



Corporate NO: R1688

Report COUNCIL DATE: Nov. 16, 1998

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: November 9, 1998**

FROM: Acting General Manager, Engineering **FILE: 4100-001**

SUBJECT: B.C. Transit's 1998/99 Winter Quarterly Service Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

To advise Council on schedule changes, known as "sheet-changes", that B.C. Transit will be implementing on December 14, 1998, as part of their 1998/98 Annual Service Plan previously approved by the Vancouver Regional Transit Commission (VRTC).

BACKGROUND

As part of B.C. Transit's ongoing efforts to improve service throughout the Region, their 1998/99 Annual Service Plan (ASP) was approved by the VRTC last winter and implemented in April, 1998. The focus of the ASP is to improve existing service by reducing overcrowding and improving schedule reliability prior to considering new services in the Region. To facilitate this, B.C. Transit introduces Quarterly Service Plans (QSP's) throughout the year that support the overall goal(s) of the ASP.

The VRTC is comprised of seven elected municipal representatives within the Region based on designated geographical areas. Currently, Surrey is represented by Mayor Marlene Grinnell of Langley City. In September, 1998, the VRTC gave approval to the 1998/99 Winter QSP, which consists of a number of changes to improve transit service south of the Fraser River. B.C. Transit has transmitted a letter to Council outlining the intended changes for the Surrey area as information.

DISCUSSION

The approved service changes include the following:

New transit exchange near 74 Avenue/Scott Road - A new exchange for the Scottsdale (Delta)/Strawberry Hill (Surrey) area is to be built and operational by December 14, 1998. The new off-street exchange replaces the current on-street operation around the Scottsdale Mall area, which utilizes 70 Avenue and Nicholson Road in Delta. The new exchange will be located within the area referred to as the "Penreal" site, which is bounded by 72 Avenue, Scott Road, 76 Avenue and 122 Street. The exchange was recently finalized through negotiation between B.C. Transit and the developers/property managers for the commercial site. The exchange will improve passenger transfer connections and transit operations by reducing transfer times since the buses will be located within a smaller area and not on the street around a large block. Improved customer amenities will also be provided (i.e., shelters, lighting, telephones).

Improved Service Between White Rock, South Surrey, Newton and City Centre - Increased daytime service frequency has been approved for Route #321 along King George Highway. Monday to Saturday daytime service (i.e., 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.) will be improved between White Rock and Surrey City Centre. Currently, the Route #321 service between Newton and Surrey City Centre is more frequent compared to the #321 service between White Rock and City Centre, due to passenger demand levels and the density of development being served.

Service between Newton and City Centre during the peak periods (i.e., 6 - 9 a.m.; 3 - 6 p.m.) is at a 10-minute frequency in either direction according to current schedules. Service between White Rock and City Centre during the same peak periods is at about 20-minute frequency in either direction. Both are considered adequate in meeting current demands. During the off-peak or daytime period (9 a.m. - 3 p.m.), service reduces to 15-minute frequency between Newton and City Centre; however, between White Rock and City Centre service reduces to 30-minute frequency. B.C. Transit will make improvements between White Rock and City Centre during the daytime period by providing 15-minute frequency service to reduce overcrowding and to make the route more convenient as a transportation alternative.

Improved Regional Connector Between Langley, Fleetwood, and Surrey City Centre - B.C. Transit has been working with Langley Township and City this year on a service improvement project for their communities. As part of this project, service along Fraser Highway between Langley City and Surrey City Centre will be improved by providing new 30-minute frequency daytime service. Currently, only peak period service in the peak direction is available for this transit route.

Other Improvements - Other improvements planned within Surrey include the addition of an earlier morning trip for the Route #640 service from Scott Road SkyTrain Station to Tilbury Island (72 Street/River Road) in Delta. Currently, the first trip leaves Scott Road at 6:20 a.m. on weekdays and an earlier trip is to be added to facilitate 6:30 a.m. start times for workers in the area.

Service on Route #358, primarily serving White Rock, is to be improved by increasing service frequency to 30 minutes from 40 minutes. This route is currently operating on a trial basis in White Rock from the on-street bus exchange located at 16 Avenue/152 Street to the Marine Drive area of White Rock. It currently utilizes Martin Drive from 152 Street to 16 Avenue to turnaround from its terminus location and head towards the Marine Drive commercial area. This seaside route was introduced earlier this year in response to requests for improved service along and access to the commercial area of Marine Drive in White Rock.

CONCLUSION

Surrey has consistently requested improvements to routes within the City, such as cross-town routes that link all town centres, as well as routes connecting to other municipalities having major employment nodes or centres. However, only relatively minor service improvements have been implemented in Surrey over the past several years.

The new service improvements along the King George Highway and Fraser Highway corridors are the improvements offered by B.C. Transit following the announcement of Surrey's plan to introduce a free pilot shuttlevan service between its town centres. Consequently, the majority of the service envisioned for the free shuttlevan pilot program will be provided by B.C. Transit in the winter QSP effective December 14, 1998, at no expense to the City.

The Engineering Department supports improved transit service within and around Surrey, particularly since nearly half (49%) of Surrey residents surveyed in 1997 cited the need for more public transit as the best way to improve transportation in the City. This is a positive step as we carefully move towards more local control, administration, and a wider range of transit service choices under the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority, which commences operation on April 1, 1999. Additional changes and improved service levels for area residents can be anticipated as alternative transit service delivery models are investigated further and implemented at the local level, in conjunction with other transportation demand management measures.

Paul Ham, P. Eng.

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