



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### REPORT TO COMMITTEE

**TO:** Public Works and Transportation Committee  
**FROM:** Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Manager, Transportation  
**RE:** **DRAFT RICHMOND AREA TRANSIT PLAN**

*To PW&T - September 7, 2000*  
**DATE:** August 23, 2000  
**FILE:** 6480-01

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

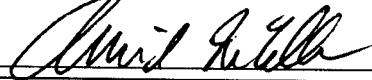
1. That TransLink be commended for their efforts in addressing the transit service deficiencies in the City through the recently completed *Richmond Area Transit Plan*, which outlines key service improvements to be introduced over the next five years.
2. That the overall findings and recommendations contained in *the* Richmond Area Transit Plan be endorsed, and that, in implementing the proposed service improvements, TransLink be requested to:
  - (a) Advance the implementation of the Williams Road cross-town service from 2001 to 2000 and the Crestwood service from 2002 to 2001 to respond to the input received during the public consultation process.
  - (b) Provide the City with further information on the scope of road infrastructure requirements to support the Richmond Area Transit Plan.
  - (c) Launch a public communications program to increase the community awareness of the upcoming transit service improvements in Richmond.
  - (d) Devote resources to update the accessible bus stop inventory and to identify any deficiencies in providing accessible bus stops at high priority locations in Richmond.
  - (e) Implement the Lansdowne Transit Exchange by 2001 to fulfil TransLink's commitment in providing an off-street bus passenger transfer facility within the City Centre to support the effective integration of the new #98 B-Line with local and regional services.
3. That the above recommendations be conveyed to the TransLink Board of Directors.
4. That staff continue to work with TransLink to ensure the timely implementation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan, to monitor the resulting ridership response and user feedback, and to identify further service enhancements as required to reflect future land use and travel demand changes.

5. That members of the Richmond Transit Public Advisory Committee be commended for their participation in the plan development process and that the Committee be kept in tact to provide further input in the implementation and monitoring phases of the Richmond Area Transit Plan.



Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Manager, Transportation

Att. 2

<b>FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY</b>
<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>


## STAFF REPORT

### ORIGIN

Over the past year, the City has been working closely with TransLink in the development of the Richmond Area Transit Plan. At the March 13, 2000 regular Council meeting, staff presented a report on the proposed transit improvement concepts and the input obtained through the second round of public consultation. At that meeting, the following resolution was passed:

*That staff be directed to report back to Council on the implementation strategy of the recommended components of transit improvements for Richmond over the next five years upon completion of the draft Richmond Area Transit Plan.*

Since March, 2000, much effort has been expended by City and TransLink staff in analyzing the public input and technical information to determine the implementation sequence of the various proposed service improvements. In June, 2000 a draft plan was prepared and taken to a third round of public consultation process for community feedback. The draft plan was presented to the TransLink Board on July 19, 2000. At that meeting, the Board directed TransLink staff to refer the draft plan to the City of Richmond for comments before the plan is given final approval.

This staff report presents the draft Richmond Area Transit Plan for Council's consideration.

### ANALYSIS

#### **1. Joint Effort by City and TransLink**

Over the past year, City and TransLink staff have been working together to jointly develop the Richmond Area Transit Plan. The key tasks undertaken by the two parties include:

- Planning, designing, organizing, and facilitating the public consultation activities for the project;
- Conducting regular meetings with the Richmond Transit Public Advisory Committee; and
- Evaluation of technical information at various meetings and workshops.

The draft plan being put forward at this time is a result of this collaborative effort.

#### **2. Summary of the Draft Richmond Area Transit Plan**

The following presents the key elements of the Draft Richmond Area Transit Plan. The draft plan, which was submitted to the TransLink Board on July 19, 2000, outlines the plan objectives, the process undertaken, and the recommended improvements.

##### **2.1 Plan Objectives**

The main objectives of the Richmond Area Transit Plan are to:

- Identify short-term (1 to 3 years) and medium term (4 to 5 years) local and regional transit service priorities for the City of Richmond; and

- Develop a strategy combining TransLink and City of Richmond efforts for implementing these service improvements and related support measures.

The plan has also been developed to support TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan, which establishes the actions that the authority will take over the next five years to address the region's transportation needs. The improvements identified in the draft plan are also consistent with the transportation-related policies and initiatives identified in the City's Official Community Plan.

## 2.2 Public Consultation Process

The public consultation process, undertaken over the period between July, 1999 and June, 2000, consisted of the following activities:

- A Public Advisory Committee was established to provide advice and input to TransLink and the City in the development of the public consultation materials and the plan;
- In September, 1999, the public was invited to provide input on the deficiencies in the Richmond area transit network;
- In the public consultation process conducted in February, 2000, a number of service concepts were presented to transit users and Richmond residents for comments;
- During the last round of public consultation undertaken in June, 2000, the public was provided with detailed information on the year 2000 service improvements and was also encouraged to participate in the development of specific transit improvements proposed for the years 2001-2004;
- The public also provided feedback into the plan development process by phone and e-mail;
- A market research program was conducted in April, 2000 by TransLink to gather statistically valid input from a cross-section of Richmond residents;
- An operator's focus group meeting was held to obtain input from bus drivers experienced with the Richmond transit service;
- Regularly scheduled Customer Satisfaction Surveys were carried out to determine the expectations of transit patrons and the corresponding satisfaction levels; and
- Language assistance was available at all public meetings and for market research interviews.

## 2.3 Transit Issues

The existing bus route structure serving Richmond was established in the 1970's. The network is primarily a radial system focussed on the City Centre and reflects the travel patterns of that time. It is clear from the public input and land use/travel demand analysis that restructuring of the Richmond area transit system is long overdue to support the current urban form.

During the recent public consultation activities, various local and regional deficiencies of the Richmond area transit network were identified. The following general service improvements were identified to address these deficiencies:

#### Local Service

- Provide more east-west transit services;
- Provide transit services to growing residential areas currently not served adequately by transit;
- Improve transit services to industrial employment areas;
- Improve services to schools;
- Improve transit accessibility within the City Centre;
- Improve transit services in some areas of the City to improve coverage; and
- Increase service frequencies in the peak and off-peak hours on most routes, and provide earlier morning services to major destinations such as the Airport.

#### Regional Service

- Provide direct services from Richmond to other regional destinations such as Metrotown, Tsawwassen ferry terminal, Surrey (Newton and City Centre), White Rock/South Surrey and New Westminster;
- Provide more frequent, direct and extended hours of service to the Airport;
- Provide more direct and frequent service to Vancouver downtown and East Vancouver; and
- Provide more frequent, extended hours, and year round service to UBC.

### 2.4 Opportunities to Expand Key Markets

Based on recent analyses of the market and land use information and review of the above transit issues identified by the public, there is an opportunity to increase Richmond transit ridership significantly by expanding service to serve the following markets:

- Major employment centres: Richmond City Centre, and the Vancouver International Airport;
- Major regional activity centres: Metrotown, UBC and Downtown Vancouver;
- Local activity centres: Riverport Complex, community centres, and shopping centres; and
- Major industrial and business parks: Bridgeport and Crestwood.

### 2.5 Evaluation of Transit Service Expansion Concepts

The following service improvement concepts were developed and taken to the public in February, 2000:

#### Local Service

- Williams Road service;
- Steveston Highway service;
- Blundell Road service;
- Westminster Highway/No. 5 Road service; and
- Crestwood industrial area service.

#### Regional Service

- Richmond City Centre - East Vancouver/Metrotown service;
- Richmond City Centre - North Delta/North Surrey service;

- Richmond City Centre - Ladner/Tsawwassen service; and
- Richmond City Centre - White Rock/South Surrey service.

#### Community Bus Services

- City Centre circulator service;
- Bridgeport Industrial area service; and
- Terra Nova area service.

These transit service concepts were examined in a workshop attended by City staff, TransLink staff and the consultants to establish the implementation priorities. A number of criteria, including ridership and effectiveness measures, were used to determine the service priorities that would formulate the draft plan.

## 2.6 Recommended Plan

Upon extensive evaluation of the service improvement concepts noted above, a number of specific improvements, along with the corresponding implementation priorities have been identified as follows:

(A) Year 2000 Committed Improvements - The following service improvements are committed for implementation in the year 2000. The focus of the improvements will be the #98 B-Line service and the corresponding integration of local services. Other local and regional services will also be implemented this year to address current service deficiencies.

#### Local Service

- New service on No. 4 Road between Alderbridge Way and Cambie Road;
- Improved frequency and extended operating hours on the YVR south terminal #425 service;
- New frequent service on Cooney Road;
- New direct West Richmond - Riverport service (#401);
- New direct Steveston - Bridgeport service (#402);
- New direct Riverport Industrial - Cambie/Knight Street service (#405);
- New direct Steveston - Cambie service (#410); and
- Frequency increases on most local Richmond routes.

#### Regional Service

- #98 B-Line service between Richmond and Vancouver;
- New West Richmond - downtown Vancouver peak period express services (#491, #496, and #492);
- New Richmond - UBC (#480) service;
- Frequent airport shuttle and increased frequency on the #404 service;
- New direct Steveston - East Vancouver service (#402);
- Improved connections between transit services serving the areas south of the Fraser River and Richmond at Highway 99/Steveston Highway;
- Direct Steveston - 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Skytrain station service (#410); and
- New peak period Richmond - Surrey (Newton) service.

(B) Year 2001-2002 Proposed Improvements - The following transit service improvements are proposed for implementation in the year 2001 to 2002 period to address the requirement for improved local and regional connections requested by the public.

Local Service

- New Williams Road cross-town service;
- New cross-town service to Crestwood industrial area; and
- New City Centre circulator community bus service.

Regional Service

- New direct Richmond - Metrotown service;
- New direct Richmond - Tsawwassen service; and
- New all-day Richmond - Surrey (Newton) service.

(C) Year 2003-2004 Proposed Improvements - The following transit service improvements may be implemented in the 2003 to 2004 period subject to the plan update in 2002.

Local Service

- New Blundell Road cross-town service; and
- New Bridgeport community bus service.

Regional Service

- New direct Richmond - White Rock service.

## 2.7 Resource Requirement and Performance Targets

To implement the proposed improvements, 433,000 annual bus service hours and 145 buses will be required to support the Richmond Area Transit Plan for the first three years of the plan. This represents an increase of 51% when compared to the service levels in Spring, 2000. Approximately 50% of the total increased service hours over the next three years will be for the Year 2000 Program Plan (including #98 B-Line, the local/regional service integration plan and other service improvements).

Based on the most recent ridership projections prepared by TransLink, there would be an increase of 25% in a.m. peak hour transit trips originating in Richmond (from 4,000 in 1999 to more than 5,000 in 2005), and transit's mode share during the a.m. peak hour is expected to increase from 9.4% in 1999 to 11.5% in 2005.

## 3. **Recent Feedback on the Draft Plan**

The final phase of the public consultation program was carried out in June, 2000. The following comments were received:

Richmond Transit Public Advisory Committee – On May 24, 2000, the final meeting of the Richmond Transit Public Advisory Committee was held. Overall, the Committee was very supportive of the process and product of the draft plan. However, the Committee felt that it would be desirable for the Williams Road cross-town service to be implemented in 2000, as opposed to 2001 as proposed in the draft plan. Further improvements to the airport service was also identified as an urgent requirement. Some members of the Committee have expressed a desire to keep the group together to provide additional input in the implementation and monitoring phase of the plan. In a letter dated July 28, 2000, Mr. Gary Abrams, Chair of the Committee provided comments on the plan development process and the various recommended service improvements (Attachment 1).

Open House – On Friday, June 16, 2000, an open house was held at Richmond Centre Mall to obtain input on the draft plan. It is estimated that over 300 people attended this event. Overall, the public was very supportive of the various proposed improvements. The #98 B-Line generated much excitement and questions. The various regional connections were also well received by the public. However, again, some residents would prefer that the Williams Road cross-town service be implemented in the year 2000 rather than a year later.

Public Meeting (June 13, 2000) - A public meeting was held in City Hall Council Chambers on June 13, 2000. The format was a presentation followed by a question and answer period. Overall, the public was satisfied that the various service deficiencies have been adequately addressed. There were some specific comments related to the desire for better connections between No. 5 Road and north-east Richmond which have since been addressed in the refined draft plan.

Public Meeting (June 15, 2000) - A public meeting was held with Cantonese and Mandarin speaking staff available to answer questions. Richmond Chinese Community Society, Richmond Chinese Cultural Society, and Richmond Asia Pacific Business Association members were invited to attend this special meeting. Although the turnout for this meeting was low, those who attended were supportive of the plan.

Richmond Community Services Advisory Council - On Monday June 12, 2000, a meeting was held with the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC) to obtain feedback on the draft plan. The comments of the Committee are summarized in a letter to Mayor and Council dated June 13, 2000 (Attachment 2). RCSAC members were impressed with the comprehensiveness of the plan and the commitment of TransLink to community input. They were also pleased to see that most of the key issues identified in a RCSAC membership survey on transit and transportation are addressed in the draft plan. However, the RCSAC encourages the City to work toward making all bus stops in Richmond wheelchair accessible and would like to see safety around bus stops improved with more lighting and public telephones. The RCSAC members also suggested that an extensive communications plan be developed to inform the public on upcoming service improvements.

Richmond Committee on Disability (RCD) - On Wednesday June 14, 2000, City, TransLink, and HandyDART-contractor staff were invited by the RCD to attend a special forum on transportation. Representatives from the Richmond Community Health Committee, Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee, and other groups also attended this event. The key issues identified were the need for more bus stops to be wheelchair accessible and HandyDART service in the evenings.

Vancouver International Airport Authority – Open houses were also held at Vancouver International Airport. The attendants of these open houses were generally pleased with the outcome of the draft plan. Specific comments on further enhancements include: expanding hours of service to better reflect work start/finish times for airport-based businesses, direct service to the airport from South Surrey/White Rock, and frequency increases on the West Richmond/Vancouver direct services.



#### 4. Staff Comments on the Draft Plan

The effort by TransLink in developing the Richmond Area Transit Plan with the City to identify service improvements for the next five years are commendable. The proposed draft plan contains a comprehensive list of transit improvements for Richmond, which are strongly supported by staff. In considering the final endorsement of the plan for implementation, however, the following issues should be addressed:

Advancement of Williams Road and Crestwood Services – In light of the clear preference expressed by the community in the public consultation process, it is recommended that TransLink advance the implementation of the Williams Road cross-town service from 2001 to 2000 and the Crestwood industrial area service from 2002 to 2001. These changes would also reflect the feedback from the Public Advisory Committee on the draft plan.

Infrastructure Requirements – It is recommended that TransLink provide the City with further information on the road infrastructure requirements to support the Richmond Area Transit Plan. As the City's work crews will need to be scheduled to complete any infrastructure works for new bus stops and minor road geometric modifications it is important that TransLink provide the detailed information on the transit infrastructure requirements in a timely manner to support the plan.

Communication of Improvements – It is also recommended that TransLink launch a communications program to advise the public of the upcoming transit service improvements in Richmond. It is important that the public is made aware of the planned service changes to encourage ridership.

Accessible Bus Stops – It is recommended that TransLink be consider devoting some resources to update the accessible bus stop inventory in Richmond to address the concerns of the Richmond Committee on Disability and Richmond Community Services Advisory Council. It is likely that there are many existing bus stops that meet the requirements to be designated as wheelchair accessible but they are not readily identified and officially designated.

Lansdowne Transit Exchange – The Lansdowne Exchange is an important transit focal point for Richmond and has been recognized as a key element of the #98 B-Line system since the commencement of the project. This facility was intended to be implemented in December of 2000 in conjunction with the start-up of the #98 B-Line but has now been deferred indefinitely. Staff are prepared to assist TransLink in negotiations with Lansdowne Mall. It is therefore recommended that in supporting the Richmond Area Transit Plan, TransLink be requested to ensure effective integration of the #98 B-Line and other local buses within the City Centre by implementing the Lansdowne Transit Exchange in 2001.

#### 5. Next Steps

The following steps to finalize the approval of the plan will be completed over the next few months:

- *August/September, 2000* – Review of the draft plan by Council;
- *September, 2000* – Finalization of the plan based on Council's comments; and
- *September/October, 2000* – Approval of the final plan by the TransLink Board of Directors.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None at this time as the details of the road infrastructure requirements for the Richmond Area Transit Plan have not yet been made available to staff by TransLink at the time of preparing this report. Staff will report back on the financial impact of the infrastructure requirements as part of the Annual Transit Infrastructure Program through the approval process of the Five-Year Major Capital Works Program.

CONCLUSION

Over the past year, City and TransLink staff have been working together to develop the Richmond Area Transit Plan. After extensive public consultation and technical analysis, the draft plan has now been developed. Overall, staff are supportive of the draft plan and are satisfied that the various service deficiencies have been adequately addressed in the plan development process. To respond to input received during the recent public consultation activities, it is recommended that the timing of the Williams Road and Crestwood services be advanced, an extensive communications program be launched to advise the public of the upcoming service changes, and resources be allocated to update the accessible bus stop inventory in Richmond. Staff will report back on the infrastructure requirements through the Five-Year Capital Works Program and continue to work with TransLink in the timely implementation of the plan.



Tegan Smith, M.C.P.  
Transportation Planning Analyst

TS:Ice

July 28, 2000

To: Mr. Greg Halsey-Brandt, Mayor  
Members of Richmond City Council

**Re: Richmond Area Transit Plan**

A brief report is required as we, the Public Advisory Committee for the Richmond Area Transit Plan, near the end of the mission assigned to us in the summer of 1999. We first met on July 13, 1999. Our fifth, and potentially last, meeting took place on May 24, 2000, in the new City Hall.

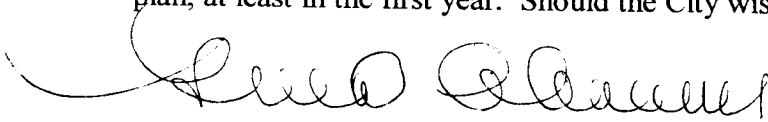
We began with eleven members, in addition to Councillor Lyn Greenhill, and ended with ten. Our members represented a wide range of interests in public transportation. We strove to present to the Translink project staff not only our own idiosyncratic views, but the concerns of the whole community. We were willing to learn, and the Translink staff to learn from us. We were generously supplied with detail (my file is 6 cm. thick).

The Richmond Area Transit Plan was recently approved in principle by the Board of Directors of Translink. It is soon to go before you for approval.

We are satisfied with the result and with the process. Our contribution was, we believe, modest but significant.

Our thanks go to the City of Richmond, as well as to Translink, for giving us the opportunity to listen and to speak (sometimes at undue length). If our involvement in the process achieved nothing else, it left us all more knowledgeable on a subject of profound concern to the community.

At our final meeting some of us expressed interest in following the implementation of the plan, at least in the first year. Should the City wish our further involvement, we stand ready.



G.W.D. Abrams, Chairman  
Public Advisory Committee  
Richmond Area Transit Plan

June 13, 2000

Mayor Greg Halsey-Brandt and Members of Richmond City Council  
City of Richmond  
6911 No. 3 Rd.  
Richmond, B.C.  
V6Y 2C1

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councilors:

Members of the Richmond Community Services Advisory Council (RCSAC) met with City and TransLink staff yesterday to give our input into the Draft Richmond Area Transit Plan. We wanted to ensure that issues of concern to our agencies were included in the Plan.

Our members were impressed with the comprehensiveness of the Plan and the commitment of TransLink to community input into development of local transit plans. We are encouraged that, not only are we acquiring #98 B-Line Bus Service, but also that there will be significant enhancements to existing local bus services in December of 2000. It was interesting to review the Service Improvements and Priorities for 2001-2004. Regional connections to Metrotown, Ladner, Surrey, New Westminster and the Ferry Terminal were identified by RCSAC as being important.

Last year RCSAC developed a survey on Transportation and Transit Issues in consultation with City Transportation department staff. The purpose of the survey was to get feedback from clients, volunteers and representatives of various community service agencies to inform the Richmond Transit Plan development process. The survey was distributed in the summer of 1999. In addition, we were involved in preparing a map noting the location of Social, Health, Government and other relevant agencies to assist with the location of bus stops. We are pleased to see that most of our key transit issues are addressed in the Draft Transit Plan.

Our members do have a concern that, while Richmond has many busses with lifts, only 35% of the bus stops in Richmond are wheelchair accessible. We encourage the City to work diligently toward making the other 65% stops accessible in the near future.

One more concern from our survey was around safety. There is a need for more lighting and the provision of public telephones near bus stops. Many residents are afraid to travel by bus at night.

At our meeting yesterday, members encouraged City and TransLink staff to organize an extensive communications plan so that members of the community will know about the new and expanded bus routes before they go into effect. People should be encouraged to use public transit whenever possible.

Thank you for your commitment to public consultation on this important issue for the community of Richmond.

Yours truly,

Brenda Reynolds, Co-Chair  
RCSAC Transportation Sub-Committee