

Subject: Meeting of North Shore Council's with Translink

Date: Sat, 24 May 2003 07:55:43 -0700

From: "Ernie Crist" <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

To: "FONVCA (E-mail)" <fonvca@fonvca.org>

CC: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, <=SMTP:=SMTP:=SMTP:Cagebc@yahoo.com>

On Thursday May 22 there was a meeting of all North Shore Councils with representatives of Translink at the City Hall in North Vancouver.

The original purpose of the meeting was for the Councils to get together and talk about a joint transportation strategy. At least that is how I understood it. Instead, Mayor McCallum of Surrey, Chair of Translink and Pat Jacobsen also of Translink came and gave a lengthy spiel about the virtues of Translink's plan for the region. It was only after McCallum was finished selling his vision that Council members were given an opportunity to ask questions. The emperor instead of coming to town to ask what his people needed, came to tell them about his priorities. From then on it was business as usual. The stage was set for another Translink PR victory.

Those plans call for the acquisition of 250 new buses plus various Rapid Transit extensions throughout the region including the much touted Richmond (Airport) RAV Downtown Line scheduled to become operational in 7 years - estimated cost is \$ 1.7 Billion. A few of those buses will go to the North Shore said McCallum. I could hardly conceal my excitement.

Translink is also gearing up for a review of its present 2010 and 2021 plans. There was a great deal of pep talk on the need to continue with the current Translink philosophy, which is guiding Translink even while it is being reviewed - translation? The old policy, however costly and inefficient and however little it will do for the North Shore, will continue.

McCallum's message was that, however staggering the cost to improve regional transportation, it is a bargain compared to the cost if we don't.

This North Shore residents already know, especially those who have to cross the inlet each and every day. Each year 30,000 new cars add to the existing traffic snarls in the region. The cost to the economy, especially the movement of goods, is staggering, he said. This too we knew already and subsequently, no one at the meeting questioned the need to upgrade regional transportation.

What was left out of the pep talk was that there is nothing in the plan for the North Shore - not even a commitment to replace the aging Sea buses - not a word about new Sea Bus crossings from Ambleside or Maplewood, which would dramatically improve the picture - not a word about real solutions such as a (Light) Rail system linking Downtown rails with the rails on the North Shore already in place going to Whistler and beyond. This is by far the cheapest form of mass transportation. It is also the most widely used throughout the world. It beats every other form of mass transit, including Sky Train, by a mile.


The bottom line is that North Shore residents will be paying for a massive regional transportation expansion but the benefits for the North Shore are meager indeed. A commitment for a truly regional plan also encompassing the North Shore is crucial. By way of example, it is impossible to engage in any long term community planning unless future transit corridors are indicated on the map. But any suggestion to that end met with little more than sympathy.

The excuse for excluding the North Shore is as specious as ever. Translink still insists that there are not enough people on the North Shore to justify this kind of investment. This is true but only because Translink is using completely false parameters. On one hand, Translink is paying lip service to the need of mass transportation. On the other hand, it still has not grasped that the cost to expand the road network to keep up with growing traffic is ten times the price of Rapid Transit, including to the North Shore.

In the meantime, traffic tie-ups on the approaches of First and Second Narrows are growing. But other than sympathy by one of the MLA's present, there was not a hint of addressing either end of the Lions Gate Bridge nor the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge

which, apart from the north - south issue, also impedes east - west traffic. It is also a serious risk for the residents in the eastern part of the District. With only one access in and out of Seymour, in a disaster, people there would be stranded.

And this was essentially the gist of the much touted meeting which was to change the course of transportation history for the North Shore. I had prepared a 9 point program for discussion but not much came of it. As I said, the emperor came there primarily to speak not to listen. All in all, it ended up with nothing more than a few self satisfied smiles by Translink salesmen but more frustrations by those who really understand what is going on.

 winmail.dat	Name: winmail.dat Type: application/ms-tnef Encoding: base64
--	---