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**To:** Public Works and Transportation Committee      **Date:** May 31, 2002  
**From:** Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Director, Transportation      **File:** 6480-03-01  
**Re:** **TRANSLINK THREE-YEAR TRANSIT PLAN (2002-2004) – BUS COMPONENT**

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**Staff Recommendation**

That the 2002-2004 Three-Year Transit Plan for bus service proposed by TransLink, as described in the attached report, be endorsed.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Director, Transportation

<p><b>FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY</b></p> <p><b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b></p>
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## Staff Report

### Origin

At the November 26, 2001 regular Council meeting, Council endorsed the submission of a list of transit service improvements in Richmond to TransLink for possible inclusion in its 2002 Program Plan and directed staff to report back on the evaluation of the submission and the final 2002 Program Plan. Since that time, TransLink staff have been developing a Three-Year Transit Plan for 2002-2004, as part of a comprehensive Three-Year Transportation Plan as required by the "Choice 2" funding option approved by the TransLink Board in November 2001. This report provides an overview of TransLink's proposed Three-Year Transit Plan for transit service improvements to be implemented during 2002-2004.

### Analysis

#### 1. Three-Year Transit Plan (2002-2004) – Bus Component

As a condition of support for the "Choice 2" funding option (i.e., a funding package consisting of fuel tax, property tax and transit fare increases to support road and transit improvements), TransLink staff were directed to develop a financially sustainable three-year road and transit program plan for 2002-2004. The 2002 Transit Plan, approved by the TransLink Board in March 2002, represents the first year of the Three-Year Transit Plan, which is to be produced by June 2002. The overall Three-Year Transportation Plan, of which the Three-Year Transit Plan is one component, is anticipated to be presented to the Board for approval in July 2002.

##### 1.1 Transit Plan Objectives

The overall objectives of the Three-Year Transit Plan are to:

- *Focus Service Improvements on Specific Markets and Customers* – Major initiatives will be focused on peak period commute trips, and in market corridors and areas where TransLink can effectively compete with the private automobile and has the greatest opportunity to increase ridership and revenues.
- *Improve Ease of Using Transit Service* – Initiatives are intended to make transit service more direct, frequent, reliable and simple to use in terms of design and customer information.
- *Provide Basic and Affordable Transit Service in Other Time Periods and Market Areas* – Initiatives are included to ensure that a basic, affordable and cost efficient network of services will be provided in the region to ensure basic mobility and access for most residents during peak and mid-day periods.

##### 1.2 Community Shuttle Services

A major thrust of the plan is the substantial expansion of community shuttle services, with 16 community shuttle projects planned including at least one in every sub-region of Greater Vancouver. Most of the proposed community shuttle routes would operate in lower-density suburban residential communities and all but one would replace existing conventional bus services. Of the new community shuttle service hours, two-thirds would replace standard bus hours while one-third would be used to extend service into new areas and to provide longer hours of operation.

The following sections describe the processes to develop the bus component of the Three-Year Transit Plan and the transit service improvements approved for 2002 and proposed for 2003-2004 for Richmond.

## 2. Richmond Transit Service Improvements – 2002

On an annual basis, transit service levels for 2002 will increase by 6.7 percent over 2001 level of service, with SkyTrain experiencing the largest increase in service hours (38 percent) due to the opening of the Millennium Line in September 2002 and the addition of trains on the Expo Line. Bus service hours will increase by 0.4 percent on an annual basis to provide improved connecting services to the Millennium Line as well as other service improvements.

### 2.1 Conventional Bus Service Improvements

Due to the limited increase in bus service hours in 2002 for the region, a number of the proposed transit service improvements submitted by Richmond to TransLink for consideration in the preparation of the 2002 Transit Plan have been deferred to 2003 and 2004. Notwithstanding, Richmond has gained or will gain significant transit service improvements under the 2002 Transit Plan as indicated in the table below.

Start Date	Improvement
April 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce two new peak period express services from southwest Richmond (#492) and southeast Richmond (#488) to downtown Vancouver via the City Centre, Garden City Road and Oak Street.</li> </ul>
September 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase service levels on #480 (UBC-Richmond) and #98 B-Line to address consistent crowding.</li> <li>Implement extension of #405 (No. 5 Road-Cambie) during peak periods to provide service on Vulcan Way, No. 6 Road and Bridgeport Road.</li> </ul>

These service improvements comprise a significant proportion of the 14,600 total annual conventional bus service hours added for the entire region in 2002 (e.g., the introduction of the #488 and #492 services account for 10,500 of the total additional annual service hours).

### 2.2 HandyDART Service Improvements

Custom transit service (HandyDART) will increase 3.5 percent under the 2002 Transit Plan, which is equivalent to 16,000 additional annual service hours across the region. Locally, the Richmond HandyDART service extended its evening operating hours from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weekdays (Monday to Friday) effective April 1, 2002. The trips are provided by shared-ride taxi trips but booked through the HandyDART office. The increased operating time window reflects a recommendation made by the Richmond Committee on Disability.

To raise awareness of the extended service hours, Richmond HandyDART is distributing flyers on the HandyDART vehicles and will place a notice in the Richmond Committee on Disability newsletter and the *Richmond Review* newspaper. Richmond HandyDART will also be posting bulletins at various community centres and other facilities frequented by their clientele. TransLink will have a general bulletin in the Buzzer, which is a bi-weekly transit newsletter that is distributed across the whole Lower Mainland.

### 3. Richmond Transit Service Improvements – 2003 and 2004

TransLink's proposed Three-Year Transit Plan for 2002-2004 will increase annual service hours for conventional and shuttle buses by 8.4 percent over 2001 annual service levels. Custom transit service hours for 2002-2004 are planned to increase by 15.6 percent over 2001 levels.

#### 3.1 Conventional Bus Service Improvements

Following approval of the 2002 Transit Plan, staff have worked in consultation with TransLink staff on the development of the remaining 2003-2004 bus service components of the Three-Year Transit Plan through TransLink's various technical committees. The process involved the following steps:

- discussion of the operating guidelines/parameters and constraints;
- agreement on the Plan's key objectives;
- identification of a list of candidate projects, most of which were developed through the completion of Area Transit Service Plans and which entailed extensive staff, Council and community input into developing and prioritizing service improvements;
- establishment of project evaluation criteria and assessment of each of the service options; and
- general consensus on a draft bus service plan that responds to the key objectives.

The list of potential bus service projects for 2003 and 2004 included all projects identified in completed and in-progress Area Transit Plans and other projects identified by TransLink or municipal staff (primarily for Vancouver and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows as area transit plans have not yet been developed for these areas).

The projects were evaluated using three core criteria of net new ridership attracted, cost efficiency in terms of cost per new ride and enhancement of basic mobility in markets with no service or limited service plus a number of supporting criteria such as the priority within an Area Transit Plan (i.e., proposed year of implementation in the plan) and ease of implementation (i.e., requirement for infrastructure improvements and/or approvals by other organizations).

The regional and local bus service improvements proposed for Richmond for 2003-2004 are described in the table below. The proposed improvements capture all of the Phase 2 (2001 and 2002) transit service improvements recommended in the Richmond Area Transit Plan with the exception of the introduction of a City Centre community shuttle and a regional Richmond-Ladner-Tsawwassen service, both of which have been deferred to 2005 as they were previously identified as lower priority service improvements.

Note that the timing of the proposed bus improvements is preliminary and subject to change following further input from Coast Mountain Bus Company, municipalities and other stakeholders.

**Proposed Richmond Service Improvements (2003-2004)**

<b>Proposed Service Improvement</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Bus Type</b>	<b>Annual Hours Standard Bus</b>	<b>Annual Hours Minibus</b>
<b>Regional Bus Service Improvements</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce limited stop service between Surrey, North Delta, Richmond Centre and Airport Station.</li> <li>Operate Monday to Friday during peak periods as #301 service at a 30 minute frequency.</li> </ul>	2003	Express Bus	12,000	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce mid-day and Saturday service on #301 service.</li> </ul>	2003	Express Bus	10,000	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase service on heavily used routes throughout the region as needed (may include services in Richmond such as the #98 B-Line).</li> </ul>	2003-2004	Articulated Bus	6,000	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce new service between Richmond Centre and Metrotown.</li> <li>Operate at 20 minute frequency during peak periods.</li> </ul>	2004	Standard Bus	10,500	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance Richmond Centre to Metrotown service to operate at 30 minute frequency during the daytime.</li> </ul>	2004	Standard Bus	9,600	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce reverse-peak direction service on #488 and #492 express routes between Richmond, Central Broadway and Downtown Vancouver.</li> <li>Subject to ridership performance of new routes.</li> </ul>	2004	Standard Bus	4,500	-
<b>Local Bus Service Improvements</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discontinue standard bus service on #424 - YVR shuttle.</li> <li>Introduce minibus service on #424 - YVR shuttle.</li> </ul>	2003	Standard Bus Minibus	(10,200)	11,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce new route connecting Steveston with Williams Road corridor, Ironwood and Riverport Recreation Complex.</li> <li>Operate as weekday daytime service.</li> <li>Could also operate as modified #490 route.</li> </ul>	2003	Standard Bus	3,000	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce new service to Crestwood Industrial Park area with modified existing Cambie service.</li> </ul>	2004	Minibus	-	7,000
<b>Totals – Regional and Local Service Improvements</b>			<b>45,400</b>	<b>18,000</b>

The proposed increase in conventional bus services of 45,400 annual service hours for Richmond services represents 56 percent of the total additional standard bus annual service hours of 80,900 for the region. These new services will require an additional 21 standard buses, many of which will be provided through the substantial expansion of community shuttle services. Within Richmond, community shuttles are proposed to replace the existing standard bus service on the #424 (Airport Shuttle) and as a new service to the Crestwood Industrial Park area.

### 3.2 HandyDART Service Improvements

The arrival of additional HandyDART vehicles in 2003 (28 for replacement and 16 for service expansion) will enable the addition of 16,000 annual service hours for custom transit each year in 2003 and 2004. TransLink will maintain funding of the TaxiSaver Program at its current annual level of \$900,000. TransLink staff will work in close consultation with local service providers and customers on the allocation and provision of the planned service enhancements.

**Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact at this time. New transit services identified for 2003-2004 may require the provision of related infrastructure (e.g., bus stop landings), which would be funded from the annual Transit Plan Infrastructure Improvement Program to be reviewed as part of 2003 and 2004 Major Capital Works Programs. 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 accommodate transit operations) are eligible for 50/50 cost share between the City and TransLink.

**Conclusion**

TransLink's Three-Year Transit Plan for 2002-2004 proposes a significant increase in shuttle bus service hours (68 percent of the total increase of 297,300 hours) as well as a substantial boost in conventional bus service with a net increase of close to 100,000 annual service hours and 27 standard buses during peak times over the three-year period. Further annual standard bus hours will be freed up on routes converted to community shuttles. Significant transit service improvements are proposed for Richmond under the three-year plan and staff recommend that Council endorse TransLink's proposed Three-Year Transit Plan.



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