



# Corporate Report

NO: C001

COUNCIL DATE: February 25, 2008

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## COUNCIL-IN-COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **February 22, 2008**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering**

FILE: **0620-20 (SoFA)**

SUBJECT: **South of Fraser Area (SoFA) Transit Plan**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Engineering Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Endorse the draft South of Fraser Area (SoFA) Transit Plan in principle, subject to:
  - a) A supplement being added to the draft SoFA Plan to reflect an appropriate share of the additional buses contained in the recently announced Provincial Transit Plan as well as the projects, and their timing, related to the SoFA area contained within that Plan;
  - b) TransLink committing to achieving equity in the provision of bus transit service across the region including the SoFA area in terms of hours of service per capita as quickly as possible and no later than 2013;
  - c) The immediate commencement of planning for the new facilities and infrastructure identified in the Provincial Transit Plan, including a joint study by TransLink and Surrey on the technology and route for the rail rapid transit extension and on the Bus Rapid Transit lines;
  - d) TransLink forwarding to the City of Surrey for comment the draft 7 Year Implementation Plan based on the SoFA Plan as supplemented to reflect the above conditions;
  - e) The Plan acknowledging the need for further significant rapid transit projects in the Plan's timeframe beyond those projects identified in the Provincial Plan, and that the Plan will be further amended in the future as information is available to support the inclusion of those projects in the Plan; and
  - f) The SoFA Plan identifying the need for improved connections to Abbotsford.

3. Strongly endorse TransLink making a request for Federal funding for essential transit facilities South of the Fraser and in Metro Vancouver; and
4. Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report along with the related Council resolution to TransLink and to each of the other South of the Fraser Area (SoFA) municipalities.

## **BACKGROUND**

TransLink is in the process of completing a comprehensive update of the SoFA Transit Plan. This Plan includes, for the first time, a long-term perspective on how, when and where transit will be deployed in the South of the Fraser sub-regional area. Such a long-range vision will allow the City to plan land uses along future rapid transit corridors so that the investment in transit systems is properly supported. There have been high expectations from the SoFA municipalities that the Plan would deliver, among other things, a clear strategy as to how the historical differences in transit service levels between the SoFA area and the remainder of the region would be eliminated.

At its regular meeting on November 1, 2007, Council considered a Corporate Report that reviewed in detail the draft SoFA Plan. Council resolved not to support the draft Plan, in part, due to its long time frame to overcome the current inequity in transit service south of the Fraser in comparison to the remainder of the region. Council further resolved to seek the support of the other SoFA municipalities in requesting a Plan that was more responsive to the needs of the South of Fraser Area, and which addressed the current inequities in transit service. In early December 2007, the SoFA area municipalities advised TransLink they were unable to endorse the draft Plan. TransLink was advised, among other things, that there were fundamental concerns over the rate of transit expansion, the lack of regional equity in levels of service, and the absence of a longer-term vision that included rail expansion in the SoFA area.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Impact on SoFA of the Provincial Transit Plan**

On January 14, 2008, the Provincial Government announced a Provincial Transit Plan that included an ambitious expansion to all levels of transit within the Province. With respect to Metro Vancouver, the Provincial Plan includes expansions to SkyTrain, the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit lines, and an additional 900 new buses to the region-wide bus fleet. The main components of the Provincial Plan are:

SkyTrain extension to UBC – 12 km	\$2.8 billion
SkyTrain extension to Guildford and Fleetwood – 6 km	\$1.1 billion ±
Evergreen Line Construction – 11 km	\$1.4 billion
Upgrades to SkyTrain Expo Line stations to accommodate 6 car trains plus new storage track, system upgrades and maintenance and storage facilities	\$2.0 billion ±

Additional SkyTrain cars	\$1.0 billion
Nine new Rapid Bus lines, seven of which will be in the Metro Region, including along the King George Highway and Fraser Highway in Surrey	\$1.2 billion
1,500 new, clean energy buses and related maintenance infrastructure, of which approximately 900 are planned for Metro Vancouver	\$1.6 billion
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$11.1 billion</b>

Successful implementation of the Provincial Transit Plan requires significant financial commitments from the Federal Government, TransLink and local governments. Out of the \$11.1 billion in new funding required by the announcement, the Province is committing up to \$4.75 billion and is calling on the Federal Government for \$3.1 billion, on TransLink for \$2.75 billion and on local governments for \$500 million. The local government share is related to municipalities outside the lower mainland.

### Funding Uncertainty

At this time, there has been no firm commitment from the Federal Government for their funding share and TransLink has yet to determine how to fund its share. To demonstrate support to TransLink in seeking the necessary Federal funding, a recommendation has been included in this report for Surrey City Council endorsement of such a request by TransLink.

### Impact on Bus Service

The following table provides an indication of the current level of transit bus service provided in the region and in sub-areas within the region:

Area	Existing Bus transit service (hrs of bus service/capita/yr)
Vancouver	2.4 (240% of SoFA)
Burnaby/New Westminster	2.4 (240% of SoFA)
North Shore	2.1 (210% of SoFA)
NE Sector	1.3 (100% of SoFA)
Regional average	1.8 (180% of SoFA)
SoFA Area	* 1.0 ±

\* updated for latest 2007 data and including service from all depots.

It is clear based on the above table that the South of the Fraser area is underserved in relation to bus transit service in comparison to the remainder of the region.

The recently announced Provincial Transit Plan identifies 900 new buses for the Metro Vancouver area. This provides TransLink with the opportunity to significantly accelerate the rate of expansion of bus service in the South of Fraser area. TransLink is proposing

to supplement the SoFA Transit Plan to increase the number of buses and the number of service hours per bus to achieve the following levels of service:

Year	Number of Buses	SoFA Population	Service Hrs. per Capita per year
2007 (current)	224	640,000	1.0 ±
2013	515	700,000	2.7
2031	913	1,000,000	3.4

Preliminary analysis indicates that this level of service is in line with the future regional average for the different time frames identified.

### **Impact on Bus Rapid Transit**

Seven new Rapid Bus lines are planned within the Metro Vancouver region. Within SoFA, these include routes on King George Highway and 152 Street (between Surrey City Centre and Semiahmoo Town Centre), Fraser Highway (connecting the Expo Line in Surrey to Langley Town Centre), on Highway 99 (between the south Surrey Park and Ride facility and the new Canada Line in Richmond), on Highway 1 (between the 200 Street interchange and Lougheed SkyTrain station) and between Langley City and Coquitlam (on 200 Street and across the new Golden Ears Bridge).

Under the original SoFA Plan, the Rapid Bus Line on King George Highway was planned to start in 2013. While no definitive time lines have been announced, it is anticipated that the Provincial Plan will accelerate implementation of Rapid Bus Lines in the SoFA area.

It is noted that the original SoFA Plan anticipated a Rapid Bus Line on 104 Avenue between the City Centre and Guildford. The Provincial Plan calls for a SkyTrain extension on 104 Avenue between City Centre and the Fleetwood Town Centre by 2020. A Rapid Bus Line as identified in the original Plan is considered a necessary interim step in relation to the provision of adequate transit service in this corridor until the SkyTrain extension occurs.

### **Impact on Rail Rapid Transit**

As part of the overall \$3.1 billion Expo Line upgrade, the Provincial Plan includes a 6 km extension of SkyTrain within Surrey. Preliminary concepts, from the Province, suggest that the extension would run from Surrey City Centre to Guildford Town Centre (via 104 Avenue) and then south and east to Fleetwood Town Centre (via 152 Street and Fraser Highway). However, we understand that this proposal is at a very conceptual level and there is no specific cost breakdown for this component. A joint City-TransLink study needs to be undertaken immediately to determine the optimum technology and alignment for this rail rapid transit extension.

The South of Fraser area is comparatively underserved by rail rapid transit in comparison to other parts of the region based on the length of transit rail line per capita. The following table illustrates this comparison.

### Rail Rapid Transit (including Canada Line)

	Current Lines (km)+	Population per km *	2020 Lines (km)	Population per km *
Vancouver	26.6	22,100	38.6	15,200
New Westminster	9.3	6,200	9.3	6,200
Burnaby	17.6	11,700	17.6	11,700
Richmond	5.0	35,300	5.0	35,300
Surrey	6.0	67,000	12.0	33,500

+ Including the Canada Line

\* Based on 2006 population

The proposed extension of rail rapid transit from Surrey City Centre to Fleetwood will assist in rectifying the regional disparity but will not eliminate it.

### Funding Impact on TransLink

The Provincial Transit Plan indicates that capital contributions from TransLink of approximately \$2.75 billion will assist in funding the planned infrastructure; however, the Plan does not address the operating costs associated with the increased transit system that will be the product of the capital expenditures. TransLink has estimated that the Plan will increase its operating costs by approximately \$100 million a year net of increased revenues. There is no identified funding source from which to address this operating shortfall, particularly in view of the fact that TransLink's traditional sources of revenue are considered to be fully tapped in support of its existing operation. This raises the matter of TransLink needing access to new sustainable and reliable funding sources from senior levels of government for the new operational expenses.

### Next Steps

The opportunities presented by the recently announced Provincial Transit Plan taken in conjunction with the original draft SoFA Plan are significant. Surrey and the remainder of the SoFA area should experience a substantial increase in bus transit service, which will offer a real and meaningful transit choice to Surrey residents in place of the private automobile, and which should position the SoFA area from the perspective of bus transit service at equity with the remainder of the region by 2013.

Although the Provincial Plan helps to allay some of the major concerns with the draft SoFA Plan, a number of matters still remain to be jointly worked on by the SoFA municipalities and TransLink. These include:

- Timing and staging of the Rapid Bus lines;
- The need to plan for transit beyond 2020 (the end point for the new Provincial Transit Plan);
- Need for new service depots, bus exchanges and layovers, etc., to support the additional buses anticipated by the Plan;
- Establishing guidelines for population and job densities in relation to supporting various levels of transit service (i.e., frequent bus network, rapid bus line, SkyTrain

- extension, etc.) that are necessary to assist the City in its land use planning processes to support the transit corridors identified in the Plan; and,
- Connections to the Abbotsford transit system, and through these connections better service to the Abbotsford airport, which is quickly becoming a significant regional transportation hub.

This Corporate Report provides comment on the SoFA Transit Plan. Based on the comments contained within this report some further work needs to be undertaken by TransLink to complete the Vision.

The next phase of the Planning process is the development of a 7-year implementation strategy in support of the Plan and a detailed cost summary in support of the Plan. On completion, the final SoFA Transit Plan including the 7-year implementation strategy will be presented to Council for endorsement before the Plan is forwarded to the TransLink Board for approval.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the comments within this report, it is recommended that Council:

- Endorse the draft South of Fraser Area (SoFA) Transit Plan in principle, subject to:
  - a) A supplement being added to the draft SoFA Plan to reflect an appropriate share of the additional buses contained in the recently announced Provincial Transit Plan as well as the projects related to the SoFA area contained within that Plan;
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  - f) The SoFA Plan identifying the need for improved connections to the Abbotsford Transit system.
- Strongly endorse TransLink making a request for Federal funding for essential transit facilities South of the Fraser and in Metro Vancouver; and

- Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report along with the related Council resolution to TransLink and to each of the other South of the Fraser Area (SoFA) municipalities.

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