



**HANDYDART USERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Thursday, July 23, 2020 – 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Virtual meeting**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

|                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Martin Aquino                | Marjie Ross      |
| Brian Gibney                 | Roseanne Shannon |
| Wayne Leslie                 | Linda Tang       |
| Justina Loh                  | Avery Timm       |
| Tim Louis (Chair)            | Bet Tuason       |
| Laura Mackenrot (Vice Chair) | 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:**

Sandie Berar, Manager – Customer, Community & Stakeholder Experience, First Transit  
Rob Proctor, Managing Director, HandyDART Service, First Transit

**1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

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

1.2. **Opening Remarks**– 11:00 - 11:05

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

- Laura gave an update on Scott's recovery, and Tim approved Scott's leave of absence from the meeting.

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

- Motion to adopt the agenda: moved by Laura; seconded by Martin; carried.
- Request from Laura to add Stanley Park at the end of the agenda.
- Motion to amend the agenda: moved by Laura; seconded by Linda; carried.

## Minutes of the HandyDART Users' Advisory Committee Meeting

### 1.5. **Approval of May 13, 2020 Minutes** – 11:15 – 11:20

- Brian Tucker requested an edit under Item 2.1 to change “dropped by 17% to “dropped to 17%.”
- Motion to approve the May 13 minutes: moved by Brian Tucker; seconded by Laura; carried.

## 2. **REPORTS**

### 2.1 **HandyDART Recovery Planning** – 11:20 – 11:55

Presentation for information and feedback (copy included in package)

Sarah Ross, Director, System Planning, TransLink

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

Sandie Berar, Manager – Customer, Community & Stakeholder Experience, First Transit

- Sarah began by giving an overall broad update on where TransLink is currently at with recovery planning.
- TransLink’s 2-year revenue loss is projected to be \$500 million conservatively.
- TransLink was very pleased to recently sign a memorandum of understanding with the Provincial government that affirmed that transit is an essential service in the region.
- There has also been an announcement from the Federal Government that they will be coming to the table with financial support for operating. (The Federal Government does not usually provide operating funding).
- Ridership is rebuilding and is slowly going up and is now at approximately 40% of pre-COVID levels.
- Conventional bus ridership is the most robust.
- West Coast Express ridership continues to remain very low.
- In most cases across the conventional system, physical distance has been able to be maintained quite well. That being said, passengers are not always equally distributed in all regions, and two metres of distancing is not always possible.
- Sarah and Kathy then moved into speaking about HandyDART recovery.
- Two metre physical distancing is being practiced on all HandyDART trips.
- When day programs start to open back up and HandyDART ridership grows, this degree of physical distancing might not be possible.
- Currently looking ahead to assess and plan for how more service can be provided while still keeping customers safe.
- Looking at what the breaking point will be of when more trips are being requested than there are available seats on buses will still maintaining physical distancing.
- Want to ensure customers needs are met while still keeping passengers safe.
- Current peak travel times are linked to renal trips and are 6 to 7 a.m.; 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.
- Pre-COVID, peak times were linked to day programs, and were 8 to 10 a.m. and 2 to 3 p.m.
- Currently only receiving and processing about 25% of pre-COVID HandyDART applications.
- Pre-COVID micro buses could take up to eight people; now in phase 1 micros can only take one person, and in phase 2 micros will only be able to take three people per trip.
- Midi buses could take up to 12 people pre-COVID; currently two people, and four people in Phase 2.
- Kathy clarified that HandyDART never moved to “essential service only.” Although the majority of trips have been renal and chemo, people have still continued to be able to book rides to work, medical appointments, and other things they deem essential to their daily lives.

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- Over 2,000 phone calls have been made to HandyDART customers to speak about their comfort level with returning to transit.
- During customer care phone calls: 34% say they will not return for quite some time; 91% of customers say that when they return to HandyDART they will wear masks; 3% will not, and 4% aren't able to wear masks.
- Sandy then explained that one of the models being considered in order to meet demand once ridership increases is to prioritize rides requests according to three levels:
  - Level 1: dialysis and cancer treatments;
  - Level 2: other medical appointments, paid workshops, and post-secondary education, and
  - Level 3: day programs, unpaid workshops and other miscellaneous purposes.
  - An additional strategy would be to stagger bookings so that level 1 clients could call as early as seven days in advance to secure an available ride, and levels 2 and 3 could call up to three days in advance of their desired trip.
- Scheduling window is when a customer calls in and requests a 12:00 pick-up and currently there is an hour of flexibility on either side of the requested time to find an available time. It is currently being considered to extend the booking window to 90 minutes on either side of the requested time.
- An additional option is to limit the number of miscellaneous trips a customer can take in a month, in order for there to be availability for as many people as possible.
- All of these possible solutions are only temporary and interim in order to continue to deliver service during COVID.
- Laura — suggested that masks should be worn by passengers on HandyDART. Perhaps customers could be asked when booking if they have a mask, and if not it would be worth it for HandyDART to provide one.
- Laura – regarding the three levels of priority for booking, mentioned that day program trips should be classified in a higher priority level as they are important for both the customer and as respite for the caregiver.
- Laura – also has concerns about denials. If there is a concern that not enough taxis can be made available to deliver rides, perhaps some smaller vehicles could be procured and used to drive one or two passengers.
- Laura – regarding the 60 minute booking window being extended to 90 minutes, if that is only for level 1 priority customers, what would happen for levels 2 and 3? These customers currently have a 90 minute window, and it would be concerning if that 90 minutes was extended to 120 or more.
- Laura – made an additional point that if a customer does not accept a ride that is offered at a time that will not get them to an appointment on time, that should be classified as a denial, not a refusal.
- Laura – also mentioned that minutes and agendas for both the HDUAC and UAC are still not up-to-date on the website.
- Briana – confirmed that the HDUAC minutes are up on the website.
- Kathy – responded that she made note of all of Laura's points and will take them away for review.
- Brian Gibney — commented that increasing to a 90 minute window would be too much. Also he's surprised that there's no type of red flagging system in place for customers who book an obviously unreasonable number of trips in a month.
- Bet – mentioned that dialysis patients cannot wait 90 minutes as this could pose a serious health risk.
- Liina – clarified that the 90 minutes being referred to in the presentation is not to do with on-board wait time or transfer time, but rather the window of flexibility of what time the customer requests a ride for, and the allowable window on either side of that time that the booking agent can offer an available ride.

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- Kathy – added that the 90 minute window is to provide options to people who aren't necessarily tied to a specific appointment time and have the flexibility to book a ride in a bigger window of time.
- Laura – is worried about denials for people booking rides for trips to the grocery store, bank or pharmacy. Although those trips would have quite flexible times, she wouldn't like to see people denied for those trips because they are classified as level 3 priority.
- Linda—agreed with Brian Gibney's comment about customers not being allowed to take excessive numbers of HandyDART trips.
- Linda — asked if TransLink has spoken to the government about providing funding for increased HandyDART demand in the future, because the government has demonstrated that there is a focus on the importance of good mental health, and this would be negatively impacted for people if social and recreational trips began to be limited.
- Sarah — responded that conversations are being had for funding for both the conventional system and HandyDART. The types of trips taken by HandyDART customers, as well as the purpose and value of the service have been relayed to the Province.
- Linda — since it's inevitable that the demand for HandyDART service will exceed system capacity without increased funding, what measures are being taken to address the challenges of HandyDART users to access conventional transit, such as keeping the priority seats for those who need them? I generally feel like I get no help from other people, and the Operators contribute to the bystander effect. I'm exhausted having to advocate for my designated seat on the conventional system.
- Briana — TransLink is very aware of the challenges associated with priority seating, and ideas to improve things are being worked on. Operators are not able to enforce or manage the usage of priority seating. A big part of this is because many people's disabilities or needs may be nonapparent, and Operators are not able to assess this.
- Chris — added that an awareness campaign is run each year, and sensitivity training with staff is in the works.
- Marjie — commented that perhaps when booking rides, call takers can suggest booking during non-peak times, and know these times, to increase the chances of a trip.

### 2.2. HandyDART Registration: Update & Engagement Strategy – 11:55 – 12:30

Presentation for information and feedback (copy included in package)  
Briana Ingram, Manager, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

- The service design work was completed earlier this year and presented to the Committee in February.
- At that time TransLink committed to continuing financial and options analysis and engagement with stakeholders.
- Now in the early stages of designing the next phase of engagement and would like to get this committee's feedback on that.
- Want to take the results of initial engagement out to a broader group of stakeholders in order to validate what was heard.
- Would like to engage on stakeholders understanding of why TransLink needs to update the registration process.
- Efforts will be focused on engaging with current customers, the HDUAC, day programs, disability agencies and medical professionals.
- Looking to begin engagement potentially in the Fall, and engagement will primarily be virtual.

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- Brian Tucker — Is it accurate that the purpose of a change to registration is not to change validation but to educate people on their options?
- Briana — responded that the purpose is not to increase denials, but to develop a more robust registration process to help manage demand and ensure trips are available when customers need them. COVID aside, TransLink is facing an unsustainable rise in demand for HandyDART trips, and the funding that is available to increase trips year over year is finite. This process is looking ahead to help improve education about the conventional system and what options are available to registrants.
- Sarah — added that education is absolutely one of the purposes, and it will be made sure that this is reflected in the engagement materials.
- Justina — it's difficult to give feedback on the registration engagement when we don't know what the proposed registration process is.
- Briana — clarified that they are currently not looking for feedback on the registration process, but rather feedback on how best to undertake engagement once it is time for that step in the process.
- Laura — commented that not everyone is available/able to participate in online engagement, so how would those people be included?
- Sarah — we are always looking at a range of ways that people can participate. Maybe in-person, one-on-one, physical distanced sessions will need to be planned. This will of course depend on how COVID restrictions progress. We are looking at engagement beginning possibly in mid October to mid November. Following that, it is anticipated that there will not be a next step of reporting out (not including to HDUAC) until early 2021.
- Martin — expressed that he had comments about the registration process, but in the interest of time would share his thoughts with the group by email.
- Avery — doing engagement primarily online will skew the data due to not many seniors being computer proficient. Some other ideas are phone calls and mail.
- Linda — I have no further input on the engagement methods and process. I support the registration process to ensure only those who need the service have access to it.

### 3. OTHER BUSINESS

- Laura red flagged that Stanley Park has re-opened but with only one lane
- This could have an impact on access for people with disabilities, especially those accessing the park via HandyDART
- There are also several sections of the park that are not open for access by people with disabilities.

### 4. CLOSING REMARKS

### 5. MEETING TERMINATION

- Motion to adjourn meeting, moved by Laura, seconded by Bet, carried.

### 6. INFORMATION

#### 2020 Meeting Dates:

Thursday, July 23, 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