



**To:** Richmond City Council  
**From:** Councillor Lyn Greenhill  
Chair, Public Works & Transportation  
Committee  
**Re:** **TRANSLINK FUNDING OPTIONS**

**Date:** November 7, 2001  
**File:** 0154-04

The Public Works & Transportation Committee, at its meeting held on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

**Committee Recommendation** (Cllr. Rob Howard opposed to Parts (1), (2), (3) and (5); Cllr. Evelina Halsey-Brandt opposed to Part (4))

- (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 31<sup>st</sup>, 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;**
  - (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 31<sup>st</sup>, 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.**

Councillor Lyn Greenhill, Chair  
Public Works & Transportation Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that the Committee added Recommendation No. 4.

## Staff Report

### Origin

The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (TransLink) anticipates a forecast funding shortfall of \$40 to \$50 million starting in 2002 due to the failed implementation of a vehicle levy to support existing and planned transportation improvements. TransLink is seeking public input in the formulation of a strategy to address this deficit. Following completion of the public consultation process, TransLink staff will present a recommended funding strategy to the TransLink Board on November 23, 2001.

The submission of the City's views and recommendations to TransLink with respect to the funding options will help define the future of the regional transportation system. This report outlines TransLink's proposed funding options and provides staff comments on the issue.

### Analysis

#### 1. Funding Shortfall

Following the failure of the province to provide assistance in implementing the vehicle levy, TransLink adopted a short-term strategy in February 2001 to address the funding shortfall that included eliminating all funding for the operation of the new SkyTrain Millennium Line and reductions in transit service and Major Road Network (MRN) operations and maintenance funding. Based on this strategy, TransLink forecast that a deficit of \$47 million would remain in 2002.

In July 2001, TransLink reported that the funding shortfall could be reduced to \$22 million based on the following factors:

- increased gas tax revenues, decreased debt service costs and the transit service reductions implemented on October 15, 2001 could together reduce the deficit by \$15 million; and
- an efficiency-based cost reduction target of \$10 million for 2002.

However, the recent transit dispute and the delay in the implementation of the transit service reductions (originally scheduled for June 1, 2001) have now eliminated at least \$15 million from these previous forecast savings.

#### 2. Funding Options

TransLink proposes two choices to address the funding shortfall.

##### 2.1 Choice 1

Choice 1 would cut existing road and transit programs to match revenues by:

- eliminating operations and maintenance funding for MRN roads uploaded from the municipalities (\$9 million per year);
- reducing capital spending on road improvement projects such as left-turn bays, improved signalling or road widening (\$10 million per year);

- no capital contribution towards the planning and development of major road projects such as the Fraser River Crossing and South Fraser Perimeter Road (\$15 million per year);
- transit service cuts of 15 to 20 percent to be accomplished by reducing frequencies at all times of the day and curtailing evening and weekend services;
- using diesel buses to replace the trolley buses; and
- deferring the opening of the Millennium SkyTrain line.

## 2.2 Choice 2

Choice 2 would maintain and continue to improve roads and transit by raising revenues via:

- a \$0.02 per litre increase in fuel taxes (\$40 million per year);
- an increase in property taxes of \$22.00 per household based on an average assessment of \$280,000 (\$20 million per year); and
- advancing the scheduled 2003 transit fare increase of \$0.25 for one zone and \$0.50 for two and three zones as well as revising the fare structure and cracking down on fare evasion (\$25 million per year in 2002 only).

The increased revenues, equivalent to \$80 million per year, would support:

- doubling the current funding level for MRN operations and maintenance (\$18 million per year) and MRN minor and major road projects (\$20 million and \$35 million per year, respectively);
- modest growth in transit services via an expansion of mini-buses by 60 vehicles, an increase in regular and express bus services of 30 buses and improved frequencies across the region;
- replacement of the trolley bus fleet; and
- implementation of the Millennium SkyTrain line.

## 3. Public Consultation Process

TransLink is undertaking a public consultation process to solicit feedback on the proposed funding options and to ensure that there is public support for the recommended strategy.

Elements of the consultation process include:

- eight public meetings held throughout the region, including one in Richmond on October 24, 2001;
- meetings with municipal councils and other interested agencies, such as the Vancouver Board of Trade and various Chambers of Commerce;
- cut-out questionnaire from newspaper insert (Attachment 1); and
- a feedback and voting form on TransLink's web site.

Comments made at the public meeting held in Richmond are summarized in a separate memorandum (Attachment 2).

#### 4. Comments on Proposed Funding Choices

The goals and objectives of TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan (STP), to improve and enhance regional transit service and road infrastructure as well as implement transportation demand management measures, remain relevant and are consistent with the transportation-related policies of the City's Official Community Plan. Staff therefore support TransLink's efforts to secure additional funding sources to enable the timely implementation of the STP. With respect to the funding choices outlined by TransLink, staff offer the following comments and observations.

##### 4.1 Efficiency Gains

TransLink has set a target of reducing expenditures by \$16 million per year through greater efficiency and cost effectiveness, regardless of the funding option chosen. TransLink and its subsidiaries are committed to streamlining administration, implementing more mini-bus services and lowering the operating cost per hour for bus services.

Staff Comments: Efficiency gains represent a sustainable long-term source of cost savings. A comparison of operating statistics for the Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC) with other transit operators suggests that there may be opportunities to achieve cost savings via more efficient service provision. For example, a recent TransLink staff report summarized transit service performance for the first quarter of 2001. The reported actual 2001 operating cost per service hour for the 3-month period for CMBC was \$89.55 while the comparable figure for West Vancouver Transit Services was \$69.44. Similarly, the 1999 direct operating costs per vehicle hour for the Edmonton Transit System and the Ottawa Carleton Regional Transit Commission were \$67.24 and \$79.57 respectively. Efforts to attain lower operating cost levels comparable to other transit agencies would realize significant savings and improve accountability within the agency.

Recommendation: *That efficiency gains within TransLink and its subsidiaries be explored and fully achieved in conjunction with the implementation of any funding strategies for additional revenues.*

##### 4.2 Balance across Improvements and Funding Sources

TransLink proposes a combination of three revenue sources under Choice 2 to address the funding shortfall and has made a commitment that at least 50 percent of the revenue generated by Choice 2 would be dedicated to road improvements.

Staff Comments: As TransLink is attempting a balanced funding approach by raising additional revenues from three sources, an equally balanced approach should be applied to the implementation of improvements to ensure that benefits are realized by all users of the transportation system. These benefits should, as much as possible, be directly linked to the contributors of the funding sources.

Recommendation: *That the package of transportation improvements to be implemented with the additional revenues be balanced to achieve benefits for all users of and contributors to the regional system.*

#### 4.3 Richmond/Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit

TransLink's presentation at the Richmond public meeting indicated that Choice 2 would allow work to continue on the study of a rapid transit link between Richmond, downtown Vancouver and the airport. This work would include examination of the route and technology, a review of the financial feasibility of the system and further investigation of the potential of the project as a public-private partnership.

Staff Comments: The GVRD's *Livable Region Strategic Plan* and *Transport 2021*, TransLink's *Strategic Transportation Plan*, and Richmond's *Official Community Plan* all recognize the need to implement sustainable transportation links between major regional centres in the long term. In particular, *Transport 2021* recognized the Richmond-Vancouver corridor as having priority for a rapid transit link based on intensity of use and land use plans. The current Richmond/Airport-Vancouver rapid transit study further corroborates this recommendation by concluding that a rapid transit link should be built sooner (by 2010) rather than later (by 2021). Staff are supportive of policies that promote sustainable transportation and, in particular, the continued pursuit of implementing a rapid transit link between Richmond, downtown Vancouver and the airport.

Recommendation: *That sustainable forms of transportation, including a Richmond/Airport-Vancouver rapid transit line, be given first priority for planning and implementation.*

#### 4.4 Consultation Process

The TransLink Board of Directors normally meets once per month as a Committee of the Whole, at which time the committee hears requests of delegation from individuals or organizations. Outside of the current consultation process being undertaken by TransLink regarding funding options, a request to appear before the Committee of the Whole is the normal opportunity for the public to provide input into the decision-making process.

Staff Comments: Meetings of the Committee of the Whole this year have been erratic (four of the 10 monthly meeting have been cancelled), which in turn has limited the opportunities for public feedback. TransLink should consider instituting, as needed, a broader and more accessible public consultation process particularly for affected local communities, on major transportation improvements to enable greater public comment on these issues prior to the final decisions.

Recommendation: *That a more open, accessible, and inclusive public consultation process for local communities be adopted by the TransLink Board, with the new consultation process to be carried out prior to making any decisions on major transportation improvements.*

#### 4.5 Commitment on Specific Improvements for each Municipality

TransLink's public consultation material presented the benefits of Choice 2 in broad terms only (i.e., additional revenues will enable increased capital and maintenance funding for roads and more improvements to transit service) but did not specify the form of these improvements for each municipality. TransLink did, however, provide some details of the planned improvements specific to Richmond at the public meeting held at the Richmond Inn on October 24, 2001.

**Staff Comments:** The composition of the planned regional and municipal improvements should be clearly specified in terms of scope, location and timing and a commitment to implement the improvements should be included in the forthcoming update of TransLink's STP. Moreover, the planned improvements specific to Richmond should include the following projects and funding as presented by TransLink at the Richmond public meeting held October 24, 2001:

- increase in annual operations and maintenance funding for MRN roads to \$1.7 million;
- increase in funding available for cost-shared minor capital projects of up to \$1.9 million;
- planning and development of regional major road projects (i.e., South Fraser and North Fraser Perimeter Roads);
- new direct regional connector transit routes to Surrey, Delta and Burnaby;
- new direct express bus route from No. 2 Road to Vancouver;
- introduction of new City Centre circulator and Williams Road cross-town mini-bus routes;
- improved service on local bus routes; and
- continuation of planning work on a Richmond/Airport-Vancouver rapid transit service.

**Recommendation:** *That 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 above.*

#### 4.6 Possible Funding from Federal Government

TransLink estimates that the federal government collects close to \$400 million annually in federal gas taxes from the Lower Mainland area. Currently, none of this money is returned to the region to support transportation-related operations or improvements. TransLink is seeking a commitment from the federal government to fund regional transportation improvements using a portion of the federal gas taxes collected locally.

**Staff Comments:** TransLink should continue its efforts to secure financial support from the federal government. Urban transportation systems are increasingly recognized as essential to national trade and tourism interests and thus warrant increased funding from the federal government. Moreover, should TransLink adopt Choice 2 and be successful in obtaining federal funding, increased property taxes should be the first additional revenue source to be offset by the federal funds. Property taxes as a revenue source are not consistent with the principle that funding sources should be transportation-related and that users of the transportation system, transit and road users, should pay a larger portion of total costs. Furthermore, a commitment was made at the time of the creation of the GVTA that the agency would not exercise its authority to increase property taxes to fund transportation improvements.

**Recommendation:** *That 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 be the first additional revenue source to be offset by the federal funds.*

#### 4.7 Development of a Long-Term Funding Strategy

The public consultation material presents Choice 2 as addressing TransLink's forecast funding shortfall of \$40 to \$50 million starting in 2002. The material presented, however, does not clearly indicate if the three new additional revenue sources are intended to provide long-term financing for the agency.

*Staff Comments:* While the increases in fuel taxes and property taxes are potential long-term financing mechanisms, the transit fare increase will provide additional revenue in 2002 only. Therefore, the proposed additional revenue sources in Choice 2 should be considered as interim financing only to address the immediate 2002 shortfall. As part of the update of the STP in 2002, TransLink should formulate a secure long-term funding strategy that gives consideration to potential funding from the federal government, further efficiency savings that may arise from the resolution of issues outstanding from the recent labour disruption at Coast Mountain Bus Company and other sustainable funding sources.

*Recommendation:* 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.

#### Financial Impact

No additional costs to regional residents and transportation system users will be incurred if Choice 1 is implemented. However, the City will lose nearly \$2 million annually in TransLink funding (based on the 2001 allocation) for the improvement and maintenance of major roads including No. 3 Road, Steveston Highway, No. 2 Road, Westminster Highway, Alderbridge Way, Gilbert Road, and Bridgeport Road. In addition, TransLink would abandon the Richmond Area Transit Plan and cut overall bus service by 15 to 20 percent, which would likely include reductions to Richmond transit services.

Should Choice 2 be implemented, TransLink estimates that the typical financial impact on regional residents and various users of the transportation system would be:

- Transit User – annual increase in 2002 of \$120 and \$240 for one-zone and multi-zone users, respectively;
- Motor Vehicle Driver – annual increase of \$32 based on average user who buys 133 litres of gasoline per month;
- Semi-Trailer Driver – annual increase of \$908 based on average user who buys 3,785 litres of diesel fuel per month;
- Home Owner – annual increase in property taxes of \$22 based on average assessed value of \$280,000 for a house; and
- City of Richmond – annual increase in allocation of operations and maintenance funding for major roads to \$1.7 million and up to \$1.9 million available annually for cost-shared minor capital road projects.



**Conclusion**

TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan was predicated on an additional funding source, a vehicle levy, in place by October 2001 to support regional transportation improvements. The absence of the levy has created a funding gap of \$40 to \$50 million starting in 2002 and TransLink is currently embarked on a public consultation process to determine an appropriate funding strategy to resolve the shortfall.

An economically, environmentally and socially sustainable regional transportation system that is coordinated with land use planning is vital to the liveability and economic competitiveness of the Lower Mainland. TransLink's Strategic Transportation Plan identifies the transportation improvements intended to realize this system through enhanced regional transit services and road infrastructure improvements that benefit both individuals and goods movement. Thus, staff recommend that the need for TransLink to secure additional funding to sustain the timely implementation of the Strategic Transportation Plan be acknowledged and supported.

Should the additional revenue sources be those mechanisms described by TransLink in Choice 2, staff recommend that, as much as possible, the improvements directly benefit the contributors to the system and that TransLink provide clarity and commitment with respect to the specific improvements to be implemented. In addition, the proposed additional revenue sources should be viewed as interim financing only to resolve the immediate deficit. A long-term financing strategy that recognizes potential federal funding as well as efficiencies arising from alternative transit service delivery methods and other sustainable sources should be developed as part of the Strategic Transportation Plan update.



Joan Caravan  
Transportation Planner I

# What is TransLink?

**What we do.**  
 The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (TransLink), plans and funds the largest integrated road and transit system in Canada, serving the GVRD's 21 municipalities from Louisa Bay to Langley.

## Regional Roads

- TransLink is responsible for the network of 2,200 lane kilometres of regional roads. Almost every trip in the region involving the movement of goods and people uses the major road network.
- Specifics:**
- \$9 million of funding to municipalities for the maintenance of key arterial roads such as: Granville Street, Dollarton Hwy, Stevenson Hwy, Garden City Road, No. 3 Road
  - \$9 million of funding to maintain roads the Province does not pay for anywhere such as: Barnett Hwy, Kingsway (Burnaby), Fraser Hwy, King George Hwy.
  - \$25 million per year toward capital projects, such as:
    - Burnaby: Building a new Marine/10th connector
    - Surrey: Widening and realigning Scott Rd
    - New Westminster: Reconstruction of retaining wall on Columbia Street
    - North Vancouver: Mount Seymour Parkway bridge deck replacement
    - Delta: Big slough bridge replacement

## Transit Services

- Transit services are operated throughout an area approximately three times the size of the new municipality of Toronto. An estimated 85% of the region's residents have a transit service within 400 metres of their home and 40% use the transit system at least once a week.
- Specifics:**
- Peak bus fleet of 935 vehicles
  - Current plans are to replace the existing trolley fleet with new trolley buses not diesel!
  - Employs about 2,800 bus drivers and mechanics
  - 231 HandyDART mini-buses serving over 3,100 disabled customers

# It's time to choose.

We have some important road and transit service decisions to make and we want your opinion. Population and traffic are growing. Maintaining regional road and transit services requires a bigger investment. A vehicle levy to fund that investment didn't happen and TransLink faces a \$40 to \$50 million shortfall starting 2002. Concerned business, commercial, social and environmental groups are joining us to get your advice on the following choices. A decision must be made by November.



### No New Revenue

TransLink has cut and deferred road improvements and reduced transit service once already to meet this year's shortfall. Additional cuts are required to meet next year's shortfall.

Cuts to meet the \$40 to \$50 million shortfall in 2002 would mean the following changes:

### Road Cuts

- NO funding to maintain those roads transferred from municipalities to TransLink; the cost would revert back to municipalities (\$9 million per year)
- NO road improvements such as left turn bays, improved signalling or widening of roads (\$10 million per year in capital spending)



### Roads Investment

- DOUBLE the funding from today's level for maintaining roads from \$9 to \$18 million
- DOUBLE road capital funding for road improvement projects to \$20 million per year
- DOUBLE the contribution towards large projects that clearly demonstrate improvement in the mobility of goods and people across the region to the equivalent of \$35 million per year.

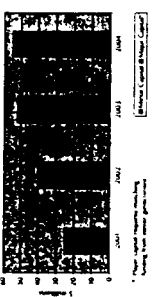
### Transit Growth

- MODEST GROWTH in transit services
  - expand mini-buses by about 60 vehicles
  - increase regular and express bus service by 30 buses a year
  - improve frequency across the system
- REPLACE existing trolley fleet with new trolley buses
- OPEN the Millennium Line

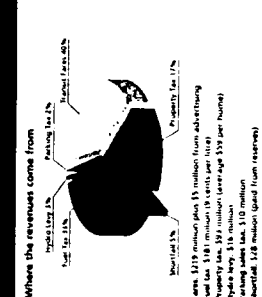
### Paying for Choice 2

These improvements are estimated to cost \$60 to \$80 million per year. New revenue is needed to pay for them. The revenue options available to TransLink are fare increases, property taxes and additional fuel tax.

### Our stakeholders have told us that the funding should come from several sources, not just one. The provincial government has indicated it will collect up to 2 cents per litre of fuel tax within the GVRD. If it is matched by existing regional sources (fare increases and property taxes).



### Current financial situation - Budget 2001



### Capital Contributions

- NO capital contribution towards planning and development of large road projects, such as the Fraser River Crossing and South Fraser Perimeter Road (\$15 million per year in capital spending)
- NO opening of the Millennium Line
- NO replacement of the trolley buses - diesel buses to substitute
- 100 fewer buses during rush hour

### Transit Cuts

- CUT bus services by 15% to 20% (equivalent to 4 times the service cuts made this year)
- 500 fewer employees
- reduced frequencies at all times of the day
- curtailing of evening and weekend service

### Fare Increase (\$25 million in 2002 only)

- Crack down on fare evasion
- Revise the fare structure to provide better value to frequent customers
- Advance scheduled 2003 fare increase to 2002, a 25 cent increase for one-zone from \$1.75 to \$2.00, 50 cents for two and three zones

### Property Taxes (\$20 million per year)

- \$22 increase on an average home (average assessment in the GVRD is \$280,000), based on the current method for setting property taxes
- An alternative would be a "flat" tax of \$32 per home, (this method requires provincial approval of this method)
- Property taxes approved and collected by the GVRD

Property Type	Current	Proposed	% Change
Single Detached	\$1,100	\$1,320	20%
Single Attached	\$1,100	\$1,320	20%
Multi-Unit Residential	\$1,100	\$1,320	20%
Commercial	\$1,100	\$1,320	20%

### Q&A

- Q: Why do you have only 2 choices?  
 A: We have a limited number of options to raise revenue. We are currently exploring fare changes, fare cuts, fare increases, and other options to raise revenue. We are currently exploring fare changes, fare cuts, fare increases, and other options to raise revenue.
- Q: How do you know you need more revenue?  
 A: We have a \$40 to \$50 million shortfall starting in 2002. We need to find ways to raise revenue to cover this shortfall.
- Q: How do you know you need more revenue?  
 A: We have a \$40 to \$50 million shortfall starting in 2002. We need to find ways to raise revenue to cover this shortfall.

# Make yourself heard:

Now that you know the choices, please tell us the service level you want. You can advise TransLink of your choice by attending a public meeting, or by mail, fax, or web site.

**Mail to:** TransLink Funding Input  
 6000 4720 Kingsway  
 Burnaby, BC, V5H 4K2  
**Fax to:** 604-453-4632  
**Web site:** Register your preferred choice at: [www.translink.bc.ca](http://www.translink.bc.ca)

You can also participate in an on-line discussion about the future of our road and transit system at [www.translink.bc.ca](http://www.translink.bc.ca)

## Choice 1

- Cut existing road and transit programs to match revenues.**
- Major cuts to transit
  - No road projects

## Choice 2

- Maintain and continue to improve roads and transit services by raising revenues.**
- More buses and trains, higher frequency
  - More road maintenance for regional roads
  - More road improvements

## Regional public meetings

- You can also attend public meetings at these locations. All public meetings are from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.
- October 3: Capilvan City Hall, 3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam
  - October 18: Upper Town Centre Hall, 15150 Russell Avenue, White Rock
  - October 24: Burnaby Centre, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond
  - October 25: 711 W. Broadway, Vancouver
  - October 26: Burnaby Centre, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond
  - October 27: 711 W. Broadway, Vancouver
  - October 28: 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond
  - October 29: 715 Millside Blvd, New Westminster
  - October 30: Sheraton Inn - Guildford, 15150 Russell Avenue, White Rock
  - November 1: Burnaby Centre, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond
  - November 2: Burnaby Centre, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond
  - November 3: Burnaby Centre, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond
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  - November 30: Burnaby Centre, 7551 Westminster Hwy, Richmond

## Next steps

We appreciate your time and attention in reviewing these options - your input is important. The feedback we receive from you and other stakeholders through this process will be reported to both the TransLink and GVRD boards, at their November meetings. This, in addition to the results of the public meetings, will be used to make decisions on the future funding of our road and transit systems.

## TransLink's commitment to finding efficiencies

TransLink is committed to finding efficiencies in its operations. We are currently exploring various options to reduce costs and improve service. We are currently exploring various options to reduce costs and improve service.



**City of Richmond**  
Urban Development Division

## Memorandum

**To:** Mayor and Councillors  
**From:** Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Director, Transportation  
**Date:** October 25, 2001  
**File:** 0154-04

**Re:** **TRANSLINK FUNDING OPTIONS FOR 2002 – SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AT RICHMOND PUBLIC MEETING (OCTOBER 24, 2001)**

TransLink is currently engaged in a public consultation process to gather feedback on the following two alternative funding options to address its forecast 2002 deficit of \$40-\$50 million:

- *Option 1* - Cut existing road and transit programs to match revenues; or
- *Option 2* - Maintain and continue to improve roads and transit by raising revenues via increases in fuel taxes, transit fares and property taxes.

As part of its regional consultation process on this issue, TransLink held a public meeting in Richmond (one of eight meetings) at the Richmond Inn on October 24, 2001 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This memorandum summarizes the material presented by TransLink and the comments and feedback provided by attendees at the meeting, which was attended by approximately 50 to 75 people.

### 1. TransLink Presentation

Ms. Pat Jacobsen, Chief Executive Officer of TransLink, gave a power-point presentation (hard copy attached) at the start of the meeting that provided an overview of the two funding options. Some of the key comments made by Ms. Jacobsen were:

- The Richmond meeting had the biggest turn-out to date;
- Transportation has been identified as the #2 issue in the region (health is #1);
- We pay either with money or with more congestion and being less competitive;
- TransLink is not only responsible for buses but roads as well;
- Good transportation to and from all parts of the region is important to Richmond's economy as we are a major employment centre, including the airport;
- There are 139 lane-km of TransLink-funded roads in Richmond;
- Total funding provided by TransLink for major road improvements in Richmond (e.g., No. 2 Road/Blundell Road) amounted to \$2 million from 1999 to 2001;
- \$1.04 million has also be provided to Richmond by TransLink for the operations, maintenance, and rehabilitation of the major roads in 2001; and
- The recently completed Richmond Transit Area Plan proposed a 60% increase in buses by 2002 and the re-design of both regional and local bus services (e.g., #98 B-Line and cross-town connections).

Mr. Glen Leicester, Manager of Implementation Planning of TransLink, then spoke briefly about transit service within Richmond and described some of the key features of the Richmond Transit Area Plan and the current status of the #98 B-Line operations.

Ms. Jacobsen closed the presentation with a discussion of:

- the implications of Option 1 vs. Option 2 from a regional as well as Richmond's perspective;
- the specific implications for Richmond include:
  - Option 1
    - No TransLink capital and maintenance funding for roads
    - Cut bus services by 15-20%
    - Abandon Richmond Transit Area Plan
  - Option 2
    - Increase maintenance funding from \$1M to \$1.7M for roads
    - Up to \$1.9M per year available for cost-shared projects
    - New direct bus routes connecting between Richmond and Surrey, Delta, Burnaby
    - More express routes between No. 2 Road and Vancouver
    - New minibuses for City Centre, Williams Road cross-town and Crestwood
    - Improved services on local routes
    - Continuation of planning work on Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit
- the possible funding sources for the \$60M-\$80M/year improvement costs with Option 2 being:
  - gas taxes (2 cents/litre = \$40M/year)
  - property taxes (\$22/home = \$20M/year)
  - transit fares (25 cents and 50 cents increases for one and multi-zones respectively = \$20M/year).

At the end of the presentation, the following dates were noted for the next steps to be taken in the decision process related to the current funding issues:

- November 17, 2001 - Council of Councils Meeting
- November 23, 2001 - TransLink Board Meeting
- November 30, 2001 - GVRD Board Meeting

## **2. Public Comments and Feedback**

A total of 17 speakers from the public made presentations at the public meeting. Some of the notable themes and specific comments made by these speakers, including representatives from Richmond Chamber of Commerce, YVR, Richmond Committee on Disabilities, a number of transit drivers, residents and workers, were:

### TransLink Governance and Operations

- achieve efficiency;
- make changes through management;
- need more focus on goods movement, not just transit;
- regional ground transportation needs improvements (including rapid transit) for YVR; and
- support rapid transit.

Funding Options

- everyone should pay as long as benefits go back to everyone;
- broad-based approach to raise revenues (including increased property taxes) okay for financing effective transit and road improvements;
- the Millennium line is too expensive to operate; and
- continue to lobby federal government for funding.

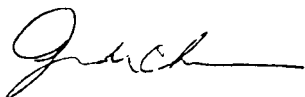
Transit Service

- lack of late night transit services;
- simplify the fare system;
- need enforcement of HOV lanes;
- #98 B-Line currently not performing as expected;
- HandiDart service being neglected;
- better traffic light co-ordination along #98 B-Line route;
- too much spent on bus shelters; and
- pleased with improved transit service for west Richmond.

Approximately 20 to 25 percent of the audience appeared to be transit drivers, including three of the 17 speakers. The main areas of concern for the drivers were travel time delays on the #98 B-Line service, the additional features of the #98 B-Line, which were viewed as unnecessary, and a desire for increased transit service (e.g., 24-hour service). The main sources of travel delays cited for the #98 B-Line were construction due to the Airport Connector Project and a lack of enforcement of the HOV lane in south Granville. As noted in a forthcoming staff report, the imminent completion of the Airport Connector Project should resolve delays in this area and TransLink is working with the City of Vancouver to address HOV violations. Mr. Leicester of TransLink noted that the new features of the #98 B-Line service, such as the shelters and the display of real-time bus arrival information, were factors specifically requested by customers and survey respondents. He further noted that the afternoon Sexsmith Park and Ride shuttle service has been extended to 7:00 p.m.

In general, based on the comments made from the above speakers, there appeared to be an overall public consensus that Option 2 would be preferable provided that effective and balanced transportation improvements are committed to be implemented, and that the improvements would in turn directly benefit those who contribute in the region.

Staff will be presenting a report on the funding options at the forthcoming Public Works and Transportation Committee meeting on November 7, 2001. In the interim, if you have any questions on this issue, please contact me at 276-4021.



Gordon Chan, P. Eng.  
Director, Transportation

JC:lce

pc: George Duncan, Chief Administrative Officer  
David McLellan, General Manager, Urban Development