

CITY OF BURNABY

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
(TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT DIVISION)

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS:

RE: 1993/94 Annual Service Plan
Discussion Paper

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Mayor L. Traboulay, Chairman, Vancouver Regional Transit Commission.

R E P O R T

The Traffic and Transportation Committee (Transportation and Transit Division), at its meeting held on 1992 October 20, adopted the attached staff report prepared in response to B.C. Transit's 1993/94 Annual Service Plan Discussion Paper.

Members:

Mr. Ernest Neumann
Mr. Peter Miller
Mr. Len Werden

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Young
Chairman

Councillor D. Evans
Member

Councillor D. Lawson
Member

Councillor C. Redman
Member

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION: : AGENDA - 1992 NOVEMBER 02 : COPY - CITY MANAGER - DIRECTOR ENGINEERING - DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
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TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS
TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FROM: ACTING DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: 1993/94 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN DISCUSSION PAPER

1992 OCTOBER 14

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to Mayor L. Traboulay, Chairman, Vancouver Regional Transit Commission.

R E P O R T

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At its regular meeting of 1992 September 28 Council received correspondence from BC Transit transmitting a copy of the 1993/94 Annual Service Plan Discussion Paper for review and comment by member municipalities of the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission. Subsequently Council referred the discussion paper to the Traffic and Transportation Committee for comment.

The correspondence from BC Transit requests comment prior to the 1992 November meeting of the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission. This report provides an assessment of the possible implications of the Discussion Paper for the City of Burnaby. However, as the Discussion Paper is essentially a policy document lacking specific proposals for service changes, the impact of these policies on transit services in Burnaby cannot be determined until further developed in an Annual Service Plan.

2.0 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN PROCESS

The intent of the Annual Service Plan is to identify new transit services or changes to existing transit services for the upcoming fiscal year. The Plan usually defines specific changes to the transit system and provides an operating budget for all components of the Vancouver Regional Transit System including Skytrain, bus, Sea Bus and Handi Dart services.

Normally at this time of year the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission would be submitting the full Annual Service Plan for review and comment by municipalities. Due to the continuing lack of agreement between the Commission and the Province over transit funding, the development of an Annual Service Plan including a transit budget appears to be delayed. Instead, the Commission is circulating a Discussion Paper which does not provide budget details.

3.0 DISCUSSION PAPER

The Discussion Paper indicates that the provision of transit service in the upcoming fiscal year is founded upon a poor economic outlook and slow ridership growth. Both of these conditions tend to reduce the overall resources available for the provision of transit service and also dictate the need for more effective utilization of existing resources. The key areas for improvement of existing performance include the following:

- (i) Preparation of a critical review of poor performing routes in the VRTS, including reasons for poor performance and possible remedial action.
- (ii) Reassessment of service levels during some low demand time periods such as evenings, early mornings and Sundays.

- (iii) Re-examining transit and transportation options in the suburbs, including how to serve growing suburb-to-suburb demand and demand to regional town centres.
- (iv) Increasing the operating speed and efficiency of transit through application of transit priority measures.

The following sections assess the implications of each of these measures from the perspective of the City of Burnaby.

4.0 POOR PERFORMING ROUTES

A number of bus routes in the Vancouver Regional Transit System provide a basic level of service to areas of the Region, but the ridership on these routes falls far short of the minimum levels defined in the Service Design Guidelines necessary to support the service. An example of a poor performing route is cited as one in which passenger boardings per hour are in the range of 20.

Under the terms of this definition a number of routes in Burnaby, including the 139/140 serving Burnaby Heights and the 131 and 132 operating north/south between Edmonds Station and North Burnaby, could qualify for review and possible remedial action including a reduction in service. However, as some of these routes are designated for improvement as part of the proposed reconfiguration of North Burnaby services, the performance of these routes may improve to acceptable levels. The mechanism for assessment of poor performing routes is proposed to be a special Critical Review to be completed by 1992 October. This assessment should take into account potential improvements resulting from the proposed reconfiguration of North Burnaby services.

5.0 REASSESSMENT OF OFF-PEAK SERVICE

The Discussion Paper notes that overall service provided during off-peak period is less effectively utilized but subject to higher costs. It is noted that evening service for example consumes over 20% of all service provided but generates only 13% of daily ridership. Moreover, weekend service is subject to higher labour costs while late night service imposes increased costs for security.

The Discussion Paper does not pose specific measures to address this disparity between service and costs, but it is assumed that some reduction in off-peak service would be required. From the City's perspective, service reductions would largely affect captive riders including the elderly, the young and the poor who do not have ready access to a private vehicle. Burnaby, with its high population of seniors, could therefore be significantly affected by reductions in off-peak service. As changes to service levels on existing routes would not be included in an upcoming Annual Service Plan, it is important that the City be provided with the opportunity to comment on planned revisions to service frequencies on off-peak services.

6.0 SUBURB-TO-SUBURB DEMAND

Currently the transit system tends to be, a radial system oriented to servicing suburb to downtown Vancouver trips. The transit system is thus less well structured to serve the suburb-to-suburb travel which is becoming increasingly important as jobs and population locate outside the City of Vancouver.

More suburb-to-suburb service has been provided in recent years but these service improvements have been subject to low ridership and high costs. From Burnaby's perspective however the continued development of suburb-to-suburb service is desirable to support town centres. Within Burnaby service between the City's town centres is generally attractive with good transit connections to other town centres including New Westminster and in the future Whalley via SkyTrain.

In this regard the Discussion Paper proposes that routes that achieve regional transportation and land use goals be considered for exemption for review under the Service Design Guidelines.

7.0 TRANSIT PRIORITY MEASURES

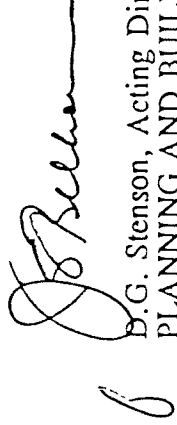
The application of transit priority measures is necessary to reduce traffic delay and resulting higher operating costs. Bus lanes, queue jumpers, transit activated signals and localized re-routings which have the capability to speed up service have been covered in a previous report from BC Transit to the Traffic and Transportation Committee in 1992 June. This report noted the support of the City of Burnaby and a willingness to cooperate fully with BC Transit to implement transit priority measures.

To improve the speed of service the Discussion Paper proposes that BC Transit work with municipalities and MOTB to encourage transit priority measures, review bus stop spacing and reassess the operating criteria for express and limited stop services.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Discussion Paper concludes that in order for the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission to consider introduction of new services in the fiscal year 1993/94 service efficiencies must be achieved. While this conclusion is reasonable in view of the current fiscal climate, the implications the possible service reductions could be significant in Burnaby. On balance however the City stands to benefit substantially from the service improvements defined for North Burnaby scheduled for next year. If some reallocation of service is required to permit these service improvements to proceed, then it is likely that transit users in Burnaby may benefit overall.

Detailed evaluation of the impact of the policies in the Discussion Paper on Burnaby however, will require the development of specific proposals defined in an Annual Service Plan.



D.G. Stenson, Acting Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RG/cr

- cc: Director Administrative & Community Services
- Director Engineering
- Director Finance
- Director Recreation & Cultural Services