

**Subject: [Fwd: Fwd: RAV]**

**Date:** Fri, 02 Jan 2004 16:28:55 -0800

**From:** Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

**To:** Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

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**Subject: Fwd: RAV**

**Date:** Fri, 02 Jan 2004 18:35:08 +0000 (GMT)

**From:** Elizabeth James <cagebc@yahoo.com>

**To:** "Clr. Richard Walton" <rwalton@dnv.org>, allandorr@shaw.ca, bplatts@shaw.ca

**CC:** fonvca@fonvca.org

*Dale Laird* <dale@trams.bc.ca> wrote:

Date: Thu, 01 Jan 2004 15:58:31 -0800 (PST)

From: Dale Laird

Subject: RAV

Forwarded message from kliggett@telus.net

Below is a part of President of Local 111 Don MacLeod's address to the TransLink Board. You can see how the members of our Local are going to be affected by the allocation of funds TransLink has decided on.

It's especially galling when comparing the bus/population figures. We're going to be passing up for at least a decade or cutting service from some areas or times to alleviate the strain on others, depending on TransLink's priorities.

Also, the prediction of more confrontation, increased absenteeism and the resulting management reaction are conservative, I believe. It'll be a battle zone in some places. Once again we're left with an increased workload while still being the first target for [angry] commuters.

From Brother MacLeod's address:

First and foremost, we believe there is a significant deficiency relative to the Region's current and future needs with respect to the Plan's bus expansion projections. It is important to remember that almost 80% of our transit passengers ride bus only, and 46% of those have no alternative means of transportation. Our view - that 150 additional buses in the first three years, most of which will not arrive until the third year, and increasing the fleet to 1600 by 2013 is deficient - is founded in the widely-accepted fact that we are today far behind in fleet size relative to the Region's population, not to mention the targets of all other previous plans.

In the 15-year period from 1982-1997 the population of our service area increased by almost half a million people, while in the same time-frame we expanded our fleet by a mere 32 buses. From 1997 to present our service area population increased by almost another 400,000 people to just under 2 million, and in those last seven years we expanded our fleet by another 56 buses.

Measured as a bus-per-capita ratio we have gone from one bus for every 1200 residents in 1982, to one bus for every 1600 people in 1997, and currently one bus for every 1900 residents. Comparatively, other major urban centres in Canada are as follows; Ottawa 96 1/800, Toronto 1/1400, Winnipeg 1/1200, Edmonton 1/900, Calgary 1/1200, Montreal 1/1200, Quebec City 1/1000. (Source: CUTA)

It cannot be argued that the introduction of two rail lines in the intervening years has offset the lack of bus expansion relative to population increase. The two rail [SkyTrain] lines barely carry 20% of current ridership and most bus vehicles displaced as parallel routes were reallocated to feed those SkyTrain Lines. The success of LRT (ridership) is dependent on an adequate and attractive supporting bus service more than most other factors.

Another more recent example of bus expansion falling behind population increase and demand is the recent trolley-bus replacement contract. Consider we just approved replacing the existing trolley fleet in 2005-7

with an order equal to the capacity of the fleet purchased in 1982, which in turn was less than the fleet size in the mid seventies. These trolley buses essentially service the same streets, almost entirely within the City of Vancouver, and are considered to be the backbone of the fleet servicing the majority of the busiest routes (12). Yet between 1982 to present day, Vancouver's population increased 33%, from 418,000 to 555,000.

The bus expansion numbers proposed in this Plan will take us to barely 1300 by 2007, and 1600 by 2013. These projections are far less than those deemed necessary in most other Plans; the GVRD's LRSP, TransLink's original 5 yr. Plan, and the mid point scenario (MSP) assumed in the Negotiator's Agreement creating TransLink. In fact, the 150 bus expansion proposed in this Plan by 2007 leaves us below the scheduled expansion rate of the [old] BC Transit 10-year Plan, which was roundly criticized by the Region as being far too inadequate to meet the projected growth and demand. That Plan called for 1452 buses by 2009.

The LRSP (Livable Region Strategic Plan) adopted in 1996 called for 1900 vehicles by 2006. An April 5, 1997 GVRD Council of Councils Report noted "While the figure of 1,900 vehicles is not definitive, it is a reasonable estimate of needs."

TransLink's first mid -range Plan, the 5-Year STP (Strategic Transportation Plan), called for 1,640 buses by 2005. Key Opinion Research Findings, based on input received by TransLink from more than 4,000 residents in the consultation process of that Plan, indicated "An improved bus service that is more frequent, comfortable and direct was ranked the number one overall transportation priority."

The MPS (Mid Point Scenario) assumed in the Negotiator's Agreement to transfer governance, accepted by the Region, was a mid-point between the BC Transit 10-Year Plan and the 2021 LRSP. The MPS called for 1,608 buses by 2009.

What do all these numbers mean? Over-crowding, missed connections and pass-ups on too many routes throughout the system. We do not agree with the assessment that problems are "only minor and being addressed." The condition was greatly exacerbated with the success of U-Pass given the existing service levels and the less than adequate increase in service to meet the actual demand. We have grave concerns with respect to meeting the demand of future U-Pass expansion without any corresponding increase in capacity. This Plan, with no new additional vehicles for almost two years and only vague commitments to increasing service on existing busy routes, offers no relief for a serious condition affecting our passengers and our Members. We need 150 additional buses yesterday, not three years from now.

This condition of capacity well below current demand creates considerable wasted resources and a host of counter-productive developments. Overcrowding and pass-ups means more complaints, disputes and assaults; less ridership and more cars on the road; higher absenteeism, lower morale; More time and money wasted seeking short term solutions that can only be resolved by increasing bus capacity; an increasingly frustrated community and a less productive Region.

We need to find solutions to our existing problems now. We need to address the lack of capacity for our University service in time for next September's return to school. We need accurate data on all problem routes. We need to provide more reliable service to our existing passengers before we can hope to attract new riders.

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