



To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** August 27, 2002
From: Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation **File:** 0100-20-RTTA1-01
Re: **RICHMOND TRANSIT AND TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE – FINAL
REPORT WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE #98 B-LINE, LOCAL TRANSIT
ISSUES AND CITY CENTRE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS**

Staff Recommendation

1. That Council formally acknowledge the co-operation and assistance of TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company to enhance the #98 B-Line service and to address other Richmond-related transit issues.
2. That Council endorse the recommendations of the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee, as described in Attachment 1 of this report, and formally acknowledge the contributions of the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee towards improving transit service and traffic conditions in Richmond.
3. That the recommendations of the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee be forwarded to the Chair of the TransLink Board of Directors.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation

Att. 2

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

Staff Report

Origin

On December 11, 2001, the Public Works and Transportation Committee held a public meeting to solicit community feedback regarding the #98 B-Line transit service and No. 3 Road traffic conditions. A staff report summarizing the issues identified at the meeting and the recommended improvements to address the concerns was presented to Council at its regular meeting on January 14, 2002 at which the following resolution was passed:

"That a committee be reconstituted, made up of those stakeholders who comprised the Area Transit Plan Advisory Committee, and that the committee work with staff and the City to comment on and monitor the progress of recommendations suggested by City staff and TransLink relating to No. 3 Road transit issues."

This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee and presents its recommendations regarding regional and local transit service as well as City Centre traffic conditions.

Analysis

1. Mandate and Structure

Per Council direction, the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee (RTTAC) was constituted in February 2002 with the following objective:

To provide comment and advice to Council on the implementation and operation of the transit service improvements proposed by TransLink as a result of the Richmond transit service review and City Centre traffic conditions.

In addition to a City Council liaison, the RTTAC comprises 15 members who represent the following organizations and/or interests:

- Richmond Chamber of Commerce (1 member)
- Richmond Senior's Advisory Committee (1 member)
- Richmond Committee on Disabilities (1 member)
- Richmond Youth Advisory Committee (1 member)
- City Centre Community Association (1 member)
- Vancouver International Airport Authority (1 member)
- Richmond Asia Pacific Business Association (1 member)
- Richmond Centre Mall (1 member)
- Lansdowne Mall (1 member)
- Regular Transit User (4 members)
- Pedestrian/Motorist (2 members)

2. Activities

The RTTAC met three times between March 2002 and July 2002 to consider the recommended transit service changes and City Centre traffic conditions with each meeting focusing on the following elements:

- 1st Meeting (March 13, 2002) – reviewed the extent, scope and timing of the transit service improvements, suggested potential monitoring requirements and discussed No. 3 Road traffic conditions;
- 2nd Meeting (June 19, 2002) – provided preliminary feedback on the performance and effectiveness of the transit service improvements implemented on April 22, 2002 and discussed potential traffic improvements on Sea Island Way and No. 3 Road; and
- 3rd Meeting (July 31, 2002) – provided final comments on transit-related issues and No. 3 Road traffic conditions, discussed the City Centre pay parking initiative and suggested final recommendations to Council regarding transit service and City Centre traffic conditions.

3. Recommendations of the RTTAC

Attachment 1 provides the recommendations of the RTTAC with respect to the #98 B-Line service and the recently introduced #488 and #492 peak period express services, local transit services, No. 3 Road traffic conditions, and the future role of the Committee. Attachment 2 summarizes the customer comments received from April to July, 2002 on various Richmond transit services.

Staff have worked closely with the Committee and TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company staff throughout the process on various aspects of the Richmond-related transit services as well as with the Committee on traffic conditions along No. 3 Road. Staff are supportive of the Committee's recommendations, particularly with respect to the continuation of the Committee and actions to improve the #98 B-Line service.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the City at this time. Funding for proposed road and traffic improvements will be identified in future Capital Plan submissions, which will be subject to Council approval.

Conclusion

The Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee has fulfilled its mandate to provide comment and advice to Council regarding the operation of the #98 B-Line and the transit service improvements implemented in April 2002 as well as traffic conditions on No. 3 Road. Staff recommend that the Committee's recommendations be endorsed.



Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner

JC:lce

Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee Report to Richmond City Council

1. Introduction

On January 14, 2002, Richmond City Council approved the formation of an advisory committee to provide feedback and advice to the City on the implementation and performance of the proposed transit service improvements and City Centre traffic conditions. The Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee (RTTAC) was constituted in February 2002 with the following mandate:

To provide comment and advice to Council on the implementation and operation of the transit service improvements proposed by TransLink as a result of the Richmond transit service review and City Centre traffic conditions.

RTTAC met three times between March 2002 and July 2002 with staff from TransLink, Coast Mountain Bus Company and the City of Richmond to examine and discuss various transit issues as well as traffic conditions along No. 3 Road. The Committee received various presentations and reports to support discussion of the issues as well as reports for information only, such as the City Centre pay parking initiative. The Committee's recommendations are limited to those issues within its terms of reference.

2. Recommendations

The Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee offers the following recommendations to City Council with respect to Richmond transit services, No. 3 Road traffic conditions and the future role of the Committee.

1. That TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company staff be commended for their efforts to resolve the following identified issues:
 - #98 B-Line Overcrowding -- crowding on the #98 B-Line service has become better with more consistent transit times and the addition of 2 new transit routes, the #488 and the #492, in April 2002. Customer satisfaction levels have increased substantially since the #98 B-Line started but overcrowding continues to need attention especially as the service attracts more riders;
 - Loss of Direct Service – the 2 new transit routes, the #488 and the #492, as well as the #98 B-Line peak service extensions on No. 3 Road have been very well received. The e-mails from customers (see Attachment 2) speak well of these new services and reasonable numbers of riders are using these services. The Committee asks TransLink to further promote these new services. The new services also provide direct access to the Sexsmith Park and Ride facility;
 - Richmond HandyDART Service – limited evening hours of operation for the Richmond HandyDART service, which was addressed in April 2002 by extending the hours of operation from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on weekdays (Monday to Friday). Additional service hours will be provided through an overall system-wide increase for the 2003 HandyDART service contract; and
 - #480 Performance – crowding on the #480 service to/from UBC, which will be addressed in September 2002 with additional bus capacity during peak periods that will increase service frequencies to 20 minutes from 30 minutes.

2. That TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company be encouraged to address the following outstanding issues with respect to the #98 B-Line service:
 - Transit Priority Measures – fast-track completion of the installation of transit priority measures along the entire route, particularly in downtown Vancouver and the southbound approach to the Arthur Laing Bridge, to improve travel time performance and reliability;
 - Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) Technology – complete installation of AVL technology along route and in buses to improve travel time performance and reliability;
 - Fare Zone Evasion – implement feasible measures to combat fare zone evasion (i.e., passengers that pay for a 1-zone fare but travel two zones);
 - Signage at Granville Station – consider installation of an LED real-time customer information sign at Granville Station once the AVL system becomes operational;
 - Personal Safety – implement feasible measures to address personal safety concerns of passengers transferring between the #98 B-Line and local transit services during evening hours in the Richmond City Centre;
 - Frequency of Service – improve service frequencies to that originally identified in the Richmond Area Transit Plan (i.e., every 4-5 minutes during peak periods, every 7-8 minutes during midday, every 10 minutes during evenings, and every 7-10 minutes during weekends); and
 - Utilization of Service – examine the passenger loading profile to achieve better utilization of the service over the entire route (e.g., passengers boarding in downtown Vancouver but travelling within Vancouver only can prevent Richmond-bound passengers from boarding in downtown Vancouver).

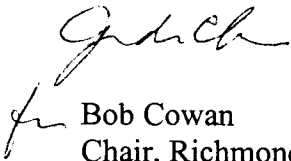
3. That TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company be encouraged to undertake the following actions with respect to the #488 and #492 services:
 - Loading Procedure – maintain existing unloading/loading procedures; and
 - Two-Way Service – fast track the initiation of two-way peak period service, subject to demonstrated demand and ridership.

4. That TransLink and Coast Mountain Bus Company continue to regularly monitor transit rider satisfaction and report back to the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee and/or the City on the results as warranted.

5. That the City of Richmond be encouraged to undertake the following actions with respect to City Centre traffic conditions:
 - City Centre Transportation Plan – continue to aggressively pursue the implementation of the remaining elements of the City Centre Transportation Plan, with a particular focus on completion of the North Loop Road;
 - No. 3 Road Traffic Signal “Louvers” – maintain use of the traffic signal “louvers” installed on bus lane and left-turn traffic signals on No. 3 Road to minimize bus/vehicle conflicts;
 - Monitor Traffic Conditions – continue to monitor traffic incidents on No. 3 Road and identify remedial measures as appropriate to address any concerns;
 - Traffic Signal Co-ordination – continue efforts to optimize traffic signal co-ordination along No. 3 Road;

- No. 3 Road/Sea Island Way U-Turns – retain an independent traffic safety engineer to re-assess the safety implications of introducing U-turns for northbound traffic on No. 3 Road at Sea Island Way. The Committee recognizes that the Vancouver International Airport Authority has acted upon the first recommendation as part of the Airport Connector Project; and
 - No. 3 Road/Sea Island Way Access – convert the existing bus lane eastbound on Sea Island Way to a right-turn lane. The Committee recognizes that this improvement has been completed.
6. That the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee be maintained with the following features:
- Membership – retention of the existing membership structure;
 - Meeting Frequency – dates of future meetings of the Committee to be determined by issues as they arise; and
 - Mandate – terms of reference of the Committee broadened to include the provision of input on other major transportation-related issues in Richmond such as the Richmond/Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit Study, the 2010 Winter Olympics bid process and the proposed Trade and Exhibition Centre.

Respectfully submitted by:



Bob Cowan
 Chair, Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee
 on behalf of the members of the Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee

Richmond Transit and Traffic Advisory Committee Members	
Bob Cowan (Chair)	Vancouver International Airport Authority
Gary Cohen	Richmond Chamber of Commerce
Danny Leung	Aberdeen Shopping Centre
Tom Choy	Richmond Asian Pacific Business Association
Peggy White	Richmond Centre Mall
Lorelei Guthrie	Lansdowne Park Shopping Centre
Frances Clark	Richmond Committee on Disability
Jose Gonzalez	City Centre Community Association
Aileen Cormack	Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
Katrina Wang	Transit User
Marion Smith	Transit User
Paula Verhoeven	Transit User
Kathryn Grant	Transit User
Elinor Ellis	Representing Richmond Residents
Bruce Rozenhart	Representing Richmond Motorists
Ann Beaufoy	Representing Richmond Pedestrians
Councillor Lyn Greenhill	City of Richmond Council Liaison

Customer Comments about Richmond Transit Service April to July 2002

#488 Service

- 488 - May 6 Customer contacted us in April about how happy she is with the new service. However, she has some concerns about the bus stop at Westminster & Garden City. In the winter, when it is dark in the morning, she says "it's an accident/murder/abduction waiting to happen it's so dark and secluded". *
- May 6 Customer contacted us in April about the 488 and again this month because she is having trouble catching it at Richmond Centre (at the wrong bay). *
- 488, 492 & 98 May 14 - Customer emailed to say that the #488 & 492 are a positive step forward for those people living in East Richmond. The changes made when the 98 started eliminated convenient service for those not close to No. 3 Road. Strongly urges the continuation of the 488 & 492. The customer stopped using the bus when the 98 went into service. *
- 488, 492 & 98 - May 17 Customer emailed to say that the 488/492 routes are just what he needs. They are even more convenient than the 98 and he hopes that TransLink does not shut them down. *
- 488, 492, Drivers & 98 - May 17 Customer thanks us from the bottom of her heart for the new 488 & 492 service. "It eases our pain of taking 1 1/2 hours ride home with the 98 every day". The drivers are pleasant and kind and the customer likes the pick-up and discharge only feature. "In short, I think TransLink has done a great job here." *
- 488, 492, 98 & Drivers - May 17 A passenger heard from a fellow passenger that a driver told her that customers should email/write about the 488 & 492 service or it might be cancelled in September. The customer is very happy with the service and says "Not only are these buses more convenient than the dreaded #98, they offer by far a quicker service. Any ideas of discontinuing this service would be completely foolish. A better idea would be to discontinue the #98 and give Richmond riders back the routes that we had before that the majority were happy with. We love the #492 and #488. *
- 488, 492 & 98 - May 20 Customer says she is pleased with the 488 & 492. It is much improved over the shuttle from the Park & Ride (98). It takes about 35 minutes to get to downtown - if she had to take the 98 it would take much longer. *
- 488, 492 & Drivers - May 21 Customer wrote: "Last week one of your drivers advised me that these new bus routes were in jeopardy of being rescinded. I would like to state that I appreciate this new service since the only other bus service near my residence is the 98-B, which is a 20 minute walk and takes an additional 20 minutes to get to my place of employment. I hope that the 488 and 492 bus service continues since I believe the best incentive for commuters to use public transit is the availability accessible convenient service. *
- 488, 492 & 98 - May 22 Customer is happy to see the 488 & 492 running the Garden City route during the rush hours. The service, even with construction on Broadway, is faster than the #98 on No. 3 Road. Requests they be permanently scheduled. *
- May 22 Customer says thanks for listening and introducing the 488 in April. It is such a convenience to have a direct bus from home to downtown Vancouver. *
- July 17 Customer works at Children's Hospital and lives in Port Moody. He would really like the #488 to pick him up at the hospital - it would mean taking 15/20 minutes off of his trip. The stop is drop-off only. Could pick up be considered? *
- 488 492 & 98 - May 28 Customer wrote to express appreciation of the improved bus service to Richmond. He says with the introduction of the 98 last year, some of the direct bus routes from Richmond to Vancouver were discontinued and introduced a certain degree of frustration and inconvenience for those living close to No. 3 Road. He is very pleased with what has been done with the 488 & 492 - listening and responding positively to constructive comments. A big thanks. *
- 488 492 & 98 - June 17 "Thank you very much for finally putting bus service on the east side of No. 3 Road back in existence. People can now actually get a bus from the Sexsmith Bus Loop and park and not have to walk a mile to get to the 98 B-line which is absolutely awful service. I understand that if the ridership is low on the above-mentioned routes these buses will be cancelled. YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT BUS RIDERSHIP IS DOWN DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. If you use the summer months as a gauge of ridership, you should have your heads examined!! I am a monthly employers pass rider. I would like to know how you count us, and monthly pass holders, on the bus. There are a number of us who use the above-mentioned routes who have these. I don't see anyone counting how many people are on these buses. As far as I can tell the buses are well used! I see them full every day. Please do not cancel these routes. July 30 Customer wrote back to say thanks for letting her know that we do not plan on cancelling the route. *
- 488 & Drivers - July 20 Customer concerned because drivers are telling customers that this route is being cancelled. *

#492 Service

- See 488
- 492, 98, 402 & 403 - May 16 Customer says they really like the 492. Was taking the 98 from No. 3 & Blundell to downtown - it was frequent and convenient, but took longer than before (compared to the 402 & 403 before). Likes the 492 because it is not that crowded and does not have to transfer at Richmond Centre or Brighouse. *
- See 488
- See 488
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- May 31 "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I've been using the new 492 route back and forth to work at Children's Hospital. I've been wishing for it for a long time. Previously I would have had to take three buses each way. Now it's one bus and I can relax and read. It has finally gotten me out of my car, and I find the commute much more relaxing. Way to go!"