South Fraser Community Rail 

***“Hydrogen iLink Passenger* *Rail, Scott Rd. SkyTrain to Chilliwack” #connect the valley***

**Members of the Mayor’s TransLink Council, June 16th, 2019**

**Members of the TransLink Board of Directors,**

**Mr. Kevin Desmond, CEO of TransLink,**

**To ALL Media in the Lower Mainland.**

**To all concerned:**

**TransLink’s Stated Falsehoods about the Interurban - Exposed….**

**Flawed Reports, Assumptions, Conclusions and Misrepresentations - Enough is Enough!**

**As most will be aware by now, the South Fraser Community Rail (SFCR) organization has become very active over the past three years but are an extension of about two decades of community activity for this cause. Our goal is the reactivation of the Interurban Corridor with state-of-the-art Hydrail Passenger Rail service. We own the passenger rights! Passenger and freight service on this line legally MUST be shared equally, if Double Tracking is required CP Rail are legally bound to do so at their expense. All of our statements and projections are supported by the LEEWOOD Study (2010) in addition to two UMA Engineering High Level Reviews, one for Surrey and one for Langley (circa 2007). These studies are posted on our website in their entirety** [**www.southfrasercommunityrail.ca**](http://www.southfrasercommunityrail.ca) **. In the case of the UMA studies, they were completed prior to the knowledge of the existence of the Master Agreement which affected some of their conclusions but overall were very positive on the proposition of reactivating this corridor for passenger rail.**

**This is a positive community initiative which has unfortunately turned into a public fight against irresponsible governance by TransLink Staff over the past year. Our SFCR Group will not back down or be intimidated in the face of what we see as an out of control bureaucracy attacking a very legitimate option that should be properly considered and analyzed.**

**Our group up to now has been responsible in our process of communication with the TransLink Mayors Council through about four detailed letters, a couple of two hour meetings making presentations to senior staff with only two ASKS 1) an opportunity to make our presentation to the Mayors Council and the TransLink Board and 2) for TransLink to partner with B.C. Transit to hold six Public Engagement Meetings between Surrey and Chilliwack. On April 2nd 2019 we presented our plan to the City of Chilliwack Council and received unanimous support for two very similar ASKS with the result being the media from Chilliwack to Delta picked up our story including Radio, Print and TV, we were thoroughly covered and it was all very positive. The result? A barrage of what can only be described as an instantly created panic by TransLink with Public Engagement Open Houses and an activated telephone Market Research campaign. At the conclusion of that short-lived exercise we received all their survey results within a Public Release – Headline “The people of Langley support SkyTrain by 93%!” – Really, how did that happen?**

**“*The Survey results published by TransLink exposes this organization for what it is very good at; irresponsibility with your tax dollars! They held ONE sided Open Houses with only ONE option available, conducting in-house on-line surveys with only ONE option offered and conducted telephone Market Research with only ONE option and only ONE question asked! Add all of this up and you get a ONE-sided result! Surprised? If it wasn’t so serious it would be funny!***

***Conducting all of this in a Transit starved community*, how did they not get 100% support?**

**We can only assume, due to their reaction to our activity that they are afraid of something? On the eve of our first SFCR well publicized (and self-funded I might add) planned Public Engagement Community Meetings, TransLink find it necessary to launch, what can only be described as an embarrassing attack on our Interurban proposal by pulling outdated and very flawed reports from the 2006 – 2012 era off the shelf, dusting them off and pretending they have some relevance to the argument of today. Following this Executive Summary of the arguments to Mr. Geoff Cross’s memo (below) will be an attachment containing a critique of those studies and reports we speak of, we are calling out TransLink and their actions for good reason, we will no longer be sitting back and allowing TransLink to go public misrepresenting the facts with respect to the fallacies of their argument.**

***Item 4.0 Interurban Passenger Rail – Geoff Cross MEMO to Planning Staff dated June 6th, 2019***

* **The line is currently owned and operated by Canadian Pacific and Southern Railway. - *The Interurban corridor* *is NOT owned by CP Rail or Southern Rail; they own the freight rights with significant restrictions. The corridor is owned by the people of B.C.***
* **The Interurban route has been studied by three previous reports and rejected. – *The three reports referenced were and are very flawed. The DRL Report (2006) and Urban Systems Report (2010) (a detailed critique of both are contained within the attachment). The 2012 Surrey Rapid Transit Study was exactly that, it was a Surrey centric report that compared apples with oranges. (more on this later) Of interesting note the very detailed Leewood and UMA Engineering reports for Surrey and Langley have not been mentioned. These three reports are posted on our website.***
* **They say poor ridership demand. – *No ridership study has been conducted so that statement is dishonest! The West Coast Express (WCE) had 2.3 million boardings last year with 375,000 population North of the Fraser (5 day a week operation, 5 in and 5 out). The Urban Systems Report concluded ridership would only be 1.7 million riders on the Interurban South of the Fraser with our population of 1.2 million, 16 cities / municipalities, 14 post-secondary institutions, Intern. Airport serving 1,000,000 people, two large industrial parks and much more. Based on WCE numbers we estimate a ridership of over 5.5 million annually. How could they possibly arrive at their number?***
* **Operating cost vs Bus Improvement Alternatives – *Given they have no operating numbers, no capital numbers, no idea of ridership and absent any ridership study with absolutely no analysis on how buses are going to get around highway congestion? Buses are not an option. Falsehood!***
* **There are Conflicts with freight traffic and increasing freight volume. – *Once again TransLink is ignoring what they have been repeatedly told relating to the sale agreements of 1988.* *These sale agreements covering the entire corridor protects passenger rights and shared movement with freight traffic including that of requiring CP to Double Track IF required. Large corporations are not free from living up to signed contractual and legal obligations and agreements. By ignoring the facts TransLink IS NOT being truthful with the public. These agreements cover the public’s rights.***
* **Service on the Interurban Rail would be expensive. – *TransLink is ignoring the facts – To construct the line we are talking $12.5 million per KM for the Interurban (all in) vs $200 million per KM SkyTrain down the Fraser Highway? To operate the Interurban would serve a population of approximately 850,000 and the Fraser Highway option only 152,000. Yet another Falsehood!***
* **It is skipping the largest population and urban centers. – *Where to start? Vancouver, North Delta, Newton, Sullivan, Cloverdale/Clayton, South Surrey, Langley City, Township of Langley, Willoughby, Walnut Grove, Fort Langley, Aldergrove, Abbotsford, Sardis, Chilliwack and bus connections to White Rock! Other destinations Abbotsford Int. Airport (1,000,000 customers this year), 14 Post Secondary Institutions, two large industrial parks, 7 First Nations Communities, Tourism and Agri-Tourism, and there is more.***

**Option 1  *Original LRT 312,340 Pop. Cost $1.65 Billion per capita $5,122.***

***Option 2 SkyTrain to Fleetwood 62,735 Pop. Cost $1.65 Billion per capita $25,504.***

***Option 3 SkyTrain to Lang. City 157,618 Pop. Cost $3.0 Billion per capita $19,033.***

***Option 4 Interurban to Chilliw. 852,846 Pop. Cost $1.25 Billion per capita $1,465.***

***Yet another Falsehood by TransLink!***

* **Long travel-times estimate 53 minutes Langley to Scott Road. – *Our well-researched estimate is 90 minutes from Chilliwack to the Pattullo Bridge and would connect to SkyTrain. From Langley to the Pattullo Bridge would be approx. 30 minutes. For TransLink to throw this out there, they are disregarding that travel time has a direct connection to the number of stops, which obviously has not been a part of their research. Yet another Falsehood by TransLink.***

* **The cost of achieving the necessary upgrades on the Interurban is far higher than what Interurban passenger service advocates have claimed. - *This is an operational railway maintained under strict B.C. and National regulations and standards. Further proof of its maintained standard is that in 2015/16 BNSF ran 12,000 ft empty heavy rail coal trains back into the U.S. along the Interurban Corridor through Abbotsford and through Huntington into Washington State. They ran about three trains a day for three months. Yet another Falsehood by TransLink.***
* **The Interurban requires substantial infrastructure investments comparable to building rapid transit along urban arterials. *– This statement can only be described as totally misrepresenting the facts. The reactivation cost of approx. $12.5 million per KM for the Interurban as compared to the outrageous cost of construction costs of $200 million KM for Surrey Center to Langley City speaks for itself.***

***25% (4 Kms) of the 16 KM line to Langley City goes through two dead zones (Green Timbers Forest 1.5 Kms and the Serpentine Flats 2.5 Kms).***

***Extrapolate that distance at $200,000,000 per Km and you get a waste of $900,000,000 through an area with no population. The Interurban on the other hand requires no such construction through Agricultural land. The cost we are stating above includes Rolling Stock, Road gates, Passenger Platforms and infrastructure.***

**Summary**

**It is unfortunate that TransLink Staff are finding reason to be obstructionist to a non-threatening ask over the past four months for our group to present this plan directly to the TransLink Mayors Council and the TransLink Board of Directors. Coupled with that request was for TransLink and B.C. Transit to partner in the hosting of at least a half dozen Public Engagement Meetings between Surrey and Chilliwack that would go a long way to proving our well researched position vs what we believe we have proven to be a complete fabrication of the facts.**

**Our campaign is for an Inter-Regional Transportation solution that is fiscally and environmentally responsible to the WHOLE region. In our view LRT (or secondarily SkyTrain) down 104th and King George Blvd to connect to the Interurban at Newton Town Center makes abundant sense. It creates the connectivity that is needed and serves the greater number of people by far at a reasonable cost. We intend to continue to inform taxpayers about what is really going on. It is very disappointing to see a major bureaucracy like TransLink take the actions they are taking, using unfounded information, flawed reports, misdirected and unproven assumptions, ill-informed conclusions as well as a complete misrepresentation of the facts to fight the taxpayer that is paying the bills. I will close with the following - The infamous Rafe Mair’s axiom 1 “You make a serious mistake in assuming that people in charge know what the hell they are doing”!**

**TransLink’s world stops at the Township of Langley Abbotsford border, that is devastating to our FULL region, it must stop! The South of Fraser is ONE Region, a fact TransLink staff have never understood.**

**Sincerely,**

**W.R. (Rick) Green Former Mayor, Township of Langley 2008 - 2011**

**Home / Office 604 607-7338 Cell 604 866-5752**

[**creeksidefarms@shaw.ca**](mailto:creeksidefarms@shaw.ca) **/** [**southfrasercommunityrail@shaw.ca**](mailto:southfrasercommunityrail@shaw.ca)

**On behalf of The South Fraser Community Rail Committee Management Group the Hydrogen iLink Line Founding & Action Group Members: Rick Green, Lee Lockwood, Roy Mufford, Peter Holt, Brit Gardner, John Vissers, Scott Thompson and Tony Edgar**

* **Professor Condon, University of British Columbia, James Taylor Chair in Landscape Patrick and Liveable Environments.**
* **Bill Vander Zalm former Premier of the Province of British Columbia 1986 - 1991.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Go to the South Fraser Community Rail Website –** [**www.southfrasercommunityrail.ca**](http://www.southfrasercommunityrail.ca) **for a complete description, videos, background and support resource documents in support of this proposal, with much more to come. Check NEWS section!**

**Facebook:** [**https://www.facebook.com/connectthevalley/?epa=SEARCH\_BOX**](https://www.facebook.com/connectthevalley/?epa=SEARCH_BOX)

***(Attachment)***

**TransLink / MoTi Surrey Rapid Transit Alternatives Analysis Assessment of the Interurban Corridor (circa January 2012)**

**This report is nothing more than an internal Surrey Centric Report designed to compare the Fraser Highway vs King George Blvd. vs a small run of the Interurban that would only serve Surrey’s internal needs. It in no way looks at the Inter-Regional merits or abilities of an activated Interurban commuter rail passenger service. Hydrail was also not considered. Any use of this report for the purpose at hand is irresponsible.**

**A Review and Critique of the DRL Report (circa October 16th, 2006 plus the Strategic Transportation Review Foundation Paper #4 Partnership FVRD / BC Transit, TransLink & B.C. Government – (Urban Systems circa 2008 / Final Report 2010) specific to the Interurban Corridor.**

**This critique is to deal specifically with two very narrowly focused and therefore flawed consultant reports that have been produced on the Interurban Corridor going back to 2006 and 2008 respectively. As Mayor I actively challenged TransLink’s Senior management team regarding the Urban Systems Report. A meeting was held with TransLink senior management on January 11th, 2011 advising them of our serious displeasure with this report that was produced. All of that is on record in a letter dated January 13th, 2011 to Ian Jarvis, then CEO recapping the results of that meeting and an action plan that was never implemented. As the Urban Systems Report clearly states on several occasions, it was a high-level review of the Interurban and they appeared to rely on the conclusions and assumptions on the DRL Report of 2006. This DRL report was restricted by the terms under which it had to conform and is now even less relevant due to advances in technology.**

**It appears that the above two reports conclusions are still being recognized by some within TransLink and those with ulterior motives to support the view that the Interurban corridor should be dismissed as an option. Nothing could be further from the truth. The inaccuracies follow -**

**IMPORTANT: Both of these reports were written without the knowledge of the contract content (in the provincial sale of 1988) 1) on the whole Interurban Line and 2) the Pratt Livingston Corridor (otherwise known as the Joint Section) that runs through the Langleys from Cloverdale through to around 232nd Street covered by the Master Agreement (previously unknown but uncovered in the Spring of 2009). Specific to that Master Agreement which is an 88-page document are the following:**

1. **Under the terms of the Master Agreement - A 21 Year Agreement, renewal at either party’s option including the renewal clause! Renewed in June of 2009, next renewal by August 26th, 2030.**
2. **Under the terms of the Master Agreement - Passenger Rights are protected at no cost up to 33% of the wheelage using the Joint Section tracks.**
3. **Under the Terms of the Master Agreement - Traffic on this section shall be shared equally between Passenger and Freight Traffic.**
4. **Under the Terms of the Master Agreement – The Railway Operations Easement Area shall encompass the tracks and an area sufficient to enable CP Rail to double track, construction of such double track to be at the sole cost of CP Rail including the cost of removal and relocation of the works of any other party on the lands required to double track.**
5. **Under the terms of the Master Agreement – CP has agreed not to apply for this rail line to fall under the National Railway Act regulations.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE: – Outside of the Joint Section covered by the Master Agreement, the full Interurban Corridor from the Pattullo Bridge to Chilliwack has Passenger Rights protected in perpetuity per the agreement of sale in 1988 between B.C. Hydro and Itel/Southern Rail.**

***Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (Technical Assessment of operating Passenger Rail***

***On the Interurban Corridor FINAL REPORT, October 16th, 2006 Prepared by DRL Solutions Inc.***

***Page 3 Assumption – property acquisition required new right of way. - Incorrect***

***Page 18 Sect 5 Technical and constructability Issues identified in their report as follows:***

* 1. ***Service Reliability and Freight Train Operations S. Rail - Sale Agreement requirements***
  2. ***Service Reliability/Frt Train Operations CPR Page Subdivision - Master Agreement requirem.***
  3. ***Constructability of Additional Trackage/Steep Rail Gradients - N/A (New Technology)***
  4. ***Electrical Pole Line Restrictions on New Track Construction - N/A (Electrical Not required)***
  5. ***Passenger Car Safety Standards applicable to Heavy Rail Track - National Standards***
  6. ***Conflict between vehicle clearance & passenger Access. Req. - European Solution***
  7. ***LRT Access to Langley Town Center - Master Agreement requirem.***
  8. ***Grade Crossing Warning System/Highway Traffic Interface - New System in place in Lang.***
  9. ***Safety aspects of Pedestrian and Private Crossings - No problem w freight traffic***
  10. ***Availability of Competing Sources for Compliant Rail Vehicles - Numerous Manufacturers***
  11. ***Utilities Relocations – Cost and effects on construction sched. - Not required***
  12. ***Property Acquisition – Cost and effects on construction sched. - Not required***
  13. ***Environmental Issues – Floodplain and Wetlands Construction - N/A – Active Freight Op. Now***
  14. ***Environmental Issues – Train Operat. & Passenger Stat. Facilit. - N/A – Active Freight Op. Now***
  15. ***Environmental Issues – Noise and Rail Line Maint. Restrictions - N/A – Active Freight Op. Now***
  16. ***Environmental Issues – Visibility, Safety and Veg. control Restr. - N/A – Active Freight Op. Now***
  17. ***Compatibility of Rail Signals/Com. Syst. W transm. Lines – - N/A***
  18. ***Security Issues - Normal Mainten Req.***
  19. ***Track Maintenance Standards for LRT DMU/EMU vehicles - Recommend Hydrail***

***Transportation Review Foundation Paper #4 Partnership FVRD / BC Transit, TransLink & B.C. Government – (Urban Systems circa 2008 / Final Report 2010) specific to the Interurban Corridor.***

* ***This report and its assumptions regarding the prospects for an inter-regional rail service are frankly not based on accurate information. By their own admission this report was not a feasibility study, but in their opinion a high-level screening of these options which we would suggest are very inaccurate. As the Mayor of the Township of Langley and member of the TransLink Mayor’s Council we were not approached to provide input into this study. To the contrary we met with Senior TransLink staff in early January of 2011 and I wrote a letter to the then CEO of TransLink, Ian Jarvis in respect to this issue and it is clear they did not incorporate any input from the Surrey UMA report or the Langley UMA report (circa 2008 / 08) that dealt with Passenger Rail. This report was produced without any recognition of the renewal of Passenger rights within the Joint Section, and the fact that it is an operational railway in every respect causing a significant error in calculations and conclusions.***
* ***Its conclusions were based on the limited and error filled DRL Solutions report of 2006 by the consultant’s own admission (as described above). In a private conversation with one of our committee members the DRL Consultant admitted that this was the first and only rail review they had ever done.***
* ***Hydrail was not a consideration nor was it available at the time of this report. They were limited to only considered Heavy Rail Diesel Push Pull, Heavy Rail Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU), Light Rail Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) and Light Rail Electrical Multiple Unit.***
* ***Considered extension of West Coast Express from Mission over to Abbotsford as part of this study which makes no sense given the exorbitant lease cost TransLink are paying CP Rail annually for the existing WCE line. It also relies on the ongoing (renewable) contract with CP and does not provide access to a destination most people want to go who live South of the Fraser, 1.2 million compared to 372,000 North of the Fraser.***
* ***As stated in the introduction, this report was done prior to the discovery of NO COST Passenger rights and Hydrail technology that negates the necessity of relocating B.C. Hydro’s transmission line while providing a clean, zero emission solution.***
* ***The number of potential stations of 9 is low as we suggest 12 – 14 would be required. Speed is correct but train type of Diesel would be incorrect primarily due to its negative affect on the Fraser Valley Airshed.***
* ***Annual ridership numbers of 1,703,000 are substantially wrong compared to any formula you can develop looking at ridership North of the Fraser on WCE.***
* ***Potential of Double Tracking mentioned. FACT Any double tracking will be at the cost of CP Rail, unknown at time of this report.***
* ***Track upgrade a non-issue. – On or about 2015/16 the BNSF who ship coal to Roberts Bank from the US through White Rock asked and received permission to return their trains back to the states through Abbotsford on the Interurban line. There were about 3 – 4-unit trains per day approx. 12,000 Ft. in length over a 3-month period that returned their trains on this corridor. The length, weight and configuration of these trains provides substantial proof of our argument that track upgrades are not required to the extent being suggested. Cost of stations which would be track platforms (like Europe) would be required and are built into the costs of the Leewood report as are rolling stock and automated road gates.***
* ***Operating costs are in question as are the revenue estimates based on what we see is a dramatic miscalculation.***
* ***Cost per ride and therefore Cost per service Hour are dramatically incorrect.***
* ***Suggestion that this line would serve as a Commuter rail service is incorrect, it is a Community Rail Service serving 16 Cities/Towns/Communities/Municipalities, 14 Post Secondary Institutions, an International Airport (1,000,000 customers this year), Industrial Parks and much more with the Rail Line serving as the Spine and a community Bus Service feeding the Rail Line as the Ribs. Just like SkyTrain.***
* ***The economic evaluation of the Interurban flies in the face of reality of today for a wide variety of reasons. Read Jock Finlayson’s (BC Business Council) re the need for an “Innovation Rail Corridor” out to Chilliwack. We already have such a thing that will build a new economy for the valley.***
* ***One must ask the question, what expertise did Urban Systems have to be selected to conduct such an evaluation?***
* ***The growth up the valley, Township of Langley East have grown exponentially faster than anything considered in 2008/09. The dramatic increase in the cost of housing, the movement of business and industry plus the attraction of living in the Fraser Valley is the reason for our growth.***
* ***The projected increase of 1,000,000 more residents and 500,000 new homes within 40 years points to the immediate need for this Passenger Rail Corridor.***

**Once again, this is about TransLink misrepresenting the facts encouraging the TransLink Mayors Council and Board to spend and wasting Billions of dollars, making their free spending habits a way of life. Their actions bare absolutely no relationship to good Transit planning. There must be an oversight of their actions.**