



To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** March 5, 2003
From: Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation **File:** 6460-01
Re: **Federal Government Urban Transportation Showcase Program – Proposed
Inclusion of Richmond “TravelSmart” Initiative in GVRD/GVTA Submission**

Staff Recommendation

That Council endorse the inclusion of a TravelSmart initiative in Richmond as part of the GVRD/GVTA submission to the federal government’s Urban Transportation Showcase Program.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation

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Staff Report

Origin

The Urban Transportation Showcase Program is a five-year \$40 million federal government program created to demonstrate, evaluate and promote effective strategies to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from urban transportation. Through the program, Transport Canada intends to work in partnership with provinces and municipalities to establish a number of transportation “showcases” in selected cities across Canada for demonstrating and evaluating a range of urban transportation strategies within a broad planning framework.

In 2001, the GVRD and GVTA (TransLink) submitted a joint proposal to the program that comprised an integrated package of initiatives designed to demonstrate innovation and best practices in reducing GHG (and other) emissions while promoting increased transit use, walking and cycling in the region. In December 2002, the federal government announced that the GVRD/GVTA was one of 15 municipalities selected as a finalist from 48 submissions. At least four of the 15 finalists are expected to receive grants so the GVRD/GVTA submission could result in the region receiving up to \$10 million in federal funding. The GVRD/GVTA is now preparing a detailed submission for the final award selection, which is expected to be announced in July or August 2003.

This report describes the initiatives included in the original GVTA/GVRD submission, including a TravelSmart initiative, and recommends that Council endorse the inclusion of the implementation of a TravelSmart initiative in Richmond as part of the GVTA/GVRD final submission to the Urban Transportation Showcase Program.

Analysis

1. GVRD/GVTA Submission to the Urban Transportation Showcase Program

The GVRD/GVTA has developed a package of six showcase modules to demonstrate the efficacy and inter-dependency of individual transportation measures as well as how they can work together on a large scale to help achieve a sustainable region. The six modules are:

- *TravelSmart* – a household-based trip reduction program that targets residences with an individualized marketing to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes;
- *Transit-Oriented Development* – measures to reduce private vehicle use and increase transit use in three SkyTrain station precincts;
- *Hybrid Bus Demonstration* – purchase of up to six hybrid buses to demonstrate the viability of this technology in the region;
- *Transit Priority Corridor* – road design changes and the deployment of intelligent transportation systems technologies that give buses priority at traffic lights along Main Street in Vancouver to improve transit speeds and reliability;
- *Central Valley Greenway* – construction of a 19-km bicycle and pedestrian commuter path that runs through three municipalities (Burnaby, New Westminster, Vancouver) and connects key residential and employment areas, schools and post-secondary institutions, shopping malls, several business parks and downtown Vancouver; and

- *Goods Movement* – use data from the recently completed truck freight study to improve the truck modelling capability of the regional transportation model in order to improve strategic planning for goods movement.

Based on City staff discussions with GVRD and GVTA staff regarding Richmond's possible participation in the Urban Transportation Showcase Program, the TravelSmart initiative was identified as a potential application within Richmond.

2. TravelSmart – An Individualized Travel Marketing Program

TravelSmart is a travel marketing program that directly targets households, rather than employers, with individualized marketing and promotional information to encourage and reinforce the use of alternative transportation modes. The program was first developed in Perth, Western Australia in 1997 and tested in 15,000 households. Rather than offering generic material to a diverse travel market, the program was able to achieve significant mode shifts by:

- identifying households that do use, or are interested in using, alternatives to single occupant vehicles with a focus on walking, cycling and transit;
- providing individualized support and resources only to those households interested in shifting modes;
- rewarding those households already regularly using alternative transportation modes; and
- targeting the marketing efforts in a particular neighbourhood.

The key objective of the program is to effect immediate changes to mode choice at a low cost while longer term measures, such as transit service and infrastructure improvements, land use planning and transport policy changes, are undertaken. Based on this approach, the TravelSmart program in Perth achieved increases of 21%, 91% and 16% in transit use, cycling and walking, respectively and car vehicle kilometres travelled have declined 14%. Moreover, these results have been sustained two years later.

3. GVRD/GVTA TravelSmart Initiative

In partnership with local municipalities, the GVRD/GVTA will identify at least three target areas for consecutive implementation of the program – one inner urban neighbourhood, one regional town centre and one suburban neighbourhood. Ideally, the program will fit in with existing planning programs and initiatives in each area. Since each area is unique in its land use and transportation context, each target area will provide insights into how the program can be adapted to local conditions. The possibility of expanding the TravelSmart program to include a school-based trip reduction program will also be explored. The results of the programs will be compared to the GVTA's existing "On Board" employer-based trip reduction program. Implementation of the program is anticipated to begin in late 2003/early 2004 and be completed by March 31, 2006.

Both the GVRD and GVTA are enthusiastic about the potential inclusion of Richmond as a target area for the implementation of a TravelSmart program. Richmond is an excellent location for the program as the city has an extensive trail and cycling network and recently improved local and regional transit services yet Richmond's proportion of trips by single occupant vehicles is among the highest in the region while its proportion of transit riders is among the lowest. In addition, Richmond residents own more cars per capita than any other municipality in the

GVRD. Should the GVRD/GVTA final submission be successful in receiving federal funding, further discussions between staff will occur to develop and tailor a TravelSmart program for Richmond.

Financial Impact

Under the terms of the Urban Transportation Showcase Program, Transport Canada will fund a maximum of one-third of the eligible program costs although federal sources in total can make up a maximum of 50 percent of program costs. The GVRD/GVTA proposal identified a total budget of \$35 million with a maximum of \$10 million from Transport Canada and the balance primarily from the GVTA but with some commitment from the GVRD, participating municipalities and other partners. Municipalities are expected to contribute approximately one-third of the total cost of capital projects.

The TravelSmart initiative has a total program budget of \$2.5 million. Municipalities are expected to contribute in-kind staff resources and support but no direct funding. Thus, there is no direct financial impact to the City as City support of the program can be accommodated within existing departmental work programs.

Conclusion

A proposal submitted by the GVRD/GVTA to Transport Canada's Urban Transportation Showcase Program has been selected as one of 15 finalists eligible to receive up to \$10 million in funding to support the implementation of a variety of initiatives designed to reduce GHG emissions and improve air quality in the region. The GVRD/GVTA are now preparing a detailed submission for the final award selection.

One of the initiatives included in the submission is TravelSmart, a household-based trip reduction program that targets residences with individualized marketing programs to encourage and reinforce the use of alternative modes of transportation. Richmond has been identified as one of the possible locations for the implementation of the program, at no direct cost to the City. As the program would produce local and regional benefits through reduced GHG emissions, improved air quality and decreased traffic congestion, staff recommend that Council endorse the inclusion of a TravelSmart initiative in Richmond as part of the GVRD/GVTA submission to the federal government's Urban Transportation Showcase Program.



Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner

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