

Subway line for Broadway corridor is best option but also most expensive, TransLink study says

BY KELLY SINOSKI, VANCOUVER SUN MARCH 6, 2013



The City of Vancouver says a subway to UBC is the best method to deal with constant overcrowding of transit along the heavily used Broadway corridor. TransLink has cited a \$3-billion subway line along the Broadway corridor as having the “highest acceptability rating” among three potential rapid-transit options.

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But the transportation authority noted light rail transit or a partly tunnelled LRT — ranging from \$1.1 billion to \$1.84 billion — along with a \$2.67-billion combination of subway and LRT are also “more acceptable than business as usual” on the heavily congested corridor.

Bus or bus rapid transit along the route, meanwhile, has not been recommended for further consideration because “they do not have sufficient capacity to meet demand in 2041,” according to a University of B.C. rapid-transit analysis.

The analysis comes less than a week after the city of Vancouver and UBC released a KPMG report and made another pitch for a subway along the Broadway corridor, with Mayor Gregor Robertson suggesting the area is at risk of losing high-tech jobs to other cities such as Toronto, New York or San Diego because of “gridlock and over-stretched transit.”

According to the UBC rapid-transit analysis, the subway would provide the greatest improvement at the highest cost along the corridor, with a projected 320,000 daily boardings by 2041, and would generate 54,000 additional daily trips in the region.

By comparison, a combination of LRT and subway would have a projected 350,000 daily boardings, generate 44,000 additional transit trips and provide “rapid transit benefits to a broader area” because it serves two routes east of Arbutus. LRT is projected to have 160,000 daily boardings with 11,000 additional trips by 2041 but has the option of part of the LRT built in a tunnel where Broadway is busiest.

Meanwhile, TransLink has also narrowed the options for rapid transit in Surrey, including a \$900-million bus rapid-transit project on Fraser Highway, King George Boulevard and 104th Avenue; a combination of light rail on Fraser Highway with bus rapid transit (\$1.68 billion) on King George and 104th; light rail on Fraser Highway, 104th Avenue and King George to Newton, with rapid bus to White Rock \$2.18 billion); and SkyTrain (\$2.2 billion) on Fraser Highway and bus rapid transit everywhere else.

Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts said her city will continue to push for light rail on all three routes: Fraser Highway, King George and 104th Avenue. That option is expected to generate 166,000 daily boardings, compared with 180,000 for the first two options and 200,000 for the four alternative.

The options for both rapid transit lines will now be referred to the regional transportation strategy to consider the trade-offs and benefits and determine the preferred option.

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