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## What's New?

### News Releases

#### GVRD, TransLink win federal funds for sustainable transportation

November 26, 2003

Transport Canada today awarded TransLink and the Greater Vancouver Regional District \$8.8 million for a package of new sustainable transportation projects under the ministry's [Urban Transportation Showcase Program](#).

"I am very grateful that the federal government has chosen to support the joint [TransLink/GVRD proposal](#) for innovative transportation projects in this region. These projects will help improve the public realm and the transit system in a way that has lasting benefits," said TransLink Chair Doug McCallum.

"The funding for these projects will help support our Sustainable Region Initiative by promoting alternate forms of transportation such as transit, cycling and its supporting infrastructure," said GVRD Chair Marvin Hunt.

The GVRD/TransLink proposal was created in partnership with the cities of Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey, New Westminster, Richmond, Delta, Coquitlam – plus SFU Community Trust and Better Environmentally Sound Transportation. The Showcase package focuses on new programs that demonstrate innovation in promoting reductions in greenhouse gas and other emissions.

The federal government contribution provides a portion of the funding needed for these projects with the balance of support from participating partners.

The following programs were approved for federal funding under the Urban Transportation Showcase program:

#### Travel Smart

Travel Smart is a marketing program targeted to households that have expressed an interest in trying transportation alternatives to reduce their number of vehicle trips. A success in Germany and Perth, Australia, and recently piloted in Portland, Oregon, the program provides residents in a specific neighbourhood with transit, cycling and walking information that is customized to their specific needs.

The TransLink/GVRD proposal is to run this program in Kitsilano, the Sperling area in Burnaby, Richmond Centre, South Surrey/White Rock, Coquitlam Centre and Delta. Transport Canada and TransLink will share

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the \$900,000 total cost.

### **SkyTrain “Transit Villages”**

The transit village concept involves making improvements so that it is easier and safer to walk, cycle or take transit to rapid transit stations. This can involve improving the “urban design” around the stations with such steps as sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, better lighting and signage, more bike lockers and street furniture. Other steps are more complex, such as new local transit services, changes to by-laws or official community plans and bigger infrastructure improvements.

This program is proposed for the Surrey Central, Metrotown and Broadway/ Commercial SkyTrain stations.

In addition, the submission is proposing a “community transit pass” program for UniverCity, a new planned community adjacent to Simon Fraser University. Similar to the U-Pass programs recently adopted at SFU and UBC, the community transit pass would require all households in the proposed development to purchase a transit pass as part of the purchase price of their unit. This concept has been used successfully in a number of U.S. communities, most notably Boulder, Colorado.

The approximate cost of this project is \$10.3 million, shared between the cities of Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby, the UniverCity Community Corporation, TransLink and the GVRD.

### **Central Valley Greenway regional bicycle and pedestrian commuter path**

This project focuses on improvements to the Central Valley Greenway, a flat, 22 kilometre long corridor linking Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminister, considered to be the backbone of the regional cycling network. It joins key residential and employment areas, shopping malls, schools, business parks and downtown Vancouver. It also connects with most SkyTrain Millennium Line stations and 12 other bike routes and trails.

The Central Valley Greenway is the first cycling infrastructure project in Canada to be advanced with significant private sector funding. Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST), received a \$1 million grant from VanCity Savings Credit Union to help build the Greenway. BEST will contribute beyond the 2006 Showcase implementation period.

The total cost of this project will be about \$14.3 million, with funding from Transport Canada, TransLink, the GVRD, BEST, VanCity Credit Union and the cities of Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminister.

### **Hybrid Bus Demonstration**

This part of the TransLink/GVRD Showcase submission will examine how new technology in the form of “hybrid” buses can improve transit buses, both in terms of their performance and environmental impact.

Hybrid buses use a small diesel engine to run an electric generator, which supplies an electric motor that in turn powers the bus. These buses can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 40 per cent over a standard diesel bus, cut other harmful emissions by 65 to 97 per cent and reduce noise emissions considerably.

TransLink would retrofit two buses that were used to test early prototypes of the Ballard Fuel Cell propulsion system. The \$1.65 million cost would

be shared between TransLink and Transport Canada.

### **Main Street Transit Priority Corridor**

The Number Three Main Street/Downtown trolley bus is one of the busiest, most frequent and highest passenger volume routes in the region.

Growing traffic congestion along Main Street is slowing this service down and causing buses to "bunch," affecting travel time, operating costs and ridership.

This program proposes changes to the design of Main Street to incorporate more "bus bulges" - extensions of the curb at bus stops and intersections, allowing buses to load and unload passengers without pulling out of traffic. Bulges also make street crossings shorter, reducing the time needed for pedestrian crossing signal phases and thus speeding up the flow of general traffic and buses alike.

Signal priority systems as part of a regional Intelligent Transportation Systems project would allow buses to "hold" green lights at intersections, reducing the number of stops for red lights. Better bus stops with electronic displays similar to those used on the #98 B-Line would be included in the project to make the service more attractive. The Showcase submission includes a plan to market the improved service along the corridor.

This project has a target to improve efficiency by 10 to 15 per cent. The freed-up resources could be used to increase bus service on the corridor by as much as 20 per cent.

Transport Canada, TransLink and the City of Vancouver would co-fund the project, estimated at \$6.4 million.

### **Study: Goods Movement Efficiency and Greenhouse Gases**

The Greater Vancouver Region's role as Canada's western gateway puts enormous pressure on our roads system to move goods and services to and from our land, sea and airport facilities. Growing traffic congestion increases shipping costs due to time delays and greenhouse gas emissions.

In fact, goods transportation is estimated to account for 35 per cent of these emissions in the region. As such, the purpose of this study would be to uncover ways to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of goods movement in the region while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

TransLink recently conducted the first major truck freight study in 20 years. The proposed Showcase program would complement that study by enhancing the regional transportation model and helping us better understand goods movement logistics.

The study would analyze how goods movement is affected by policy decisions such as truck-only lanes, major infrastructure developments and land use policies regarding the location of transportation facilities. The research would also examine and evaluate measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

TransLink and Transport Canada would co-fund the \$200,000 cost of this study.

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