

REPORTS
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
1988 JUNE 13

TO: MEMBERS OF THE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
1988 May 26

FROM: JOAN SAWICKI, COUNCIL MEMBER

SUBJECT: TEXT OF THE BRIEF REGARDING "THE LOCATION OF
THE TRANSIT FARE ZONE BOUNDARY IN N.E. BURNABY"

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RECOMMENDATION:

This is for the information of Council.

R E P O R T

Attached is the text of the Brief I submitted on behalf of The Corporation of the District of Burnaby to the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission at its meeting of 1988 May 26. At that time the Transit Commission received our submission and indicated that it would be considered in the context of a wider review of the fare zone system.

Coincidentally, at the 1988 May 26 meeting, the Commission also endorsed a BC Transit staff report recommending a revised N.E. Sector Bus Sky- Train Integration Plan. That report concluded as follows:

"The Commission should be aware that a major consideration in the recommendation [to continue] to operate the #151 and #152 services on the Willingdon-Hastings corridor was the opposition of Burnaby Council to rerouting these buses via the Lougheed-Broadway corridor. Burnaby Council requested that this change be reviewed as part of the North Burnaby Area Plan which is to be completed over the next year. The retention of the #151 and #152 addresses the request of Burnaby Council by maintaining the services on the Willingdon-Hastings corridor."


Joan Sawicki

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BRIEF RE TRANSIT FARE ZONE BOUNDARY IN N.E. BURNABY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Vancouver Regional Transit Commission has requested that BC Transit staff review the existing fare zone system. This brief is submitted by Burnaby Council relative to the location of the fare zone boundaries, particularly the one severing N.E. Burnaby. The Municipality's objections to this boundary location go back to 1984 April when fare zones were reintroduced. The Council of the day had endorsed a fare plan which placed the fare zone boundaries so that they were coincident with municipal boundaries. To meet the operational needs of MTOC the N.E. sector fare zone boundary was unilaterally shifted westward from North Road to Gaglardi Way. The effect of this was to alienate the Lougheed Town Centre area from the rest of the Municipality.

This report briefly re-examines our community concerns relative to the zone boundary through our Municipality. We submit that the current boundary location is inequitable in meeting a fundamental objective of fare zones - namely that fares should reflect distance travelled. Our position remains the same as in 1984.

"THAT the transit fare zone boundary in N.E. Burnaby be relocated to coincide with the municipal boundary along North Road including the Lougheed Mall transit interchange."

2.0 EQUITY

The fare zones have been established in order to provide some relationship between the price of transit (fares) and the cost of transit. Fare zones provide a crude pricing mechanism but no better option is available. Transit service is predominantly downtown oriented and so it is worthwhile to start considering zone boundaries in terms of distance from downtown. Figure 1 below shows a series of concentric rings spaced 10km apart and centered on downtown.

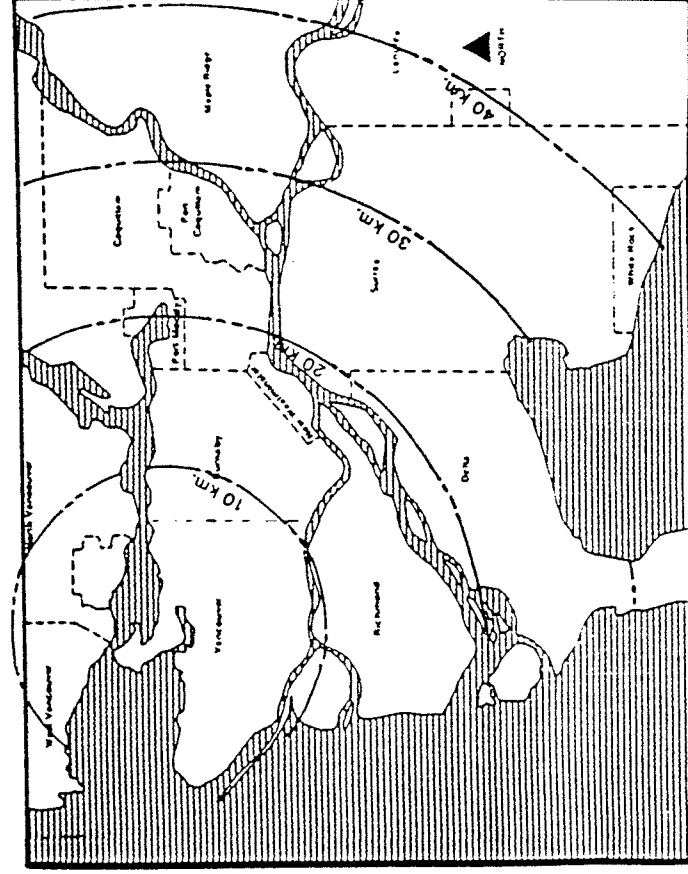


FIGURE 1. Radial Distance to Downtown Vancouver

Figure 2 shows how, coincidentally the existing fare zone boundaries approximate the 10 and 20km rings.

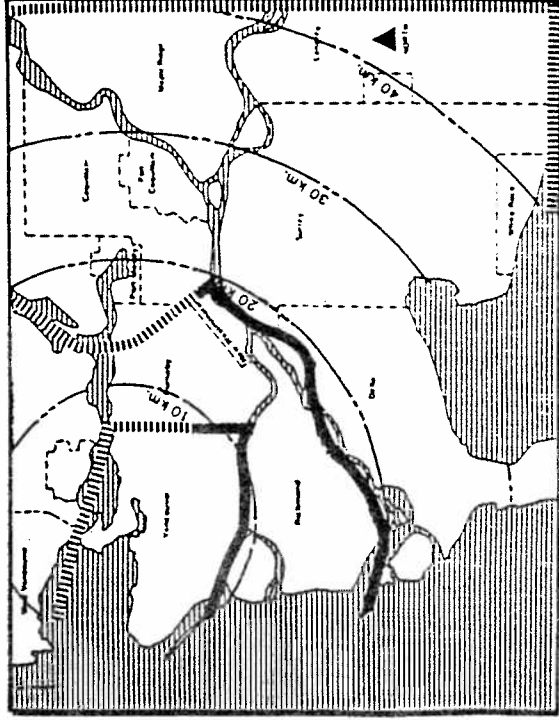


FIGURE 2. Existing Fare Zone Boundaries relative to Radial distance to Downtown

Approximations
Distortions

We would expect the fare zone boundaries to vary from this simplistic ring model. For example the distortion of the fare zone relative to the north shore is understandable given the relatively high cost of providing service across the Burrard Inlet.

Similarly the distortion of the fare zone in North West Burnaby to coincide with the city/municipal boundary makes sense since that boundary is readily comprehended by most transit users. As a consequence however, the Burnaby Capitol Hill resident travelling 10km downtown pays more than the Vancouver Champlain Heights resident travelling the same distance to the same location. It is recognized that some will lose depending on where the boundary is cast. For North Burnaby however, there is no offsetting bonus as the N.E. fare zone boundary is grossly distorted westward, coming within 2km of touching the "theoretical" 10km radius of the inner zone boundary. Conversely Figure 3 below also shows how a N.E. fare zone boundary that conformed to municipal borders is obviously more equitable than the current one.

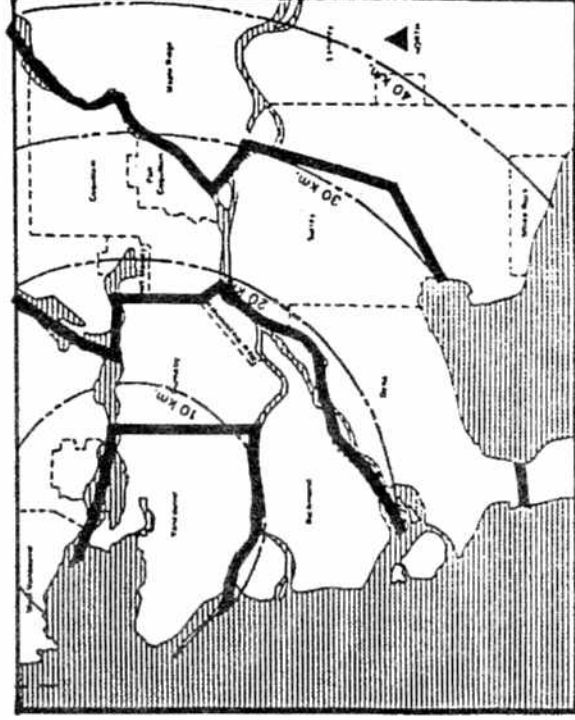


FIGURE 3. Improved Fare Zone Boundaries that Better Reflect Travel Distance

If this concept of transit zones roughly coinciding with 10km radii from downtown is extrapolated outward, Figure 3 indicates that another zone boundary south of the Fraser may be warranted. Such a boundary is shown approximately following the 30km radius ring that traverses the green belt areas of Surrey and Delta. We understand that the Transit Commission, today, will include Langley in the Greater Vancouver Transit Service area. With the current zone boundary that will mean that a Burnaby Loughheed Town Centre resident travelling 15km to Vancouver will pay the same as the Langley resident travelling 40km.

3.0 COMMUNITY CONCERN

One of the fundamental goals of the Municipality of Burnaby is to accommodate growth and accompanying change to the extent that it provides for a properly structured and identifiable community that will satisfy the total needs of the Municipality and at the same time enhance community self sufficiency and identity. Because of Burnaby's topography and history of urban growth, this process of community 'integration' has received, and continues to require, considerable fostering. Accordingly transit zone boundaries that arbitrarily exclude a significant part of the Municipality from the rest are contrary and particularly harmful to the municipal aim of facilitating community identity and cohesiveness.

The shift of the fare zone boundary to Gaglardi Way alienates one of our designated town centres from the rest of the Municipality. This core area centered on Loughheed Mall includes a population of 10,000 who pay municipal taxes on a level equal to other Burnaby residents. The fare zone boundary also alienates important community facilities from the rest of the Municipality including the Cameron Recreation Centre and the Burnaby Marine Park. Some of the Burnaby Cariboo Secondary school catchment area is similarly alienated from the school by the fare zone boundary.

The Municipality is keenly aware of the factors of urban structure which BC Transit has used to justify the fare zone boundary along Gaglardi Way. Our goal has been and remains to integrate the Loughheed Mall area as well as the more sparsely populated Burnet Highway corridor into the municipal community notwithstanding the physical impediments of topography, land use patterns, etc. Significantly, current fare zone boundaries coincide with municipal boundaries, except in the north-east of Burnaby. Notwithstanding any other evaluation criteria the location of this fare zone boundary should be a function of balance between municipal and community objectives equity, and the operational convenience of the transit operator.

The Municipality has adopted a series of 'transportation policies' and a Transportation Plan based on these policies. With respect to Public Transportation it has been resolved

"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.

THAT Council strive to obtain from the Provincial Government legislation establishing an appropriate cost-sharing formula for transit service funding that will allow the Municipalities to establish attractive fare schedules capable of encouraging public transit usage.

The Comprehensive Transportation Plan conceptually defines the principle of a municipally oriented transit system that is integrated into a regional transit infrastructure. BC Transit has in the past been most supportive of this concept but the exclusion of the Loughheed Mall transit focus from the Burnaby/New Westminster fare zone creates an impediment to intra-municipal travel by transit because of the added cost of having to cross internal fare zones.

4.0 OTHER FACTORS

For BC Transit the overriding impetus for moving the fare zone boundary from North Road (coincident with municipal boundaries) was the single zone fare card that is not zone specific. This factor was outlined by transit staff as follows:

"Loughheed Mall functions as a focal point for both Coquitlam and Burnaby services and would present a problem with enforcement of the zone system. This problem arises as it would not be possible for bus drivers to know from which direction passengers with single zone 'local' fare cards had arrived and so Coquitlam passengers could potentially ride into New Westminster and all of Burnaby with a local fare card which is not valid for zone boundaries at peak times. When these issues were identified, it appeared that Gaglardi Way represented a more natural zone boundary."

Theoretically, this problem could arise at any zone boundary if passengers disembarked, walked across the zone boundary and re-embarked on the other side. We understand that this form of fare evasion is a routine practice at Kootenay Loop west of Boundary Road. The obvious solution is to make the 'local' single zone fare card non-transferable. Thus, during peak periods when fare zones apply a Zone 1 card could only be used in Zone 1, a Zone 2 card only in Zone 2, etc. BC Transit was in 1987 considering just such a non-transferable card but in response to one protesting delegation the Commission elected not to implement this improvement.

5.0 CONCLUSION

As stated previously to the Commission it is our conclusion that the North Road fare zone boundary that was originally proposed and endorsed by Burnaby Council is the appropriate one. Our analysis confirms that the existing boundaries are not equitable for Burnaby residents. It should be noted that what the Municipality is proposing mitigates but does not eliminate the inequity.

The proposed boundary is also in keeping with municipal goals of fostering a community identity and cohesiveness and is congruent with the principle of a municipal oriented transit system for local travel integrated with inter-municipal transit links. The operational problems including fare enforcement at this boundary do not appear to be insurmountable. Accordingly it is requested that BC Transit not use Gaglardi Way as a fare zone boundary but revert to the original proposal of a fare zone boundary that approximates the municipal border.

