



# North Shore Area Transit Plan

## Final Summary Report

October 2012



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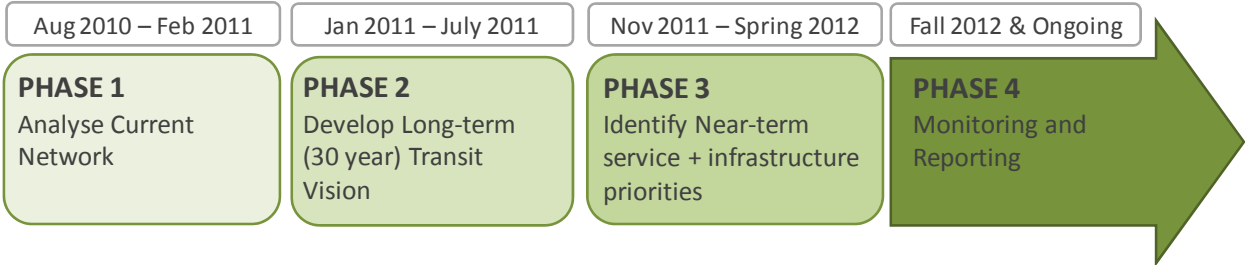
# INTRODUCTION

TransLink’s Area Transit Plan program focuses on seven individual sub-regions within Metro Vancouver to develop a transit network plan in coordination with communities’ travel needs, growth patterns, and land use plans. In fall 2010, TransLink started the process of updating the North Shore Area Transit Plan to align with the existing and future transportation needs of the North Shore, which includes five municipalities (the City of North Vancouver Districts of North Vancouver and West Vancouver, Bowen Island Municipality, and Village of Lions Bay) plus three significant First Nations’ lands (covered by two different First Nations – Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish). The area transit plan process develops plans to guide transit service and infrastructure investments and coordinate transportation and land use, with the goal of increasing transit mode share in support of TransLink’s regional objectives as stated in its long term strategy Transport 2040. Through the area transit planning process, TransLink worked together with local, regional and provincial governments, First Nations, stakeholders, residents, businesses and the public to create a long-term transit vision and identify near-term transit service and infrastructure initiatives for the North Shore.

Concentrated development in core areas, diverse communities and challenging geography characterize the North Shore today. Personal travel is mainly by car. Transit use is highest in the City of North Vancouver and among North Shore commuters who travel to and from downtown Vancouver during the morning and afternoon rush. The North Shore’s transit network – relatively consistent in structure since the 1970s – reflects this traditional home to work travel behaviour.

# AREA TRANSIT PLAN PROCESS

In fall 2010, TransLink started working with North Shore communities to develop an updated area transit plan for the North Shore. This involved 1) analyzing the current transit network and trends that affect future demand; 2) developing a long-term transit vision; and 3) identifying transit priorities that support the vision.



The first three phases of the area transit planning process are now complete, and TransLink is starting the final, ongoing phase – monitoring and annual reporting on the North Shore transit network and its intrinsic relationship with the local land use conditions.

This document represents a summary of phases 1 through 3, for more detailed information technical and summary reports are available for each of the three individual phases of the plan.

## **WORKING WITH NORTH SHORE COMMUNITIES**

Development of the North Shore Area Transit Plan was aided by a group of committed stakeholders, representing a wide variety of communities and interests. A Public Advisory Committee met monthly since fall 2010 to comment on and guide the plan process. Staff from all five North Shore municipalities and two First Nations were invited to be part of a Technical Advisory Committee, working to ensure alignment between TransLink and local initiatives. The general public provided input throughout the planning process, including direct public consultation on the final near-term priorities.

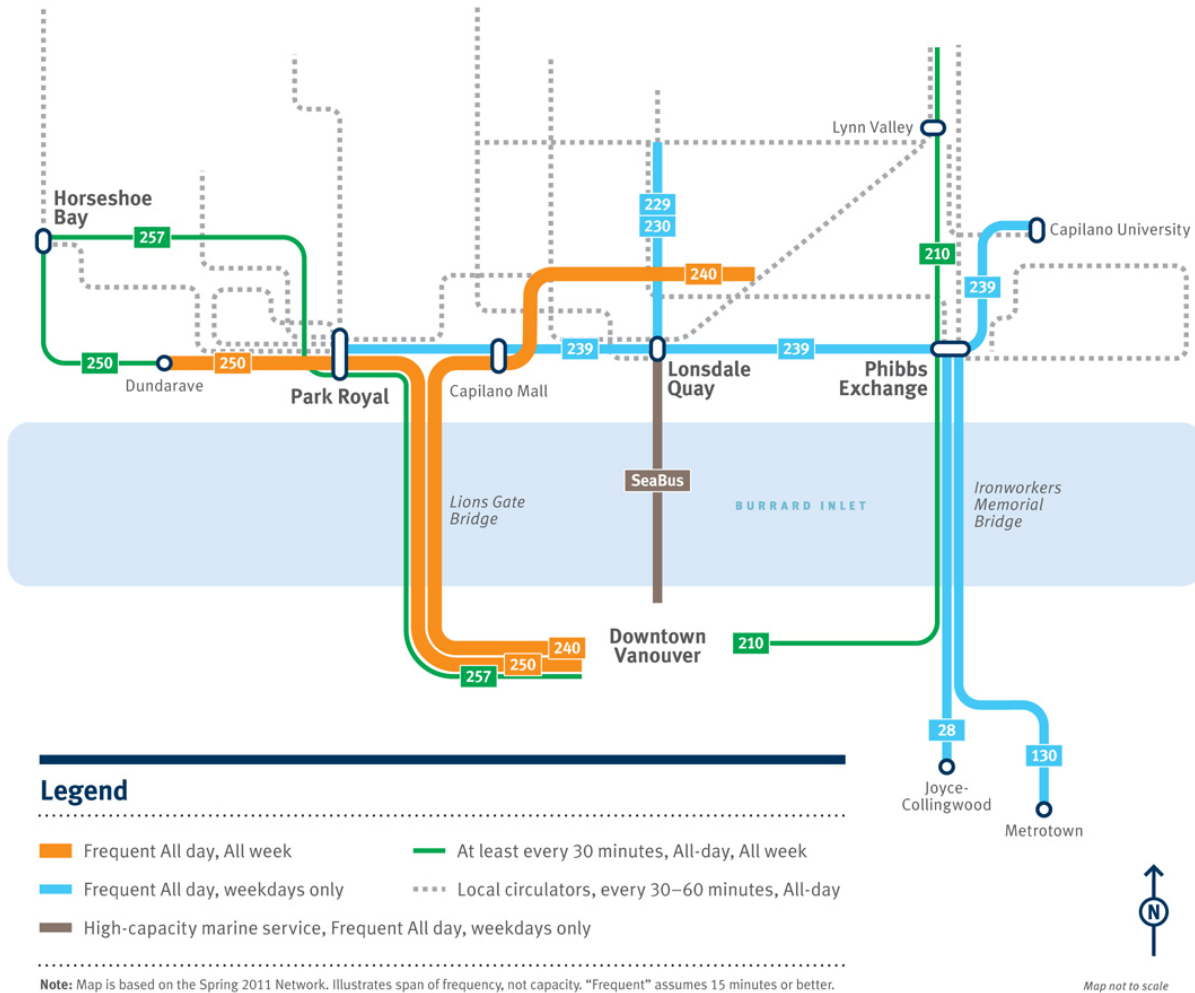
## **THE NORTH SHORE TRANSIT NETWORK TODAY**

During Phase 1 of the area transit planning process, TransLink analyzed the current network to understand how effective transit service is today, learn about stakeholder and customer perceptions of the transit network, and gain insight about travel markets on the North Shore.

The transit network today was designed around the North Shore's land use characteristics:

- Primarily single family residences
- Pockets of high density, residential and employment areas primarily concentrated along the shoreline
- Key transit destinations such as downtown Vancouver, Capilano University, and Horseshoe Bay ferry terminal
- Key tourist destinations including Grouse Mountain and the Capilano Suspension Bridge

Today's network is much the same as in the 1970s, when SeaBus was introduced. The current network focuses on traditional commuter travel to downtown Vancouver. Thirty-two bus routes connect three main transit exchanges – Park Royal, Lonsdale Quay and Phibbs Exchange. Transit service is timed to allow transfers between bus routes and to the SeaBus. The current network does not reflect the growing trend of more people staying on the North Shore for work, shops and services.



## CURRENT NETWORK PERFORMANCE

TransLink measures and evaluates transit service against a set of transit service guidelines that are consistent across the region. These guidelines have three primary goals:

- Ensure an acceptable level of service quality
- Provide a consistent basis to evaluate proposed improvements and new services
- Help balance improved service levels and the efficient use of resources

In following these guidelines, TransLink aims to provide service across the region that is simple, comprehensive, frequent, convenient, comfortable, reliable and efficient.

In the first phase of the area transit planning process, TransLink evaluated North Shore transit service against these guidelines, and observed the following:

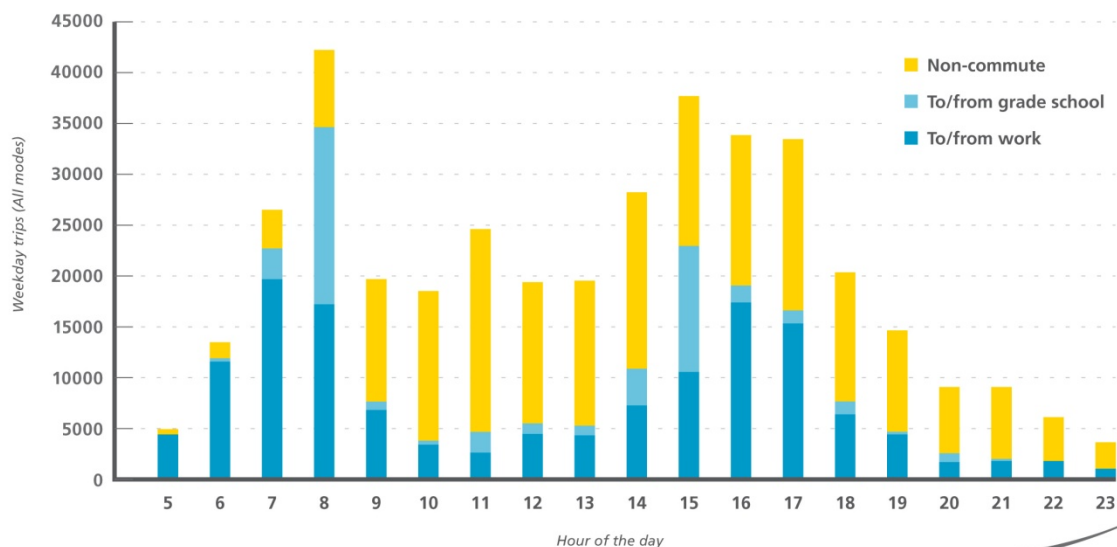


## Frequent service is in place but productivity can be low

Frequency of North Shore transit service is adjusted to accommodate higher demand at peak times and a minimum level of service is in place during non-peak times, when demand is lower. While most North Shore routes meet minimum frequency guidelines throughout the day, this means that productivity is sometimes very low: an average bus trip during midday has at most 20 passengers on board and SeaBus is typically less than 40 per cent full.

## Transit demand drops significantly after 6 p.m.

To make service more convenient for customers and enable easy connections, TransLink deploys available service from early in the morning to late in the evening, seven days a week. Transit service within the North Shore meets this guideline and service to and from downtown Vancouver starts later and ends earlier than the minimum guideline. However, analysis shows all travel demand – whether by transit or car – drops significantly after 6 p.m. as shown in the following graph.



## Customer perceptions of comfort affected by crowding at peak times

Passenger comfort is closely related to how crowded transit services are. Though crowding is less likely on weekends or in off-peak hours, many North Shore customers' perceptions of service are informed by their experience during peak hours. This is when transit use is highest; most crowding occurs during peak times and particularly on weekday trips going to/from downtown Vancouver and Lonsdale Quay. The busiest routes on the North Shore are typically at or slightly above the service guidelines for crowding during the peak periods. This affects overall perceptions of service.

### Reliability is affected by congestion and high demand during the afternoon rush

Although 80 per cent of trips on the North Shore arrive at their end point on time, reliability guidelines comparing scheduled transit times to actual are not always achieved, particularly during the afternoon rush. However, the majority of trips that require connections (e.g. at Phibbs Exchange or Lonsdale Quay) still allow customers to connect. When missed transit connections do occur, they are during the afternoon peak period when traffic congestion and demand is high. Service is more reliable on weekends.

### The transit network is challenging to understand

The North Shore's transit network is influenced by the area's topography, street network, and travel demands. The current network complexity, plus routes and schedule variations at different times of day make it difficult to understand and communicate the transit network, an issue identified through customer and stakeholder surveys as a barrier to transit use.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSIT ON THE NORTH SHORE

In Phase 1 of the area transit planning process, TransLink surveyed residents and stakeholders on the North Shore about their perceptions of transit service. A variety of people were engaged through customer surveys, TransLink Listens, and a North Shore Area Transit Plan stakeholder survey. Front-line transit operators also provided input. Several key themes emerged.

**Overall positive ratings:** Most North Shore routes are rated positively by customers and generally higher than the rest of the system across the region.

**Employees share customer opinions:** Transit employees report that existing transit customers are generally satisfied with service. Some common issues heard from SeaBus customers include the need to introduce more evening and weekend service. From bus operators, the biggest concerns heard relate to service reliability and crowding.

**Crowding is a concern:** Crowding, which mainly takes place during peak periods, is the most significant factor affecting overall perceptions of transit service.

**More direct service desired:** Many participants thought that more people would use transit if there were more frequent service, improved bus connections, more direct bus routes, improved travel time, and/or new direct service between North Shore neighbourhoods.

**Travel time:** Travel time on transit was also a theme, though people value different things. Some stakeholders think that transit should be competitive with travel by private car, for both travel time and cost. Commuters and students value improved overall travel time, even if it means they have to make transfers. Seniors value point-to-point direct access (without transfers) even if service is less frequent.

**Longer service hours desired:** People from some areas said they would like longer service hours, particularly where service ends earlier (e.g., West Vancouver and Bowen Island). Notably, this perception is in contrast to findings that travel demand on all modes drops significantly after 6 p.m.

## KEY TRENDS FOR TRANSIT ON THE NORTH SHORE

One of the strategic objectives of area transit planning is to develop a transit vision and transit service and infrastructure investment priorities that support regional and local growth plans. Therefore, during the first phase of the planning process, TransLink identified key trends affecting the future of transit on the North Shore.

### North Shore's core centres will continue to grow

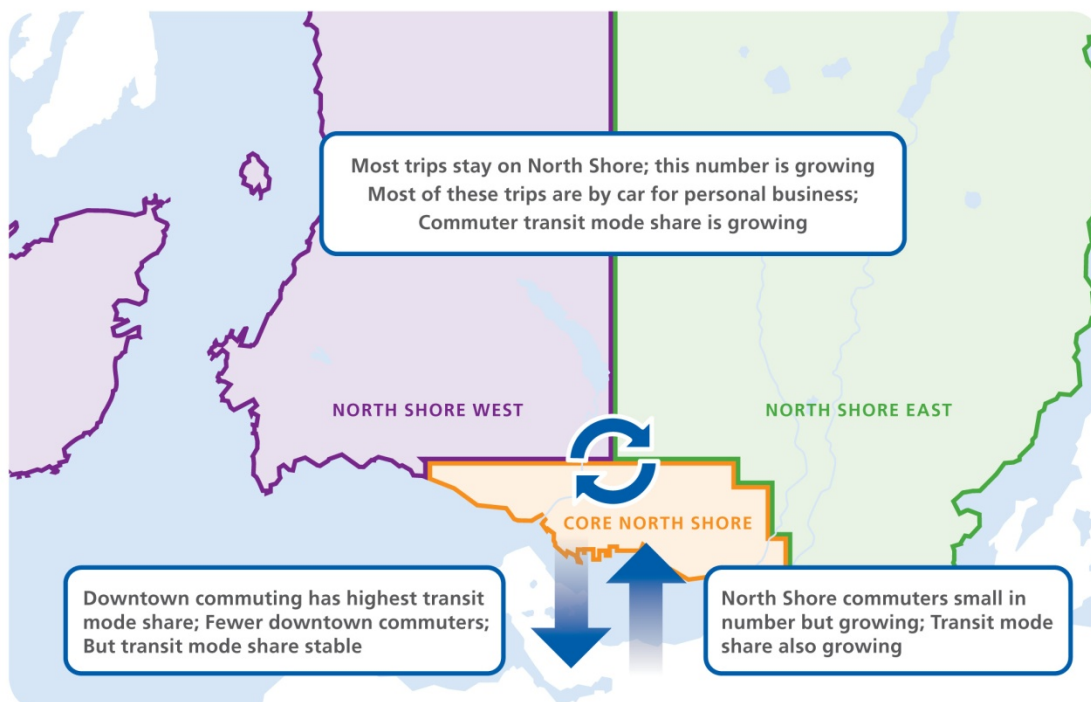
Compared to the rest of the Metro Vancouver region, the North Shore will have the lowest growth over the next 30 years. Most growth will be concentrated in core centres along the Burrard Inlet, from Ambleside through Lower Lonsdale to Lower Lynn Valley. Existing density in the main corridors and centres will intensify, with few new urban centres being created.

### More trips will stay on the North Shore

North Shore travel patterns have changed over the past few decades from traditional “suburb to downtown” travel. Most trips are now made locally – 60 per cent of all trips made on the North Shore start or end there.

### A changing population will place new demands on the system

Over the next 30 years, the number of seniors (65 years or older) living on the North Shore is expected to more than double. This will place new demands on transit service, including new demand for midday transit service. In addition, jobs are being created on the North Shore at a faster rate than population growth. This means people are more likely to stay on the North Shore for work and more people will commute there from other parts of the region.





## STRATEGIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Phase 1 review established a clear picture of the existing North Shore transit network, public perceptions of transit on the North Shore, and key trends influencing the future of transit. This in turn helped identify the strategic challenges and opportunities to consider when developing the transit vision and investment priorities in the following two phases.

### Managing customer perceptions

What customers perceive can differ from what is actually taking place. For example, customers are interested in evening transit service; however, data suggest all trip activity, including transit demand, drops significantly after 6 p.m. Further study and action is required to identify opportunities for efficient travel options during low-demand periods.

### Maintaining and growing markets

Transit mode share for commuters going to downtown Vancouver remains high today, but this market is shrinking. With 65 per cent of personal trips on the North Shore made by car, there may be opportunities to increase transit use through changes to the network that improve travel time, comfort, reliability and value for money. Examples include more direct and fast routing to the core North Shore employment centres, which ensure reliable connections and convenience, and re-aligning service at upper levels of the North Shore to make them more direct.

### Delivering service within North Shore's unique geography

It is an ongoing challenge to deliver convenient and comprehensive service in a region marked by steep inclines, rivers and creeks which limit east-west movement to a small number of road and pedestrian corridors. The North Shore also has natural traffic congestion points, primarily at the bridges that cross Burrard Inlet, where transit priority can improve the travel time advantage over the car.

### Meeting new transit demands

The transit network today serves a traditional commuter market, but a growing number of non-commuting trips throughout the day stay on the North Shore; these now make up the largest number of overall daily trips. Focusing on convenience, transit priority or other factors – such as working with municipalities on parking availability and pricing – may help attract more people to transit, particularly during the middle of the day.

### Supporting land use decisions

Population and employment growth over the next 30 years will be concentrated around the shoreline, from Ambleside to Lower Lynn Valley and specific key town centres. Maintaining Marine Drive and Lonsdale Avenue as strong transit corridors is essential. Transit ridership is already high and will continue to grow; municipal plans envision transit-supportive land use along these corridors and in town centres. Transit will be able to compete better with car trips in such concentrated markets. Strategies to improve transit frequency, travel time and comfort should be developed to help maintain transit as an attractive option.

On transit routes in low density, low activity areas outside this core, ridership data indicates service is underused. Land use plans do not envision densification of these areas, so it is not expected that

demand for transit will increase substantially from current levels. More work is required to look for ways to improve demand, reallocate resources and identify new potential service strategies.

### **Improving transit exchanges**

North Shore's three main transit exchanges, Park Royal, Lonsdale and Phibbs will also be critical to support service design. Timing of connections and reliability of service are key to the success of these exchanges. Most of the day customers can expect reliable connections, but between 23 and 36 per cent of trips in the afternoon peak report missed connections. Measures to improve afternoon peak reliability will be needed to help reduce customer travel time.

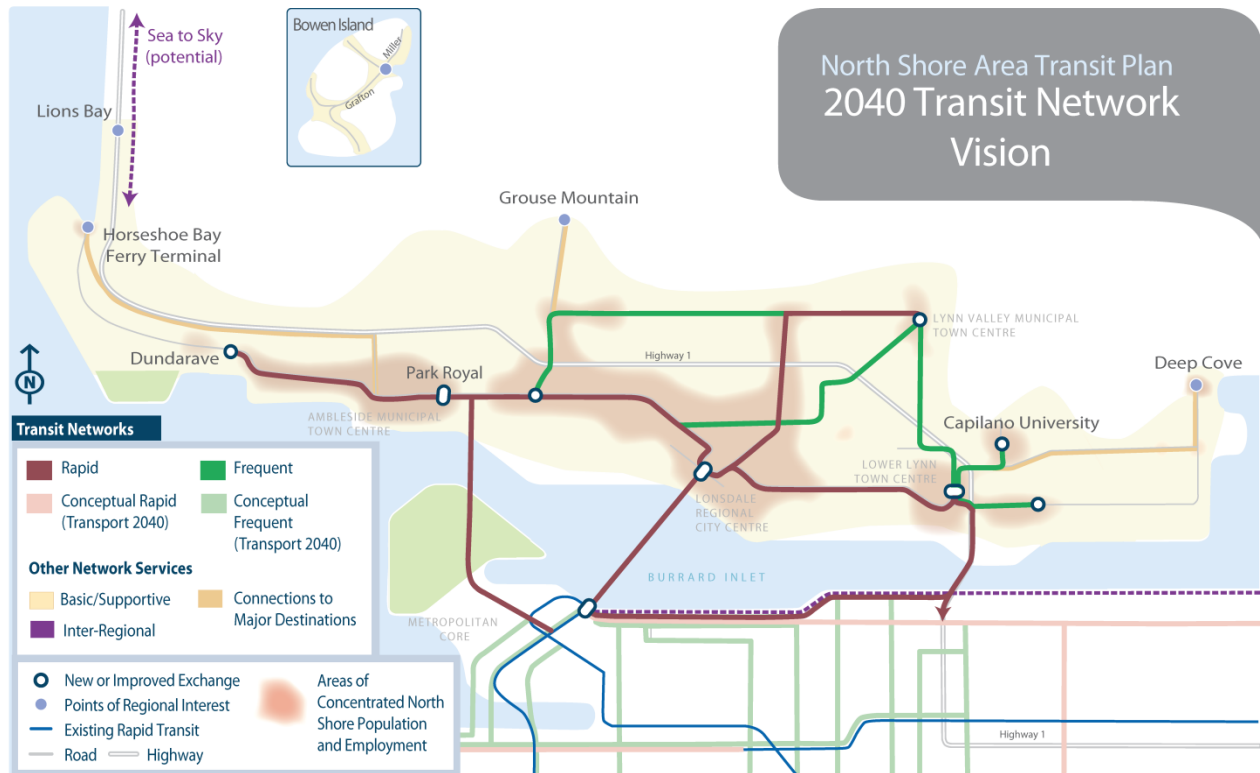
Customer perceptions about safety, accessibility and usefulness at exchanges are poor. Collaboration with municipalities is needed to improve the effectiveness of the exchanges, land use integration and the customer environment.

## **A TRANSPORTATION VISION FOR THE NORTH SHORE**

In Phase 2 of the area transit planning process, TransLink worked closely with North Shore communities to establish a long-term transit vision that aligns with expected growth on the North Shore, emerging travel patterns, and future land use plans (established in the Phase 1 analysis).

Several alternative network visions were considered. These were developed using insight and feedback from public stakeholders, project advisory committees, market research, transit operators, and an analysis of the existing North Shore transit network in Phase 1. The alternatives were analyzed to identify the type of network design best capable of achieving the greatest benefits in personal mobility, network productivity and financial resources, among other priorities

The North Shore Area Transit Plan 2040 Transit Network Vision is an integrated network of transit corridors, service types, and infrastructure investments (see the map below).



The network vision is designed to serve projected land use on the North Shore and achieve a 50 per cent increase in transit mode share for the entire North Shore by 2040. Today, trips by transit represent only 10 per cent of all trips taken; investment and realization of the long-term vision will increase to 15 per cent by 2040.

#### Highlights of the North Shore 2040 Transit Network Vision:

- **Expanded Frequent Transit Network (FTN)**, service every 15 minutes (or better) all day every day, in major corridors where population and employment growth and land use concentration are expected to be highest.
- **Faster** and **more reliable** service on major corridors will link key destinations and centres on and off the North Shore.
- Basic local connections to the FTN will provide **simple (legible) and effective service coverage**.
- Improved **transit exchanges** and facilities will integrate with surrounding urban design and land use to provide a high quality customer experience.
- **General service will be maintained** where growth and demand is expected to remain the same.

## **SUPPORTING LIVABLE, SUSTAINABLE NORTH SHORE COMMUNITIES**

The North Shore Transit Vision sets the foundation for identifying future transit service and infrastructure priorities. Working toward this vision will enable North Shore communities to achieve the following objectives:

1. Build transit-oriented communities by aligning the Frequent Transit Network with areas planned for concentrated growth and development.
2. Protect the environment by increasing transit mode share to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled and support provincial greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
3. Improve personal mobility through quality service that aligns with customers' needs.
4. Provide sustainable travel choices by providing opportunities to maintain or increase the share of trips made by walking, cycling and other supportive modes while minimizing single-occupant vehicle use.
5. Increase network productivity by allocating efficient and effective transit services that match anticipated demand.
6. Use financial resources wisely by maximizing cost-effective provision of transit vehicles and service hours.
7. Meet the travel needs and demands of North Shore residents, workers and visitors by maximizing utility of the transit service.

## **IDENTIFYING SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES**

In Phase 3 of the area transit planning process, North Shore communities identified the near-term transit service and infrastructure priorities that are the first steps toward realizing the long-term vision identified in Phase 2.

Implementation of these priorities will depend on funding availability through TransLink's Base and Supplemental Plans or through ongoing reallocation of existing service. Identifying priorities allows TransLink to be prepared for implementation of a range of service and infrastructure projects, and ready to move forward following regional decisions on funding.

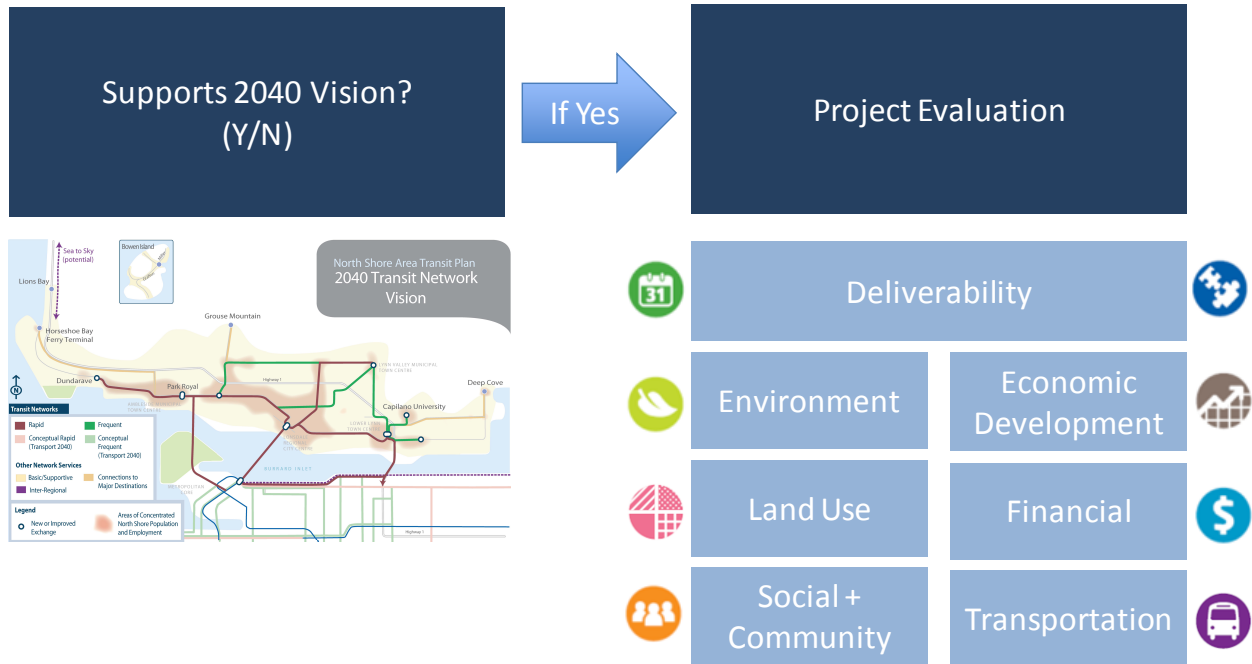
## **IDENTIFYING NEAR-TERM PROJECTS**

Potential projects were drawn from a variety of sources:

- The general public, via community consultation, online and telephone input;
- Stakeholders, via consultation workshops and on-line;
- Front-line operations staff;
- Technical and Public Advisory Committees; and
- Internal technical analysis, including revisions to projects based on public input.

All candidate projects were screened to determine support of the 2040 Transit Network Vision. Projects that support the vision aligned with planned growth and development patterns, helped to meet new

transit demands, maintained and grew transit markets, improved network simplicity and legibility, and supported inter-regional travel.



In the evaluation stage, seven separate evaluation accounts were identified that reflect TransLink’s strategic goals articulated in *Transport 2040* and other themes consistent with broader regional goals and commitments. These include:

**Deliverability:** The extent to which a project can be delivered and when, including the contribution of the concept to supporting regional and local land use & transportation plans.

**Economic Development:** The extent to which a project supports the economic needs of the region by minimizing impacts to goods movement and improving transit access to activity centres and tourist destinations.

**Environment:** The extent to which a project helps reduce vehicle emissions and preserve biodiversity.

**Financial:** The extent to which a project is cost-effective.

**Land Use:** The extent to which a project contributes to building complete, transit-oriented communities, and is supported by an appropriate level of density, diversity of uses, and destinations.

**Social and Community:** The extent to which a project provides safe, secure and accessible transit service while limiting negative impacts to the surrounding neighbourhood and community.

**Transportation:** The extent to which a project can be expected to grow transit use by providing reliable, attractive and integrated service.

## WHAT IS A PRIORITY?

When considering priority projects, two main streams were considered: significance (the anticipated benefits and impacts) and deliverability (the ease of implementation). The overall composite score for each project was divided into three levels of priority – high, medium, and low.

### Priority Definitions

Priority Level	Related Implementation
High	Implemented when funding allows
Medium	Implemented when funding allows and demand warrants
Low	Only considered if conditions change and funding allows

Identified high-priority North Shore transit projects will be submitted for consideration in regional implementation processes at the next available opportunity. High-priority service changes may also be submitted for consideration through other processes, including on-going network management initiatives such as service optimization, where possible and appropriate. Moderate priority projects may be considered as part of development of mid-to-long-term investment strategies to anticipate future land use patterns and development. Low-priority projects will only be considered when conditions (such as land use, population, transportation policies, or regional transportation priorities) change.

All TransLink planning and project implementation processes consider the regional significance of projects and investments when prioritizing investment decisions. While Area Transit Plans are an important input into regional decisions on transportation priorities, all local priorities are evaluated in the regional context. The timing and delivery of NSATP priorities will be contingent on regional funding priorities. On-going monitoring of the NSATP will track the implementation of the priorities toward the long-term vision as well as identifying the local land use conditions required to support realization of the vision.

## EVALUATED AND PRIORITIZED PROJECTS

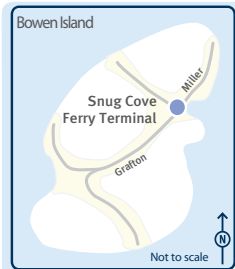
A total of 73 potential projects located across the North Shore were evaluated, including 58 service and 15 infrastructure projects. In total the NSATP identified 13 high-priority projects, 43 medium and 17 low. It should be noted that there are relationships between some projects, such that introduction of one project may affect the scoring and subsequent necessity of another. As high-priority projects are implemented, re-evaluation of related projects will be required. Also of note is that some projects were revised and re-evaluated following public consultation based on public acceptance and

As advances are made toward the North Shore 2040 Transit Network Vision, new and alternative near-term priorities will be identified through ongoing management of the transit network and future area transit plans.



suggestions for improvements. Other projects that formed part of TransLink's Base and Supplemental Plans during the ATP process, including frequency increases to SeaBus, were not included in the NSATP evaluation as it is assumed they are already in consideration for implementation when funding allows.

The 13 high-priority projects will be considered along with other regional priorities for implementation in the coming years as the region adopts existing and future Base and Supplemental Plans developed by TransLink, or through the ongoing Network Management Program. All projects identified as high priority help move the North Shore towards the 2040 Transit Network Vision, as illustrated in the following map.

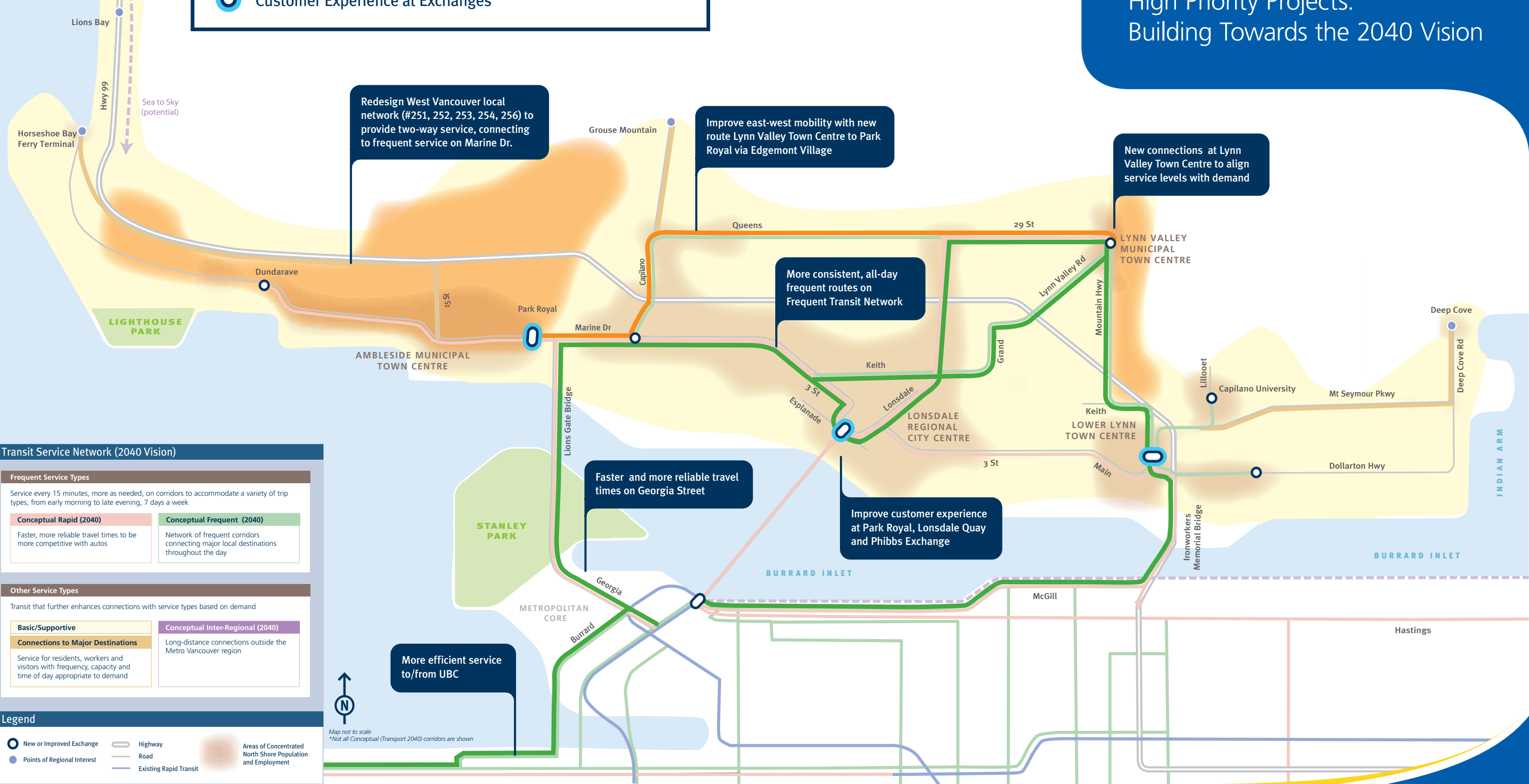


### High Priority Projects

- Strengthen the FTN
- Improve Internal Mobility
- Customer Experience at Exchanges

# North Shore Area Transit Plan Phase 3

## High Priority Projects: Building Towards the 2040 Vision



### Transit Service Network (2040 Vision)

Frequent Service Types	
Service every 15 minutes, more as needed, on corridors to accommodate a variety of trip types, from early morning to late evening, 7 days a week	
<b>Conceptual Rapid (2040)</b> Faster, more reliable travel times to be more competitive with autos	<b>Conceptual Frequent (2040)</b> Network of frequent corridors connecting major local destinations throughout the day
Other Service Types	
Transit that further enhances connections with service types based on demand	
<b>Basic/Supportive</b> <b>Connections to Major Destinations</b> Service for residents, workers and visitors with frequency, capacity and time of day appropriate to demand	<b>Conceptual Inter-Regional (2040)</b> Long-distance connections outside the Metro Vancouver region

### Legend

- New or Improved Exchange
- Points of Regional Interest
- Highway
- Road
- Existing Rapid Transit
- Areas of Concentrated North Shore Population and Employment

Map not to scale  
 \*Not all Conceptual (Transport 2040) corridors are shown

The high-priority projects are as follows:

- Redesigning Queens Rd, Mathers Ave services (#251, #252) to introduce two-way service
- Redesigning British Properties, Chartwell local services (#254, #256) to provide two-way service
- Redesigning Caulfeild Dr, Westmount Rd service (#253) to provide two-way service
- New service to connect Park Royal and Lynn Valley Town Centre via Capilano Rd, Queens Rd, 29th St
- Capacity and frequency increases on #230 and #240, discontinue #241
- Modifications to Lynn Valley local service (#229)
- Modifications to #258 to allow stops through Downtown Vancouver and 4th Ave
- New connections on N24 NightBus to Lynn Valley Town Centre
- Extend #240 service to Lynn Valley Town Centre
- Extended Georgia St transit priority lane hours, increases speed and reliability, to 7 p.m. daily
- Park Royal Exchange passenger and transit improvements
- Lonsdale Quay Exchange passenger and transit improvements
- Phibbs Exchange passenger and transit improvements

## **OTHER PROJECTS**

43 projects fall within the medium-priority band. They contribute toward the 2040 Transit Network Vision; however, they did not evaluate high enough to be considered a high enough priority to include in near-term plans. They will be monitored, and further considered as demand warrants. There is also some opportunity to consider advancing projects with relatively minor impacts through other implementation processes.

Projects evaluated as low priority will only be considered for implementation when conditions change. Changes in land use, population, employment, travel demand, or policy will be monitored to identify when low-priority projects may need to be re-evaluated.

## NEXT STEPS

The North Shore area transit planning process identified and prioritized over 70 service and infrastructure projects that will be considered for implementation. All 13 high-priority projects will be recommended for implementation in the near term when funding is available. Medium and low priorities will be considered based on demand and future conditions.

Ongoing work with partner municipalities will continue to support integrated land use and transportation planning, with the aim to continue development toward realizing the long-term vision and the near-term priorities. As the North Shore develops, both the long-term vision and the near-term priorities will be revisited to ensure land use and transportation is coordinated.

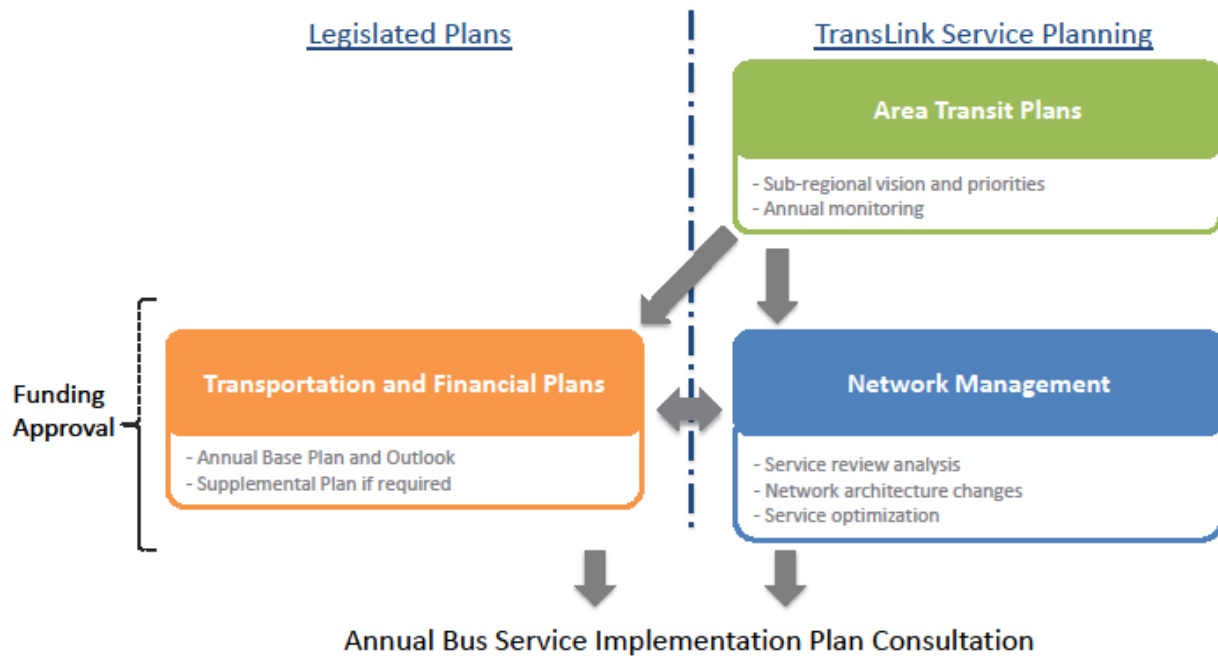
The planning process also identified two items that require future work.

1. North Shore rapid transit study: A number of rapid transit corridors were identified in the 2040 Transit Network Vision. Additional work is required to further develop the details of these corridors. Future rapid transit studies would need to be identified in updates to TransLink's 10-Year Transportation and Financial Plan and the regional transportation strategy, and the Regional Rapid Transit Network Strategy, which look at potential investments that involve significant capital.
2. Low-demand service strategy: There are areas on the North Shore that are currently served by conventional buses, but which have very low ridership. Future work would identify ways to effectively serve low-demand areas in a cost-efficient way. Appropriate processes for doing so include the upcoming update of the Regional Transportation Strategy.

Following the completion of an area transit plan, TransLink starts an ongoing "Phase 4". This includes annual monitoring and reporting. Based on availability of data, reporting is expected to include:

- Transit service performance
- Land use changes
- Priority implementation and other service or infrastructure changes
- Regional trip and travel demand

The following illustrates the general process for implementation of ATP priorities, including opportunities for additional public consultation.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The North Shore area transit planning process has been guided by a committed group of people invested in the future of transportation on the North Shore. The following people should be acknowledged for their input at various phases of the plan:

## Executive Advisory Committee

Kathy Lalonde	Bowen Island Municipality
Brent Mahood	Bowen Island Municipality
Ken Tollstam	City of North Vancouver
David Stuart	District of North Vancouver
Grant McRadu	District of West Vancouver
Rory Mandryk	Municipality of the Village of Lions Bay
Anne-Marie Koiner	Municipality of the Village of Lions Bay
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**Technical Advisory Committee continued...**

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Kamala Rao	TransLink Roads
Lyle Walker	TransLink Transportation & Land Use
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George Hill	Youth Representative
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Pam Best	North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
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