
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:
PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION BOARD DISCUSSION PAPER**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council authorize the submission of this report to the Passenger Transportation Board.

The Social Issues Committee, at its 'Open' meeting held on 2011 May 26, received and adopted the attached report recommending the submission of this report to the Passenger Transportation Board in response to its recently released discussion paper.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Paul McDonell
Chair

Councillor Anne Kang
Vice Chair

Councillor Pietro Calendino
Member

Copied: City Manager
Director Planning and Building
Director Finance
Director Engineering

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

DATE: 2011 May 19

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 1750 20
*Reference: Burnaby Access Advisory
Committee*

**SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA:
PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION BOARD DISCUSSION PAPER**

PURPOSE: To propose the submission of this report to the Passenger Transportation Board in response to its recently released discussion paper.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council to authorize the submission of this report to the Passenger Transportation Board.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

At its 2011 March 24 meeting, the Social Issues Committee received correspondence forwarded from the Passenger Transportation Board (PTB) regarding a request for response to a discussion paper entitled *Accessible Transportation in British Columbia*. The purpose of the discussion paper is to invite public comment on the current state of accessible transportation in the province in order to inform the PTB in their long-range planning processes. PTB is an independent tribunal in British Columbia established under the Passenger Transportation Act with responsibilities, along with the Registrar, Passenger Transportation Branch within the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, for implementing the Act. As such, the PTB's primary responsibility is to make decisions on applications relating to the licensing of passenger directed vehicles (e.g. taxis, limousines etc.) and inter-city buses in British Columbia.¹

Arising from discussion, the Social Issues Committee passed a motion referring the paper to the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee (BAAC) for more fulsome consideration. The Burnaby Access Advisory Committee was established in 1988 to provide advice and direction to the Planning and Building Department on accessibility and inclusion issues for persons with disabilities. The Committee is comprised of Burnaby residents and is supported by a City staff member who coordinates meetings and facilitates the Committee's work program. Some citizen members are also members of organizations representing persons with disabilities, but they do not formally represent these organizations on BAAC.

¹ For more information on the Passenger Transportation Board see: www.ptboard.bc.ca.

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From: Director Planning and Building
Re: Accessible Transportation in British Columbia:
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2.0 DISCUSSION

Members of BAAC considered the discussion paper, and a summary of the arising discussion is presented below. These comments reflect the opinions of BAAC members:

- Suggestion from the Committee that one of the important issues to consider as British Columbia's population ages and corresponding disability rates increase, is that the transportation system will have to evolve to be able to service a greater overall volume of persons with disabilities. For example, most accessible buses now have two designated places for persons using mobility aids. While this is a great improvement, if more than two individuals using mobility aids are waiting for a bus, some will have to wait for the next scheduled service. This situation is already occurring frequently and will mostly likely increase as the provincial demographic shift continues.
- Suggestion from the Committee that the PTB work to mandate that inter-city bus operators (e.g. Greyhound Canada, etc.) have at least one wheel-chair accessible vehicle operating on each route, and that the schedule of this vehicle be noted as such on all timetable information for the information and choice of users.
- Suggestion from the Committee that the PTB work to support inter-city bus operators to provide disability awareness customer service training to all staff, particularly regarding the handling, care and transport of wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
- Suggestion from the Committee that the PTB continue to work to support TransLink and BC Transit to extend the operation of HandyDART² to 24 hours a day and to better equip vehicles to operate in snow and ice.
- Suggestion from the Committee that the PTB work with TransLink and BC Transit to consider developing and offering a 'premium service' through HandyDART where, for an additional set market-rate fee, vehicles could be dispatched on short-notice and/or outside of regular operating hours. The Committee noted that this service would be useful for unexpected situations and would provide another alternative, as wheelchair accessible taxis are in high demand. In order for this 'premium service' not to adversely affect the service availability to users who are unable to afford the additional fee, the Committee noted that it may be necessary to acquire additional vehicles.

² HandyDART is a door-to-door shared-ride service which utilizes specially-equipped vehicles designed to carry passengers with physical or cognitive disabilities. Buses are operated via a centralized service centre that is available 18 hours a day within the TransLink service area. HandyDART buses outside of the TransLink service area are available approximately 10 hours a day, with one additional evening a week available for booking, based upon geographic location within the province.

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- Suggestion from the Committee that the PTB work to further advocate for a 'hands-on' training component of TaxiHost³, including the addition of time allocated for all trainees to participate in associated practice activities.
- Suggestion from the Committee that the PBT consider reviewing, with appropriate public consultation, the current operation of the Taxi Saver Program(s)⁴, as administered by BC Transit and TransLink, to improve taxi company 'buy-in' and participation.
- Comment from the Committee that the members appreciate the PTB's efforts in seeking public input on this discussion paper, and would request that any policy directions arising from this process be shared publicly.

3.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At its meeting on 2011 March 24, the Social Issues Committee received correspondence forwarded from the Passenger Transportation Board (PTB) regarding a discussion paper entitled *Accessible Transportation in British Columbia*. The Committee requested staff to obtain input from the Burnaby Access Advisory Committee (BAAC). Staff subsequently met with BAAC to obtain its feedback.

This report summarizes the resulting discussion by members of BAAC. It is recommended that the Committee request Council to authorize the submission of this report to the Passenger Transportation Board.

B. Luksun, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

RM:sla:sa

cc: City Manager
City Clerk
Director Engineering
Director Finance

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³ TaxiHost is a training program for taxi drivers, which includes a component on serving customers with disabilities. At present, the program, while bringing considerable focus to theory, service and communication issues related to the transportation of people with a wide range of disabilities, does not include any hands-on experience with the loading and securement of passengers and their mobility aides. TaxiHost training is currently required to drive a taxi in Metro Vancouver, Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Outside the Lower Mainland, taxi driver training is generally the responsibility of taxi companies.

⁴ Taxi Saver is a supplementary service to HandyDART, available for people with permanent disabilities, which provides subsidy towards the cost of taxi rides.