



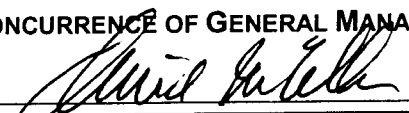
To: Public Works and Transportation Committee **Date:** November 5, 2001
From: Gordon Chan, P. Eng. **File:** 6480-03-02
Director, Transportation
Re: **DRAFT TRANSLINK PROGRAM PLAN FOR 2002**

Staff Recommendation

1. That Council endorse the submission of the list of prioritized transit service improvements in Richmond, as described in the attached report, to TransLink for possible inclusion in the Draft 2002 Program Plan.
2. That staff be directed to work with TransLink to monitor transit service improvements implemented in 2001 and identify outstanding deficiencies that can be addressed in future submissions for service improvements, including any raised in the forthcoming public consultation processes held by both TransLink and the City on the recent changes to local transit services.
3. That staff be directed to report back on the evaluation by TransLink of Richmond's submission of transit service improvements for inclusion in the draft 2002 Program Plan and the development of the Final 2002 Program Plan.

Gordon Chan, P. Eng.
Director, Transportation

Att. 2

<p>FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY</p> <p>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</p> 

Staff Report

Origin

As part of its annual budget preparation process, TransLink has requested each member municipality review its proposed list of transit service improvements for 2002 and submit a prioritized list of candidate projects to facilitate development of a draft 2002 Program Plan. The Plan is intended to reflect approval of a funding strategy that would allow a modest expansion of transit service. A preliminary list of proposed improvements is being solicited from municipalities at this time to assist TransLink staff with the formulation of the final 2002 Program Plan following the TransLink Board decision on a strategy to address its funding shortfall.

This report presents, for Council's endorsement, the City's submission of prioritized local and regional transit service improvements for 2002 to be considered for inclusion in TransLink's draft 2002 Program Plan.

Analysis

1. Development of Draft 2002 Program Plan

The 2002 Program Plan process has been delayed pending TransLink's current consultation process to resolve its \$40 to \$50 million funding shortfall starting in 2002. TransLink Board approval of Choice 1, cut existing road and transit programs to match existing revenues, would entail transit service reductions of 15 to 20 percent. Development of a 2002 Program Plan to meet this requirement would occur following such a decision.

Conversely, TransLink Board approval of Choice 2, raising additional revenue of \$80 million via a combination of increased fuel taxes, transit fares and property taxes, would provide sufficient funding to sustain existing levels of service and may allow a modest expansion of transit service to address changes in demand. TransLink staff have identified the following likely transit service initiatives under this scenario, based in part on approved Area Transit Plans:

- opening of the Millennium SkyTrain line to Commercial Drive Station in July 2001;
- introduction of 60 Mark II SkyTrain cars into service on the Millennium and Expo lines;
- re-routing Burnaby, New Westminster, Northeast Sector and Vancouver buses to connect with the new Millennium Line stations, which will enable some savings as a result of the elimination of duplicating express bus routes;
- introduction of the #97 B-Line to Coquitlam-Port Moody, an SFU Shuttle service from Production-University station and improved Willingdon Avenue service to extend the market reach of the Millennium SkyTrain line;
- streamlining of services in key corridors to simplify routings, speed services through reduced stops and transit priority measures and reduce overlap and duplication;
- possible introduction of expanded suburb-to-suburb services, including a Richmond-Surrey express bus service that is identified as a high priority in the Strategic Transportation Plan and for which highway-style coach buses have already been purchased;
- possible introduction of some minibus services where the cost of existing service could be reduced while maintaining or improving customer service; and

- increased HandyDART service to be paid for through reductions in conventional bus service as a result of savings associated with the Millennium SkyTrain line and streamlining.

In addition to the projects noted above, approval of Choice 2 may enable further service improvements. Accordingly, TransLink has requested each municipality to submit a prioritized list of candidate projects for consideration in the development of a draft 2002 Program Plan. For municipalities that have an approved Area Transit Plan, such as Richmond, TransLink staff expect the list of projects to be selected from the improvements identified in the plan.

TransLink staff anticipate presentation of a draft 2002 Program Plan to the TransLink Board in December 2001 followed by presentation of a final 2002 Program Plan in February or March 2002.

2. Approved Improvements per the Richmond Area Transit Plan

Following completion and approval of the Richmond Area Transit Plan by Council and the TransLink Board in September 2000, the majority of the transit service improvements identified for Year 1 (2000) of the plan (shown in Attachment 1), including the introduction of the #98 B-Line service, were implemented following the transit strike in August 2001. The following approved Year 1 enhancements have yet to be implemented:

- full implementation of the #98 B-Line service (i.e., operation of a higher number of buses to enable increased frequencies throughout the day and evening);
- peak period City Express route (#492) from West Richmond to downtown Vancouver; and
- introduction of a peak period Express Bus service between the City Centre and North Delta/Central Surrey (Newton Town Centre).

The following service improvements are identified for Years 2 and 3 (2001 and 2002) of the plan, none of which have been implemented:

- new cross-town route along Williams Road between Steveston and Riverport;
- increase peak period frequency of Richmond-Surrey Express Bus service to every 15 minutes and introduce all day service with a 30-minute frequency;
- new peak period City Bus service every 15 minutes between the City Centre and Metrotown Station with expansion to an all day service with a 30-minute frequency during midday, evenings and weekends;
- improve service to Crestwood Industrial Park;
- new peak period Express Bus service every 30 minutes between the airport, the City Centre and Ladner and Tsawwassen Town Centre with a daytime service between Ladner Exchange and the City Centre; and
- new community shuttle service within the City Centre area.

These improvements, as well as the deferred Year 1 improvements, are shown in Attachment 2.

3. Prioritized List of Transit Service Improvements for 2002

Staff have identified the following priorities for local and regional transit service improvements based on the outstanding planned expansions proposed in the Richmond Area Transit Plan.

3.1 Priorities for Local Service Improvements

Staff propose the following local transit service improvements in descending order of priority:

Priority for Local Services

- (1) Full implementation of the #98 B-Line service, which is currently operating at a level below that anticipated in the plan (i.e., lower service frequencies);
- (2) Introduction of Williams Road cross-town service;
- (3) Expanded service to new areas of Crestwood Industrial Park;
- (4) New community shuttle service within the City Centre area; and
- (5) Implementation of peak period #492 Express Bus service from West Richmond to downtown Vancouver.

The priority of the local service improvements generally reflects the proposed timing of the services per the Area Transit Plan, which in turn recognizes the need for more frequent and direct service to downtown Vancouver, improved east-west connections and improved service to industrial employment areas. The community shuttle service within the City Centre area has a lower priority relative to the other improvements as the #98 B-Line service currently performs as a quasi-shuttle service along No. 3 Road. A number of other bus services, such as the #402, #403 and #410, also travel along portions of No. 3 Road and adjacent streets within the City Centre. Similarly, implementation of the #492 service has a relatively lower priority as the #490, #491 and #496 currently provide peak period express bus service from West Richmond to downtown Vancouver and the #402 provides a connection to the #98 B-Line.

3.2 Priorities for Regional Service Improvements

Staff propose the following regional transit service improvements in descending order of priority:

Priority for Regional Services

- (1) New peak period Express Bus service between the City Centre and North Delta/Central Surrey (Newton Town Centre);
- (2) New peak period City Bus service every 15 minutes between the City Centre and Metrotown Station; and
- (3) New peak period Express Bus service every 30 minutes between the airport, the City Centre and Ladner and Tsawwassen Town Centre with a daytime service between Ladner Exchange and the City Centre.

The priority of these regional transit improvements reflects the travel patterns documented in the 1996 Census of local and regional residents commuting to neighbouring communities for work purposes. Of all persons working in Richmond, 23 percent live in Vancouver, 13 percent in Surrey, 9 percent in Delta, and 6 percent in Burnaby. Conversely, of Richmond residents who travel to other municipalities for work purposes, 71 percent commute to Vancouver, 14 percent to Burnaby and 13 percent to Delta/Surrey.

4. Possible Improvements to Existing Services – TransLink Review

The introduction of the #98 B-Line service and the restructuring of local bus routes effected in August 2001 was the biggest change made to transit service in Richmond in the last 25 years. As the new system is not yet performing optimally, TransLink is undertaking a comprehensive review of the structure and operation of the City's regional and local transit service. This review includes consultation with Coast Mountain Bus Company staff as well as transit customers and members of the City's former #98 B-Line Advisory Committee. TransLink staff anticipate presenting a draft report of recommendations resulting from this review to the City by the end of November 2001 and presenting a final report to the TransLink Board in December 2001.

5. Possible Improvements to Existing Services – Public Hearing

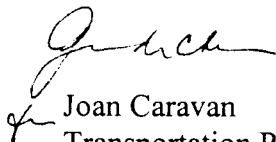
The identification of possible additional transit improvements can also be expected through ongoing public feedback on transit improvement needs, including those that may be raised in the forthcoming public hearing being initiated by the City. Any additional transit improvements arising from this public hearing that are not identified in the Richmond Area Transit Plan will be forwarded as a separate submission to TransLink for consideration in the development of the draft 2002 Program Plan, which TransLink staff anticipate presenting to the TransLink Board on December 21, 2001. The final 2002 Program Plan will be presented to the TransLink Board in February or March 2002.

Financial Impact

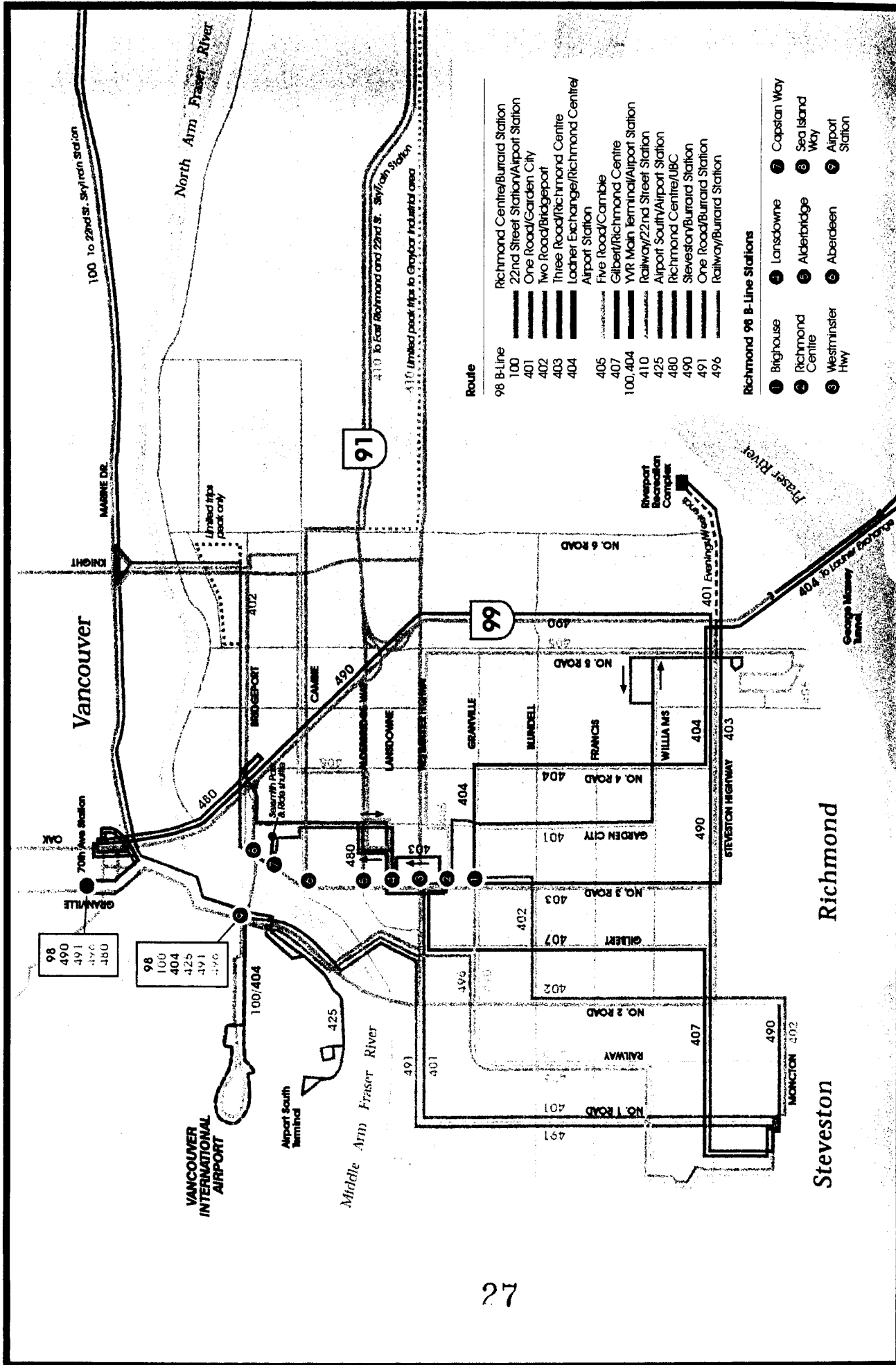
There is no financial impact at this time.

Conclusion

TransLink is requesting submissions from member municipalities of prioritized lists of transit service improvements to facilitate development of a draft 2002 Program Plan that is premised on TransLink Board approval of a funding strategy that would allow modest transit service expansion (i.e., Choice 2). Staff are seeking approval of a prioritized list of local and regional transit improvements for submission to TransLink to be considered for inclusion in its draft 2002 Program Plan. Improvements to existing services may result from TransLink's current review of Richmond transit operations. Any additional transit service improvements that may arise from the forthcoming public hearings on transit service will be forwarded in a separate submission to TransLink for consideration in the development of the draft 2002 Program Plan.



Joan Caravan
Transportation Planner I



Existing Transit Services

