



## DRAFT FONVCA AGENDA

Wednesday Feb 20<sup>th</sup> 2013

**Place:** DNV Hall 355 W. Queens Rd V7N 2K6

**Time:** 7:00-9:00pm

**Chair:** Diana Belhouse – Delbrook C.A. & SOS

Tel: 604-987-1656 Email: delbrookca@gmail.com

**Notetaker:** John Miller

Regrets: Lyle Craver, Paul Tubb, Herman Mah, Sharlene Hertz

### 1. Order/content of Agenda(\*short)

**Chair Pro-Tem Suggests:**

### 2. Adoption of Minutes of Jan 16<sup>th</sup>

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/feb2013/minutes-jan2013.pdf>

Emails pertaining to draft minutes will be distributed at meeting.

**Business arising from Minutes.**

### 3. Roundtable on “Current Affairs”

A period of roughly 30 minutes for association members to exchange information of common concerns.

A. Update by EUCCA – Corrie Kost

B. Woodcroft Assoc. appoints Val as FONVCA representative.

### 4. Old Business

4.1 Update from “Process” Committee of FONVCA

4.2 Healthy Neighbourhood re-imburement to FONVCA

### 5. Correspondence Issues

**5.1 Business arising from 5 regular emails:**

Distributed with full package and posted on web-site

**5.2 Non-Posted letters – 1 this period**

Distributed with full package but not currently posted on web-site.

### 6. New Business

**Council and other District Issues.**

**a) DNV Budget Presentation by Rick Danyluk**  
<http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?a=5637>

b) Shirtsleeve Meeting with Council on Tues Mar 26th

c) Update Report on OCPIC – Dan & Corrie

d) DCC (Development Cost Charges) Bylaw Review

[ftp://ftp.dnv.org/Engineering/Outgoing/Draft\\_DCC\\_Bylaw\\_Bylaw\\_Review\\_and\\_Update\\_Background\\_Report\\_\(January\\_2013\).PDF](ftp://ftp.dnv.org/Engineering/Outgoing/Draft_DCC_Bylaw_Bylaw_Review_and_Update_Background_Report_(January_2013).PDF)

Overview of Jan 15/2013 public information mtg.

<http://ubcm.civicweb.net/Documents/DocumentDisplay.aspx?ID=260>

<http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?p=true&a=254&v=9>

<http://www.surrey.ca/for-business/9134.aspx>

[http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/Documents/5.1\\_Attachment2\\_ProfKitchen\\_Discussion\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/Documents/5.1_Attachment2_ProfKitchen_Discussion_Paper.pdf)

e) Doctor Home Visits –

- refresh request to DNV Council as a UBCM Resolution

- introduced April/2012 (item 4.3(e))

- **May/2012 item 3F** “FONVCA write to Mayor & Council to encourage Council to bring to the UBCM (Union of BC Municipalities) a resolution asking the BC Government to pass legislation changing the fee schedule to create financial incentives for home (medical) visits.”

- June/2012 item 4.2

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/jun2012/letter-to-council-item-3F-w-attachment.pdf>

**We had missed the deadline for DNV council to submit the requested resolution to UBCM.**

**ACTION ITEM:** Encourage council to submit the requested resolution in time (early 2013) for next year's UBCM

## 7. Any Other Business

a) FONVCA Web Site Hosting - Renewal

Due: December 15/2013

b) Metro Vancouver Community Forum –

A proposal to send a representative from FONVCA to discuss “Transportation” issues.

## 8. For Your Information Items

### 8.1 Non-Legal Issues

a) News-Clips of the month February 2012

<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/feb2013/news-clips/>

b) Local Government Updates on Municipal Stats.

<http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/>

c) Translink Efficiency Report (Dec 2012)

[http://translinkcommission.org/Report\\_on\\_TransLink\\_Efficiency\\_Review\\_by\\_Shirocca\\_Dec\\_17-12\\_MASTER.pdf](http://translinkcommission.org/Report_on_TransLink_Efficiency_Review_by_Shirocca_Dec_17-12_MASTER.pdf)

### 8.2 Legal Issues

a) Conflict of Interest of Elected Officials

[http://www.sms.bc.ca/bulletin\\_item/?id=1813](http://www.sms.bc.ca/bulletin_item/?id=1813)

by Stewart MacDannold Stuart

b) Municipal Duty to Consult Indian Band

[http://www.sms.bc.ca/bulletin\\_item/?id=1743](http://www.sms.bc.ca/bulletin_item/?id=1743)

c) Toronto Mayor found NOT guilty

<http://www.canlii.org/en/on/onscdcd/doc/2013/2013onsc263/2013onsc263.pdf>

9. Chair & Date of next meeting: Mar 20<sup>th</sup>

## FONVCA Received Correspondence/Subject

14 January 2012 → 10 February 2013

LINK	SUBJECT
<a href="http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/CGA_26jan2013.pdf">http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/CGA_26jan2013.pdf</a>	Radar gun for local speed surveys / Available for community associations
<a href="http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Doug_Curran_12feb2013.pdf">http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Doug_Curran_12feb2013.pdf</a>	Please read the following information regarding your correspondence to Council
<a href="http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Monica_Craver_21jan2013.pdf">http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Monica_Craver_21jan2013.pdf</a>	BC Parks in Jeopardy: Doors opening to Vehicles on hiking Trails.
<a href="http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Wendy_Qureshi_16jan2013.pdf">http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Wendy_Qureshi_16jan2013.pdf</a>	Lynn Valley highrises - we need a clip from Nov. 2007
<a href="http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Wendy_Qureshi_1feb2013.pdf">http://www.fonvca.org/letters/2013/14jan-to/Wendy_Qureshi_1feb2013.pdf</a>	Noise and idling bylaws

### Past Chair Pro/Tem of FONVCA (Jan 2010-present)

Feb 2013	Diana Belhouse	Delbrook C.A. & SOS	Notetaker
Jan 2013	Val Moller	Woodcroft & LGCA	John Miller
Nov 2012	Eric Andersen	Blueridge C.A.	Sharlene Hertz
Oct 2012	Peter Thompson	Edgemont & Upper C.A.	Cathy Adams
Sep 2012	John Hunter	Seymour C.A.	Charlene Hertz
Jun 2012	Paul Tubb	Pemberton Heights C.A.	Kim Belcher
May 2012	Diana Belhouse	Delbrook C.A. & SOS	Diana Belhouse
Apr 2012	Val Moller	Lions gate C.A.	John Miller
Mar 2012	Eric Andersen	Blueridge C.A.	Dan Ellis
Feb 2012	Dan Ellis	Lynn Valley C.A.	John Hunter
Jan 2012	Brian Platts	Edgemont & Upper Capilano C.A.	John Miller
Nov 2011	Paul Tubb	Pemberton Heights	Cathy Adams
Oct 2011	Diana Belhouse	Delbrook C.A. & SOS	Eric Andersen
Sep 2011	John Hunter	Seymour C.A.	Paul Tubb
Jul 2011	Cathy Adams	Lions Gate C.A.	Dan Ellis
Jun 2011	Eric Andersen	Blueridge C.A.	John Hunter
May 2011	Dan Ellis	Lynn Valley C.A.	Cathy Adams
Apr 2011	Brian Platts	Edgemont & Upper Capilano C.A.	Brian Platts/Corrie Kost
Mar 2011	Val Moller	Lions Gate C.A.	Diana Belhouse
Feb 2011	Paul Tubb	Pemberton Heights ← Special focus on 2011-2015 Financial Plan	Eric Andersen
Jan 2011	Diana Belhouse	S.O.S.	Brenda Barrick
Dec 2010	John Hunter	Seymour C.A. ← Meeting with DNV Staff on Draft#1 OCP	None
Nov 2010	Cathy Adams	Lions Gate C.A.	John Hunter
Oct 2010	Eric Andersen	Blueridge C.A.	Paul Tubb
Sep 2010	K'nud Hille	Norgate Park C.A.	Eric Andersen
Jun 2010	Dan Ellis	Lynn Valley C.A.	Cathy Adams
May 2010	Val Moller	Lions Gate C.A.	Cathy Adams
Apr 2010	Paul Tubb	Pemberton Heights	Dan Ellis
Mar 2010	Brian Platts	Edgemont C.A.	Diana Belhouse
Feb 2010	Special		
Jan 2010	Dianna Belhouse	S.O.S	K'nud Hille

Additional Local Government References:

- a) [http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/International/Local\\_Government\\_Participatory\\_Practices\\_Manual\\_EN.pdf](http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/International/Local_Government_Participatory_Practices_Manual_EN.pdf)
- b) <http://www.sooke.ca/assets/Local~Government/Corporate~Services/UBCM%20Booklet.pdf>
- c) [http://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8080/bitstream/handle/1828/4140/Williams\\_Bruce\\_MA\\_2012.pdf](http://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8080/bitstream/handle/1828/4140/Williams_Bruce_MA_2012.pdf)
- d)

# FONVCA

## Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting January 16, 2013

Delbrook Rec Centre – Oak Room – 600 W. Queens Road

### Attendees

Val Moller ( <b>Chair pro-tem</b> )	Lions Gate N.A. / Woodcroft
Sharlene Hertz ( <b>notes</b> )	Delbrook C.A.
Diana Belhouse	Delbrook C.A. & Save Our Shores Society
Cathy Adams,	Lions Gate N.A.
John Miller	Lower Capilano Community Res. Assoc.
Douglas Curran	Capilano Gateway Association
Corrie Kost	Edgemont & Upper Capilano C.A.
Eric Andersen	Blueridge C.A.

**Regrets:** NIL

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

### 1. Order/Content of Agenda

Chair Pro-Tem suggests:

- Request to add 6(e) – Water Management (from Jan 14<sup>th</sup> Council Workshop)
- Request to add 6(f) – Issue of Closed Meetings of Council

### 2. Adoption of Minutes of November 21, 2012

#### Business Arising from Minutes:

6(a) – **Cathy Adams** has drafted letter to Council regarding request for Shirtsleeve Meeting and will send out soon. **ACTION**

Following item tabled at November meeting was re-tabled due to absence of **Dan Ellis**: FoNVCA invite Executive Director and a DNV Council Member from the Recreation Commission to provide an overview of structure and relationship to other organizations. In addition, requested the following documents be provided in advance of the meeting: 1) Financials 2) Minutes of RecCom meetings for the past year 3) Joint Venture Agreement with the City of North Vancouver. **ACTION**

**Moved by Andersen, seconded by Belhouse. Carried**

### 3. Roundtable on Current Affairs

#### Delbrook Community Association

- Belhouse raised issue of transparency and on overuse of in camera meetings
- Use of over 40 in-camera meetings last year - extends to Rec Commission

- Decisions made in-camera – why the secrecy?

### Capilano Gateway

- LARCO development: architectural plans being finalized; exploring space usage including community gardens, meeting space; environmental study for Shell station – report will be available to community
- During process has observed DNV has ad hoc planning process rather than specific criteria

### **3.A. Update by EUCCA – Corrie Kost**

- Edgemont Village Shuffle – businesses moving around to accommodate new building next to Delaney’s
- 125 unit 3 storey seniors complex proposed– not in OCP, internal courtyard provides only open space, land use decision; OCPIP agenda for January 17<sup>th</sup>, to discuss *Edgemont Village Refresh: overview upcoming engagement initiatives*. EUCCA Executive invited to attend as observers.

### **3.B. Use of FoNVCA website:**

- Doug Curran raised issue as a follow up to previous meeting discussion in October. Issue was raised due to observation that historically some individuals tended to overuse the website; we have a screening policy and will continue to monitor the situation.

## **4. Old Business**

### **4.1 Old Business Update from “Process” Committee of FoNVCA**

- Follow up to November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and request to Task Group to consider various questions. Corrie Kost to advise Task Group of questions; Task Group has not met, but these questions will be included in the next meeting of TG. **ACTION**
- Association update and follow up survey is planned; Corrie Kost keeps in touch with associations although not all are active.
- Significant social capital in community associations and opportunity for municipal government to incubate and support these organizations to enrich life in community.
- For example, Doug Curran receives a lot of requests for engagement by many groups and DNV – appears to be variance in communications and downloading
- TG will be looking at many issues

## **5. Correspondence Issues**

### **5.1 Business arising from 20 regular emails:**

Observation: Corrie Kost observed that Monica Craver has been diligent on the mountain biking issue and communicating concerns about destruction of alpine areas. She is withdrawing from this campaign. Corrie Kost will continue with the issue and obtain evidence and will discuss informally with Council. Discussion included: should be user pay; complex issue as mountain biking difficult to monitor and police even if we have rules/fines/licensing

### **5.2 Non Posted Letters – 1 this period [no other items came forward]**

- This letter has no relevance to FONVCA and was thus not posted.

## 6. New Business

### a) Invite Councillors to attend FoNVCA meetings

Item discussed; consensus reached: at next Shirtsleeve Meeting ensure that Councillors are advised they are always welcome to attend FoNVCA meetings as observers. **ACTION**

### b) Report on OPCIC – Dan and Corrie

Dan absent, Corrie reported.

There is an OPCIC meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>; Edgemont Refresh discussion on the agenda to discuss timeline with the planner for the Refresh initiative; at 5:30pm this will be followed by Lynn Valley discussion.

Issues discussed included

- OCP has certain guidelines
- Public is disadvantaged due to lack of understanding / knowledge of OCP process and resulting OCP mandate
- Communities consultation needs to be enhanced.
- If you want lower density, you lose amenities; according to page 15 of Jan 2013 *“Background Report” on Development cost Charges Bylaw Review and Update* land purchase (eg. for parkland) cost is \$6.5M per acre.

### c) DCC (Development Cost Charges) Bylaw Review

Corrie Kost attended the public meeting of January 15<sup>th</sup> and reported on discussion.

Ref: <http://www.dnv.org/article.asp?a=5605>

Two simplistic ways to view the charges:

- 1) Global view – accommodate 20% growth of residents – new residents should pay for 20% of current value of existing water, sewage, roadways, parks. So if existing invoice is valued at say \$5B (arbitrary figure – real value of relevant infrastructure is unknown) then 20% growth should pay \$1B via DCC's.
- 2) Infrastructure Deficit Spread – expect 20,000 residents = 10,000 units; developers must provide parkland ~ additional 100 acres = \$650M; actually, according to the above noted report, developers will pay only \$20M for parks in revised scenario.

DNV staff proposes to charge the lowest DCC for parks in the Lower Mainland and some of the highest DCC's for roads/sewers/water. We are subsidizing newcomers for parkland (note that only community and neighbourhood parks are part of this discussion) – we would appear to be subsidizing new growth which goes against principles stated in the OCP. Parkland is distributed poorly/inequitably across DNV. Best Practices Guide dictates ~ 10% value of a residential unit as the cap for DCC. If DCC Bylaw is to apply as a district wide policy then it must be applied uniformly across the District – ie. The same DCC charge must be applied no matter where a particular(similar) development is located. Note that DCC charges are only one part of the total package – which also includes 5% of cost of development and CAC (community amenity charges). Thus it is difficult for residents to comment on the proposed DCC charges Bylaw without complete knowledge.

### d) DNV publishes upcoming meetings in NSNews

Congratulations to DNV – excellent initiative.

### e) Water Management

DNV workshop of January 13<sup>th</sup> was about water metering; one attendee from the public. Likely no further discussion on this issue for the next four years and not likely to implement water metering as it is currently not cost effective. Almost half of water usage in DNV is

industrial; households use 250 litres/day – and about half of that is due to flushing toilets; fixing leakages – both on public and private property is optimal/cost-effective; low flush toilets the way to go. Existing single family “refresh” would address private leakages.

#### **f) Closed Meetings of Council**

This is a definite concern. FOI suggested, but not likely successful. Corrie Kost has begun monitoring and tracking all DNV Council meetings including in camera.

### **7. Any Other Business**

#### **7. a) Corrie wants feedback on errors/editions/changes to FONVCA Web Site.**

#### **7. b) Meeting Climate Change Challenge**

In depth domestic and international case studies can be found at <http://www.mc-3.ca/>. An exhaustive 1140 page report by the US has also just been released. See <http://ncadac.globalchange.gov/> - extremely informative!

#### **7. c) FORTIS Gas Presentation – District Heat/Cooling Systems – deferred indefinitely (Dan)**

#### **7. e) Request to remove from FoNVCA website**

(<http://www.fonvca.org/agendas/jan2011/Healthy%20Neighbourhoods%20Fund%20and%20CA%20Policy%20under%20review.pdf>)

A DNV staff member requested removal of an email from FONVCA website. This email exchange was part of an ordinary email exchange by a FoNVCA representative with various DNV staff.

**John Miller moved, seconded by Doug Curran that we do not rescind the email.  
Carried.**

### **8. For your Information Items – advise you read**

#### **8.1 Non Legal Issues**

- a) & b) Newsclips – always interesting
- c) City of Vancouver – Pedestrian Report

#### **8.2 Legal Issues – Advise you read**

- a) Ontario Court overturns shark fin ban
- b) Toronto Mayor Ford found guilty of voting on a matter in which he had pecuniary interest
- c) Forfeit of Public Property Rights – effects waterfront properties
- d) Limits of OCP – recommended reading; also see Consistency Revisited regarding issue in Prince George.

### **9. Chair and Date of next meeting**

Diana Belhouse – 7 PM Wednesday February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at District Hall

Recorder – John Miller

Item for next meeting – Cost of room for January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting

### **10. Adjournment at 9:09 p.m.**

Diana Belhouse moved: adjournment. Agreed.

**FONVCA Agenda Item 5.1**

**Subject:** Fwd: Radar gun for local traffic speed surveys / Available for community associations  
**From:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>  
**Date:** 27/01/2013 11:32 AM  
**To:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** Radar gun for local traffic speed surveys / Available for community associations  
**Date:** Sat, 26 Jan 2013 23:45:36 -0800  
**From:** Capilano Gateway Association <capgatewayassoc@gmail.com>  
**Reply-To:** capgatewayassoc@gmail.com  
**To:** FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Hello Corrie,

Residents of our community have been concerned for some time with the speed of traffic along Fullerton Avenue and Curling Road. Speed surveys undertaken by RCMP were deemed suboptimal by DNV Streets and Traffic department.

In light of this situation, the Capilano Gateway Association purchased a radar gun for use by FASIC, our local traffic committee, developing speed surveys along local streets. The data from these surveys will be useful as part of plans for improving public safety.

In recognition of the fact that a number of other communities within the DNV have similar concerns with respect to safety and vehicle speeds within their neighbourhoods, we would like to offer the use of our [radar gun](#) by other associations. The gun is simple to operate, with an accuracy of +/- 1 mph and can record vehicles at 1,500 ft. distance.

To help offset the cost of the gun we are asking for a \$10 weekly donation to our association. Please let us know if you would like to book the gun for use by your group.

best regards,

**Subject:** Fwd: Important: Please read the following information regarding your correspondence to Council

**From:** Douglas Curran <Dougcurran@shaw.ca>

**Date:** 12/02/2013 2:28 PM

**To:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

**CC:** FONVCA <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Hello Corrie,

I received the response below from West Vancouver's Mayor and Council. I found it refreshing to think that all correspondence on public matters be made open and available. Some months back you had noted the W Van policy and thought the below a good reference for a step that would be of benefit within the DNV.

Doug

Douglas Curran  
2046 Curling Road  
North Vancouver, B.C.  
Canada V7P 1X4

Ph: 604-985-5621  
www.dougcurranphotos.com

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** MayorandCouncil <[MayorandCouncil@westvancouver.ca](mailto:MayorandCouncil@westvancouver.ca)>

**Date:** February 12, 2013 10:14:36 AM PST (CA)

**To:** Douglas Curran <[Dougcurran@shaw.ca](mailto:Dougcurran@shaw.ca)>

**Subject:** Important: Please read the following information regarding your correspondence to Council

Notice: Thank you for your email correspondence to Council. Please read the following important information regarding your correspondence to Council.

Correspondence (emails, letters, faxes) to Mayor and Council requires the inclusion of the author's name and civic address. Correspondence to Mayor and Council will be published each week on the "Correspondence to Mayor and Council" web page, and listed on Council meeting agendas. Correspondence is published in its entirety unless the author specifically requests confidentiality (please see the exception regarding confidentiality noted below). Correspondence authors who do not wish their name/contact information to be made public (please see the exception regarding confidentiality noted below) are requested to inform Legislative Services by phoning 604-925-7004 or by sending an email to [mayorandcouncil@westvancouver.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@westvancouver.ca)<blocked::blocked::mailto:mayorandcouncil@westvancouver.ca> by Friday, February 15, 2013 at 12:00 Noon; otherwise the correspondence will be published in its entirety.

Please note this exception: Confidentiality does not apply for correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council, or Council, regarding the subject of, and notice of, a public hearing or public meeting, development application consideration, or other public processes and statutory notices. Correspondence of this nature will be included, in its entirety, in public information packages, in correspondence published on the "Correspondence to Mayor and Council" web page, and will be part of the public record.

Correspondence addressed to Mayor and Council is circulated to Mayor and Council in the week in which it is received, and forwarded to the appropriate division director for consideration and response to the author, or for information. Written responses from directors are included in the responses to correspondence section of each week's correspondence list.

Please don't hesitate to contact Legislative Services at 604-925-7004 if you have any questions in this regard. Thank you.



**Subject:** Fwd: Fw: Dr. Horejsi - "BC Parks in Jeopardy: Doors opening to Vehicles on hiking Trails."

**From:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

**Date:** 21/01/2013 12:23 PM

**To:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** Fw: Dr. Horejsi - "BC Parks in Jeopardy: Doors opening to Vehicles on hiking Trails."

**Date:** Mon, 21 Jan 2013 11:51:17 -0800

**From:** Monica Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>

**To:** <fonvca@fonvca.org>

Dear FONVCA: The following needs to be posted for the Public Record. I believe that many public authorities and landowners *do* understand the damage the extreme freeride mountain biking cult/lifestyle wrecks on the natural environment (riding and trail building activities) --- but for reasons only known to themselves continue to remain willfully blind to it. It is a shameful state of affairs all around. This will be *my* final response to the ongoing epidemic of mountain biking in our midst. Take care.

**From:** [Monica Craver](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 09, 2013 6:21 PM

**To:** [DNV Mayor and Council](#)

**Subject:** Dr. Horejsi - "BC Parks in Jeopardy: Doors opening to Vehicles on hiking Trails."

Dear Mayor and Council: Although this paper was written for, and about provincial and national parks, much of what is stated in it could also be applied to municipal "planning" for mountain biking. This was not written by me, but by a wildlife scientist -- an expert in his field. I don't expect much will change in DNV with respects to the ongoing problematic issue in the woods, either, but this is yet another voice speaking out against "failed management policies" with respect to mountain biking, etc. that you should seriously consider. Thank you.

--Monica Craver--

(PS. According to the BC Motor Vehicle Act a bike, or "mountain" bike, is considered to be a vehicle.)

**From:** [Brian Horejsi](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, January 09, 2013 2:13 PM

**To:** [Monica Craver](#)

**Subject:** Comment on Garibaldi Plan

**Hi Monica**

**I've just sent this in to BC parks...**

...

**I don't imagine there will be a positive response from Parks – they have close to a dozen plan "reviews" under way, and the commercial economic agenda is overpowering, but it should be known to them that there are people across the land that object to their failed management policies.**

**Brian**

**BC Parks in Jeopardy: Doors opening to Vehicles on hiking Trails.**

**09 January 2013**

**Analysis and comments by Dr. Brian L. Horejsi**

It is simply difficult for many British Columbians to imagine that managers of the provincial Park system would deliberately introduce to, and promote in Parks, an activity based on machines and dependent on vehicles. British Columbia's park lands have become increasingly ecologically fragile and isolated, and each day they become more valuable to BC residents, as well as other Canadians, for their role in protecting natural ecosystems and contributing to social and environmental well being. Parks managers have consistently failed to meet this goal, an ugly reality widely known to environmental activists and independent environmental scientists, and a failure that has drawn the attention of the provinces Auditor General <!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[1]<!--[endif]-->; yet BC Parks management is in the process of forcing off pavement mountain biking, an activity known to be responsible for a growing list of destructive environmental consequences and one inbred with a culture of lawlessness and aggression, into the provinces Parks. Conspicuously absent from this management initiative is any environmental impact assessment addressing the environmental and social costs of mountain biking.

A cultural change in BC Parks management has been underway for over three decades; to Parks watchers and conservationists, it is almost palpable: You can feel it! The swing has been from old time senior management, people with a philosophy of protection and commercial restraint, to the new breed of promoters and collaborators, people whose swagger comes from expanding special interest use of Parks and incorporating commercial business interests into Parks. Gone, or going, are people that see Parks as valuable Provincial and National publicly owned ecological assets, not just symbolically, but as real and tangible landscapes divorced from the growth and consumption agenda of other Provincial and Federal lands. Parks are lands where decisions and management should be based one part on scientific ecological integrity, one part environmental impact assessment, and one part province wide democratic citizen involvement, lands where the protection and conservation agenda are to be aggressively defended.

The thrust of the most recent Provincial Parks Planning initiative [\[2\]](#) presents an ugly head that threatens to deliver a destructive and irreversible blow to the public and ecological role that Provincial Parks have historically played, and not incidentally, were in part established to play. BC Parks have through time united British Columbians from across the province, and in some cases citizens from coast to coast, and faithfully served tens of millions of citizens. Where they have served Canadians, they have successfully done so in large part by being stable refuges from mechanization, commercial development and industrialization. Based on a suspect management "review", one in which mountain bikes have suddenly achieved their own special category of user, a century of successfully serving people from across the province is apparently no longer a high priority - no longer a management standard. Satisfying millions of visitors expecting equal and unimpaired access to most park natural areas, all while serving the dual role as home to relatively intact and protected ecosystems, is now under severe and intense attack from commercial and mechanized interests. And sadly, Parks management has become a significant contributor to the threat. To suggest that this is a serious betrayal of the will of the people of British Columbia is, in my view, an understatement.

The BC Park planning agenda strikes not only at Park ecosystems, but equally as dangerously, it attacks the century long conservation and protection vision and philosophical foundation of Parks in general. The planning review apparently is being justified by senior Park Management spouting the same tired proclamations that have led over decades to a long and growing list of endangered species and places, the precarious state of biodiversity across the province and country, and the degraded state of public lands "managed" for industrialism and motorized/vehicle use (Provincial Forests and some parks). There have always been extreme activity and commercial interests pounding at the doors of any Parks system, whether they be mining, grazing, or hotelier interests. But the newest breed, equally as dangerous, are mountain bike promoters, dealers and manufacturers. Park management has far too often cowered before these latest pressures, whose proponents sense weakness and incapacity to regulate; and too often senior Park Management has assuaged its failures to protect Parks with cries that compromise is necessary!

Compromise, however, no longer has a place in the conservation and protection of remnant landscapes like Provincial Parks. Compromise is the function of giving away something each time pressure or demand occurs. It works well for commercial, corporate and other special interests - to use an example, special interest Group A demands a piece - a few acres or just a few km of trail in the South Chilcotin area, for example - of the \$100 dollars you have in your hand. Five years later Group B wants the same thing. After decades of compromise, you now hold \$13.47. Some might consider that a benefit; after all, you could have nothing left! I don't think most British Columbians see it that way. Nor do living ecosystems function that way.

British Columbians have already had most of the land in their Province compromised by special interest users. After 100 years Provincial Parks are the remnants of insatiable demand and compromise. They are invaluable; and they harbor and, in cases like Lillooet or Garibaldi, anchor much of the Provinces still ecologically functional landscapes. They are the end result of a century of conservation horse trading. Now another crack has appeared in the conservation dam.

In danger are still functioning, living ecosystems that have absolutely nothing to gain from compromise. They need all their existing biological and evolutionary parts and processes to stay alive.

This invasion of Parks is not happening by accident. It is, in my view, a calculated effort to defer to extremists in local communities, national lobby groups like the International Mountain Biking Association and their local "tribes", and radical chamber of commerce types and collaborating legislators in western Provinces.

Our neighbor, America, is already seeing failures resulting from managements abdication of legal and moral, social and environmental obligations. In Big Bend National Park, for example, the Superintendent caved in to mountain bike lobbyists from outside the Park [\[3\]](#), where National Park standards were eroded through complicity with an in-service coterie of people, and callously authorized a regime of ecological and social conflict characteristic of mountain biking. And we have our own deplorable precedent in Banff National Park, where the crushing top-down fist of commercialization and associated extremist activities is accelerating ecological decline and fueling disintegration of democratic public participation process.

A mole is a person who insinuates him or herself in an organization or system for the specific purpose of elevating a single agenda, usually an agenda that person stands to personally gain from, above all others, with calculated disregard for the social, psychological, or environmental damages and costs imposed on other interests and agendas. The strategy is most common in the environmental regulatory world, and it is a practice that has been highly successful for the mtn biking lobby; through it they have broken down traditional, environmentally and scientifically sound, user compatible standards and activities on Public lands with remarkable regularity. I suspect this has been, and is, a factor in the apparent urge to force off-pavement mountain biking into BC Parks.

When conservation management of Provincial parks retreats to the level of what some might refer to as a reasonable compromise, it is illuminating to look at the money and lobbying trail. A compromise built on blind or willful ignorance of conflict, intense lobbying by special interests like mountain bike dealers, manufacturers and promoters, and an indefensible absence of scientifically sound environmental impact assessment and land and wildlife protection standards, is not a compromise. It is malfeasance!

It is alarming that BC Parks would push mountain biking in direct confrontation of decades of sound scientific study showing the acute and costly conflict between machines, their users, and bears, bighorns, and wolves as well as elk, mule deer, and sadly, all other species including birds. After decades of intense effort by the public, with collaboration by some government agencies including in some instances BC Parks, to recover grizzly bear populations in many parts of the BC park system, efforts which are by no means yet to be considered a success, it is offensive to see the indifference of senior planners and managers as they load additional human use and conflict into ecosystems already under ecological stress. And while Climate disruption is adding already to that stress, it is notably absent in Parks documents.

The net results of a mountain bike invasion will be many, all negative. BC Parks is moving toward domination of landscapes by destructive land uses and intense user conflict, much as has been the case on U.S. Federal lands (National Forest and Bureau of Land Management lands). The unfortunate appearance of the local decision-mountain biking initiative demonstrates a disproportionate influence over a regulatory agency whose mandate is to protect the interests of all the people. As the Provinces Auditor General points out "Ecological integrity of parks and protected areas is integral to the quality of life in British Columbia". Given that BC Parks is "not successfully meeting this goal" [\[4\]](#), opening the floodgates to mountain biking is further aggravating bitter and unjustified conflict about who owns Provincial lands and who should decide how and to what extent they are protected.

The change that will take over all of BC parks when mountain bikes begin to run freely will precipitate a life altering shroud of social and user conflict. Contrary to the rote arguments by senior management and planners in BC Parks (see, for one example, the Garibaldi expanded biking initiative, and the generalized concession to biking in the overall planning process <!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[5]<!--[endif]--> ), a decision to impose mountain biking on Provincial Parks is a decision that will significantly affect the quality of the environment. Gone will be the serenity and satisfaction experienced by citizens that come to watch wildlife and walk in spectacular landscapes in peace; front country and back country solitude will be elusive, if not gone; the delightful anonymity that hikers exhibit, their generally quiet demeanor and friendly yet excited conversations about the grandness of nature, will be over ridden by the high fiving, whooping, and screeching common to some mountain bikers, the constant clutter, thumping and creaking of machines, and the visual spectacle of people that consider themselves members of "tribes" and too often dress in garish garb characteristic of the Tour de France. No two groups of people could be in greater contrast.

One of these groups, citizens that have enjoyed our Provincial Parks for non mechanized and peaceful recreation for over a century, will lose an often cherished and valued park environment and experience, while another, mountain bikers and their corporate backers, will take over previously natural use landscapes with machines and the bravado that accompanies them.

This cannot be viewed, except in today's perverse commercial and growth dominated agenda, as a success or achievement.

These mean spirited actions by Parks managers are not accomplishments; they go into the lost-past and lost-future column, a place where British Columbians begin to lose something they have managed to (generally) hold above the every day ugly politics of greed and consumption for the better part of a century. To think that essentially internal Park planning decisions can now severely damage, and begin to alter Provincial Parks like the Yalakom or South Chilcotin, or any other Provincial Landscape, according partly to personal and institutional biases and whims, is tragic. It is and will be tragic for millions of British Columbians, and it robs future millions of citizens of the chance to experience present day living landscapes the likes of which do not exist anywhere else in the west.

In what stands out as a masterful piece of deception, mountain bikers, their advocates and regulatory ministries almost exclusively hang their hat on only one issue to "justify" their activities and it is that bikes and bikers have no greater impact on a trail than hikers. They reference essentially one study that began with a crippling bias – it was originally instigated and funded by the mountain biking industry. It focused on whether a bike tire or hiking boot causes more damage to a trail. The result is the farcical equivalent of claiming that the only impact your car has on the world in which it operates is where its tires contact the pavement. It is a magician's sleight of hand – like the broken wing display of a grouse leading the dog off the trail – that has hornswoiggled land and wildlife managers and, it appears, government environmental analysts.

To make the claim that the physical impact of mountain biking on soils is no greater than the impact of hikers and walkers is not just preposterous, but for any land management Service to hang their "justification hat" on it as though it were ordained by solid science and evidence, is dishonest. To dismiss as irrelevant the weight loading on tire surface, the constant shear of rotation movement, and the braking, sliding and skidding of wheels, says a great deal about the ideological spin some land managers have put on this issue. Unwittingly, I suspect, land and wildlife managers and proponents of mtn biking contradict themselves and the "no greater impact" argument by immediately pointing to the need for drastic trail upgrading, including "armor" plating, necessary to accommodate biking. That begs the question, just which is it, ladies and gents? No impact, or massive trail construction and / or upgrades which lead to a sharp increase in physical trail size and presence, biker use, and subsequent erosion surface?

But this is only a small part of the effort to railroad public perception of bikes and biker impacts and conflicts. By insisting that you and I hold a magnifying glass to the physical impact of bikes on soil (trails) regulators and bikers systematically ignore and misrepresent the three greatest areas of impacts; 1) conflict with traditional users, and the rapid displacement of hikers, walkers and people interested in the natural world and escape from machines and industrialization (is that not what Parks are for?), 2) the vastly extended range of impacts on soil, waterways and vegetation that machines cause, and 3) the broad and often intensive ecological and behavioral <!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[6]<!--[endif]--> zone of impact on wildlife that bikes and bikers impose on the trails and parking areas they use.

This orchestrated misrepresentation by omission is as absurd as arguing that the only thing important about the elephant in your living room is the sole of its foot!

***To further aggravate the distortion mtn biker advocates have propagated, the overarching issue – that machines and vehicles like off pavement mountain bikes are incompatible with, and consequently should never be permitted to enter and degrade, Parks - is deliberately avoided.***

The prevailing view of industrial and vehicle impacts on landscapes and ecosystem is dependent on a long established administrative / corporate insistence that the non human living world be regarded as an essentially mechanical system lacking the sensory and cognitive abilities of humans when in fact, the mammals, birds and fish that occupy public lands have sensory systems and abilities / capabilities that are in many cases far superior to those of humans. This requires cognitive and reflex capacity, different than that of humans of course, to process (and react to) the information they get from their surroundings, surroundings which increasingly are clogged with human presence.

The displacement effect of newly created or aggravated habitat "pits" that form around mountain biking roads and activities, consisting of lost and degraded habitat security and utility, will redistribute some, if not many or all, of the members of existing wildlife populations, with ramifications for in-Park and inter-jurisdictional conservation and conflict management. These negative changes will add cumulatively to existing stress on endangered species, populations, individual animals, their habitat and legally mandated conservation and recovery efforts.

Humans have an evolutionary and cultural connection with wildlife, and while much of this is cognitive – a positive mental state of mind about wildlife – there is no question too that the setting – both the landscape and designated management agenda, as well as visual, auditory and olfactory signs - all elicit renewal and reinforcement of cognitive connection and enjoyment.

One of the immeasurably rewarding pleasures gained from walking in, or just thinking about, British Columbia's Parks is not seeing evidence or examples or occurrences of mechanical contrivances, the kinds of things people in North America see on a hourly basis in most of their life. Escaping these stress producing irritants is a major reason people use Parks, wilderness areas, and other more well managed, less industrialized public lands. It is a treat, soothing to the soul and mind, to walk a trail and not see tire tracks, discarded parts of machines, or the high rate of debris vehicle users haul with them, or a bike despoiling a nearby ridge top. Garibaldi, and the entire BC park system, will be tarnished forever, losing in the process a great deal of its natural lustre, if vehicle bike tracks begin to desecrate trails.

Walking a trail and seeing tracks of a grizzly bear that might be just ahead of you, or passed by this morning travelling your way, or noting the monster tracks of a moose and wondering if it's just around the corner, or simply admiring the delicate track of a mule deer, brings a surge of pleasure and excitement to many hikers, me included.

In this cumulative respect, the presence of mountain bikes on any landscape is an added threat to the appreciation and conservation of natural cultural resources – resources which are not always carved on a rock wall – and which I believe include evidence of trail use by wildlife, however temporary these signs of the natural world might be. These important signs and indicators are obliterated by mechanization like mountain biking.

The stunning ignorance imbedded in the argument “just let us build a super sized (bike) road – bikers and their industry coyly insist on calling them trails – for bikes travelling at 7 to 20 times the speed at which a hiker walks, at multiple bike widths, with extreme construction durability, sometimes through previously unfragmented wildlife habitat, and then introduce bikers with an anti social “*we deserve to have our machines here attitude*”, and we “know” there will be no environmental or social impact, indicates a deep seated attitude of denial, entitlement, and disrespect. Equally as threatening to public lands and British Columbians who engage in traditional use of those lands, is the acceptance of such a fraudulent claim by regulators like BC Parks.

Decisions to enable off pavement mountain bike use in BC Parks ignore reality; the daily range of mountain bikes far exceeds that of people on foot (or horseback), it allows bikes and bikers to outdistance and elude the “reach” of law enforcement, and it ignores the far reaching biker invasion of designated or de facto habitat security which Provincial Parks have at least historically attempted to provide. Mountain bikes represent not only a vastly different kind of human footprint, but they enable major expansion of the human footprint with negative ecological, and wildlife population dynamics and viability consequences.

A recent decision in the U.S. is printed in the Federal Register under the heading “Vehicles – bicycles”, is at least honest, although probably by accident, and indicates to me that legally, mountain bikes are vehicles! Its time BC Parks comes clean in a functional everyday sense and acknowledges, in their everyday language and planning documents, that mountain bikes are vehicles, that should be treated and managed like all other vehicles. In reality, proposals to permit mountain bikes in Provincial Parks represent a seismic shift to give priority to vehicles above traditional – historical foot dependent use by humans.

The reality is that far too many land and wildlife management Ministries and people in those ministries, are mired in a chronically under informed vacuum that fails to serve the public interest or meet the serious needs of scientific, intelligent and aggressive conservation responses and actions now desperately required in BC’s Provincial Parks.

The list of impacts and conflicts associated with mountain biking keeps growing, and yet land and wildlife managers frequently behave as though they are without common, scientific or social sense, robotically repeating propaganda and misinformation from the biker lobby. Mountain bikers as a group are disproportionately males, young males. Yet Parks have until recently prided themselves in appealing to the biological evolutionary linkage to the natural world found in virtually all members of Canadian society, including females and all age classes of Canadians. It is not uncommon, in fact, to see special programs designed to get all people interested and active in the outdoors. Mountain biking does exactly the opposite; the aggression and threats to emotional and physical well being of walking trail users that bikers present disproportionately drives female hikers, outdoor activists, and young, mature and elderly walkers to abandon trails and areas invaded by mountain bikers. Consequently, many hikers abandon areas sacrificed to mtn bikers, leading to displacement of woman of all ages as they abandon “their” public lands, their hiking trails, their favorite walks and their special areas, creating a sex aggravated impact.

The threat that bikes and bikers pose to other users and wildlife should come as no surprise. The cognitive “envelope” around a person engaged in a seemingly simply yet demanding manual motor task likeriding a mountain bike on a trail is disturbingly narrow; it consumes most of the participants brain “power”, virtually shutting off input to that individual from visual, auditory and olfactory signals that originate outside that very restricted envelope. In other words, contrary to the proclamations of bikers about experiencing the outdoors and interacting with the natural world, they are virtually in a shroud created by subconscious innate, natural biological and neural demands on their senses; they see little, hear little, and smell very little. They are as distant and removed from “nature” [\[supportFootnotes\]-->\[7\]<!--\[endif\]-->](#) as if they were driving a car! And they are almost as much of a threat.

The tiresome claim that mtn bikers are being “denied access” to any area is another of the baseless and factless arguments common to promoters of the industry; Almost all bikers are, as trite as it may seem to point it out, in possession of two legs and two feet and (most) are as capable of walking as hikers are. They have *never* been denied access to wilderness areas, protected areas, or Provincial Parks. Like every other British Columbian, they are welcome to walk public lands under virtually all circumstances, the very, very few exceptions – which apply equally to all users - being resource protection closures!

Public lands and Provincial Parks were initially protected many decades ago because visionary people saw great value in public ownership of exceptional landscapes that “protected (“stored”) and renewed watershed, biodiversity (including wildlife and natural landscapes), clean air, and refuge for all citizens from the physical and mental poking and prodding of everyday work and survival.

This great vision and the ecological well being of these landscapes began to slowly unravel beginning in the 1960s when public lands began to be viewed as storehouses for extractable resources. Provincial Parks, in some cases however, began to segregate themselves from this consumption agenda, establishing themselves in the eyes of the public, as the best of special places and deserving of legal protection separating them from the industrial and mechanical invasion that was degrading provincial Forest lands.

By the 1980s the march against public lands was intense, but still Provincial Parks, thanks in large part to growing involvement of citizens who had come to realize what was at stake, held the high road against industrialization by special commercial interests.

What was gaining momentum inside the bowels of political government and their Ministries, however, was a culture that viewed public lands as a dumping ground or release valve for new land use schemes that were gaining insider political traction, including off road vehicles, oil and gas exploration and exploitation, logging and the most recent, off pavement mountain biking.

British Columbia is suffering a crisis in regulatory decay brought on by governments that have increasingly viewed and “managed” public lands as a by product of economic growth and consumption. Absent the legal foundation to say no at a regional or Provincial Level, no competent or efficient regulatory system can exist. **As is now becoming far too evident, todays regulatory / management system is incompatible with the long term protection of viable ecosystems**, including the protection of ecological, legal and social characteristic that have for over a century defined societies view and expectations of Provincial Parks. The pathological premise that continued human and industrial consumption of the biocapacity of public lands (by for example, mountain bikes and bikers) can be “managed” at the impact end (on the trail) as opposed to the decision making “end” (before it starts) threatens dramatic interference with the ecological function of Provincial Parks as we know them today.

Provincial Parks are amongst the few remaining landscapes on which society has committed itself to sharing physical and ecological space with other species. Now this commitment is under severe threat. The growing occurrence of incremental expansionary and consumptive actions are irreversibly degrading Parks, each one taking another bite out of the Parks living systems and each one counter to the traditional role of maintaining ecological function and keeping development and mechanization out of and at a distance from Park Ecosystems. In some sectors of government and the public service, this agenda is misrepresented as “leadership” when in fact what is needed are managers, for example, whose leadership would come in the form of an in- Park “no growth – no additional activities” agenda.

One of the pressing needs in today's world is the need for some positive social constants, as well as some ecological stability, and Provincial Parks have historically played just such a role, helping stabilize the lives of millions of Canadians. Parks are intended to act as fire walls against the day to day frenzy of commercial, government, and corporate excess, and self centered individualism, that creates the disparity, friction and stress in today's world. Changes in orientation of Provincial Parks, in this specific case forcing off pavement mountain bike vehicle use on walking trails in BC parks, are striking at the century long stability and vision of Parks and creating another layer of tension, conflict, cost and impact British Columbians don't need and haven't asked for.

Dr. Brian L. Horejsi

Ecologist / wildlife scientist,

And frequent public land user,

Calgary, Alberta

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->

<!--[endif]-->

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[1\]](#)<!--[endif]--> See: Conservation of ecological integrity in B.C. parks and protected areas. 2010.

Report 3, August 2010. Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia.

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[2\]](#)<!--[endif]--> BC parks, Protected Areas Management Planning, for 9 interior Parks, and for

Garibaldi park, began in 2011. See BC parks website at [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/lillooet/lillooet\\_mp.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/planning/mgmtplns/lillooet/lillooet_mp.html)

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[3\]](#)<!--[endif]--> Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. 2012. Big Bend breaks ground

on single-track bike racing trail. News Release, 18 April 2012.

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[4\]](#)<!--[endif]--> See footnote 1. These two quotes are from: Conservation of ecological integrity in B.C.

parks and protected areas. 2010. Report 3, August 2010. Office of the Auditor

General of British Columbia.

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[5\]](#)<!--[endif]--> Garibaldi Park; Management plan amendment for the Spearhead Area. Draft. BC

Parks, October 2012. And See Footnote 1, above. **It is a disturbing indication of**

**political interference that BC parks would not recognize the comprehensive**

**environmental destruction associated with mountain bikes in the area before**

**issuing a plan amendment specifically designed to consider expansion of mountain**

**biking, and then, in early December 2012, decide, based on only a very narrow**

**aspect out of a wide range of impacts, that mountain biking is not appropriate in**

**only a small part of the Park, the Upper Spearhead drainage.**

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[6\]](#)<!--[endif]--> Displacement, harassment, and alienation.

<!--[if !supportFootnotes]-->[\[7\]](#)<!--[endif]--> This cognitive isolation is made even more acute by a helmet, which not only physically shields the rider from his/her environment, but provides the rider a sense of anonymity and consequently self imposed immunity, one of the foundations of aggressive and lawless behavior.

-- The END --

— Attachments: —

BC Parks in Jeopardy\_Mtn Bikes\_#2\_09January 2013.doc

68.0 KB

**Subject:** Fwd: Noise and idling bylaws

**From:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

**Date:** 01/02/2013 2:48 PM

**To:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Noise and idling bylaws

Date: Fri, 1 Feb 2013 14:08:55 -0800

From: Wendy Qureshi <wendyqureshi@shaw.ca>

To: North Shore News <editor@nsnews.com>

CC: [fonvca@fonvca.org](mailto:fonvca@fonvca.org)

Dear Editor,

What is going on with the DNV bylaws? They are not enforced. I live near Lynn Valley Road and Mountain Highway. There are trucks coming and going all day every day. Do they have to keep their motors running for an hour or more?

I have spoken to some of these drivers and asked them why they don't turn off their motors. I get the "bird." Nasty.

There was a truck parked in front of Woodstop today and it was running full tilt for more than an hour. The back-up beep beep also went on and off for more than an hour. They were loading wood onto the truck. There is no need to keep the motor running.

Please, we residents of Lynn Valley do not need this constant barrage of noise and it will certainly get worse if there are highrises built in our community.

Wendy Qureshi  
North Vancouver  
604-980-1885

**Subject:** Fwd: Lynn Valley highrises - we need a clip from Nov. 2007  
**From:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>  
**Date:** 17/01/2013 11:35 AM  
**To:** Corrie Kost <corrie@kost.ca>

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** Lynn Valley highrises - we need a clip from Nov. 2007  
**Date:** Wed, 16 Jan 2013 23:54:12 -0800  
**From:** Wendy Qureshi <[wendyqureshi@shaw.ca](mailto:wendyqureshi@shaw.ca)>  
**To:** CBC Radio <[earlyed@cbc.ca](mailto:earlyed@cbc.ca)>  
**CC:** George Koch <[georgewkoch@shaw.ca](mailto:georgewkoch@shaw.ca)>, John Sharpe <[goforaspin@gmail.com](mailto:goforaspin@gmail.com)>, Monica Craver <[mecraver@shaw.ca](mailto:mecraver@shaw.ca)>, [alexschwarz@telus.net](mailto:alexschwarz@telus.net), [Fonvca@fonvca.org](mailto:Fonvca@fonvca.org)

Dear Rick and gang,

I am a long time supporter of your program. My thoughts and emails have been on-air.

Former District of North Vancouver Councillor Ernie Crist was on your show as was Lynn Valley Community Association representative Dan Ellis in early November 2007 after the following ad was published.

We people who are fighting against highrises in our community would appreciate this clip.

Thanks in advance.

Wendy Qureshi  
604-980-1885

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Wendy Qureshi <[wendyqureshi@shaw.ca](mailto:wendyqureshi@shaw.ca)>  
**Date:** January 15, 2013 2:29:27 AM PST  
**To:** George Koch <[georgewkoch@shaw.ca](mailto:georgewkoch@shaw.ca)>  
**Subject:** Ta da

# An open letter to the **PEOPLE OF THE NORTH SHORE**

## **What is a sustainable community (Lynn Valley) and how can we achieve it?**

The North American City is the product of the automobile. It shaped our lives, our culture, and our economic priorities. Land was plentiful, oil cheap and Henry Ford, an American hero, turned mass production of cars into a religion.

However, the imperatives for radical change are now upon us. Our reliance on the automobile to commute in the city is past.

Global warming is not a myth, the economic cost of single vehicle transportation is not a myth, nor is the waste of land nor is the staggering cost to our health and the depletion of fossil fuel. Change is no longer an option. It is a challenge we will either meet head on or we will suffer serious consequences.

The new 21st century livable city is designed for people not cars, stated world renowned city planner Hans Blumenfeld on his visit to Vancouver almost 30 years ago. Indeed there are no cars to speak of and to the extent that they exist, they are the exception not the rule.

Transportation in the new city is based on mass transit. It is efficient, convenient, cheap, and pollution free. It is virtually noiseless and pleasing to the eye. It is in harmony with the city's architecture. It is part and parcel of a new human friendly environment in which people speak to each other and relax while traveling at great speed moving to their destination. It is an antidote to alienation and comprises everything from rapid trains, noiseless street cars, to buses, ferries and mini buses.

The new city has plenty of trees, parks, playing fields, indoor and outdoor recreation and cultural

facilities. Most neighbourhoods are self contained for efficiency and yes, there are highrises. Indeed, compact developments are the rule rather than the exception while total green space is enhanced and pedestrian friendly.

However, the new proposal for highrises in Lynn Valley is not conducive to this objective. It is the exact opposite. It is outmoded and reactionary.

Far from decreasing reliance on the car it will enhance it. Far from less pollution, there will be more. Far from generating less traffic congestion, there will be more. The reason is that the most important element of enhanced livability, as outlined in numerous vision statements by the World's most credible town planners, will be missing, namely a transportation system which reflects this concept and must be its backbone.

If the proposal for highrises in Lynn Valley, in the name of motherhood and apple pie, is implemented as it will unless the people stand up now and stop it, everything which is outdated now will be worse. Any and all talk to the contrary is at best wishful thinking or an out and out hoax as was the previous densification of the Lynn Valley Core sold to the people of Lynn Valley as a "Pedestrian Oriented Town Centre".

Sign the petition. Get on board. If you want to join our team and fight this travesty, contact Wendy Qureshi at 604-980-1885 or [wendyqureshi@shaw.ca](mailto:wendyqureshi@shaw.ca)

The struggle continues.

**WENDY QURESHI**

**JOHN SHARPE**

**ERNIE CRIST**

*Concerned citizens who care about the sustainability of our community, Lynn Valley.*



**FONVCA AGENDA Item 6(a)**

Version: 11 Last modified: 2/8/2013 2:04:00 PM Viewed: 2/14/2013 11:33:24 PM

## Budget Calendar

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting Purpose</b>	<b>Time/Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Monday, February 18	Budget presentation and introduction of the Draft Financial Plan Workbook	Council Chamber 7:00 pm	Regular Meeting of Council - overview of budget highlights and walk through the workbook
Wednesday, February 20	Community Associations briefing	Meeting Room A 7:00-9:00 pm	Financial Plan Meeting
Monday, March 4	Receive public input and Council opening remarks	Council Chamber 7:00-9:00 pm	Regular Meeting of Council - Financial Plan
Tuesday, March 5	Financial Plan deliberations	Committee Room 5:00-7:00 pm	Special Council Meeting - Financial Plan - Authority to proceed with the preparation of Financial Plan Bylaws (Public)
Monday, March 11	Financial Plan deliberations (if required)	Committee Room 5:00-7:00 pm	Special Council Meeting
Monday, March 25	Proposed date for first three readings of Financial Plan Bylaws	Council Chamber 7:00 pm	Regular Council Meeting
Monday, April 8	Proposed date for final adoption of Financial Plan Bylaws	Council Chamber 7:00 pm	Regular Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 16	Tax Distribution Workshop	Committee Room 5:00 - 7:00 pm (1 hr)	Council Workshop (Public)
Monday, April 29	Proposed date for first three readings of Tax Rate Bylaw	Council Chamber 7:00 pm	Regular Council Meeting
Monday, May 13	Proposed date for final adoption of Tax Rate Bylaw	Council Chamber 7:00 pm	Regular Council Meeting

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June 1/2012

Your Worship & Members of Council,

At a regular FONVCA meeting of May 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, as a result of correspondence from a local resident (redacted version attached) the issue of health/home care was discussed.

The following motion was passed unanimously by those members present that:

*“FONVCA write to Mayor & Council to encourage Council to bring to the UBCM (Union of BC Municipalities) a resolution asking the BC Government to pass legislation changing the fee schedule to create financial incentives for home (medical) visits.”*

During discussion of this issue, attendees were encouraged to individually, through their respective association, to **also** back the Ombudsman’s report <sup>(1,2)</sup>

We have an opportunity, at the local level, to make a difference on an issue which, sooner or later, impacts us all, and ask our local municipal council to continue the dialogue, via the UBCM, with the Provincial Government.

Yours truly,

Diana Belhouse,  
FONVCA Chair Pro-tem  
Tel: 604-987-1656

1. [http://www.carp.ca/2012/02/24/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BC-Seniors\\_Report\\_Volume\\_1.pdf](http://www.carp.ca/2012/02/24/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BC-Seniors_Report_Volume_1.pdf)  
[http://www.carp.ca/2012/02/24/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BC-Seniors\\_Report.pdf](http://www.carp.ca/2012/02/24/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BC-Seniors_Report.pdf)
2. <http://www.carp.ca/2012/02/24/bc-ombudsmans-delivers-trenchant-new-report-government-responds-with-seniors-action-plan-2/>

I have had recent experience with Vancouver Coastal Health and the problems with accessing services and the confusing duplication of jurisdictions which provide those services.

There is the Lions Gate Hospital Outreach program of dieticians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and social workers, all duplicated by Community Care Services, and the Geriatric Outreach Program. The wound care nursing is part of one of these programs - but try and get help once they decide the patient is healed – you have to start all over with the “Case Manager”. Big problem here: lack of shared information about the patient’s condition.

**So my first recommendation** is this: the whole system needs a thorough review to stop unnecessary duplication and make it more efficient and less costly (e.g. reduce high administrative salaries) and that the DNV Mayor & Council send a resolution to the UBCM asking the Provincial Government to do this.

This all started for me last spring when I tried to find out about the day-care offered one or two days a week to people with Alzheimer’s or various degrees of dementia. I learned there’s a year long waiting list and cost is determined by the patient’s last income tax return, with some paying very little and others considerably more. Volunteers are used in these programs – one at West Van Seniors Centre, the other at Mahon Park at the Margaret Fulton Centre.

The second big concern I have is the virtual impossibility of getting a doctor to make house calls, even though patients cannot go to their Dr’s office.

Three weeks before my husband died, I finally was able to access a retired doctor, one of five who makes house calls for elderly home bound patients. He has 280 patients under his care and told me most G. P.’s won’t do this because it’s not paid well enough, or they simply are not interested.

I should explain that I had home care 24/7 for my husband and went the private route for everything. Coastal Health would have charged 50% more because we had saved enough to cover home care costs.

I had hand rails installed all through the house, special bathroom & bath equipment, wheelchair, transfer chair, walker, finally an electric lift in the bedroom, hospital bed etc. and private physiotherapy, message therapy, diabetic foot care etc. who came to the house.

For those of you unfamiliar with this, I should mention it is possible to borrow some equipment for a donation from the Red Cross for a 3 month period. Otherwise you must rent it or buy it. Only a physiotherapist can arrange for you to access the Red Cross.

Second Big Question: Why is our government not doing anything about the problem of the lack of doctors making house calls?

The Community Charter s.8(3)(i) allows municipalities to regulate, prohibit, and impose requirements relating to public health. Regional districts may, under section 523 of the Local Government Act regulate and prohibit for the purposes of maintaining, promoting, or preserving public health and can undertake measures considered necessary for these purposes.

Section 2(1) of the Public Health Bylaws Regulations establishes that bylaws relating to the protection, promotion, or preservation of the health of individuals are subject to concurrent authorities. So before such a bylaw can be adopted it must have been submitted to the Minister of Health Services and the regional health board or medical officer for approval.

So it is possible for a municipality to have some say over the way our local health system is managed.

The government is really encouraging home health care to take the burden off acute care hospital beds, but it is NOT making it happen.

This is a problem which affects the quality of life for all of us – and quality of life is a major consideration for community associations.

**My second recommendation** therefore is that FONVCA ask the DNV Mayor & Council to bring to the UBCM (Union of BC Municipalities) a resolution asking the BC Government to pass legislation changing the fee schedule to create financial incentives for home visits.

I could say a lot more but time is of the essence. I was given an excellent article about the recent Ontario experience which pointed out the lack of training for family medicine residents to do house calls, that doctors in rural areas are more likely to do house calls, the need for medical leaders who want to change the culture of family medicine to value house calls for the elderly infirm; and that medical school stress this aspect of medical care.

So please think about this. I am not a single voice crying in the wilderness. This concerns all of us –we're all getting older, baby boomers too – Let's ask DNV to lead the way via the UBCM this fall.



# PROGRESS REPORT ON TRANSLINK

## EFFICIENCY REVIEW

*for TransLink Commission*

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## **Glossary of Terms**

**AVL** - Automated Vehicle Location

**BCRTC**—British Columbia Rapid Transit Company

**CCFG** – Compass Card and Fare Gates

**CFS**—Cumulative Funded Surplus

**CMBC**—Coast Mountain Bus Company

**CNG** – Compressed Natural Gas

**E&M** – Expo and Millennium Line

**EWT** – Excess Wait Time

**Forecast Period**—2013 to 2015

**GAAP**—Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

**IT** – Information Technology

**MRN** – Major Road Network

**O&M** – Operations and Maintenance

**Outlook Period**—2016 to 2022

**Q2** – Second Quarter

**Q3** – Third Quarter

**WCE**—West Coast Express



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of considering TransLink's December 2011 supplementary fare increase, the TransLink Commissioner engaged Shirocca Consulting to carry out an "*Efficiency Review*" to ensure TransLink was minimizing costs. Based on this report, the Commissioner opted to reject TransLink's request and instead challenged TransLink to find \$40 to \$60 million in cost savings spread over the next three years. This report addresses TransLink's progress in responding to the recommendations made in the *Efficiency Review* and reducing costs.

### **PROGRESS ON EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Finance**

The *Efficiency Review* found a consistent pattern of over-estimation explained by the manner TransLink developed its budget as well as its incorporation of several levels of financial buffers against unforeseen risks (i.e., contingencies and a large cumulative funded surplus). The *Review* recommended a more rigorous approach to expenditure forecasting, probabilistic analysis of contingency requirements as well as a thorough review of the Cumulative Funded Surplus (CFS).

In its 2012 Third Quarter (Q3) Financial and Performance report, TransLink forecasts an annual deficit of \$8.7 million; \$29.3 million lower than the budgeted deficit of \$38.0 million. While TransLink advises that it now budgets on a more zero-based approach, in the absence of year-end results, it is impossible to determine if the *2013 Base Plan* cost projection process was sufficiently rigorous to ensure 2012 savings were included in the 2013 budget base. In fact, it is clear that some were not included in the *Plan* due to timing or an abundance of caution. No analysis was provided regarding the latter two recommendations but TransLink's plan to draw down the CFS to the Board Policy level of 12% by 2015 was noted.

#### **Conventional Bus**

The *Efficiency Review* found that CMBC's conventional bus cost per hour was higher than all but one Canadian system comparator<sup>1</sup>, rides per hour were the lowest recorded in 20 years, non-revenue time (eg., recovery and deadhead time) was high and labour utilization (operator paid hours to service hours) was increasingly unfavourable. The *Review* recommended reductions in non-revenue time, more rigorous service design guidelines (including on-time standards), increased use of articulated buses to save service hours and improved labour utilization and tracking.

The *Progress Report* found that reallocation of buses from low-demand to high-demand routes and times has resulted in improvements in rides per hour. Improved labour productivity through

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<sup>1</sup>The exception is Ottawa, which operates an extensive busway system and has a peak oriented service profile that add significant costs.

tightened scheduling, increased articulated vehicle use and reduced non-revenue time by 47,950 hours in 2012 were also noted. These improvements have resulted in significant savings without affecting service to the public and further gains are expected in future. A review of service design guidelines is being initiated and CMBC has adopted an “excess wait time” standard.

## Community Shuttle

The *Efficiency Review* found that community shuttle costs had increased sharply (58.5%<sup>2</sup>), especially in maintenance (123%), while ridership grew less than a 1%, partly because of expansion into new markets where ridership potential was increasingly shallow. Non-revenue time was also high (35% of total service hours in 2010) as it had increased substantially after much of the fleet was centralized at Oakridge Transit Centre. Private sector operated community shuttle costs were 36% lower than CMBC’s fully allocated cost. The *Review* recommended a review of decision-making for the introduction of service, reductions in non-revenue time and spare vehicles, introduction of more hybrid routes, review of electronic loading on these light vehicles, and consideration of maintenance and operations outsourcing based on full cost accounting.

The *Progress Report* found that rides per hour for CMBC directly operated shuttles declined slightly in 2011 and 2012 compared to 2010. A few improvements, including service reductions on some routes and additional hybrids routes, have been implemented and others are said to be in store, including receipt of new vehicles in January 2013 that should reduce maintenance costs. TransLink reports it is planning a full review of community shuttle service, which will include introducing more performance based decision-making and improved tracking, analysis and reporting of performance. Operating community shuttles out of more depots and other measures to reduce deadheading costs are also under consideration.

## Custom Transit

The *Efficiency Review* determined that Access Transit (custom transit service) had experienced rapid cost escalation between 2006 and 2010, exceeding the rate of service expansion and inflation, and this had resulted in a decline in performance (i.e., cost per hour, cost per ride, etc). The *Review* recommended increased use of taxis and mini-vans, reduction in last minute trip cancellations and a review of eligibility criteria.

As of November 2012, eight vehicles have been eliminated and another 20 will be cut in 2013 while maintaining the same level of service, thus reducing costs. Micro buses make up a higher percentage of the fleet, smaller mini-vans are slated for trial and increased taxi use is pending. A cancellation reduction program has been implemented and a new strategic plan is being prepared, which will address eligibility criteria. Overall, costs have stabilized and some improvement in productivity is noted.

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<sup>2</sup> Between 2006 and 2010.

## Fleet

The *Efficiency Review* found spare vehicles were high, particularly for higher cost trolleys, CNG and articulated buses as well as for community shuttles. This excess fleet added unnecessary operating and capital costs. It was also observed that community shuttle maintenance costs were high, partly because vehicles were past their normal retirement date. The *Review* recommended improved monitoring and tracking of spare vehicle ratios and reduced vehicle procurement to bring spares into line with policy ratios; substitution of lower cost vehicles as spares for more expensive and less flexible fleets; use of full cost accounting in the analysis of alternative fuel fleet procurement; and, consideration of term supply agreements to reduce costs.

The *Progress Report* found that spare vehicle ratios are being monitored and tracked quarterly and have been reduced for diesel and HandyDART vehicles through vehicle retirement and cancellation of replacement orders, resulting in operating (insurance, maintenance, etc) and capital cost savings. Changes in procurement practices as recommended are being implemented or considered for future vehicle acquisitions.

## Energy

The *Efficiency Review* suggested that TransLink analyse the use of commodity derivatives, used by several large public and private sector transportation companies, to deal with fuel price volatility to reduce its costs. TransLink advised that it has reviewed this issue and decided not to pursue this approach, although no comprehensive cost-benefit analysis has been provided.

## Maintenance

The *Efficiency Review* found that CMBC's maintenance cost was higher than its Canadian peers and its five-year cost growth was unsustainable at almost double the growth in service kilometres (35% vs. 21%) despite a largely renewed fleet. Its high comparative cost was partially attributable to the inclusion of indirect costs<sup>3</sup> in its internal rates but also because it had higher staffing levels and a higher percentage of overhead and indirect costs. Also, "Make or Buy" analysis was not taking full cost into account thus favouring in-house production of components. The *Review* recommended reviews of overhead costs and staffing levels, improved tracking of non-wrench time and full cost accounting in "make or buy" analyses.

The *Progress Report* found that CMBC maintenance had embarked on reorganization and reduced staffing by 44 positions so far. Various improvements in tracking maintenance have been implemented that promise future cost reductions. Outsourcing of some engines and transmissions has been justified based on cost analyses without full cost accounting but CMBC advises that future analyses will reflect total costs. Overall, significant cost savings have been realized and updated data and processes are driving future improvements and cost savings.

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<sup>3</sup> Non-wrench time.

## Corporate Overhead

The *Efficiency Review* revealed a sharp increase in TransLink and CMBC corporate overhead costs and that they were high relative to Canadian Peer systems. It noted that IT costs in 2010 represented one-third of TransLink's total corporate costs and capital costs had almost doubled over the five year review period. Furthermore, TransLink's police costs had increased by 111%, and, while this was partly due to introduction of the Canada Line, CMBC's transit security department had not been reduced in size since the introduction of the police. The *Review* recommended investigation of police cost reductions and overlaps with CMBC security, reductions in overhead and administration costs and a review of the IT program.

In 2012, an independent operational review of TransLink police was completed recommending a series of cost reductions, including overtime and vehicle reduction that have been implemented. The *Progress Report* also identified some reductions in internal contingencies by subsidiaries. However, TransLink corporate costs, including police, are increasing faster than the operating subsidiaries. Compass Card and fare gate implementation (approximately \$48 in million in net operating costs from 2013 to 2015) as well as IT costs (17% increase in operating costs over the Forecast Period and 75% in capital expenditures relative to 2012) stand out and are contrary to economies and restraint in operational spending.

## COST SAVINGS

Based on the *Efficiency Review's* short term recommendations, approximately \$65 to \$70 million in potential cost savings largely through more rigorous budgeting practices was estimated. An additional \$50 to \$65 million over the longer term through further cost savings and changes to business practices was projected. Recognizing implementation complexity, labour contract issues and other considerations, it was suggested that short term reductions could be phased in over one to three years and longer term reductions over four to seven years.

The *Progress Report* has identified approximately \$33 million in annualized cost savings in 2012/2013 that have either been or are in the process of being implemented since the completion of the *Efficiency Review*, of which the bulk have been realized by CMBC (\$28 million or 85%). Cost savings in 2014 and 2015 are estimated to be \$6.5 and \$3.3 million respectively, primarily as a result of reduced recovery time from bus operations. Other measures generally have yet to be defined and/or quantified. In total, this brings TransLink's expected annualized cost savings to \$43 million by the end of 2015.

## Changes in Cost per Hour

Cost per hour for the total transit system in the *2013 Base Plan* is nevertheless higher over the Forecast Period (2013 to 2015) than in the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*. This contrasts with both the conventional transit and bus costs per hour, which show material decreases in all years over this

period. However, not all cost savings identified have been included in the *2013 Base Plan*. As a result, the cost per hour, particularly for bus, is likely high.

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, there have been significant reductions in operating costs, particularly by CMBC, that are reflected in lower conventional transit and bus costs per hour and moderate increases in both rail and custom transit cost per hour over the *2013 Base Plan* Forecast Period. Even though custom transit cost per hour is slightly higher than in the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*, its tempered growth shows marked improvement compared to prior years.

However, gains from operating company efficiencies are partly eroded by the sharp increase (25%) in TransLink corporate costs between 2012 and 2015, much of this related to the CCFG introduction. Even excluding CCFG and studies, corporate costs increase by 11.2% between 2012 and 2015, which significantly exceeds inflation. This includes a 26% increase in computer and systems costs. While TransLink has reported that investment in this area had previously been neglected, this corrective swing and the significant increase in corporate and police costs as a percentage of total transit expenditures contrasts with the economy initiatives in the subsidiaries.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Under the *South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act (Act)*, TransLink is required to annually update a 3-Year Plan and 7-Year Outlook (Base Plan) identifying the services and programs it proposes to deliver over this period. The *Act* stipulates that the Plan must be funded by established funding sources, including taxes and fares, accumulated surpluses and borrowings within its approved limit.

The *Act* also requires the TransLink Commissioner to review the Base Plan, as well as any Supplement(s), and publish a formal opinion on whether the underlying parameters and assumptions, including revenue and expenditure estimates, are reasonable. If the Plan proposes a short term fare increase above that permitted under the *Act* (2% per annum based on April 2008 rates or higher than previously approved in a Supplement) or the introduction of a first-time short term fare, the Commissioner must also provide an indication of whether this proposal is considered appropriate and reasonable.

In December 2011, TransLink applied to the TransLink Commissioner for a supplementary fare increase above inflation as proposed in the *2010 Funding Stabilization Plan* and carried forward into the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*. In considering this request, the *Act* required the Commissioner to:

- Maintain TransLink’s financial stability,
- Allow TransLink to implement planned service and projects,
- Encourage TransLink to minimize its costs, and,
- Keep fares as low as possible.

To inform his consideration of this application, the TransLink Commissioner engaged Shirocca Consulting to carry out an “*Efficiency Review*” to analyse and comment on TransLink’s efficiency, productivity and effectiveness. Based on these considerations, the Commissioner opted to reject TransLink’s request and instead encouraged TransLink to reduce its costs, challenging the organization to find \$40 to \$60 million in cost savings spread over the next three years.

On April 10, 2012, as part of its on-going discussions with the Province to obtain a new source of funding, the Mayor’s Council also passed a motion requesting that the Province conduct an audit of TransLink.

### THIS ASSIGNMENT

In early September, TransLink released a draft *2013 Base Plan* for public review and comment. On October 30, 2012, the TransLink Board approved the *2013 Base Plan*. In the *Plan*, TransLink advised

that it intended to make application to the Commissioner for a supplemental fare increase taking effect in 2014.

Under the *Act*, the TransLink Commissioner is required to review and provide an opinion on the reasonableness of the *2013 Base Plan*. In late September, the Commissioner engaged Shirocca Consulting to analyse, review and comment on the *Base Plan*. And, in anticipation of TransLink's supplemental fare increase application, to assess progress that has been made with regard to the Commissioner's challenge and the recommendations in the *Efficiency Review* and *Provincial Audit*. The assignment was specifically to address the following:

- Does the *2013 Base Plan and Outlook* respect the intent of the approved *2012 Moving Forward Plan* as to transportation services, projects and programs to be undertaken?
- What parameters and assumptions have been changed relative to the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*, especially revenues and expenditures, and are these changes reasonable?
- Is TransLink financially solvent and within its borrowing limits after funding the *Base Plan*?
- To what extent does the *Base Plan* respond to the findings of the Commission's *Efficiency Review* completed in March 2012 and the BC Ministry of Finance's *Audit*<sup>4</sup> released in October 2012?
- Have TransLink's planned unit costs for transit service declined from the *2012 Moving Forward Plan* and, if so, what accounts for this change?

## **THIS REPORT**

This report is the second of two responding to the above assignment. The first report entitled "*Review of the 2013 Base Plan*" addressed the first three tasks. This report addresses the remaining two tasks. Its focus is a review TransLink's progress in reducing its costs and responding to the recommendations made in the *Efficiency Review* and *Provincial Audit*.

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<sup>4</sup> BC Ministry of Finance, Review of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority (TransLink), October 2012.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY REVIEW & PROVINCIAL AUDIT

### THE EFFICIENCY REVIEW

The *Efficiency Review*, which was completed in March 2012, examined TransLink's efficiency at two levels as follows:

- an overall financial level in terms of actual to budget performance between 2006 and 2011 and a review of the *2012 Budget* in terms of targeted increases relative to 2011 actual revenue and expenditure; and,
- a focused review of the transit system and a more detailed look into the bus division, as it represents the largest area of service expenditure within TransLink and associated key areas.

This latter review examined TransLink's performance relative to industry norms, best practices and other peer transit systems as well as internal trends between 2006 and 2010. At an overall system level, these comparisons were diagnostic, indicating areas of poor performance requiring further analysis. At the bus division and associated key areas, the review focused on specific underlying issues that explained these problems and/or where performance could be improved.

### OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY REVIEW FINDINGS

At the overall financial level, the *Efficiency Review* found that TransLink has abundant revenue sources and funded reserves. A comparison of budget to actual expenditures revealed a consistent pattern of over-estimation explained by the manner in which TransLink developed its budget. The *Review* also found that the budget incorporated several levels of financial buffers against unforeseen risks (i.e., contingencies and a large cumulative funded surplus) and was founded on core expenditures in service delivery that included some inefficiencies.

At the second level of the *Efficiency Review*, a Canadian peer comparison<sup>5</sup> found that TransLink's conventional transit system<sup>6</sup> had higher costs and lower cost efficiency and effectiveness than most others, even after taking into account the challenges of TransLink's large service area. Strong gains in both ridership and revenue (28% and 41% respectively) between 2006 and 2010 as a result of major system expansion, were outpaced by cost growth (51%). Cost per hour, kilometre and passenger grew faster than inflation and cost recovery declined. Passengers carried per hour and kilometre also declined, although the drop would have been worse without the ridership surge from the Olympics and Canada Line.

The *Efficiency Review* also found that TransLink's custom transit system performance had deteriorated from prior years relative to the Canadian peer systems<sup>1</sup>. The *Review* revealed that a

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<sup>5</sup> BC Transit (Victoria), Calgary Transit, Edmonton Transit and Toronto Transit Commission.

<sup>6</sup> Conventional bus, ferry and rail services.



major restructuring of the custom transit program had resulted in cost increases (70%) far in excess of service expansion (14%) and inflation. Also, that expected cost efficiencies and improvement in service effectiveness had not yet resulted.

At the bus division level, the *Review* again revealed an abundance of equipment, new vehicles and staffing levels that help to explain the overall transit system level findings. Internal trends between 2006 and 2010 showed increasing costs and declining productivity in labour and equipment utilization as well as high overhead. The *Review* also found that internal change in how bus service was delivered had not kept pace with external changes in customer demand and rail system expansion as well as technological advances in vehicles and equipment.

The *Review* pinpointed a number of specific areas that could be improved to reduce core costs. These included revising budgeting practices and tightening capital project management as well as improving productivity in both bus service delivery and maintenance. Some longer term initiatives to modernize and streamline costs aimed at improving long term financial sustainability were also suggested. Section 4 of this report provides additional detail on the *Efficiency Review* findings in all these areas and evaluates progress to date in responding to the *Efficiency Review* recommendations.

## **THE BC MINISTRY OF FINANCE AUDIT**

The BC Ministry of Finance's *Audit* examined the areas covered in the *Efficiency Review* as well as several areas that had been excluded from this *Review*. The *Audit* examined:

- Service level planning, ridership, scheduling and capacity utilization;
- Reliability of fiscal forecasts to help plan, budget and manage costs;
- Utilization of centralized corporate service delivery;
- Operating and administrative costs (including employee compensation and incentive programs);
- Cost mitigation strategies and operating efficiencies;
- Debt and financial management;
- Land use management;
- Procurement (including fuel, operating supplies and capital assets); and,
- Security and policing costs and utilization; and capital asset management.

The *Audit* made 27 efficiency recommendations. It concluded that TransLink could reduce its costs by \$41 million. However, the *Audit* was completed and submitted to TransLink in October 2012,

when the *2013 Base Plan* had already been released for public input and comment. As a result, the *2013 Base Plan* could not include actions that respond to the *Audit*. TransLink has committed to review and consider the *Audit's* recommendations.

### **3. FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY**

#### **MAIN FINDINGS ON FINANCE EFFICIENCY**

The *Efficiency Review* found that TransLink's budget development process and the economic assumptions used to project revenue and expenditures were sound in principle. However, it also revealed that TransLink had consistently under spent its budget by an average of \$52 million in the three preceding years (2009 to 2011).

Closer examination revealed that the budget was based on a second-quarter (Q2) year-end forecast, which, inherent in its nature, tends to include protection for unforeseen expenditures and conserve spending flexibility, or reflects "conservatism". This conservatism resulted in an inflated base compared to actual year-end expenditures. When inflation and other growth factors were applied to the inflated base, the effects of the excess cascaded into long term expenditure projections. This conclusion was confirmed by the Ministry of Finance, Office of the Controller General Internal Audit Branch in their *Audit*.

The *Efficiency Review* also found that TransLink budgets in such a way as to include considerable financial buffer room, including both overall operating and capital contingencies, internal contingencies within subsidiaries and corporate departments and a large Cumulative Funded Surplus (CFS).

By policy, an operating contingency set at 1% of operating expenditures (\$10 million in 2012) is included in the first year budget of the Base Plan to address TransLink's financial risks (eg., wage increases in a year where contracts are under negotiation, etc.). While this may be reasonable and prudent, no analysis was provided to support or controvert the adequacy of this sum.

A further question was why the operating contingency was needed when the CFS, which is intended to cover unexpected costs, was equal to 22% of 2012's budget expenditures and almost double the Board policy level of 12%. No analysis or rationale supporting this level of reserves was provided. In reviewing the financial statements of comparable transit organizations, no industry-standard for equity levels were identified. Recommending the appropriate level for the CFS was beyond the scope of the *Efficiency Review*. However, the *Review* noted that it is incumbent on TransLink staff to fully analyse and document the reserve requirements supporting the 12% policy directive.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #1 —

A more rigorous approach to expenditure forecasting is required. This should include revising the Q2 forecast procedures to develop a more exact and realistic year-end expenditure forecast thus ensuring that the base for the subsequent year's budget is not inflated.

TransLink advises that it now budgets on a more zero-based approach. In addition, responsibility managers are tasked with taking year-to-date efficiencies and savings into account in developing the subsequent year's budget. According to TransLink, the budget is no longer a product of the Q2 year-end forecast and applied economic cost driver assumptions.

In examining the *2013 Base Plan*, TransLink's 2012 third-quarter financial and performance report (Q3) results were reviewed. While TransLink did not prepare a complete year-end forecast, it did report on most year-end expected results. The Q3 report reflected both year-to-date cost savings against budget as well as, in some cases, expected aggregate year-end results. In their Q3 report, TransLink forecasts an annual deficit of \$8.7 million; \$29.3 million lower than the budgeted deficit of \$38.0 million. However, in the absence of year-end results, it is not possible to determine if the *2013 Base Plan* cost projection process was sufficiently rigorous to ensure 2012 savings were included in the 2013 budget base.

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #2 —

Consideration should be given to modelling the operating contingency requirement using a probabilistic approach that includes a range of economic assumptions and scenarios (e.g., Monte Carlo simulation modelling). Once established, this contingency should be reviewed and adjusted at each quarter-end. In most cases, the risk inherent in expenditure overruns is mitigated as the fiscal year winds down.

No change. The operating contingency is calculated as 1% of expenditures (\$14.9 million) and is only applied in the first year of the *Plan* (i.e., 2013). No analysis supporting this amount was reported or provided. The *2013 Base Plan* review did reveal reductions in internal contingencies in subsidiaries and departments.

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #3 —

A thorough review of CFS requirements should be undertaken and fully documented to warrant maintaining such a high percentage of operating expenditures (18% in 2012).

No analysis supporting the 12% CFS level established in policy has been provided by TransLink. However, the *2013 Base Plan* projects the CFS to be drawn down to the target level of 12% by 2015.

Specifically, the CFS level is projected to drop from \$274.9 million in 2012 to \$173.6 million in 2015 – a \$101.3<sup>7</sup> million decrease and a reduction in the financial buffer carried forward.

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<sup>7</sup> This assumes that 2012 actual revenues and expenditures come in on budget, whereas the Q3 financial and performance report indicated that the year end results are likely to be \$29.3 million more favourable. If realized, this would reduce the projected draw on the CFS to \$72 million over the Forecast Period.

## 4. BUS DIVISION EFFICIENCY

### MAIN FINDINGS ON CONVENTIONAL BUS EFFICIENCY

The *Efficiency Review* found that conventional bus hours increased by 17.1% between 2006 and 2010, and cost per hour grew by 9.5% to \$110.56. In comparison to Canadian peer systems<sup>8</sup>, CMBC's cost per hour was higher than all but one.<sup>9</sup> Ridership increased at a lower pace (7.1%) and passenger boardings per hour declined 8.6% to 48.5 per hour, the lowest recorded in 20 years. Non-revenue time (eg., recovery) was found to be 24.8% of scheduled running time and labour utilization (operator paid hours to service hours) was 1.405 and increasingly unfavourable.

In early 2012, management indicated that actions were underway to improve service productivity (rides per hour) through the Service Optimization Initiative (SOI), which was designed to reallocate hours from low performing services to higher demand routes to increase ridership and revenue on a cost neutral basis. Between 2010 and 2012, SOI has reallocated 170,000 bus hours and an additional 75,000 hours are projected to be optimized in this way from 2013 to 2015.

### Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

#### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #4 –

Improve service effectiveness and reduce costs. The cost savings from the reductions in non-revenue time (e.g. recovery and deadhead) should be deducted from operating costs as opposed to being reallocated. Ways to reduce delays and increase average speed and reliability of buses should also be examined.

In 2012, non-revenue time (recovery time) was reduced by 47,950 hours. An additional 55,000 hours of recovery time are to be eliminated over the next three years. Another 13,000 hours have been reduced in deadhead time in December 2012, with further reductions expected in 2013. These reductions have been possible because of recently available AVL<sup>10</sup> data. Cost savings are being deducted from the CMBC operating budget.

Scheduled recovery time for CMBC conventional bus service was 24.8% and much higher (in excess of 30%) for community shuttle in 2010. CMBC advises that the blended conventional/community shuttle rate of recovery time has been reduced from 25.3% in 2010 to 23.4% in 2012 and is projected to decline to 21.2% by 2015. Further reductions are planned for the Outlook Period, although these may be revised as CMBC plans to assess the impacts on service reliability. CMBC estimates recovery time will fall to 19.9% in 2022.

<sup>8</sup> BC Transit (Victoria), Calgary Transit, OC Transpo (Ottawa) and Winnipeg Transit.

<sup>9</sup> The exception is Ottawa, which operates an extensive busway system and has a peak oriented service profile that add significant costs.

<sup>10</sup> Automated Vehicle Location.

Average operating speed has increased slightly in 2012 to 23.1 kilometres per hour up from 23 kilometres per hour in 2011. CMBC reports they are working with municipalities and TransLink to identify ways of reducing delays for buses. The recent introduction of high occupancy vehicle lanes and ramps serving the Highway 1 Rapid Bus service should further improve average speed and reliability.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #5 –**

Establish more rigorous service design guidelines (standards) including an acceptable on-time performance standard.

TransLink reports that it will initiate a review and update of transit service design guidelines in 2013. CMBC also advises that it has adopted an “excess wait time” (EWT) measure for routes with frequent service. EWT measures the average additional waiting time passengers experience as compared to the wait time they expect.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #6 –**

Increase the use of articulated buses ensuring the service frequency is adjusted to match the additional capacity provided.

CMBC advises that it is better utilizing the existing fleet of articulated trolley buses and, in so doing, are reducing costs (“right sizing”). However, the substitution of articulated for standard trolley buses will increase the spare vehicle ratio of the latter, which is already excessive.

CMBC will also receive 25 additional articulated diesel buses in 2013. These vehicles will replace 25 standard sized vehicles that are being retired, thus increasing overall fleet capacity. Some of the articulated vehicles may be used on the shortened King George B-Line service, which is due to start in September 2013. Others may be used to provide added capacity on high demand routes. A detailed deployment plan has not been completed and no cost savings have been identified at this time.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #7 –**

Improve labour utilization and tracking.

CMBC advises that labour utilization rates have improved in both 2011 and in 2012 (per Q3 report) due to reduced make up, guarantee and stand by time. Over the next three years, CMBC plans to continue to improve labour productivity by targeting absenteeism. It is measuring labour productivity by comparing revenue hours to total operator paid hours excluding premiums and payouts. The conventional bus operator productivity rate<sup>11</sup> effectively measures the efficiency of the “run cut” or crew schedule. The productivity rate has increased from 71.7% in 2010 to 73.1% in

<sup>11</sup> Productivity rate = Labour cost minus premiums and various pay-outs /revenue service hours.

October 2012. For every 1% change in the productivity rate, a savings of \$2 to \$3 million annually is estimated.

## MAIN FINDINGS ON COMMUNITY SHUTTLE EFFICIENCY

The *Efficiency Review* found that community shuttle operating costs had increased 58.5% between 2006 and 2010 but passenger boardings grew less than a 1% partly as a result of expansion into new market areas where ridership potential was increasingly shallow. Cost per hour increased 22% over the five year period, with maintenance cost per kilometre jumping 123%.

The cost per passenger boarding grew at twice the rate of conventional bus service reaching \$6.50 per passenger (using a fully allocated cost). Passenger boardings per hour dropped 22% to 10.8. Non-revenue time, including both deadhead and recovery time, was also found to be excessive. Deadheading had increased substantially after much of fleet was centralized at Oakridge Transit Centre in Vancouver. Contracted community shuttle costs were found to be 36% lower than CMBC.

In early 2012, CMBC advised that action was being taken to improve service productivity through the Service Optimization program. However, service productivity (rides per hour) for CMBC directly operated shuttles declined slightly in both 2011 and again in 2012 (Q3 Forecast) compared to 2010. TransLink has also indicated it is planning a full review of community shuttle service in 2013.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #8 –

Undertake a review of the Service Design Guidelines, including the decision-making processes for introducing new community shuttle services.

TransLink advises that it will review and update the existing Transit Service Design Guidelines in 2013. This will include more performance based decision-making and improved tracking, analysis and reporting of transit service performance.

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #9 –

Optimize existing service and pursue reductions in non-revenue time (recovery and deadhead time).

TransLink advises that several routes have seen service reductions and one route was discontinued in 2012. CMBC reported in early 2012 that a facility plan was being prepared that would ease depot constraints in the future, and that an internal committee was looking at operating community shuttles out of more depots, including the new Hamilton Transit Centre in 2015. Changes are being evaluated to reduce some of the highest deadheading costs (e.g., North Vancouver). Over the next three years, TransLink and CMBC propose to continue with the service optimization program as well as pursue reductions in schedule recovery and deadhead time.



**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #10 –**

Introduce more hybrid routes using community shuttle vehicles on conventional bus routes during low demand time periods.

Three additional hybrid routes have been added in 2012, bringing the total to 11 compared to 5 in 2010. More hybrid routes are planned to be introduced over the next three years, where passenger volumes and efficient vehicle deployment permits. TransLink proposes to convert approximately 86,000 hours of conventional bus service to community shuttle service between 2013 and 2015.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #11 –**

Reduce the spare vehicle ratio and review the electronic technology load on the vehicles.

The spare vehicle ratio for community shuttles is presently unchanged due to operating limitations (see Fleet for more details). No plan was reported to change the electronic technology load on the community shuttle vehicles. However, some existing shuttles have had their frames strengthened and 25 new replacement shuttles with improved suspension systems are being acquired and will commence service in January 2013. CMBC believes these new vehicles will lead to a reduction in running repairs and less structural damage.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #12 –**

Ensure directly operated community shuttle services employ full cost accounting.

No action reported.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #13 –**

Consider outsourcing some maintenance or operations where existing depot constraints are barriers to efficient operation.

TransLink reports that analysis is being carried out on this issue but that no results are as yet available.

## **MAIN FINDINGS ON CUSTOM TRANSIT EFFICIENCY**

The *Efficiency Review* determined that Access Transit (custom transit service) had experienced rapid cost escalation between 2006 and 2010, exceeding the rate of service expansion and inflation that had resulted in a decline in performance (i.e., cost per hour, cost per passenger, etc). The consolidation into a single regional operator had not produced expected savings due to high growth in labour, administrative and overhead costs. Rides per hour had declined but ridership was also impacted by the labour disruption in 2009-10.

In discussion with management in early 2012, they advised that action was being taken to decrease the number of spare vehicles (31% in 2010) and to introduce a higher proportion of smaller “micro buses” into the fleet (“right sizing”) to reduce costs. They also were expecting improved productivity (boardings per hour) as a result of scheduling improvements.

As of November 2012, fleet size was down by eight vehicles and another 20 are slated to be cut in 2013 while maintaining the same level of service. Micro buses now comprise 73% of the custom transit fleet, up from 54% in 2010. Boardings per hour have increased from 2.16 in 2010 to 2.29 in 2012, a 6% improvement.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #14 –

Increase the use of non-dedicated vehicles such as taxi’s and minivans.

CMBC advises that increasing the allocation of taxi supplements was under consideration for 2013 but was delayed pending the outcome of the *Audit*. The *Audit* reiterates the recommendation regarding supplemental taxi use. The use of smaller van-based vehicles is planned as a trial in the next three years.

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #15 –

Reduce last minute cancellations.

CMBC has introduced a new program in October 2012 to reduce last minute cancellations (less than one hour before pick up time). Under the program, customers get reminders to provide adequate notice for cancellations, which after a certain number of failures to report can lead to suspension of service.

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #16 –

Review the eligibility criteria.

TransLink has retained a consultant to prepare a new Strategic Plan for Access Transit. Reviewing eligibility criteria is part of the terms of reference.

## MAIN FINDINGS ON FLEET EFFICIENCY

The *Efficiency Review* found that TransLink’s policy for spares vehicles ranged from a low of 18% of peak vehicles for conventional diesel buses to a high of 25% for Natural Gas (CNG) buses, community shuttles and electric trolleys. However, actual spares were found to exceed these levels in all fleets. While the spare policy levels were on the high side, they were not out of line with

industry standards or peer agencies. However, the *Review* noted that excessive spare vehicles add unnecessary operating and capital costs to the system.

The *Review* pointed out that trolleys and articulated buses carry a large spare ratio yet they cannot be substituted for diesel buses outside the trolley network or high volumes routes, whereas standard diesel buses can substitute for trolleys, articulated buses and CNG buses. Furthermore, analysis indicated that trolley's and CNG's have higher lifecycle costs than those of standard diesel vehicles and that full cost analysis was not being used when assessing alternate fuel technology vehicles. However, the standard diesel spare ratio does not formally include substitution for more expensive vehicle types.

The *Review* also noted that TransLink tenders its vehicle orders individually as opposed to using three to five year term supply agreements that could result in cost savings. Suppliers offer consideration for term supply agreements, as they can amortize their development costs over the contract term and save on the cost of responding to annual tenders. Concessions for multi-year orders include vehicle discounts, optional equipment upgrades or other allowances.

Finally, the *Review* observed that community shuttle maintenance costs were high in part due to weight issues but also as a result of the age of the vehicles. Vehicles were found to be running up to two years past their normal retirement date because an acceptable replacement vehicle had yet to be sourced.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### **EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #17 –**

Improve the monitoring and tracking of spare vehicle ratios.

Spare vehicle ratio is being monitored and tracked each quarter. CMBC will identify any service impacts from the reduced spare ratios.

### **EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #18 –**

Reduce vehicle procurement numbers so that the fleet is in line with the policy spare ratios.

The standard diesel bus spare ratio was reduced from 18% to 16%, and the articulated diesel bus ratio from 25% to 20%. This resulted from 42 buses being taken out of service in mid 2012 that are now either sold or being sold (these vehicles were 16 years of age and at that the end of their useful life). The spare ratio for CNG's, trolleys and community shuttle is currently unchanged at 25% but CMBC is planning to lower its spare ratio target for new CNG bus orders from 25% to 20%.

Reducing the spare ratio has resulted in lower maintenance, insurance and other costs. In addition to operating cost savings, it triggered cancellation of the planned acquisition of 66 replacement conventional buses in 2013 with a net capital cost saving of \$23.7 million after senior government

contribution. Similarly, HandyDART vehicle replacements have been reduced by 22 vehicles to lower the spare vehicle ratio with an estimated net capital cost saving of approximately \$330,000<sup>12</sup>.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #19 –**

Substitution of lower cost vehicles as spares for more expensive and less flexible fleets.

CMBC advises that this is under consideration for all future bus orders.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #20 –**

Use full cost accounting in the analysis of alternative fuel fleet procurement.

CMBC advises that full cost analysis will be used for the next order will be for CNG buses.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #21 –**

Consider vehicle term supply agreements.

Multi-year vehicle orders are under development. CMBC also indicated that a multi-year offering based on the forecasted vehicle requirements will be included in the next vehicle procurement.

**EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #22 –**

Source a community shuttle replacement vehicle.

A lower cost, van-based community shuttle replacement vehicle has been sourced and the first order of 25 vehicles has been placed with the new vehicles expected to go into service in January 2013.

## MAIN FINDINGS ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The *Efficiency Review* noted that TransLink procures up to 75% of its fuel requirements through fixed price contracts that carry a price premium of \$0.06 to \$0.08 per litre. This cost premium is, in effect, insurance against fuel price escalation. The *Review* outlined an alternative approach, used by several large public and private sector transportation companies, to deal with fuel price volatility, namely to hedge fuel costs through commodity derivatives. At the time of the *Efficiency Review*, this could have potentially reduced fuel transaction costs by \$0.05 to \$0.07 per litre or \$1.5 to \$2 million per year, notwithstanding the risks attached to commodity derivatives.

<sup>12</sup> TransLink did not provide a cost figure for this reduction. The estimate is based on a pro-rated cost derived from the reported costs for the 2014 HandyDART vehicle replacement contract.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #23 –

TransLink should analyse the benefits and risks of hedging through commodity derivatives versus continuing with fixed price supply contracts.

TransLink advise that they have reviewed this issue and decided not to pursue this approach. To date, no comprehensive cost-benefit analysis has been provided by TransLink.

## MAIN FINDINGS ON MAINTENANCE EFFICIENCY

The *Efficiency Review* recognized that CMBC maintenance is a highly complex operation responsible for multiple makes and models of vehicles employing CNG, trolley, diesel and hybrid technologies. As well, CMBC operates an in-house overhaul centre, trolley overhead and rectifier stations. However, compared to Canadian peers, its direct cost for standard diesel maintenance per kilometre was higher, partly because of the inclusion of some indirect costs<sup>13</sup> in its internal rates but also because CMBC had higher staffing levels and a higher percentage of overhead and indirect costs.

Between 2006 and 2010, the *Review* found the increase in maintenance costs was almost double that in service kilometres (35% vs. 21%). Direct or allocated maintenance costs per kilometre increased an average of 8% per year over the five year review period. During this time, the fleet was substantially renewed, as almost 1,000 replacement and expansion vehicles were acquired.

The *Review* reported that the maintenance cost per kilometre for trolleys, CNG buses and community shuttles increased 76%, 130% and 310% respectively, although noting that community shuttle maintenance costs were high owing to deferred replacement of vehicles. On the positive side, diesel bus maintenance costs were stable and overtime was well-controlled.

The *Review* also found that maintenance staffing per bus was high relative to Canadian transit industry peers. Furthermore, “Make or Buy” analysis was not taking indirect and overhead costs into account for decision-making purposes thus favouring in-house production of components. The *Review* also noted maintenance indirect costs were high and required further examination.

<sup>13</sup> Non-wrench time.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #24 –

Seek ways to reduce cost and improve productivity by reviewing overhead costs and staffing levels related to maintenance with a view to making cost savings.

CMBC has commenced maintenance department reorganization. Maintenance staffing has been reduced by 44 positions from 811 in 2012 to 767 in 2013. Further reorganization of technical and support positions is under evaluation. The ratio of buses per mechanics (including electricians and electrical technicians) has also improved from 3.5 to 3.9 at the end of 2012.

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #25 –

Improve tracking and reduce non-wrench time to highlight and track improvements that should result in cost savings.

System and procedural improvements completed or in process include: increasing the ratio of predicted versus unplanned maintenance; improved identification and tracking of “non-wrench” time; tracking and follow-up of variances against standard job costs and the identification; and, reduction of “fault repeaters” ( i.e., repeatedly performing the wrong fix on a maintenance job).

### EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #26 –

Revise costing for “Make or Buy” analysis for large contract decisions to ensure that any potential staff or other overhead reductions are factored in.

Series 50 engines and transmissions have been contracted out without full cost accounting as the difference was still significant enough to justify this decision. CMBC reports that future “Make-or-Buy” analysis should and will take full overhead costs into account in the decision-making criteria.

## MAIN FINDINGS ON CORPORATE OVERHEAD EFFICIENCY

The *Efficiency Review* revealed that TransLink and CMBC corporate overhead costs were high relative to other Canadian Peer systems. Between 2006 and 2010, the rate of cost growth for CMBC (25% and 61% for conventional bus and community shuttle) and TransLink overhead (41%<sup>14</sup>) exceeded both inflation and service hour growth. TransLink’s corporate overhead cost as a percentage of total revenue had risen from 4.0% to 5.7% between 2006 and 2011. The *Review* noted that IT costs in 2010 represented one-third of TransLink’s total corporate costs and capital costs for IT had almost doubled over the five year review period from \$18 to 34 million.

<sup>14</sup> Excludes one-time costs and studies.

The *Review* also highlighted the significant increase in TransLink police costs between 2006 and 2011 (111%), although noting that this was partly due to the addition of officers for the Canada Line in 2009. Furthermore, the *Review* pointed out that, in addition to TransLink police, CMBC has a transit security department, which had not been reduced in size since the introduction of the police.

## Progress on Efficiency Review Recommendations

### **EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #27 –**

Review growth in TransLink Police Costs and CMBC overlaps.

An independent operational review of the TransLink police directed at improving efficiency was carried out in 2012. This report contained 30 recommendations, including new business practices to reduce overtime, return-to-work and stricter management of sick time, new expenditure controls and a vehicle fleet reduction (8 vehicles in 2012). No action was reported with regard to CMBC security.

### **EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #28 –**

Investigate reductions in overhead & administrative costs.

CMBC reports expected savings resulting from reductions in recognition program, safety and training. In addition, CMBC, WCE, BCRTC (E&M) and Canada Line have reduced administration costs in 2013 compared to the *2012 Budget*.

### **EFFICIENCY REVIEW RECOMMENDATION #29 –**

Review IT program in terms of realized productivity gains, overlaps, operating costs and other organizational costs.

No information has been provided with respect to a review of the IT program pursuant to the recommendation. However, CMBC has reported a reduction in transit supervisors that likely is a productivity gain related to communications and GPS tracking of buses as well as reduced deadheading time as a result of AVL data.

IT operating costs still represent about a third of total TransLink corporate expenditures and have increased by 28.9% between 2010 and 2012 based on the *2012 Budget*.<sup>15</sup> They are forecast to increase by 17% in the *2013 Base Plan* over the Forecast Period. Furthermore, capital expenditure in the 2013 Capital Program on IT over the next three years has been increased 75% compared to the 2012 Capital Program (\$12.5 to \$21.9 million). This increase in the 2013 Capital Program is contrary to every other program area in which there are reductions, with the exception of West Coast Express<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Note: The Q3 Financial and Performance Report indicates that computer systems are projected to be \$1.8 million higher due to an increase in network capacity.

<sup>16</sup> The 2013 Capital Program adds \$410,000 in 2013 and \$23.8 million in 2015 for the lease buy-out of the original 28 passenger cars.

## 5. COST SAVINGS

Based on the *Efficiency Review's* recommendations, a ball park estimate of potential cost savings that could reduce TransLink's total annual expenditures was calculated. Once implemented, these savings would then continue to reduce all future annual expenditures by that amount plus inflation assuming no change in service. The areas of cost saving referenced were illustrative, as the *Review* did not cover all areas of the organization and acknowledged that it would be up to TransLink to determine where and how to best make spending cuts. However, it explicitly excluded increased revenue, as the focus of the *Review* related to the Commissioner's responsibility to ensure TransLink minimizes its costs when considering a supplemental fare increase.

Over the short term, it was estimated that approximately \$65 to \$70 million in potential cost savings could be realized, largely through more rigorous budgeting practices. An additional \$50 to \$65 million in potential savings was estimated over the longer term through further cost savings and changes to business practices. However, recognizing the difficulty in putting some of these savings into practice because of implementation complexity, labour contract issues and other considerations, it was suggested that short term reductions could be phased in over one to three years and longer term reductions over four to seven years.

### COST SAVINGS TO DATE

Based primarily on information and cost estimates provided by TransLink together with some independent calculations, this review has identified approximately \$33 million in annualized cost savings in 2012/2013 that have either been or are in the process of being implemented by TransLink and its subsidiaries since the completion of the *Efficiency Review*. While some measures were already in process prior to the *Review*, many appear to respond to the *Efficiency Review* recommendations. The bulk of the cost savings (\$28 million or 85%) have been realized by CMBC.

Cost savings in 2014 and 2015 are estimated to be \$6.5 and \$3.3 million respectively. To date, these savings primarily result from the planned reduction of schedule recovery time from bus operations. Other measures generally have yet to be defined and/or quantified. In total, this brings TransLink's expected annualized cost savings to \$43 million by the end of 2015.

Table 5-1 provides a broad breakdown of the savings identified. The savings calculated differ from those published by TransLink in the *2013 Base Plan* for several reasons. They:

- do not include any cost reductions prior to 2012;
- exclude both realized and projected revenue gains;
- include cost savings identified after the *2013 Base Plan* was completed as well as some expected results from 2013 initiatives;



- are shown on a one-time annualized basis rather than on an as incurred basis<sup>17</sup>; and, most importantly,
- do not add prior year reductions into future years (cumulative gains) but rather net cost savings in each year on the premise that once cut, the base cost for the subsequent year is net of the cost reductions.

**TABLE 5-1: ANNUALIZED 1 YEAR COST SAVINGS (\$M)**

ANNUALIZED COST SAVINGS	2012/13	2014	2015	GRAND TOTAL
Roads & Bridges	\$0.5			
<b>Bus Division</b>				
<i>Operations &amp; Scheduling</i>	\$15.7	\$6.4	\$3.2	
<i>Maintenance &amp; Fleet</i>	\$8.8	\$0.2	\$0.1	
<i>Administration</i>	\$1.6			
<b>Total Bus Division</b>	<b>\$26.1</b>	<b>\$6.6</b>	<b>\$3.3</b>	
<b>Rail Division</b>				
<i>Operations &amp; Scheduling</i>	\$2.8			
<i>Administration</i>	\$1.0			
<b>Total Rail Division</b>	<b>\$3.8</b>			
Police	\$0.6			
Corporate				
<b>Total Operating Cost Savings</b>	\$31.0	\$6.6	\$3.3	\$40.9
<b>Total Debt Service Cost Savings</b>	\$2.0			\$2.0
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL COST SAVING</b>	<b>\$33.0</b>	<b>\$6.6</b>	<b>\$3.3</b>	<b>\$42.9</b>

## CHANGES IN COST PER HOUR

For the purpose of measuring cost efficiency, the transit industry utilizes a number of performance indicators. For this review, a single indicator has been used – operating cost per service hour. Very simply, this indicator links cost input to service output using readily available information. It is notable that it excludes capital costs as well as debt service and depreciation. The use of service hours does not account for variability in capacity, such as rail transit compared to bus transit. Notwithstanding these short comings, the measure is the most commonly used across the transit industry.

<sup>17</sup> Reductions occur at various times during the year, for example with each schedule, and therefore may only be partially realized in one calendar year.

The cost per hour measure has been calculated for the following:

- Total Transit System = Conventional and custom transit, TransLink corporate and transit police
- Conventional Transit = All rail, bus and ferry services, including contracted services and operating company administration.
- Custom Transit = Access Transit, including operating company administration
- Bus = Conventional bus and community shuttle, including contracted services and operating company administration

Again, it should be noted that the costs savings estimated in Table 5-1 are only partly included in the *2013 Base Plan* and may also only apply to a portion of a year. As a result, the full effect of these reductions is not reflected in the cost per hour, which is consequently higher especially for bus. Table 5-2 provides cost per service hour for 2011 and the 2012 budget as well as the forecast cost per service hour for 2013 to 2015 from the *2013 Base Plan*.

**TABLE 5-2: COST PER HOUR**

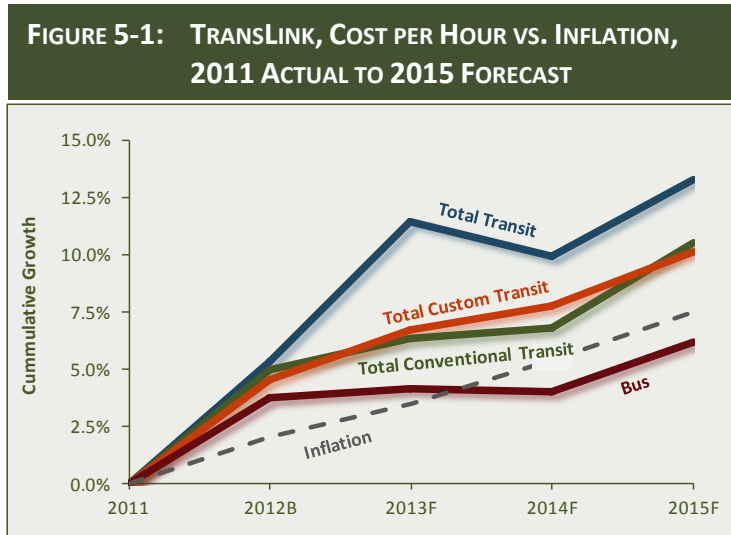
COST PER HOUR	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2012-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional, Custom & Corporate)	\$132.55	\$139.61	\$147.72	\$145.67	\$150.18	7.6%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)	\$121.93	\$127.92	\$129.62	\$130.20	\$134.81	5.4%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)	\$77.11	\$80.60	\$82.27	\$83.11	\$84.95	5.4%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)	\$111.17	\$115.29	\$115.78	\$115.61	\$118.06	2.4%
Corporate, Studies & Transit Police	\$14.53	\$15.72	\$22.17	\$19.51	\$19.65	25.0%
CCFG Cost per Hour Impact			\$4.23	\$2.84	\$2.84	
<b>Changes from 2012 MF</b>						
Total Transit (Conventional, Custom & Corporate)		<b>-\$0.78</b>	\$6.07	\$1.86	\$2.86	2.6%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)		<b>-\$2.06</b>	<b>-\$1.45</b>	<b>-\$2.81</b>	<b>-\$1.48</b>	0.5%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)		\$0.09	\$0.55	\$0.57	\$0.77	0.8%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)		<b>-\$1.41</b>	<b>-\$1.84</b>	<b>-\$3.72</b>	<b>-\$2.32</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>
Corporate, Studies & Transit Police		\$1.01	\$7.44	\$4.48	\$4.27	20.4%

## Total Transit System Cost per Hour

The total transit system cost per service hour is forecast to increase by 7.6% from \$139.61 in 2012 to a \$150.18 in 2015, which exceeds inflation (6.4%). While operating costs grow below the rate of inflation, TransLink corporate and police costs are projected to increase by 25% over this period.

Much of this latter growth is driven by the introduction of the Compass Card and Fare Gates (CCFG) in 2013 and the added costs for operating CCFG, including staffing costs that will ultimately be transferred to the operating companies<sup>18</sup>. TransLink also proposes a number of studies that are increasing costs. TransLink police costs continue to escalate in part due to the move to new facilities in Sapperton. Overall, the percentage of corporate and police costs relative to total transit costs increases from 11.3% in 2012 to 15% in 2013.

Compared to the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*, the total transit system cost per hour is higher throughout the Forecast Period. This increase results because the reduction in service hours was greater than the decline in total operating costs.



Inflation rate sourced from Central 1, Economic Analysis of British Columbia, Volume 32, Issue 4, September 2012

## Conventional Transit Cost per Hour

The cost per service hour for conventional transit is expected to grow by 5.4% between 2012 and 2015 or slightly below inflation. However, total cost per hour growth since 2011 remains higher due to the *2012 Budget* cost per hour increase, which was almost triple inflation. The tempering in cost per hour reflects the continued focus on efficiency and cost reduction particularly in CMBC. Rail costs increase at a higher rate than bus costs due to the impact of the 48 cars placed in service in 2010 coming off warranty over the next three years, E&M guideway repairs as well as inclusion of testing and commissioning costs for the SkyTrain extension to Coquitlam City Centre in 2015.

Conventional transit cost per hour is \$1.95 lower on average throughout the period from 2012 to 2015 compared to the *2012 Moving Forward Plan* largely due to cost reductions, particularly in bus costs. However, the rate of increase in cost per hour over this period is marginally higher (0.5%) than projected in the *Moving Forward Plan*.

<sup>18</sup> CCFG increases cost per hour by \$4.23 in 2013, and \$2.84 in 2014 and 2015.

## Custom Transit Cost per Hour

Custom transit cost per service hour is projected to grow by 5.4% over the next three years from \$80.60 to \$84.95. Again, this increase is slightly below inflation but does not offset the sharp growth in cost per hour in the *2012 Budget*. The slower rate of growth over the Forecast Period compared to prior years reflects efficiencies already introduced, such as reduced spare vehicles and an increased proportion of smaller ‘micro’ buses that are more efficient to operate. Relative to the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*, custom transit cost per hour is slightly higher (on average \$0.50 per hour) as is the rate of increase in cost per hour over this period (0.8%) despite lower costs.

## Bus Cost per Hour

The cost per hour for conventional bus and community shuttle service is projected to increase 2.4% from \$115.29 in 2012 to \$118.06 in 2015. The increase is less than half the rate of inflation and serves to reduce total bus cost per hour growth since 2011 below inflation. This relatively small increase reflects a concerted effort on finding efficiencies and reducing costs at CMBC. Significant cost reductions have been found in scheduling, operations, fleet, maintenance and administration. In addition, CMBC forecasts the “rightsizing” of vehicles will increase the use of community shuttles over the next three years. As these lower cost services are substituted for underutilized conventional buses, the proportion of bus service operated by community shuttles is expected to increase from 11.3% in 2012 to 13.1% in 2015.

In contrast to the transit system cost per hour indicator, bus cost per hour is consistently lower (\$2.32 on average) than the *Moving Forward Plan* between 2012 and 2015. This improvement relates primarily to cost reductions as costs have decreased more in percentage terms than service hours (-6.7% vs. -5.8%).

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The *Efficiency Review* completed in April 2012 highlighted eight areas and put forward 29 short term and eight longer term recommendations on potential cost savings. The *Progress Report* focused solely on the *Efficiency Review's* short term recommendations. It found that positive actions had been taken on 12 of the 29 recommendations, three appear to have initiatives under consideration or slated for 2013 and seven have been flagged for future action by TransLink. The most notable and productive actions to date include:

- Reducing non-reproductive time (recovery and deadhead time) and deducting these scheduling savings from the bus division budget;
- “Right-sizing” or substituting more cost effective community shuttle service for underutilized conventional bus service;
- Reducing spare vehicles thus lowering maintenance, insurance and other operating costs as well as debt service costs through reduced new vehicle acquisitions; and,
- Bus maintenance reorganization and other maintenance efficiency savings.

Clearly, significant progress has been made with respect to the *Efficiency Review* recommendations and more initiatives appear to be underway that should result in further cost reductions.

Approximately \$33 million in annualized cost savings are estimated in 2012/2013 that have either been or are in the process of being implemented by TransLink and its subsidiaries since the completion of the *Efficiency Review*. The bulk of the cost savings (\$28 million or 85%) have been realized by CMBC. Cost savings in 2014 and 2015 are estimated to be \$6.6 and \$3.3 million respectively. To date, these savings primarily result from the planned reduction of schedule recovery time from bus operations. Other measures generally have yet to be defined. In total, this brings TransLink's expected annualized cost savings to \$43 million.

Cost per hour for the total transit system in the *2013 Base Plan* is nevertheless higher over the Forecast Period (2013 to 2015) than in the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*. This contrasts with both the conventional transit and bus costs per hour, which show material decreases in all years over this period. As noted in Section 5, not all cost savings identified have been included in the *2013 Base Plan*. As a result, the cost per hour, particularly for bus, is likely high.

Overall, there have been significant reductions in operating costs, particularly by CMBC, that are reflected in the lower conventional transit and bus costs per hour and moderate increases in both rail and custom transit cost per hour over the *2013 Base Plan* Forecast Period. And even though custom transit cost per hour is slightly higher than in the *2012 Moving Forward Plan*, its tempered growth shows marked improvement compared to prior years.

However, gains from operating company efficiencies are partially eroded by the sharp increase in TransLink corporate costs between 2012 and 2015 (25%), much of this related to the CCFG introduction. Even excluding CCFG and studies, corporate costs increase by 11.2% between 2012 and 2015, which includes a 26% increase in computer and systems costs. While TransLink has reported that investment in this area had previously been neglected, this corrective swing and the significant increase in corporate and police costs as a percentage of total transit expenditures contrasts with the economy initiatives in the subsidiaries. This trend merits monitoring.

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A Total Operating Costs and Service Hours

**TABLE A-1: 2013 BASE PLAN OPERATING COSTS (\$M)**

OPERATING COSTS	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2014-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional, Custom & Corporate)	\$916.3	\$979.2	\$1,023.2	\$1,011.2	\$1,045.4	6.8%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)	\$769.4	\$820.7	\$820.5	\$826.1	\$857.8	4.5%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)	\$46.5	\$48.2	\$49.2	\$49.7	\$50.8	5.4%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)	\$545.7	\$576.1	\$573.7	\$574.6	\$588.9	2.2%
Corporate, Studies & Transit Police	\$100.5	\$110.3	\$153.6	\$135.4	\$136.8	24.1%

Source: TransLink

**TABLE A-2: 2013 BASE PLAN SERVICE HOURS (M)**

OPERATING COSTS	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2014-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional & Custom)	6.913	7.014	6.927	6.942	6.961	-0.8%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)	6.31	6.416	6.33	6.345	6.363	-0.8%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)	0.603	0.598	0.598	0.598	0.598	0.0%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)	4.909	4.997	4.955	4.97	4.988	-0.2%

Source: TransLink

**TABLE A-3: 2012 MOVING FORWARD PLAN OPERATING COSTS (\$M)**

OPERATING COSTS	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2014-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional, Custom & Corporate)		\$989.6	\$1,032.4	\$1,054.7	\$1,080.5	9.2%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)		\$836.5	\$875.0	\$893.9	\$916.0	9.5%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)		\$49.4	\$50.1	\$50.6	\$51.6	4.6%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)		\$590.3	\$623.2	\$637.6	\$643.2	9.0%
Corporate, Studies & Transit Police		\$103.7	\$107.3	\$110.2	\$112.8	8.8%

Source: TransLink



**TABLE A-4: 2012 MOVING FORWARD PLAN SERVICE HOURS (M)**

OPERATING COSTS	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2014-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional & Custom)		7.049	7.289	7.334	7.334	4.0%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)		6.436	6.676	6.721	6.721	4.4%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)		0.613	0.613	0.613	0.613	0.0%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)		5.058	5.298	5.343	5.343	5.6%

Source: TransLink

**TABLE A-5: VARIANCE—2013 BASE PLAN VS. 2012 MOVING FORWARD PLAN OPERATING COSTS (\$M)**

OPERATING COSTS	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2014-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional, Custom & Corporate)		-\$10.4	-\$9.2	-\$43.5	-\$35.0	-2.4%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)		-\$15.8	-\$54.6	-\$67.8	-\$58.2	-5.0%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)		-\$1.2	-\$0.9	-\$0.9	-\$0.8	0.8%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)		-\$14.2	-\$49.5	-\$63.0	-\$54.3	-6.7%
Corporate, Studies & Transit Police		\$6.6	\$46.2	\$25.2	\$24.0	15.2%

Source: TransLink

**TABLE A-6: VARIANCE—2013 BASE PLAN VS. 2012 MOVING FORWARD PLAN SERVICE HOURS (M)**

OPERATING COSTS	ACTUAL 2011	BUDGET 2012	FORECAST			% CHANGE 2014-15
			2013	2014	2015	
Total Transit (Conventional & Custom)		-0.035	-0.362	-0.392	-0.373	-4.8%
Total Conventional Transit (Bus, Rail & Ferry)		-0.020	-0.346	-0.376	-0.358	-5.3%
Total Custom Transit (Access Transit)		-0.010	-0.015	-0.015	-0.015	0.0%
Bus (Conventional Bus & Community Shuttle)		-0.061	-0.343	-0.373	-0.355	-5.8%

Source: TransLink