



2023

Accessibility Plan



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Land Acknowledgement

TransLink respects the Indigenous Nations within Metro Vancouver and acknowledges all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples for their continued resilience, sustainable stewardship, and as active members of the community for generations to come.

We recognize that in planning and managing the region's transportation system we have a role to play in supporting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

Summary

Accessibility means making a place or service useful for people of all abilities. This is TransLink's 2023 Accessibility Plan. This plan helps us identify barriers to accessibility and actions to remove them.

This plan is part of how we will fulfill the promise of Access for All from our Transport 2050 strategy. The Transport 2050 strategy has many long-term actions to make transportation more accessible, and where every person in Metro Vancouver can easily connect to the opportunities they need to thrive. You can read more about the long-term actions in Appendix C and find out more about Transport 2050 at transport2050.ca.

This plan documents 32 actions to remove barriers to accessibility. These actions are short-term, medium-term, or they are ongoing in duration. Short term actions will occur in three years. Medium-term actions will take longer than three years. Ongoing actions are things we will continue to put into practice. We have organized these actions into four categories:

- Transportation
- Information and communications
- Service design and delivery
- Built environment

There are things in each of these categories people use every day when they take the transit system. You can read about the actions starting on page 23 of this plan. On page 27 you can find a plan to make our workplace more accessible.

TransLink follows the value of “nothing about us without us.” This means we talk to people who rely on our transit system's accessibility. To do this, we work closely with two customer accessibility advisory committees: The Access Transit Users' Advisory Committee provides input on the conventional transit system, while the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee advises on our HandyDART service.

We will update this plan every three years and provide information on how we are fulfilling it. In the meantime, we want to hear from you about accessibility and how we can continue to improve this plan. You can share your feedback by emailing us at access.transit@translink.ca.

A Message from Our CEO

At TransLink, we play a critical role in making our region more accessible, striving to make it easier for people of all abilities to move through Metro Vancouver. That's why we're proud to share our 2023 Accessibility Plan – a roadmap that embodies our dedication to inclusivity and removing barriers for all.

We have a longstanding history of adapting, innovating, and evolving to meet the needs of our customers – from early adoption of low floor buses to improving on-system navigation with braille signage and tactile walking surfaces. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring our services are readily available for everyone.

Inclusivity is not just a checkbox; it's the cornerstone of our mission to create a better region for every member of our community. Our strategy focuses on four critical areas: Service Design & Delivery, Built Environment, Information & Communications, and Transportation. Through actions in these areas, we will ensure that our services, facilities, and communication channels meet the diverse needs of customers and employees.

The TransLink team is mindful that this strategy is not a destination, but one step on our ongoing journey towards inclusivity. We value feedback from our advisory committees, customers, employees, and stakeholders as it guides us in effectively enhancing accessibility.

Together, our collective efforts will unlock a more inclusive, empowered, and connected region that reflects the diversity of our people and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Quinn', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Quinn
CEO, TransLink

Message from Committee Chairs

We are pleased to introduce TransLink's 2023 Accessibility Plan. Both the Access Transit Users' Advisory Committee (UAC) and HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee (HDUAC) were established years prior to the development of this plan and have been important avenues for advocacy and advice on TransLink's transportation system. We would like to acknowledge the hard work of advocates, including past and present committee members as well as members of the public, who have championed accessibility for people with disabilities and seniors.

Recently, the HDUAC has provided valuable input on changes to the HandyDART application process, including encouragement that staff ensure the updated process is inclusive, accessible, and dignified for all applicants. HDUAC members have also expressed strong support for online HandyDART booking and recently requested more frequent updates from staff on this project as it unfolds.

The UAC has also provided input on a variety of topics related to the fixed-route transit system, including prototypes of multi-stall washrooms, potential accessibility improvements at on-street bus stops. Some members have participated in site visits, including an evaluation of dual format braille and tactile signage.

On behalf of both committees, we appreciate TransLink's commitment to accessibility, while recognizing that there is still work to be done. The committees look forward to playing an active role in continuing to help identify barriers experienced by people using the transportation system, and to monitoring the progress of this plan. We are hopeful that a formal Accessibility Plan in combination with forthcoming, provincial Accessibility Standards, will help establish a more accessible British Columbia for generations to come.

Sherry Baker
Chair of the UAC

Laura Mackenrot
Chair of the HDUAC

Introduction



As the transportation authority for Metro Vancouver, TransLink knows how important it is to make sure everyone can easily access our services. We want to connect residents and visitors to all the places where we live, work, and have fun. Making our system more accessible and inclusive is something all of us can benefit from.

We are working hard to make sure our workplace, services, and the places we build are easy and welcoming for people of all ages and abilities. We also want to make sure you know what we are doing. That is why the 2023 TransLink Accessibility Plan is important.

This plan talks about actions that will find, remove, and prevent barriers that might make it difficult for people to use our services. It allows us to figure out what needs to be done and allow you to tell us what is missing. You can think of this plan as a list of improvements we want to make in the next three years and beyond. This plan also looks to the future and the goals of our long-term plans, like the Transport 2050 strategy for the next 30 years.

We will also work with other organizations to make our region more accessible. This includes cities, Metro Vancouver, the province, local post-secondary institutions, and private companies. We look forward to sharing our Accessibility Plan with these partners. By working together, we can remove barriers to mobility across the region.



About TransLink

The South Coast BC Transportation Authority, also known as TransLink, plans and manages Metro Vancouver’s regional transportation system, which includes public transit, major roads, active transportation, and some bridges. We make sure that people who live here and those visiting can easily reach the places and opportunities that matter most to them.

To provide transit services, we work with different operating companies owned by TransLink and private contractors. For example, the British Columbia Rapid Transit Company (BCRTC) runs SkyTrain and West Coast Express. The Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC) manages the SeaBus and handles the bus services in the region, and oversees contracted services including HandyDART, which is a special door-to-door transit service. The West Coast Express is a rail service for commuters traveling from Vancouver to Mission. Transit Police ensure safety and security on and around our system.

We have a Board of Directors and the Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation who work together to lead and guide us.

Recognition of Indigenous Nations and Indigenous Peoples

TransLink operates on the traditional, unceded territories and treaty territory of the following Indigenous Nations:

- qícəy (Katzie First Nation)
- qwɑ:h'á ən' (Kwantlen First Nation)
- kwikwə́ł əm (Kwikwetlem First Nation)
- máthxwi (Matsqui First Nation)
- xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam Nation)
- qiqéyt (Qayqayt First Nation)
- se'mya'me (Semiahmoo First Nation)
- Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)
- scé waθən məsteyəxw (Tsawwassen First Nation)
- səlílwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh Nation)

It should be noted that Tsawwassen First Nation negotiated a modern treaty with a formalized role in decision-making processes through the TransLink Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation as per the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act.

Our Accessibility Story

Making our transit system more accessible is something we are always working on. We have made a lot of progress so far, but there is still room for improvement. Here are some of the things we have accomplished:

- 1981** HandyDART takes over from multiple non-profit providers to serve door-to-door transportation for people who are unable to use conventional transit
- 1986** SkyTrain opens, creating the foundation for a fully accessible rapid transit network across the region
- 1990** The first buses accessible to people using mobility devices are put into service
- 1996** The first low floor buses arrive for service
- 1999** TransLink takes over from BC Transit as the transit provider in metro Vancouver
- 2007** TransLink publishes the Access Transit Strategy. This strategy creates a permanent Users' Advisory Committee to provide advice and input from people with disabilities, seniors, and their advocates
- 2008** TransLink's entire transit fleet becomes accessible to people using mobility devices, one of the first in North America
- 2008** Audible stop announcements introduced on fixed route buses
- 2016** TransLink launches the Compass Card system which allows people to pay for trips on a reloadable card
- 2017** The Universal Fare Gate Access Program provides a means for accessing SkyTrain and SeaBus for people who cannot tap their Compass card at fare gates
- 2019** TransLink creates the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee to provide advice and input from users of HandyDART
- 2021** The Compass Card system is launched on HandyDART
- 2022** Dual-format braille and tactile signage is rolled out at 8,600 bus stops across the region
- 2023** TransLink pilots a smartphone-based wayfinding technology for customers with sight loss, known as the Accessible Navigation Pilot Project

Context of the 2023 Accessibility Plan

Metro Vancouver

In 2017, over 410,000 people living in Metro Vancouver said they have a disability. As our region gets older and more people live here, this number will go up even more. These are important things for our organization to think about as we work with the public to find and remove barriers to our services.

TransLink's Accessibility Programs

We want to ensure that services are accessible to everyone. We offer different ways to help people get around easily on our transit network, like priority seating on all types of transportation, buses and shuttles with lifts and ramps, and elevators and escalators at SkyTrain and Canada Line stations. We also have partnerships with the Province of BC and the CNIB to offer special transit passes.

Our accessibility programs make traveling in Metro Vancouver simple and convenient. These include HandyDART, HandyCard, TaxiSavers and others. We also listen to our community's needs through two accessibility advisory committees that give us valuable advice on how to improve our programs, projects, and initiatives for both regular transit and HandyDART.

HandyDART

HandyDART is a door-to-door shared ride service. It is used by registered customers who need assistance to travel because they can't use regular transit alone, either for part of their trip or the whole journey. HandyDART is an essential option for people with disabilities all over the region, providing a reliable alternative to the conventional transit system. In 2022, we provided almost 1 million HandyDART trips.

To make sure we meet our customers' needs, we have made significant investments in expanding and improving HandyDART over time. This includes ongoing investments through our Investment Plans, introducing Compass and concession fares for HandyDART, and continuously upgrading our fleet and facilities.

TransLink regularly shares reports on how HandyDART is doing through the HandyDART Transit Service Performance Review. We also conduct an annual customer survey, the HandyDART Customer Service Performance Report, to ensure we provide transparency on how our customers experience and view the service.

HandyCard

A photo-identity card called HandyCard is available for people who have a permanent physical and/or cognitive disability that is significant enough that they cannot use regular transit without help.

HandyCard allows people to access reduced fares when travelling on TransLink buses, SkyTrain, SeaBus, and West Coast Express. They can also take along an attendant, who can ride for free. HandyCard holders can buy half-priced TaxiSaver vouchers to use as payment at specific taxi companies.

TaxiSaver

Customers with a HandyCard can buy taxi fare discount vouchers called TaxiSavers at a reduced price. These vouchers can be used when they book a taxi ride on their own. They are like coupons that work as payment with certain taxi companies, and TransLink covers 50% of the cost to make it more affordable for customers.

Accessibility Advisory Committees

TransLink has two public accessibility advisory committees. The Access Transit Users' Advisory Committee (UAC) advises on the conventional transit system. The HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee (H DUAC) advises on HandyDART services.

Assistive Devices Program

This program helps customers with disabilities who cannot tap a Compass Card to enter at SkyTrain stations or SeaBus terminals. The type of assistive device offered depends on each person's specific needs and abilities. Some may be eligible for TransLink's Universal Fare Gate Access Program, which provides a special card with radiofrequency identification (RFID) technology. This card automatically opens accessible fare gates when they get close to them.

Travel Training

TransLink works together with community groups all over the region to offer informative workshops for seniors and people with disabilities. These workshops help them learn how to travel independently.

Station Assistance Program

This program offers a helpful attendant to meet and assist customers with sight loss at stations. The attendant is there to assist customers with disabilities at stations and enable remote gate opening.

Accessible BC Act

The Accessible BC Act (“the Act”) was enacted in June 2021. The Act’s intent is to make the province more inclusive, including for persons with disabilities. This law allows for the development of accessibility related regulations for public sector organizations. The first regulation of this Act, the Accessible British Columbia Regulation, came into force on September 1, 2022 and identified TransLink as an accessible organization. As an accessible organization, TransLink is required to have the following by September 1, 2023:

1. An accessibility committee;
2. An accessibility plan; and,
3. A tool to receive feedback on accessibility

Additional regulations will be incorporated into TransLink’s plans and operations as they are developed and enacted by the Act.

Accessibility Committee

The Act prescribes an Accessibility Committee focused on assisting the organization to identify barriers as well as advise on their prevention and removal.

TransLink meets this requirement with its established HandyDART Users’ Advisory Committee (HDUAC) and Access Transit Users’ Advisory Committee (UAC).

Accessibility Plan

The Act requires that organizations must develop a plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization. In addition, an organization must review and update its accessibility plan at least once every 3 years.

This Accessibility Plan is intended to meet this requirement of the Act.

Tool to receive feedback on accessibility

The Act requires that organizations must establish a process for receiving comments from the public on the organization's accessibility plan, and barriers to individuals in or interacting with the organization.

TransLink meets this requirement by providing a wide range of mechanisms for feedback from customers on accessibility and services. TransLink will be refining its website and processes to improve clarity and accessibility.

TransLink's Plans and Guidelines

Transport 2050

Transport 2050 is the current 30-year Regional Transportation Strategy for Metro Vancouver. It describes a long-range vision for the region and guides transportation decisions. It outlines over 100 actions or strategies to make transportation options more accessible, convenient, reliable, affordable, safe, comfortable, and environmentally sustainable. It recognizes that there are disadvantaged individuals or groups in the region, including people with disabilities and seniors, who often face systemic discrimination or barriers.

The vision of Transport 2050 is “Access for Everyone,” where every person in Metro Vancouver, no matter who they are, where they live, or how they choose to get around, can easily connect to the opportunities they need to thrive.

Transport 2050 was developed through TransLink’s largest-ever public engagement – a three-phase process that began in 2019. In that time, TransLink hosted more than 350 in-person or virtual events that resulted in over 160,000 conversations, 38,000 surveys, and 4,000 ideas. TransLink engaged directly with over 500 stakeholder groups, including seniors and people with disabilities, across 27 different municipalities. TransLink also engaged with Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous organizations through individual engagement meetings and the establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Committee.

More information on Transport 2050 can be found online at transport2050.ca.



Accessibility in Transport 2050

Transport 2050 includes many actions to improve accessibility. You can find these actions in Appendix C. They are organized based on the different areas we want to work on in this plan (see Areas of Action). Achieving the long-term goals and actions in Transport 2050 is a key driver for the near-term and medium-term actions outlined in this Accessibility Plan.

Transport 2050: 10-Year Priorities

The Transport 2050 10-year Priorities is a plan that outlines what we want to achieve in the next 10 years. It helps us figure out how much money we need to fund the goals and actions in Transport 2050 . We plan to invest about \$20 billion in new projects to improve transportation, and as we get things up and running, it will cost about 50% more each year to operate everything.

This plan also helps us know where to spend money to make transportation better for everyone. It guides us in making decisions to improve accessibility for our customers over the medium to long term, including the actions of this Accessibility Plan.

Some of highlights from the Transport 2050 10-Year Priorities that influence or fund the actions of this Accessibility Plan include:

- Accelerated investments for bus stop improvements, transit exchange upgrades, and station upgrades
- Doubling bus service over current levels
- Investments in RapidBus, Bus Priority Infrastructure, SkyTrain, SeaBus, and West Coast Express
- Reliable & Fast Transit Network Expansion (up to 11 new rapid transit corridors; up to 8 new express transit corridors; additional major planning studies)
- Funding for expanded walkway and bikeway networks
- Increasing available HandyDART trips by 60% and planning for late evening and 24-hour HandyDART service

While our 10-Year Priorities sets out things we want to do and how much they might cost, they need to be funded through an Investment Plan, which is described on the next page.

More information on the investments proposed in the Transport 2050 10-year Priorities can be found online.

Investment Plans

TransLink’s investment plans outline what projects we will deliver and how we will fund them. Investment plans are fully funded over ten years by revenue sources. They must be guided by a 30-year strategy – currently Transport 2050. These plans identify funding sources to deliver on actions that will remove barriers and improve accessibility.

2022–2027 Customer Experience Action Plan

This five-year action plan is a roadmap for making the experience better for all customers. It builds on what we learned from Transport 2050 and the first Customer Experience Action Plan. It will support us in putting the customer first as we continue to deliver new transportation projects.

Guidelines

TransLink often works with different groups like governments, Indigenous Nations, private companies, and operating companies to get projects done. To make sure everything goes smoothly and consistently, we follow laws, standards, and our own guidelines. These guidelines aim for the best quality for our customers and our service. Doing this helps us build things in a way that is accessible to everyone.

A lot of our guidelines have technical details about how to make places easy to use for everyone. Many of these are informed by the Canadian Standards Association and Universal Design principles. For example, we have guidelines for designing bus stops that include things like wheelchair landing pads, tactile surface indicators, and routes that are easy for people of all ages and abilities to use.

We also have guidelines that think about the bigger picture. One example is our Transit Oriented Communities Design Guidelines. This tool helps plan and build neighborhoods and streets around transit, making it easier for people with disabilities and seniors to get around. It talks about things like good sidewalks and having amenities, jobs, and services close to where people live. By following these guidelines, we are working with our partners to create a consistent and accessible experience for all our customers.

Actions & Strategies



Development of Actions

This Accessibility Plan was created to bring together all our ongoing efforts to make TransLink more accessible and remove barriers to our services. It includes actions that are part of important documents like Transport 2050, Transport 2050: 10-Year Priorities, and the 2022 Customer Experience Action Plan. We gathered actions from different parts of TransLink, Coast Mountain Bus Company, and BC Rapid Transit Company. The main focus was to bring together actions that directly impact customers and are planned for the near future.

We also wanted to make sure we gathered actions from our accessibility advisory committees. We examined minutes from meetings of the UAC and HDUAC to look for discussion on barriers and actions. You can find a summary of what we found in Appendix B. From these, we developed or enhanced more actions for this plan. We also asked the Committees to give us feedback on this plan and help identify anything we missed.

Areas of Action

There are four main areas for our actions. These areas match the needs of people with disabilities and where the public comes into contact with TransLink. We made sure these areas also align with the Accessible Canada Act and the standards in the Accessible BC Act. The four areas are:

- Service Design and Delivery
- Built Environment
- Information and Communications
- Transportation

Actions and Strategies

Now we will talk about the actions that will go into the four areas. You will find them starting on the next page. These are the actions we are going to do to make things more accessible. We divide them into three groups based on how long they will take to finish.

First, we have the **near-term actions**. These are projects or actions that are already in progress, and we have money set aside for them in a budget or investment plan.

Next, we have the **medium-term actions**. These are ideas that we are still working on and are in the early stages of development. We do not have the funding for them yet, but we want to fund them later on.

Lastly, we have the **ongoing actions**. These are projects or actions that take a long time to finish or might never be finished. They include things we have to keep doing over and over, or they involve working with others on an ongoing basis.

By doing these actions, we will get closer to achieving our long-term goals for Transport 2050 and its overall goal of Access for Everyone. Long term goals and actions in Transport 2050 are in **Appendix C**.

Table One: Service Design and Delivery Actions

Label	Action	Timeline
A1	Create a new HandyDART application process that includes an in-person consultation option, faster processing, conditional eligibility, appeals process, and improved travel training for using regular transit, which will move the service towards a Family of Services model.	Near-term
A2	Allow HandyDART customers to book online as well as by telephone.	Near-term
A3	Expand real-time information displays at bus stops.	Near-term
A4	Explore opportunities to highlight courtesy seating on vehicles.	Near-term
A5	Share the results of the six-month trial of smartphone-based wayfinding technology known as the Accessible Navigation Pilot Project.	Near-term
A6	Investigate opportunities to modernize the TaxiSaver program.	Near-term
A7	Consider conducting regular audits of accessibility features.	Medium-term
A8	Improve the quality of audio announcements on SkyTrain for better communication with customers.	Medium-term
A9	Investigate more advanced information displays on buses.	Medium-term
A10	Engage with UAC and HDUAC on replacements technologies or components that are customer facing.	On-going

Table Two: Built Environment Actions

Label	Action	Timeline
B1	Build, operate, and maintain multi-stall, accessible and gender-neutral washrooms at key transit hubs.	Near-term
B2	Provide \$19.2 million to local governments for pedestrian infrastructure to transit between 2022 and 2024 through the “Walking Infrastructure to Transit” cost-share program.	Near-term
B3	Monitor and report on customer feedback on Tactile Walking Surface Indicators installed at select TransLink properties and rapid bus stops to UAC and relevant staff.	Near-term
B4	TransLink and the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to develop guidelines for cycling infrastructure adjacent to bus stops. The guidelines will incorporate feedback provided by UAC and participants with disabilities.	Near-term
B5	Replace escalators on the Expo Line and at some West Coast Express stations to make them more reliable and accessible.	Medium-term
B6	Work with municipalities and private organizations to improve and increase bus shelters in the region.	On-going
B7	Upgrade SkyTrain stations to increase capacity, reduce crowding, improve accessibility and amenities, and integrate better with surrounding neighborhoods.	On-going
B8	Enhance amenities at bus exchanges, including accessible shelters, seating, lighting, and customer information.	On-going
B9	Continue to improve mobility device accessibility of bus stops on network.	On-going
B10	Ensure that new SkyTrain stations and trains are accessible, including ensuring adequate space for HandyDART loading zones.	On-going

Table Three: Information and Communications Actions

Label	Action	Timeline
C1	Investigate opportunities to incorporate accessible communications into a language access policy.	Near-term
C2	Investigate options to improve customer experience and communications for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.	Medium-term
C3	Seek opportunities to prioritize accessibility into service disruption protocols, emergency planning, maintenance, and road safety.	Medium-term

Table Four: Transportation

Label	Action	Timeline
D1	Increase HandyDART service by 3% in 2023 to offer more trips for customers.	Near-term
D2	Reallocate service to prioritize high-urgency projects from the 2018 Investment Plan starting in 2023, which includes increasing bus services.	Near-term
D3	Explore new trends and offerings in custom transit to consider for future service delivery.	Medium-term
D4	Pilot late-night services to support expansion to 24-hour HandyDART service.	Medium-term
D5	Refurbish mid-life trains and replace older trains to improve capacity and customer amenities.	Medium-term
D6	Replace older HandyDART vehicles and expand the fleet.	On-going
D7	Continue to develop education opportunities for HandyDART and bus operators, transit police, and any front-line staff to better serve customers with disabilities.	On-going
D8	Strengthen driver training for taxi operators serving HandyDART trips.	On-going
D9	Continue to seek senior government support for HandyDART operations.	On-going

An Accessible Workplace

We also want to remove barriers for our employees. That's why in 2022, TransLink created its first ever Workplace Accessibility Strategic Plan. This internal plan starts the changes that will embed accessibility and inclusion within the culture of our organization and operating companies. To support our efforts, we have created an internal email address for employees to provide direct feedback on accessibility, in addition to an employee resource group on accessibility.

For our Workplace Accessibility Strategic Plan, two core goals have been established to inform accessibility within TransLink between 2022 and 2025: Foundation and Advancement.

Foundation (2022–2023)

The first goal is to set the foundation by enhancing company-wide commitment to accessibility through the following actions:

- Drafting an internal accessibility strategy and policy for the company.
- Securing executive level joint sponsorship for accessibility initiatives.
- Collaborating with internal groups to build a roadmap for accessibility goals related to communications and IT systems.
- Establishing an Accessibility Employee Resource Group and/or a Champions and Allies group.

Advancement (2023–2025)

The second goal is to get departments across the company to work together to learn about accessibility and make it part of our culture. The strategies are grouped into the following categories:

Education

- Disability inclusion and awareness trainings for all employees.
- Tools for managers and leaders to hire and manage those with accommodation needs.
- Hire external consultants for accessibility specific training for communications and IT systems.

Software & Communications

- Identify employee’s software-specific and communications-specific accessibility barriers and needs.
- Collect demographic data during recruitment.
- Build a Workplace Accessibility Guide.

Built Environment

- Renew Rick Hansen Certification for Sapperton head office and explore certification for other TransLink office facilities

Customer Accessibility Advisory Committees

About our Committees

“Nothing about us, without us.” This means that when we talk about people who rely on the accessibility of our services, we need to include them. TransLink takes this commitment seriously, and that is why we have two advisory committees: the Access Transit Users’ Advisory Committee and the HandyDART Users’ Advisory Committee.

These committees are made up of members from the public who use our transit services. Many members are people with disabilities or their advocates. Their role is essential - they review both big and small projects, give us helpful feedback on how we can make transit more accessible for everyone, and alert us to systemic barriers.

Involving these committees helps us keep our promise to make sure accessibility is a priority. We value their input and collaboration as we deliver an inclusive transit system for our region.

Access Transit Users’ Advisory Committee

In 2007, TransLink established the Access Transit Users’ Advisory Committee (UAC) as the advisory committee for accessibility on conventional and custom transit (HandyDART) systems. Later, we would create a separate committee to advise on HandyDART.

Today, the purpose of the UAC is to advise TransLink on improvements to the accessibility of our conventional transit. The Committee provides advice on TransLink plans, programs and other initiatives.

A Brief History of ComPACT

Our accessibility advisory committees came about because of a group called the Committee to Promote Accessible Conventional Transit (ComPACT). They started in the 1980s as a non-profit society. Their goal was to advise BC Transit, and later TransLink, on how to make the transit network easier to use for everyone.

ComPACT’s hard work and advocacy led to some of the first accessibility features we have in our transit system today. Their efforts were important in making transit more accessible.

Now, the Access Transit Users’ Advisory Committee carries on ComPACT’s legacy. They continue to give advice on how to make the transit system accessible for all users. They play a big role in helping TransLink make sure everyone can use the transit system with ease.

HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee

In 2019, TransLink created the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee (HDUAC) as the advisory committee for HandyDART, TransLink's door-to-door shared ride service for those unable to use the conventional transit system without assistance.

The purpose of the HDUAC is to provide advice and guidance on HandyDART plans, programs, and other initiatives. It also advises TransLink, Coast Mountain Bus Company and service contractors on matters to improve HandyDART service for customers.

Membership

Members of both Committees are appointed by the TransLink Board of Directors after a public recruitment process. We try to make sure that at least half of the voting committee members are people with disabilities or from groups that work with people with disabilities. We also want to include at least one member who is Indigenous or represents an Indigenous organization. The members of these Committees should reflect the diverse people living in British Columbia.

The COVID-19 Pandemic

Over the course of the pandemic, TransLink developed a multi-faceted approach to keep our customers safe on transit, including:

- Developing cleaning and sanitizing protocols.
- Limiting vehicle capacity on HandyDART to keep social distancing.
- Installing new vents for air circulation on HandyDART vehicles
- Recommending physical distancing measures.
- Using spare HandyDART service hours to provide food hampers to those in need.

Both UAC and HDUAC played a crucial role in advising TransLink on the difficulties seniors and people with disabilities faced during the pandemic.

Committee Consultation

In June 2023, both committees got a draft version of the Accessibility Plan to review. The committee members could share their feedback by email or during virtual committee meetings.

Key Discussion Themes

Feedback received was evenly split between positive reaction and recommended changes to highlight barriers and actions or improve the accessibility of the plan.

Transportation Barriers

Committee members provided the following feedback on transportation barriers:

- Current payment options for TaxiSavers are a barrier to usage.
- Reliance on verbal communication is a barrier to passengers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or with speech-related disabilities.
- Accessibility protocols around emergencies or service disruption are unclear and a potential risk to people with disabilities.
- Coordination between TransLink and other public sector organizations on accessibility could be improved.
- The plan should highlight maintenance of accessibility features, including but not limited to elevators, lifts, audio information, and accessible signage.
- Regular accessibility audits should be conducted to ensure the accessibility of the system.

This feedback led to the addition of the following actions:

Action A6: Investigate opportunities to modernize TaxiSaver program.

Action C3: Seek opportunities to prioritize accessibility into service disruption protocols, emergency planning, maintenance, and road safety.

Action A7: Consider conducting regular audits of accessibility features.

The plan was also revised to clarify TransLink's role as a transportation agency and how we collaborate with other public sector organizations.



Accessibility of Document

Committee members provided the following feedback on the accessibility of a draft version of the plan:

- It was difficult to read and understand the plan as a member of the public.
- Some tables were difficult to navigate with a screen reader.
- The plan needed a definition of accessibility.

Based on this feedback, we made the plan easier to read and made it more accessible for a screen reader. The plan also includes a glossary of terms in Appendix A.

Monitoring & Evaluation



Monitoring

TransLink will monitor the Accessibility Plan. Staff will present progress on near-term actions identified in the Plan to both the UAC and HDUAC on a regular basis. Monitoring progress on this plan will help us with budgeting, funding and planning.

Evaluating

The plan contains action items that TransLink will monitor and evaluate over time. We will assess actions according to their level of completion in the near-term, medium-term, or as ongoing efforts.

We anticipate substantially completing near-term actions within the next three years. For medium-term actions, we will actively develop them or secure funding during the same three-year cycle. As for ongoing items, we will regularly report on their progress as we track them over time.



How to give us feedback

To provide feedback on this plan, email us at access.transit@translink.ca.

Printed copies and alternate formats of the Accessibility Plan can be provided upon request.

You may also send your feedback via mail addressed to:

Access Transit Planning
TransLink
400 – 287 Nelson’s Court
New Westminster, BC V3L 0E7

Appendices

Appendix A:

Glossary

Accessibility	When the needs of people with all types of disabilities are specifically considered, and products, services, and facilities are built or modified so that they can be used by people of all abilities.	Sourced from CDC
ASL	American Sign Language (ASL) is a complete, natural language that has the same linguistic properties as spoken languages, with grammar that differs from English. ASL is expressed by movements of the hands and face.	Sourced from NIDCD
Barrier	Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society. It can be caused by environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies, and is affected by intersecting forms of oppression.	Sourced from the Accessible British Columbia Act
British Columbia Rapid Transit Company (BCRTC)	An operating company of TransLink, BCRTC manages and runs two SkyTrain lines in Metro Vancouver: the Expo Line and the Millennium Line. They also manage the West Coast Express commuter rail service and oversee the service contract to operate and maintain the Canada Line.	
Braille	Braille is a system of tactile reading and writing utilized by those who are blind (or who have very low vision). Braille is not a language, per se: it is a means of representing characters in a tactile manner.	Adapted from Braille Literacy Canada
Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC)	CMBC runs most of the bus service in our region, about 96%. They also operate the SeaBus, which takes passengers across Burrard Inlet. The other 4% of bus service is provided through contracts with other companies.	

Compass Card	Reloadable fare cards that can be used when taking transit within Metro Vancouver.	
COVID-19	An infectious disease caused by a coronavirus discovered in 2019.	
Conventional services	Conventional transit services include bus, ferry (SeaBus), and rail (SkyTrain, Canada Line, and West Coast Express). Other services, such as demand-responsive Access Transit services, are not included in this definition.	
Custom Transit	Door-to-door transit services, such as HandyDART, for people whose mobility needs make it difficult for them to use conventional transit.	
Disadvantaged individuals or groups	Groups or individuals who face unearned disadvantages because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.	Sourced from Government of BC – BC Laws
Family of services	Refers to a collection of transit services that work together. Typically refers to the opportunity for people with disabilities to use a combination of fixed-route transit (e.g., SkyTrain, bus) and custom transit services (e.g., HandyDART) to meet their travel needs.	
Inclusion	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as disadvantaged groups (see “Disadvantaged individuals or groups”).	Adapted from Dictionary.com
Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation	The Mayors’ Council on Regional Transportation is composed of 23 members — the Mayors from all 21 municipalities within the transportation service region and a representative from the Tsawwassen First Nation and Electoral Area A. The Mayors’ Council provides direction on regional transportation policy, investment, and funding through developing, updating, and approving the 10-Year Investment Plans and the 30-Year Regional Transportation Strategy	

Metro Vancouver	A geographic region on BC's South Coast that includes 21 municipalities, one Electoral Area, one Treaty Nation, and nine Indigenous nations.	
Micromobility	Micromobility includes both human-powered mobility devices (bikes, kick scooters, etc.) and electric-assisted mobility devices, such as electric bikes and scooters, which can be personally owned or used in shared fleets.	
Ride-hailing	Ride-hailing is booking rides and paying for car service through a smartphone app with a transportation network service provider	Adapted from City of Vancouver
Systemic barriers	Policies, procedures, or practices that unfairly discriminate and can prevent individuals from participating fully in a situation.	Sourced from the Council of Ontario Universities
Systemic discrimination	Systemic discrimination can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies, or practices that are part of the structure of an organization, and that create or perpetuate disadvantage for racialized persons or other disadvantaged groups.	Sourced from the Ontario Human Rights Commission
Tactile Walking Surface Indicators	A system of textured ground surfaces used to convey information to pedestrians who are blind, DeafBlind, or partially sighted. TWSI are detected underfoot or through use of a long white cane.	
Universal Design	The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.	Source from the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

Appendix B:

Committee Identified Barriers

The barriers below were taken from UAC and HDUAC meeting minutes from January 2019 to March 2023, as well as during committee feedback period in June and July 2023. They were provided by committee members who shared their lived experience as users of conventional transit and HandyDART. Barriers outside TransLink control were not included.

HandyDART Barriers:

- HandyDART Customer Performance Survey does not include customers who are non-verbal.
 - » **Action taken:** Survey protocol updated to allow caregivers to respond on behalf of a HandyDART customer.
- Taxi trips delivered by HandyDART are inconsistent in level of support for customers.
 - » **Action taken:** A Taxi Working Group was created to improve taxi services to HandyDART clients.
- Phone-only HandyDART booking option a barrier to some people with disabilities.
 - » **Action taken:** Online Booking project in development.
- HandyDART hours do not align with conventional service.
 - » **Action taken:** Extended hours pilot project in development.
- HandyDART passengers travelling long distances may experience multiple transfers, creating a lengthy trip.
 - » **Action taken:** Coast Mountain Bus Company is working with TransDev to improve availability of cross-boundary trips.

Conventional System Barriers:

- Audio announcements on buses are sometimes wrong. This is a barrier to people who need audio announcements for their trip.
 - » **Action taken:** TransLink communicated issue with CMBC. CMBC seeks to provide accurate, clear messaging on buses.
- Emergency evacuation procedures at TransLink head office not accessible.
 - » **Action taken:** Emergency exit procedures described at in-person meeting. Staff undertook evacuation training for people with disabilities.

- Accessible washroom at SeaBus sometimes not available due to safety issues.
 - » **Action taken:** Customer washroom unlocked to maintain access.
- Lack of accessible washroom facilities on the transit network.
 - » **Action taken:** Funding for six washrooms across the network is in the 2022 Investment Plan.
- Bus stops that are next to a bike lane are a barrier.
 - » **Action taken:** UAC to advise ‘Inclusive Design Adjacent to Cycling Facilities’ project team.
- Elevator or lift breakdowns and maintenance.
 - » **Action taken:** Work is underway to replace elevators at all SkyTrain stations on the Expo Line and at West Coast Express stations.
 - » Transit Alert subscriptions now include station access information.
- Limited seating at bus stops across network.
- Station Assistance Program delivered inconsistently at Canada Line stations.
 - » Canada Line updated policy and attendants now escort passengers with sight loss to fare gates or desired destination within station.
- Temporary bus stop signage not accessible to people with vision loss.
- ‘Bus stop balancing’ project removed some closely spaced bus stops, resulting in longer distances between some stops.
 - » **Action taken:** Some relocated bus stops were reinstated based on customer feedback.
- Street furniture and snow clearing practices create barriers to accessing bus stops.
 - » **Action taken:** The UAC formed a working group to identify the barriers associated with on-street bus stops and to share recommendations with TransLink, CMBC, and relevant municipal and institutional staff.
- Height difference between SkyTrain platform and train floor can create an edge that hinders mobility device users.
 - » **Action taken:** Newer (Mark V) trains will be closer to the platform.
- High passenger volumes create additional demand for accessible seating on crowded vehicles.
 - » **Action taken:** Operators are provided with training on who should use accessible seating. Awareness campaigns are also run on a regular basis.

Appendix C: Actions from Transport 2050

In Transport 2050, TransLink identified five goals for regional transportation: convenient, reliable, affordable, safe & comfortable, and carbon-free. The strategy also identifies over 100 actions to improve transportation across all modes.

The central theme of Transport 2050 is Access for Everyone. As the guiding document for the next 30 years of Metro Vancouver’s transportation network, Transport 2050 contains many long-term actions that will be key in making our region more accessible.

The actions below were drawn from Transport 2050’s thematic index for persons with disabilities and categorized according to the Action Areas of this plan.

More information on these actions can be found on the Transport 2050 website at transport2050.ca.

Table 1: T2050 Long-term Service Design and Delivery Actions

T2050 Reference	Description
2.1.5	When planning and designing transit priority, carefully consider how marginalized and disadvantaged populations may be positively or negatively impacted, and work towards achieving an optimal balance between accessibility, convenient access, and reliable and fast service
4.2.4	Ensure that everyone, including marginalized or disadvantaged individuals and groups, feels welcome and secure when getting around
4.2.6	Provide walking, cycling, and transit skills training, resources, and support programs that improve safety and confidence
6.2.3	Prototype, experiment, pilot, and innovate with purpose
6.3.2	Develop a Regional Social Equity Strategy, through engagement with marginalized and disadvantaged groups and in partnership with local and regional governments, that establishes principles, objectives, strategies, and measures of success to advance a more just, equitable, and inclusive region by considering the factors that impact an individual’s experience of social equity
6.4.2	Incorporate an equity lens into decision-making processes that asks not just whether a policy or investment works, but also who it works for, and who it doesn’t work for
6.7.6	Pursue a people-first technology approach for transportation system elements
8.2.1	Work collaboratively and within public agencies to increase social equity, diversity, and inclusion in areas

Table 2: T2050 Long-term Built Environment Actions

T2050 Reference	Description
1.1.3	Rapidly complete a network of walkways so that walking can be the most direct, and the most convenient, travel option for most short trips (e.g., a distance of less than one kilometre)
4.1.4	Prioritize protection for those road users with the least physical protection and who are most easily injured or killed in car-dominated environments (i.e., people walking, biking, and rolling; on motorized two-wheelers or horseback; children, seniors, and people with disabilities; and roadwork crews)
4.1.7	Make streets vibrant, comfortable, inviting, and inclusive public spaces for everyone, especially in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas
6.8.1	For areas of the street dedicated to mobility, apply specific space allocation and prioritization principles when people using multiple different modes of transportation – including walking, rolling, cycling, transit, light-duty personal cars, and commercial vehicles of all sizes – are vying for space on a particular street that is too narrow to accommodate all interests at all times
6.8.2	Develop a more detailed streets management framework that considers land use and different modal networks – including walkways, bikeways, transit, and driving people and freight – and assess relative modal priorities for each street segment in the region in ways consistent with the goals of Transport 2050. This framework will help to reconcile overlapping priorities where specific street segments have both limited space in the right-of-way and high importance for multiple networks

Table 3: T2050 Long-term Information and Communications Actions

T2050 Reference	Description
4.2.1	Improve wayfinding to make it easier, less stressful, and more intuitive to move around the region
6.3.3	Update engagement practices and establish guidelines for social equity-based engagement approaches to make them more equitable and inclusive of everyone
6.4.1	Collect data essential to planning, monitoring, and evaluating against the desired outcomes of Transport 2050
6.5.1	Publish an annual progress report and public dashboard on the implementation status of Transport 2050

Table 4: T2050 Long-term Transportation Actions

T2050 Reference	Description
1.1.5	Improve access to shared micromobility by enabling convenient, safe, accessible, and interoperable services that are well distributed throughout the urban parts of the region, such that they can support short local trips within Urban Centres as well as longer trips between Urban Centres
1.2.2	Provide a transit system that is accessible and barrier-free for everyone across the region
3.2.5	Make micromobility devices such as bicycles, and mobility aids such as walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters, more widely available to more people at low cost
4.1.5	Make active transportation facilities comfortable and enjoyable for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds, consistent with the British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide
4.2.2	Ensure transit passengers have room to move around and room to sit if they require it
5.1.3	Support carriers specializing in smaller, zero-emission freight vehicles. This includes supporting cargo bicycles and small-scale automated neighbourhood delivery pods for last-mile freight applications in low-speed and pedestrianized zones in the urban parts of the region

