



TRANSLINK BOARD-IN-BRIEF— MARCH 28, 2003

Here are the main points from the March 28th meeting of the TransLink Board of Directors. The complete agenda and supporting reports for every Board meeting are posted on TransLink's web site (www.translink.bc.ca). The Board-in-Brief is also available on the web site.

Note: Board-in-Brief is not the official minutes of the TransLink Board meeting and should not be interpreted as such. The minutes for this meeting will be adopted at the next TransLink Board meeting.

Item 4.1—Fraser River Crossing, Selection of Preferred Option

The Board:

- Endorsed a bridge crossing (Option 1) in the 200th Street corridor as the preferred alternative for the new Fraser River Crossing.
- Confirmed that the annual funds currently provided to the Albion Ferry operation be re-directed to offset the annual debt servicing and operating costs of the new Fraser River Crossing, once the crossing is in operation.
- Directed staff to consult with the affected municipalities, stakeholders, Albion Ferry users, and Fraser River Marine Transportation Ltd., and return with a recommended strategy for the future of the Albion Ferry by no later than November 2003.
- Received for information, an update on progress on the Fraser Gateway Program.

Two crossing options were put forward for the Board's consideration. Option 1—which was recommended by the project director—involves a bridge crossing along the 200th Street corridor between Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows and Langley. Option 2 was a tunnel/bridge combination that would cross the river via Barnston Island. (Maps of the full routes for both options can be found within the Board report, which is posted on the TransLink web site.)

Significantly lower overall cost was a major consideration in the selection of Option 1 as the preferred option. Option 1 is estimated at \$600 million, compared to \$750 million for Option 2. Option 1 was also found to provide higher net user benefits than Option 2 (\$690 million versus \$606 million), and can be completed two years sooner.

The Fraser River Crossing is one of a suite of projects collectively known as the Fraser Gateway program. The Fraser Gateway is an integrated road network that would significantly improve the movement of goods and people through the Fraser Corridor. Other priority projects in the Gateway Program include the South Fraser Perimeter Road, North Fraser Perimeter Road, and improvements to the Pitt River Bridge, the Port Mann Bridge, Highway 1 and Lougheed Highway.

TransLink and the provincial government have been working together since fall 2002 to develop the Fraser Gateway Program.

Item 4.2—Proposed 2003 Major Road Network (MRN) Minor Capital Program

The Board:

- Approved the proposed projects for inclusion in the 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program as outlined in the report; and
- Reserved the remaining 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program funding, as identified in this report, for the Board's consideration of any additional projects that may be recommended by MRTAC (Major Roads & Transportation Advisory Committee) in 2003.

MRTAC and TransLink staff have jointly prepared the Major Road Network (MRN) Minor Capital Program annually, since the commencement of the program in 1999. Municipalities within the region are eligible to apply for cost-sharing with TransLink for minor capital projects on the designated 2,200 lane-kilometres of roadways that comprise the MRN.

The intent of the MRN Minor Capital Program is to facilitate the construction of relatively small-scale improvements on the MRN that generally address congestion, safety and capacity issues to the extent that large-scale capital projects can be deferred. These projects should also support goods and transit movement within the region. Costs of approved projects are shared between TransLink and the municipality on a 50/50 basis, up to the municipality's eligible program funding limit.

TransLink's 2003 MRN Minor Capital Program budget is \$20 million. The funds for approved projects as per the Board report is \$13.8 million. Unallocated funds will be set aside for the Board's consideration of any additional recommendations from MRTAC.

Item 4.3—2003 Capital Projects – Specific Project Approval

The Board provided specific project approval for the following 2003 capital projects:

- Port Coquitlam Shops Building Seismic Update – Budget: \$625,000
- Payroll System Implementation – Budget: \$745,000

- SkyTrain Uninterruptible Power Supply System Replacement – Budget: \$336,000
- SkyTrain Running Rail Replacement (replacing worn rails between Stadium and Main Street Stations) – Budget: \$805,000

Item 4.4—Proposed 2003 Bicycle Infrastructure Capital Cost Sharing Program

The Board:

- Approved the Bicycle Infrastructure Capital Cost Sharing Program as described in the report; and
- Approved the 2003 Bicycle Capital Program funding residual, as identified in the report, be carried forward to remain available for bicycle capital projects.

At its December 2002 meeting, the Board approved a fund of \$1.5 million for the 2003 Bicycle Infrastructure Capital Cost Sharing Program as part of the 2003 Transportation Plan and Budget. The program is intended to encourage municipalities to construct more bicycle routes and remove physical barriers to cyclists across the region, thus contributing to low-cost and environmentally friendly transportation options.

A total of \$1 million was allocated among the municipalities based on their relative populations. The remaining \$500,000 is available to municipalities presenting projects that are regionally significant but require substantially higher contribution from TransLink than is possible with the population allocation formula, which is typically less than 50% of the project cost.

Item 4.5—GST Municipal Determination for West Coast Express Ltd. and Fraser River Marine Transportation Ltd.

The Board:

- Confirmed the creation of Fraser River Marine Transportation Ltd. (FRMT) as a wholly owned operating subsidiary of TransLink and the delegation of authority to FRMT to carry out activities relating to the Albion Ferry crossing effective April 1, 1999; and
- Confirmed the delegation of authority to West Coast Express Ltd. (WCE) to carry out activities relating to the commuter rail service effective April 1, 1999.

TransLink is currently seeking ‘municipal’ designation from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency for FRMT and WCE that will allow the two entities to claim municipal rebates equal to 4/7ths of the Goods and Services Tax incurred on expenditures. The resolutions passed by the Board will assist TransLink in that effort.

Item 4.6—Implementation of U-Pass for University of BC and Update on Simon Fraser University U-Pass

The Board:

- Received the report, titled as above, for information;
- Approved the implementation of a U-Pass Program at the University of British Columbia to be effective on September 1, 2003;
- Revised the implementation date of a U-Pass at Simon Fraser University to be effective on September 1, 2003; and
- Directed the CEO to enter into a formal agreement with the Alma Mater Society and the University of British Columbia for the introduction and administration of the U-Pass program.

The introduction of the Universal Pass (U-Pass) Program is expected to increase ridership by approximately 1.1 million rides in its first year, or an additional 8,400 rides per weekday during the September-April term. This represents a 0.8% increase in TransLink's annual system ridership. The U-Pass will support a transit-use culture among students so that they will continue to use and support transit after completion of their post-secondary education and assist in reducing traffic demand, improving air quality and supporting the region's land use plan.

Item 4.7—Impact of Proposed Amendments to Canada Transportation Act

The Board received the report, titled as above, for information.

During a review of the Canada Transportation Act—a process which began in 2000—TransLink and its West Coast Express subsidiary made strong arguments in favour of changes to the Act to support urban transportation and commuter rail, respectively. TransLink pressed for secure, long-term funding for transit and transportation infrastructure improvements. West Coast Express coordinated a response from commuter rail properties across Canada, calling for greater access to railway tracks and protections against overcharging for services from Class 1 railways.

On February 25, 2003, the federal Transport Minister issued *Straight Ahead – A Vision for Transportation* and tabled in the House of Commons Bill C-26, an act to amend the Canada Transportation Act. While TransLink's desire for the creation of an arm's-length agency to direct fuel taxes to transportation was not fulfilled, the government did indicate strong support for urban transportation by including urban transportation authorities in the list of bodies that can buy abandoned rail corridors and by setting the valuation of these corridors at net salvage value. As well, amendments related to commuter rail are substantial and clearly reflect an intention to create an environment conducive to expansion of this popular form of urban public transit.

The next TransLink Board meeting will be held:

Date: Thursday, April 17

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Richmond City Hall – Council Chambers
6911 No. 3 Road