

# Appendix A – Public Perceptions Analysis Summary

Northeast Sector Area Transit Plan  
Phase 1: Issues and Opportunities



# Public Perceptions

In this phase of the ATP, TransLink undertook a public online survey to gauge what is working well with today's Northeast Sector transit network, what people feel needs improvement, and the priority level of these issues. The essentially same survey was also administered to the online 'TransLink Listens panel', and a similar but separate survey was also made available in printed copy to transit operators who work in the Northeast Sector.

This section will review the results of these consultation activities, as well as compare them against the findings of the quarterly market research which TransLink conducts by phone across the entire Metro Vancouver region on an ongoing basis.

## 1. OVERALL FINDINGS

A key message received was that there exists among respondents of all three surveys a perception of low overall quality of transit service in the Northeast Sector. Some of the ways we heard that TransLink might improve that quality of service include the following "top 5" priorities:

- (1) Increase service frequency
- (2) Make existing service more direct
- (3) Improve the travel time for existing service
- (4) Extend service hours earlier and/or later
- (5) Provide new service and/or more direct connections to areas of the Northeast Sector currently without service or direct connections

While the specific order of prioritization varied somewhat between survey audience, the call to "increase service frequency" was the top ranked priority across the board, and "make existing service more direct" was also second ranked for both the public and TransLink Listens survey. Details on the specific survey results are summarized in Appendix A.

## 2. GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY

From May 28 through June 14, 2013, TransLink hosted on its Northeast Sector Area Transit Plan web site a link to a survey intended to gauge issues, opportunities and priorities for improvement in the Northeast Sector's transit network. This survey was open to the general public and received a total of 699 survey completions.

While the public survey required no pre-qualification to complete, responses to questions on transit usage did indicate that the majority of respondents were regular transit customers. While only 4% of respondents said that they never use transit, 66% indicated that they take transit more than once per week. The most commonly used services noted included the 97 B-Line and the 160 Port Coquitlam/Vancouver.

The top three service priorities for the Northeast Sector, in order of preference selected by the public respondents, were as follows:

- (1) Increase service frequency
- (2) Make existing service more direct
- (3) Extend service hours earlier and/or later

Further details on these findings, including methodology, details of the responses (i.e. routes, service hours, etc.), and additional priorities ranking can be found in Appendices A and B.

### 3. TRANSLINK LISTENS SURVEY

During the same time period as the public online survey, the essentially same survey was also administered to the TransLink Listens online panel. This TransLink Listens version did vary somewhat, as respondents were required to live in the Northeast Sector sub-region (Anmore, Belcarra, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, or Port Moody) or to travel within or through any part of the Northeast Sector by any mode of travel at least monthly or more often. A total of 441 TransLink Listens panelists completed the survey.

Also different from the public survey, the results from the TransLink Listens survey were weighted to reflect the known age, gender, region, and main mode of travel parameters of the Metro Vancouver region (based on Census data and prior demographic studies). Given this weighting, the results of the panel may be more statistically representative of the general public than the results of the open public survey. However, even with weighting, the TransLink Listens responses may differ from random general population surveying, given the panel's likely more frequent experience with transit and transportation surveys.

Amongst TransLink Listens panel respondents, travel use was still high though not as high as amongst the general public respondents; 31% of panelists reported using transit more than once per week, while 11% report never using transit. The most commonly used services noted included the 97 B-Line and the West Coast Express.

The top three service priorities for the Northeast Sector, in order of preference selected by TransLink Listens respondents, were as follows:

- (1) Increase service frequency
- (2) Make existing service more direct
- (3) Improve the travel time for existing service

Further details on these findings, including methodology, details of the responses (i.e. routes, service hours, etc.), and additional priorities ranking can be found in Appendices A and B.

## 4. TRANSIT OPERATORS SURVEY

A similar but briefer version of the above-described surveys was also made available to transit operators who work in the Northeast Sector. This printed survey was made available for approximately a week's window, ending July 14, 2013, and 56 surveys were completed.

The top three service priorities for the Northeast Sector, in order of preference selected by Northeast Sector transit operators, were as follows:

- (1) Increase service frequency
- (2) Provide new service and/or more direct connections to areas currently without service or direct connections
- (3) Extend service hours earlier and/or later

Additional open-ended comments indicated that other (though in some cases, overlapping) key priorities include the following, in order of prevalence:

- (1) Expansion of existing service
- (2) Service reliability
- (3) Service to new areas

Further details on these findings, including methodology, details of the responses (i.e. routes, service hours, etc.), and additional priorities can be found in [Appendix C](#).

## 5. SYSTEM-WIDE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

TransLink collects transit performance ratings via ongoing quarterly phone surveys of Metro Vancouver residents age 16 and over who have used transit in the past 30 days. Perceptions of 'overall service' are reported along with various service (i.e. route specific) and system (non-route specific) attributes. Attributes are rated on a scale from one to ten, where one means 'excellent' and one means 'very poor'. An average rating of less than 7.0 is taken to suggest that improvements should be considered for that route.

The perception of low overall quality of transit service as reflected in the three surveys undertaken for the Northeast Sector Area Transit Plan is not consistent with the overall service rating given to Northeast Sector services in the quarterly phone surveys. In these ongoing system-wide surveys, the Northeast Sector rated 7.7/10 on overall service throughout 2012. This difference is likely indicative of both the more self-selecting nature of open online surveys, as well as the generally more critical evaluations of the frequently engaged TransLink Listens panel.

Likewise for 2012, the quarterly phone surveys indicated that Northeast Sector routes rated an average of 7.0/10 for 'frequency of service', 8.2/10 for 'having a direct route', and 8.0/10 for 'trip duration'. Given that these three issues were ranked in the Area Transit Plan surveys within the top five priorities for improvement, the results of these Area Transit Plan surveys do seem to be consistently more critical of the sub-region's transit network than are the results of more random phone surveys.

## 6. PROMOTIONS AND SUPPORT

The public survey was promoted through numerous channels, including:

- 2 newspaper ad placements in two local Tri-Cities newspapers
- Facebook advertising
- Posts/links on partner municipal web sites
- Social media posts (Buzzer Blog, Twitter, local Northeast Sector blogs)
- Posters distributed to municipalities for community outreach
- ‘Street Team’ hand-to-hand distribution of approximately 2,500 information cards at various key community and transit locations
- ‘Seat drops’ of the same information cards on West Coast Express train seats

In addition, in early/mid June, TransLink staff attended drop-in sessions at four different community locations (on four different dates), with the intent of providing support to members of the Northeast Sector community in accessing and completing the online survey. These locations included the Wilson Centre in Port Coquitlam, the Dogwood Pavilion in Coquitlam, the Kyle Centre in Port Moody, and the SHARE food bank in Port Moody. Staff at these sessions assisted interested members of the public with completing a survey on an electronic tablet provided by TransLink, and this input was then submitted along with all the other surveys received online.

Additional details on the promotions of the public survey can be found in Appendix B.