

Minutes of the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee Meeting
February 19, 2020



HANDYDART USERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 19, 2020 – 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Rooms #427/428 – 287 Nelson's Court, New Westminster

MINUTES

Attendees:

Martin Aquino	Roseanne Shannon
Brian Gibney	Linda Tang
Tim Louis (Chair)	Avery Timm
Laura Mackenrot (Vice Chair)	Bet Tuason
Scott Ricker	Brian Tucker
Marjie Ross	

Regrets:

Wayne Leslie
Justina Loh

Staff:

Chris Chan, Travel Training Manager, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC
Tessa Forrest, Manager, Access Transit Planning, TransLink
Richard Marion, Coordinator, Access Transit Planning, TransLink
Liina Marshall, Manager, Access Transit Services, CMBC
Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC
Tamara Tedesco, Coordinator, Access Transit Planning, TransLink
Gurtej Tung, Planner, Access Transit Planning, TransLink
Erin Windross, Manager, Access Transit Service Delivery Improvements, CMBC

Guests:

Bill Davey, Assistant General Manager, Kamloops Transit, First Canada
Danielle Harriott, Regional Transit Manager, Operations, BC Transit

1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

1.1 Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

- Tim Louis called the meeting to order at 11AM.
- Tessa Forrest then read the land acknowledgement.
- Tim thanked everyone for electing him as Chair and indicated that he is open to feedback.

1.2 Opening Remarks

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1.3 **Committee and Staff Introductions**

- Scott Ricker has joined the HDUAC as a new member, and this was his first meeting. Scott is the Chair of the Access Transit Users' Advisory Committee, and he will be sitting on the HDUAC as a liaison between the two groups.

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

- Moved, seconded and carried.

1.5 **Approval of December 5, 2019 Minutes** – 11:15 – 11:20

- Laura requested that names in the Attendance portion be alphabetized.
- Laura also pointed out that HDUAC minutes need to be posted on the TransLink website, and that minutes and agendas for the UAC are not posted either. Tessa verified that this protocol is outlined in the Terms of Reference for both committees and this update needs to be made to the website.
- Moved, seconded and carried.

1.6 **Safety Briefing & Emergency Procedures Discussion** – 11:20 – 11:45

Dorit Mason, Sr. Manager, Emergency Management and Safety

- Dorit Mason and Andrea lions spoke about building safety.
- Andrea addressed the questions and concerns from the last meeting.
- She updated the committee on the changes to the evacuation procedure.
- On March 17 there will be staff training to educate people on how to assist members of the HDUAC and UAC in an emergency.
- Q: Brian Tucker—With respect to the Coronavirus, are the operating companies updating their pandemic plans for the virus?
- A: Staff coming back from China are to seek medical advice. We are taking the threat very seriously. TransLink is also doing this as well. We have been working on public messaging, similar to what is happening during flu season.
- There was a request to prepare a related document for HandyDART users. Dorit and Andrea said they could work with HandyDART to modify information for them.
- Q: Martin—What is being physically done to prevent the virus, not just coronavirus but other viruses for this time of the year?
- A: Enhanced cleaning and increased assessments to ensure good cleaning of buses and SkyTrains.
- Kathy mentioned that TransLink recently participated in a conference call where what is being done in other jurisdictions was discussed. Also, prevention is being talked about with employees as well.
- Laura commented that she was concerned about messaging for HandyDART users. These customers are much more likely to have

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compromised immune systems. It is important to remind people to cancel their rides if they aren't feeling well.

- Bill mentioned that there is a vaccination program but is not sure of the intent.
- Dorit mentioned that if you are sick, it's best to stay home. This applies in all cases, not just for coronavirus.
- Brian Gibney—suggested seasonal placards or posters on busses, shelters and HandyDART reminding people to wash their hands.
- Andrea—TransLink is working towards an annual safety campaign, and it will include summer issues and winter awareness.

- Q: Roseanne—Will there be increased cleaning of HandyDART vehicles?
- A: HandyDART currently has a cleaning program in place and runs a hand washing campaign during flu season. There is also regular cleaning of hard surfaces, as well as gloves available for drivers.
- Brian tucker commented that having gloves would be a signal to passengers as well.
- Q: Avery—Can drivers take an extended leave if they are sick?
- A: Yes, drivers have sick days available that they can take for leave.

2. REPORTS

2.1. Director's Report, Access Transit Service Delivery & Access Transit Planning – 11:45 – 11:50

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

Taxi Service

- Taxi companies have not removed the incentive program. Only 1 company has done this.
- BCTA is business as usual and is continuing to take HandyDART trips.
- Q. Brian Gibney—Are the incentives through the taxi companies? Why does the Provincial Government give incentives?
- A: Kathy Pereira—All incentives are still in place, except for Yellow Cab, which has stopped its incentive program.

Access Transit Customer Care

- Roseanne suggested there be messaging for people calling for taxi savers about replacing their expired card.

HandyDART Van Pilot

- Toronto currently has 200 vans. Vans work better in some areas.
- Side loaders were tried but some drivers don't like them.
- Q: Tim—How will feedback be collected?
- A: We are looking at telephone surveys, similar to the taxi survey.

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- Laura commented that accessible designated taxis are not necessarily accessible for everyone. It is important that when using the term “accessible,” if it is meant that something is accessible solely for people in wheelchairs, “wheelchair accessible” is the language that should be used. In order for something to be deemed “accessible,” people with a range of other disabilities need to be able to access it.
- Avery Was not able to get into the vans either. An added step to help get up would make a world of difference.
- HandyDART has been busier than expected, with more trips than planned. We have also been Using more taxies than planned.
- February: 3300 over for the month.
- Low denials: 133 denials in December.
- Protests are having impacts on on-time performance.

2.2. **Overview of HandyDART Fleet Right-Sizing Study** – 11:50 – 12:00 Erin Windross, Manager, Access Transit Service Delivery Improvements, CMBC

- Brian Gibney asked about the status of web booking and the app. Something needs to be done to the phone system. There needs to be a direct line to dispatch.
- Q: Brian Gibney—What about the app?
- A: We couldn't do it if we wanted right now. The system can't migrate.
- Brian Gibney indicated that most people have resources for accessing online bookings.
- Kathy indicated that the process of upgrading the phone system Will double the available lines, which will make scheduling easier.
- Kathy agreed about needing the online booking option and web app.
- Avery expressed Concerns about the security of the system.
- Kathy explained that there are many levels of security for TransLink systems that ensures safety. This, in fact, is a reason why some companies won't work with the organization.
- Marjie indicated that people still don't always use online services. People don't usually have others around to assist them.
- Martin enquired about the languages for people, and if it was a federal issue.
- It is not regulated by anyone.
- Q: Marjie—How many people know there is language help?
- Q: Brian Tucker—Is there a training component for people who speak English as a second language about HandyDART?
- Bet asked about the seat belt.
- Kathy responded that the committee will have an opportunity to flag issues for the RFP.
- One issue is that drivers can't get through the aisle if there is a passenger with a walker. They have to move the walker n order to fit.

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- All the fixtures are moveable. TransLink does its customization as well.
- Erin indicated that people will be asked their overall experience.
- Laura indicated that the stool worked well; however, it could be an issue for larger people. Also, it would be better if you didn't have to use a stool at all.
- Better structure for customer feedback and a more structured way to make fleet decisions.

BREAK – 12:00 - 12:15

2.3 **Compass for HandyDART and HandyDART Registration Update Project** – 12:15 – 1:30

Jessica Stronghill, Director, Transit, Bridgeable

Tessa Forrest, Manager, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Danielle Harriot, Regional Transit Manager – Operations, BC Transit

Presentation for Feedback (copy included in package)

- TransLink has been looking at Compass for HandyDART for awhile.
- Looking at what is possible and customer needs this time around.
- Lots of enthusiasm for payment online or over the phone.
- Easier, seamless transfer to the conventional system.
- The purpose of bringing Compass on HandyDART is to improve payment options.
- Customers have struggled to purchase fares because aren't sold on the weekends
- Transferring between modes is not currently seamless.
- Also want to ensure that HandyDART users aren't locked out of using future benefits of Compass (e.g. using Compass to pay for car and bike shares).
- 2 co-creation workshops were held.
- Went to a driver depot and conducted surveys.
- Created a drop-in validation session to further engage with customers.
- Brian Gibney asked why HD vehicles don't display advertising like conventional buses do.
- No answer was available.
- Laura suggested that one of the reasons there may not be advertising on HandyDART buses is to not create visual clutter on the vehicle and maintain the easily identifiable yellow branding. In addition, as people's vision declines, due to aging or a pre-existing eye condition, yellow remains one of the colours that the majority of people continue to be able to see. Covering up the easy to spot big yellow bus with advertising could negatively impact its visibility.
- Avery mentioned that advertising on the outside of buses may cause confusion for riders with dementia.

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- BC Transit started in-person eligibility as a pilot in 2014.
- Piloted it in two communities.
- It is now in place in 12 BC Transit communities.
- Found that in many cases seniors who had surrendered their drivers' licences were referred to HandyDART right away and were not aware of the conventional services available.
- When asked if people found the in-person registration process negative, neutral, or positive, 100% of them said it was positive.
- Many reported they learned something they didn't know about the transit system during the process.
- Laura asked what the percentage of people would be required to attend an in-person meeting.
- Tessa has presented to the City of Vancouver Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, the North Shore Disability Advisory Committee, Measuring Up, and been in touch with Disability Alliance BC and CNIB.
- Laura stated that she sits on the HDUAC as an independent member, and it is her own personal stance that she does not support a shift to in-person registration for HandyDART. With transparency in mind, she would like to also advise that she serves on the CITY of Vancouver's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, and is a representative for the Seniors' Advisory Committee, and both of these groups are also not in favour of in-person registration.
- Tim referenced a recent letter, sent by Justina Loh, on behalf of DABC stating that DABC has never been, and is currently not, in support of in-person registration.
- Scott asked how long the process would be if it involved a test ride and an in-person interview.
- Tessa mentioned that the current turn-around time for applications is five days, but Kathy explained that it often takes three or four weeks due to information missing on applications.
 - Tessa also mentioned that the time needed to get medical verification from a medical professional would be eliminated in the case of in-person registration.
- Bet asked how it will be possible for an OT, rather than a Dr, to be able to recognize peoples' needs who seem well enough to travel on conventional most days but whose abilities may fluctuate.
 - Danielle confirmed that the involvement of OT's is not to make diagnoses, but to have a conversation about peoples' abilities and discuss transit options.
 - Tessa mentioned that even though the discussion is being had to remove the requirement of medical verification, people would still be welcome to include assessment or verification from a medical professional if they choose. She also clarified that TransLink does assess who does get to use HandyDART service.

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- Q: Avery—what happens in the case that the scope of someone's disability changes?
 - A: Danielle—at BC Transit, that is something that happens from time to time. In some cases, individuals may come in for re-assessment: sometimes via phone call and sometimes in-person.
 - Q Brian Tucker—If the denial rate is only 2%, what is the point of changing the registration process?

2.4. **Review of Weather-Related Service Reductions** – 1:30 – 1:55

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

- Kathy reviewed challenges that are faced for HandyDART during inclement weather.
- Even when it appears that roads and sidewalks are clear of ice and snow, there can still be challenges faced by drivers and passengers.
- During these times, service levels are reduced to deliver essential trips only until weather conditions improve.
- This item will be re-visited in more detail again in the Fall.

3. **OTHER BUSINESS**

4. **CLOSING REMARKS**

5. **MEETING TERMINATION**

6. **INFORMATION**

2020 Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:30 AM - 2 PM

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

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