

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"LaClaire, Lon" <lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/16/2020 4:32:21 PM

Subject: Memo - Bus-Priority Projects Supporting COVID-19 Recovery

Attachments: ENG-TPL-Council Memo - Bus Priority Projects supporting COVID Recovery - 2020-09-14.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- ☐ At Council's direction, staff are working in partnership with TransLink to implement bus-priority measures to enable faster and more reliable bus travel, manage road congestion as the economy restarts, and support safe physical distancing on transit.
- ☐ As part of COVID-19 recovery measures, TransLink recently awarded the City \$345,000 to complete bus-priority pilot projects on four corridors in 2020: Robson St, Granville St, Main St and Kingsway, and 49th Ave.
- ☐ The pilots will be implemented in fall 2020 for about one year. Staff will monitor the transit, traffic, and parking impacts, and consider feedback from residents, businesses and stakeholders before considering which temporary measures should become permanent.
- ☐ Other bus-priority projects being implemented in fall 2020 include a TransLink-led Pilot for Bus Stop Balancing on Route 2 Macdonald/Downtown, and improvements to the existing bus-priority lane on W Georgia St.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

September 16, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Bus-Priority Projects supporting COVID-19 Recovery

Staff are working in partnership with TransLink to implement bus-priority measures to enable faster and more reliable bus travel, manage road congestion as the economy restarts, and support safe physical distancing on transit. This supports the direction from Council to reallocate road space and improve transit priority during the pandemic, as was moved on May 27, 2020.

This memo provides an update of various bus-priority projects being implemented in fall 2020, including pilot projects supporting COVID-19 mobility recovery, a bus stop balancing pilot led by TransLink, and other ongoing bus-priority initiatives.

Bus-Priority Projects supporting COVID-19 Recovery

Transit provides a relatively affordable mobility option, whether for essential workers, employees accessing retail areas, or customers wanting to shop and dine. With reduced transit capacity due to physical-distancing requirements, providing reliable and fast transit service is particularly important to ensure that its reduced capacity is maximized to best serve the community.

As part of the COVID-19 recovery measures, TransLink recently awarded the City \$345,000 to complete bus-priority pilot projects on four corridors in 2020:

- Robson St
- Granville St
- Main St and Kingsway
- 49th Ave

These four bus priority projects will be implemented in fall 2020 and piloted for approximately one year until fall 2021. Over the next several weeks, residents and businesses along the respective corridors will be notified about the bus-priority projects through postcard mail-outs and the City's website. As the pilot projects will be implemented quickly, we are informing the public and will maintain an open channel for feedback to make adjustments, as necessary. After a year the pilots will be reviewed to determine which, if any, should be made permanent, considering the benefits, impacts, and any feedback received during the course of the trial.

Where proposed bus improvements are adjacent to businesses, staff are also working with Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) and business owners to mitigate loading and parking changes and to find a balance between traffic and transit operations, and temporary patios, pop-up plazas, connections to Slow Streets, and other mobility and public life recovery initiatives.

A summary of the proposed bus-priority improvements is provided in the following sections and illustrated in **Appendix A**.

Robson Street

To support economic recovery in the busy retail area along Robson St, the curb lane has been repurposed at key locations between Jervis St and Burrard St to widen sidewalks and extend existing parklets. Over 18,000 passengers take Route 5/6 on an average weekday and experience the slowest average transit speeds in the region. The improvements on Robson St provide many benefits, including more space for people to walk, sit, or queue when visiting local businesses; less delay for people riding the bus; and more reliability for people driving.

The following changes have been implemented on Robson Street, in coordination with the sidewalk widening, parklets, and public art:

- Temporary bus bulbs that widen the sidewalk and waiting area have been installed at Bute St (eastbound and westbound), and at Burrard St (westbound);
- Bus stops have been temporarily suspended to allow for sidewalk widening at Thurlow St (eastbound and westbound) and at Jervis St (eastbound); and
- Left-turn restrictions at Thurlow St and Burrard St.

Staff are currently monitoring the transit and traffic conditions, parking impacts, and inviting feedback from residents and businesses.

Granville Street

Granville St is ranked 10th in the region for person-hours of delay in TransLink's 2019 *Bus Speed and Reliability Report*, and is among the highest rates of bus bunching (when two or more buses arrive at the same time) and the slowest average travel speeds in the region. TransLink estimates the bus-priority measures could reduce the average travel time for passengers on Route 10 by 20% during peak hours, and would have operating efficiencies for many 'Not-in-Service' buses accessing the depot located in Marpole.

The existing curbside lane on Granville St will temporarily become a bus-priority lane in effect at the following times, with no changes to on-street parking:

- Southbound between 16th Ave and SW Marine Dr, from 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;
- Northbound between SW Marine Dr and King Edward Ave, from 7 to 9:30 am on weekdays; and
- Northbound between King Edward Ave and 16th Ave, from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays.

Although most of the transit delay and reliability issues occur north of 16th Ave in the South Granville retail area, the temporary patios and pop-up plazas to support business recovery remain a priority. The transit and traffic impacts along the Granville St corridor will be further monitored during the bus-priority pilot. Potential changes in the South Granville retail area will be explored at a later time, through further conversation with the BIA and in coordination with Broadway Subway construction.

Main Street & Kingsway

In April 2019, staff heard support from residents and businesses for transit improvements through the Mount Pleasant Industrial Area Transportation Strategy process. On an average day, over 23,000 passengers use the bus stops in this area, where Routes 3, 8, and 19 converge. Transit riders experience delays on Main St and Kingsway throughout the day and on weekends. TransLink estimates that bus lanes along this section of Main St would reduce average travel times by 15% and significantly increase reliability.

The existing curbside lane on Main St will temporarily become a bus-priority lane in effect at the following times:

- Southbound between Terminal Ave and Kingsway, from 7 am to 7 pm every day, with parking suspensions;
- Northbound between Kingsway and 4th Ave, from 7 to 9:30 am on weekdays, with no changes to on-street parking; and
- Northbound between 4th Ave and Terminal Ave, from 7 am to 7 pm every day, with parking suspensions.

The existing curbside lane on Kingsway will temporarily become a bus-priority lane in effect at the following times, with no changes to on-street parking:

- Eastbound between Main St and Fraser St from 3 to 6 pm on weekdays; and
- Westbound between Fraser St and Main St from 7 to 9:30 am on weekdays.

Many portions of the curb lane on Main St, south of 10th Ave have also been repurposed to temporary linear plazas and patios to support business recovery. A new temporary bus bulb on Main St at 14th Ave (northbound) will provide more space along the sidewalk and for people waiting at the bus stop. As well, the right-turn lanes at Fraser and Kingsway will be extended to reduce delays for buses and other vehicles.

The transit, traffic, and parking conditions in the Mount Pleasant retail area will be further monitored, and potential adjustments to the temporary bus lanes and major intersections will be explored at a later date in coordination with Broadway Subway construction.

49th Avenue

The 49th Ave corridor is ranked 11th in the region for person-hours of delay in TransLink's 2019 *Bus Speed and Reliability Report*. Along the corridor, buses face consistently high congestion throughout the day. Routes 49 and 430 operate on 49th Ave, with a combined frequency of every 5-7 minutes at peak times. In 2019, Route 49 was the second busiest bus route in the region, after the 99 B-Line, with over 10,000,000 annual boardings. Ridership was also growing quickly before the pandemic, with nearly an 8% increase between 2018 and 2019, which is the second-highest in the city.

A new temporary curbside bus-priority lane will be implemented on 49th Ave, in effect at the following locations and times, with suspension of on-street parking:

- Eastbound between Windsor St and Inverness St from 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;

- Eastbound between Inverness St and Knight St from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;
- Eastbound between Bruce St and Victoria Dr from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;
- Eastbound between Arlington St and Boundary Rd from 7 am to 7 pm every day;
- Westbound between Arlington St and Kerr St from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;
- Westbound between Vivian St and Elliott St from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;
- Westbound between Gladstone St and Victoria Dr from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays;
- Westbound between Bruce St and Knight St from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays; and
- Westbound between Prince Edward St and Main St from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays.

The following bus zones will be extended, requiring some suspension of on-street parking adjacent to the bus stop from 7 to 9:30 am and 3 to 6 pm on weekdays:

- Prince Edward St (eastbound);
- St. George St (westbound);
- Vivian St (eastbound); and
- Doman St (eastbound).

The existing bus stop at Wales St (westbound) will be temporarily suspended. Corner clearances and right-turn lanes will be extended on 49th Ave at, Knight St, Kerr St, and Tyne St to reduce delay for buses and vehicles. Additionally, consistent with existing bylaws, new signage will formalize no stopping restrictions at intersections, including at Beatrice St and Bruce St T-intersections, which will impact some curb space currently used for parking.

Potential bus-priority improvements along 49th Ave west of Main St will be explored at a later time.

Bus Stop Balancing Pilot led by TransLink

TransLink has embarked on a Bus Stop Balancing Program, which involves reviewing bus stop spacing to balance the need to provide an efficient transit service and also convenient access to destinations. By strategically removing bus stops where they are spaced very close together, access is maintained while improving the speed, reliability, and attractiveness of taking transit.

TransLink has selected Route 2 Macdonald/Downtown as one of the first routes to pilot in a wider regional program. City staff believe that this is a good route to trial, as there are many extremely closely-spaced stops. This work should inform how to approach other routes. TransLink is leading the project, including the consultation and engagement with its customers.

TransLink has also reached out to key stakeholders, including the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and the Seniors' Advisory Committee, affected Business Improvement Associations, businesses, schools, and others. Signs have been placed at all bus stops along the route, with information about the project, notices of stop closures, and an invitation for feedback from the public. The pilot on Route 2 will run for six weeks, from September 21, to October 31, 2020. More information about the pilot on Route 2 can be found in TransLink's memo to Mayor and Council dated August 11, 2020.

West Georgia and other ongoing Bus-Priority Initiatives

Staff are also continuing to advance the bus priority initiatives that were awarded TransLink funding from the 2019 Bus Speed and Reliability program.

The bus-priority improvements on W Georgia St (as shared in a memo to Mayor and Council on February 25, 2020) were delayed due to the pandemic and will be installed in fall 2020. To improve bus reliability and travel times, the changes along W Georgia St between Richards St and Gilford St include:

- Changing the westbound bus/HOV lane currently in effect from 3 to 7 pm every day to a bus-priority lane in effect from 7 am to 7 pm every day; and
- Minor adjustments to loading zones and left-turns to support the bus-priority lane.

Staff are also in the early stages of planning for potential bus-priority improvements along other corridors, including W 4th Ave, Hastings St, W Broadway, E Broadway, and Burrard St.

Communications and Engagement for Bus-Priority Projects

Over the next few weeks, residents and businesses will be notified about the bus-priority pilot projects through postcard mail outs and the City's website (www.vancouver.ca/improve-bus), which will be launched in mid-September. The website includes graphics indicating the street changes, and provides an opportunity for members of the public and stakeholders to contact project staff via email (buspriority@vancouver.ca).

Similar to other COVID-19 recovery initiatives, we anticipate that some residents and businesses may only learn about the changes once they are implemented. City staff and TransLink are committed to listening to public feedback; monitoring the transit, traffic and parking impacts; and making necessary adjustments to the bus-priority measures over the course of the pilot. Staff will consider feedback from the public and assess the monitoring results before the temporary bus-priority measures become permanent.

Residents can learn more about the Bus Stop Balancing Pilot Project on Route 2 on TransLink's website (www.translink.ca/busstopbalancing) and provide feedback to TransLink via email (busstopbalancing@translink.ca)

If you have any questions about these bus-priority projects and their implementation in the coming months, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.
General Manager, Engineering Services

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Appendix A – Map of Bus-Priority Projects being Implemented in Fall 2020

