

Report From Simon Fraser HandyDART

Submitted by Carol Schmidt, Transit Manager

This year has been very busy in the Simon Fraser HandyDART program which provides custom transit in the municipalities of Burnaby, New Westminster, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody. We have had a number of buses replaced to update our fleet as well as some growth in full time positions. Simon Fraser now has a total of 56 full time runs as well as 10 runs on both Saturday and Sunday. We have 90 full time and casual staff. We are working to have full coverage between 6:00 am and 11:00 pm seven days a week. We are expecting a 10% increase in buses in the coming year that would generate six new full time runs.

We continue to welcome new clients as our client list grows daily. At this time Simon Fraser HandyDART has approximately 10,000 registered clients, and we are providing between 850 and 1,000 rides per day.

We have endeavoured to reach out to the community, attending workshops and meetings to help people decide if HandyDART is right for them, or just letting them know about our transit service. We are pleased to report that our office is being considered for the New Westminster accessibility of the year award that will be announced later this year.

This year we welcomed Cathy Ballard as our new Office Coordinator. She has been working in the office at Simon Fraser for the past eleven years, and has brought her positive attitude and excellent work ethic forward to coach our staff and resolve service related issues.

Dennis Morgan joined our team in June as our new Fleet Coordinator. He jumped right in, working

hard and on August 1st we moved our parking lot, finally upgrading from gravel to pavement. With Dennis's attention to detail this move was made painless for our employees. Dennis is in the process of fitting and measuring for new uniforms that should arrive in the next 4-6 weeks.

This has been a year of change at Simon Fraser HandyDART. At times it has been challenging as we grow larger, and yet for me personally it has been a wonderful experience. As many of you know, Bob Mawson retired in May of this year and I have had the privilege of succeeding him in the position of Transit Manager. I have also made a personal commitment to maintain the same high standards of service quality that Bob Mawson set for the program over the past eight years.

I look forward to the upcoming year as we prepare to meet the challenges set out by TransLink. As we enter the RFP process at GVCSS I feel confident that working together will lead to success for GVCSS in operating custom transit for the North of Fraser region. I have full confidence in Ron McLeod, Mary Norris and the Board of GVCSS that they will continue to support their employees in this huge and exciting project.

Finally, we are extremely fortunate to have such an excellent working relationship with our funding authority and we would like to single out the on-going cooperation and support that we consistently receive from Tom Yang, Jim Dawe and Craig Maruyama at TransLink.

