

# **REPORT**

## ***Engineering Services***

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** October 16, 2023

**From:** Lisa Leblanc  
Director, Engineering Services  
**File:** 05.1035.10  
(Doc#2364838v1)

**Item #:** 2023-643

**Subject: Support for TransLink’s Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** Council supports in principle TransLink’s Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan to advance the provision of fast, reliable, high-quality rapid transit along the Marine Drive/Way corridor from 22nd Street SkyTrain Station to Marine Drive Canada Line Station, and in other priority regional corridors that could reduce regional traffic passing through New Westminister.

**THAT** Council direct staff to work with TransLink and coordinate with adjacent municipalities towards the planning, design, and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit within New Westminister.

**THAT** Council ask the Mayors’ Council to prioritize the Marine Drive/Way corridor as a priority BRT project, along with other BRT corridors that reduce regional traffic passing through New Westminister.

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### **PURPOSE**

To seek Council’s endorsement in principle of TransLink’s Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan.

### **SUMMARY**

TransLink’s 10-Year Priorities (known as “Access for All”) was unanimously endorsed by the Mayors’ Council and the TransLink Board of Directors last year to guide implementation of the Transport 2050 regional long-range transportation strategy. Within the 10-Year Priorities, TransLink recommends implementation of nine Bus Rapid Transit

(BRT) corridors, to be delivered in phases as prioritized by the Mayors' Council. TransLink is currently identifying the first-tier priorities for BRT implementation and is seeking municipal input and support for the BRT Action Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

Transport 2050, TransLink's regional long-range transportation strategy, was adopted in 2022 and sets out a bold vision for the region's transportation future. This includes quadrupling the size of the rapid transit network, partly by implementing BRT routes across the region.

The Transport 2050 10-Year Priorities – now known as the “Access for All” plan – set out what the region should implement within the first 10 years of the long-term plan. This includes up to nine BRT routes using zero-emission buses, ideally on dedicated, traffic-separated lanes with high-quality passenger amenities. The 10-year priorities for transit are illustrated in Attachment 1.

Among the nine proposed BRT routes, one is proposed to operate within New Westminster's boundaries: 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain Station-Marine Drive Canada Line Station via Marine Drive/Way. Although they will not operate within New Westminster, other proposed routes – particularly those south of the Fraser River and in the Tri-Cities and Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows subregions – may also contribute to reducing regional traffic passing through the city, by providing efficient alternatives to private motor vehicle travel.

## **DISCUSSION**

TransLink has initiated planning for the nine proposed BRT routes and has begun engagement with staff from all regional municipalities. Through this current process, TransLink intends to prioritize the nine proposed BRT routes into tiers, such that the first tier of projects can move forward to advanced planning and design for early implementation in the 10-year time horizon. It is expected that the first tier will include 3-4 routes. Tier 2 and 3 routes will be implemented later in the time horizon.

The only proposed route that directly implicates the City of New Westminster is the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station-Marine Drive Station route along Marine Drive/Way. As 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station is near the City's western boundary, the vast majority of the proposed route would operate within the Cities of Burnaby and Vancouver. However, the proposed service will benefit residents of New Westminster travelling to/from employment centres and other destinations along the North Arm of the Fraser River, and also to/from Vancouver International Airport (YVR).

BRT represents a level of bus service not currently seen in the region, with dedicated lanes over significant distance, advanced transit priority measures to improve speed and reliability, specialized vehicles, and enhanced passenger amenities at stations. Given the short distance over which the proposed route would operate within New Westminster, the

potential impacts to the transportation network are expected to be limited. Many of the modifications that may be necessary would likely involve Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure jurisdiction at the north end of Queensborough Bridge.

When meeting with TransLink representatives, City staff noted the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Bold Vision exercise now underway and highlighted the opportunity to coordinate neighbourhood land use planning with the BRT planning and design. Anchored by a SkyTrain station, a BRT service would further complement this transit-oriented neighbourhood with another high-quality transit option.

The Mayors’ Council requested TransLink staff to provide clarity on how municipalities can indicate support for the BRT Action Plan, resulting in this request for Council endorsement. The Mayors’ Council will look to municipal motions of support to confirm commitment for the implementation of BRT corridors in the host municipalities. That support will be considered alongside other factors in the Mayors’ Council’s prioritization of potential BRT corridors across the region through the Action Plan.

Although the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station/Marine Drive Station route is the proposed service that most directly affects the City of New Westminster, staff note that other potential BRT routes may serve to reduce regional through traffic within the city by attracting more commuters to use rapid transit. Therefore, staff recommend that Council also express support for other proposed BRT routes that could reduce regional traffic passing through the city, such as:

- Scott Road (Surrey/Delta)
- King George Highway (Surrey)
- Lougheed Highway (Port Coquitlam/Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge)

**NEXT STEPS**

TransLink will be finalizing their prioritization of the first-tier BRT routes in the coming months based on technical review and municipalities’ indications of support. With Council endorsement, staff will continue to work with TransLink staff as planning and design proceeds.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The implementation of regional BRT directly supports the City’s transportation and sustainability goals, as outlined in the Master Transportation Plan and the Seven Bold Steps Toward Climate Action.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no immediate financial implications to the City associated with this report.

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Transportation staff are actively collaborating with CAPD staff on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Bold Vision process, which has direct implications on the planning and design for a potential BRT service to that neighbourhood.

**OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. THAT Council supports in principle TransLink’s Bus Rapid Transit Action Plan to advance the provision of fast, reliable, high-quality rapid transit along the Marine Drive/Way corridor from 22nd Street SkyTrain Station to Marine Drive Canada Line Station, and in other priority regional corridors that could reduce regional traffic passing through New Westminster.
- 2. THAT Council direct staff to work with TransLink and coordinate with adjacent municipalities towards the planning, design, and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit within New Westminster.
- 3. THAT Council ask the Mayors’ Council to prioritize the Marine Drive/Way corridor as a priority BRT project, along with other BRT corridors that reduce regional traffic passing through New Westminster.
- 4. THAT Council provide staff with alternate direction.

Staff recommend Options 1 to 3.

**CONCLUSION**

TransLink’s regional transportation strategy – Transport 2050 – represents a bold vision for moving toward a more sustainable, accessible future. Implementation of BRT across the region will make substantial contribution toward achieving that vision, and municipal support for BRT implementation is critical in delivering on that vision.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – TransLink 10-Year Priorities (Transit), from Transport 2050

**APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
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This report was approved by:  
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