

north shore news

HandyDART depot facing eviction

Service could be forced off North Shore

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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The union representing HandyDART drivers is warning the bus depot may soon be moved off the North Shore and that service for the seniors and people with disabilities who rely on the shuttle could suffer as a result.

The depot has had a series of temporary homes in recent months including the current one at Lions Gate Marina at the foot of Senator Road. The landlord has told TransLink and its HandyDart contractor MVT Canadian Bus Inc. that it must be off the premises by May 31.

MVT had been using the site temporarily after being told the operation could no longer stay at the now-defunct AirCare testing facility across the street. Unless a new location can be found locally, the 19 buses stored there will be moved to a depot off of North Road in Coquitlam and HandyDART drivers will have to commute there to start and finish their shifts.

"The concerns from our members have been about the fact that if the yard has to move to North Road, there will be a loss of services because the buses will be running to and from the North Shore, obviously empty for up to an hour a day. That's a lot of service that will be lost," said Bob Chitrenky, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union local 1724.

The first pick-up of the day is at 5:15 a.m. and the buses have to be parked at the depot by 10 p.m., Chitrenky said. It's unclear how that could be accommodated given the employees' schedules, he added.

"Unfortunately, it's a question of finding property over on the North Shore that can handle our buses. We don't need a big property. It's only 19 buses," Chitrenky said.

In a parallel issue, the City of North Vancouver has been fighting TransLink's decision to close the Third Street bus depot and move it across Burrard Inlet over concerns the North Shore would lose all its bus service in the event of the Ironworkers Memorial Second Narrows Crossing being closed.

In the meantime, TransLink and MVT are looking for options to keep the HandyDART depot on the North Shore, according to a statement from the agency.

"MVT has approached the owners of the property, who have indicated they may consider entering a long-term lease," it said. "CMBC Transit services and MVT are working with TransLink's real estate division and with independent realtors to find a new location on the North Shore. If efforts to find one on the North Shore are unsuccessful, the buses will be deployed from the North Road HandyDART depot in Coquitlam.

"Regardless of the eventual depot location, we don't anticipate any impact on service to customers," the statement read.

MVT did not respond to an interview request and the District of North Vancouver did not have anyone available by North Shore News' deadline Friday.

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