

ITEM 14
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 01
COUNCIL MEETING 86/01/06

RE: DELEGATION APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL AT ITS REGULAR MEETING 1985 DECEMBER 09
SPOKESMAN MR. BRIAN PRENTICE, 4386 PORTLAND STREET, BURNABY, B.C., V5J 2N6

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendation of the Director Planning & Building Inspection be adopted.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1985 December 18

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

SUBJECT: PROPOSED BUS ROUTING ALONG PORTLAND STREET (DELEGATION
APPEARING BEFORE COUNCIL AT ITS REGULAR MEETING 1985 DECEMBER
09) - SPOKESMAN MR. BRIAN PRENTICE)

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to Mr. T. B. Prentice,
4386 Portland Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 2N6

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

At its meeting of 1985 December 09 Council heard Mr. Brian Prentice as a delegation representing residents of Portland Street who are opposed to the proposed routing of the No. 116 Suncrest local route that feeds to the ALRT station and bus interchange at Metrotown. The purpose of this report is to respond to the concerns raised by Mr. Prentice as well as by members of Council.

2.0 BACKGROUND:

The routing of the 116 bus along Sussex/Portland as shown on Figure 1 attached is to be implemented along with other approved routing changes related to B.C. Transit's bus/ALRT integration plan. The bus/ALRT integration was to occur simultaneously with the ALRT system entering regular service in January but the major re-routing of buses has now been postponed to March 07.

Council was first introduced to B.C. Transit's preliminary bus/ALRT integration proposals at its meeting of 1984 October 09 when it considered a staff report on the 1985/1986 Annual Service Plan for the Vancouver Regional Transit System (Manager's Report No. 62, Item 7). That report was referred to a caucus meeting of Council held on 1984 October 15. Amongst other things members of Council were concerned that the south slope bus routings that were indicated by B.C. Transit at that time were essentially similar to the existing routes and hence the coverage of the south slope routes showed no improvement. Accordingly Council adopted the following recommendations at its regular meeting of 1984 October 22.

"THAT the transit service changes proposed for Burnaby in the Annual Service Plan include consideration of the following:

- a) improved route network coverage such that no developed area in Burnaby is further than 400 meters (one quarter mile) from a transit/ALRT station
- c) stronger north/south ALRT feeder bus linkages particularly on the south slope".

It was in response to these concerns that B.C. Transit revised its bus/ALRT integration plans for Burnaby/New Westminster. The revised plan was introduced to Council at its meeting of 1985 April 09 (Item 2, Manager's Report No. 27). This plan included a new local loop route (No. 114/115) which circulated through the south slope neighbourhood via Clinton, Gilley, Marine Drive and Nelson. To improve coverage the 116 Suncrest routing was revised to incorporate Sussex and Portland as part of its local circulation loop. After a meeting with B.C. Transit staff Council approved the bus/ALRT integration plan in principle at its meeting of 1985 May 21 (Item 6, Manager's Report No. 35).

3.0 ROUTING ALTERNATIVES:

The existing Suncrest route (No. 130) is routed from Metrotown via Sussex to Rumble, Rumble to Patterson, southbound on Patterson to Marine Drive, west on Marine Drive to Joffre, north on Joffre to Rumble and east on Rumble to complete the one-way loop at Sussex. The problem with this routing is that it does not provide an adequate level of transit coverage in the residential area west of the Gray Creek Ravine Park. The Municipality's adopted standard is that residential areas should not be further than 400 meters (one quarter mile) radial distance from a bus route. B.C. Transit's guideline is that no built-up area should be more than 450 meters walking distance to a bus stop. The two standards are essentially similar but the B.C. Transit one is better since it is less arbitrary.

To improve coverage, extension of the loop to Marine Drive via Sussex was considered and rejected because of the grade. Sussex has a sustained grade of 15 percent on approach to Marine Drive (the sustained grade on Patterson is 12.5 percent). Thus the only practicable way of improving coverage is to extend the Suncrest route via Sussex and Portland as proposed. B.C. Transit estimate that this extension brings approximately 200 persons to within their coverage standard. This figure however tends to understate the benefits. B.C. Transit's 'strict' coverage analysis includes the Marine Drive bus which is not an alternative to the two south slope local routings that feed to Burnaby Metrotown.

The reduction in walking distance varies depending on location within the outlined area shown on Figure 1. The majority of residents, (in the area south and east of Portland/Bradley) would have their walking distance reduced by about 300 meters. This is equivalent to a walking time of 3-5 minutes (depending on condition).

The area shown in Figure 1 contains approximately 290 residential properties. Assuming one household per property the benefit of reduced walking time would be extended to over 800 persons. 1981 census data for the Sussex/Nelson Planning Study Area (which includes the area under discussion) indicates that 12 percent of the population is comprised of people aged 65 or over. The high percentage of population in the 45 to 64 age group (26.3 percent versus a municipal average of 22.8 percent) suggests a "greying" population that will increasingly place reliance on public transportation rather than car usage for mobility needs.

4.0 OTHER ISSUES:

The above discussion has addressed a number of the concerns expressed by the delegation including the number of people benefiting from the route, seniors, the grade on Sussex south of Portland, the chronology of events, etc. The other concerns that were raised are discussed below:

4.1 Travel Times

Mr. Prentice suggested that the Sussex/Portland diversion would not be attractive because of the time required to travel around the loop. He assumed that the travel time would be increased by schedule recovery time during which the bus would 'sit' at Marine Drive and Greenall. This will not be the case. The travel time for the bus from Portland and Sussex around the loop to Sussex and Rumble will be approximately 8 minutes. Thus the longest in bus travel time to Metrotown will be approximately one quarter of an hour. It should be noted that on the return leg from Metrotown the patrons using stops along Portland would have a shorter travel time as they would not have to circulate around the loop.

As might be expected research into the subject of modal choice has confirmed that people place different perceptual weightings on the separate time components of their journey. Typically walking and waiting time for transit is 'valued' at respectively two and three times the unit in-vehicle time. Thus in making transit attractive to users it is important to minimize the walking and waiting components of journey time as well as vehicle travel time. The Transit focus concept of timed transfer interchanges, the ALRT system and better route coverage in residential areas are all important to meeting the objective of making the transit system more attractive.

4.2 Suitability of Portland Street

Concern has been expressed regarding the physical suitability of Portland Street for routing buses. Between Patterson and McKay, Portland Street is finished to a 28 foot standard and between McKay and Sussex, it is surfaced with an interim 'cap'. Obviously a wider street would be better. However, a field test by a full size bus has confirmed that the route can

be negotiated safely by a bus. Only a minor improvement, to the north-west corner of Sussex and Portland, has been identified as being required. There are other streets in the Municipality with the same standard as Portland that are being currently used as bus routes.

4.3 Safety

Staff appreciate the concern of Portland residents regarding the safety of their children. We do not believe that the presence of buses in the street will constitute a safety hazard. Buses are driven by trained professional drivers seated in a vehicle that gives them a sight advantage greater than enjoyed by a private car. Children will also perceive the presence of a bus much more readily than they would a private car.

4.4 Taxes

The minor adjustments that the Municipality is making to the road system in connection with the bus/ALRT integration will be funded from general revenue sources and are not a major cost item relative to municipal expenditures on transportation. The improvement and/or widening of Portland Street is not being contemplated at this time. Should the street be improved it would be as a Local Improvement at the request of residents. Through the Local Improvement Program approximately 60% of the cost of the improvement is charged back to residents and reflects the construction costs of a 28 foot wide street (even if a wider standard of street is built).

4.5 Dissemination of Information

Portland residents are concerned that they were not notified of/or otherwise involved in the routing decision. There is often a problem regarding the communication of public information on changes in municipal services or infrastructure to the affected residents of the Municipality. Generally the existing communication media work adequately but sometimes they do not. The fact that transit improvements are the responsibility of B.C. Transit rather than the Municipality creates some ambiguity as to which agency should be responsible for marketing transit changes.


5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS:

The Municipality has an adopted policy regarding transit that states:

"THAT COUNCIL SUPPORT AND PURSUE THE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC TRANSIT SYSTEM WITH THE OBJECTIVE THAT SUCH A SYSTEM WILL BECOME THE MOST ATTRACTIVE MEANS OF ACCESS TO SELECTED CORE AREAS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE DURING PEAK MOVEMENT TIMES AND PROVIDE A COMPETITIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE USE OF THE PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE AS A MEANS OF MOVEMENT WITHIN THE REGION AND THE MUNICIPALITY."

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Achievement of this policy objective can only be realized if the transit system is more attractive than it is at present. When automobile users have been asked, in regional travel surveys, why they did not use transit for their journey the typical response is that the transit is inconvenient, too slow, etc. The Municipal-ity's Transportation Plan defines a concept for a municipal public transportation system that will potentially be attractive to users. These plans are now coming to fruition with the development of ALRT and the implementation of transit focal points at the key ALRT stations in Burnaby. It is essential that route coverage on the local feeder bus system be maximized to ensure that residents now and in the future have a ready accessibility to public transit.


A. L. PARR
DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

PL/nb
Attach.

cc: Director Engineering

