



HANDYDART USERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Virtual meeting

MINUTES

Attendees:

Martin Aquino

Brian Gibney

Wayne Leslie

Justina Loh

Tim Louis (Chair)

Laura Mackenrot (Vice Chair)

Marjie Ross

Roseanne Shannon

Linda Tang

Avery Timm

Bet Tuason

Brian Tucker

Regrets:

Scott Ricker

Staff:

Chris Chan, Travel Training Manager, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

Briana Ingram, Manager, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

Sarah Ross, Director, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Tamara Tedesco, Coordinator, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Gurtej Tung, Planner, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Erin Windross, Manager, Access Transit Service Delivery Improvements, CMBC

Guests:

Rob Proctor, Managing Director, HandyDART Service, First Transit

1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1.1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement – 11:00

- The Chair called the meeting to order and Briana read the land acknowledgement.

1.2. Opening Remarks– 11:00 - 11:05

1.3. Committee and Staff Role Call – 11:05 – 11:10

- Regrets were received from Scott Ricker.

1.4. Adoption of the Agenda – 11:10 - 11:15

- Moved by Wayne, seconded by Martin, carried.

Minutes of the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee Meeting

1.5. Approval of February 19, 2020 Minutes – 11:15 – 11:20

- The following amendments were requested by Laura and have been reflected in an updated copy of the February 19 minutes:
 - Add that Laura pointed out that there are no HDUAC minutes posted on the TransLink website, and that UAC minutes and agendas are missing as well.
 - Add that Scott Ricker was introduced as a new member, as Chair of UAC.
 - Under Section 2.1, regarding the van pilot, amend Laura's comment to explain the importance of being clear about whether something is specifically "wheelchair accessible" or generally "accessible," as these two terms have very different meanings and impacts for customers. The term "accessible" on its own can be vague and interpreted many different ways.
 - Under Section 2.2, edit Laura's comment regarding her feedback about the vehicle to reflect that she was in fact speaking about the stool.
 - Under Section 2.3, expand Laura's comment about no advertising on the outside of HandyDART buses to include an explanation of how yellow is a colour that remains easily seen by people with deteriorating vision.
 - Under Section 2.3, add Laura's statement regarding her association with the City of Vancouver's Person's with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors' Advisory Committee, and her position on in-person registration.

2. REPORTS

2.1. Director's Report, Access Transit Service Delivery & Access Transit Planning

– 11:20 – 11:50

Verbal update for information (written copy included in package)

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

- HandyDART demand in 2020 started out as being very robust, and was even up compared to usual.
- Once it was announced that we were in a state of emergency due to COVID-19, demand dropped significantly—about 17% of normal levels.
- Fare collection was suspended on HandyDART on March 25, but fares will be re-introduced across all services on June 1.
- One of the ways that HandyDART has been able to support the community during this time has been through partnering with agencies to aid in food delivery. Thank you to Laura for her suggestion of this.
- TransLink was looking at an upgrade to Trapeze prior to COVID, as well as the introduction of web bookings, and ViewPoint, which would improve scheduling. Itinerary and web booking will be deferred until 2021.
- Access Transit Customer Care has had a significant drop in call volumes.
- Hours were reduced to 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and closed on Saturdays because there were less than 10 calls coming in per day.
- Travel training is essentially shut down in its public form.
- Relationships with community stakeholders are being maintained, but in-person training is being postponed.

Minutes of the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee Meeting

- Travel training videos are now online, and feedback is welcome. Videos can be found on TransLink's [Access Transit Programs page](#).
- Complaints have gone down considerably.
- Complaint categories have shifted from trip availability to customer service and sensitivity training.
- **Tim**—Do we have any projections as to when the use of HandyDART will return to normal levels?
- **Kathy**—Unfortunately we do not know. Much of this will depend on when the Health Authorities allow adult day programs to re-open. We currently only have information from one group that plans to open June 1, and that will be a significantly reduced schedule.
- Regarding the HandyDART van pilot, the intent was to test the two vans: Looking at how to support the driver and the passengers better. The Ford Transit Connect is not being piloted at this time due to social distancing restrictions. The Dodge ProMaster is already in service.
- A survey for feedback will be pushed out to customers in the next week or so.
- **Linda Tang**—What is the cost savings with the vans compared to HandyDART buses?
- **Kathy**—There is a 1 to 3-thousand-dollar savings. Our intent with running the vans was not to realize a cost savings but to deliver a better service.
- There is still a very strong commitment to having a lot of customer engagement and involvement. This will likely be in the summer.
- **Avery**—With the event of COVID-19, has there been any reconsideration of in-person interviews due to social distancing restrictions?
- **Briana**—We haven't looked into how we would manage physical distancing when an in-person registration process would be implemented in the future.
- **Kathy**—Also, the implementation of this process isn't imminent, and customer engagement, this summer, is planned to be over the phone.
- **Avery**—Added that even when COVID is over, there could be other pandemics, and this is a vulnerable population. Interviews could be done over the phone.
- **Laura**—Just because distancing requirements begin to relax, that doesn't mean that seniors and people with disabilities will be able to not distance. Consultation will be very important for the registration process, but they will need to be virtual group meetings, not individual phone calls. Group meetings are vitally important for sharing ideas and feedback. The same productive dialogue cannot be achieved one-on-one.
- **Kathy**—Responded that TransLink is aware of this risk and considerations are being made as to how things may need to change.
- **Brian Tucker**—Given that the current rejection rate is less than 2%, what is the pay-off in adjusting the current registration process?
- **Kathy**—Changing the registration process isn't about impacting the number of rejections but is about improving the travel options available to applicants.

2.2. COVID-19 Related Updates and Information – 11:50 – 12:20

Presentation for information and feedback (copy included in package)

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

Rob Proctor, Managing Director, HandyDART Service, First Transit

- At the beginning of April, 15% of pre-COVID trips were being delivered.
- Now sitting at about 17% of pre-COVID trips.

Minutes of the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee Meeting

- Currently 96% of trips are being delivered with two passengers or less per vehicle.
- 2.2 to 2.8 trips per service day/shift.
- Most trips are essential: chemo and dialysis.
- Trips that are non-essential tend to be things like grocery, bank and pharmacy.
- Less than 1% of trips are being delivered by taxis.
- Busiest times are first thing in the morning (between 6 and 7 a.m.), in the afternoon, and then again in the evening.
- Kathy explained that cutting back to deliver only essential service (dialysis and chemo) trips in early March was considered but was decided against in order to continue to get people to work and other medical appointments and day programs. Ridership declined rapidly though over the next couple of weeks and HandyDART was very suddenly only delivering essential trips plus other trips that were necessary.
- **Tim**—Very pleased to hear about the large number of trips that only have one passenger. Are there any plans for once higher levels of ridership resume to maintain reasonable social distancing?
- **Rob**—One trip per bus will not be possible. Kathy and the team are now talking about what increased ridership and the impacts of that will look like. Also communicating with day programs to get an idea of what their re-opening plans are in order to stagger service as much as possible.
- **Kathy**—One of the challenges in trying to plan that out is determining what to do at 25% capacity, 35%, 50% etc. The concern is that if demand ramps up quickly and social distancing is still a concern, we want to avoid having a high number of denials due to limits on capacity. Personal protection equipment and disinfecting protocols will play a big role in how to manage the risk.
- **Current cleaning protocols include a variety of measures.**
- Daily bus disinfecting of touchpoints, seatbelts and buckles.
- The regular bi-weekly deep cleaning was changed to weekly, including a disinfecting mop-out.
- Each bus is stocked with wipes and disinfectant to wipe down the customer area after each trip. In cases where there are no tubs of wipes available, paper towel and disinfecting spray is used.
- A Health Care Working Group was established and had many meetings.
- The focus of this group was to determine the impact of the virus on renal customers, and what equipment would be required to keep everyone safe.
- The decision was made early on that no person who tested positive for COVID-19 would be transported on HandyDART.
- **Martin**—Were there any patients, or partners of patients, involved in the working group?
- **Kathy**—No, the group was comprised of medical professionals and HandyDART employees.
- HandyDART registrations have dropped 75%
- HandyCard applications have dropped by 56%
- TaxiSaver sales are down 45%
- Access Transit Customer Care call centre staff have made over 4200 calls for wellness checks
- The calls are being really well received.
- HandyDART has partnered with Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House and Kiwassa Neighbourhood house for food delivery.

Minutes of the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee Meeting

- A request came through to help support health care workers who could not take conventional transit due to front-facing wheelchair securement spaces being unavailable.
- Temporary HandyDART access is being approved for these customers.
- Still focusing on the under 12 years of age policy.
- HandyDART registration and Compass for HandyDART are still on the table. There may be delays, but they are not being stopped due to COVID-19.
- A lot of work is being done to assess what the new norm looks like? Can safe operations be achieved using PPE, or will vehicles need to carry less passengers in order to maintain social distancing?
- **Laura**—Glad to hear the various priorities for the year are still being worked on. Since the next meeting isn't scheduled until September, could updates continue to be sent. Even if there isn't anything new per say, just a note to touch base would be appreciated.
- **Avery**—Concerned that cases of COVID-19 will go up due to people being overzealous about the relaxing of social distancing.
- **Laura**—Suggested that perhaps, in these times, maybe the monthly TaxiSaver limit could be increased for some customers.
- **Kathy**—Confirmed that taxis are being considered as a part of the solution. They are, however, operating at 10% of normal capacity.
- **Brian Gibney**—Suggested that perhaps HDUAC meeting frequency should be increased at this time. Laura supported this suggestion.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

4. CLOSING REMARKS

5. MEETING TERMINATION

6. INFORMATION

2020 Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 10:30 AM - 2 PM

Tuesday, December 1, 2020 10:30 AM - 2 PM