



## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** May 29, 2014

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

**ISSUE:** Status of Compass Card Project

### SUMMARY:

- The faregates/Compass Card project is jointly funded by TransLink, the Province of British Columbia (Province), and the Government of Canada (Canada). The Province's contribution is fixed at \$40 Million.
- To date, Compass cards have been distributed to 80,000 customers as part of a staged implementation, including TransLink staff and BC Bus Pass clients.
- The Compass Card portion of the project is being delivered on behalf of TransLink by Cubic Transportation Systems (Cubic) based in San Diego.
- Under the original 2012 agreement, Cubic agreed to have the system fully operational (approximately 1 million cards) by March 1, 2013.

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- On May 13, 2014, TransLink conducted a performance test on the card reader units installed on its buses.

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### BACKGROUND:

Compass cards are durable, reloadable, electronic fare cards that work everywhere on transit in Metro Vancouver. Transit passengers will use the Compass card to pass through a faregate, which is a four-foot-high, paddle-style gate at all SkyTrain and SeaBus stations. Customers will also use the cards to "tap on" and "tap off" of buses.

The overall project budget for the faregates and Compass Card was originally \$171M, with the Province providing \$40M and Canada providing \$30M for faregates only. The project budget has increased from \$171M to \$194M, with the increase being covered by TransLink.

The Compass Card component of the project is being delivered by Cubic Transportation Systems, Ltd. (Cubic) of San Diego, California. Cubic was the lowest bidder for the project.

TransLink initially planned to launch Compass by March 2013. TransLink has postponed the opening date several times and had most recently committed to having the system operational by spring 2014.

Currently, 80,000 customers are using Compass Cards. The groups using the cards include TransLink staff, BC Bus Pass clients (an annual pass provided to low income seniors) and Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) pass holders. TransLink also has a public engagement process underway, including an "Ask Compass" website.



**DISCUSSION:**

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## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** September 3, 2014

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

**MEETING:** Russ Jones, Auditor General, on September 4, 2014

**ISSUE:** HandyDART Service and the TransLink Compass Card Project Audits.

### SUMMARY:

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- While HandyDART service is provided across the Province of British Columbia (Province), the Metro Vancouver service is provided by TransLink, independent of the Province.
- Most of the HandyDART user complaints are related to the TransLink system.
- The provincial and federal investments in the Compass Card project are for the construction of faregates at stations, which are on schedule and budget and are nearing completion.
- However, TransLink's activation of the Compass Card system is behind schedule and has increased in budget.

### BACKGROUND:

#### Role of Auditor General

The Auditor General is the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia's (Legislature) independent auditor. Under the *Auditor General Act*, the Office of the Auditor General conducts independent audits and advises the Legislature on government's management of its responsibilities and resources. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) conducts financial, performance and governance audits, but have not indicated what type of audits are scheduled this year.

### DISCUSSION:

#### HandyDART Service

HandyDART is an accessible door-to-door shared transit service for persons with disabilities in British Columbia (BC). It is provided by TransLink in Metro Vancouver and by BC Transit in the rest of the province. The table below compares the amount of service and customer satisfaction for the BC Transit and TransLink HandyDART systems.

SYSTEM	HandyDART vehicles	Passengers per Year	Complaints per Year
BC Transit	168	1.3 M	158
TransLink	310	1.2 M	1,526



### *BC Transit*

The HandyDART service provided by BC Transit is within the OAG's audit mandate.

The province pays 63% of the cost of custom transit (HandyDART) in the Victoria Region and 66.69% in the other BC communities. The total provincial custom transit operating contribution exceeds \$16 million and supports more than 1.3 million passenger trips annually. Local governments establish service levels and provide their share of funding.

HandyDART is the largest, but not the only component of custom transit. Other components include dial-a-ride service and taxi saver (discounted coupon) programs.

BC Transit has been audited and reviewed extensively since 2012, including audits of its governance and ridership by the OAG in 2012, and an Independent Review into its performance, governance, communications, and funding relationship with local governments by a 3-person panel appointed by the Minister. The Independent Review confirmed that BC Transit provides "first-rate, efficient and cost-effective transit service".

Since early 2014, BC Transit has been piloting a new process in the City of Vernon / District of Coldstream and in the Comox Valley Regional District. The process incorporates in-person mobility assessments and is intended to match custom transit applicants with the service that best suits individual needs and abilities. Customer feedback from these pilots has been positive to date.

### *TransLink*

In Metro Vancouver, HandyDART is funded and operated by TransLink, and does not receive direct funding from the Province.

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In the past several years, demand has been growing faster than service provided, resulting in increased numbers of customer trip requests being denied. TransLink has been criticized frequently by user groups and the drivers' union for the number of declined trips. In addition, TransLink HandyDART issues were a focus of recent Budget Estimates debates.

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### Compass Card Project

In 2009, the TransLink Board approved a business case to move ahead with procurement and installation of a new smart card fare collection system. The project includes installation of new smart card vending and fare validator machines and electronic fare gates at SkyTrain stations and SeaBus terminals, fare validator machines at West Coast Express stations and on all TransLink buses, and information systems to support customers' smart card payments.

TransLink's business case identified five key objectives:

- Improve operating efficiency and increase ridership through improved customer and ridership information and data;
- Create new opportunities to generate or increase revenue;
- Provide new and convenient options for customers to increase customer satisfaction;
- Improve the quality and efficiency of transit service delivery; and
- Improve safety and security.



The business case estimated annual incremental benefits of \$21-\$34 million (in 2011 dollars), mostly from bus operating efficiencies and \$7 million from reduced fare evasion.

In 2009, the Province, Government of Canada and TransLink signed a cost sharing agreement for the Compass Card and fare gates project. The Province is contributing \$40 million and the Government of Canada is contributing up to \$30 million from the Building Canada Fund towards the installation and operation of faregates, with TransLink responsible for the remaining costs as well as the costs of smart cards on buses.

Renovation of stations to accommodate fare gates and their installation was substantially completed in the fall of 2013. Approximately 80,000 people, mainly BC Bus Pass customers and TransLink staff and families, already use the Compass card.

The entire project was originally scheduled to complete in the fall of 2013. TransLink now anticipates that full service (closure of faregates) will not begin before the summer of 2015. TransLink has announced an increase in the overall project budget from \$171 million to \$194 million. The provincial and federal shares are fixed.

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The delay is due largely to issues (slow tap speeds and higher than acceptable error rates) with the mobile validators, which riders use to tap on and off buses. TransLink is working with the vendor to update software and mobile hardware on buses.

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## BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

**DATE:** November 13, 2014

**PREPARED FOR:** Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure

**ISSUE:** Compass Card Project Update

### SUMMARY:

- **The Compass Card/Faregates project is jointly funded by TransLink, the Province of British Columbia (Province), and the Federal Government of Canada (Federal Government). The Province's contribution is fixed at \$40 million.**
- **Under the original 2012 agreement, TransLink planned to have the system operational by March 1, 2013.**

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- **TransLink is now aiming to have the system fully operational in early 2016.**

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### BACKGROUND:

Compass cards are reloadable electronic fare cards that will replace most paper-based fare media on TransLink's system (passengers who pay cash when boarding a bus will still receive a paper ticket that is not readable by faregates). Transit passengers will use Compass cards to pass through faregates, which are four-foot-high, paddle-style gates at all SkyTrain and SeaBus stations. Customers will also use the cards to "tap on" and "tap off" of buses.

The overall budget for the Compass project originally was \$171 M, with the provincial and federal governments providing \$40 million and \$30 million respectively, for station upgrades to accommodate faregates, for fare card vending machines and the gates themselves, and for a share of the computer systems and software that control the opening and closing of gates and deduction of appropriate fares. The project budget has increased from \$171 M to \$194.2 M, with the increase covered by TransLink.

TransLink initially planned to fully launch Compass by March 2013, but the date has been frequently postponed. TransLink is now targeting to start closing the gates in early 2016.

### DISCUSSION:

The Province is directly involved in the faregates/Compass Card project in two ways:

- Through a Building Canada Fund partnership with Canada and TransLink to upgrade stations and to acquire and install the faregates and related equipment and software; and
- The Province has one seat on the five-member Compass Card/Faregates Project Board (Partnerships BC holds a second seat).



*Building Canada Fund*

Station works and faregate installation, funded through the Building Canada Fund, are substantially complete, with stations upgraded and faregates and supporting systems in place, but open, at SkyTrain and SeaBus stations. TransLink’s current challenges relate to the use of Compass Cards on buses and HandyDART, which were not part of the Building Canada Fund project.

*Project Board*

The Province and Partnerships BC form a minority on the Compass Card/Faregates Project Board.

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Another major benefit was the information that would be obtained from riders tapping on and tapping off.

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*Next Steps*

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