



REPORT TO COUNCIL

TO: Richmond City Council
FROM: Councillor Lyn Greenhill, Chair
Public Works & Transportation Committee
RE: **DRAFT TRANSLINK STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

DATE: February 24th, 2000
FILE: 6600-01

The Public Works & Transportation Committee, at its closed meeting held on Wednesday, February 23rd, 2000, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

1. ***That the overall vision and objectives of the draft TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan to enhance liveability in the region through expanded transit services, roads and infrastructure, and implementation of transportation demand management measures, as outlined in the attached report from the Manager of Transportation, be supported.***
2. ***That Council request TransLink to address the following issues in the completion and implementation of the various components of the draft Plan:***
 - a) ***The study of the Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line in 2001, involving full participation of Richmond City Council, staff and public, should include the identification of recommended options for alignment and technology, which can be implemented before 2010.***
 - b) ***The Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line should be taken into consideration in the planning of the Broadway West rapid transit line and the future use of the Arbutus rail corridor.***
 - c) ***The introduction of "Express Bus" routes including the Richmond/Metrotown and Richmond/Surrey connections, continued improvement of service between Richmond and UBC, and the expansion in "City Bus" services to improve cross-town access to local Richmond destinations should be considered as high priority initiatives.***
 - d) ***The draft Plan should ensure that sufficient funding is provided for the completion of the #98 B-Line with median bus lane operations on No. 3 Road by the end of 2000, without reducing the scope of improvements developed jointly by TransLink and Richmond.***
 - e) ***The introduction of "Community Shuttle" services in Richmond for application in the City Centre and various local neighbourhoods with the first application in 2001 and subsequent service expansions in other areas in Richmond should be included in the draft Plan.***
 - f) ***Adequate resources should be allocated in the draft Plan to ensure the full implementation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan within the next five years, including improvements to regional connections and accessibility to local destinations, and introduction of community bus services.***

- g) *TransLink and municipal staff should continue to work together to update the Richmond component of the MRN to reflect changes in land use and travel demand, and to modify the MRN to address elements that may not be appropriate for municipal jurisdiction, such as the Knight Street corridor in Richmond.***
 - h) *The “Strategic Road Network” proposed in the Plan should also include: the major upgrade of the Steveston Interchange to address capacity and safety concerns and to protect the integrity of the Highway 99 system; and the replacement of the Moray Channel Bridge or its permanent closure to high vessel passage to ensure operational efficiency of the #98 B-Line and general traffic flow to/from the Vancouver International Airport.***
 - i) *TransLink should work with municipal and provincial staff to establish the proposed bicycle program and to provide funding for the expansion of the municipal cycling infrastructure to ensure continuity between adjacent municipal and provincial bicycle networks.***
 - j) *Further examination of the transportation pricing measures proposed in the draft Plan should be carried out with the inclusion of other alternative measures to ensure that the overall transportation demand management objectives are achieved.***
 - k) *That the City of Richmond strongly suggests that TransLink work with the Federal Government to redirect current federal road and fuel taxes to transportation infrastructure instead of general revenue.***
- 3. *That Council's endorsement of the above matters related to the draft TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan be conveyed to the Chair of the TransLink Board of Directors.***

Councillor Lyn Greenhill, Chair
Public Works & Transportation Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that the Committee added clause (k) of Part 2 of the above recommendation.

STAFF REPORT

ORIGIN

In June, 1999, staff presented a report to Council providing an overview of the principles and work program for the preparation of the TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan (STP). At that time, staff were directed to provide input and technical assistance to TransLink in the development of the STP through participation on the Transit Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) and the Major Roads Technical Advisory Committee (MRTAC). Over the past six months, staff have been providing comments in the STP development process through these committees.

TransLink has now completed a draft of the STP, which sets out the actions the new authority will take to respond to transportation needs in the region for the next five years. On January 29, 2000, TransLink staff presented the draft STP to the regional Council of Councils. A series of public meetings are being held in various parts of the region to seek response to the draft plan.

This staff report presents the draft STP (Executive Summary - Attachment 1) and outlines staff's assessment of the key aspects of the plan for the consideration of Council.

ANALYSIS

The draft STP proposes significantly increased expenditures for transit and selective development of roads in the region. The plan also proposes initiatives to address issues related to transportation demand management, alternatives to single occupant vehicles, goods movement, cycling, walking, safety, technological applications, etc. These improvements will be financed through existing and new revenue sources. The following is an overview of the key elements of the plan and staff's assessment of the possible implications for Richmond.

1. Vision and Objectives

The overall vision statement of the STP is "enhanced livability through managed mobility." This vision incorporates a management system that addresses all aspects of the transportation system and places emphasis on efforts aimed at providing effective transportation to accommodate travel to workplaces and services, to enhance goods movement, to provide alternatives to the automobile, to improve air quality, etc. The three objectives outlined in the STP to support this vision are:

- *Enhance the transit system through expansion of existing services and provision of a range of new services to meet customer needs;*
- *Improve the Major Road Network through rehabilitation and upgraded maintenance of existing roadways and selective addition of new facilities that will support goods movement and relieve congestion at key locations; and*
- *Develop a system that implements transportation demand management, promotes the use of walking, cycling and other alternatives and will integrate management of all elements of the transportation system in a fiscally responsible manner and monitor progress of implementation.*

These objectives are proposed to be achieved through the development and execution of the following components of the STP: the Transit Plan, Road and Infrastructure Plan, Management Strategy, and the Financial Plan.

The proposed STP is consistent with the transportation-related policies contained in the City's OCP as the Plan supports actions to enhance livability in the region through enhanced transit services, roads and infrastructure, and application of transportation demand management measures.

Staff Recommendation: That the overall vision and objectives of the draft TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan to enhance livability in the region through expanded transit service, roads and infrastructure, and application of transportation demand management measures be supported.

2. Transit Plan

The Transit Plan proposes significant expansion of transit services for the 2000 to 2005 period (48% fleet expansion and 25% service hour increase). The new resources will be allocated toward the introduction of: "Express Bus", "B-Line", "City Bus", and "Community Shuttle" services. The Area Transit Plan process is also considered a key element of the STP.

2.1 Richmond-Vancouver Rapid Transit Line

The draft STP proposes to begin a study for planning of the Richmond/Airport rapid transit link to Vancouver in 2001. In staff's assessment, the STP should be specific in stating that the purpose of this study is to identify the recommended alignment and technology. Based on the findings of Transport 2021 (a regional transportation study conducted jointly by the Province and GVRD in 1993/1994), the Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line was projected to achieve the highest ridership and intensity of use among all rapid transit lines examined in the region (including the Broadway-Lougheed line). Given the significant ridership projections, continued population growth, and increasing employment opportunities in Richmond and those associated with the Airport operations, it is suggested that a stronger statement concerning the implementation timing (by 2021) for this line be included.

Discussion and planning activities are currently being held on the rapid transit options for the Broadway corridor between Commercial Drive and UBC and on the use of the Arbutus railway corridor. Both of these issues have a major impact on the planning and ultimate feasibility of the Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line. It would therefore be extremely prudent to include the consideration of the Richmond-Vancouver line in any decisions that will be made regarding the Broadway line and Arbutus corridor issues.

Staff Recommendations: The study of the Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line in 2001 involving full participation of Richmond City Council, staff and public, should include the identification of recommended alignment and technology of the line which can be implemented before 2010. Furthermore, the Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line should be taken into consideration in the planning of the Broadway West rapid transit line and the future use of the Arbutus corridor.

2.2 Introduction of "Express Bus" Routes and Expansion in "City Bus" Services

The draft plan proposes the introduction of new "Express Bus" routes between Richmond and Metrotown, Surrey Centre, and other regional centres to serve the long distance commuter market using fast, comfortable highway-type buses. The overall objective for "City Bus" services is to eventually provide a minimum of 10-15 minute service in peak hours and 15-20 minute daytime service in high density areas. Based on the input received from the public over the past few years and results of market surveys, these regional connections are urgently needed to accommodate the travel demand to both work and shopping destinations in Richmond.

The current bus route structure in Richmond is deficient in terms of the lack of connections among local destinations. The desire to have increased accessibility within the local area is evident based on the feedback provided to TransLink and City staff in a number of public consultation forums. It is suggested that the implementation of cross-town services in Richmond be given high priority consideration in the draft STP.

Staff Recommendation: The introduction of "Express Bus" including the Richmond/Metrotown and Richmond/Surrey connections, continued improvement of service between Richmond and UBC, and the expansion of "City Bus" services to improve cross-town access to local Richmond destinations should be considered as high priority initiatives in the Plan.

2.3 Funding for Completion of the #98 B-Line

The #98 B-Line service is scheduled to commence operations in December, 2000. The objective is to provide full median bus lane operations on No. 3 Road between Ackroyd Road and Sea Island Way to ensure that the most efficient service is achieved and that traffic safety is maintained. To ensure that all components of the #98 B-Line system are implemented so that the quality of the system is not compromised, sufficient funding will need to be allocated by TransLink to complete this project in 2000. In addition, to maximize the security and operational efficiency of the system, ticket machines should be implemented as soon as possible.

Staff Recommendation: The Plan should ensure sufficient funding for the completion of the #98 B-Line with median bus lane operations on No. 3 Road by the end of 2000, without reducing the scope of improvements developed jointly by TransLink and the City.

2.4 Introduction of "Community Shuttle" Services

"Community Shuttle" services are proposed to be introduced in areas where large 40 foot buses are expensive and ineffective. The draft STP has identified the central part of Richmond as a potential area for such a service. In the current development of the Richmond Area Transit Plan, "Community Shuttle" services are being considered for application in the City Centre as well as in local neighbourhoods beyond existing transit service coverage. This type of service should be implemented in Richmond as a demonstration project as early as 2001.

Staff Recommendation: The introduction of "Community Shuttle" services in Richmond for application in the City Centre and various local neighbourhoods with the first application in 2001 and subsequent expansions in other areas in Richmond should be included in the draft Plan.

2.5 Implementation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan

The draft plan also proposes the introduction of a fixed 3-year planning cycle for the identification of transit service expansion requirements and to develop innovative, integrated, and cost-effective solutions. The Richmond Area Transit Plan is scheduled for completion in 2000. Adequate resources will need to be identified in the draft plan to ensure the full implementation of the service improvements contained in the Richmond Area Transit Plan, including improvements that address the key issues of the requirement for better regional connections, enhanced accessibility to local destinations, and alternative methods of service delivery.

Staff Recommendation: Adequate resources should be allocated in the Plan to ensure the full implementation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan within the next five years, including improvements to regional connections and accessibility to local destinations, and introduction of community bus services.

3. **Road and Infrastructure Plan**

The Road and Infrastructure Plan outlines a strategy for the maintenance and development of the Major Road Network (MRN) and other key transportation infrastructure over the next five years. The strategy is expected to achieve better co-ordination and better management of existing road infrastructure through implementation of new maintenance standards and major capital projects.

3.1 Update of Major Road Network (MRN)

The draft STP proposes to maintain the integrity of the Major Road Network by including roads that meet approved criteria. These criteria will be applied for the review and refinement of the MRN to reflect changing land use and travel patterns and to ensure that it continues to fulfil a regional function. In refining the MRN, TransLink should also consider whether some elements of the network are appropriate municipal responsibilities, e.g. Knight Street corridor (given the fact that this is the only freeway type facility in the MRN, and that the Knight Street corridor is functioning as part of the Highway 91/Highway 99 system).

Staff Recommendation: TransLink and municipal staff should continue to work together to update the Richmond-component of the MRN to reflect changes in land use and travel demand, and to modify the MRN to address elements that may not be appropriate for municipal jurisdiction, such as the Knight Street corridor in Richmond.

3.2 “Strategic Road Network” and Capital Improvements

The draft Plan proposes an overall capital expenditure of \$120 million on a “Strategic Road Network” of regional and provincial roads. These funds will be allocated to both minor and major projects. Minor projects will be aimed at managing and improving the efficiency of the existing network, such as intersection geometric, safety, and network continuity improvements. Major projects will be aimed at advancing much needed network-level road improvements and system initiatives, such as regional signal co-ordination, etc.

A number of projects have been identified as major capital projects on the "Strategic Road Network". In staff's assessment, the upgrading of Steveston Interchange and the Morrey Channel Bridge should be included as major capital projects on the "Strategic Road Network."

In 1999 TransLink committed to partner with the City and BCTFA to conduct a review to identify improvements for the Steveston Interchange. The Steveston Interchange is an important facility as it provides connections via Highway 99 to many regional centres, and major gateway facilities such as the airport and ferry terminal, and to many inter-regional connections such as the Sea to Sky corridor and border crossings.

The closure or replacement of the Moray Channel Bridge or its permanent closure to high vessel passage should also be included in the network to ensure best performance of the #98 B-Line service is achieved and traffic flow efficiency to/from the Airport and Vancouver is maintained.

Staff Recommendation: The "Strategic Road Network" proposed in the draft Plan should include: the major upgrade of the Steveston Interchange to address traffic safety concerns and to protect the integrity of the Highway 99/Steveston Highway system, and the replacement of the Moray Channel Bridge or its permanent closure to high vessel passage to ensure operational efficiency of the #98 B-Line and general traffic flow to/from the Vancouver International Airport.

3.3 Cycling Infrastructure Initiatives

The draft plan includes a regional cycling network program for municipal initiatives and facilities that provides continuity between adjacent municipal bicycle networks. This program will allow for the accelerated implementation of cycling infrastructure within municipalities.

Staff Recommendation: TransLink should work closely with municipal and provincial staff to establish the proposed program in the draft Plan and to provide funding assistance for municipal cycling infrastructure initiatives to ensure continuity between adjacent municipal and provincial bicycle networks.

4. **Management Strategy/Financial Plan**

The draft STP proposes that the use of transportation pricing measures to increase transit ridership and to limit the growth in single occupant vehicle travel in the region be considered. The revenues obtained from the implementation of the transportation pricing measures will be used to finance the expansion of transit services and road capital projects. The possible measures considered in the Plan include: road pricing/tolling, vehicle charge, parking tax and parking management, transit fares, benefiting area charges, etc.

The introduction of transportation pricing measures is a sensitive issue. The need to find new revenue sources to fund service expansions is generally recognized. Staff's assessment is that these measures, together with other possible measures, should be examined further to determine their effectiveness in terms of meeting the full transportation demand management objectives.

Staff Recommendation: Further examination of the transportation pricing measures proposed in the Plan should be carried out with the inclusion of other alternative measures to ensure that the overall transportation demand management objectives are achieved.

4.1 Financial Outlook

TransLink currently uses the following revenue sources to fund the transportation system: transit fares, residential and commercial property tax, parking sales taxes, AirCare test fees, levies on BC Hydro residential electricity accounts, and gasoline taxes.

TransLink is proposing to introduce the new transportation pricing-related revenue sources to fund transit expansions and maintain and selectively expand the major road network. These revenues will be devoted exclusively to cover the increase in annual costs from \$506.7 million in 1999 to \$814.4 million in 2005 for the additional services and capital programs set out in the plan.

The following tables summarize the impact of the proposed transportation pricing measures on TransLink's financial outlook. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the projected surplus/deficit "without" and "with" the new transportation pricing revenue sources respectively.

Table 1: Financial Outlook – *Without* Proposed Transportation Pricing Measures (\$ millions)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<i>Total Revenues</i>	488.1	503.4	533.9	554.4	580.1	597.2	621.9
<i>Total Costs</i>	506.7	544.4	598.8	661.	715.3	758.0	814.4
<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>	(18.6)	(40.9)	(64.8)	(106.6)	(135.2)	(160.8)	(192.5)

Table 2: Financial Outlook – *With* Proposed Transportation Pricing Measures (\$ millions)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<i>Total Revenues</i>	488.1	518.3	583.4	676.5	733.9	760.7	816.6
<i>Total Costs</i>	506.7	544.4	598.8	661.	715.3	758.0	814.4
<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>	(18.6)	(26.1)	(15.4)	15.5	18.6	2.6	2.2

5. **Next Steps**

The following outlines the next steps to the final approval of the STP by TransLink Board of Directors.

- Council's resolutions on this issue to be conveyed to the TransLink Board in the week of February 28, 2000;
- Public meeting in Richmond to be held on March 2, 2000 at 6:00 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel;
- TransLink Board of Directors to be presented with the results of the public consultation and hear delegations by mid-March, 2000; and
- TransLink Board of Directors formally considers approving the final plan by late-March, 2000.

It should be noted that based on the current schedule for the collection of public input on the Plan established by TransLink, results from the Richmond public meeting could not be reflected in this report. Therefore, after the March 2, 2000 public meeting, staff will prepare a follow-up memorandum to Council summarizing the comments received from the March 2, 2000 public meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None to the City at this time. If the STP is approved, the plan could result in some new cost sharing opportunities for the City for improvements to the MRN, and new cycling infrastructure. Implementation of transit improvements could result in some infrastructure cost to the City for new bus stops, wheelchair pads, etc. which has been incorporated into the current proposed Five-Year Major Capital Works Program.

CONCLUSION

Overall, it is recommended that the vision and objectives of the proposed Strategic Transportation Plan to enhance livability in the region through enhanced transit service, roads and infrastructure, and transportation demand management be supported. The proposed expansion of the transit system and increased investment in major roads to achieve a number of environmental and land use goals is consistent with transportation-related directions laid out in the City's OCP.

The majority of transit, road, travel demand management-related improvements identified in the plan are supported by staff. However, there are a few key issues that should be highlighted:

- *Richmond-Vancouver Rapid Transit Line* – The proposed study should aim to identify the recommended options for alignment and technology of the Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line that can be implemented within 10 years, with full involvement in the study by Richmond Council, staff, and public. The Richmond-Vancouver rapid transit line should also be taken into consideration in the planning of the Broadway West rapid transit line and the protection of the Arbutus corridor as a rapid transit corridor by TransLink.
- *Inclusion of Steveston Interchange and Moray Channel Bridge in the “Strategic Road Network”* - In staff's assessment, the upgrading of the Steveston Interchange and the Moray Channel Bridge are regionally significant projects. The upgrade of the Steveston Interchange, including an overall capacity increase to enhance traffic safety, protect the integrity of the Highway 99 system, and support major activity centres in the area; and the replacement of the Moray Channel Bridge or its permanent closure to high vessel passage to protect the operational efficiency of the #98 B-Line and ensure traffic flow efficiency to/from the Airport activity centre, should be included as part of the proposed “Strategic Road Network” in the Plan.
- *Further examination of Transportation Pricing Measures* – To ensure that the proposed pricing strategy reflects the most effective means of managing transportation demand, further examination of the transportation pricing measures proposed in the plan should be carried out together with other alternative measures to ensure that the overall transportation demand management objectives are being met.

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Transportation Planning Analyst

DRAFT TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan

Executive Summary

The Strategic Transportation Plan sets out the actions TransLink will take to respond to transportation needs in the region and support the Livable Region Strategic Plan for the next three to five years. It is an interim plan. Its strategies are those of the Livable Region Strategic Plan and Transport 2021, pending a coordinated review of long range strategies by TransLink and the Greater Vancouver Regional District in 2001. The Plan is substantive, proposing significantly increased expenditures for transit and selective development of roads in the region. Equally important, the Plan establishes a management program which will address transportation demand management, support alternatives to single occupant auto travel, establish road use priorities, apply technology to transportation, and emphasize goods movement, cycling, walking, safety and security, and marketing. The Plan calls for measuring achievement through an annual report to the TransLink Board and the public that will measure TransLink's achievement.

By many standards, our region is already relatively successful. We have achieved a land use form and level of transit use that would be the envy of many American and some Canadian cities. The proportion of trips made by the automobile has not increased in recent years. Transit services have improved and the SkyTrain system is now being expanded. Our town centres are beginning to provide the services required to become complete communities. Much residential development has been concentrated around Vancouver's urban core and the town centres. Vancouver is consistently rated one of the most livable cities in the world.

However, there are many challenges which this transportation plan must address. These will also need to be addressed in TransLink's longer range transportation plan and the review and update to the Livable Region Strategic Plan, which will be developed in concert in the next two years. Growth concentration objectives are not being fully achieved. Increasingly, employment growth is dispersing across the region. Transit supply is below plan needs, and the goal of a transit market share of 17% of rush hour travel by 2006 is not being achieved. Similarly, targets for other non-automobile travel (i.e. cycling, walking and carpool/vanpool) are not being achieved. Objectives for transportation demand management and trip reduction are not being met. Overall system management is fragmented across jurisdictional boundaries and less than comprehensive.

We need an effective management strategy to make the best use of our road and transit system, to manage transportation demand, and to provide transportation choice. We need to advance the development of rapid transit systems, and provide more and more varied transit services that will attract users and serve their needs. We need to better promote walking and cycling as low-cost and low-impact modes of travel. We need to address the needs of industry for the efficient movement of goods, and to make some provision for the continuing growth in automobile traffic, and this means key improvements to our road system. Partnership with other agencies – municipalities, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the Province, and the private sector will be required to make these achievements possible.

DRAFT TransLink Strategic Transportation Plan

To pursue these objectives, the Strategic Transportation Plan will:

- Increase transit use by up to 29% by 2005
- Slow the growth of traffic congestion
- Provide a well-maintained and financed major road network
- Support more efficient goods movement
- Pursue new road facilities including the South Fraser Perimeter Road and a new bridge to replace the Albion Ferry
- Provide more frequent and less crowded transit services through an increase in the bus fleet of approximately 48%
- Offer a much more responsive and flexible bus service by providing a broader range of bus services, including more "B-Line" services, connections between town centres, and community shuttles
- Increase handyDART service by 25%
- Expand SkyTrain capacity
- Provide more choices for carpooling, vanpooling and other alternatives
- Provide new cycling facilities and a gradual increase in cycling
- Adopt new technologies to improve transportation services and operations
- Ensure better monitoring of the performance of the transportation system
- Maintain ongoing public consultation in the implementation of these changes

Overall, the Plan is forecast to increase transit ridership from 127 million in 1999 to between 153 million and 164 million passengers in 2005, depending on the impact of the proposed fare changes. This represents an increase in transit ridership of up to 29%, resulting in a transit market share of up to 12.5% of regional travel compared to 11% today. If the proposed transportation demand management and transit priority measures are implemented, transit ridership can be expected to be higher.

The additional services and capital programs set out in the Strategic Transportation Plan will increase TransLink's annual costs from \$506.7 million in 1999 (scaled to twelve months) to \$814.4 million in 2005.

The Plan will be financed through existing and new sources of revenue: a transit fare increase averaging 25 cents on a one zone fare and similar proportional increases in other fares in 2000 and again in 2003; an automobile levy averaging \$75 per vehicle increasing annually by 5%, beginning in October 2001; and the addition of a parking charge in 2005. The automobile levy will be structured to charge heavy road users more than occasional users. The increase in transit fares will improve cost recovery, and the auto levy and parking charge represent initial steps toward transportation pricing. TransLink's mandate means that these revenue sources will be devoted exclusively to transportation services and facilities.

Maintaining the quality of life in our region requires action. This Strategic Transportation Plan makes a clear choice to implement the programs and invest in the changes required to minimize the growth in automobile traffic and preserve the quality of life in our region.