



Public Works & Transportation Committee

Date: Wednesday, November 7th, 2001

Place: Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

Present: Councillor Lyn Greenhill, Chair
Councillor Kiichi Kumagai, Vice-Chair
Councillor Linda Barnes (4:23 p.m.)
Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt
Councillor Rob Howard
Mayor Malcolm Brodie (4:05 p.m.)

Also Present: Councillor Bill McNulty

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1. It was moved and seconded
That the minutes of the meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee held on Tuesday, October 16th, 2001, be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION

2. **MITCHELL ISLAND WATERMAIN CROSSING**
(Report: October 25/01, File No.: 6340-20-P.00412) (REDMS No. 466845)

The Director, Engineering, Robert Gonzales, reviewed the report with the Committee. In response to questions, he advised that:

- the waterlines located on either side of the proposed watermain had not been designed to post-disaster standards;

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- the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) was currently assessing the status of their waterlines and had identified a number of difficulties relating to these lines, and it was unlikely that if a disaster occurred today, that a majority of the supply lines would be in operation;
- design of the proposed waterline to post-disaster standards was undertaken because the cost of 'post-disaster' construction was negligible and would not have an impact on the cost of either the project design or construction
- earthquakes would not be the only type of disaster which could disrupt water service to Mitchell Island, as marine accidents and scouring problems could also cause disruptions
- the 'overhead' component was applied to any capital project designed and constructed by a contractor
- the proposed watermain would be 45mm (18 inches) in diameter and would be buried a minimum of 15 metres (50 feet) below the river bed
- a fire safety component had been included in the project to ensure that if a fire occurred on Mitchell Island, there would be an adequate supply of water for fire fighting purposes, at the same time, trying to avoid system redundancy
- the \$100,000 cost paid by the City would be for connection of the watermain and some ancillary works to the main water system.

The Chair also commented, in concluding the discussion, that there would soon be only one company capable of undertaking directional drilling, which would result in higher costs for future projects.

It was moved and seconded

That:

- (1) *the City of Richmond enter into a contract with P. Baratta Construction Limited in accordance with Tender T.1528 for the construction of the Mitchell Island Watermain Crossing for the total tendered amount of \$839,020 plus GST.*
- (2) *an additional \$157,401 from the 2000 Water DCC Bylaw No. 7080 be allocated to the Mitchell Island Watermain Crossing project.*

CARRIED

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

3. **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RICHMOND AREA TRANSIT PLAN AND # 98 B-LINE**

(Report: October 26/01, File No.: 6480-03-03) (REDMS No. 539030)

The Director, Transportation, Gordon Chan, introduced Mr. Glen Leicester, Manager, Implementation Planning, and Mr. Ian Jarvis, Acting Chief Executive Officer, of TransLink, to the Committee. Mr. Chan then reviewed the report with members of the Committee.

Mr. Leicester spoke at length about the implementation of the 98B rapid transit line and the transit service changes which had been made in Richmond. With regard to the 98B line, he noted that the system currently was not meeting performance expectations, and he then outlined the problems being experienced, including timing, late running buses, poor scheduling of the B line, delays in 'real time' bus and transit priority signal system issues, the number of transfers required, and crowding. He stated that checks undertaken in recent weeks have indicated that there had been significant improvements as a result of specific problems being addressed, and other improvements would soon result following the completion of the Moray Channel Bridge construction.

Mr. Leicester advised that he had been instructed to undertake a review of the service, with this review to be completed by November 16th, 2001. He stated that he had met with representatives of Coast Mountain Bus Company on 'what was working and not working'. He further stated that in addition to addressing the issues with Richmond at today's meeting, he would also be meeting with customers who had submitted complaints, stakeholders and those individuals involved with transit advisory committees to hear their concerns and comments about transit service. Mr. Leicester advised that following the completion of his review, he would be submitting a report and recommendations to the Board of TransLink in December on ways to stabilize the current system.

(Councillor Barnes entered the meeting at 4:23 p.m.)

A lengthy discussion ensued among Committee members and the delegation on the transit situation, during which the following issues were addressed and commented on:

- the need to extend the hours of operation for the shuttle bus for the 98B line from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to accommodate those users who finished work at 5:00 p.m. – advice given that the hours had been extended to 7:00 p.m. with the addition of a temporary second bus, and that a full change to a single bus would occur in January, 2002

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- the need for late night transit service on Friday and Saturday evenings – advice was given that discussions had been held with Coast Mountain Bus Company on this matter, however because of the current collective agreement, it would be difficult to initiate a Friday/Saturday evening bus service; discussions were currently underway with Coast Mountain Bus Company and the transit union to find ways to deliver transit service more efficiently
- the feasibility of initiating transit service on the Oak Street corridor – advice was given that this would have to be examined
- curb lane enforcement of no parking and HOV lane status – advice was given that providing enforcement was an issue, and that suggestions had been made that the HOV lane be designated for buses only rather than for motor vehicles; these recommendations could be made to the City of Vancouver which has responsibility for Granville Street; advice was given that TransLink only funded the maintenance requirements (the Chair noted at this point that one of the problems which Richmond had to deal with was the fact that Vancouver was not interested in supporting a bus only lane)
- the feasibility of using the dedicated 98B line route on No. 3 Road for all transit buses – advice was given that while there were two routes which utilized the full length of the dedicated route, there were a number of other routes which require stops part way through the route and which require left hand turns, which would not be possible in the dedicated lane
- the proliferation of traffic lights along the No. 3 Road 98B line route and the lack of visibility of the road markings on dark rainy nights – advice was given that there certain legal requirements which the City had to meet with respect to traffic signalization, however, City staff were working to simplify the traffic light system and hoped to have a report to the next Committee meeting on proposed changes.

The comment was made during the discussion that if the public to accept Option 2, if that funding source was adopted by the Board of TransLink, it was essential that TransLink be seen to be cooperating and taking positive steps to improve the transit service to 'make it work'.

In response to questions about the performance of the 98B line now that some improvements had been made, advice was given that the number of customer complaints had declined significantly since its start in August of this year (a chart was circulated to Committee members which tabulated the number of complaints received since the implementation of the 98B line, a copy of which is on file in the City Clerk's Office). Further advice was given that a majority of the people who had written TransLink had been contacted by a TransLink customer relations group.

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Mr. Leicester commented further that even though the performance of the 98B line had improved, there was still additional work to be done to address the 'transfer' problems.

Reference was made to the problems encountered earlier with the bus shelters, and advice was given that the bus shelters had been modified to eliminate the gaps in the shelter walls, and were now considered to be as effective as any private bus shelter.

Reference was made to the concerns expressed by local residents at recent candidate's meetings about (i) the inadequacy of the road situation on No. 3 Road; (ii) TransLink and the 98B line; (iii) the apparent lack of consultation and listening to what people wanted; and (iv) the anger which people felt about a system which had been promised as being new and improved, but only proved to be new. Mr. Leicester responded, noting that there had been a number of significant improvements to local transit service, including increased frequency on many routes, the doubling of the level of service along Bridgeport Road and to the airport, a reduction in the use of transfers, and investing considerable amounts of money to make transit vehicles wheelchair accessible. He noted however, that there were issues, such as transfers, poor reliability, connections to Oak Street and the Sexsmith Road parking lot, which still had to be addressed. Mr. Leicester added that TransLink was taking the comments made very seriously and was working to correct the problems.

Discussion continued among Committee members and the delegation on (i) the number of people who still used their vehicles because of the inconvenience of the transit system; (ii) the lack of cooperation by the City of Vancouver; (iii) the current traffic situation on No. 3 Road and the need for improvements; (iv) the need to correct a number of systemic issues; and (v) the need for education to advise Richmond residents about the improvements which have been made to local transit services.

(Suggestions were made during the discussion that (i) the timing of the traffic signal at the Miller Road intersection was too short, which resulted in long line-ups because transit buses could not get through; and (ii) arrows on the road might help to alleviate confusion along the 98B line.)

In concluding the discussion, the comment was made that in spite of the problems being raised at this meeting, transit dependent people were finding it easier to get around Richmond and that some of the services which had been introduced were appreciated.

It was moved and seconded

That:

- (1) *staff continue to work with TransLink to monitor and enhance the operating performance of the #98 B-Line service as well as to support further development and implementation of local transit service improvements as identified in the Richmond Area Transit Plan.*

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- (2) *upon completion of the construction activities related to the Airport Connector project and full implementation of the #98 B-Line transit priority measures and further implementation of the Richmond Area Transit Plan, staff report to Council with updates on the following issues:*
- (a) *the effectiveness of the full implementation of Automatic Vehicle Location technology and other transit priority measures in improving the travel time and reliability of the #98 B-Line service along the entire route;*
 - (b) *the specific measures to be implemented to improve the travel time performance of the #98 B-Line within the City of Vancouver, particularly in the Marpole and South Granville areas;*
 - (c) *the ridership response to the #98 B-Line service following the resolution of the initial operating problems identified (in the report dated October 26th, 2001, from the Director, Transportation) and further marketing efforts by TransLink to encourage use of the service;*
 - (d) *the effectiveness of the #98 B-Line/local service integration strategies and the requirement for further enhancements;*
 - (e) *the overall travel time for passengers from various parts of Richmond to downtown Vancouver relative to the conditions before the introduction of the #98 B-Line;*
 - (f) *identification of the priority of specific service improvements to be considered in TransLink's 2002 Program Plan and the road infrastructure and passenger amenities required to support such improvements; and*
 - (g) *the ridership impacts of the recent 2001 service reductions to the Richmond late night services.*

Prior to the question on the motion being called, Cllr. Kumagai stressed the importance of inviting Mr. Leicester to attend a future meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee in order to review the recommendations he would be making to the Board of TransLink. He also commented at length on the impact which the lack of funding for TransLink would have on transit service in general, and Richmond in particular.

Discussion then ensued among Committee members and the delegation on (i) the timing of the submission of Mr. Leicester's report to the Board of TransLink, and (ii) the feasibility of holding a public meeting to advise the public of the recommendations being proposed by Mr. Leicester.

The question on the motion was then called, and it was **CARRIED**.

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It was moved and seconded

That the Public Works & Transportation Committee hold a public meeting in the near future to investigate the situation relating to the 98B Line transit service and the No. 3 Road traffic situation, and to include in that, an investigation of the differences between public expectations and public perceptions to determine how these perceptions diverge, and that following the public meeting, staff undertake an analysis and suggest possible feasible alternatives.

CARRIED

4. **TRANSLINK FUNDING OPTIONS**

(Report: Oct. 31/01; File No.: 0154-04) (REDMS No. 539237)

Mr. Chan reviewed the report with the Committee. (Mr. Leicester and Mr. Jarvis were in attendance for this matter.) Discussion then ensued among Committee members, the delegation and staff on issues related to this matter, including the continuation of a study of a rapid transit link between Richmond, downtown Vancouver and the airport. Reference was made to previous studies which had been completed on this issue, and questions were raised about the need for another study.

Discussion ensued on this particular issue, during which information was provided by the General Manager, Urban Development, David McLellan on the GVRD's priorities for expansion of the existing light rapid transit (LRT) system. Also addressed were the problems in establishing an LRT corridor through Vancouver to Richmond and the airport, and whether the Vancouver Whistler 2010 Olympic Games bid, if successful, would have an impact on determining if funding for an LRT extension to Richmond would be approved.

Also raised during the discussion was the issue of fare evasion on Skytrain, and discussion ensued on (i) the steps being taken by TransLink to combat this problem, and (ii) why turn stiles were not installed at all Skytrain stations.

Reference was made to Recommendation (2)(f) and questions were asked as to why the Provincial Government had not been included. In response, information was provided by Mr. Jarvis about the funding options approved by the Provincial Government with regard to an increase in gas taxes which would be diverted to TransLink. Further information was provided by Cllr. Kumagai that this recommendation was directed specifically at the Federal Government and the amount of revenue taken from British Columbia annually and not returned. Discussion then ensued on whether the Provincial Government should be included in the recommendation.

Reference was made to the fact that Option 2, if approved, would result in, among other things, an increase in property taxes, and concern was expressed that there was nothing to indicate how long this increase would continue.

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Discussion continued among Committee members, the delegation and staff on the implementation of an LRT system and whether the City had any guarantee that TransLink would consider the proposal and the City's concerns and act accordingly. Advice was given during the discussion that the overall regional strategy was in the process of being updated. It was noted that the activities and growth generated by the airport had to be considered and the study being proposed would help to provide this information.

Also addressed was the lack of trust on the part of the public with respect to the existing transit system, and the need to have an effective transit system in place. Questions were raised, and discussion ensued, on whether funds generated by each of the proposed increases could be earmarked for the specific areas which need to be supported, such as the revenue generated from transit fare increases, being returned to the bus system, and the revenue generated from fuel taxes, being used to improve the road system.

Questions were raised about why a 'hybrid' of Options 1 and 2 had not been considered. In response, advice was given that the reduced revenue from such an option would not allow TransLink to improve road and transit services as proposed, and would result in the cutting of services and programs.

In response to a question, information was provided by the delegation on the relationship of TransLink and the Coast Mountain Bus Company, and on the responsibility of the Provincial Government and the GVRD with respect to TransLink.

(Mayor Brodie and Councillor McNulty left the meeting at 5:45 p.m., and did not return.)

Discussion ensued among Committee members on the question of amending the staff recommendation to include a clause which would end the increase in property taxes after a certain period of time. As a result of the discussion, the following **amended** motion was introduced:

It was moved and seconded

- (1) *That the need for TransLink to secure additional revenues to sustain the timely implementation of regional transportation improvements for roads and transit be formally acknowledged and supported.*
- (2) *That, should the TransLink Board of Directors endorse Choice 2 (as described in the report dated October 31st, 2001, from the Director, Transportation), the following principles be adhered to in the execution of this funding strategy:*
 - (a) *Efficiency gains within TransLink and its subsidiaries be explored and fully achieved in conjunction with the implementation of any funding strategies for additional revenues;*

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- (b) The package of transportation improvements to be implemented with the additional revenues be balanced in order to achieve benefits for all users of and contributors to the regional system;*
 - (c) Sustainable forms of transportation, including a Richmond/Airport-Vancouver rapid transit line, be given first priority for planning and implementation;*
 - (d) A more open, accessible and inclusive public consultation process for local communities be adopted by TransLink, with the new consultation process to be carried out prior to making any decisions on major transportation improvements;*
 - (e) The specific scope, location, and timing of improvements in each municipality be clearly defined and committed for implementation as part of the Strategic Transportation Plan update and, specifically for Richmond, that the improvements include those presented by TransLink at the Richmond public meeting held October 24, 2001 (and described in the report dated October 31st, 2001, from the Director, Transportation); and*
 - (f) TransLink continue its efforts to secure long-term financial support from the federal government and, if successful, that any increased property taxes endorsed by the TransLink Board of Directors be the first additional revenue source to be offset by the federal funds.*
- (3) That any additional revenue sources being considered by TransLink at this time be recognized as interim financing only to address TransLink's immediate deficit, and that TransLink formulate a long-term financing strategy as part of the Strategic Transportation Plan update with consideration given to possible on-going federal government funding, additional efficiencies resulting from the resolution of outstanding transit operation issues and other sustainable funding sources.*
 - (4) That any property tax increase be approved as an interim funding source, with termination after three years.*
 - (5) That the above recommendations be conveyed to the TransLink Board of Directors for their consideration of the current funding issues at their meeting of November 23, 2001.*

Prior to the question on the motion being called, discussion continued on whether Recommendation No. (4) should be included and the impact which would result if this source of funding ended in three year's time.

As a result of the discussion, the request was made that Recommendation No. (4) be dealt with separately.

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The question on Parts (1), (2), (3), and (5) was then called, and it was **CARRIED**, with Councillor Rob Howard opposed.

The question on Part (4) was then called, and it was **CARRIED**, with Councillor Evelina Halsey-Brandt opposed.

5. MANAGER'S REPORT

The Chair asked the new Councillors for items which they wished to have staff address at a future meeting, and as a result, staff were asked to report on (i) traffic light coordination, and (ii) advanced left turns.

- (a) The Manager, Engineering Planning, Paul Lee, reported that the Indian Cultural Centre pump station was 75% complete, and should be in operation by mid to late December.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded
That the meeting adjourn (6:05 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee of the Council of the City of Richmond held on Wednesday, November 7th, 2001.

Councillor Lyn Greenhill
Chair

Fran J. Ashton
Executive Assistant