

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Geoff Cross, Vice President, Transportation Planning and Policy

DATE: March 22, 2017

SUBJECT: Custom Transit Service Delivery Review: Outcomes and Recommendations

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS**

That the TransLink Board of Directors:

- A. Endorse the recommendations from Management set out in Table 2 of the report dated March 22, 2017 titled “Custom Transit Service Delivery Review: Outcomes and Recommendations,” which include policy changes to improve customer experience and increase availability of service and are based on the recommendations of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee convened to provide input into the review;
- B. Direct Management to explore additional ways for HandyDART customers to provide input on the HandyDART service; and
- C. Direct Management to support the Stakeholder Advisory Committee’s recommendations and draw on best practices in relation to HandyDART operations by undertaking the following:
  - (i) Retaining responsibility for the HandyDART Registration function and assuming responsibility for the Customer Feedback function within the TransLink enterprise;
  - (ii) Validating the findings of the HandyDART Public Sector Comparator (which indicate it is more costly for the TransLink enterprise to provide most service delivery functions) by conducting a detailed procurement process to assess market response and assist in determining (a) whether the call centre function<sup>1</sup> should be provided by the TransLink enterprise or a contractor; and (b) whether the operation of dedicated vehicles should be provided by one contractor or multiple contractors;
  - (iii) due to the specialized and personalized nature of HandyDART service, include, in future Request for Proposals for HandyDART service operations, the requirement for proponents to offer employment opportunities to HandyDART personnel employed by the incumbent contractor, on a preferred basis; and
  - (iv) Extending the existing contract with MVT Canadian Bus, Inc. for six months (to June 30, 2018).

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek Board Approval for the recommendations arising out of the Custom Transit Service Delivery Review.

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<sup>1</sup> The call centre function includes reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and responding to same-day issues.

## **BACKGROUND**

In June 2016, the TransLink Board committed to undertake a review of the policies and delivery model for HandyDART, which is TransLink's custom transit service. This was in response to a number of questions that had been raised at Board meetings, particularly around responsiveness to customer concerns, HandyDART and taxi service standards and quality, and the HandyDART service model and operations.

In addition, although the accessibility of the conventional system has improved as a result of significant investment in recent years and TransLink's conventional system is one of the most accessible in Canada, HandyDART policies have not changed to reflect this improved access for people with disabilities.

Internal organizational changes implemented in spring 2016 have enhanced TransLink's oversight and accountability of HandyDART service. TransLink is committed to establishing more rigorous standards and performance levers to further enhance accountability of the service, with the understanding that regardless of who delivers HandyDART service, TransLink is always responsible for the customer.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Custom Transit Service Delivery Review was initiated in July 2016 and had two areas of focus:

1. Review of HandyDART policies that influence customer experience and availability of trips.
2. Review of the service delivery model (e.g. whether elements of the service are contracted out or provided by the TransLink enterprise), including a Public Sector Comparator financial analysis.

The method for this project included:

- Review of previous work and stakeholder engagement undertaken by TransLink
- Establishment of a project Stakeholder Advisory Committee
- Broader Stakeholder Engagement
- Peer Review, benchmarking existing HandyDART policies against those of seven comparable peer agencies across Canada
- Input from technical experts
- Analysis of HandyDART satisfaction survey results and other data

### **Stakeholder Advisory Committee**

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee was convened to inform the development and assessment of HandyDART service delivery models and policies. Membership was drawn from existing HandyDART customers who represent users from different geographic regions in Metro Vancouver, a representative of HandyDART frontline staff, as well as representatives from health and advocacy agencies with responsibilities or influence toward a broad segment of HandyDART ridership.

The Advisory Committee met at three to four week intervals to review and provide feedback on key project deliverables. A total of eight meetings were held and focussed on preparing service objectives, discussions regarding current state and service objectives of HandyDART, policies and service models of peers and the evaluation criteria for the proposed service models. At the conclusion of this process, the Committee prepared recommendations and input on HandyDART policies and the service delivery model. Additional information can be found in Attachment #1, Stakeholder Advisory Committee Final Report.

Feedback from Committee members has been that they have valued this intensive engagement and 'having a seat at the table' through this review. As part of their recommendations, they have requested

that TransLink explore additional ways for HandyDART customers to have input into the oversight of the HandyDART service. Committee members have also indicated an interest in providing input on how service standards are set out in any procurement processes emerging from the Board's decision on the recommendation of the review. Management will establish strategies for this stakeholder involvement.

### **Broader Stakeholder Engagement**

To ensure this review addressed the needs and concerns of a range of key stakeholders, TransLink held four workshops and two individual stakeholder meetings. This was done in coordination with the execution of an online survey. There were a total of 76 in-person engagement workshop attendees, 132 online responses, and 23 paper surveys. Overall, the findings of this engagement work aligned with Advisory Committee recommendations. A more detailed summary of these findings can be found in Attachment #2, Broader Stakeholder Engagement Summary Report.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **Policy Review**

In undertaking this review, we have learned the following:

*Demand for HandyDART Currently Outstrips Supply and is Anticipated to Grow:* Up until late 2016, there had been no increase in HandyDART service since 2009. To respond to an increase in demand in 2016, an additional 25,300 trips were provided compared to 2015. Although the trip denial rate is a small per cent of total trips provided, we heard from many customers that it can be difficult to get a trip when needed and that many customers have stopped calling out of frustration. In addition, HandyDART is currently providing fewer trips per capita than our peer custom transit agencies, which indicates that there is likely latent demand for the service. Furthermore, recent BC Stats projections indicate the number of people in Metro Vancouver aged 70 or older will increase by 55% over the next ten years, which could translate into a greater need for HandyDART service, as the incidence of disabilities increases at this age<sup>2</sup>.

With the approval of the Phase 1 of the 10 Year Vision Plan, service for HandyDART is now being increased and by 2019 service will grow by 15%, providing for an additional 171,000 trips a year. The full 10 Year Vision Plan calls for a 30% increase in HandyDART.

Further analysis to estimate future demand for HandyDART is required. The expansion in the Mayors' Vision is expected to address the increased demand to some degree, but analysis shows that it is likely insufficient to catch up or keep pace with need. Measures to manage the demand, such as those described below, will also be required.

*There is an Opportunity to Improve How Customers Experience HandyDART:* There are a number of elements that impact the quality of service and experience for customers, including:

- Ease of booking a trip
- Availability of a trip at customer's preferred time
- Amount of time a customer has to wait to be picked up
- Duration of their trip when on the vehicle
- Being and feeling safe and secure when taking a trip
- Customer service, skills and courteousness of drivers and other staff

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<sup>2</sup> The demand for HandyDART is likely to not increase directly proportionate to an increase in number of seniors; as a result of the review, there may be changes that will increase the use of conventional transit among this customer group.

- Availability and accuracy of information about their trip
- Responsiveness to customer feedback

Recent surveys on HandyDART customer satisfaction indicate that overall satisfaction levels with HandyDART in Metro Vancouver are relatively high. The Provincial Office of the Seniors Advocate conducted a survey in 2016 that found 92% of respondents feel HandyDART is meeting their transportation needs moderately to extremely well. The 2016 annual HandyDART Customer Service Performance survey commissioned by TransLink found 79% of customers award a score of 8 out of 10 or better for overall service. However, there remain a number of factors that are having a negative impact on customer experience.

Currently, a HandyDART a trip can be booked seven days to one day in advance, up to noon the day before the trip reservation. Extending the reservation closing time to later in the day would more closely align with the practices of some Canadian peers and would provide better service for customers.

The duration of a trip as experienced by customers is impacted by the length of the time spent waiting and the on-vehicle ride time. The pick-up window is the time frame that a trip will arrive to pick-up the customer; for HandyDART this is 15 minutes before and after the reservation time for a maximum potential wait of a half hour. Recent data indicates that customers wait for longer than 15 minutes for approximately 50% of trips. There may be ways to reduce the average waiting times without significant cost impacts.

Our engagement and analysis has confirmed that taxis play an important role in providing custom transit service<sup>3</sup>. However, persistent and significant concerns have been raised about the customer service provided by taxis. Training of taxi drivers that provide custom transit trips is currently inconsistent and not on par with the training for HandyDART drivers. As such, we have heard reports from customers that safety protocols and general good customer service practices are not always followed. Furthermore, customers are not informed that their trip will be provided by a taxi and the advance notification call is often not provided or is inaccurate. In addition, taxis often neglect to display appropriate HandyDART signage and it can be difficult for customers to discern, particularly in busy locations, if the arriving taxi is for their trip. These significant, systemic challenges with HandyDART taxi service must be addressed.

*TransLink is Not Maximizing Strategies to Ensure HandyDART Trips are Available When Customers Need Them:*

Currently, HandyDART service is delivered largely in isolation from the conventional system and very few intermodal<sup>4</sup> trips are taken by HandyDART customers. The review has confirmed that HandyDART is a service for people with physical and cognitive disabilities when they are unable to use the conventional system. Given the improvements in accessibility of fleet, stations and stops in recent years, there may be some customers who have historically required HandyDART that are now able to use the conventional system for some or all of their trips.

Through the review we have learned that most peer agencies are moving to a “Family of Services” approach, which refers to the use of a combination of accessible conventional services and custom transit services to provide trips that correspond with a customer’s needs and abilities, which is determined by the transit agency when the trip is booked. Support services are provided to deliver this

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<sup>3</sup> The review does not include the TaxiSaver subsidy program.

<sup>4</sup> Trips that involve the use of more than one mode of transportation (eg. HandyDART with a transfer to SkyTrain, SeaBus, Conventional Bus).

approach including travel training<sup>5</sup>, developing an eligibility process that provides substantive information on registrants' abilities, and maximizing the accessibility of the conventional system. There are a number of compelling reasons for adopting this including: Improving availability of HandyDART trips when customers need them, improving the flexibility and independence of travel for customers, and meeting latent and increased demand. See Attachment #3 for an illustration of this approach.

In order to implement the Family of Services approach, clear information is needed about an individual's abilities. The current HandyDART application process requires a simple form be completed and signed by a health professional. This does not provide the TransLink enterprise (i.e. TransLink and its subsidiary companies) with sufficient information on an applicant's abilities to be able to determine if and when they would be unable to use conventional transit without assistance and when HandyDART is required. At the same time, many health care providers may not understand the accessibility amenities of the conventional system and the abilities a customer needs to use it.

All of the peer agencies reviewed and the majority of agencies across North America (including BC Transit) use some level of an in-person component in determining eligibility for their custom transit services. This ranges from 10% to almost 100% of applicants participating an interview or functional assessment. TransLink is the only agency of the peers reviewed that does not use an in-person eligibility assessment for at least a portion of applicants and is considered to have the most 'open' eligibility process for a custom transit service.

The stakeholder engagement component of this review confirmed that most stakeholders support TransLink shifting toward a more rigorous eligibility process as it will help ensure that HandyDART trips are not used in situations that could be served by the conventional system, thereby increasing availability of trips for customers when they are unable to use the conventional system. However, significant concerns around dignity and inconvenience for customers were raised about introducing an in-person component.

Based on these findings, the project Stakeholder Advisory Committee has prepared a number of recommendations on policy changes to improve customer experience and increase availability of service. These recommendations detail actions to:

- Improve reservation convenience;
- Reduce wait times and travel times;
- Enhance HandyDART taxi service quality and accountability;
- Ensure trips are available when customers need them; and
- Ensure HandyDART is appropriately funded.

These can be found in Table 2 of this report.

### **HandyDART Service Delivery Model**

There are five functions of service delivery:

1. Registration: Application review and assessment, registration functions.
2. Customer Feedback: Responding to customer complaints and commendations.
3. Call Centre: Reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and responding to same-day issues.
4. Delivery rides: Operating dedicated HandyDART vehicles and non-dedicated vehicles (e.g. taxis).
5. Assets: Owning and maintaining fleet and facilities.

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<sup>5</sup> Travel Training is a short-term, one-on-one service designed to help people with disabilities learn how to use conventional services safely and independently.

The current service delivery model is described as a “turn-key contract”, which means all functions are provided by a single contractor, MVT Canadian Bus, Inc. (MVT), with the exception of the registration function, which is undertaken by TransLink’s subsidiary Coast Mountain Bus Company (CMBC) on behalf of TransLink. In reviewing service delivery options, a full range of potential models were considered, including in-house and contracted services and potential hybrid models. It also addressed the role of taxis in meeting service needs.

Using both qualitative and quantitative factors, options have been assessed against evaluation criteria, with the understanding that regardless of who delivers different functions, TransLink is always responsible for the customer and accountable for HandyDART service. The evaluation criteria include the following:

<p><i>Day-Of Customer Experience:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes on-time reliability, trip duration, trip information, safety, courteousness of staff and consistency of customer experience.</li> <li>• Is a priority for customers and has a significant impact of customer satisfaction.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Flexibility in Managing Demand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes matching trips to appropriate modes, the ability to add staff and fleet, ability to respond to changes in technology and transportation options, and to be flexible in the use of non-dedicated vehicles.</li> <li>• Given the existing and anticipated increased demand for HandyDART service, it is important that the service model provides flexibility to maximize the availability of trips.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Pre and Post-Trip Customer Experience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes reservations and customer feedback.</li> <li>• Responsiveness to customers is essential to ensure their input is heard.</li> <li>• Customer Service and courteousness is important in making trip reservations.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Financial Analysis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes the effective use of financial resources, maximizing the availability of trips and ensuring the financial sustainability of the delivery model.</li> <li>• Conducted as a Public Sector Comparator (see below for additional information).</li> </ul>

Using these evaluation criteria, the delivery model analysis was conducted in order to respond to the following questions:

Decision 1: Who does registration?

Decision 2: Who handles customer feedback?

Decision 3: Who delivers rides?

Decision 4: Who delivers the call centre functions?

Decision 5: Who owns/manages the assets?

This analysis was based on seven alternatives to the current service delivery model option that were presented by the consulting team to the Advisory Committee and staff for consideration. Variations in the models reflect differences in how components of the service are delivered. The models reviewed are as follows:

**Table 1: Service Delivery Model Analysis**

	Existing Model	Alt 1: 1 Contractor Most Functions	Alt 2: 2 Contractors Most Functions	Alt 3: 1 Contractor Trip Delivery	Alt 4: 2 Contractors Trip Delivery	Alt 5: In-House All Functions	Alt 6: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party & 1 Contractor	Alt 7: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party & 2+ Contractors
<b>Registration</b>	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink
<b>Customer Feedback</b>	Turn-key (Contractor)	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink
<b>Delivering Trips</b>	Turn-key (Contractor)	Turn-key (Contractor)	2 Contractors	Contractor	2 Contractors	TransLink	Contractor	2 Contractors
<b>Call Centre</b>	Turn-key (Contractor)	Turn-key (Contractor)	2 Contractors	TransLink	TransLink	TransLink	Separate Call Centre Contractor	Separate Call Centre Contractor
<b>Public Sector Comparator Value for Money Results</b>	2.7%	3.2%	n/a	2.0%	-1.7%	Public Sector Comparator	3.0%	0.7%
	\$5.2	\$6.1		\$3.9	(\$3.2)		\$5.8	\$1.3
	3	1		4	7		6	2

**Public Sector Comparator**

A Public Sector Comparator was prepared to provide a financial assessment of the costs the potential delivery model alternatives, the findings of which have been considered in the evaluation of models. Ensuring the most cost effective method of service delivery is used enables TransLink to maximize the number of trips available for HandyDART customers. Overall, the Public Sector Comparator found that:

- Service delivery functions provided by the TransLink enterprise are more costly due to higher labour costs;
- Having multiple contractors Deliver Rides is more costly due to increased contract management costs; and
- Some cost efficiencies can be gained by TransLink being responsible for the Customer Feedback function as this is an existing area of business for the TransLink enterprise.

The Public Sector Comparator analysed the service delivery models options and the performance ranking for HandyDART service delivery under these different models can be seen in Table 1. An Executive Summary of the Public Sector Comparator method and results can be found in Attachment #4. (Note that based on the Customer Experience elements of the Evaluation Criteria, Alternative 2 was not advanced for financial analysis, due to the poor results).

The following highlights key benefits and trade-offs of the delivery model alternatives for each delivery model function, drawing on the technical analysis from consultants and what was learned from peers:

**Registration**

- The registration process is the initial touchpoint between TransLink and HandyDART customers, and given the importance of accountability to the customer and oversight of the service, it is appropriate TransLink continue to have direct responsibility for this function.

#### *Customer Feedback*

- Customer feedback serves as an essential way for TransLink to receive information on the status of service and how it can be improved;
- Given the importance of accountability to customers and oversight of the service, CMBC's existing Customer Information department will take on this function on behalf of TransLink and will work with Access Transit Service Delivery and Access Transit Planning to ensure timely responses are provided; and
- All peer agencies manage this function in-house.

#### *Call Centre*

- Separating the Delivering Rides and Call Centre functions eliminates the inherent conflict of interest that exists in assigning trips to non-dedicated providers and conventional transit services when the Call Centre provider also delivers trips (i.e. they could be more likely to delegate difficult-to-deliver trips to a taxi, thereby maintaining better performance indicators);
- Family of Services is maximized when there is a separation between Delivering Rides and Call Centre functions;
- Contractor(s) can be replaced at the end of a contract cycle if they are poor performers; there is less flexibility to change a function once it is provided by the TransLink enterprise;
- If a contractor provides the Call Centre function, a well-structured and rigorously managed contract can be used to employ contract levers to ensure a high standard of customer experience;
- Direct control by the TransLink enterprise of this function can result in increased productivity and maximize oversight; and
- If multiple contractors operate Call Centre, there is a risk of significant inefficiencies in trip distribution and inconsistency of service.

#### *Delivering Rides*

- When a single entity is responsible for the dedicated vehicles Delivering Rides (i.e. HandyDART buses), it is easier to achieve a consistent customer experience;
- When TransLink Delivers Rides, there is direct control over service;
- When contractor(s) Deliver Rides, a well-structured and rigorously managed contract can be used to employ contract levers to ensure a high standard of customer experience;
- Contractor(s) can be replaced at the end of a contract cycle if they are poor performers; there is less flexibility to change a function once it is provided by TransLink;
- Multiple contractors Delivering Rides provides the ability to shift work to contractors based on service performance through performance-based reallocation of service; and
- Contractor(s) Delivering Rides provides greater flexibility in the use of non-dedicated services.

#### *Assets*

- Considerations of assets has been largely outside the scope of this review, however, it is assumed for the time being that TransLink will retain ownership of the HandyDART fleet, regardless of who is delivering rides and whoever delivers service will be responsible for fleet maintenance.

**Contractual Considerations & Procurement Strategies**

We are aware that HandyDART is an important part of the daily lives of our customers. Continuity of service and a seamless transition through any change is paramount. In order to run an adequate procurement process allowing for the validation of the Public Sector Comparator findings, a five to six month procurement period is required, including conducting a request for proposal, bid review and selection, contract negotiations, and Board approval of a recommended proponent(s). In order to ensure a smooth transition to a new service provider, a six month transition period may be required from the award of contract. As such, MVT’s contract would need to be extended six months to June 30, 2018 to ensure there is continuity of service and a seamless customer experience.

In addition, potential changes in the HandyDART contractor and delivery model has resulted in some uncertainty for existing HandyDART clients because of their relationship with current HandyDART employees. Management’s view is that it would be in TransLink’s interest to assure clients that existing employees with unique skills and personalized relationships will be encouraged to remain with the HandyDART program. In order to address this, prospective HandyDART contractors would be required to provide preferential hiring of existing employees.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**HandyDART Policies**

Based on the project objectives, the findings of the peer review, and the outcomes of the engagement with the broader stakeholder community, the project Advisory Committee has prepared the following HandyDART policy recommendations:

*Table 2: Committee and Management Recommendations*

<b>Committee Recommendation</b>	<b>Management Recommendation</b>
<b>1. In order to improve customer experience by <u>improving reservation convenience</u>, the committee recommends:</b>	
1.1 The reservation window be extended from 12pm to later in the afternoon the day before.	Management recommends extending the reservation window to 4pm by mid-2017.
1.2 TransLink introduce options for online booking.	Management recommends continuing to pursue online booking options and determining the financial implications.
<b>2. In order to improve customer experience by <u>reducing wait times</u>, the committee recommends TransLink:</b>	
2.1 Improve the performance of the 10-minute advance warning of vehicle arrival for all HandyDART trips, including taxis.	Management recommends the development of strategies to improve the performance of the 10-minute advance warning of vehicle arrival be completion by end of 2017.
2.2 Report out on wait times for customers on the TransLink Accountability Dashboard.	Management recommends wait times for customers be added to the TransLink Accountability Dashboard by end of 2017.
2.3 Assess the feasibility of reducing wait times without reducing availability of trips.  Based on this feasibility assessment, establish a	Management recommends a feasibility assessment to reduce wait times be completed by end of 2017.

<p>specific target to increase the number of trips that arrive within the first 15 minutes of the pick-up window.</p>	
<p><b>3. In order to improve customer experience by <u>reducing travel times</u>, the committee recommends:</b></p>	
<p>1.1 TransLink implement a policy where HandyDART trips take no longer than 1.5x the duration of the same trip on conventional bus services pending a timely feasibility assessment and further engagement with stakeholders.</p>	<p>Management recommends a feasibility assessment be completed by end of 2017 of implementation of a policy where trips take no longer than 1.5x the duration of the same trip on the conventional system.</p>
<p>1.2 Look for opportunities to be more proactive in dispatching, such as regularly checking projected conditions and schedules and re-distributing customer trips.</p>	<p>Management recommends continuing improvements to dispatching.</p>
<p>1.3 TransLink perform an in-depth review of the existing HandyDART trip scheduling software to ensure trip routing and scheduling are as efficient as possible.</p>	<p>Management recommends TransLink engage a specialist to review all parameter settings in the scheduling software by the end of 2017.</p>
<p><b>4. In order to improve customer experience by <u>continuing to use and enhancing HandyDART taxi service</u>, the committee recommends TransLink:</b></p>	
<p>4.1 Implement mandatory HandyDART taxi driver training.</p>	<p>Management recommends that an implementation plan for a taxi driver training program be completed by end of 2017 with implementation expected in 2018.</p>
<p>4.2 Implement other ways to ensure HandyDART customer service standards are met by taxi drivers.</p>	<p>Management recommends that, at the conclusion of the current contract cycle, taxi service agreements be transferred to TransLink (from MVT) to allow for direct oversight by TransLink and build in performance levers. Other mechanisms to achieve customer service standards from taxis and new opportunities for customer feedback on taxis will also be investigated.</p>
<p>4.3 Explore technical solutions to integrate HandyDART and taxi scheduling software for tracking customer pick-up/drop-off information.</p>	<p>Management recommends an exploration of technical solutions be completed by early 2018.</p>
<p>4.4 Implement policy for mandatory high-visibility signage for all taxis performing HandyDART trips.</p>	<p>Management recommends that policy be implemented by end of 2017 making high-visibility signage mandatory for all taxis performing HandyDART trips.</p>
<p><b>5. In order to ensure HandyDART trips are available for customers when they need to use the HandyDART system, the committee recommends:</b></p>	

<p>5.1 TransLink deliver sufficient HandyDART trips to meet customer demand.</p>	<p>Management recommends TransLink continue to pursue opportunities to increase HandyDART service with the goal of having trips available when customers need them. This includes: Delivering the 15% service expansion in the Phase 1 Plan; advancing the remaining expansion in the 10-Year Vision in future Investment Plans; and, to better manage demand, introducing a Family of Services approach, including a new travel training program and the collection of more substantial information about customer’s abilities.</p>
<p>5.2 An implementation strategy be developed for a Family of Services Approach.</p>	<p>Management recommends an implementation strategy for the Family of Services approach be developed and include a phased, multi-year rollout.</p>
<p>5.3 A Travel Training Program be implemented to teach customers how to use conventional transit safely and independently.</p>	<p>Management recommends an implementation plan for a Travel Training Program be developed in 2017 and implemented in 2018.</p>
<p>5.4 TransLink continues to make the conventional system more universally accessible including bus stops, signage, stations, and fleet.</p>	<p>Management recommends TransLink continue to make improvements to the accessibility of the conventional system through established guidelines and policies, and with the support of the Access Transit Users’ Advisory Committee.</p>
<p>5.5 A working group with customers, stakeholders and staff be immediately established to build on previous work to identify, maintain and ensure a customer-centred and respectful eligibility process that provides substantive information on registrants’ abilities.</p>	<p>Management recommends immediately establishing a working group with customers, stakeholders and staff to develop an implementation strategy for an eligibility process that provides substantive information on registrants’ abilities by end of 2017 that includes a phased, multi-year rollout.</p>
<p><b>6. In order to ensure that HandyDART is <u>appropriately funded</u>, the committee recommends:</b></p>	
<p>6.1 TransLink further examine the demographic changes that could drive increased demand for HandyDART service.</p>	<p>Management recommends TransLink continue to advance analysis on how best to forecast demand for HandyDART service.</p>
<p>6.2 In recognition that a high proportion of trips are to access health-services, TransLink engage with senior government and other agencies to review opportunities for funding HandyDART and improvements to the universal accessibility of the conventional system.</p>	<p>Management recommends TransLink work with senior government and agencies and develop opportunities for funding solutions for HandyDART and other accessibility improvements.</p>

## **HandyDART Service Delivery Model**

### *Advisory Committee Recommendations*

TransLink should be a public transportation leader in the province, inspiring other agencies to achieve higher quality service. In order to best achieve a high level of customer experience, flexibility in managing demand, and effective use of financial resources, the committee recommends:

- TransLink increase oversight and accountability for HandyDART by establishing clear standards and moving Customer Feedback in-house and retaining Registration in-house;
- A single dedicated provider Deliver Rides to ensure consistency of service;
- The Call Centre function should be delivered by a separate provider from the provider Delivering Rides (unless TransLink Delivers Rides);
- TransLink pursue additional opportunities for HandyDART customers to provide input; and
- TransLink take into account existing HandyDART employees through any transition.

### *Management Recommendations*

Management agrees in principle with the recommendations of the Committee, including that a single dedicated contractor delivering rides could be the best way to ensure consistency of service. However smaller and/or local contractors could bring other benefits while still achieving customer service standards and consistency.

Therefore, Management recommends that the Board direct staff to support the Committee's recommendations and pursue additional opportunities for customer involvement and draw on best practices learned by undertaking the following:

- TransLink enterprise to retain responsibility for the Registration function and take on provision of the Customer Feedback function;
- Validate the findings of the Public Sector Comparator, which indicate it is more costly for the TransLink enterprise to provide most service delivery functions, by conducting a detailed procurement process to assess the market response. The procurement process will help determine:
  - whether the call centre function should be provided by the TransLink enterprise or a contractor; and
  - whether the operation of dedicated vehicles should be provided by a single or multiple contractors.
- Due to the specialized and personalized nature of HandyDART service, require prospective HandyDART contractors to provide preferential hiring of existing employees; and
- Extend MVT's contract for 6 months to June 30, 2018.

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the past seven months TransLink has undertaken the Custom Transit Service Delivery Review. This review was initiative in response to a number of questions that had been raised at Board meetings, particularly around responsiveness to customer concerns, HandyDART and taxi service standards and quality, and the HandyDART service model and operations. This process has included extensive engagement with stakeholders, research on peer agencies and industry best practice and engagement with technical experts. The review included two areas of focus: (1) HandyDART policies that influence

customer experience and availability of trips; and, (2) the service delivery model, including a Public Sector Comparator financial analysis. The findings have demonstrated that a number of changes can be made that will improve the HandyDART service for customers. Recommendations on both HandyDART policies and the service delivery model have been developed for the Board's consideration.