



## HANDYDART USERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

### MINUTES

#### Attendees:

|                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Sherry Baker                 | Brian Gibney      |
| Wayne Leslie                 | Tim Louis (Chair) |
| Laura Mackenrot (Vice-Chair) | Jeriah Newman     |
| Marjie Ross                  | Roseanne Shannon  |
| Linda Tang                   | Avery Timm        |
| Bet Tuason                   | Brian Tucker      |

#### Regrets:

Martin Aquino

#### Staff:

Briana Ingram, Manager, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Liina Marshall, Manager, Access Transit Services, CMBC

Kathy Pereira, Director, Access Transit Service Delivery, CMBC

Rob Proctor, Managing Director, First Transit

Sarah Ross, Director, System Plans, TransLink

Richard Marion, Coordinator, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Erin Windross, Manager, Access Transit Service Delivery Improvements, CMBC

Ross McFarland, Senior Planner, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Gurtej Tung, Planner, Access Transit Planning, TransLink

Megan Johnston, Senior Advisor, Engagement, TransLink

## **1. PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

### **1.1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement – 11:00 - 11:05**

- Tim called the meeting to order.
- Briana read the land acknowledgement.

### **1.2. Opening Remarks– 11:05 - 11:10**

- Briana clarified how the workshop process will work.
- The next meeting will have a full agenda including both sets of minutes from March and this workshop.

## **2. HandyDART Modernization Workshop and Discussion**

- Briana provided an introduction:
  - There has been 4 workshops and a telephone town hall and hearing a lot from customers. To date, we have had 608 surveys complete, over 400 from HandyDART customers, and from advocacy groups as well.
  - Sending out 230 paper surveys. Will be accepting them until April 30.
  - Received over 600 calls to the project line including requests for information.
  - At the telephone town hall, an Occupational Therapist that works with BC Transit in the Okanagan walked people through the process of how the interview works.

- Through the engagement, we have heard concerns that the OT would not really understand the individual, and that the process would be intrusive and undignified. I know there are concerns about the process from some people.
- Pleased with the number of people we have heard from as well.
- Megan and Ross gave the presentation, including:
  - Background on HD walking through the modernization process
  - Recent improvements to HandyDART, including recommendations from 2016 review
  - Demand for HandyDART is expected grow about 26% over 10 years
  - Compass for HD
  - Potential changes to fares
  - Online booking to phone booking
  - The potential change to how people register for HD

**DISCUSSION: Do you feel that an in-person consultation would be a valuable component? Does it help customer needs?**

- Avery: Strongly dislike the in-person interview. Will be judged. People with disabilities will not trust you. Trust will never happen. People will be very uncomfortable with this. Conditional eligibility is a change to eligibility. There will be restrictions.
- Clarify on trust What would build trust?
  - Not really. If there was trust, then when people apply it would be already assumed that they are eligible. The in-person appointment assumes no trust.
- Jeriah: The opinions I have heard are quite similar to Avery. The rider provides information that is being asked for, but it must be verified by a GP or OT. This communicates no trust. People would have to get an OT with a referral. Privacy is another concern. The information being provided to HandyDART. Is it to all drivers as well?
- Sarah Ross: We envision applicants fill out a simplified form and would be contacted about a direct approval or an in-person consultation. It would be done by an OT - the person would not have to arrange for this. One of the objectives is a conversation between the person and the OT. How do we assess if people can really use the conventional system? Many people don't know about the

accessibility of the conventional system. How can we ensure when someone says they can't use the conventional system, that is informed by knowledge of the conventional system in terms of its accessibility?

- Avery: An education campaign could be used to educate about the system and what is available.
- Sarah: Do you have concerns that this would lead to people using HandyDART that could use the conventional system with some support?
- Avery: Some people could use the conventional system, would be good to talk to them after they've been approved so they know their options.
- Jeriah: It's not always so separated. Some issues with proximity to the bus stops. Can use conventional for some trips and require HandyDART for others.
- Linda: Support the consultation. Changed from a conventional transit user to HandyDART. It was a big transition. Nice to have an understanding of the service with the consultation. Expect a whole group to be covered.
- Laura: Glad that this is an open forum. Against the personal registration process. Personal consultation with a medical professional. This is asking for the right to use transit. Ask/beg for the request to use the benefit of HandyDART. An OT may not have the full capacity to understand all the disabilities. It is important to know how the disabilities interact together. Still Pro for still having the paper form. you can get more information if you would like. Can attach an information sheet on using conventional transit. Information should be available in multiple languages. Make sure that people receive a follow-up Campaigning is very important. This is how people will learn about the issues and the transit system. Most people have to be in a bad position before they could use HD. Disrespectful to come in for a half day appointment. Constantly begging for our benefits. Laura is pro travel training. Hiring seniors and people with disabilities to help people to learn how to use the transit system. The Federal DTC and the provincial PWD applications also already have medical verification.
- Wayne: Supportive of the individuals and the comments they made. Viewing HD as one more component of the transit system. Opportunities to improve education and understanding when people

are in. Freedom of choice. This choice is taken away from people with disabilities. We need to find another way to tackle the problem of people using HD that could use conventional transit.

- Sarah: We want to enable as many people as possible to take the conventional system. Provides more options and flexible travel. This is why we have HD. A free and open choice to the individual is a challenge. Is about how the system is managed. It is a high touch system and expensive to provide. We continue to advocate for increased funding as well.
- Wayne: If we reframe this, we could provide this as an opportunity to use the system to its full advantage. Can tick more than one box and come up with positive solutions we may have not thought of.
- Brian Tucker: Question about relevant abilities.
- Kathy: Right now, we don't know the individual's abilities. How do you use transit and what do you need it for? It isn't as flexible as conventional transit. They could meet people for lunch if they use the conventional system. Right now we don't engage with applicants on any level, don't look at any individual abilities, and treat everyone as a client with defined parameters around mobility.
- Marjie: The length of time to take the in-person interview. Had a situation to use HD. Could cause delays in receiving the service.
- Sarah: It is not for temporary use of HD – that would not require the in-person consultation. The timeliness could be an issue. We would try to turn around applications within 2 weeks. Would not stretch out the time. If it could take a month, we would not want this.
- Kathy: A number of applications come in without any information. Sometimes 4 to six weeks because of need to get information.
- Jeriah: It is important to acknowledge the information and terminology. The family would find this challenging.
- Linda: Some conditions fluctuate throughout the day as well.
- Bet: Cognisant on how we word the invite to participate. Now they are being put through an assessment. Many of the current users of HD feel that we are trying to weed out people instead of helping them. Their disability will have an assessment by TL and may not conform with a recognized disability. Is this a proposal or a done deal? It will limit the numbers and people are unclear.
- Sarah: This is not a done deal. Engaging and receiving feedback and will make changes based on the information being provided to the TransLink board.

- Sherry: Is the referral form could be expanded? This information could be included on the referral form. Many doctors do charge for the forms. Biggest concerns have to do with confidentiality.
- Sarah: Are trying to reach out to the doctors' association. Did have a doctor participate in the town hall. Not familiar with the full context of what tl and hd provide.
- Kathy: Most doctors know their patient. The OT will know the restrictions in the environment. Help bridge the gaps. They will know what is available to them. What do you need, and can we help you get there? About functional ability. How do we help people travel?
- Tim Louis: Toronto has switched to paper? What do we believe that would be accomplished in-person? Do we have any estimates on current users that should not have been approved?
- Sarah: Toronto does use in person. About 10 to 20% at this time. They also have a 19-page form to fill out. This could be more of a barrier than an in-person interview. TransLink does not have this information about people misusing HandyDART. 30% of people that apply never use HD. We'd like to build a better understanding of the person and the transit system.
- Wayne: Will this decision by the TransLink Board be made before the committee formally meets again? Would a formal motion from HDUAC be warranted?
- Sarah: The Board will be meeting after the next HDUAC meeting.
- Laura: Laura does not see consensus in the room. She does not know what the motion would be. It is important that the TL board knows about the HDUAC perspective.
- Sarah: the next meeting in June the HDUAC would have the proposal to the board. They will want to hear the perspective of the HDUAC.
- Rosanne: Most people with health challenges. They already have a professional in their lives already. Many clients would view this has an obligation not an option.
- Marjie: Yes or no on the different categories.
- Laura: Will existing customers be grandfathered?
- Briana indicated that if registration changes existing legacy customers would not have to re-apply.

## **DISCUSSION: Potential fare changes and Compass for HD.**

- Laura: Pro compass and giving people a lanyard. Could try to have people purchase Compass on HD. Still have concerns for people 19-64 needing 2 Compass cards. Would have to have their HD compass pass. Just go the extra step for those with Handy Card. Will they be paying again?
- Wayne: It is great to see cost relief. Is a relevant topic. The transit system needs to be functionally working in this area.
- Rosanne: Since this is a subsidised service. What has changed to allow for the discounts. How will it be affordable to TL.
- Sarah: The entire transit system is a subsidised service. Fares cover about 55% of the cost of trips on conventional, 5% for HD. The BC bus pass would not be accepted on HD. Will follow-up with Rosanne on FH health pass.
- Brian Tucker: Based on HD experience, colours of compass card. Offered to pay cash? How much change do drivers carry? What is a no pay?
- Kathy: Drivers don't have any change. Would ride without paying. Did not collect a fare.
- Brian Tucker: How many no pays do we have?
- Kathy: We can get the stats.
- Laura: mentioned that drivers don't deny people. They don't sell tickets on the weekends or evenings. Now paying 3 or 5. Eventually her tickets will have paid.
- Laura: Making a video on how using compass would work on using HD with compass. Gently getting the card to swipe or tapping the card themselves. Videos on how to load your compass card would be useful. Specific representatives on how to talk to people about the issue. Can have people that use compass.

## **DISCUSSION: Other questions/feedback**

- Brian Gibney: Question of the online booking platform. Will there be an app involved as well?
- Briana: It is still in development. The implementation is tied to the cyber attack. Not sure if there will be an app.
- Kathy: Indicated that they are in the process of updating their software platform.
- Briana: If proposed process is enacted, existing customers would not be asked to go through the process when it is brought in. At some

point, we may want to have a check-in with existing customers, to ensure we have sufficient information and are providing right services for their needs. This is similar to current practice for inactive accounts being reactivated.

- Bet: short clips for group locations and bulletins to support Compass adoption.
- Rosanne: Travel training videos. Linked on the TransLink website itself.
- Sherry: Left the meeting.
- The consultation period will end on April 25.
- TransLink will be developing and providing support materials for compass activation.

Meeting terminated at 1:10.

**2021 Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday, June 2, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 15, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.