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Background Brief 2007: 05 / October 2007

## **TRANSIT IN BC: GOVERNANCE AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENT TIMELINES**

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## **TIMELINE: MAJOR EVENTS IN BC TRANSIT HISTORY**

- 1890 – Streetcar service starts in Victoria and Vancouver this year.
- 1891 – One of Canada’s first interurban transit lines – a streetcar route between Vancouver and New Westminster – begins service this year.
- 1896 – 55 people are killed when the Point Ellice bridge between Victoria and Esquimalt collapses under the weight of a streetcar packed with Victoria Day revelers.
- 1913 – The people of Nelson vote in favour of the municipality taking over a streetcar system that had operated in the community for several years. This made it the first publicly-owned street railway in the province, according to Francis and Kelly’s *Transit in British Columbia*.
- 1923 – A bus owned by the BC Electric company begins transporting Vancouverites in March.
- 1948 – Trolley bus service officially launched in Vancouver in August.
- 1955 – BC Electric streetcars run for the last time in Vancouver on April 24.
- 1972 – The provincial government begins a subsidy program to support local transit systems. The next few years see bus services launched in communities around the province.
- 1973 – Bus services in the Greater Vancouver area are expanded, with 99 new buses in service by the end of the year.
- 1977 – SeaBus service begins with two vessels in Burrard Inlet in June.
- 1978 – The Urban Transit Authority runs a pilot program testing buses with “special hydraulic lifting systems to allow those in wheelchairs to ride those buses.”
- 1980 – The BC Minister of Municipal Affairs announces in December that the rapid transit line (later named Skytrain) between Vancouver and New Westminster will be built.
- 1982 – Skytrain construction is launched with a groundbreaking ceremony by Premier Bill Bennett on March 1.
- 1986 – Skytrain begins carrying paying customers in January.
- 1995 – The West Coast Express commuter rail line running between Mission and Waterfront Station in Vancouver is launched in November.

- 2000 – In April, newly-formed TransLink releases its 2000-2005 strategic plan, which includes a proposed vehicle levy averaging \$75 per car.
- 2001 – In January, the province says it will not implement a vehicle levy. Bus drivers strike from April to August. Also, Auditor General Wayne Strelieff reviews TransLink in a report issued in August.
- 2003 – A request for proposals to build the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver (RAV) rapid transit line is issued.
- 2004 – TransLink directors vote 8-4 in favour of the RAV line after twice previously rejecting it.
- 2005 – InTransitBC is awarded the contract to build the RAV line. RAV is renamed Canada Line and the project is officially launched in November.
- 2006 – The provincial government releases details of its Gateway plan on January 31. The plan includes the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge and an expansion of public transit across the bridge. Also, a governance review of TransLink is announced March 8.
- 2007 – In March, the government releases the report of the TransLink review panel, which recommends a new governance and funding structure. Also this year, BC Transit finalizes plans to “embark on a series of service expansions in 25 transit systems around the province.”

## **TIMELINE: TRANSIT GOVERNANCE**

- 1897 – The British Columbia Electric Railway Company, an electric utility and transit company, is founded. The company’s streetcars – and later its buses – provide transit service to Vancouver and Victoria for several decades.
- 1961 – With the *Power Development Act*, the provincial government expropriates BC Electric to facilitate power projects on the Peace River. A year later, the company is merged into BC Hydro, which takes responsibility for transit as the replacement for BC Electric.
- 1973 – The Department of Municipal Affairs establishes a Bureau of Transit Services in February. Its job is to establish “new transit services in rural and urban communities.” It is also involved with publicly owned transit systems already in operation, such as BC Hydro’s transit services in Greater Vancouver and the Capital Region. The next year it starts giving technical and management assistance to other communities setting up transit services, such as Kitimat.

- 1978 – The Urban Transit Authority (UTA) of British Columbia, later called BC Transit, is established as a Crown corporation by the *Urban Transit Authority Act*. The act is passed June 29. Responsibility for transit systems outside Vancouver and Victoria is transferred from the provincial bureau to the new corporation. UTA and regional districts in Vancouver and Victoria “negotiate responsibility for planning, marketing and funding transit service.”
- 1980 – The Metro Transit Operating Company (MTOC) takes over from BC Hydro the operation and maintenance of buses in Vancouver and Victoria. MTOC is a crown corporation.
- 1982 – UTA’s name is changed to BC Transit to “heighten public awareness of the corporation’s role in facilitating the provision of public transit across the province.”
- 1983 – Local government responsibility for transit is transferred from the Greater Vancouver and Victoria area regional districts to two regional commissions.
- 1985 – MTOC merges with BC Transit in June.
- 1998 – The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, also called TransLink, is created by a new law passed on July 29. BC Transit maintains responsibility for providing public transportation outside Greater Vancouver.
- 2007 – New legislation to overhaul TransLink is introduced on April 26. The changes would create an appointed board of directors to oversee planning, construction and operation of the regional transit system. The board would be appointed by a Mayors’ Council also tasked with approving the authority’s plans on new taxation, transit fare increases and new borrowing.

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