

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

**CC:** "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"  
"Dobrovolny, Jerry" <jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca>

**Date:** 6/25/2019 4:03:52 PM

**Subject:** Memo - Late Night Transit Service

**Attachments:** ENG - TPL - Memo - Late Night Transit Service - June 2019.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see attached above a memo from Jerry Dobrovolny regarding an update on TransLink's review of late night transit services. The key points are summarized below:

- TransLink initiated a review of Late Night Transit Services in April 2018. It included bus transit and SkyTrain, and involved multiple stakeholders.
- In Summer 2018, a NightBus Hub Pilot Program was launched, focusing on NightBus services at the W. Georgia and Granville Street intersection. As a result, ridership increased 20% between 2017 and 2018.
- It is not possible to operate the SkyTrain 24 hours per day, seven days per week due to maintenance considerations; operating it all night Friday and Saturday was investigated as a possibility.
- In order to operate all night on Fridays and Saturdays, SkyTrain would have to end one hour earlier on Sundays through Thursdays to allow enough time for maintenance. This would impact 900,000 riders annually, compared to 700,000 who would benefit from increased hours on weekends.
- Phase 2 of the Mayor's 10 Year Vision includes a 58% increase in NightBus service. 2019 and 2020 will see extended hours, frequency increases and new or extended routes. In addition, TransLink is considering a "Shadow SkyTrain Bus Service" that would operate seven days per week along the three SkyTrain lines, operating when the SkyTrain is shut down for the night. It would cost \$4m and is not currently funded.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jerry Dobrovolny at 604.873.7331 or [jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca](mailto:jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca).

Thank you,

Paul

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

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## MEMORANDUM

June 25, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Lon LaClaire, Director, Transportation

FROM: Jerry Dobrovolny, General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Late Night SkyTrain and Services Review Update

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At the request of elected officials and stakeholders, TransLink launched a review of late night transit services including SkyTrain hours of operation and bus service in April 2018. This memo provides Council with an advance summary of the Late Night SkyTrain and Services Review Report, which is being presented at the Mayor's Council meeting on Thursday, June 27, 2019.

The report focuses on three areas:

- Stakeholder engagement and recent NightBus changes;
- SkyTrain extended hours technical study; and
- Future improvements to the NightBus service.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Recent NightBus Changes**

TransLink engaged various stakeholders to feed into the Late Night Service Review:

- Local business associations;
- Other transportation-related agencies and authorities (YVR);
- Industry associations (Vancouver Taxi Association);
- Police officials (Vancouver Police Dept., Transit Police); and
- UBC student representatives.

Discussions included a wide range of options focused on improving safe transportation out of the downtown core at night. Increasing accessibility and awareness of the NightBus service has been a key element of the discussion.

In summer 2018, TransLink, in partnership with the City of Vancouver, launched a NightBus Hub Pilot Program at Granville and Georgia Streets. This created a more visible and user friendly hub by focusing NightBus services in one location. The result was that NightBus ridership increased by 20% between 2017 and 2018. Due to the success of this pilot the NightBus Hub has now been made a permanent feature of TransLink's service. Additional marketing will be undertaken this summer by TransLink to further promote this change.

## **SkyTrain Hours Technical Study**

British Columbia Rapid Transit Company (BCRTC) operates and maintains the Expo and Millennium SkyTrain Lines on behalf of TransLink. In spring 2018, BCRTC engaged a consultant to consider the potential impacts and required system changes to support a possible extension of SkyTrain service hours. A similar study of the Canada Line was also commissioned. The BCRTC study was broken into four phases.

Phases 1 and 2 reviewed global best practice in this area. They concluded that:

- Systems that provide late night services have redundancy in their train routes, thus permitting maintenance to occur by switching riders to alternate lines. The SkyTrain system does not offer this opportunity.
- Peer cities of similar size to Vancouver do not operate extended service hours.
- Operating SkyTrain 24 hours per day, seven days per week (24/7) is not feasible due to the required maintenance window.
- Operating SkyTrain on Friday and Saturday nights (24/2) was taken forward for consideration.

Phases 3 and 4 considered in more detail the feasibility of operating SkyTrain 24/2. They concluded:

- Consideration of maintenance requirements is critical to the continued efficient and safe running of the SkyTrain system.
- By running SkyTrain later on Friday and Saturday nights, there is a need to make up this maintenance time on other days of the week. A one-hour curtailment of operating hours from Sunday through Thursday is required for this, as well as full or partial closure of the system during some statutory holidays. In other words, instead of the last SkyTrain departure from Waterfront being at 1:15 am, the last departure would be 12:15 am Sunday through Thursday.
- This reduction in weekday SkyTrain service would displace an estimated 900,000 'last hour' weekday passengers annually. The most optimistic estimate of ridership on 24/2 late night SkyTrain is 700,000 annually. This estimate is likely on the high end as it does not take into account the future presence of ride hailing services.
- Additionally, this change would likely disproportionately negatively impact lower wage workers Monday through Thursday, relative to the benefits on Friday and Saturday evenings.
- There is also potential significant negative impact to the capital program of station upgrades, including system readiness for integration with the Broadway Subway.

## Future Improvements to the Night Bus Service

Phase 2 of the Mayors 10-Year Vision, approved in 2018 and presently being implemented, includes a 58% increase in NightBus service levels, relative to 2016. In 2019 and 2020, improvements to Night Bus service will include extended hours, frequency increases and new or extended routes.

TransLink is also considering the Potential of a "Shadow SkyTrain Bus Service" that would operate seven days a week along the SkyTrain Expo, Millennium and Canada Lines. It would start once SkyTrain service stops, and run until it begins again in the morning. The estimated cost of this service is approximately \$4 million annually and is not currently funded.

Finally, the introduction of ride hailing is expected create new service supply and will absorb a potentially significant amount of the demand for service late at night. As such, ride hailing can be seen as a complementary service, especially for "first mile / last mile" connections at the end of routes.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

- City staff agree that 24 hour SkyTrain service does not make operational or financial sense at this time.
- City staff consider the idea of a 'Shadow SkyTrain' service to have merit, and would support TransLink's plan to study this concept in more detail.
- City staff support more service hours in general, either on new or existing routes.
- The full report from TransLink will be presented at the Mayor's Council meeting on June 27, 2019.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly at [jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca](mailto:jerry.dobrovolny@vancouver.ca) or 604.873.7331.

Sincerely,



Jerry W. Dobrovolny, P.Eng., MBA  
General Manager, Engineering Services

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