

Re: 1989/90 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN FOR THE  
VANCOUVER REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM  
(Item 8, Manager's Report No. 25, 1988 April 05)

ITEM 10  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 47  
COUNCIL MEETING 1988/07/11

ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

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

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1988 June 27

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING INSPECTION Our File: 08.201

SUBJECT: 1989/90 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN FOR THE VANCOUVER REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM

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RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be sent to John Mills, Vice President Planning, B.C. Transit and Mayor D.A.S. Lanskaill, Chairman, Greater Vancouver Regional Transit Commission.

R E P O R T

1.0 INTRODUCTION/SUMMARY

Each year BC Transit prepares and publishes an Annual Service Plan for the operation of transit for the coming operating year. The transit operating year extends from April 01 to March 31. At its meeting of 1988 April 05 (Manager's Report No. 25, Item #8) Council received a report on the subject "Transit Planning in Burnaby - An Update". That report included discussion of the 1988/89 Annual Service Plan and municipal concerns raised previously.

This year BC Transit has initiated the consultation process for service planning earlier than previously. They have written to us as follows:

"As part of the development of the 1989/90 Annual Service Plan for the Vancouver Regional Transit System, we are requesting that municipalities forward requests and suggestions for new or modified service. These requests may include new routes, changes or extensions to existing routes, changes to service hours, frequencies, days of operation, etc., construction of park n' ride lots, transit exchanges or transit priority measures.

These requests should be approved by Municipal Councils and ideally forwarded to BC Transit by July 31, 1988 for consideration in the 1989/90 Annual Service Plan. All requests/suggestions should contain background and some justification for the proposal. Each proposal will be evaluated by BC Transit against the plan's objectives and financial constraints, and therefore may not be included in the final service plan document." (Letter from BC Transit dated 1988 June 07).

The items discussed in this report are mostly ones which the Municipality has requested previously. For example planning and implementation of a North Burnaby Area Plan has been requested, included and postponed on a perennial basis in successive Annual Service Plans since 1982.

## 2.0 MUNICIPAL REQUESTS

The key municipal requests for transit improvements are based on adopted policies, and the Burnaby Comprehensive Transportation Plan. It is to be noted that since adoption of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan some significant achievements have been made toward the realization of the transit component of the plan. Most important is the implementation of the transit focal point concept in South Burnaby in conjunction with the SkyTrain development.

### 2.1 North Burnaby Area Plan

The routing of buses in North Burnaby has been considered to be a problem by successive transit authorities since the 1970s but comprehensive transit initiatives remained unimplemented. The GVRD initiated a review of the North Burnaby area with a series of public meetings in 1982. The draft Service Plan for 1986/87 (dated 1985 October) which was approved by Burnaby Council, BC Transit stated:

"An analysis of the current community land use pattern, coupled with the performance of the existing transit system supports the conclusion that a major restructuring of transit routings is required in North Burnaby. Over the past 20 years there have been significant changes to the nature of the community, resulting in many new and varied travel patterns. The route structure however, has not responded to these changes resulting in the situation today where transit is not meeting the needs of residents in the area. Ridership data has confirmed this as many North Burnaby local routes are failing to meet even minimum productivity levels.

The Service Plan is designed to update the North Burnaby transit system in light of changes in land use. It is also designed to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness by using existing resources more logically.

The construction of a new operating centre on Boundary Road (at Kitchener Street) coupled with the January 3, 1986 bus-ALRT changes will allow the North Burnaby project to proceed as originally planned."

Notwithstanding this emphatic endorsement the final version of the Service Plan published in 1986 March postponed the implementation of the area plan to the next fiscal year - 1987/88. Since then the North Burnaby Area Plan no longer features in Draft Annual Service Plans. Transit's stated prerequisite - ALRT integration and the Kitchener bus garage - have been operational for some time now.

The key elements of the North Burnaby Area Plan are as follows:

2.1.1 The Reorganization of Local North Burnaby Routes

It is generally acknowledged that routing of local services to North Burnaby is not optimal and it is assumed that a rationalization of routes will improve system productivity. However modifications to existing routes, and the introduction of new routes will have to be done with sensitivity. The reorganization of routes in South Burnaby has shown that existing transit riders have often integrated their lifestyle with the existing pattern of transit. For them changes may not appear beneficial. For other people who do not value transit introduction of bus routes and transit stops to their neighbourhood, is viewed with some misgiving. These factors can be mitigated by the public consultation program adopted by BC Transit and endorsed by Burnaby Council.

2.1.2 Brentwood (Mall) Transit Interchange

A key element of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan is the transit focus concept which proposes transit node points at Town Centres. New off-street transit interchanges have been developed at Edmonds Station, Metrotown and Lougheed Mall. The only transit focus left to develop is in the Brentwood area. Municipal staff have been working with the owners of Brentwood Mall and BC Transit to achieve the siting of a transit interchange at the Mall. At this stage staff are hopeful that we will succeed. It must be emphasized however that as well as cooperation of the Mall proprietor, a strong commitment is required from BC Transit.

2.1.3 Trolley Extensions

The initial Implementation Strategy of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan indicated the extension of Vancouver trunk line trolley services into the Municipality as precursor to development of the focal concept. The existing trolley terminus loops on Broadway and Hastings (Kootenay Loop) west of Boundary Road are not optimal interchange points. The extensions provide a better "interface" between the suburban focal point concept and the urban grid network of transit that serves the City.

The extension of the Kingsway trolley through the Metrotown transit interchange has been implemented but the other trolley extensions have not received recent active consideration. Some years ago possibilities of extending Hastings trolleys eastward from Kootenay Loop was actively pursued by (GVRD) transit planning staff with cooperation of the Municipality. When the trolley extension plans were shelved by BC Transit it was on the understanding that they would be reconsidered in the context of the North Burnaby Area Plan. We assume that this will be the case.

## 2.2 South Burnaby Bus/SkyTrain Integration

Integration of the South Burnaby transit network and SkyTrain occurred in 1986 March shortly after SkyTrain entered revenue service. There has been some "fine tuning" of routes but further review is required to assess whether or not particular routing proposals made by the Municipality should now be implemented. Burnaby has proposed that the No. 28 Smith bus, which serves Burnaby Hospital, be routed to the Metrotown transit focus rather than to Joyce Station. This rerouting warrants reconsideration with Metrotown core area development. It is perhaps significant that when bus/SkyTrain integration was under review in Vancouver, the Joyce Station Area Planning Committee also recommended the No. 28 be focused on Metrotown rather than Joyce Station.

Similarly the Municipality, with support from Burnaby residents, has recommended that the No. 101 bus originating at Lougheed Mall terminate at the Edmonds Station rather than at the 22nd Street Station in New Westminster.

## 2.3 Transit Planning

The forthcoming service planning year should include the following planning activities.

### 2.3.1 A Strategic Plan for Transit

The Municipality has recommended that BC Transit develop its Annual Service Plan in the context of a hierarchy of longer range plans. BC Transit has indicated that it will be developing a 5 Year Plan but it has not yet done so. It appears that BC Transit, and the Municipalities (through GVRD Development Services Department) will shortly embark on a coordinated Transportation Forecasting/Planning exercise. The result could be a Comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan that integrates public transportation and road infrastructure investment if the Ministry of Transportation and Highways also agreed to participate.

### 2.3.2 Rapid Transit Extensions

It is in the interest of all the Municipalities of the Region that BC Transit define future rapid transit corridors and specify when lines/expansions might be implemented. An operationally attractive proposal that has been tested through computer simulation is the extension of SkyTrain to Lougheed Town Centre via the Edmonds Corridor. The Municipality has offered to work with BC Transit to develop a preliminary plan which would determine whether a feasible alignment could be specified. In this instance municipal staff are most concerned that potential negative impacts on adjacent land uses can be mitigated. We also wish to ensure that land development is coordinated to support a future extension (assuming a feasible alignment is defined and adopted).

### 2.3.3 Commuter Rail

Burnaby's Comprehensive Transportation Plan shows commuter rail service along the Burrard Foreshore. Notwithstanding recent political initiatives to revive it, it is our understanding that BC Transit staff are not actively considering the commuter rail proposal. It is our view that a review is warranted.

### 2.3.4 Transit Innovation

Municipal staff have suggested that BC Transit evaluate the introduction of non-standard transit vehicles. An early draft of the 1988/89 Service Plan proposed the introduction of articulated diesel buses on selected Richmond trunk routes. The Barnet/Hastings corridor should also be considered for articulated bus operation in order to meet anticipated North East sector travel demand growth.

In Europe the use of mini/midi bus vehicles is now common practice for many transit operations. In North America the common wisdom among bus operators remains that small buses are not as cost effective as standard buses because of their shorter life cycle and higher maintenance costs. We have suggested that it may be worthwhile to test smaller vehicles on some of Burnaby's local feeder routes, such as the No. 116 Suncrest. Mini/midi buses may be less intrusive and more productive than full size buses when operating on local residential streets.

### 3.0 TRANSIT SYSTEM OBJECTIVES

BC Transit will be evaluating municipal requests "against the plan's objectives and financial constraints". The objectives are not specified but last year's transit service plan objectives were:

- "1. Maintain the current level of transit service over the next year.
2. Introduce new or expanded service only where increased travel demand warrants.
3. Improve overall system performance and efficiency."

For Burnaby, a suitable objective, one that meshed with adopted policies and plans might read:

"That transit increase its modal share of travel demand in the Municipality, particularly in the traffic congested North Burnaby corridor".

Unfortunately the reality of funding constraints may preclude such an objective - attracting new riders to transit, particularly during peak periods requires increased system capacity at typically a net increase in cost.

4.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Burnaby has recently submitted the following reports and Briefs to the Greater Vancouver Regional Transit Commission.

1. Transit Fares and Funding (Staff report to the Council Meeting of 1988 April 18, Item #8, Municipal Manager's Report No. 28).
2. The Location of the Transit Fare Zone Boundary in N.E. Burnaby (Brief submitted to the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission at its meeting of 1988 May 26).
3. The Structure and Organization of Transit in the Vancouver Conurbation (Brief submitted in response to a letter from Mayor D.A.S. Langskail, dated 1988 June).

In its INITIAL discussion of the latter item members of Council expressed the view that the Commission should be apprised of the range of Burnaby concerns regarding transit. Accordingly, and in the spirit of the Council Brief, it would be appropriate if municipal input to the 1989/90 Service Plan were directed to the Commission as well as BC Transit staff.



A.L. Parr  
DIRECTOR PLANNING &  
BUILDING INSPECTION

PL/mcb

cc: Director Engineering