

TRANSLINK BOARD-IN-BRIEF – MARCH 31, 2001

Here are the main points from the March 31 meeting of the TransLink Board of Directors.

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—Funding By-Laws

The Board adopted the annual funding by-laws required under the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Act to establish a power levy and to collect property taxes for 2001.

Item 3.2—Temporary Extension of FastTrax Decal Validity

The Board approved a temporary extension of the validity of FastTrax decals for the duration of the strike by Coast Mountain Bus Company drivers to allow their use with one-zone FareSaver tickets for multiple-zone journeys.

FastTrax decals are used by full-time students of public post-secondary institutions to travel in all zones at peak periods with a one-zone FareCard. However, TransLink has halted the sale of monthly FareCards for April to avoid the cost, and the inconvenience and delays to customers involved in processing thousands of refunds due to the disruption of Bus and SeaBus services resulting from the current job action.

Extending the fare payment discount provisions of the FastTrax program to the use of FareSaver tickets protects some post-secondary students from having to pay significantly higher fares on SkyTrain and West Vancouver buses during the period that FareCards are not being sold.

Item 6.1—March 31, 2001 Meeting Decisions

The Board ratified the actions recommended by the Committee of the Whole with respect to the following:

- *Item 3.1—2001 Final Budget*

The budget was presented to the Board for their information and the information of the delegations attending the Committee of the Whole.

- *Item 3.2—2001 Final Program Plan*

The Board approved the 2001 Final Program Plan, as per the report that was deferred from the Board meeting on March 16.

The 2001 Program Plan provides for some transportation improvements during the period from April 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001 to respond to the Strategic Transportation Plan directions, and outlines reductions to transit services and major roads in the coming year to achieve a balanced budget.

In mid-January it became clear that the Province was not prepared to support the implementation of the vehicle levy. In January and February, the Board conducted workshops on funding and a joint workshop was held with the GVRD Board. The consensus that resulted from this process was to deal with the shortfall in the 2001 budget by reducing the funding for the Major Road Network and for transit services by \$2 million and \$5 million, respectively. Also, the Board decided that under the financial circumstances it was facing, TransLink could not afford any start-up, operating and maintenance costs for the new “Millennium” SkyTrain line.

Capital spending will be reduced by foregoing planned expansion of the vehicle fleets and depots, cancelling an order for 50 replacement buses in year 2002, and cutting back on other planned capital works which would have been required to support an expanding transportation system.

Despite the reductions in funding, several major service improvements will be implemented. The #98 Richmond-Vancouver B-Line service (including integrated and enhanced local Richmond transit services and improved service to the International Airport) will be introduced this year, and the Express Bus service in the South of Fraser area will operate with new highway coaches that provide greater comfort for long trips.

- *Item 3.3—Proposed Bus Service Reductions*

The Board approved the proposed bus service reductions as per the report Proposed Bus Service Reductions, Effective June 2001 that was deferred from the Board meeting on March 16.

The reductions are required to ensure that TransLink’s 2001 budget will retain an adequate reserve balance for contingencies. These service cuts will reduce service hours by 4 per cent, and will affect less than 2 per cent of customers. The reductions target inefficient routes and services where alternatives are available to customers.

- *Item 3.4—Cancellation of #358 Seaside Bus Service in White Rock*

The Board directed staff to proceed with the elimination of the #358 Seaside service in White Rock on April 9, 2001. (The report had been deferred from the Board meeting on March 16.)

The #358 route has been identified as one of the poorest-performing routes in the bus system. Ridership is low and the operating costs per passenger is \$11.40. A cost-effective, customer-friendly Community Shuttle transit service is proposed for the White Rock / South Surrey area in the future.

The next regular TransLink Board meeting is:

Date: Friday, April 20
Time: 8:00 am
Location: Greater Vancouver Regional District
2nd Floor Boardroom
4330 Kingsway, Burnaby
