



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** January 20, 2004
From: Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation **File:** 6480-03-02
Re: **TRANSLINK 2004 TRANSIT PLAN**

Staff Recommendation

That the attached report, which outlines the transit service improvements for Richmond as part of TransLink's 2004 Transit Service Plan, be received for information.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation
(4021)

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

Staff Report

Origin

Based on the broad improvements identified in TransLink's current approved 3-Year Transportation and Financial Plan (2002-2004), TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC), in consultation with municipal staff, prepare annual transit service plans for TransLink Board approval. In December 2003, the TransLink Board approved the 2004 Transportation Plan that details transit service improvements for 2004 and is derived from the overall direction established by the 3-Year Transportation Plan approved in July 2002.

This report describes, for Council's information, the transit service improvements to be implemented in Richmond as part of TransLink's 2004 Transportation Plan.

Analysis

1. Overall Regional Improvements

TransLink's priorities for 2004 include increasing transit use for trips to, from and between the metropolitan core and regional and municipal town centres and for post-secondary student trips, in particular to UBC and SFU to support the U-Pass program, by improving the frequency, directness and reliability of transit service. TransLink intends to improve service frequencies on crowded routes and to extend service coverage in suburban areas where warranted by demand. The implementation of several projects will be delayed from Spring to Fall 2004, including some in Richmond (see Section 2), to respond to the increased crowding on existing services. In markets where ridership levels do not warrant the use of standard 12-m long buses, TransLink will continue to expand community shuttle services using vehicles that are smaller and more appropriate for lower traffic routes.

Total annual bus and shuttle service will increase by 3.6% (135,600 annual service hours) in 2004, which will primarily be achieved through a major expansion of community shuttle services (115,400 hours). Buses freed up from community shuttle conversions will be used to expand conventional services (20,100 hours). In total, 45 new vehicles will be added to the existing fleet of 1,200 buses and shuttle vehicles in 2004. HandyDART service will increase by 3.3% in 2004, which will enable an additional 36,000 trips in the region.

2. Richmond Service Improvements

A number of transit service improvements for bus routes operating in or to/from Richmond are scheduled to commence operations in 2004. These improvements account for over 57,000 annual service hours (42%) of the total system-wide increase of 135,600 annual service hours. In terms of new equipment, 18 of the 45 new vehicles will be assigned to Richmond-related service improvements. The city will gain both new and enhanced services across the following regional and local routes for conventional and community shuttle buses:

- Regional Services – new services to connect town centres between Surrey/Newton-Richmond Centre/Airport Station and Burnaby/Metrotown-Richmond Centre as well as enhanced service levels on the #98 B-Line and the #620 (Tsawwassen Ferry-Airport Station); and
- Local Services – new community shuttle services along Williams Road and in the Crestwood industrial area and enhanced service to the main and south terminals of YVR.

The table below provides details on the service improvements, including proposed implementation dates and additional annual service hours.

Proposed Implementation	Route	Description	Est. Annual Service Hours		# of Peak Vehicles	
			CB	CS	CB	CS
Spring 2004	424 425	Replace conventional bus service to Airport with community shuttle service	(13,900)	18,000	(2)	5
Spring 2004	620	Introduce Tsawwassen Ferry-Airport Stn service (formalize current overload trips)	1,000		1	
Spring 2004	98	Increase service during off-peak periods	4,800		0	
Winter 2004	CS	Introduce community shuttle service along Williams Road between Steveston and Riverport Complex		13,000		3
Winter 2004	405 CS	Introduce community shuttle service in Crestwood Industrial area and replace portion of conventional bus service	(3,000)	5,000	(1)	2
Winter 2004	301	Introduce Phase 1 of Newton Exchange-Airport Stn service: Mon-Fri peak periods at 30-minute frequency	10,500		7	
Winter 2004	301	Introduce Phase 2 of Newton Exchange-Airport Stn service: Mon-Fri mid-days & daytime Sat/Sun/Hol at 60-min freq	5,750		0	
Winter 2004	301	Introduce Phase 3 of Newton Exchange-Airport Stn service: Evening service all days at 30-minute frequency	2,420		0	
Winter 2004	430	Introduce Phase 1 of Richmond Centre-Metrotown service: Mon-Fri peak periods at 30-minute frequency	4,500		3	
Winter 2004	430	Introduce Phase 2 of Richmond Centre-Metrotown service: Mon-Fri mid-days & daytime Sat/Sun/Hol at 30-min freq	9,600		0	
Total			21,670	36,000	8	10

Note: CB = conventional bus service / CS = community shuttle service

With respect to HandyDART service, an additional eight expansion vehicles to be deployed in early 2004 will allow regional service to grow by about 16,000 hours annually, which will provide approximately 36,000 additional trips across the region. Service increases will be allocated across the entire service area based on the level of demand and "unmet" trips, and the ability of local service providers to schedule additional services. Richmond HandyDART service gained extended weekday evening service in 2002 and additional peak hour weekday service in 2003. It is likely that improvements for 2004 will again be allocated to weekday peak hours, as these periods generally record the highest passenger demand for trips.

3. Richmond Infrastructure Improvements

TransLink has identified a preferred site for an off-street bus exchange in the Steveston Village area. The new terminus will provide a number of benefits for both the local neighbourhood and transit operations:

- removing a number of lay-over buses from local streets, which can block sightlines for motorists wishing to exit from adjacent off-street parking areas;

- terminating buses will turn around and lay-over within the loop, thus eliminating circuitous routings along local streets as required by the current on-street arrangements;
- passenger exchange will primarily occur off-street within the loop, thereby minimizing the need for passengers to cross streets to transfer to other buses;
- improved passenger security as the loop will provide a focal point for transit operations that concentrates operators and passengers in one well-lit area;
- less impact on residences adjacent to existing lay-over areas, as the loop will be located in an area relatively further away from nearby residences; and
- provides an opportunity for staff to examine the feasibility of expanding on-street parking due to the removal of a number of buses from the street.


TransLink undertook public consultation on the preferred location in late 2002 when the agency held two open houses at the Steveston Community Centre. Based on feedback received via comment sheets, local residents strongly support an off-street exchange. There will be further opportunity for public input as the preferred site will require rezoning, which will entail a public hearing and Council approval per the normal rezoning process. TransLink anticipates that construction will begin in 2004 and that the new facility will be open by the end of 2004.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact at this time. New transit services that may require the provision of related infrastructure (e.g., bus stop landings) would be funded from the annual Transit Plan Infrastructure Program, which is subject to Council approval as part of the annual Capital Budget review process. Most capital projects related to transit passenger amenities (e.g., accessible bus stop installations) and other transit infrastructure improvements (e.g., minor road works to facilitate transit operations) are eligible for 50/50 cost-sharing between the City and TransLink.

Conclusion

Richmond will gain significant transit service and infrastructure improvements in 2004 as part of TransLink's 2004 Transportation Plan. Service enhancements include new regional connectors (Surrey/Newton-Richmond Centre/Airport Station and Burnaby/Metrotown-Richmond Centre), new local services (community shuttle routes along Williams Road and in the Crestwood industrial area) and higher service levels on existing routes (#98 B-Line, #620 Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal-Airport Station, #424 and #425 to main and south terminals of YVR). HandyDART service will increase to provide approximately 36,000 additional trips across the region with this increase to be allocated across the entire service area based on the level of demand and "unmet" trips, and the ability of local service providers to schedule additional services. As in 2003, HandyDART service increases in Richmond will likely be allocated to weekday peak periods. Infrastructure improvements comprise a new off-street bus exchange for the Steveston village area, which is anticipated to be open by the end of 2004. This facility will provide benefits for the local area in terms of eliminating circuitous routings along local streets, removing buses from streets (which can block sightlines), and improving passenger security and safety by focusing passenger exchanges between buses in an off-street well-lit area with a concentration of operators and passengers.


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