

**TRANSIT PROGRAMS TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION
OPTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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**Paper Prepared for presentation at the Walking the Talk:
Sustainable Transportation Implementation, Performance and
Results Session**

**September 17-20, 2006 Annual Conference of the Transportation
Association of Canada, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island**

ABSTRACT- Transit Program to Enhance Transportation Options and Partnerships

The regional transportation authority in Greater Vancouver (TransLink) is one of the few organizations in North America that has continued to increase transit ridership since the 1990s with ridership growing 48% between 1990 and 2005. This paper outlines how transit agencies can be creative in working with their customers and communities to substantially increase transit use and build long-lasting partnerships through innovative programs. These programs can be successful at generating new ridership at a fraction of the cost per new rider as compared to significant operating costs and capital investments in new rapid bus or rail transit systems.

This paper highlights the development and implementation of TransLink's Universal (U-pass) Program for more than 65,000 full and part time students at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and the University of British Columbia (UBC). The U-Pass Program has increased transit ridership at UBC and SFU by 63% since its introduction in September, 2003. In addition, it has increased mode share at both schools to almost 45%. This program is unique in that it has enticed a well-known financial institution to provide sponsorship funding and marketing promotion. Also, the U-Pass Program has resulted in stronger partnerships with these educational institutions, leading to support for other joint initiatives such as the development of the Community Pass Program and improvements in transit service and customer facilities on both campuses.

This paper describes the key steps used to develop the U-Pass Program, including a market research survey employed to establish pass pricing, key program features, and bus service improvements to support the program. The paper also provides useful insights for other transit organizations contemplating introducing transit pass programs.

Further, this paper also outlines the development and deployment of TransLink's OnBoard Program and in particular, its most successful initiative, the Employer Pass Program. The Employer Pass Program has worked successfully with over 180 employers to meet employers' and employees' transportation needs, increase transit ridership and successfully switch drivers to transit. This initiative alone has removed more than 1.4 million single occupant vehicle (SOV) peak hour commuting trips for the roads around Greater Vancouver in 2004 and 2005.

Finally, this paper highlights the development of Canada's first Community Pass Program, which is targeted to residents of sustainable communities being built at both UBC and SFU. In early 2006 this program was implemented at UniverCity, a sustainable community at Simon Fraser University, with a ten-year built out population of 10,000 residents.

Other potential initiatives being contemplated by TransLink to increase transportation options and transit ridership include:

- an expansion of the U-Pass Program to seven colleges;
- a potential transit pass program for the 15,000 staff and faculty at UBC and SFU;
- modifications to the eligibility criteria of the Employer Pass Program to increase its effectiveness; and

- a broad expansion of a community Travel Smart marketing program which is being piloted currently as part of TransLink's Urban Transportation Showcase Program.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the development, implementation and results of three successful programs that the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (TransLink) has employed to be creative in working with its customers and the communities it serves, and to substantially increase transit use and build long-lasting partnerships. These include the U-Pass, the Community Pass and the Employer Pass Programs.

2.0 U-PASS PROGRAM

2.1 Introduction and Background

The U-Pass Program is a deeply discounted transit pass program targeted to university students and possibly staff and faculty as well. The program is implemented on a mandatory or voluntary basis. The program objective is to provide low cost and easy access to transit service to significantly increase transit ridership within and to and from university campuses, and build future market share.

In 1997, a few Universal Pass (U-Pass) Programs, providing low cost and convenient transit passes for post-secondary students, had been introduced in university campuses in Canada and the U.S. One of the most prominent and successful programs was established in 1996 at the University of Washington, located in the City of Seattle.

In 1997, Gord Lovegrove, the Manager of the Transportation Demand Management Program at the University of British Columbia (UBC-see Exhibit 1), the largest university in Greater Vancouver-, approached Bill Lambert, then the Director of Customer Service for BC Transit-the Vancouver transit service provider. Mr. Lovegrove explained the University of Seattle's U-Pass Program and the tremendous increases in transit ridership that it had generated, and asked if BC Transit would support such an initiative.

At that time the transit system in Greater Vancouver was bursting at the seams with ridership relative to its transit system capacity, and had limited excess service capacity, especially in peak periods, to handle the potential ridership increase that would be generated by establishing a U-Pass Program.

However, three years later in late 2001, circumstances had significantly changed which facilitated discussions about a U-Pass Program.

By 2001, BC Transit had been merged into a new regional transportation agency-the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (May, 1999) called TransLink. TransLink had a mandate to plan and fund the Greater Vancouver transit system as well as provide transportation demand management, cycling and road/bridge capital and operating/maintenance programs. With this

broader transportation mandate and the need to significantly increase transit ridership and improve its credibility, TransLink looked more favourably in late 2001 upon a U-Pass Program with UBC. As well, TransLink realized that a U-Pass Program would enable it to further build its already strong post-secondary school market, and to promote a transit culture among students so they would remain transit customers when they graduated.

By 2001, UBC as well wanted to develop some of their endowment lands to generate funds for the university. The position of the Greater Vancouver Regional District was that to gain approval for the development of these lands, UBC would have to reduce the single- occupant vehicle (SOV) trips to its main campus. UBC was also willing to assist TransLink in reducing its transit service costs for the program by agreeing to spread the start of its classes each weekday over the morning period (between 8.00 and 9.00 am) . This would ease the transit service peaking burden and the number of buses (i.e. saving of 9 buses or \$1.5 million annually) that would be required to serve the student ridership needs at UBC with a U-Pass Program.

By 2002, the UBC transit modal share was at 26% and transit use approached 30,000 trips per day compared with just 19,000 in 1998. As well, by 2002, the other large university in the Greater Vancouver region-Simon Fraser University (SFU), located at the top of Burnaby Mountain, was becoming interested in initiating discussions concerning a U-Pass Program (see Exhibit 2). The SFU students wanted to lower their transit costs and the SFU administration wanted to reduce demands for building parking structures on campus. Some of the impetus for an SFU U-Pass Program was generated by the fact that a SkyTrain rapid transit station, Production Way-University Station on the new Millennium Line, was to be located at the base of Burnaby Mountain and was scheduled to open in the fall of 2002. This station, combined with frequent bus services traveling up Burnaby Mountain connecting the station and the SFU campus, provided excellent transit service.

The TransLink Board approved at its March 2002 meeting key principles for a U-Pass Program including revenue protection, price harmonization and cost protection, explained as follows:

- **Revenue Protection:** From a revenue perspective, TransLink could not afford to lose fare revenue from implementation of a U-Pass Program. As a result, the pricing of the pass would be based on the principle that existing base fare revenues from transit trips by students at these institutions would be maintained. The base fare revenue calculation would take into account the number of student trips and the fare payment methods used. This revenue neutrality did not include the additional TransLink service and administrative cost required to provide the U-Pass Program. In addition, to prevent fraudulent use of the passes, TransLink would require participating institutions to have a student photo identification pass.
- **Price Harmonization:** To offer some harmonization of U-Pass prices at UBC, SFU and other post-secondary schools that would want to join the U-Pass Program, it was proposed that TransLink provide three alternative U-Pass Program rates. The rates would include a city rate for campuses where transit's existing share of travel exceeded 40%; an urban rate where transit share fell between 20% and 40%; and a suburban rate for campuses where transit share fell below 20%.
- **Cost Protection:** It is expected that a significant increase in demand would result from the implementation of the U-Pass Program at UBC and SFU, requiring additional transit service. The need for additional service would vary at each institution. Therefore, it was

reasonable that each institution pay a portion of the additional cost of transit required to meet the demand generated by the introduction of a U-Pass. For purposes of the U-Pass discussions, it was suggested that TransLink should negotiate recovery of the costs of additional service provided at a rate of 50%. This would allow TransLink to recover fare revenues that it would forego by providing the additional service to the institution rather than by introducing this service elsewhere in the region. (1).

In addition, it was determined before a U-Pass Program could be implemented, that the student body must approve the program and the pass-pricing rate by a majority referendum vote. If approved, all students would pay for the pass through student fees.

In anticipation of a successful U-Pass Program implementation at UBC and SFU, TransLink assumed the following impacts, benefits and costs of a U-Pass Program. (This is interesting information when it is compared to what actually transpired in regard to U-Pass Program implementation, which is discussed later in this paper).

Ridership

- To increase by as much as 35% to 50% in the first two years at both UBC and SFU

Partnerships

- A U-Pass Program would enable TransLink to further enhance existing strong partnerships with both the administrative and student groups at UBC and SFU

Transit Culture and Future Market Share

- The U-Pass Program would assist in promoting a “transit use by choice” culture among students, so upon graduation they would continue to use transit by choice.

Required Service Increases

- Projected increase in operating costs of approximately \$1.3 - \$1.4 million annually to provide the additional service (i.e. approximately 20,000 service hours) to meet the ridership demands generated by the U-Pass Program.

Lost Fare Revenue

- Base fare revenues for the program were based on 2002 ridership levels. Therefore, additional ridership generated by the introduction of the pass was not expected to result in increased revenue for the next two years, and additional fare revenue could be foregone if there were a general fare increase during the next 12 to 18 months

Start-Up and Administrative Costs

- It was estimated that TransLink would incur start-up and administrative costs for the U-Pass Program of \$ 225,000. On-going administration costs including staff, printer consumables and magnetic media costs, were estimated to be in the \$200,000 to \$250,000 range annually.

Lower Student Travel Costs

- Each student was to save approximately \$500 annually over current pass costs.

Other Impacts.

- The U-Pass Program was to assist in reducing the traffic demands on the major road network in the region roads, improving regional air quality and supporting the region's land use plan.
- The pass was expected to reduce traffic and parking impacts in adjacent neighbourhoods around campuses providing benefits to the community at large, especially at UBC (1).

2.2 Program Pass Price

To determine the pass price, based on the program principle of “revenue protection”, comprehensive market research surveys, at a cost of \$80,000, were conducted with representative samples of SFU and UBC students. These surveys included part-time and full-time students and were completed in the fall of 2002 by a market research firm hired by TransLink.

The surveys required students to generate trip diaries and indicate the transit services they used, how often, when and from where and their method of fare payment. Sensitivity analysis was also completed in regard to the pricing of the U-Pass. This analysis indicated that a pass price in the \$20-\$25 range would be supported by a majority of students in a student referendum (2).

In the fall of 2002, SFU had 11,000 full time students and 9,000 part time students including the main campus on Burnaby Mountain, and smaller campuses in downtown Vancouver and in the northern part of the City of Surrey. The transit market share of travel at SFU was estimated at 34%. A U-Pass cost of \$25 per month per student was required to maintain TransLink's revenue neutrality at SFU. The SFU administration offered to assist in reducing the pass price by \$2 per month to \$23.

In the fall of 2002 UBC had 30,000 full-time students and 8,000 part-time students located at its main campus on Point Grey and at a smaller downtown campus. The transit market share of travel at UBC was estimated at 26%. A U-Pass cost of \$23.00 per month per student was required to maintain TransLink's revenue neutrality at UBC. The UBC administration offered to assist in reducing the pass price by \$3 per month to \$20.00 and to \$15.00 for students living on campus.

To gain approval for the program at both schools and keep the U-Pass price in the \$20-25 range, two key concessions were made by TransLink. TransLink agreed to forego its principle of recovering 50% of its increased service costs for the program. Maintaining this principle would have placed the price at both schools well above \$25 per month. TransLink also agreed to freeze the price of the pass between the start of the program in the fall of 2003 until September, 2005.

For this price, the U-Pass Program provides students with unlimited travel on the complete bus, rapid transit and marine transit system, and a \$2.00 discount on one-way travel on TransLink's West Coast Express commuter train service.

2.3 U-Pass Program Negotiation Process, Legal Agreements, Pass Administrative Details and U-Pass Referenda

Negotiation Process

The negotiation process for developing the legal agreement for the U-Pass Program involved a core team from TransLink, including a senior manager from each of the Legal, Finance and Planning Divisions, and key representatives from the student societies and administration/finance and legal divisions at both UBC and SFU. Negotiations started in the fall of 2002 and concluded in August, 2003 when both legal agreements with UBC and SFU were signed. In parallel with this negotiation process, a separate group involving all parties developed the administrative details of printing and distribution logistics of the pass, and the pass format and design. A key administrative issue for TransLink was to ensure that fare integrity and revenue security issues were addressed through the inclusion of proper student photo identification and a magnetic strip on the U-Pass which would be dipped into electronic fareboxes on buses and shown to staff on other transit services such as the SkyTrain.

Legal Agreements and Pass Administrative Details

The key elements for of the U-Pass legal agreements for UBC and SFU included the following:

- No defined term. However, TransLink, UBC, SFU and their respective student societies would have the right to terminate the agreement in the event of specified causes with a one-year notice to the other parties.
- UBC and SFU student societies would need to conduct legally binding student referendums and obtain majority support both to initiate and to terminate the U-Pass agreement with TransLink.
- A U-Pass Committee would be established as a forum that would have all parties meet at least once per semester or more often as required to discuss and resolve any program service, administrative or other ongoing issues.
- A formal review of the program would be completed by an independent consultant within 18-24 months of the start of the program. This review would detail the program costs and benefits and any issues. Cost of review would be shared between all parties.
- The program would be mandatory for all students with the following exceptions : students who were not assessed student fees; students who did not reside with the Greater Vancouver Regional District; students who did not attend any classes offered by either University within the GVRD; outgoing exchange students; co-op students working outside the GVRD; students who has a valid Government of BC Pass or Canadian National Institute for the Blind Pass, students who held a valid TransLink or operating company pass, and users of the paratransit system.
- There would be no adjustments to the price of the U-Pass at UBC or SFU by TransLink during the first two years of the Program.
- Any future increases to the cost of the U-Pass would form part of TransLink's general fare increase following its normal consultation process and would be implemented as part of any general fare increase.

- The U-Pass Program would provide passes to those eligible students enrolled in the spring and fall semesters at UBC and in all three semesters at SFU. N.B. A summer semester pass has since been added at UBC at the same monthly rate as the other semesters.
- All parties would agree to work together to find corporate sponsor(s) for the U-Pass that are acceptable to all parties. Contributions from sponsor(s) would be used to first defray TransLink's costs of providing additional transit service for the U-Pass Program and its costs of printing the U-Pass. If there were any remaining contributions above these costs, they would then be applied to reduce the price of the U-Pass.
- UBC and SFU would be responsible for distributing U-Passes to the eligible students at each institution.
- TransLink would be responsible for printing the U-Passes at SFU, and the printing and distribution was to be done through a third party printer, who electronically receives the student photos. Issues of privacy would be addressed by requiring the third party printer to sign a confidentiality agreement with all parties (see Exhibit 3).
- The U-Pass would be a unique pass for each institution (separate from the student card) and would be required to be inserted into the bus electronic fareboxes. The principal factor driving the requirement for a separate U-Pass was for TransLink to be able to protect its fare revenues. The U-Pass would have the following features: a prominent student photo at the top; a control number linked to the student name; a pass number; the student's name with last name and the first initial; a magnetic strip encoded for acceptance in the bus electronic fareboxes; the logos of all three parties; the expiry date of the pass; and space for a corporate sponsor logo. The pass would be designed with additional security measures such as using a different coloured backdrop on a large student photo and using different colour coding to indicate the period of validity (3).

U-Pass Referenda

UBC held its student U-pass referendum in January, 2003 and the program was approved by 63% of the students. A key to obtaining program approval was that the UBC administration provided a \$1.15 million contribution to the UBC student society for the program. This enabled a further reduction in the pass price for students living on campus to \$15.00 per month, and the ability to address hardship cases where students could provide proof that they could not afford the monthly U-Pass price

SFU held an initial U-pass referendum in the fall of 2002. However, it had to cancel the process because of illegal promotion activities by the "Yes" side. Another referendum was held in February, 2003 and the pass program was approved by just 9 votes. A large issue in the close vote was the belief by students that TransLink would not provide enough transit service to respond to the expected ridership increases generated by the program.

2.4 Corporate Sponsorship

A key feature of the Greater Vancouver U-Pass Program is that a sponsorship agreement that was negotiated by TransLink with a large local credit union, Vancity. The Vancity sponsorship contribution of \$900,000 helped defray the administrative and service costs of the program. In exchange for this funding, Vancity was permitted to market its brand name and products on the TransLink transit system and promote the pass as the Vancity U-Pass. This sponsorship also entitled them to place their logo on the pass and other collateral marketing items along with the logos of the other parties.

2.5 Review of U-Pass Program and Actual Costs and Benefits

An important component of the current U-Pass Program with UBC and SFU was the commitment to cost-share in a review of the program after 18 months. This review would document the costs and benefits of the program, as well as identifying how the program could be enhanced. The review was completed in June, 2005, with the assistance of a consultant and input from an overall steering committee and from advisory committees from both schools. Some key findings from this work include:

- 81% of SFU students and 86% of UBC students use their U-Pass, predominantly for school trips
- Weekday transit trips have increased by 54% and 84%, respectively, at UBC and SFU since September, 2003;
- The transit mode share at UBC has increased from 26% in September, 2003 to 42% in mid -2005, and from 34 % at SFU in September, 2003 to 45% in mid -2005;
- SOV trips have decreased by 22% at UBC, and by 10 % at SFU;
- 9 to 10 million annual transit rides have been generated and of these rides 3.5 million are new transit rides;
- Transit costs for students have been lowered by \$160 to \$ 800 per semester
- Parking has been reduced at both schools by up to 15%;
- Greenhouse gas emission have been lowered by 21,000 tonnes annually;
- The U-Pass has had a measurable impact on students' perception of having increased location choices available for housing, jobs and trips to school;
- Transit service is rated as good at both SFU and UBC with an average score of 7.0 and 7.2 out of 10, respectively;
- Increased frequency and reduced crowding and pass-ups are cited as the most important service improvements that could be made;
- The program has increased in popularity as recent referenda held to approve monthly fare increases of \$2.00 and \$1.75 respectively at UBC and SFU passed by 92% at UBC and 83% at SFU;
- Overall, TransLink and the two university administrations have committed significant resources to the development and implementation of the U-Pass program. TransLink has expanded transit capacity to both schools by approximately 30% and introduced 61,000 additional bus service hours annually to meet ridership demands to date at an annual operating cost of close to \$5.0 million.
- TransLink's program start up costs and on-going costs were higher than expected. TransLink's start- up costs were \$900,000 and its on-going costs are \$450,000 plus an

estimated 11,000 hours per year for operators supervising all door boarding at selected bus stops/exchanges due to the volumes of customers

- SFU start up costs for the program were \$141,000 plus 3,450 hours of staff time UBC start up costs for the program were \$550,000 plus 4,400 hours of staff time
- UBC ongoing costs to support the program are \$1.3 million per year, which includes \$1.15 million of pass subsidies, and 4,000 hours of staff time annually. SFU ongoing costs for the program are \$617,000 per year as well as 4,900 hours of staff time annually.
- As a result of the program's success, the significant increase in service hours to accommodate student ridership demand delayed planned service expansion to other parts of the region by 6 to 12 months. (4)

2.6 Lessons Learned and Existing Program Enhancements

Several key lessons were learned from the GVTA U-Pass Program. These include:

Build effective partnerships and communication channels: The success of the U-Pass Program development and implementation was accomplished by building strong communication channels and partnerships between the appropriate levels and areas of responsibility in each organization. At the start of the process there was a strong mistrust between the UBC and SFU students and TransLink over the issue that TransLink was trying to make a large profit from the U-Pass Program, and that it would never deliver in terms of the increased transit service required to meet the significant ridership growth generated by the program. However, effective communications between the parties helped to overcome these areas of mistrust. As well, each of the parties delivering on their own or shared commitments as part of the program helped to build effective partnerships and lines of communication. The overall approach for this initiative was to design and implement a program that met the needs of all stakeholders and could be fine tuned over time as circumstances changed.

Plan for the unexpected: Develop a strong contingency plan. For example, even though TransLink had completed a detailed analysis of the additional service capacity that would be required to meet the growth in ridership from the program, on each route ridership surpassed everyone's forecasts.

When the program was introduced there was significant overcrowding on the transit system and additional transit service had to be added quickly. Fortunately, TransLink had access to reserve vehicles to improve the service and address the overcrowding situation. Additionally, the resources that all parties had to put into the program for its development and implementation, (other than service levels) were much higher than original estimates, and adjustments had to be made.

Implement an Evaluation Process: TransLink, SFU and UBC planned as part of the program legal agreement for a comprehensive evaluation of the program by an independent consultant after 18 months. This assessment included interviews with all stakeholders, student focus groups and a market research survey to identify all program costs, benefits transportation impacts and operating issues and opportunities. This evolution confirmed the costs and benefits for all parties

and was able to be used by all parties to enhance their areas of responsibilities for the program and the overall program. For example, UBC took lessons from SFU to implement the printing and distribution and program management process used by SFU to improve their efficiency in delivering their program and as well, added the summer semester term for the pass.

2.7 Direction for Future U-Pass Program

TransLink initiated discussions in the fall of 2004 with representatives from the administration and student societies of the seven other publicly funded post-secondary schools in the Greater Vancouver region to add approximately 50,000 students to the U-Pass Program from the current FastTrax Program. The FastTrax Program enables students to buy a two-zone or three-zone monthly transit pass for the cost of a one-zone monthly pass, with the purchase of a two dollar sticker which is applied to the pass. TransLink has completed market research surveys at each of these schools to determine travel patterns and estimate the base fare revenue for the price determination. Several key issues have arisen for the possible expansion of the U-Pass Program for these schools:

- i) The research survey found that transit mode share at these schools varied significantly between schools, ranging from 16% mode share at a suburban college to 64% at a city college. This would mean using the base fare revenue as the formula for the price, that the U-Pass price would vary from \$18 per month at one of the suburban schools to \$55 per month at one of the city colleges located in downtown Vancouver. The students as a group from all schools have indicated to TransLink that they will not take a U-Pass Program to a student referendum vote unless the U-Pass price is close to the UBC and SFU rate (i.e. \$25 to 26.75 ranges as of September, 2005) and will certainly not support a pass rate of more than \$30 a month.
- ii) The additional annual service costs to TransLink of providing a U-Pass Program for these schools will be significant, in the order of \$3.0 million, due to the suburban location of many of the schools.
- iii) The new net rides to be gained from the introduction of a U-Pass Program at many of these schools will be limited due to their existing high transit modal shares.
- iv) Many of the students at these schools do not attend on a strict fall, winter and spring semester, making the provision and administration of a U-Pass Program more challenging.

Due to the need for more time to resolve these issues, TransLink has postponed the possible expansion of the U-Pass Program until September, 2007.

3.0 Community Pass Program

3.1 Introduction

Another concept that has been employed by other transit systems to increase transit ridership by making transit easy and affordable to use, is the introduction of a

Community Pass Program. This pass is a discounted monthly or annual transit pass made available to geographically defined communities, as a means of encouraging use of transit. One example of a program of this type is in Boulder, Colorado.

Developing a variation of this Boulder model, TransLink has developed and recently implemented its own Community Pass Program, the first of its kind in Canada. TransLink created a Community Pass for sustainable communities in Greater Vancouver with the following characteristics:

- The incorporation of sustainable transportation development principles in their design (e.g. lower parking requirements than specified in municipal bylaws);
- Existing high levels of transit service where the Community Pass would generate increased transit ridership mainly in the less utilized direction of travel (i.e. where there is excess service capacity);
- A single neighbourhood association or legal entity (instead of individual strata corporations) to administer and coordinate the program, and financially support and sustain the program;
- Existing and extensive partnerships with TransLink (e.g. existing U-Pass Program and partnerships on transit facilities); and
- Communities that were geographically separate. (5)

UBC's private and UBC-owned housing on its campus and the new sustainable community being built at SFU, UniverCity, represented communities that TransLink determined would meet these guidelines in 2004.

The Community Pass was included as a new fare product as part of TransLink's Three Year Plan (2005-2007), Implementation and Financial Strategy approved by the TransLink Board in December 2004. The plan proposed to implement the program for both residents of SFU's UniverCity and for UBC's market and non-market housing by 2006/2007.

3.2 Community Pass Areas

SFU UniverCity and UBC Community Pass

The Community Pass at SFU is intended for UniverCity which is a developing sustainable community on Burnaby Mountain containing a variety of one to three bedroom units with lower parking standards and local retail and commercial uses built to serve the community. Residents have a Community Card that allows them discounted access to SFU recreational, day care and other university facilities. Residents also have access to a hybrid community car in a community car co-op. The population of UniverCity is approximately 600 residents today living in 300 units and the community is forecast to reach a population of 10,000 in 10 years' time with 4,500 units.

The Community Pass at UBC is intended for private market housing built on UBC's Endowment Lands and represented by a University Neighbourhoods Association, and for university owned housing on the UBC campus represented by the UBC administration. There are approximately 1,100 private market housing units containing 2,150 residents and 1,000 UBC-owned housing units with 1,650 residents, providing the customer base for a potential UBC Community Pass. Over the next 15 years this community will be expanded to accommodate up to 25,000 residents.

3.3 Community Pass Program Principles

The key principles of the Community Pass Program include some of the principles of both TransLink's current Employer Pass Program and U-Pass Programs:

- **Voluntary** - Residents' participation in the Community Pass Program is optional. Participants have to sign a registration form and pay a one-time registration fee of \$50.00, provide proof of their residency in UniverCity or UBC housing and commit to purchasing the pass for a minimum of 12 months.
- **Guaranteed 50% Participation Rate** - The SFU Community Trust and UBC have to guarantee annual payments to TransLink equivalent to pass revenue based on at least 50% of residents living at UniverCity and in UBC's market and non-market housing purchasing Community Passes, exclusive of students who already have U-Passes. This financial guarantee is paid to TransLink, even if the program does not achieve its 50% participation rate.
- **Program Sustainability** - This program will be implemented after appropriate legal and financial mechanisms are developed between TransLink, the SFU Community Trust and UBC to ensure the program's long-term sustainability.
- **Pass Pricing** - The pricing of the Community Pass at UniverCity and UBC is proposed to be based on the following principles:
 - The pass price will be revenue neutral to TransLink and will be determined using a similar base fare revenue model established for the U-Pass Program pricing and using the 50% participation guarantee. This base fare revenue was determined through the conduct of market research surveys of a representative sample of residents at UBC, as well as by the transit characteristics of nearby communities in the case of SFU's UniverCity community (which is in the process of being built and occupied)
 - The Community Pass price will not be lower than the existing U-Pass Program price at UBC and SFU.
 - Employing these principles, the Community Pass price per eligible resident at both UBC housing and SFU UniverCity was determined to be \$28.00 per month or \$336.00 annually. This rate does not include TransLink's administrative and start-up costs.
- **Legal Agreement** – The Community Pass Program will be governed by a legal agreement between TransLink and the SFU Community Trust, and TransLink and UBC.
- **Additional Transit Service** - Additional transit service costs to meet the increased ridership attracted by this program are estimated to be minimal. The primary reason for this is that much of the ridership growth is anticipated to be in the reverse peak direction of transit into either UBC or SFU areas. TransLink is to be responsible for funding any additional transit service costs, similar to the existing U-Pass Program.
- **Sponsorship** - Vancity Credit Union, the current sponsor of the U-Pass Program,

has agreed to provide sponsorship funds to SFU Community Trust for the Community Pass Program in its first two years (i.e. \$100,000 in total), and Vancity's logo will be placed on the Community Pass for UniverCity.

- **Printing and Distribution of Passes** - The printing of all Community Passes (including replacement passes) with residents' photos will be handled by TransLink or on behalf of TransLink through a third party contractor. The SFU Community Trust and UBC will be responsible for all the costs and responsibilities for the distribution of the pass.
- **Design and Production of Community Passes** - The Community Pass itself will be a magnetically encoded pass, bearing the resident's photo and name, and TransLink, community and sponsor logos. TransLink will be responsible for taking the photos and designing the pass.
- **Marketing** – TransLink, UBC and SFU Community Trust will co-operate to market the program for its first two years. TransLink has agreed to provide marketing media related to its transit system and the Community Pass Program directed to UniverCity to the value of \$125,000 for the first two years of the program. This includes providing space on bus and SkyTrain car cards (value \$100,000) and \$25,000 for marketing material production. Marketing arrangements will also be made with UBC for its Community Pass.
- **Program Review** – In cooperation with the SFU Community Trust and UBC, TransLink will conduct a review of the Community Pass Program before the end of two years from the launch of the respective programs to document costs and benefits and address any issues. Total program review costs, expected to be approximately \$40,000, will be cost-shared with SFU Community Trust and UBC.

3.4 SFU UniverCity and UBC Community Pass Program – current status

SFU

The Community Pass Program was introduced at the SFU's UniverCity community in February, 2006 and promoted through open houses, signage in the individual developments and features in the community's monthly newsletter. Approximately 150 of the community's existing 600 residents have signed up for the pass. Sales of the pass have been partially impacted by the fact that some of the suites have been purchased by speculators and remain unoccupied, and by the fact that about 70 of the residents are students who already have access to a U-Pass.

UBC

UBC is still contemplating whether they will proceed with a Community Pass Program.

4.0 The Employer Pass Program

4.1 Introduction and Background

TransLink's transportation demand management (TDM) initiatives are housed within the "OnBoard" Program. The OnBoard Program is an "umbrella" for several different and unique

initiatives designed to reduce single occupant vehicle (SOV) trips. One of the primary tools in TransLink's OnBoard tool kit is the Employer Pass Program (EPP).

Employers are excellent partners for SOV trip reduction programs because of their ability to influence employee behaviors, coordinate ride-sharing activities and to shift resource allocations between parking supply and other mobility options. They also offer a single point of contact in reaching multiple customers, providing administrative efficiency for implementing commuter options programs at the workplace. As a result, employer-based transit pass programs are a staple item in the promotion of ridership for most transit organizations.

TransLink's EPP was launched as a pilot program in 1996 with the Cambie Corridor Consortium. The Cambie Corridor Consortium was Canada's first Transportation Management Association (TMA). It was formed around a number of major employers in the area including the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Hospital, the B.C. Teacher's Federation and others.

EPP participants receive a 15% discount on the cost of a monthly pass, with a minimum subscription period commitment of 12 months. The discount is intended to be revenue neutral based on the assumption that actual use does not exceed 10.3 months per year (accounting for weekends and holidays). Program participation is restricted to employers or TMA's that are able to sign up a minimum of 25 employees.

Current Situation

Since its introduction in 1996, TransLink's EPP has grown significantly. At the end of its first four years, the EPP had an enrollment of 3,600 employees and 55 employers. In the following two years the program grew to 6,000 employees and 100 employers. During the past three years (2003 to 2005), the program has grown to more than 13,000 employees and over 200 companies.

4.2 Rationale for Growth

There are a number of linked issues that have contributed to the growth of TransLink's EPP. Employment increases alone within the GVRD have undoubtedly had an effect; however, issues related to population growth have also played a role. Congestion caused by an ever-increasing number of private vehicles (up to 30,000 additional vehicles per year) has pushed many people from their SOV commute, as have gasoline prices, particularly when combined with the additional distance many commuters must travel in order to live in "affordable" housing within the GVRD.

With population growth as well as market pricing realities motivating many otherwise SOV commuters into looking at alternatives for their commute, one of the easiest conversions for travel is towards transit. TransLink offers many transit commuting options that are convenient and faster than rush hour SOV travel within the GVRD. When you combine these benefits with the ability for many commuters to access a discounted transit pass through their employers, the resulting increases the program has experienced are not unexpected.

Another significant factor in the growth of TransLink's EPP is the creation of the OnBoard Program in 2003. The goal of the OnBoard Program is to promote peak hour commuting options to residents of the GVRD through their employers. Although the OnBoard Program markets several commuting options such as ride sharing (car and vanpools), corporate car sharing, active transportation (cycling and walking) and teleworking, only the EPP creates a multi-layer bottom line benefit (revenue, ridership and reduction of SOV commutes, traffic congestion and air pollution). As a result, the EPP represents the primary focus for the OnBoard Program.

Shortly after the OnBoard Program's introduction in 2003, enhancements were made to further improve its effectiveness in marketing trip reduction options. These modifications also included a series of new measures within the program, and for each of its separate initiatives, a review of the program to determine what was working and what was not. The enhancements included an 'opportunity identification' process similar to what might be used in the private sector for products and services, added to the front end of the program, and a relationship management process added to the back end of the program. Taking the re-engineering process one step further, a professional sales training program was also developed and implemented for program staff.

A process map summary of the current OnBoard Program is shown in Exhibit 4. The OnBoard Program consists of the following 9 elements:

1) Marketing Plan

The marketing plan plays a role at all points in the process; however, its primary function is to generate client leads.

2) Targeting Criteria

Potential client companies are assessed against two sets of criteria: primary and secondary.

Primary Criteria:

- Offices within walking distance of SkyTrain Station or major transportation corridor (<1km)
- More than 100 employees

Secondary Criteria

- Limited parking
- Willingness to promote alternatives
- Willingness to assign resources

If an organization meets the current selection criteria, basic research on the organization will be done. This includes contact names, phone numbers, website, etc. Further research on the organization takes place once a level of interest has been shown. This research would include industry information, key stakeholders, pertinent historical information, etc.

3) Client Development

The initial presentation to the organization's executives includes information relating to the

commuting options initiatives within the OnBoard Program. Additionally, the presentation will detail the processes the program undertakes going forward (data gathering, analysis, reporting, executive presentation, partner implementation and relationship management) and the timelines associated with these elements. Information gathered at this presentation with the potential client organization includes:

- Business focus/objectives
- Business issues
- Level of employer/employee support
- Environmental goals/initiatives

This information is key to the overall process since it is often used to develop the basic success factors by which the client judges the program's success.

4) Data Gathering

Once a client has agreed to work with TransLink, TransLink uses the information gathered in the client development phase along with any additional information it can obtain through detailed observations of the physical plant, more in-depth executive interviews, as well as employee commuting mode share surveys (See Exhibit 5).

5) Data Analysis and Reporting

The above noted information is developed into a report with specific recommendations for action.

6) Executive Presentation

The final report is delivered verbally to client company executives for consideration. At this point recommendations are prioritized and a timeframe for follow up is suggested.

7) Partner Implementation

If the client agrees to move forward on recommendations, the OnBoard Key Account Representative will determine, in conjunction with the client organization's primary contact, if there are any areas where OnBoard staff can provide program implementation support.

8) Relationship Management System

On an ongoing basis the OnBoard account representative meets with the client organization's key contact to address issues related to program implementation as well as timeframes for measuring success. Discussions around additional program offerings and their viability within the client organization also take place at these meetings.

9) Client Relationship Management

Client contact information, report recommendations, follow up meetings and outcomes and other information relevant to the client company is entered into the client relationship management (CRM) database. This information is accessible by all OnBoard staff and is extremely valuable in the relationship management process, e.g., when the CRM system reminds the OnBoard account

representative that it is time to contact the client organization.

The OnBoard Program has also contributed significantly to the EPP's growth through its sales and marketing efforts. Marketing budgets are used to good effect by segmenting target companies and their employees and by using effective communication methods to reach each target group.

An example of this approach would be that as the OnBoard Program is reaching out to senior management within a targeted organization using a business benefit oriented approach, employees in the organization are advised of the personal benefits of a particular commuting option. Oftentimes the communication with senior executives will take place as a face-to-face meeting, while the outreach to employees takes place in the building they work in or on their route to work.

TransLink knows that it must reach many different levels of corporate strata before it is invited into an organization to deliver commuting options to their employees. TransLink has used the above approach, and variations of same, with a high degree of success.

4.3 Results

One of the key measures of success for any of TransLink's TDM programs is the measured reduction in SOV commute trips taken within the GVRD. From 2003, the onset of the OnBoard Program (a time when measures of program effectiveness were established for specific initiatives), to year-end 2005, the EPP alone has removed more than 1.4 million SOV trips from the roads in the GVRD. See Exhibit 6.

Customer survey and program entry information indicates that between 9% and 16 % of EPP participants left their SOV commute to join the EPP. If a conservative number is chosen, for example, 10% of total annual EPP participants (600 for 2003, 1050 for 2004 and 1250 for 2005) and multiply those numbers by 2 trips per day x 5 days a week x 48 weeks a year, this results in approximately 288,000 SOV trips eliminated in 2003, 504,000 in 2004 and 600,000 in 2005.

4.4 Direction for Future Employer Pass Program

Currently, a business process review is underway to determine the market potential and resources needed to manage anticipated EPP growth. Stemming from that review will be the capability for TransLink to offer a wider range of customized transit pass programs. Some of the considerations to date include: a developer pass; an entertainment zone pass; special event passes; and staff/faculty passes for large educational institutions. All of the above-mentioned passes will require strong partnerships with a variety of stakeholders in order to ensure successful implementation.

For example, the 'Developer Pass' would have a partnership between property developers, municipalities and TransLink all agreeing to provide a transit pass to the purchaser of a new residence that has been given permission by the municipality to reduce parking requirements. An 'Entertainment Zone Pass' would be specific to an area in Vancouver where most large entertainment events take place. A large number of partnerships would be required with Vancouver sports teams, concert and show promoters and cultural organizations to support an event specific or generic entertainment event pass. Other large events like marathons and triathlons or seasonal events (home shows, boat shows, etc.), could also benefit from a special event transit pass that would allow patrons to get to and from the event sites conveniently and less expensively. A staff /faculty pass for post secondary educational institutions would likely be a hybrid pass - developed from the U-Pass concept but implemented and managed in the style of the EPP.

Another area of potentially significant growth for EPP style transit pass programs will be if the federal government agrees to provide a tax exemption for a transit pass. With a significant body of research pointing out the benefits, the Canadian Urban Transit Institute and other transit proponents have been working for a number of years to convince the federal government to implement a tax exempt status on transit passes. If this becomes a reality, employer pass programs would be the perfect mechanism to support such a program - with the employer making the appropriate tax exemption adjustments during payroll calculations for each employee on the EPP.

5.0 Conclusions

Many North American major transit systems are making significant capital investments in expanding existing or building new bus rapid transit, rapid transit or commuter rail services to attract new transit ridership and build their market shares. This paper indicates that much lower cost innovative transit programs such as U-Pass, Community Pass and Employer Pass Programs can significantly increase transit ridership and build long lasting community partnerships and transit culture at a fraction of the cost of these new capital transit infrastructure programs.

References

1. TransLink Board report: Proposal for University and College Pass Program-U-Pass, March 25, 2002
2. U-Pass Program Market Research Surveys, TransLink, September, 2002
TransLink Board report: Update on Universal Post Secondary Transit Pass Program for SFU and UBC, November 22, 2002
3. University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University U-Pass Agreements with TransLink, September, 2003
4. U- Pass Review-Final report, prepared for TransLink by Urban Systems, May, 2005
5. TransLink Board report, Community Pass Principles Review and Program Update, July 12, 2005
6. TransLink Board report, Review and Expansion of U-Pass Program and Development of Community Pass, February 16, 2005

Resources

- Employer Pass Program Enrollment Form Questionnaire – March 2004 to present
- Interest in Viable Transportation Options, Mustel Group – September 2004
- OnBoard Program Process Framework – KLR Consulting September 2003
- Regional Travel Survey, GVRD Residents age 16+ - January 2003
- The OnBoard Sales, Partnership and Relationship Development Program, Knowledge Brokers International - September 2005
- The OnBoard Program, TransLink Commuter Options Program - presentation at CUTA Conference – November 21, 2005
- TransLink Board report: Demand Management: Employer Pass Program Photo ID Passes - October 20, 1999
- TransLink Board report, Implementation of U-Pass for UBC and Update on SFU U-Pass, March 5, 2003
- TransLink Board report, 2005-2007 Three Year Plan and 10 Year Strategic Outlook: Strategic Transportation Plan Amendments, December 10, 2003

TransLink Board report: BCAA and GVTA (TransLink) Marketing Research – February 16, 2005

TransLink Board report: OnBoard Program Update – February 16, 2005

Exhibits and Figures

Exhibit 1-Aerial View of University of British Columbia Campus on Peninsula



Exhibit 2-Aerial View of Simon Fraser University, with UniverCity Community located on Burnaby Mountain



Exhibit 3- Greater Vancouver U-Pass Program Pass

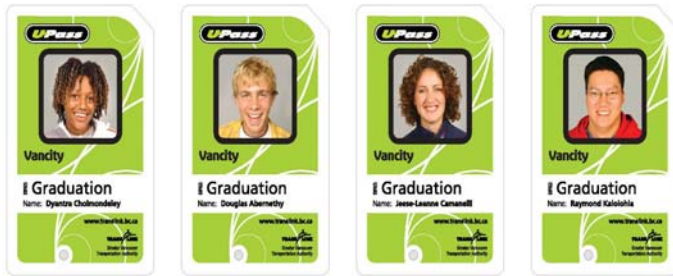
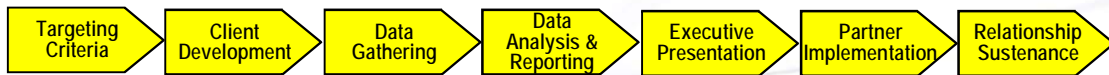


Exhibit 4-OnBoard Program Process Model

OnBoard Program Process Model

Marketing Plan



Client Relationship Management (CRM program)

Exhibit 5-Employer Pass Program Enrollment Form

EMPLOYER PASS PROGRAM EMPLOYEE ENROLMENT CONTRACT		
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY		
<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Name of Employer</u>
<u>Home Address</u>	<u>Phone Number (Home)</u>	<u>Phone Number (Business)</u>
<u>City and Postal Code</u>	<u>Phone Number (Cell)</u>	<u>Email Address</u>

Use of bus, SeaBus, SkyTrain: Valid for travel through the following zones (please check) ¹ : <input type="checkbox"/> 1-1 \$60/month <input type="checkbox"/> 2-1 \$82/month <input type="checkbox"/> 3- \$112/month <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 \$60/month <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 \$82/month <input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 \$60/month	West Coast Express (includes all-zone bus, SeaBus and SkyTrain service): Return trip to Vancouver from (please check) ² : <input type="checkbox"/> \$235/month - Mission <input type="checkbox"/> \$170/month - Port Haney/Maple Meadows/Pitt Meadows <input type="checkbox"/> \$140/month - Port Coquitlam/Coquitlam/Port Moody
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¹Zone Information: First number indicates number of zones of travel - For specific details on zone categories, visit our web-site at www.translink.bc.ca/employer_pass.
²RATES ARE CURRENT AS OF THE DATE OF THIS CONTRACT AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME. RATES ARE SET BASED ON GUARANTEED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM FOR A MINIMUM OF 12 MONTHS.

TRAVEL SURVEY: Information obtained from this survey is used for internal management purposes only to assess the effect of the Employer Pass Program and provide benchmarks for program enhancements. The information is collected and will be used for statistical analysis of the survey results. Any disclosure of this information will be in the aggregate only and will not include any information that may identify a specific participant.	
Q1. What main mode of transportation are you using now that you will replace with transit once you have an Employer Pass? CHECK ONE <input type="checkbox"/> Single Occupant Vehicle (Driver with no passenger) <input type="checkbox"/> Car/Vanpool (Driver with one or more passengers) <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER MODES (walk, bicycle, jog, rollerblade)	Q2. How many one-way trips will you be switching to transit once you have an Employer Pass? (A one-way trip is a trip to a single destination-to and from work to a one-way trip) _____ one-way trips in an average 7-day period
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Transit (Bus, SeaBus, SkyTrain or West Coast Express) <input type="checkbox"/> Single Occupant Vehicle and Public Transit <input type="checkbox"/> Car/Vanpool and Public Transit	Q3. What method of payment do you currently use most often when taking transit? CHECK ONE <input type="checkbox"/> Cash/Single or Return West Coast Express ticket <input type="checkbox"/> Fare Savers <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly FareCard (Monthly Pass) <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly West Coast Express Pass <input type="checkbox"/> 28-day West Coast Express Pass <input type="checkbox"/> U-Pass <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

CONSENT TO USE PERSONAL INFORMATION

Travel Survey - I consent to the collection, use and disclosure of the information I have provided in the travel survey section for the purposes stated in that section on the basis that disclosure will be limited to aggregate data only.

Personal Information - I understand that TransLink must collect, retain and use my personal information to provide me with an Employer Pass (including replacements and annual renewal), enable me to participate in the Program on a continuing basis and permit TransLink to obtain payment, and I consent to such collection, retention and use.

I HEREBY IRREVOCABLY AUTHORIZE TransLink to request and obtain, and authorize my employer to disclose to TransLink, my work and home phone numbers and addresses and employment status either upon request from TransLink or upon any change to such information and I further authorize my employer to advise TransLink if I revoke my payroll deduction authorization at any time, until I surrender my Employer Pass to my employer or TransLink. I am aware that the collection of my personal information is authorized by section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and is being collected solely for the purpose of ensuring the proper administration of the Program. I understand that if I have any questions on the collection of my personal information, I can contact TransLink's Program Manager at 1600 - 4720 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2, tel: 604-453-4619.

I HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ALL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS CONTRACT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM EFFECTIVE THE FIRST DAY OF _____, 20____ ("EFFECTIVE DATE") AND CONTINUING FOR A MINIMUM PERIOD OF 12 CONSECUTIVE MONTHS.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

\$15 enrolment/administration fee must be attached.

Exhibit 6-Employer Pass Program Results

Employer Pass Program Results

2003 – 2005

- Employees - 6000 to 12,000+
- Employers - 108 to 200
- Total SOV commuter trips eliminated (2003 to 2005) = 1.4 million est.

SOV Trips Eliminated

