with that entered by UBCM (i.e., the amount of Gas Tax/Public Transit funding transferred to you in the year) and produce the Annual Expenditure Report, the Financial Officer Certification and the Detailed Project Report. Financial Officers then sign off the certification form(s), attached a copy of the relevant pages of the audited financial statement, and submit the reports to UBCM. Reporting on provincial Public Transit Infrastructure Program (PTIP) funds differs slightly. You will need to refer to an informational sheet titled "*Additional Instruction for PTA and PTIP Reporters"* either included in your package or available on our website.

Although there have been some updates made, there are still references in the database and guide referring to recipients as municipalities. We recognize that this terminology is not inclusive of regional districts or of other recipients in BC, such as TransLink. We will continue to work towards resolving this issue, but in the interim, please continue to consider any reference to the term "municipality" to be inclusive of all recipients, including regional districts, TransLink and BC Transit.

VERY IMPORTANT

Please do not change prior year's financial data within the system. If you find that financial information submitted previously needs to be modified, please contact our office by e-mail at GT-PT@civicnet.bc.ca or by telephone at 250-356-2947.

If you use the Excel option when printing reports, please ensure that you don't modify the report before printing. If you modify the information in the Excel document, the information will be inaccurate in the database system and create reconciliation issues in future.

Do ensure that all projects completed under the Gas Tax or Public Transit Programs both this year and in prior years have been updated in the database system with an end date (on the Project Information screen) and status description and percentage complete (on the Project Status screen).

<u>Availability of a System User Manual:</u>
As the user guide remains substantially unchanged from last year, rather than enclosing a copy we have posted it on our website (www.civicnet.bc.ca under Programs & Services/Gas Tax-Public Transit/Instructions to Recipients for 2008 Annual Reporting). If you would prefer receiving a

printed copy, please contact us by e-mail at GT-PT@civicnet.bc.ca and we would be happy to mail one out to you.

Username and Password (page 5)
In your letter, you will have received a Username. This was originally a contact e-mail address we had for your organization that may now be out of date; however, we ask you to continue to use this Username. In 2009, the passwords were not reset so that the one that users set last year should still work. Contact us by e-mail at GT-PT@civicnet.bc.ca or by telephone 250 356-2947 if difficulties are experienced in getting into the system or the password needs to be reset.

Not Yet Begun Any Projects?
If you have not yet begun any projects and will only be reporting funds transferred to you by UBCM, administrative costs and/or earned investment income, you can move directly from Page 5 to Page 20 of the guide.

Projects Already Reported (page 6)
If you reported a project in a prior year, please simply update that project record. It is very important that a project only be entered into the system once. For projects that received funding under both the Gas Tax Agreement and the Public Transit Agreement, it is no longer necessary to enter the information as two separate records. As noted previously, updating the project end date and project status is very important.

Deleting a Project Record:
If you have inadvertently created a duplicate project record or need for any other reason to have a project record removed from the system, please contact us by e-mail at GT-PT@civicnet.bc.ca or by telephone 250 356-2947.

Project Nature (page 8)
Please refer to the following definitions for the choices provided:

- Expansion**:** An addition to an existing system and/or structure resulting in an increase of capacity, i.e. servicing more people *(new infrastructure that is added to existing infrastructure).*
- Renewal*:* The replacement or improvements to an existing system resulting in efficiencies *(upgrading existing infrastructure).*
- New: Nothing existed previously *(new infrastructure).*
- Capacity Building: Refers to eligible projects that do not result in tangible capital assets, and that are planning or planning related activities.

Project Outcomes (page 11)
Outcomes are only required for capital projects. You will note that the Outputs and Indicators are pre-filled. If your Project Type is identified as capacity building, choose CB - N/A. For all other projects, you must indicate which of the three outcomes (i.e., reduced green house gas emissions, cleaner air or cleaner water) you expect from the project. Once you have selected one of the outcomes, you must input text under either "Expected Output" or "Proposed Indicator" fields. You may indicate that the project will be leading towards more than one outcome, and for each outcome, indicate the expected output or proposed indicator (see below).

Expected Output and Proposed Indicator (page 11)
The development work with indicators is still underway. In the interim, some information about outputs and/or indicators should be input for each project (unless the project is a capacity building project).

We ask that you provide a qualitative explanation of how your project is expected to lead towards the outcomes you have selected for the project and also to supply quantitative data if it is readily available. While this quantitative information is not strictly required this year, you could report on such things as the amount of water treated for new treatment projects, the amount of materials diverted from the landfill for recycling or composting projects, the length of a new bike/walking path, or the estimated annual energy savings for a retrofit project.

Once the Partnership Committee has completed its work in developing indicators for the full range of eligible projects, we will be providing more detailed instructions on what indicators must be used for each project type, and how to report outcomes for project completed in prior years. At that time, we also anticipate being in a position to provide a survey to help monitor progress towards ISP planning and to provide a mechanism to report capacity building outputs and outcomes.

Closing the Year; Some New Information Has Become Available After the Project is Closed, How Do I Get the Year Reopened? (page 19)

Closing the project is an indication that you have completed your data entry for that project for the year. If you need to make subsequent changes, please contact us by e-mail at GT-PT@civicnet.bc.ca or by telephone 250 356-2947. Please ensure that you close the project year prior to running the Annual Expenditure Report.

If you receive errors during the validation process, the error message will be noted at that top of the page. Use the menu at the left to go back to the page identified and the field that requires correction will display in red type.

Interest and Administration Page (page 20)

As mentioned previously, please do not adjust prior years' data for interest and administration expenses. If you find that you need to make changes to prior year's information for any reason, please contact us by e-mail at GT-PT@civicnet.bc.ca or by telephone 250 356-2947. Note also that administration expenses cannot exceed interest that has been earned and recorded in the system.

Opinion On Net Capital Spending [Incrementality] (page 22)

Each recipient must ensure that Gas Tax/Public Transit funding represents incremental spending, and the Partnership Committee has determined what is meant by incremental spending. Details are provided in our Gas Tax/Public Transit Update Bulletin Number 1 dated December 19, 2006 on our website (www.civicnet.bc.ca under Programs & Services/Gas Tax-Public Transit/Bulletins to Recipients).

Essentially, there are two elements of incrementality for local governments. First is UBCM's responsibility to ensure that the total 2006-2010 net capital spending (i.e., capital spending less government grants and contributions) for all recipient local governments exceeds total net capital spending for those local governments from 2000-2004. Second is the responsibility for each local government to ensure that net capital spending each year is at least as much as it would have been had the Gas Tax and Public Transit Funds not been available.

This latter responsibility is part of the Financial Officer certification (see below). In addition, recipients are asked to provide an explanation of the considerations they made in determining how they met this test. Examples of the types of things that Financial Officers might take into consideration in making this certification are:

- amounts contemplated for spending in the financial plan (i.e., did you meet the net capital spending expectations set out in your financial plan?)
- average net capital spending for prior years (e.g., did you spend as much as you typically spent in the past?)
- change or expected change in tax base (i.e., a significant loss in tax revenue or an expectation of such a loss in future years might cause a reduction in planned capital expenditures)

- general economic circumstances in your area (e.g., if construction costs are rising rapidly, you may have made a decision to wait until these level off)
- other significant circumstances in your area (e.g., an emerging or emergency operating need may have diverted capital spending)

These are merely examples of the types of things that might be part of your considerations in making the statement that your net capital spending is as much as it would have been without the Gas Tax/Public Transit funds. Each circumstance will be unique and Financial Officers may consider whatever factors they feel are relevant in their unique circumstances.

Printing Reports

Once the report comes up on the screen after you press "Generate Report", it is necessary to choose the "Acrobat (PDF) file" from the "Select a Format" drop-down menu and then click on the "Export" button. The system will normally place a copy of the PDF file on your desktop, as well as open it up on the screen. You can then choose print as you normally would a PDF. Some users will also be able to select "Excel". If you choose this format, please ensure that you don't modify the data in the report before printing. If you modify the information in the Excel document, the information will be inaccurate in the database system and create reconciliation issues in future.

Annual Expenditure Report (page 22)

As noted in the attached letter, this is the report that you need to print and have your Financial Officer sign. The report is a summary of the data for that fiscal year input into the reporting system, plus text of the Financial Officer certification that is required. That certification is part of the overall accountability system established for the Gas Tax/Public Transit funds. Additional elements include the Annual Expenditure Report (AER) itself, auditing requirements in relation to the AER, and a system of project and compliance audits in relation to both recipients and UBCM (in its role as administrators of the programs).

In most other provinces, recipient financial information presented in the AER must be audited. This audit is in addition to statements such as our Financial Officer certification and is in addition to separate project audits (referred to above). In order to avoid the need to have an audit of the financial information presented by recipients in their AER, local government recipients have been asked to include a note in their consolidated financial statements, or a schedule in the supplementary information provided with their financial statements. Essentially, the note/schedule will set out the same information that you will be providing in your AER. Once we receive your AER, it will be compared to the note/schedule in your financial statements and, assuming they reconcile, the note will act as confirmation of the AER, thereby eliminating the need for a separate audit opinion on the recipient financial information in the AER. In 2009, we are asking that you forward a copy of the relevant pages of the financial statement at the same time as you forward your Annual Expenditure Report.

Reminder: Reporting on provincial Public Transit Infrastructure Program (PTIP) funds differs slightly. You will need to refer to an informational sheet titled "*Additional Instruction for PTA and PTIP Reporters*" either included in your package or available on our website.

Detailed Project Report (page 27)

In response to a request from Recipients and to meet our own need for simplicity in reviewing reports as they come in, new in 2009 is the ability to print a Detailed Project Report that captures in print all of the key information that recipients have entered into the database for their projects. If Recipients have eligible projects to report, we request that this Detailed Project Report be submitted with the signed Annual Expenditure Report.