

Report From Richmond HandyDART

Submitted by Elizabeth Foy, Transit Manager

In the past year, April 2006 to March 2007 Richmond HandyDART has seen an increase in demand for service. During this time we transported 1,384 clients for a total of 77,578 trips. To meet this need we increased our full time staff to 18 Custom Transit Drivers and hired a casual dispatcher for the office to assist with the workload during vacations.

Our HandyDART fleet increased to 23 vehicles and with this increase TransLink provided us with a larger fenced in area at the Sexsmith loop parking lot here in Richmond. This extra space will accommodate any future increase in vehicles.

Richmond HandyDART increased the evening service and the number of Vancouver runs we provide. We have also noticed an increase in bookings for the Hamilton area in east Richmond. This area has provided us with an ideal transfer spot for our clients who are traveling to other municipalities with Simon Fraser HandyDART.

The Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres held their annual conference in Richmond in October 2006 and we provided some chartered service as well as many individual rides to and from the luncheons, the airport, etc.

It has been 3 years since TransLink installed the Trapeze computer system for the HandyDART operations. It has been very helpful in the day to day operation, and TransLink has been making improvements to the system by making small changes over the years so that it meets our specific requirements and increases user efficiency. We have seen many changes to improve and assist us with our daily operation. In the beginning of 2007 we began preparations for the upgraded program of Trapeze version 7. All of the office staff including management have taken

several training sessions on the Web and at TransLink to prepare for the upgrade in June 2007.

In the beginning of 2007, one of our long time employees, Ken Oberholtzer and his family, moved to the interior of BC. Ken was very active on committees as well as one of our Driver Trainers. With Ken leaving, Phil Hastings volunteered to attend extra training to take on the role of the Driver Trainer with Hank Klassen. TransLink provided a 5 day program of Hazard Avoidance Training that Phil attended and both of our Driver Trainers attended a 2 day workshop at TransLink called "Train the Trainer".

I would like to commend the Richmond HandyDART employees for providing an excellent service for the residents of Richmond. The extra construction this past year with the building of the Canada Line has been a challenge for the Drivers but despite this we have managed to maintain a timely service. The transportation we are providing is a result of teamwork and dedication towards the common goal of providing access to public transportation for our clients who are eligible for custom transit.

Finally, I would also like to express sincere appreciation to Tom Yang and Jim Dawe at TransLink for providing their valuable support and expertise over the year and for their ongoing initiatives to improve the Trapeze computer system.

