



TRANSLINK BOARD-IN-BRIEF— DECEMBER 18, 2001

Here are the main points from the December 18th meeting of the TransLink Board of Directors. The complete agenda and supporting reports for every Board meeting are posted on TransLink's website (www.translink.bc.ca). The Board-in-Brief is also available on the website.

Note: Board-in-Brief is not the official minutes of the TransLink Board meeting and should not be interpreted as such. The minutes for this meeting will be adopted at the next TransLink Board meeting.

Item 3.1—Financial Impact of Freezing FareSaver Ticket Prices

The Board:

- a) received the report dated December 5, 2001 titled “Financial Impact of Freezing FareSaver Ticket Prices” for information;
- b) endorsed the fare changes as described in the report “Proposed April 1, 2002 Transit Fare Change and Tariff Revision” presented at the November 23, 2001 meeting; and
- c) adopted the “Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority 2001 Tariff Amendment By-Law Number 22 – 2001”.

At its November 23, 2001 meeting the Board approved advancing the scheduled 2003 fare increase to April 1, 2002. One-zone fares would increase 25 cents, two-zone and three-zone fares would increase 50 cents. All other fare media except monthly passes would increase in the same proportion including the fare structure for West Coast Express, HandyDART and Bowen Island. Monthly FareCards and annual passes would be frozen at 2000 levels pending a review of the fare system. A copy of the November 23rd report is provided as Attachment C.

The Board requested that staff outline the financial impact of freezing the FareSaver ticket prices prior to adopting the revised Transit Tariff. The resulting report showed projected fare revenue losses of \$5.6 million to \$10.4 million on an annual basis. The Board voted to approve the fare increases as originally recommended, thereby including increases to FareSaver tickets.

Item 3.2—Disposition of Property at 1100 Woolridge Street, Coquitlam (Lougheed Park and Ride)

The Board authorized the disposition of the property with a civic address of 1100 Woolridge Street, Coquitlam consistent with the process set out in the report (titled as above) subject to the Board approving the final terms and conditions of the sale. The Board also authorized the expenditure of \$20,000 to undertake the necessary due diligence reports and costs associated with advertising, which will be netted against the sale proceeds.

The property is 3.079 acres, and is the remaining parcel of an original assembly of 16.075 acres which was acquired for \$1.75 million from Crown Forest Products to serve as a major Park and Ride lot to accommodate Expo 86. It can accommodate up to 300 vehicles as a park-and-ride facility; however, utilization has diminished over the years from 20% of capacity in the early 1990's to 7% of capacity in October of this year. Staff has also determined that the property is not in any future corridor for rapid transit to Coquitlam.

Sale of the property will raise revenue of approximately \$3 million and reduce yearly operating costs by \$97,000.

Item 3.3—1999 Major Road Network (MRN) Minor Capital Program Status

The Board received the November 29, 2001 report (titled as above) for information. The Board approved a request for a one-year extension for one project in the 1999 MRN Minor Capital Program—specifically, the Township of Langley's 200 Street / Highway 1 Interchange Upgrade project.

Of the 34 projects in the 1999 MRN Minor Capital Program approved by the TransLink Board in May 1999, TransLink has contributed a total of almost \$8.5 million to-date to 28 projects with a total project cost of approximately \$27.9 million. As of November 29, 2001 six projects remained incomplete. Two of those projects were expected to be completed by the end of 2001; another three projects have been cancelled by the respective municipalities. The Township of Langley requested another one-year extension (to December 31, 2002) for the completion deadline on the 200 Street / Highway 1 interchange project.

Item 3.4—Fraser River Crossing Project Public Consultation Plan

The Board:

- a) Received the report titled "Fraser River Crossing Project Public Consultation Plan" for information;

- b)
 - i) Approved public consultation for the Fraser River Project as described in this report;
 - ii) Directed staff to undertake such public consultation and report back to the Board with the findings when completed in early 2002;provided all of this work is undertaken within existing approved budgets.

In response to the Board's direction in September 2000, technical studies have been undertaken to define a bridge and connecting road configuration that can effectively collect and distribute the traffic that would use a new Fraser River crossing in the 200th Street corridor.

The Fraser River Crossing Project is being spearheaded by TransLink, but is in fact an inter-governmental initiative with TransLink working alongside individual municipalities and the provincial government. The project team will invite representatives of the municipalities and the province to work together to disseminate information about the project, seek feedback and answer questions residents and businesses may have.

The report to the Board describes a public consultation plan to be implemented in 2002. Consultation activities will be concentrated in those communities directly impacted by the proposed crossing, including Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge, Surrey and Langley. Some consultation will also take place in adjacent communities (e.g., the Tri-Cities) that may also be affected by the project.

Information on the Fraser River Crossing project can be found on-line at www.translink.bc.ca/frasercrossing.

Item 3.5—Granville SkyTrain Station – New Entry with Elevator Access – Joint Development at 600 Granville Street

The Board:

- a) approved the construction of a new fully accessible SkyTrain Station entry with elevator access at Granville Station in conjunction with a proposed residential/commercial development at 600 Granville Street. This project would be subject to the successful rezoning of the 600 Granville stie by Macdonald Development Corporation.
- b) approved a capital budget in an amount up to \$4.5 million for the development of a new Granville Station entry.
- c) Authorized the CEO to enter into a legal agreement with Macdonald Development Corporation, as required and generally on the terms and conditions set out in the Board report and on the Agreement-in-Principle (attached to the Board report). This AIP would form the basis of a future Statutory Right-of-Way Agreement between TransLink and the property owner.

The new station entry is proposed at the ground-floor level of a mixed-use, high-density commercial/residential development. The development includes an underground retail mall and five levels of underground parking. The development proposal requires rezoning of the 600 Granville site for the residential tower.

Implementation of this project will support several other TransLink objectives:

- Increasing the passenger flow capacity for Granville Station, in recognition of the 50 per cent increase in annual boardings since 1988, and the 40 per cent increase projected with the Millennium Line;
- Improving customer service by providing multiple station entrances and more direct access to Dunsmuir Street;
- Improve safety and security of SkyTrain passengers through the provision of more “eyes on the station” from the added activity of the underground retail mall and the residential tower; and,
- Improve the visibility of Granville Station as a major transportation destination, and an integral component of the community.

The lack of an elevator is a long-standing deficiency at Granville SkyTrain Station, the only station on the original Expo Line that was constructed without an elevator for the accommodation of persons with mobility impairments between the station platforms and street level. A human rights complaint has been lodged against the BC Rapid Transit Company—the TransLink subsidiary that operates SkyTrain—regarding the lack of wheelchair accessibility at Granville Station. TransLink may face a ruling at some future date to install an elevator access at Granville Station, despite the costs. If no private property opportunities were available at that time, the elevator would have to be constructed at a minimum cost to TransLink of \$7.3 million.

Under the proposal approved by the Board, TransLink’s construction costs will be capped at \$4.5 million, with Macdonald Development Corporation will paying the remainder of the construction costs. TransLink and Macdonald will negotiate the sharing of annual maintenance costs.

Item 3.6—Canada Transportation Act Review

The Board voted to take the following actions on this matter:

- a) Support the overall Panel recommendations and suggested changes pertaining to urban transportation and commuter rail, as published in the *Canada Transportation Act Review*;
- b) Urge the federal government to adopt the Panel’s recommendations and suggested changes, circulate this report and the appendix to the municipalities and other stakeholders in the region to make it clear that federal funding will not be available to meet the immediate need for additional funds in the next few years; and

- c) Solicit input and support from municipalities, the provincial government and key stakeholders on the Panel's report.

In July 2001, federal Transport Minister David Collenette tabled in Parliament and publicly released the final report of the *Canada Transportation Act (CTA) Review Panel*.

Although it is not the only focus of the review, the Panel "sees urban areas as a source of major transportation problems and urban transit as a key component of a comprehensive multi-modal transport policy." The Panel goes on to say "the most pressing policy concern appears to be future funding." The Panel's critique of the urban situation is insightful, particularly the discussion on the need for funding, where they mention TransLink's efforts on funding issues. This report highlights the findings, commentary and recommendations of the report that support the use of federal funds for urban transportation.

The Panel suggests, among many other positive recommendations, the creation of an arms-length agency that would direct federal fuel taxes to transportation-related projects. This is perhaps the single most important recommendation by the Panel and is one that TransLink has been pressing on the federal government for some time. Canada is the only major advanced country that does not have a national urban policy or a system for supporting urban transportation from national revenues.

Item 3.7—Update on the Rehabilitation Needs of TransLink-Owned Structures

The Board received the November 29 report, titled as above, for information.

The report summarizes the nature, timing and budget for the work that will be needed to rehabilitate the Knight Street, Pattullo and Westham Island Bridges over the next five years. In particular, the report focusses on proposed revisions to the Bridge Capital Plan to undertake the following projects in 2002:

1. Urgent repairs to the Pattullo Bridge to prevent advanced deterioration; and,
2. A review of options and the design of improvements to increase the load rating of the Westham Island Bridge.

The pressing issue is the Pattullo Bridge. Although the bridge is generally in fair condition overall, some important elements are in poor or very poor condition. Painting of the bottom chords of the steel spans is now urgently required to protect the integrity and safety of the Pattullo Bridge. (Painting prevents corrosion and loss of section on the steel members, which would reduce the strength and safety of the structure.) Some repairs are needed on key bracing members in the steel spans that have heavy corrosion on the bracing angles and lattice bars.

A significant amount of rehabilitation work will need to be done to increase the load rating of the Westham Island Bridge in Delta. The local farming community has stated the present load rating is inadequate for the vehicles carrying farm produce from Westham Island.

Item 3.8—Third Quarter (July – September) 2001 Capital Project Summary Report

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information.

The Board also received for information a scope change on a Major Road Network minor capital project in New Westminster, and a schedule change on delivery of the 20 new Mark II vehicles for the Expo SkyTrain line.

Item 3.9—Tender/Contract Award Information – January 27, 2001 to November 26, 2001

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information.

The report provides information on the award of contracts valued at, or originally estimated at more than \$250,000 which were not previously approved directly by the Board.

Item 3.10 – Transit Fare Revenues – August to November 2001

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information.

TransLink's current forecasts for 2001 and 2002 assume that there will be a 15% reduction in ridership as a result of the four-month service disruption and that it would take up to one year to recover this ridership. The forecasts also provided for an estimate of the financial impact of the incentives provided in August to regain ridership.

While it is still early to predict how ridership and subsequent revenue will recover during the next year, at this stage there is cautious optimism based on the results from October and November 2001 where fare revenues were only off by 6.5% on average. Nonetheless, it will require another two or three months to determine the validity of this apparent positive trend towards faster recovery than anticipated.

Item 3.11 – Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) tax ruling respecting the AirCare test fee

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information.

In October 2001, CCRA ruled that the AirCare testing fees are not subject to the GST. This ruling has been anticipated by TransLink, and all AirCare financial projections and reports provided to the Board since 1999 have reflected this expectation. The current AirCare test fee structure was approved based on these projections. Therefore, there are no financial changes required to the AirCare program due to this decision.

Item 3.12—Delay in Designation of 32nd Avenue in South Surrey as a Truck Route
{note: this item was tabled at the meeting, and was not included in the agenda package}

The Board voted to delay any possible decision to designate 32nd Avenue in South Surrey as a truck route for a period of at least one year from December 18, 2001.

The decision was taken in response to community concerns.

The next TransLink Board meeting is scheduled for:

Date: Friday, January 18, 2002
Time: 9:00 am
Location: 2nd floor boardroom
GVRD headquarters
4330 Kingsway, Burnaby

The next TransLink Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled for:

Date: Wednesday, January 30, 2002
Time: 11:30 am
Location: 2nd floor boardroom
GVRD headquarters
4330 Kingsway, Burnaby