



**metrovancouver**

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# SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

## **- A History of Labour Relations Services -**

### Our History

Labour Relations Services has evolved into a function that provides services to all 21 Municipalities with the Metro Vancouver region, one Treaty First Nation, and 20 related Employers.

- **1964** - A Joint Liaison Committee on Labour Relations was established to formalize collective bargaining matters amongst three municipalities.
- **1965** - The Municipal Labour Relations Bureau (MLRB) was formed to provide common negotiating, research and advisory services to its member municipalities in the Vancouver region.
- **1979** – The Labour Relations function was incorporated under the auspices of the GVRD (now Metro Vancouver) under the Supplementary Letters Patent.
- **1982** – Labour Relations was included as a department of the GVRD.
- **2013** – Labour Relations Services was established under Bylaw 1182 and Terms of Reference – Metro Vancouver Labour Relations Function.

### JOINT LIAISON COMMITTEE ON LABOUR RELATIONS

The first steps to formalize consultation and collaboration in collective bargaining matters were taken in 1964 when the City of Vancouver, the City of New Westminster and the District of Burnaby established the Joint Liaison Committee on Labour Relations. This action was prompted by the increasing sophistication of the municipal trade unions' approach to collective bargaining and the rising costs associated with the unions' success at utilizing coordination tactics (i.e., whip-sawing) to consistently produce settlement levels in the Lower Mainland municipalities which could not be justified by reference to either the public or private sectors.



## MUNICIPAL LABOUR RELATIONS BUREAU

The effects of leading both the public and private sectors on total compensation costs created an unwarranted inflation of municipal budgets, greatly reduced the political opportunities available to respond to alternate spending priorities, and necessitated choices between transferring increased costs to the taxpayer or reducing levels of service.

These impacts in turn created a recognition that the level of consultation and coordination provided by the Joint Liaison Committee must be significantly enhanced; a means had to be found for the municipalities, without sacrificing their individual autonomy, to resist union coordination and resist duplicating excessive settlements concluded elsewhere in the region or province.

Therefore, in 1965 the Municipal Labour Relations Bureau (MLRB) was formed to provide common negotiating, research, and advisory services to its members.

By the early '70s, the MLRB had established a common wage policy for its members based upon community norms, introduced a standardized job evaluation system to assist in maintaining equivalent rates for similar work and succeeded in adjusting wage rates and benefit levels so as to more closely reflect the community standard for comparable work.

## INCORPORATION IN THE GVRD

In 1974, by which time the MLRB was bargaining on behalf of 11 employers, the function was incorporated pursuant to Supplementary Letters Patent under the auspices of the GVRD. The Letters Patent provided for the governance of a voluntary group of employers to coordinate their approach to collective bargaining and to establish centralized job evaluation services to support the goals of the group. In 1982 the Supplementary Letters Patent were amended to provide for membership of the Regional District itself in the GVRD Labour Relations function.



## GROWTH

From the establishment of the MLRB through the late 1970s the membership grew to include the majority of municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region. The group membership remained consistent until the late 1980s when the City of Langley and the Township of Langley joined. In the early part of the 1990's the membership grew once again when Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows joined. In 2003 the Village of Lion's Bay entered the function.

Currently, Labour Relations Services provides service to all Municipalities within the Metro Vancouver region.

## THE ORGANIZATION CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

Commencing in 2013, the Labour Relations Service began operating Bylaw 1182 and Terms of Reference – Metro Vancouver Labour Relations Function. Under this new direction, we continue to act as the largest municipal employers' association in the province.