



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** January 25, 2016
From: Victor Wei, P. Eng.
 Director, Transportation **File:** 01-0154-04/2016-Vol 01
Re: City of Richmond-TransLink TravelSmart Partnership - Update

Staff Recommendation

1. That staff continue to monitor the TransLink TravelSmart pilot program and relevant activities, as described in the staff report titled "City of Richmond-TransLink TravelSmart Partnership – Update", dated January 25, 2016, from the Director, Transportation and report back on the results following their completion.
2. That a copy of the above report be forwarded to the Richmond Council-School Board Liaison Committee for information.

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

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Economic Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Social Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: DW	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

At its October 27, 2014 meeting, Council endorsed the City's partnership with TravelSmart, TransLink's branded transportation demand management (TDM) program, to help advance the City's goals to increase sustainable transportation choices for the community. This report provides an update on the joint activities undertaken over the past year.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #5 Partnerships and Collaboration:

Continue development and utilization of collaborative approaches and partnerships with intergovernmental and other agencies to help meet the needs of the Richmond community.

Analysis

Following Council endorsement of the partnership, the City and TravelSmart executed a Memorandum of Understanding in December 2014 with the objective of implementing TDM strategies that foster behaviour changes that lead to increased use of transit, carpooling, car-sharing, cycling, and walking as viable alternatives to a single occupant vehicle. The next sections below highlight the key initiatives currently underway.

School Travel Planning: Pilot Project at Three Elementary Schools

The ultimate goal of a School Travel Plan (STP) is to create an environment that encourages healthy and active transportation to and from school, improves the journey for those who use vehicles or take school busses, and improves transportation safety for everyone. The benefits of an STP include:

- improved physical health due to increased activity,
- improved student focus (studies indicate that physical activity is linked to improved academic performance),
- environmental benefits due to reduced vehicle emissions and improved air quality, and
- improved community and traffic safety for students and the neighbourhood.

TravelSmart contracts HASTe (Hub for Active School Travel) to facilitate and deliver the STP program in the Greater Vancouver area. To date, HASTe has worked with school and municipal staff to develop STPs in the following cities: Vancouver, Surrey, New Westminster, Coquitlam, and District of North Vancouver.

For Richmond's pilot program, City staff are working closely with the Richmond School District, TravelSmart and HASTe to develop customized STPs at three elementary schools: Garden City, AB Dixon and Walter Lee.¹ The process was initiated in Fall 2015 and typically takes 18 months to progress through the five phases of:

- (1) *Set-up*: choose schools and establish stakeholder and school STP committees.

¹ The three schools were identified by Richmond School District based on demonstrated interest from principals.

- (2) *Baseline Data Collection*: classroom and family surveys, walkabout and observations.
- (3) *Action Plan Development*: identify education and active travel strategies as well as infrastructure planning if needed.
- (4) *Action Plan Implementation*: produce and distribute “best routes to school” maps, stage contests and events, and undertake the TravelSmart for Elementary Schools Leadership program whereby a TravelSmart facilitator educates students about the impacts of transportation on their health and environment, and works with student leaders to develop student-led projects that are performed and displayed at a Spring assembly of the entire school.
- (5) *Evaluation*: follow-up classroom and family surveys, STP updates as necessary and policy development to ensure program sustainability at the school.

Table 1 outlines the planned schedule. To date, Phase 1 has been completed and actions started within Phase 2. Surveys have been distributed and walkabouts at all three schools with the participation of City and School District staff have occurred to observe on-site conditions, particularly during the start or end of the school day.

Table 1: Planned STP Schedule

Phase	Action	Timeline
1	Set-up	Oct-Nov 2015
2	Baseline Data Collection	Nov 2015- Jan 2016
3	Action Plan Development	Jan-Feb 2016
4	Action Plan Implementation	Mar-Oct 2016
5	Evaluation	Sep-Oct 2016

A multi-agency stakeholder workshop to inform participants about the importance of active and safe routes initiatives and build the capacity of community stakeholders to contribute to and support school travel planning work in Richmond is scheduled for February 24, 2016. The workshop will bring together representatives from Richmond RCMP, ICBC, Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond School District, Parent Advisory Committees, City of Richmond (Transportation, Community Bylaws, Community Social Development), TransLink, and HUB Cycling.

As part of the City-TravelSmart partnership, TransLink is fully funding the STP process for the three schools for this first year. Should this pilot program prove successful, Richmond School District and the City would explore jointly funding the expansion of the STP program to additional elementary schools in the future.

Business Retention Initiative: Employee Transportation at Riverside Business Park

A high priority action item in the Richmond Resilient Economy Strategy is to retain and support businesses already in Richmond. Data collected through the City’s Business Development Program has shown that employee transportation is the number one barrier to workforce attraction and business retention. This issue is most pronounced in the City’s business parks, such as the Riverside Business Park (500+ businesses with 6,000+ employees) located off No. 5 Road to the south of Steveston Highway. To address the challenge, City staff are exploring the development of transportation solutions for employees at this site, including improvements to existing transit service, car-sharing, carpooling, cycling, teleworking, hours of work, private shuttle service, and fleet management. Under the MOU, the City has partnered with TravelSmart to deliver relevant aspects of this initiative, including implementation of an employee survey and exploration of transit, walking and cycling options.

Primary market research in the form of an employee survey was conducted in the summer of 2015 to determine the potential demand for alternative transportation services. A total of 1,035 valid responses were received from employees of 23 companies. The survey sought information regarding employees' current commuting patterns, mode choices, hours of work, and which potential solutions they would consider using if available.

When asked what could motivate employees to reduce their reliance on a single occupancy vehicle as the preferred mode of commuting to work, the top five answers were:

- Better access to transit (20%)
- A direct shuttle from a transit exchange/station (14%)
- The availability of car-share vehicles (11%)
- A rewards program for using a sustainable mode (11%); and
- Help with finding carpool participants (8%).

The responses informed the development of potential customized commuting travel options from TravelSmart and the private sector. The City shared this information with a group of representatives from several key businesses within Riverside Industrial Park in late December 2015. Carpooling and a private business park shuttle emerged as the two feasible options of interest to business.

As a next step, staff will continue to facilitate discussions with business stakeholders in Riverside Industrial Park to explore and pursue workable solutions to meet their employee transportation needs. Pending successful uptake of these solutions, this business retention initiative may be introduced to other business parks in Richmond.

Community Outreach

TravelSmart staff participated in City events to promote and raise awareness in the community of sustainable travel modes including:

- March 2015: Activate! Wellness Fair at the Minoru Place Activity Centre.
- May 2015: Public Works Open House at the Works Yard.
- June 2015: Island City by Bike Tour at South Arm Community Centre. TravelSmart generously donated five raffle prizes for the City's 2015 Island City, by Bike Tour with each prize comprising a bike seat cover, bike light and bell, reflective strap, regional cycling map, and Bike Sense manual.
- December 2015: TravelSmart provided an information session on the new Compass Card at an event organized by the Transportation Sub-Committee of the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee and the Minoru Seniors Society.

Potential Future Initiatives

Staff are working with TravelSmart to identify potential initiatives for 2016 including:

- City events in that TravelSmart may attend to provide information and awareness,
- further school- and business-focussed outreach efforts,

- public education sessions such as transit training sessions for seniors and recent immigrants, and
- support for the update and publication of a new edition of the City's cycling and trails map.

Financial Impact

None. The identified activities are funded by TravelSmart.

Conclusion

Following the launch of the City-TravelSmart partnership in December 2014, staff from different departments are working with TravelSmart to collectively improve the community's awareness and understanding of transportation options and build positive attitudes about sustainable transportation choices. A pilot project with three elementary schools has been initiated with the aim of achieving tangible behaviour changes. In turn, this project would help the City progress towards its targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the mode share of active transportation as well as improve personal health and enhance community safety. TravelSmart has also been integrated in one of the City's ongoing business retention programs by delivering relevant expertise to the Riverside Business Park employee transportation initiative. Staff will report back on the final outcomes of these initiatives, which are also anticipated to help inform the development of TransLink's Southwest Area Transport Plan that will include the identification of opportunities for TravelSmart programming.



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