
TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2011 February 2

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 2156-01
*Reference: SCBCTA (TransLink)
Long-Range Plans*

SUBJECT: TRANSLINK'S 2011 SUPPLEMENTS

PURPOSE: To respond to a Council inquiry regarding TransLink's proposed 2011 Supplements

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information.

REPORT

On 2010 November 15, Council raised a query regarding the prominent position of the North Fraser Perimeter Road (Phase I) in TransLink's proposed 2011 financial Supplements. This report responds to that query.

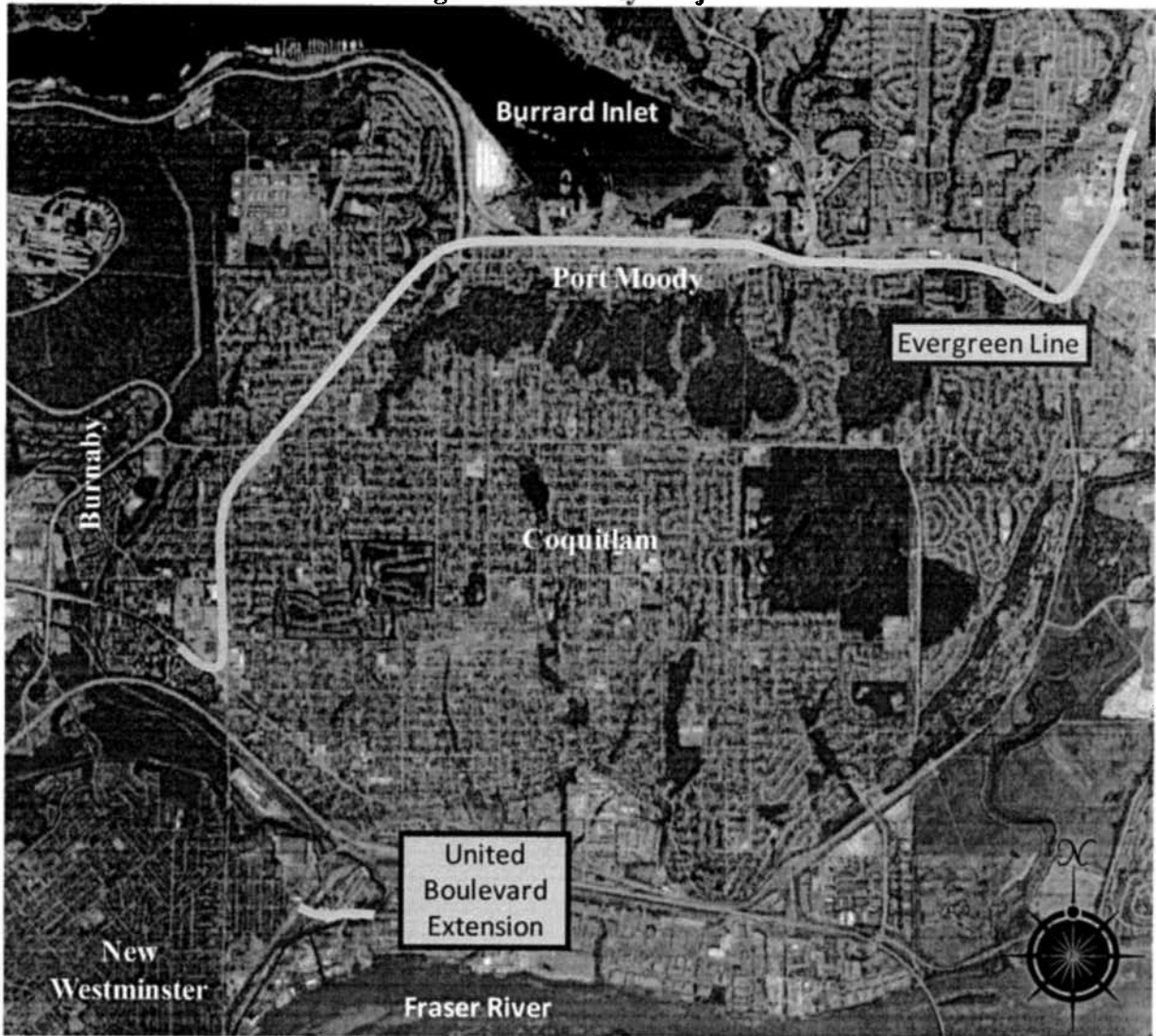
1.0 BACKGROUND

Under TransLink's governing legislation, their Board has the authority to increase TransLink's funding incrementally (roughly in line with inflation). However, more substantive increases require the approval of the Mayors' Council. This approval is sought via a financial Supplement, being "supplementary" to their previously-approved Base Plan.

TransLink has recently brought forward two Supplements for consideration. The first Supplement includes only two priority projects: the Evergreen Line and Phase 1 of the North Fraser Perimeter Road (that phase being the United Boulevard Extension). The second Supplement includes those two projects plus a range of smaller improvements throughout the region: primarily increased funding for transit and cycling.

The locations of the two priority projects are shown in *Figure 1*. The Evergreen Line is a proposed SkyTrain line from Lougheed Town Centre to Coquitlam Town Centre. The Supplement would fund TransLink's \$400 million share of the project. The United Boulevard Extension is an upgraded road link between New Westminster and Coquitlam, described in more detail below.

Figure 1: Priority Projects



1.1 North Fraser Perimeter Road

“North Fraser Perimeter Road” (NFPR) is a term used to describe an east-west route extending along the north side of the Fraser River.

- It was first identified in 1993 as part of the *Transport 2021* long-range plan, as a corridor between the Queensborough and Port Mann bridges, primarily for the benefit of goods movement.
- It was shown in the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* in 1996.
- The project has been consistently identified in TransLink plans since the creation of that organization, beginning with its first *Strategic Transportation Plan* in 2000.

- In about 2005, the provincial Gateway Program expanded the NFPR concept to include the Mary Hill Bypass and part of Highway 7 (both of which are under provincial jurisdiction, like Highway 1) extending out to the north end of the new Golden Ears Bridge in Maple Ridge.

Under both the original and expanded definitions, work on the NFPR consists primarily of upgrades to existing roads rather than construction of new routes. In terms of construction work, NFPR is a series of localized improvements rather than a single continuous project.

The current scope of the NFPR, from east to west, consists generally of:

1. Work by the Gateway Program, including:
 - a. New bridge for Highway 7 across the Pitt River, between Pitt Meadows and Coquitlam, completed;
 - b. Interchange (rather than the previous intersection) between Highway 7 and the Mary Hill Bypass in Coquitlam, completed;
 - c. Possible conversion of the existing Mary Hill Bypass intersections (Kingsway Avenue, Broadway Street, Pitt River Road, Shaughnessy Street) to interchanges at undetermined dates in the future;
 - d. Providing a grade-separated connection over United Boulevard linking Mary Hill Bypass and Highway 1, being constructed now as part of the Port Mann / Highway 1 project; and
 - e. Relatively modest intersection modifications at various points along the existing United Boulevard in Coquitlam, to connect United Boulevard into the Port Mann / Highway 1 project, being constructed now.
2. Work by TransLink, including:
 - a. The United Boulevard Extension (UBE), described in more detail below; and
 - b. Various localized enhancements (primarily improved intersection configurations) in the Front Street / Brunette Avenue corridor along the New Westminster waterfront, not yet scheduled but most are seen as part of the Pattullo Bridge replacement project.

The UBE is also referred to as NFPR Phase I. This is the subject of TransLink's proposed Supplement, and thus of Council's inquiry. Details are provided below.

2.0 UNITED BOULEVARD EXTENSION

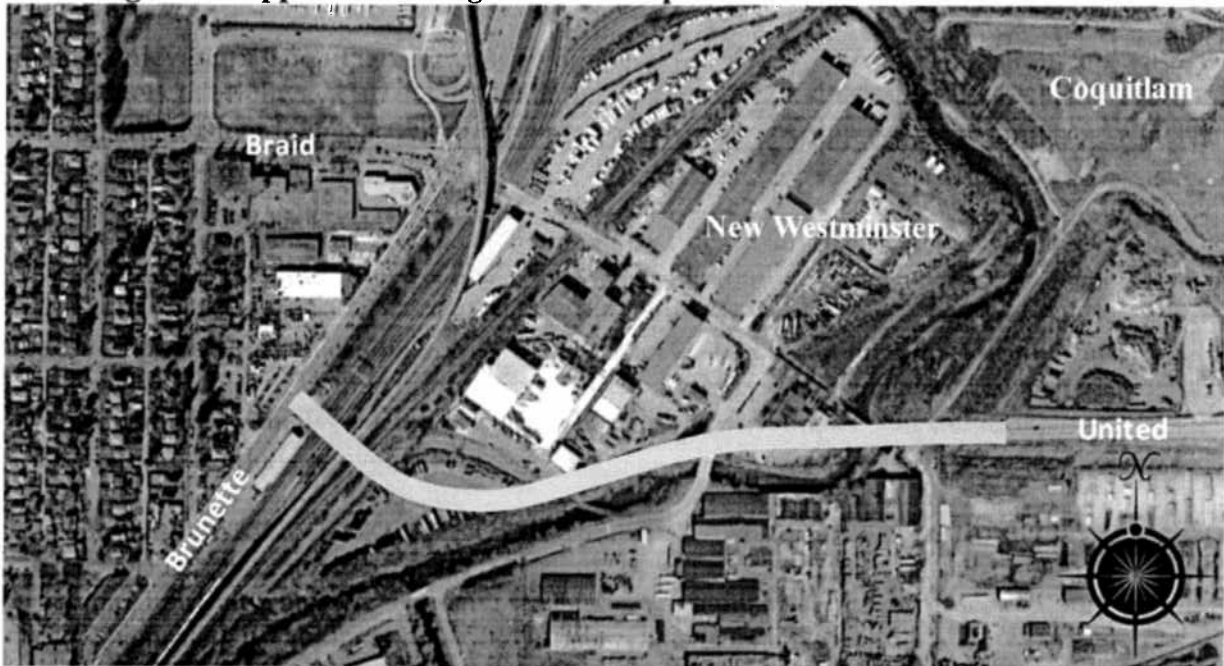
2.1 Project Description

United Boulevard in Coquitlam serves a commercial / industrial area with constrained access due to the barriers of Highway 1 to the north and the Fraser River to the south. United Boulevard has been constructed to a four-lane width. It aligns with Braid Street in New Westminster, which (in the immediate area) is a two-lane road.

A Bailey bridge over the Brunette River links United Boulevard to Braid Street via a single lane, with a traffic signal providing access to traffic in alternating directions. This narrow bridge significantly constrains the western access to the United Boulevard area. Additional delays arise due to the four railway tracks that cross Braid Street at grade, and the high traffic volumes at the Braid Street / Brunette Avenue intersection. There are also safety concerns because queues from that intersection routinely extend back beyond the railway tracks. In addition, there are few facilities for pedestrians or cyclists.

The UBE is proposed to address these concerns. As shown in *Figure 2*, it would provide a new four-lane bridge across the Brunette River, as well as a bridge above the railway tracks and SkyTrain. It would intersect Brunette Avenue at a point roughly 200 metres south of Braid Street. The project would include facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

Figure 2: Approximate Alignment of Proposed United Boulevard Extension



Due to the need to pass over the railway tracks and SkyTrain, the UBE would be elevated at Brunette Avenue. Ramps would link the two roads. If it proceeds, construction of the UBE is anticipated for the years 2011 through 2014. The resultant road would be owned primarily by the City of New Westminster, with a short section owned by the City of Coquitlam.

TransLink conducted public consultation for the UBE in November and December. Four options for the Brunette / United interchange were presented. According to the summary documents prepared by TransLink, respondents were opposed to all four concepts. The concept with the least impact to the adjoining Sapperton neighbourhood received less opposition than the other three concepts. New Westminster Council has since expressed unanimous opposition to all four options, while supporting further planning, consultation, and the development of alternative designs.

2.2 Project Ranking for the Supplements

In preparing the two proposed Supplements, TransLink evaluated a range of candidate projects. The evaluation process was based on the following ten goals, each of which was evaluated using several criteria:

1. Goals arising from TransLink's *Transport 2040* long-range strategic plan:
 - a. Greenhouse gases aggressively reduced;
 - b. Promote non-SOV (Single Occupant Vehicle) mode share;
 - c. Complete communities;
 - d. System optimization;
 - e. Economic growth and goods movement; and
 - f. Financially sustainable.
2. Goals in the context of the current Supplement:
 - a. Significant lost opportunity if not activated in 2010;
 - b. Leverages significant external funding;
 - c. Makes best use of existing fleet and infrastructure; and
 - d. Intensity of previous commitment.

TransLink's total score for the *Transport 2010* goals was expressed as a number from zero to ten for each project. The same was done with the Supplement goals. The two scores were then averaged to give a composite score, also from zero to ten. Within the four Supplement goals, the "lost opportunity" goal was weighted higher than the other three.

Of the projects evaluated, 15 had a composite score of at least five and were thus considered for inclusion in the current Supplements. Of these 15, the Evergreen Line and the UBE had the highest composite scores (9.0 and 8.0, respectively), and were significantly better than other projects in terms of their Supplement scores. TransLink thus identified them as priority projects

for the two current Supplements. The first Supplement contains only these two projects. The second Supplement contains these plus a range of smaller investments¹.

In short, while the UBE has been a regionally-identified project for almost 20 years, its prominent position in the current Supplements is significantly influenced by the availability of federal funding, as discussed subsequently.

2.3 Public Consultation Regarding the Supplements

TransLink consulted on the proposed Supplements with various parties and in various ways, including:

1. Federal government;
2. Provincial government;
3. Mayors' Council;
4. Metro Vancouver Board;
5. Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee;
6. Presentations to municipal staff at regional staff meetings;
7. Public consultation, including:
 - a. Three open houses;
 - b. Online consultation; and
 - c. Input via TransLink's Community Relations Coordinator

TransLink indicates that their public consultation shows over 75% support for the Evergreen Line and UBE as being important to the region.

2.4 Financial

TransLink's estimated cost of the UBE is between \$151 and \$176 million, depending primarily on the yet-to-be-finalized interchange design at Brunette Avenue. Of the total, the federal government has committed \$65 million, and TransLink is seeking to fund \$60 million from the

¹ The smaller projects in the second Supplement include: station upgrades (Metrotown, Main Street, New Westminster, Surrey Central, Lonsdale Quay), expanded bus service (accommodate population growth, support U-Pass, address overcrowding, introduce three new express routes), and retaining current levels of municipal cost-sharing (for road and bicycle infrastructure). A further three projects were evaluated but scored poorly and were not included in the Supplements: 24 additional SkyTrain cars (not needed until about 2016), an additional SeaBus to replace one being retired (not needed until about 2018), and the Murray-Clarke Connector to improve east-west road travel in Port Moody (has an out-of-date business case, now being updated).

To: City Manager
From: Director Planning and Building
Re: TransLink's 2011 Supplements
2011 February 2..... Page 7

current Supplement. Even with an approved Supplement, this would leave between \$26 and \$51 million unfunded. TransLink would need to identify a source for these funds before the project could proceed.

The federal contribution of \$65 million needs to be spent before 2014 March. Given the time required for detailed design and construction, it is our understanding that the federal government has indicated the need to enter into a contribution agreement with TransLink in the next few months. This would require that TransLink be able to commit to its \$60 million share of the project cost.

TransLink has indicated that the project has a benefit/cost ratio exceeding two.

3.0 CONCLUSION

In response to Council's inquiry, this report has provided background information on the United Boulevard Extension project, in the context of TransLink's currently-proposed financial Supplement. The report has discussed the project description, project ranking, public consultation, and financial considerations. It is recommended that Council receive this report for information.



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SR:jc:sa

Copied to: Director Engineering