



TRANSLINK BOARD-IN-BRIEF— MARCH 5, 2003

Here are the main points from the March 5th meeting of the TransLink Board of Directors. The complete agenda and supporting reports for every Board meeting are posted on TransLink's web site (www.translink.bc.ca). The Board-in-Brief is also available on the web site.

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 4.1—Richmond Vancouver Airport Rapid Transit – Work Definition Phase

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

The report conveys the project definition reports for the Richmond/Airport/Vancouver (RAV) Rapid Transit project and outlines the process in which this information will be shared with the public. The reports are available on-line at the RAV web site (www.ravrapidtransit.com).

The RAV project is a proposed rail rapid transit line connecting central Richmond, the Airport and Sea Island, along the Cambie corridor to central Broadway and downtown Vancouver. A rapid transit line would connect with existing rapid transit lines at Waterfront Station and with major east-west transit services, enhancing the region's transit network.

The RAV Project Office has launched a public information/consultation process, supported by consultation materials and a web site. The purpose of this process is to share the results of the project definition of phase through a consultation Discussion Guide and feedback form. Public feedback will be summarized in a Consultation Summary Report and presented with technical reports to the contributing and participating agencies as they consider whether to proceed to finance and build the line.

TransLink will undertake its due diligence on the information in these reports. Based on its review of the work completed to-date and the feedback from the public, the Board will make a go / no-go decision on the project in April.

Item 4.2—Fraser River Crossing, Municipal Consultations and Negotiations

The Board authorized TransLink's CEO or a designate to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with each of the City of Surrey, Township of Langley, Municipal District of Maple Ridge and Municipal District of Pitt Meadows that provides a statement of principles, defines the project scope and specifications and defines responsibilities of each of the parties during the next phase of the work program.

The main purpose of pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding is to allow the Board, at a later date, to endorse a preferred option knowing that both options have been defined sufficiently and that the affected municipalities support either option.

Item 4.3—Extension of Simon Fraser Service Area HandyDART Contract

The Board extended the service contract with Greater Vancouver Community Services Society (GVCSS) for the Simon Fraser service area by one year to provide continuity during implementation of the new computerized HandyDART reservation and dispatch system.

The new reservation and dispatch system will improve efficiency and productivity through better utilization of resources. It will also streamline operating procedures for all HandyDART contractors resulting in better customer service to people with disabilities. Simon Fraser and Richmond were selected as the ideal first implementation sites since these services are operated by the same contractor-- GVCSS. The implementation pilot of slated for summer/fall 2003.

The current contract will have run its course for the five-year cycle on December 31, 2003. An extension of one year will allow TransLink and GVCSS to focus on the implementation of the new computerized reservation and dispatch system and will ensure the proper performance of the new software system prior to its rollout to the other HandyDART service areas.

Item 4.4—Impact of March 1, 2003 Increase to Provincial Fuel Tax

The Board approved recommendations by the Finance and Audit Committee, that:

- A letter be sent to the provincial government requesting that any monies collected within the GVRD as a result of the increase in the provincial fuel tax be allocated to public transportation within the GVRD region.
- A letter be sent to the provincial government requesting that TransLink and other public agencies be exempted from paying the additional 3.5 cents/litre in fuel tax.

The provincial fuel tax increase, which took effect on March 1, 2003, will increase TransLink's transit vehicle fuel costs by \$1.4 million annually.

As well, while the Greater Vancouver region will generate more than one-third of the additional fuel tax revenue, it does not appear to be receiving an equal benefit, as the majority of transportation projects identified to-date that will receive the dedicated fuel tax funding are outside the GVRD.

Item 4.5—2003 Property Tax Funding By-law

The Board adopted the "Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority 2003 Property Tax By-law Number 2003-27."

Section 25 of the *Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act* requires that a funding by-law be passed annually for the collection of property tax.

Item 4.6—2003 Capital Program Projects – Specific Project Approval

The Board provided specific project approval for the following capital projects:

- 2003 Community Shuttle Vehicle Replacement – 2 vehicles: Budget = \$236,000
- 2003 Custom Transit Vehicle Replacement – 34 vehicles: Budget = \$3,163,000

Two community shuttle vehicles are required to replace older vehicles in the fleet that have reached the end of their useful lives providing service in Burnaby Heights and on Bowen Island. Also, 34 custom transit vehicles are needed to replace older vehicles in the HandyDART fleet.

Item 4.7—Implementation of U-Pass for University of BC and Update on Simon Fraser University U-Pass

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information, and referred it to the Finance and Audit Committee.

Universal pass (U-Pass) programs have been implemented successfully at post-secondary institutions in other areas. The concept involves universal access to transit services through a mandatory student fee. Students receive transit passes at a much lower price than standard monthly passes.

In February, UBC students held a referendum on a U-Pass program, which was passed with 69% support. The monthly pass price to TransLink is \$23. However, UBC administration will provide funds to reduce the students' cost to \$20 per month for students living off-campus and to \$15 per month for students living in UBC Housing. The UBC U-Pass program is scheduled for implementation in September 2003.

Students at Simon Fraser University, in spring 2002, supported a U-Pass program via referendum. The initial proposed implementation date for the SFU U-Pass was May 1, 2003; however, SFU has recently informed TransLink that they will not be able to implement the program until September.

The introduction of these U-Pass programs are expected to increase ridership by approximately 1.1 million annual rides in its first year, or an additional 8,400 rides per weekday during the September–April term. The U-Pass will support a transit-use culture among students so that will continue to use and support transit after completion of their post-secondary education—thus reducing traffic demand, improving air quality and supporting the region’s land use plan.

Item 4.8—Northeast Sector Rapid Transit Update

The Board received a visual presentation regarding progress made in the study of possible corridor and technology options for any potential rapid transit services to the Tri-Cities area (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody).

A more complete report to the Board on this matter will be forthcoming in future months.

Item 4.9—Millennium Line Usage and Customer Satisfaction Survey

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

Given the huge impact that the Millennium SkyTrain line has had on travel patterns in Burnaby and the Northeast Sector, TransLink commissioned MarkTrend Research to survey users of the line to better establish travel patterns, customer usage and attitudes and their overall satisfaction levels with the new service. The survey was conducted during all days between November 13 and December 8, 2002. In total, 2019 riders participated in the survey.

Key findings include:

- Millennium Line customers are heavy transit users, taking an average of 9.7 trips on transit over the past seven days compared to 6.2 trips for transit users as a whole.
- Millennium Line riders are most commonly making their trip using a combination of SkyTrain and bus (69%).
- The main purpose for using the Millennium Line was to go to and from work (60%) or school (22%).
- Millennium Line users are generally positive about the new stations and feel they are better than the old Expo Line station on generating a feeling of personal security (59% think it is better). The primary reason seems to be lighting levels.

Detailed ridership counts were taken in late January and the information will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Item 4.10—Urban Transportation Forum – “Capturing the Issues” – February 19, 2003

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

One of TransLink’s major objectives in 2003 is the development of a Long-Range Transportation Plan that achieves broad support from stakeholders and the general public. Facilitating input from, and discussion among, major stakeholder organizations is key to the process.

Up to four Urban Transportation Forums may be convened in 2003 to assist stakeholder communication/consultation. Each Forum is intended to help guide development of the Long-Range Transportation Plan through its various stages. The first Forum, held February 19 at the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, was designed to identify and discuss the primary issues that must be considered in developing the Plan.

Ninety-seven individuals (including eleven TransLink directors), plus TransLink staff members, attended the first Forum. Participants represented a cross-section of private sector organizations, transportation interests, social and environmental groups, academic institution, and municipal and regional officials, providing a range of economic and social perspectives.

The four major areas of discussion were: Transportation and Land Use; Moving People and Goods; Supporting the Regional Economy; Society, Environment and Health. The Board report provides an overview of some of the points raised by Forum participants within those discussion topics.

The next Forum will probably take place in May.

Item 4.11—2002 Transit System Ridership

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

TransLink’s total ridership in 2002 was 0.4% below the level in 2000, and very slightly exceeded the budget target. Ridership was down in the first half of the year, mainly due to the lingering effects of the 2001 service disruption and the fare increase, but rebounded during the summer and then grew by 5% in the fall, due primarily to new ridership attracted by the opening of the Millennium Line. The performance during the second half of 2002 would suggest transit system ridership has recovered from the 2001 service disruption and is now poised for growth in 2003.

Item 4.12—Preliminary 2002 Financial Results

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

The report includes the TransLink Revenue and Expenditure Summary for the year ended December 31, 2002. The results are subject to audit but significant adjustments are not anticipated. The audited financial statements and a detailed year-end report will be presented at the April 17 Board meeting.

An annual surplus of \$29.3 million was achieved in 2002, based on revenues of \$602.8 million and expenditures of \$573.5 million. The primary factors contributing to the surplus were lower operating expenses at TransLink and its subsidiary companies, higher than expected revenues and the absence of senior government matching funding for Major Road Network capital projects, which reduced TransLink's debt servicing costs.

Item 4.13—Fourth Quarter (Oct – Dec) – 2002 Capital Project Summary Report

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

The report provides summary information for TransLink capital projects and programs. For reporting purposes, projects have been grouped by major category. For each project category, the report indicates the authorized budget and the estimated cost at completion.

Item 4.14—Tender/Contract Award Information—August 29, 2002 to January 14, 2003

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

The report provides the Board with 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 4.15—Platform Edge Tactile Warning System

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

The purpose of the Platform Edge Tactile Warning System project is to replace the existing platform edge panels at Expo line stations with new "Armour Tiles" that are highly visible and have a raised surface that can be detected by visually impaired people. These tiles were installed in all Millennium Line stations, and have already been retrofitted into three Expo Line stations (Joyce, 29th Avenue and Nanaimo).

The remaining 16 Expo Line stations will be retrofitted with the Armour Tiles during the period of April to November 2003.

Item 4.16—Community Shuttle Vehicle Procurement – Status Update

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information. The report provides the Board with a status update report for the procurement of vehicles for Community Shuttle services.

In December 2002, the Board approved the procurement of 44 new minibuses—39 for various Community Shuttle services in the Northeast Sector, New Westminster and Richmond (and an expansion of Langley services), plus five for the Vancouver Airport Shuttle service.

The 39 vehicles for Community Shuttle vehicles are being procured by exercising the 2003 option in the existing contract with Commercial Body Builders. The five vehicles for the Airport Shuttle service will be publicly tendered in early spring with deliveries scheduled in late fall 2003.

TransLink's 3-Year Transportation Plan for 2002-2004 also includes procurement of 29 Community Shuttle vehicles in 2004. The procurement will be presented as part of the 2004 Capital Program, and will require approval-in-principle and specific project approval in order to release capital funding.

The next TransLink Board meeting will be held:

Date: Friday, March 28
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Burnaby City Hall
4949 Canada Way