

REPORT TO: Council

FOR: Committee of the Whole

REPORT FROM: Engineering, Parks and Development Services

PRESENTED: May 15, 2012

FILE:

SUBJECT: Transportation Action Plan

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**Recommendation:**

**That** Council receive the Transportation Action Plan dated May 2012.

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1. **Purpose:**

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Committee of the Whole received a staff report on transit and transportation and passed a resolution that directed staff to present a report on transportation action plan.

2. **Time Critical:**

No

3. **Background:**

In January 2012, Council held a strategic planning retreat and identified top priority items for 2012. Transportation was one of the highest priority issues selected by Council. In response to this, a workshop was held with Council on April 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss transit and other transportation related issues. Council directed staff to report back with a more detailed work plan that would result in implementation of the proposed recommendations.

The District has several key planning documents that provide the foundation for moving forward with improvements to transportation issues. Key documents include:

- Transportation Options for the Squamish-Metro Vancouver Corridor, 2008
- Downtown Squamish 2031 Transportation Plan, 2009
- 2031 District Wide Multi Modal Transportation Study, 2011

More recently, BC Transit completed an audit of the transit service in Squamish and proposed service improvements in a letter report dated February, 2012. And the District is in receipt of several smaller studies and proposals, such as the Flex-Vanpooling Pilot proposal from the Jack Bell Rider Share Foundation, dated April 2010.

Based on the information noted above, staff believe there is a solid foundation to move forward and implement many of the recommendation the District has received over the past few years.

4. **Project Information:**

Please see the attached Transportation Action Plan, dated May 2012.

5. **Department Comments:**

None.

6. **Budget Implications**

Funds for the proposed Transportation Planner are included in the 2012 Five Year Financial Plan. Also, Council has approved \$100,000 for sidewalk improvements and a further \$100,000 for bike lane improvements. These funds will allow for further improvements to the "Safe Routes to School" program.

Additional costs will be identified as work continues, as outlined in the attached Transportation Action Plan.

7. **Policy Implication**

The proposed Transportation Action Plan is consistent with key municipal planning documents, such as the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan.

8. **Environmental Considerations**

N/A

9. **Alternatives to Staff Recommendation:**

Staff Recommendation:

**That** Council receive the Transportation Action Plan dated May 2012.

Alternative to Staff Recommendation:

None

**CAO Recommendation:**

THAT the recommendation from Engineering, Parks and Development Services be approved.

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B. Barnett, GM Engineering, Parks, Development Services

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J. Greenlees, GM Financial Services

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K. Ramsay, CAO

# **Transportation Action Plan**

**May 2012**

# Transportation Action Plan 2012

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# Transportation Action Plan 2012

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## Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this the Transportation Action Plan is to prepare a practical and realistic implementation plan that will enhance alternative transportation options in Squamish.

There are three *goals* of the transportation action plan:

- Implement transit improvements,
- Local transportation enhancements, and
- Complete a regional transportation study.

Each goal has its own specific *objectives, deliverables and timing* as outlined below.

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### Goal #1    **Implement Transit Improvements**

#### **Objectives**

##### **Find Contract Efficiencies**

BC Transit and Diversified Transportation Ltd. will conduct discussions to see if there are opportunities to further share operational functions with the Whistler Transit System and thereby save costs. Operations of the two systems had previously been more linked prior to the most recent Request for Proposals process in 2008 when they were separated at the request of the District. The aim of the separation had been to place more local focus on the Squamish system and it would be useful to reexamine whether that level of separation is still advantageous.

##### **Deliverables and timing:**

- A list of operational functions that could be further shared between the two systems as well as any other cost-containment ideas
- A general assessment of the costs or benefits to each
- Recommendations on any changes to be pursued.
- Sept 2012

##### **Implement Route Efficiencies**

While the recent public consultation showed that there was less appetite for major route restructuring, it would still be wise to double check the potential impact of some

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minor routing adjustments. If feasible, the goal of these adjustments would be to improve the consistency and therefore ease of use of the transit system's schedules.

## Deliverables and Timing:

- On board stop-by-stop ridership counts of three route segments in Valleycliffe, Highlands and Brackendale. (Sept 2012)
- An analysis of count results, recommendations of any changes for consideration and an outline of a public consultation process to ensure public awareness and support of any proposed changes. (Oct 2012)

## Scheduling Improvements

Feedback from transit customers and drivers at the recent open houses provided a wealth of suggested minor scheduling improvements. If implemented, these could increase ridership.

## Deliverables and Timing:

- Meetings with Sea to Sky School District, Capilano University and Quest University staff to confirm key class times for next September and any specialty needs and potential transit markets, such as transportation for French Immersion Elementary students (June 2012)
- Meetings with Squamish Senior's Centre staff to look at program schedules and how they relate to current transit service. (Sept 2012)
- Development of a test schedule based on all feedback and creation of a report back to Council with recommended changes for consideration. As described in the Minor Routing Efficiencies section, this report would also outline a sneak peek process to ensure public awareness and support of any proposed changes. (July 2012)

## Fare Structure Review

This review would examine Squamish Transit revenue and ridership trends and existing fare structure and make recommendations for consideration by District of Squamish Council.

## Deliverables and Timing:

- Fare Structure Review and Recommendations (June 2012)

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## HandyDART Usage Review

A recent issue related to transporting students on handyDART as well as a BC Transit call to local governments for expansion requests has highlighted the need to check in with the handyDART portion of the system to see whether it would merit additional service.

### Deliverables and Timing

- Analysis and summary of handyDART usage and trends as well as recommendations on service improvements. (July – August 2012)

## Bus Stops and Infrastructure

There are several bus stops where it would be helpful to improve the location or amenities to attract and retain customers. Similarly, it is possible to apply to BC Transit for funding through its Bus Stop Improvement Project for items such as shelters but these improvements need to be identified and formally approved at the local level.

### Deliverables and Timing:

- Confirming the system's top three required bus stop improvements. (Oct 2012)
- Creating an action plan and process to acquire funding provision to implement those improvements. (Nov - Dec 2012)

## Integrating Transit into the Development Process

One of the biggest influencers of transit system cost and success is a community's land use and development pattern. It should also be noted that recent changes to the Community Charter create the potential to allocate funds toward transportation demand management programs from development revenues.

### Deliverables and Timing:

- Reviewing the District's proposed servicing and development bylaw to look for ways to increase the linkages to—and derive amenities for—the transit system. (June 2012)
- Prepare a policy which would result in the referral of large-scale development and rezoning proposals to BC Transit planning staff for comment. (Sept - Nov 2012)



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## Goal #2 Local Transportation Enhancements

### Implementation Plan

The District has completed several major studies over the past few years that outline opportunities to enhance local transportation programs and infrastructure. Some of these studies include:

- Downtown Squamish 2031 Transportation Plan, and the
- 2031 District Wide Multi-Modal Transportation Study

Additionally, third party transportation providers, such as the Jack Bell Ride-Share organization, that have prepared proposals and plans to provide alternative transportation options in Squamish. There are more groups and services available for the District to pursue.

It should also be noted that there are several non-profit guides and toolkits which provide great information on “how to” implement alternative transportation programs. For example, the Fraser Basin Council has produced a report titled “Transportation Demand Management: A Small and Mid-Size Communities Toolkit”.

In summary, there are plenty of studies, reports and other resources that are available at this time. It is now time to focus on implementation of the recommendations contained in the available literature. The first step is to develop a priority plan and to commence implementation of the obvious and highly recommended improvements. This will be a major focus of the proposed Transportation Planner.

### Council Priorities

Over the past year, the District Council has made “Safe Routes to School” a clear priority. The focus of this initiative is to ensure that school children are able to walk and cycle to and from school safely, and to encourage alternative transportation throughout the community.

To support this initiative, Council established a capital budget in 2011 to kick-start the initiative. And in 2012, Council approved an operating budget of \$100,000 for sidewalk improvements and an additional \$100,000 for bike path improvements.

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In response to Council's direction, staff completed a number of improvements to sidewalks and bike paths around schools in 2011. This work was completed in consultation with school officials.

The next step is to continue to work with school officials, parent organizations and other community stakeholders to identify areas of concern. Also, the District's Operating Department and Engineering Department will assist with developing work plans to improve Safe Routes to School.

It is anticipated that the proposed Transportation Planner will act as a facilitator for this work.

## Goal #3 Regional Transportation Options

### Regional Transportation Study

The proposed Regional Transportation Study is a planning initiative which is intended to examine transportation options in the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD). It is anticipated that, if approved, the SLRD Gas Tax will fund the initiative.

The Study will examine long-range transportation issues in the SLRD which will help the communities prepare for the significant growth that is expected over the next twenty years. It is expected the final report will examine a broad range of transportation issues and options for the corridor in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, congestion and improve liability for. The goal will also help facilitate the movements of goods and services, which will also support tourism and resource-based industries.

By examining transportation on a regional basis, the member municipalities will be able to work together in a collaborative manner and integrate regional planning with local goals and objectives.

Specific elements of the Regional Transportation Study will include:

- A review of existing and projected traffic projections
- An assessment of transportation options such as regional transit and car-sharing programs
- Environmental, social and economic impacts of transportation options
- A comparison of financial options to ensure any proposed programs are financially sustainable.

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- An implementation plan
- A proposed monitoring program to ensure goals and objectives are achieved

## Regional Transportation Options

Although a new SLRD transportation study has been proposed, it should be noted that there have been previous studies and reports that are designed to provide alternative transportation options for Squamish commuters travelling to Vancouver and Whistler. Most notably, the report titled Transportation Options for the Squamish-Metro Vancouver Corridor provides some great insight to options.

Given that there are reports and studies in hand, the goal is to explore and pursue some of the more obvious options, which tend to be low-cost and flexible choices. These options may include upgrades to park-and-ride facilities, partnerships with car-share or co-op organizations, social marketing and investigation of a transportation commission.

As noted above, the proposed Transportation Planner would be assigned to the initiatives noted above.

## Implementation Plan

There are two major components to the implementation plan for the work described above. First, as noted several times, a proposed Transportation Planner would be the key District staff member that would coordinate and implement many of the changes. And, second, as discussed with Council, community engagement is an important component of this Action Plan and, therefore, a Transportation Working Group has been proposed.

Finally, there is a plan to ensure Council is kept abreast of the transportation initiatives and a regular reporting program has been proposed.

## Transportation Working Group

Community-based social marketing is founded on social science theories that behavior change is most effectively achieved through initiatives delivered at the community level. In particular, successful community-based social marketing initiatives focus on removing barriers to an activity while simultaneously enhancing the activity's benefits. Social marketing helps to build new social norms. As more people adopt new behaviors, social pressure is put on those who have not changed.

Developing a social marketing campaign to provide components of a transportation demand management (TDM) strategy will take time and a budget, but a well-designed campaign can trigger significant number of people to adopt new travel behaviors.

In order to initiate a social marketing program, it is proposed to assemble a Transportation Working Group that involves high-profile and influential community members. The proposed composition would include:

- Mayor of Squamish, or designate
- General Manger of Engineering, Parks and Development Services
- DoS Transportation Planner
- One representative from the Chamber of Commerce
- One representative from the Community Action Network (CAN)
- One representative from BC Transit
- Three citizens-at-large

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The purpose of the committee is to provide Squamish Council with advice and recommendations regarding the assessment, planning and implementation of short-term, medium-term and long-term transportation options.

The committee will meet on a regular basis in order to:

- Stay informed about transportation issues
- Consider municipal policies with respect to transportation planning
- Assist the municipality with the development of policies and programs that reduce the number of vehicles using TDM initiatives

From time to time, the Committee will invite additional stakeholders to meetings for discussions. These additional stakeholders may include:

- School Board representatives
- Quest University
- RCMP
- Ministry of Transportation
- Private carrier companies

The Transportation Planner will develop detailed terms of reference for the committee.

## Transportation Planner

The scope of work described above is a significant increase to the District's level of service. In order to properly resource this initiative, a new staff position is recommended. The proposed Transportation Planner will oversee all aspects of the Transportation Action Plan, with guidance from the General Manager of Engineering, Parks and Development Services.

## Council Engagement

Staff recognize that transportation is a high priority initiative for Council. Given this, there will be quarterly updates provided to Council regarding the work program described herein.