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March 1, 2001

Dr. Maurice Richardson, Chair
Ms. Helen Smith, Vice-Chair
Fort Langley Community Association
c/o P.O. Box 747
Fort Langley, B.C.
V1M 2S1

Dear Dr. Richardson and Ms. Smith:

Re: Proposed Expansion of the Albion Ferry Service

I received your letter dated January 29, 2001 on behalf of the Fort Langley Community Association with inquiries about specific aspects of the Albion Ferry vessel expansion project.

Before providing information on specific inquiries, I thought it might be beneficial to explain the Albion Ferry vessel expansion project and work proceeding on a Fraser River crossing.

The Albion Ferry expansion project involves modifications to the two vessels, increasing vehicular capacity from 24 to 56 per sailing. As you are aware, during peak periods there are regularly up to four sailing waits. The expansion would ease this present level of congestion. The capital required for this project would be recovered by a crossing toll of approximately \$1.00 per passenger vehicle. TransLink recognizes this as a medium term solution to crossing traffic congestion while a bridge solution is devised.

TransLink has identified, in our Strategic Transportation Plan, a Fraser River crossing as being a candidate project serving a high need strategic role in the transportation system. The difficulty with bridges is that they are very costly, especially given TransLink's current financial situation. Given the significant transportation demand for this crossing, TransLink has an important project underway that is examining the potential to build this project as a Private Public Partnership (PPP). Initial advice that we are receiving from international infrastructure financing consultants indicate that this crossing is well suited for this innovative method of procurement. This would allow the project to proceed much more quickly than if public funding had to be secured. The TransLink Board will receive the full results of this investigation in the early fall.

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Specifically, you asked if traffic studies had been done evaluating the effects of the ferry expansion and how pedestrian safety on Glover Street would be accommodated. In conjunction with staff from the Township of Langley, this work has been done. The Albion Ferry project will provide installation of two signals on Glover Road, a traffic signal at 96th Avenue and a pedestrian signal at Mavis Avenue. These signal installations will cost \$300,000.

Another inquiry was whether TransLink had investigated to ensure that the increased ferry capacity would actually achieve reduced wait times. The purely mechanical calculation shows that the larger vessels take longer to load but cross more quickly due to dual engines installed with the expansion. In short, the same average number of crossings per hour are expected to be maintained at the larger capacity. You note that increasing capacity may not reduce line-ups as more individuals will then choose the ferry until a congestion equal to the round trip again develops. This is likely as there is considerable demand for the crossing. As I mentioned earlier the desired solution is a Fraser River bridge to deal with the actual demand for the river crossing

You had asked if there were any plans to improve transit service to coordinate with the ferries to make access to the West Coast Express more convenient. The TransLink Board recently approved the South of Fraser Area Transit Plan, a project of TransLink in partnership with the south of the Fraser municipalities. It was recommended that a new Langley City/Walnut Grove/Fort Langley/Albion Ferry community shuffle service be introduced in Phase 1 (2001 to 2003) which would provide linkages to the Port Haney West Coast Station and the Haney Town Centre during peak periods. Unfortunately, these new services require the additional revenue source (vehicle levy) that TransLink has not secured and therefore it is unlikely that this service can be implemented.

You have raised a number of issues that I have attempted to answer in a concise manner. TransLink staff would be more than willing to provide any further information you require and Ms Sheri Plewes, VP Contracts & Acquisitions, can be reached at 453-4577 to respond to your further inquiries.

Sincerely,

George Puil
Chair

cc: Larry Ward, Sr. VP, Planning & Service Contracts
Sheri Plewes, VP, Contracts & Acquisitions
Rich Coleman, MLA

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