

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

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

Date: 3/30/2022 12:37:31 PM

Subject: **Update on Bus Stop Balancing and Bus-Priority Projects**

Attachments: **Memo - Update on Bus Stop Balancing and Bus-Priority Projects.pdf**

TransLink - Letter - BSB Completion on Routes 4 and 7 - 2022-03-17.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire regarding Update on Bus Stop Balancing and Bus-Priority Projects. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- ☐ TransLink has concluded the Bus Stop Balancing trial on Route 4 (Powell/Downtown/UBC) and Route 7 (Nanaimo Station/Dunbar), after carefully considering feedback from the community and trade-offs of each bus stop change.
- ☐ Transit riders on Routes 4 and 7 are now experiencing 7% shorter trip times and saving up to 5 minutes per trip in peak periods, comparable to the benefits from previous bus stop balancing on Routes 2, 17, and 25.
- ☐ Over the coming months, staff will be changing bus zone signage, relocating shelters, and installing new benches at affected bus stops with TransLink funding support.
- ☐ At Council's direction to advance other measures to speed up buses, staff are planning additional bus-priority measures. On West 4th Ave in Kitsilano, bus bulbs and intersection improvements are planned in late spring 2022. On Burrard St, the existing bus lanes are planned to be expanded to additional times of day. Other bus-priority measures are being explored on Dunbar St and Dundas St.

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

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

March 29, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Paul Storer, Director of Transportation

FROM: Lon LaClaire
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Update on Bus Stop Balancing and Bus-Priority Projects

RTS #: N/A

This memo provides an update on TransLink's bus stop balancing initiative on bus routes 4 and 7 (*refer to the Memo to Mayor and Council dated January 13, 2022 and November 15, 2021*), as well as updates on other bus-priority projects, including on West 4th Ave and Burrard St.

Bus Stop Balancing on Routes 4 & 7

TransLink has concluded the bus stop balancing trial on Route 4 (Powell / Downtown / UBC) and Route 7 (Nanaimo Station / Dunbar).

From November 2021 to March 2022, TransLink contacted over 675 stakeholders along the routes, consulted with citizen advisory committees, posted signs at every stop on Routes 4 and 7, and trialed the stop changes for over six weeks. TransLink has carefully considered the feedback from the community and the trade-offs of each stop and will be making the bus stop changes permanent.

On Routes 4 and 7 combined, the total 192 stops were reduced to 163 stops, of which 35 stops were removed and 6 new stops were added for more balanced stop spacing. The average stop spacing on Route 4 was increased from 290m to 340m, and from 250m to 290m on Route 7, which better aligns with TransLink's Transit Service Guidelines.

Over 90% of passengers on Routes 4 and 7 are able to use their existing bus stop and have a faster, more reliable trip. Transit riders are now saving over five minutes per trip in the busiest times of day, and experiencing 7% shorter trip times.

The travel time benefits to transit riders on Routes 4 and 7 is similar to the benefits of the earlier rounds of bus stop balancing:

- On Route 2 (Macdonald / Downtown), each roundtrip is 6-9% shorter (up to 4-6 min) during weekday peak periods and on weekends;
- On Route 17 (Oak / Downtown), each roundtrip is 4-6 % (up to 3-5 min) shorter during weekdays and 9% shorter (up to eight minutes) on weekends; and
- On Route 25 (Brentwood Station / UBC), each roundtrip is 3-7% shorter (up to 4-10 min) throughout weekdays and weekends.

City staff will begin to change bus zone signage, relocate shelters and install new benches at affected bus stops with TransLink funding through the Bus Speed and Reliability municipal cost-sharing program. As the process to relocate shelters may take several months, staff are working in partnership with TransLink to add signs on shelters at inactive bus stops to inform customers of the change.

The attached letter from TransLink provides additional detail on the process and engagement for bus stop balancing on Routes 4 and 7. Residents can learn more about the bus stop balancing projects on TransLink's website (translink.ca/busstopbalancing) and provide feedback to TransLink via email. (busstopbalancing@translink.ca).

Other Bus-Priority Measures

During previous bus stop balancing projects, Council passed a motion for staff to accelerate work on other measures that improve bus speed and efficiency.

City staff are continuing to partner with TransLink on other types of bus-priority measures that complement and further the benefits of bus stop balancing on Routes 4 and 7, in the following areas:

- **West 4th Ave** – On West 4th Ave, between Burrard St and Balsam St, additional bus-priority measures are planned to be installed in late spring 2022. Bus bulbs will be installed at six bus stops, using interim materials for several years until the sidewalk and curbs are reconstructed. Bus bulbs allow buses to stop in the travel lane and reduce delays from entering and exiting a bus stop. Bus bulbs also improve comfort for those riding and waiting for the bus, as they create more space on the sidewalk and enable a better public realm.

As West 4th Ave has high pedestrian activity, buses and other vehicles experience delays at intersections when vehicles wait for a gap to turn onto local streets. Right-turn pockets provide a space for right-turning vehicles to safely wait for pedestrians to finish crossing without blocking the travel lane, and will be extended at several intersections.

These measures are being finalized in consultation with the Kitsilano West 4th Avenue Business Improvement Association, businesses and coordinated with other street-use requests such as patios and events.

- **Dunbar St** – Based on consultation feedback, TransLink has postponed balancing the bus stops for Route 7 along Dunbar St, between 27th Ave and 39th Ave, to conduct further consultation with the Dunbar Village Business Association, Dunbar Residents' Association, and other community members. Staff will be working with TransLink to identify a revised package of stop changes that considers key travel patterns and destinations identified by the community. As well, staff will explore other types of bus-priority measures, and identify safety and accessibility upgrades to improve walking or rolling to bus stops. The planning and engagement along Dunbar St is expected to begin in late 2022.
- **Dundas St** – Staff are exploring bus priority measures on Dundas St to improve travel times and reliability for passengers on Routes 4 and 7, and other vehicles on the corridor. Minor parking changes west of Nanaimo St are planned to be installed in summer 2022, and opportunities for other improvements are currently being explored.

City staff are also completing bus-priority measures that further the transit benefits of earlier rounds of bus stop balancing on Route 2:


- **Burrard St** – On Burrard St, between West Pender St and Burnaby St, the existing bus priority lanes are planned to be expanded to additional times of the day. The existing southbound bus priority lane would be expanded from 3-7 pm to 7-10 am and 3-7 pm on weekdays. The existing northbound bus priority lane would be expanded from 7-9:30 am to 7-10 am and 3-7 pm on weekdays. Expanding the bus priority lanes during both morning and afternoon peak periods, in both directions of travel, will accommodate faster and more reliable transit service. Minor adjustments to loading zones and left-turns restrictions are planned to support the bus lanes. BIAs, businesses and local organizations are being proactively informed of these changes.

As staff continue to notify and consult with BIAs, businesses, and residents on the bus priority projects, further information will be made available on the City's webpage (vancouver.ca/improve-bus) and members of the public and stakeholders can contact project staff via email (buspriority@vancouver.ca).

Overall, TransLink's bus stop balancing program and bus-priority measures provide faster, more reliable, and cost-effective transit service. These efforts can encourage more people to take transit, which increases the City's sustainable transportation mode share and advances the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

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

604.873.7336 | lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca

ATTACHMENT: Letter from TransLink (Completion of TransLink's Bus Stop Balancing on Routes 4 and 7)

**TransLink**

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New Westminster, BC V3L 0E7
Canada
Tel 778.375.7500
translink.ca

South Coast British Columbia
Transportation Authority

Paul & Steve,

I am pleased to let you know TransLink and City of Vancouver have successfully completed bus stop balancing on Routes 4 and 7. In January, we removed 35 bus stops that were too close together to improve bus travel times and reliability. We improved spacing and customer experience by adding six new bus stops, relocating one bus stop, and improving accessibility at an additional five bus stops.

Customers are now saving over five minutes per trip in the busiest times of day. Customers will save even more time when the City constructs bus bulbs and right-turn bays on West 4th Ave this summer. The City is also relocating 11 bus shelters to the bus stops that remain in service. All of this work is being completed with funding from TransLink's Bus Speed and Reliability Program.

We carefully developed the bus stop balancing project for these routes in consultation with City staff, advisory committees, and public stakeholders to maximize travel time savings and accessibility. We carefully considered the trade-offs of closing, moving, and consolidating each stop. As a result, 93% of customers on Route 4 and 92% of customers on Route 7 are able to use their existing bus stop and have a faster, more reliable trip.

We modified our initial proposal based on public feedback. We retained 10 bus stops initially identified for closure. We have analyzed all other comments and determined that all bus stop changes trialed in January will be made permanent.

During engagement, representatives of the Dunbar Residents Association and the Dunbar BIA raised concerns about existing safety and accessibility challenges in accessing bus stops and crossing streets along Dunbar St. Later this year, we will partner with City of Vancouver staff and community stakeholders along this street to identify a revised package of stop changes, supporting transit priority such as bus bulbs, and other road safety and accessibility improvements.

We made diligent efforts to consult with and inform customers of our bus stop balancing initiatives. Those efforts included:

- **Consultation with citizen advisory committees** such as TransLink's User Advisory Committee and the City of Vancouver's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee, Senior's Advisory Committee, and Transportation Advisory Committee;
- **Proactively contacting more than 675 stakeholders along the routes** including community organizations, health organizations, seniors' centres and residences, faith organizations, schools and parent advisory groups, childcare centres, and business associations to advise of project activities, timelines and invite comments;

- **Conducted virtual and in-person meetings with key stakeholders**, as needed;
- **Partnering with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)** to send emails and voicemails blasts to their membership along the routes; and
- **Posting signs at every stop** of Routes 4 and 7, including translated signs as needed, to notify customers of the proposal and trial to invite comments.

Throughout our engagement process, general support for bus stop balancing was often accompanied by customer requests for improvements at new stops. In particular, we heard concerns about the lack of shelters and benches at some stops. It is in our customers' interest to ensure that stops are as accessible as possible, particularly for customers who are seniors or persons with disabilities. We will continue to support the City in relocating bus benches and shelters as soon as possible and seek to prioritize the stops that generated the most requests. In the meantime, we will install informational decals on shelters at closed stops to direct customers to currently served stops.

Upcoming milestones include:

- March 28 – Customer notification of permanent changes. Install decals at decommissioned bus stop shelters.
- April 11 – Permanently remove or relocate bus stops
- Early Summer – Construct temporary bus bulbs on W 4th Ave (City)
- Late Spring/Fall – Relocate shelters and benches to active bus stops (City)

Bus Stop Balancing is one of many bus priority projects being delivered by the City of Vancouver in partnership with TransLink. Since 2019, TransLink has committed more than \$5.15 million in funds for bus lanes, signal and regulatory enhancements, bus bulbs, and more. These projects make transit a more attractive option for Vancouver residents, employees, and visitors, ultimately contributing to our shared goals of improving access, mobility, and environmental outcomes.

We thank you for your support for this critical program to ensure our customers and City of Vancouver transit riders receive fast, frequent, and reliable service.

Please let me know if you have any clarifying questions or comments.

Daniel Freeman
Senior Manager, Bus Priority Programs
TransLink