

Mountain Bus Company and community representatives. A customer survey was carried out to identify existing and latent transit demand and data on existing ridership was assembled. Studies on the Southern Rail corridor from Scott Road to Langley City were undertaken to evaluate a passenger rail service. The City Centre Showcase study findings have also been considered.

Outline of Draft Vision

The Area Transit Plan has a number of components including a review of investment priorities, a Transit Issues paper, plus implementation, fleet and facilities plans. A draft transit strategy or Vision for the rapid transit and high frequency services has been developed.

This Vision has 3 broad time horizons: short, medium and long term. The short term plan concentrates on the next few years up to about 2011 and envisages a core network of high frequency transit routes (i.e., 15-minute frequency, 15 hours/day, 7 days/week), supplemented by other potential transit routes (i.e., 30-minute frequency, 12 hours/day, 5 days/week), as shown on Figure 1. As further growth occurs, a number of the high frequency routes (King George Highway, 104 Avenue, Fraser Highway) are planned for upgrading to Bus Rapid Transit Lines over the medium term by about 2021. These routes would have a 5-minute frequency supported by extensive transit priority measures and sections of dedicated bus lane. Additionally, the 15 and 30-minute frequency bus route network would expand. Please see Figure 2.

In the long term plan, which looks forward to about 2031, the potential for the Bus Rapid Transit Lines on King George Highway and 104 Avenue to be replaced with light rail is identified. In addition, a Bus Rapid Transit Line across the Port Mann Bridge to Coquitlam is planned with further expansion of 15 and 30-minute frequency bus routes as shown on Figure 3.

The long term plans will help to guide the more detailed short term plans, ensuring that infrastructure and routings are consistent with and can be readily upgraded to suit the future vision. The detailed review of the current network beginning with 2007 includes an analysis of loading, route speeds and other performance indicators. Strategies will be produced for regional connections and integration with the Canada Line plus a costed five-year implementation plan with facilities and fleet plans. These strategies will focus on issues such as additional buses, protection of rights of way, future BRT station sites, local bus exchange facilities and park and ride requirements.

The SoFA TP does not currently identify community or commuter rail service on the Southern Rail Corridor as a component of TransLink transit services for the area.

Staff Comments

The draft Vision identifies a number of significant “big ticket” transit initiatives within the City and indicates a sustained and progressive delivery of network and service improvements for Surrey.

Staff has provided comprehensive input into development of the Vision and feedback on the draft Vision seeking confirmation that:

- it is based on a thorough assessment of existing demands and future land use,
- it is responsive to the public and stakeholder input provided,
- there remains a strong commitment to local bus services and wider network coverage, and
- there is an accompanying commentary to the Vision explaining the opportunities and constraints in delivering it.

Staff see these as key to ensuring the final Plan retains credibility and is deliverable. While the draft Vision is relatively consistent with our expectations, we believe that prior to fully supporting this Vision, TransLink needs to present additional documentation detailing the evaluation behind the Vision. This would include aspects such as:

- existing passenger counts and their relation to existing densities,
- land use densities necessary to warrant each level of transit service,
- comparison of densities to ridership north of the Fraser River (Burnaby, Coquitlam),
- costs and funding levels necessary to achieve the planned network, and
- comparison between the transit service provided and the revenues generated, south of the Fraser.

This would provide the background necessary for all to more fully understand and appreciate the Vision.

The City's collaborative work with TransLink through the Urban Showcase project has identified the benefits that high quality transit provision will bring to the successful development of our City Centre and how the City can help support the delivery of these improvements. The SoFA Plan will be responsive to the proposed implementation initiatives, which will take place as part of the project, incorporating phased improvements to services as key elements of the Showcase project are introduced. Proposed changes to the City Centre Transit Exchange and layover facility under the showcase project in the City Centre will require the availability of transit and bus layover facilities elsewhere in the City, particularly at Guildford and Newton.

Staff consider the SoFA TP and the City's participation in its development, as very important. By knowing where transit improvements and investment are planned, allied with an understanding of the densities and floor area ratios required to support transit, it will allow us to better integrate transit into development, promote transportation choice and allow more efficient use of our transportation infrastructure through appropriate land use planning. It will assist us in creating neighbourhoods with densities tailored to the planned or desired level of transit service and identify those locations where enhancements to key transit exchanges are required thereby allowing us through development opportunities to promote, for example, the City's goals of sustainability and pedestrian friendly town centres. The City will also be able to provide support for the longer term Vision of the Plan, allowing us to refine the road allowances we are protecting for future BRT and LRT transit corridors.

Future Phases of the Plan will involve a detailed review of the current transit network, identification of improvements and development of the local bus network (standard buses and community shuttle). Key components of the final Plan will include a 5-year implementation schedule and capital plans for buses and facilities. As part of the facilities study, staff has sought confirmation that the Plan will review the role of Park and Ride as part of the transit “choice”. Within Surrey, Park and Ride would appear to be popular, providing a valuable means for many to access transit. There are facilities at King George Highway/Highway 99 in South Surrey, Scott Road SkyTrain station and a privately operated facility at King George Highway SkyTrain station. With the expansion of the South Surrey facility, the high demand at Scott Road and the uncertainty over the longer term future of the facility at King George, staff consider this component of the Plan important in clarifying how TransLink sees Park and Ride contributing to and integrating with the creation of the Plan strategy.

Although not an explicit aspect of the SoFA TP, as part of the public consultation process, there has been some comment made on the fare and zoning structure used by TransLink. It is acknowledged that having a fare structure which is entirely distance based could be very complex and would potentially be difficult to implement, administer and use. Nevertheless, we would support any initiative by TransLink to review the current zoning and fare regime.

Forthcoming Improvements

In 2006, TransLink expanded region-wide bus services by about 4% with an additional 168,000 service hours being available for the entire TransLink operating area. For 2007, TransLink have identified a further 207,000 service hours (about a 4-5% increase) representing an additional 74 buses. Approximately 75,000 additional service hours (about 36% of the total new service hours available, representing an additional 22 buses), will be employed within the South of Fraser Area. With respect to Surrey, early service improvements resulting from these increases have already been implemented on the 321 Route between Surrey Central, Newton Exchange and White Rock, the 502 between Surrey Central and Langley and the C74, between Fraser Heights, Guildford Town Centre and Surrey Central. The service between Guildford Town Centre and the Semiahmoo Town Centre on 152 Street has also been re-introduced.

Staff will continue to work with TransLink through the remainder of the SoFA process and will see this trend of improved service within Surrey continue to advance, reflecting our position in the Region.

Next Steps in the Process of Completing the SoFA TP

The creation of the draft vision is the first phase in the development of the Plan with effort now concentrating on detailed route analysis using information gathered from automatic passenger count data plus route speeds and other performance indicators. These are key to understanding the existing operation and use of the system. There will be a review of the network with reconfiguration of local and regional routes to provide services which best reflect the needs of current and future passengers and which both support and grow into the future strategy. TransLink have indicated that they expect

some of the frequent transit network (FTN), identified on the accompanying figures, will be developed by December 2007 for implementation early the following year. The draft final Report is planned to be completed by the Fall of 2007. It will include 5 year implementation plans for the sub regions within the SoFA along with strategies for additional buses, exchanges and park and ride.

Surrey staff will continue to contribute to the planning process primarily via the Steering Committee, Technical Working Group and with on going input and comment. In addition the city is represented within the Planning Advisory Committee representing the community and the municipal councils from which they are appointed.

CONCLUSION

The creation of the draft Vision is the first phase in the development of the Plan, and the Vision is substantially consistent with staff expectations. As outlined in the section on Next Steps, staff will undertake a thorough review of the background data and pending reports. Pending this detailed review, staff is recommending support, in principle, of the Vision as outlined in TransLink's Plan.

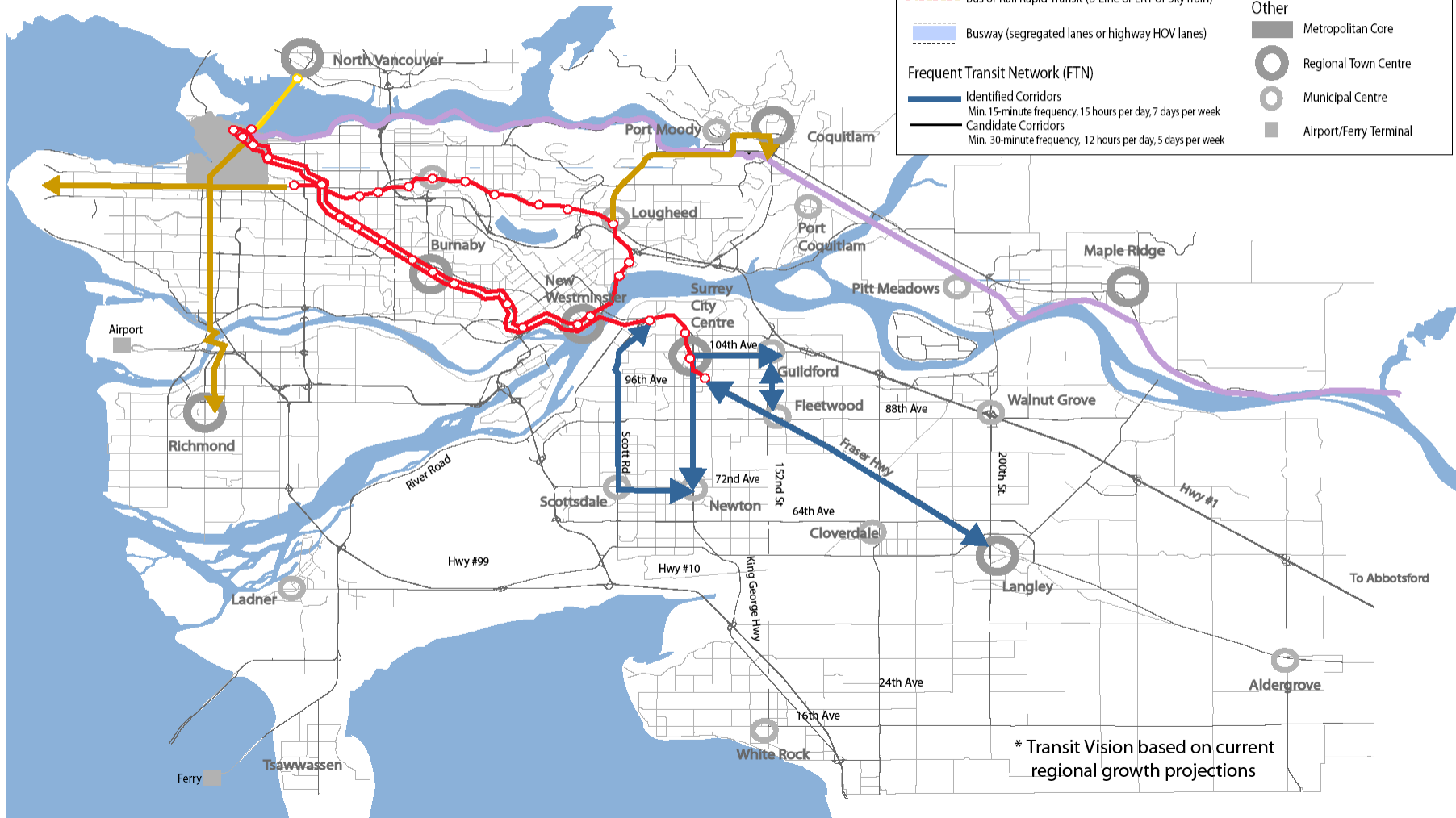
The Vision contained within the Plan will help the City to better facilitate the expansion of transit through supportive development (i.e., road infrastructure, land use planning, etc.) and make transit a more viable transportation option for Surrey residents.

Staff will continue to play an active role in providing comment and feedback during the next phases of the Plan with a future report to Council expected towards the end of the process.

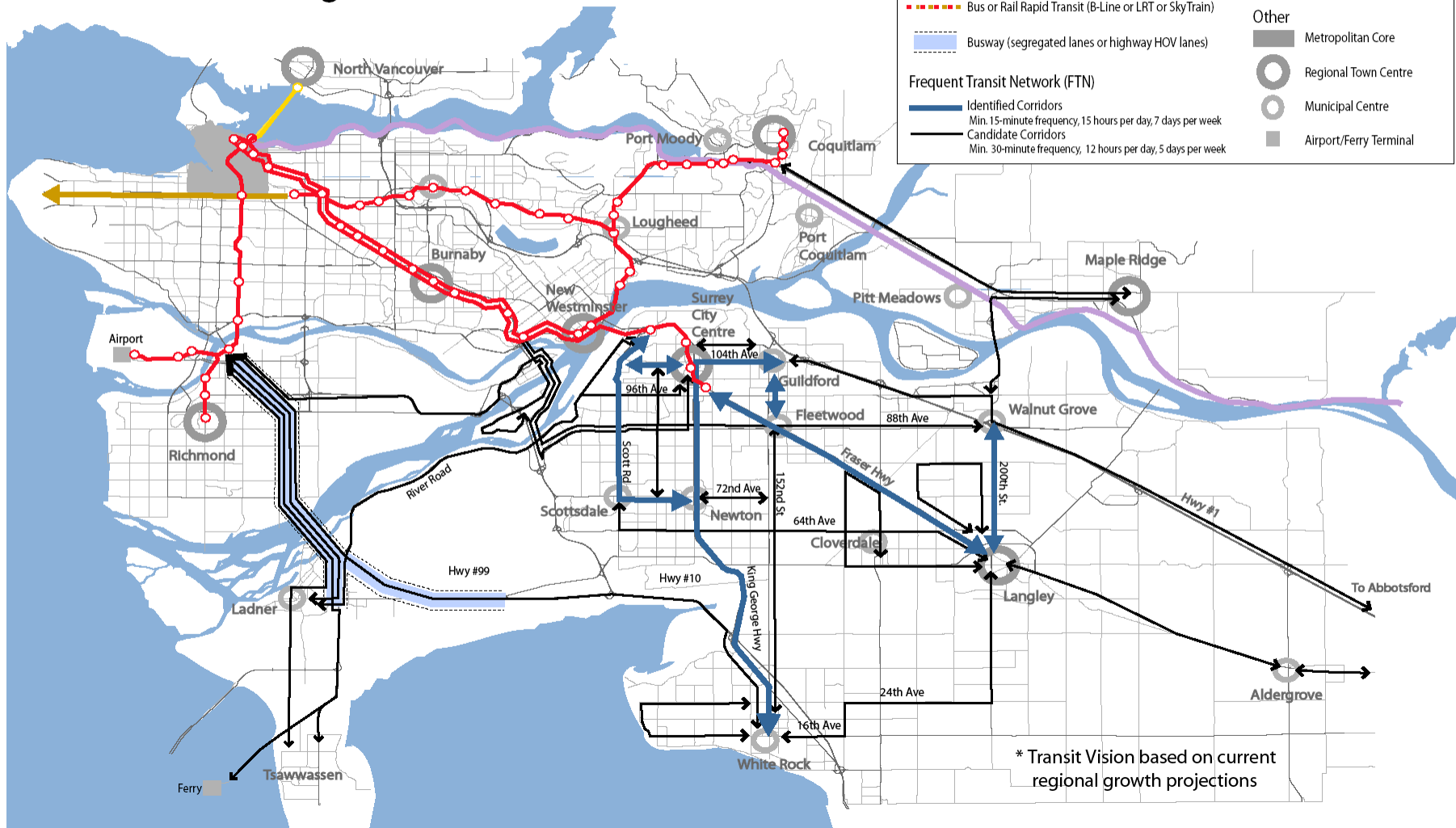
Paul Ham, P. Eng.
General Manager, Engineering

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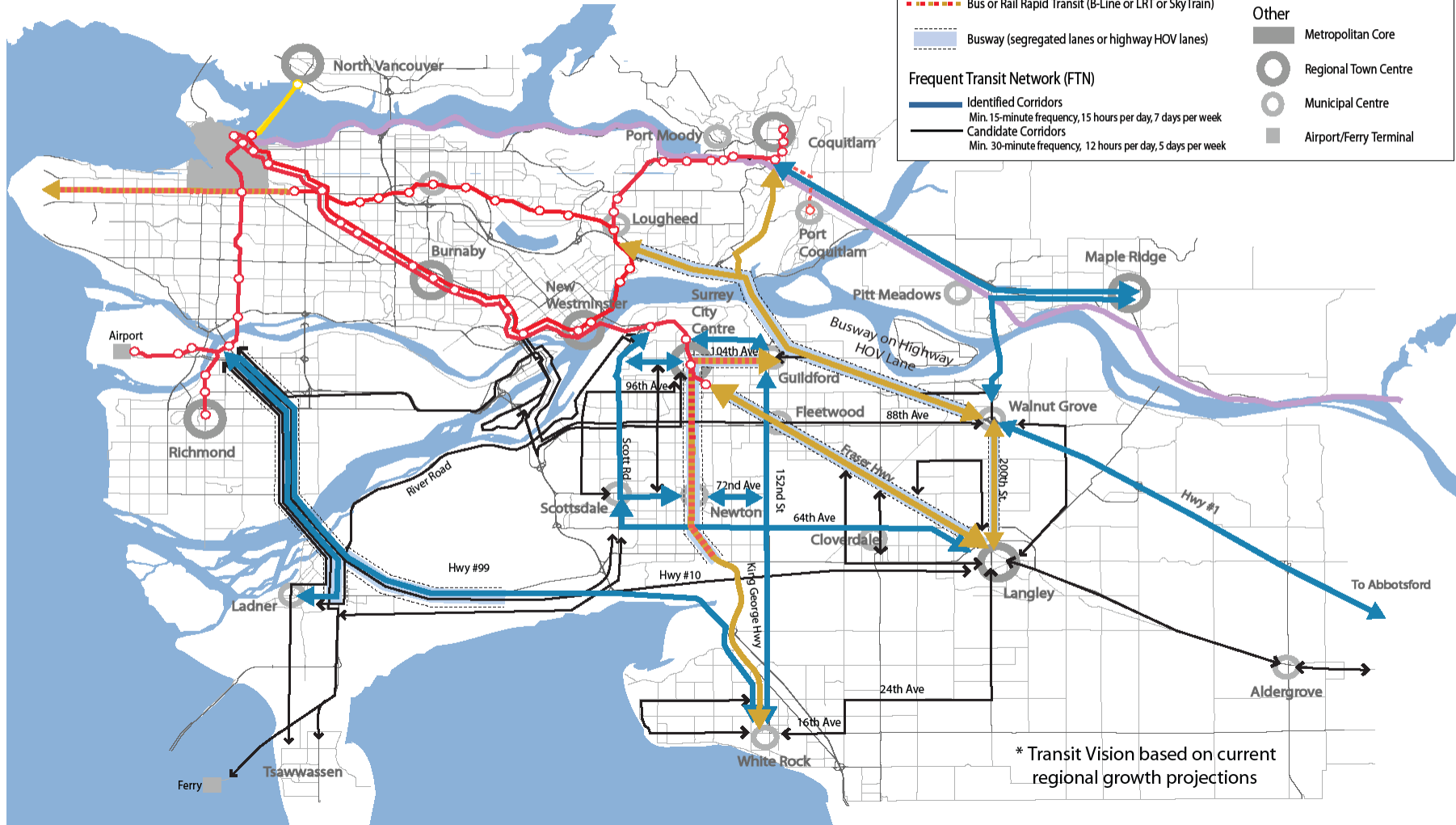
TODAY: The Starting Off Point



SHORT TERM: Creating the Framework



LONG TERM: Enriching the Network



* Transit Vision based on current regional growth projections