



**9<sup>th</sup> December, 2015**

Draft script for presentation to Translink board

- \* Each bracket (1) should aim for about ~15-20 seconds for a 5-6 minute presentation.
- \* Areas marked with (XXX) may be shortened/omitted.

**(Thank you for reception notes)**

**(1)** My name is Daryl Dela Cruz. I'm a regional issues blogger and the chair and representative of SkyTrain for Surrey, on behalf of a group of [*petition sign count*] local supporters.

**(2)** Today I just want to bring forward some of the concerns we share as a community, some of the comments I've seen by those signing the petition online and some of my experiences as an everyday transit rider in the City of Surrey.

**(3)** Back in 2012, TransLink and the provincial government, in coordination with a consultant, finalized the second phase analysis of the Surrey Rapid Transit Study. In this document there were 4 alternative that TransLink shortlisted: one of them is the full LRT system we have selected now, the others were LRT and BRT combinations, and the last one was a combination of a BRT system with an extension of the Expo Line SkyTrain to Langley.

**(4)** This study made the conclusion that extending the Expo Line and building BRT would bring the most ridership and the most transportation benefits for people on all of the corridors, and would also have the best business case. But, when the Mayors' Council formulated its regional transit plan last March, they selected Surrey's preference for an LRT system. Even though this alternative was not projected to have a positive business case.

**(5)** This isn't the way I would have liked to oversee this decision. When the City of Surrey released their LRT study in May of this year, whatever you can call an "economic case" for it completely ignored the transportation aspect. The City has disregarded facts in taking this position and may even be blatantly against the people's wishes. We haven't even talked about safety and the huge risk in putting trains on-street.

**(6)** Last week I took a routine trip to Surrey Central Station from Guildford Exchange during the PM rush hour. The first bus that arrived was a #337, the nonstop express route that connects Fraser Heights and complements the #96 with a frequent, 15-minute service. From end to end



it took me 7 minutes - 3 minutes faster than what the LRT is supposed to take according to the City of Surrey's website.

**(7)** It really brings me to the point of asking, what's the point? We're going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to, as I have observed in the city of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, rip up the street from edge-to-edge and disrupt transit riders, the thousands who live in the local community, to save 1 minute over the current 96 B-Line **(XXX)** and slow down everyone on the popular 337. On top of everything, this is the kind of thing we want to do at the expense of two traffic lanes on 104 Ave which are vital to the region and the local community.

**(8)** Now, the City of Surrey's going argument seems to be that if we stick with rapid buses, if we build a BRT system, they won't have the capacity and it'll be as overcrowded as Broadway. But to me that just highlights the lack of discussion we've had about this.

**(9)** For one, I think we should be asking Surrey what it could be doing to manage its growth so this sort of thing doesn't happen in the first place. We still have plenty of time. Don Luymes from the city was recently saying that the 96 B-Line is already as overcrowded as the Broadway corridor and we all know that's just not true. **(XXX)** It's running not even half as frequently as the 99, and isn't experiencing the same kind of serious overcrowding.

**(10) (XXX)** Maybe there is a chance that we will hit this wall in the future, but ask any citizen in Surrey, and give them all of the correct facts, and they will tell you that whatever goals of community shaping are not worth 4 years of LRT construction headaches with the end result of almost no travel time savings. That's the problem. People aren't being given the facts.

**(11)** Which brings me back to the previous alternative of a SkyTrain and a BRT system. This is the only real alternative that will make a difference to Surrey transit riders by making transit faster and more convenient, without the inconveniences and problems of an at-grade LRT system.

**(12)** A lot of the times we fail to acknowledge what SkyTrain has done in this region. SkyTrain has made our region one of the most unique in North America, it is a pioneer and a continental leader in shaping communities and encouraging transit use. When you look at the "Most sustainable" designation the American Public Transit Association gave us last week, well, SkyTrain helped us win that.



**(13) (XXX)** A slow, street-level, on-street LRT with more stops and few time-savings will not attract high ridership. It would fall short in every aspect where SkyTrain has found immense success. There would be fewer customers, slower growth around transit, more suburban sprawl and more congestion.

**(14)** If you compare SkyTrain's ridership - and that is on a per-km basis - with any at-grade light rail system, regardless of what kind of light rail system it is, our system comes out on top every single time.

**(15)** The system has clearly demonstrated its worth. We built the Expo Line when there was less density on most parts of the line in Burnaby than there is in Clayton along Fraser Highway.

**(16)** And if we're going to have a discussion about costs, well, anyone supporting this LRT system is in big trouble. The original Phase 2 rapid transit study specified that there would be annual operating deficits of \$22 million from an LRT system in Surrey - far higher than what was expected with a SkyTrain extension - and that number already accounts for potential fare revenues. To date I haven't heard from anyone on how the city and the region is going to pay for this. Nobody has. And that's alarming, because that's 40% of what it costs to pay for today's bus network in the South of Fraser.

**(17)** This really begs the question: what kind of cost cuts we going to do to achieve this? (XXX) It seems to me that there will be poor frequencies on this LRT or we're going to have to cannibalize the rest of Surrey's bus service just to make financial room for it.

**(18)** So today, I am urging TransLink and everyone in this authority to consider the restoration of the proposal to extend the Expo Line to Langley and build a BRT system on King George Blvd and 104 Ave. This proposal will cost the same to build as the proposal for LRT and cost less to operate over the long-term.

**(28) (XXX)** This is the only option for the South of Fraser that offers region-wide benefits, a good balance between the challenges of investing to shape growth and the need to be accountable to transit riders in providing them with real, tangible improvements in service.

**Drafted and finalized by our campaign directors:**

Daryl Dela Cruz (*Surrey, chair*), Benedic Dasalla (*Surrey*), Jacky Au (*Surrey*), Spencer Whitney (*Langley*)