



George Chow, MLA

Transit in Vancouver-Fraserview

Survey Results and Conclusions



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George with Members of the Transit Working Group and City of Vancouver staff

A Message from Hon. George Chow, MLA



Dear Neighbours:

I know how important public transit is to our neighbourhood. It is a vital service that connects our communities, provides an affordable transportation option, and helps create a cleaner, greener future. For many residents, public transit may be their transportation option of choice or their only option. Reliable, accessible, and timely transit service is something that we all expect to have in our community.

Before I took office, I worked with community leaders to identify the local issues that they felt were most relevant to the constituency. Transit was and remains at the forefront of issues for the constituents in Vancouver-Fraserview. Seniors,

students, workers who commute out of riding, and the public all spoke to their daily difficulties due to insufficient transit. Through my discussion with community members, it is clear that the community wants better, more accessible transit service.

Community feedback and participation is at the centre of my work on behalf of Vancouver-Fraserview residents. To ensure we had the best understanding of current transit services and how individuals use transit in the constituency, my office convened a Transit Working Group comprised of Vancouver-Fraserview residents and stakeholders. The Transit Working Group members discussed their perspective on the current transit services as well as any improvements that could be made. Ultimately, their participation and feedback led to meetings with City of Vancouver and TransLink staff. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the community who participated in the Transit Working Group. Their tireless work brought specific, transit service issues to my attention. Their feedback led to multiple community consultations convened by my office to further explore issues related to Champlain Heights, Killarney, Victoria-Fraserview, Sunset, and the River District.

This report serves as a summary of the feedback received by my office. We will be doing additional work in the coming months to engage with the City of Vancouver and TransLink on our findings and the concerns of community members to identify community-oriented solutions.

In service,

The image shows the handwritten signature of Hon. George Chow, P.Eng, followed by a red square seal. The seal contains stylized Chinese characters, likely his name in Chinese.

Hon. George Chow, P.Eng
MLA Vancouver-Fraserview
Minister of State for Trade

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MLA George Chow would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following members of the Transit Working Group for their hard work and dedication to improving transit in Vancouver-Fraserview. This report would not have been possible without their tens of hours of support, feedback, and time.

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We would also like to thank City of Vancouver and TransLink staff for their time and consultation with the Transit Working Group. Their assistance and guidance are greatly appreciated.

Finally, we would like to thank all of the constituents who took the time to provide feedback through our survey and in-person opportunities. Your feedback helped shape the findings of our report.

Executive Summary

Transit is a longstanding concern for the residents of Vancouver-Fraserview. The Vancouver-Fraserview Constituency Office worked with residents to discuss improving transit services in the area. After evaluating the responses from the transit survey, from verbal feedback of residents, to the workshops with the Transit Working Group this is what we heard:

Firstly, the loss of the #49 diversion between Kerr Street and Tyne Street on East 54th Ave has had a negative impact on the community. Broadly, residents want to see either the replacement of the diversion with a comparable service or the reinstatement of the old route. The former #49 route provided greater accessibility to community amenities especially for seniors, putting less strain on their daily routine. The route alleviated walking time between East 49th Avenue and East 54th Avenue which is important for residents as they often utilized the bus after buying groceries or doing other errands. The previous #49 also provided an easier commute for those travelling from the Captain Cook Park area back to 49th Avenue. Though the diversion added 10 minutes to the route, it saved more than that time for many residents and most importantly made the area more accessible for seniors and people with disabilities.

Secondly, the survey results and feedback highlight the desire for improvements and increased service for the #100 and River District residents. Currently to transit downtown during the morning rush hour, it is more efficient for River District residents to bus to New Westminster then take the SkyTrain west rather than simply busing directly to 29th Avenue or Joyce SkyTrain stations. The lack of capacity on the #100 is also proven by how often residents of the River District are passed by at bus stops because the buses are full. The services going north-south from the River District are currently inadequate or non-existent. More than three quarters of the survey takers stated they would benefit greatly from a north-south connection from the River District to a SkyTrain station (either 29th Avenue or Joyce)

Thirdly, Champlain Heights residents raised concerns about the #26's comfort and efficiency. Many individuals expressed concern for people with physical disabilities and seniors. The re-routed #26 uses Arlington Street which had speedbumps installed. This creates an uncomfortable situation for riders and a potentially dangerous one as buses travel through the area. Residents have also noted that the route is inefficient as it loops through the community and the infrequent service on weekends and evenings.

Overall, more than half the constituents who answered the survey take transportation multiple times a week. The residents of the Vancouver-Fraserview value and use public transit at very high rate and want their transit services expanded and more efficient services. The results highlight an opportunity to create tangible improvements and effectiveness to satisfy the needs of Vancouver-Fraserview residents.

In summary, the people of Vancouver-Fraserview want improvements to the transit system. Seniors have difficulty accessing frequent enough transit, or transit that covers their entire neighborhood. River District residents feel particularly underserved, especially if they are travelling north from S.E Marine Drive. Patrons of the #26 think it is inefficient and uncomfortable. It is our hope that this report will help TransLink and the City of Vancouver to get a better sense of the additional needs of the community.

After reviewing feedback from Vancouver-Fraserview residents, there are three community-led service improvements that residents would like to see in their neighbourhood.

New North-South Connection to and from the River District

From the survey responses, feedback from the Transit Working Group, and the rapidly increasing population in the River District, residents have made it clear that a North-South bus route is an urgent priority for the River District and West Fraser Lands. Survey respondents stated that a north-south bus route could go straight up Kerr Street although constituency staff acknowledge the challenges with the hills on Kerr Street between Kent Avenue and S.E Marine Drive as well as Marine Drive to East 54th Avenue. However, residents noted that HandyDart buses have no problem travelling up Kerr Street from S.E Marine Drive. Constituency staff believe that this presents an opportunity to pilot a smaller community shuttle bus from the River District to either 29th Avenue or Joyce Station.

Based on the advice of the Transit Working Group, constituency staff also see a potential for a route going through Champlain Heights via Matheson Crescent that has a less steep incline. The steep topographical incline near the Fraser River remains a challenge for River District residents travelling north and therefore is an accessibility issue. Besides using the Canada Line to head north or walking up Victoria Drive to catch the #20 bus (Downtown/Victoria-54th), there are few options for non-drivers.

Constituency staff also spoke with TransLink at their Transit Network Review open house in April 2019 about the possibility of adding additional stops to the existing #29 bus (Elliot/29th Avenue) to travel to the River District. If this option is pursued, we have heard from multiple constituents that the #29 is often unreliable and experiences frequent cancelations. In order to support timely service to the River District and the West Fraser Lands with an extended #29 bus, improving the reliability of the current #29 is important. The #29 also serves the #26 (Joyce Station/29th Avenue Station) bus when it changes routes at 29th Avenue Station. Improving the reliability of the #29 would also benefit the #26.

Getting a More Frequent and Efficient #26 (Joyce Station/29th Avenue Station)

Residents would like to see a less circuitous route for the #26 with increased frequency on weekends and evenings. Currently, the #26 runs every 15 minutes during peak hours on weekdays, but only every 20 minutes on Saturdays, every 30 minutes on Sundays, and every half hour to an hour during non-peak hours in the evening. Residents noted that these infrequent times on evenings and weekends is a barrier for them to get home in a timely fashion. Constituency staff recommend upgrades to weekend services to be 15 minutes in peak and every 30 minutes during non-peak hours. More frequent service on weekdays would also allow for an easier connection to Champlain Mall from the #49.

Concerns were also shared about the path of the #26 through the neighbourhood. Several respondents complained that the Arlington Street speed bumps make the ride extremely uncomfortable and difficult for peoples with disabilities and seniors. Constituency staff recommend working with TransLink and the City to identify an alternative route that does not use Arlington Street. Residents mentioned that they want traffic calming measures to remain in place because of speeding on Arlington Street.

Addressing the Loss of the #49 (Metrotown/UBC) Diversion on East 54th Avenue
The removal of the #49 diversion has been a longstanding issue for Vancouver-Fraserview residents. Residents need a long-term solution that provides greater accessibility to Champlain Mall for seniors running errands and attending medical appointments.

Some potential solutions would be to run a #49 Diversion in non-peak hours, relocating the #49 eastbound stop on Kerr Street to the southwest corner to make it easier to transfer to the southbound #26, and increasing the frequency of the #26 to allow for faster connections to Champlain Mall.