



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Public Works and Transportation Committee

Date: September 17, 2012

From: Victor Wei, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation

File: 01-0154-00/Vol 01

Re: REQUEST FOR PILOT INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE SPECIAL PUBLIC ACCESS TO STAFF WASHROOMS IN THE RICHMOND-BRIGHOUSE CANADA LINE STATION

Staff Recommendation

That Richmond City Council send a letter to TransLink advising of its support for the implementation of the pilot initiative proposed by the Richmond Seniors Network.

Victor Wei, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation
(604-276-4131)

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Community Social Development.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Development Applications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY SMT SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: 	REVIEWED BY CAO	INITIALS: -

Staff Report

Origin

The City has received a copy of a letter (**Attachment 1**) from the Richmond Seniors Network (RSN) addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of TransLink requesting implementation of a pilot initiative whereby seniors, people living with disabilities and families with young children would be provided with special access to the staff washrooms in the Richmond-Brighouse Canada Line Station. The RSN subsequently contacted staff to request City support for the implementation of the pilot project. This report responds to that request.

Analysis

1. Public Use of Staff Washrooms at Canada Line Stations

This issue was first identified to City staff in May 2011, when members of both the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC) and the Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) advised of the need for public washrooms at all Canada Line stations. In turn, staff requested that BC Rapid Transit Company Ltd (BCRTC, the operating company of TransLink responsible for the SkyTrain system) consider providing public access to staff washrooms in Canada Line stations. BCRTC subsequently advised that staff washrooms would only be made available to the public if “someone approaches an attendant with an urgent need to use a washroom” with the degree of urgency to be determined at the attendant’s discretion. However, recent requests by a RSAC member to use Canada Line station washrooms have all resulted in denial by the attendants.

Given the general desire for the provision of public washrooms near rapid transit stations and BCRTC’s current policy, it is apparent that this issue needs to be addressed on a permanent basis. As such, staff will seek the requirement of providing public washroom facilities as part of TransLink’s planned bus mall development at its eastern end on Buswell Street in close proximity to the Richmond-Brighouse Canada Line station. TransLink and the developer of the recently approved mixed use commercial/residential development adjacent to the station have agreed to provide interim washrooms for bus operators until the ultimate public washrooms are functional.

In the longer term, the provision of additional public washrooms closer to the Canada Line station would also be pursued when the adjacent Brighouse Square site to the south redevelops. In the interim, the RSN is proposing a pilot project as described in Section 2.

2. Proposed Pilot Project

The RSN, which includes representatives from RSAC and RCD, proposes that seniors, people living with disabilities and families with young children be provided with access to the staff washrooms in the Richmond-Brighouse Canada Line Station between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm for a trial period of six to 12 months, after which the pilot initiative would be assessed to determine if it could be made permanent. To bolster its request, the RSN is seeking Council endorsement of and support for the proposal.

Staff recognize that TransLink may incur increased operating costs to implement the pilot project, which may limit its feasibility. Notwithstanding, staff are supportive of the request, as

implementation of the proposal would be considered as a good step forward to improve the accessibility of the Canada Line system and enhance transit service amenities for these passengers.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Council endorsement of and support for the pilot initiative would lend authority to the request of the Richmond Seniors Network, which may increase its potential for favourable consideration by TransLink. In light of the region's demographic trend of an aging population, increasing the availability of public washrooms would recognize the changing needs of our community and help ensure that the public realm remains accessible and inclusive.



Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner
(604-276-4035)



September 12, 2012

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Mr. Ian Jarvis, CEO
TransLink
1600-4720 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4N2

Dear Mr. Jarvis,

Re: Access to Washroom at Canada Line Stations

I am writing on behalf of the Richmond Seniors Network (RSN), a community-based planning table comprised of seniors and representatives from agencies that serve seniors. Our purpose is to coordinate and address the needs of seniors in Richmond. The City of Richmond shares our inquiry about access to washroom at Canada Line Stations. This is an important issue and can be very problematic for seniors. Challenges include physical changes related to ageing, specific health conditions and / or difficulty with mobility.

As noted in previous correspondence with Mr. Fred Cummings, President and General Manager, his suggestion that TransLink patrons use the washrooms in adjoining small businesses. This has become a problem as these stores now have signage in their windows "No Public Washrooms".

I understand that seniors using the Canada Line as late as July / August have been denied access to washrooms, as the attendants have not received current policy as to the availability of washrooms to seniors, disabled and young families.

TransLink and RSN appear to be at a "no-win" situation, therefore, perhaps a suggestion as to a pilot project on Canada Line may be feasible. Is it possible that Richmond's Brighthouse Station have their washrooms open with appropriate signage to the above-noted parties, say between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Brighthouse Station is the start and ending

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Richmond Seniors Network

point of Canada Line, but most residents have at least a 30 – 40 minute walk and/or ride before arriving at this station, therefore an added need for availability of these washrooms. If TransLink could see its way to provide this public service for six - twelve months and if successful, then we could readdress this issue at that time.

We, at RSN trust that our suggestion will be favourably considered by the Executive and Board as an alternative to the present situation. If you require RSN to meet and present to the Executive / Board, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Louise Young'.

Louise Young,
Coordinator

AMC

cc: Nancy Olewiler, Chair of Translink's Board of Directors
Peter Hill, Manager Access Transit, Translink
Hon. Mas' Polak, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure
Hon. Ralph Sultan, Minister of State for Seniors
Hon. John Yap, MLA Richmond-Steveston
Linda Reid, MLA East-Richmond
Rob Howard, MLA Richmond Centre
Mayor Malcolm Brodle and Richmond City Council
Victor Wei, Director of Transportation, City of Richmond
Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee

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