



Vancouver Regional
Rapid Transit Project

QUARTERLY

Winter 1986

No. 8



COMMENT

SkyTrain: A flying start

Ever since British Columbia Premier Bill Bennett proudly announced the opening of SkyTrain, Vancouver's Regional Rapid Transit System on a sunny December 11th 1985, the colorful red, white and blue trains have out-performed all predictions.

During eight "free-ride" days, people flocked from far and wide to ride the 22 kilometre automated rapid transit linking Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster. Trains were filled to beyond design capacity with people trying out the new system. Lineups, sometimes three blocks long, were seen at some stations. During these special days, the fledgling service carried 60,000 people during a nine-hour day. Rapid Transit staff and train controllers gained valuable experience.

On January 3rd, 1986, Skytrain went into revenue service providing four-car trains every four minutes during rush-hour and every five minutes during off-peak hours. Service was an ambitious 19 hours a day, Mondays through Saturdays, and a limited six hour service on Sundays. A limited bus and trolley integration was offered.

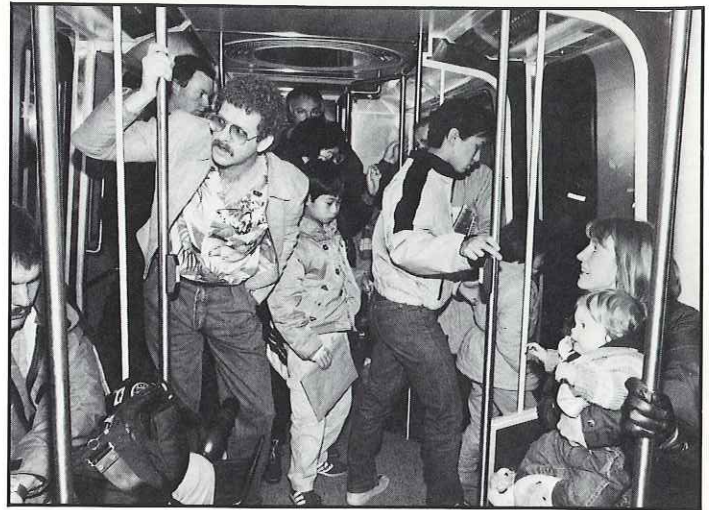
From Day One, ridership figures quickly overtook projections. During the first week SkyTrain handled 40,000 a day during the week, and by the end of the first month this had risen to 50,000 a day.

The major surprise came on Saturdays. Most transit operations experience a drop in Saturday ridership: SkyTrain not only maintained weekday averages but jumped to a steady 70,000 on Saturdays.

B.C. Transit statisticians also noticed other important changes. SeaBus, the cross-harbour ferry linking North Vancouver with downtown Vancouver and SkyTrain experienced a jump in weekday ridership, with a massive 200 per cent increase on Saturdays and Sundays. The initial bus integration, basically an extension of existing routes, provided two-way service to many stations. Transit statisticians noticed various changes in commuter habits, duly noted and these will be accommodated in the general transit integration plan scheduled for March 7th, 1986.

The first year design capacity for SkyTrain is about 100,000 commuters a day, but this is likely to be exceeded by the demands created by Expo 86 taking place from May to October. Transit planners say it will be 1987 — the system's first "normal" operating year that good, meaningful ridership statistics can be obtained.

Meanwhile, SkyTrain continues to dominate the Lower Mainland's skyline, providing fast, comfortable service.



Skytrain riders pictured above and below were among hundreds of thousands of Greater Vancouver residents who braved chill weather and long lineups to take advantage of free rides offered before revenue SkyTrain service began Jan. 3.



QUARTERLY

The Vancouver Regional Rapid Transit system is a project of the Government of British Columbia, under the responsibility of the Provincial Secretary, Hon. Grace M. McCarthy.

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**BC
Transit**

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SkyTrain gets a triple launch

SkyTrain was up and running, carrying upwards of 50,000 passengers a day, following the official opening Dec. 11 by Premier Bill Bennett of Canada's newest rapid transit line.

"Today is just the first of a lot of exciting things. All British Columbians take pride in what we are opening today," the premier told several hundred invited guests gathered at Waterfront Station, the downtown Vancouver terminus of SkyTrain.

When millions of visitors arrive for Expo 86 later this year, "they will see the future of transportation in SkyTrain." The premier said there should be a bright future in Canada for exports of SkyTrain technology, using the special expertise developed in B.C.

He praised the 5,000 men and women who worked together to build the project, noting that only a single day's work was lost due to disputes. From contract signing in May, 1981 to the December, 1985 inauguration, the SkyTrain system was planned, engineered, built and tested in just 4½ years, under a fast-tracked system of project management which shaved more than a year off conventional construction schedules.

Even as SkyTrain's first-phase line, stretching 22 kilometres from downtown Vancouver to New Westminster on the banks of the Fraser River, went into service, the premier said he looked forward to extensions of the system to the suburbs of Surrey, Coquitlam, Richmond and Delta to the east and south of the main line. And he joked about a line to his hometown of Kelowna in the Okanagan.

At the opening ceremonies, representatives of three levels of government helped christen Vancouver's brand new advanced light rapid transit system. Present were mayors of the three Lower Mainland municipalities served by the new system and Premier David Peterson of Ontario, whose provincially-owned Urban Transportation Development Corp. originated the ALRT technology.

Federal Fisheries Minister Tom Siddon represented Ottawa, which contributed \$60 million in 1982 towards the \$854 million project. Provincial Secretary Grace McCarthy, who is the B.C. cabinet minister responsible for SkyTrain and BC Transit, and several provincial ministers and MLAs representing Vancouver-area constituencies took part in a morning-long trio of ceremonies which travelled via SkyTrain from downtown Vancouver to Metrotown in the heart of Burnaby and on to New Westminster Station, the eastern terminus of the line.

Premier Peterson said the SkyTrain project was "a triumph of technology, a triumph of interprovincial co-operation, a triumph of political leadership. When British Columbia is enhanced as it is today, then all of Canada shares in that glory."

"It is world class in size and quality. This will be the first of many projects like this around the world."



Premier Bill Bennett spoke at official opening ceremonies for SkyTrain, held at the CPR station at the foot of Granville Street, where a century ago the first transcontinental railway passenger train arrived. Today it is also a transit terminal for BC Transit buses, SeaBus and now SkyTrain.

Mrs. McCarthy said the start of SkyTrain service was "just the beginning of an eventful year." The system will speed millions of people from Expo 86 to New Westminster.

Following the speeches, Premier Bennett led the guests downstairs to Waterfront Station platform, where he radioed for the first train. After it broke through a multi-coloured barrier of wide ribbons, all rode the first SkyTrain out to Metrotown Station in Burnaby, where Mayor Bill Lewarne, the premier, Mrs. McCarthy and Consumer Affairs Minister Elwood Veitch spoke at a second ceremony.

Then the train carried everyone on to SkyTrain's New Westminster terminus for the finale. Mayor Tom Baker told the crowd of several hundred gathered at the outdoor site beside the station: "SkyTrain is playing a vital role in the rejuvenation of New Westminster. It provides a new exciting transportation route into the Royal City."

After the formalities, SkyTrain was turned over to the people. Rides were free the rest of the day and for eight more days during the

holiday period. An estimated 450,000 Lower Mainland residents tried out SkyTrain on the free days before and after Christmas.

Regular operations started before dawn, at 5:20 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 3 when the first train of what is termed revenue service left New Westminster Station for downtown Vancouver. The first paying customer appears to have been New Westminster resident Don Blake, who got up at 3:30 a.m. to be first at the station. Within three weeks, SkyTrain had recorded its first million passengers, carrying 45-50,000 passengers on weekdays, considerably higher than the projected figure of 40,000. Saturday ridership has averaged 70,000 — nearly twice what was expected.

Its fast, automated service — 27 minutes from downtown to New Westminster, about half the travelling time by bus — has helped SkyTrain lure drivers out of their cars and onto public transit.

"I used to drive to work all the way from Port Coquitlam, but no more," salesman Joe DaSilva told the *Vancouver Sun*. "This is how I'm getting back and forth from now on. I arrive at work refreshed. You can't beat it."

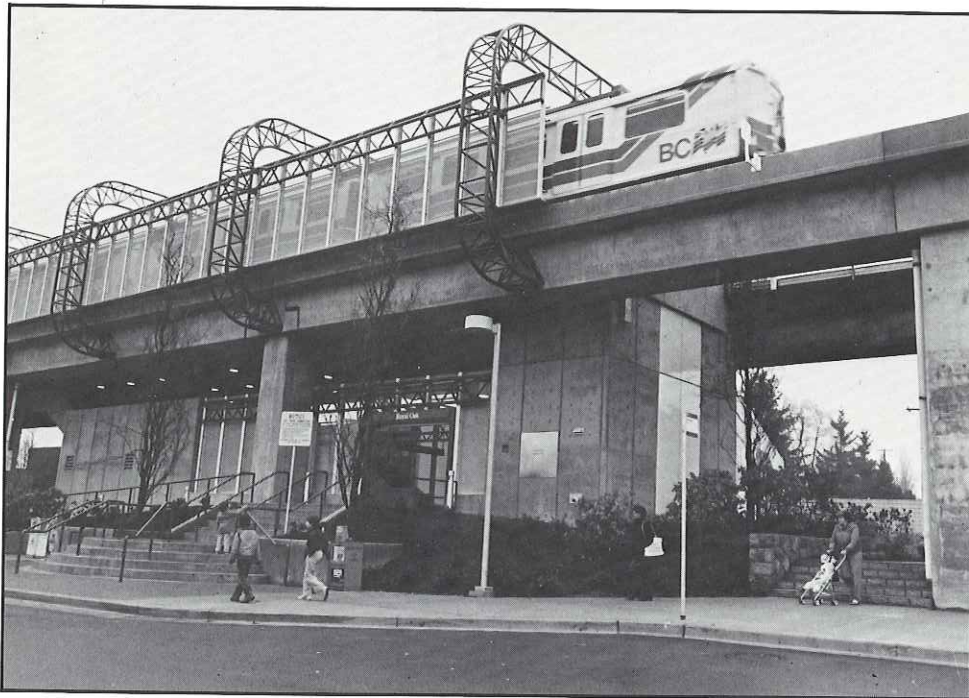


Provincial Secretary Grace McCarthy and Premier Bill Bennett flank Ontario Premier David Peterson during his address to a 500-person audience at a dinner given by the Urban Transportation Development Corporation of Ontario on the eve of SkyTrain's Dec. 11 inauguration. Posing below at the Hyatt Regency dinner (from left) were SkyTrain operating company manager John Mandelli, Rapid Transit Project Deputy Administrator Tom Parkinson, UTDC President Kirk Foley, BC Transit Chief Executive Officer Stu Hodgson, Rapid Transit Project Administrator Mike O'Connor and The Hon. Grace McCarthy, Minister Responsible for BC Transit.

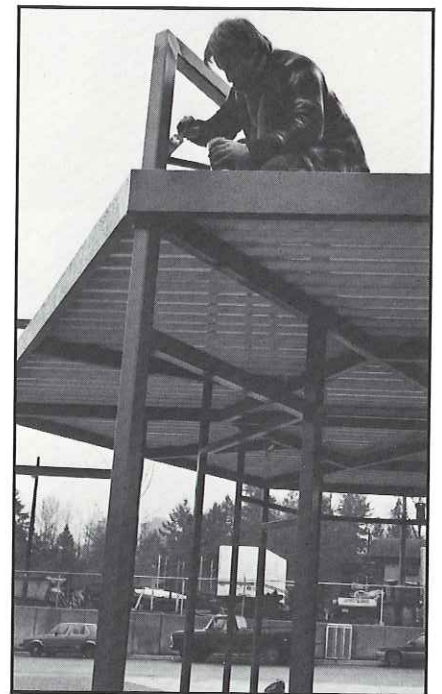


Fisheries Minister Tom Siddon, Provincial Secretary Grace McCarthy, Ontario Premier David Peterson and British Columbia Premier Bill Bennett ride the inaugural SkyTrain to New Westminster during opening

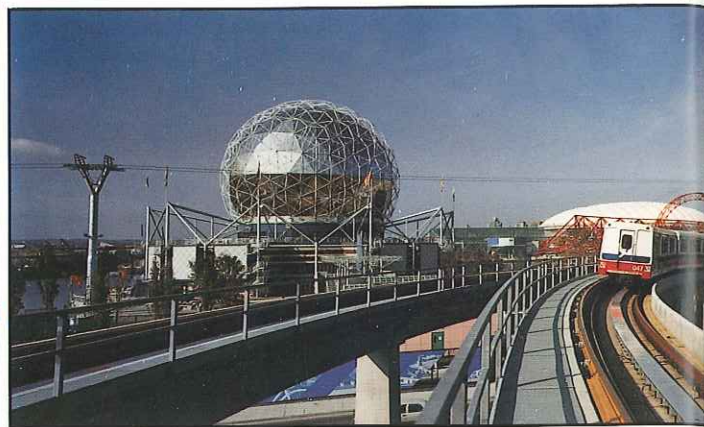
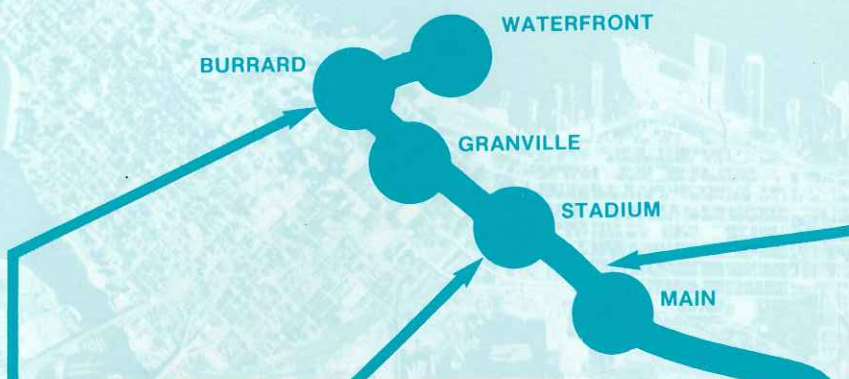
day ceremonies under watchful eye of Rapid Transit Attendants Susan Morgan and Lyanne Smith.



SkyTrain leaves Royal Oak Station in Burnaby on first day of service.



Day One finishing touches.



Gleaming new SkyTrain — part of the city and Expo, too!



Pulling into Stadium Station.
— Province photo by Colin Savage



End-car viewing.

BROADWAY



Ad panels along SkyTrain

NANAIMO

29th AVENUE



Yule lights lit trees in park surrounding Burrard Station.

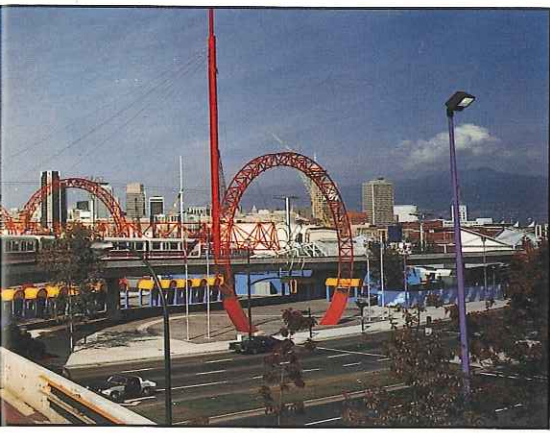


UBC bus meets four-coach SkyTrain at Nanaimo Station.



Skyscrapers sprouting at Metrotown.

Up and running



path.



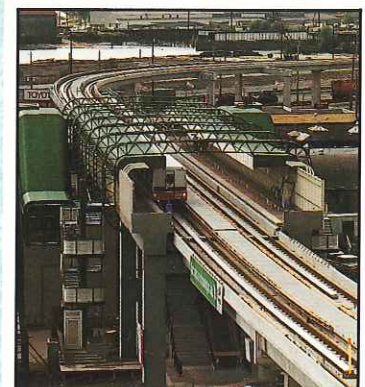
Ticket purchasers at Patterson.



SkyTrain service check.



Edmonds Stn. bus loop.



— Courtesy Reid Crowther & Partners Ltd.
Riverfront New Westminster.



An RTA explains fares.



PATTERSON

METROTOWN

ROYAL OAK

EDMONDS

Vehicle Control
Maintenance Centre

NEW
WESTMINSTER

22nd STREET



— Photo by Ric Ernst

Premier Bill Bennett and his wife Audrey were at the centre of throngs turning out in Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster for SkyTrain launch.



Burnaby Mayor Bill Lewarne greets Premier Bill Bennett, Consumer Affairs Minister Elwood Veitch, Fisheries Minister Tom Siddon, Ontario Premier David Peterson, Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt and Provincial Secretary Grace McCarthy at Metrotown Station.

Gradual integration with buses

The bus system will be gradually integrated with SkyTrain to make the transition period convenient for regular riders of the Vancouver Regional Transit System.

When SkyTrain opened for revenue service Jan. 3, only a limited number of bus routes were changed to connect at SkyTrain stations.

"More extensive changes to bus routes will be made in March, when members of the travelling public have had time to adjust to the SkyTrain schedule," says Grace McCarthy, minister responsible for BC Transit.

"In keeping the bus service essentially the same on Jan. 3 as it was on Jan. 2, we are assured a smooth introduction of SkyTrain revenue service and an orderly transition from a bus and SeaBus transit system to an integrated bus, SeaBus and SkyTrain system," she says.

The existing bus system already connects at most of the 15 rapid transit stations "and this gradual change will minimize inconvenience to the travelling public as the transition occurs."

Time capsule commemorates the 5,000 who built SkyTrain

From Carole A'Hearn to Brenda Zysman, the names of the 5,000 people who built Vancouver's SkyTrain have gone into a time capsule at New Westminster Station to be opened in the year 2085.

A letter from Premier Bill Bennett to British Columbians who will open the capsule a century from now says the inauguration of SkyTrain is "a milestone as important as the arrival in 1885 of the first transcontinental passenger train in British Columbia.

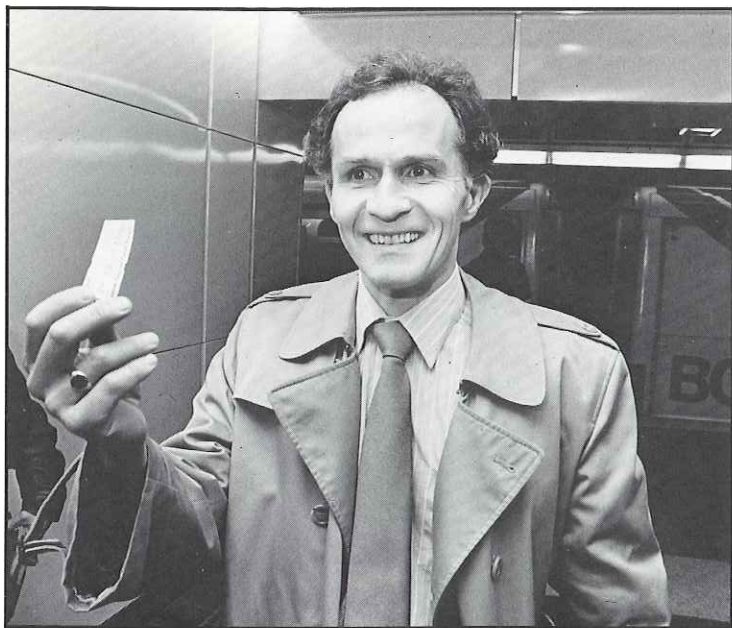
"The documents which accompany this letter in the time capsule are the essential records relating to the design and construction of SkyTrain and represent the creative efforts of thousands of British Columbian and Canadian architects, engineers, construction workers, planners and designers.

"Together, we have shown the world what imagination and determination can achieve."

Also placed in the stainless time capsule were the opening day commemorative editions of the *Vancouver Sun* and *Province*, which contained special SkyTrain supplements, a copy of the rapid transit film, *Going to Town*, a filmed message from Grace M. McCarthy, minister responsible for the project, one of the invitations to the SkyTrain opening ceremonies, and a copy of each of the seven quarterly reports of the *Rapid Transit Project*.



Premier Bill Bennett seals commemorative time capsule as Ontario Premier David Peterson and New Westminster Mayor Tom Baker look on.



— Kent Kallberg photo

One-Millionth paying SkyTrain rider in January was Steve Bridger of Richmond who stepped into glare of television lights as he left SkyTrain at Burrard Station. Steve's car had broken down and the tow truck driver dropped him off at Main Street Station for the ride to Royal Centre.



Brass band greeted VIP riders disembarking inaugural SkyTrain for ceremony at New Westminster December 11.



— Kent Kallberg photo



— Kent Kallberg photo

Moving with Mickey

The first of many heads of state to ride SkyTrain during its inaugural year and Expo 86 was none other than Mickey Mouse, who brought greetings from the Fantasyland in the kingdom of Disneyland in January. Although he was given V.I.M. (Very Important Mouse) treatment by scores of youngsters when he came down the stairs into Burrard Station (left), Mickey was just on his way to work at The Bay during a week-long Salute to Disney promotion held at the department store — directly accessible from SkyTrain's Granville Station.

Above, Mickey clutches his SkyTrain ticket while waiting on the platform for SkyTrain — whose older passengers, below, give him a mixture of shy and appreciative glances.

The two underground stations are incorporated with the 1.4-kilometre Dunsmuir Tunnel, built in 1932 to handle heavy rail traffic, and turned over for upgrading to rapid transit use in 1982.



Next stops: Surrey, Coquitlam

After New Westminster, where will SkyTrain go next?

Work has already begun on a six-kilometre extension to Surrey of the 22-kilometre phase one line from Vancouver.

Test piles for the transit-only bridge to be built across the Fraser River have been driven at the site of the bridge towers, and the construction contract is to be awarded this spring.

Construction of the bridge is to start in the fall, with completion of the Surrey line anticipated in 1989.

Premier Bill Bennett last fall gave the green light for a \$3 million engineering study into the feasibility of extending SkyTrain six kilometres into Coquitlam.

He told the Coquitlam Chamber of Commerce that if the decision to proceed with construction is made, it shouldn't take long to build the line. "Coquitlam is an area that should be considered early," he said.

Meanwhile, until the extensions are designed and built, Surrey and Coquitlam residents will get special park and ride bus service to the New Westminster Station, terminus of the SkyTrain line.

The Surrey park and ride lot is opening soon, at Scott Road and King George Highway, site of a future station on the SkyTrain line.

Two lots with room for up to 1,000 cars will be built at the Coquitlam Centre and the Brunette interchange on the Trans-Canada Highway, a \$5 million project.

The four-kilometre Phase Two extension of SkyTrain from New Westminster to Scott Road in Surrey will cost some \$170 million, and will involve some 3,000 workers.

The extension's most major impact will be easing of congestion on the Surrey side of the Fraser River.



Surrey MLA Rita Johnson and Surrey Mayor Don Ross attended the official opening of SkyTrain in New Westminster. The two representatives said they look forward to SkyTrain service across the Fraser.



— Coquitlam News photo by Craig Hodge

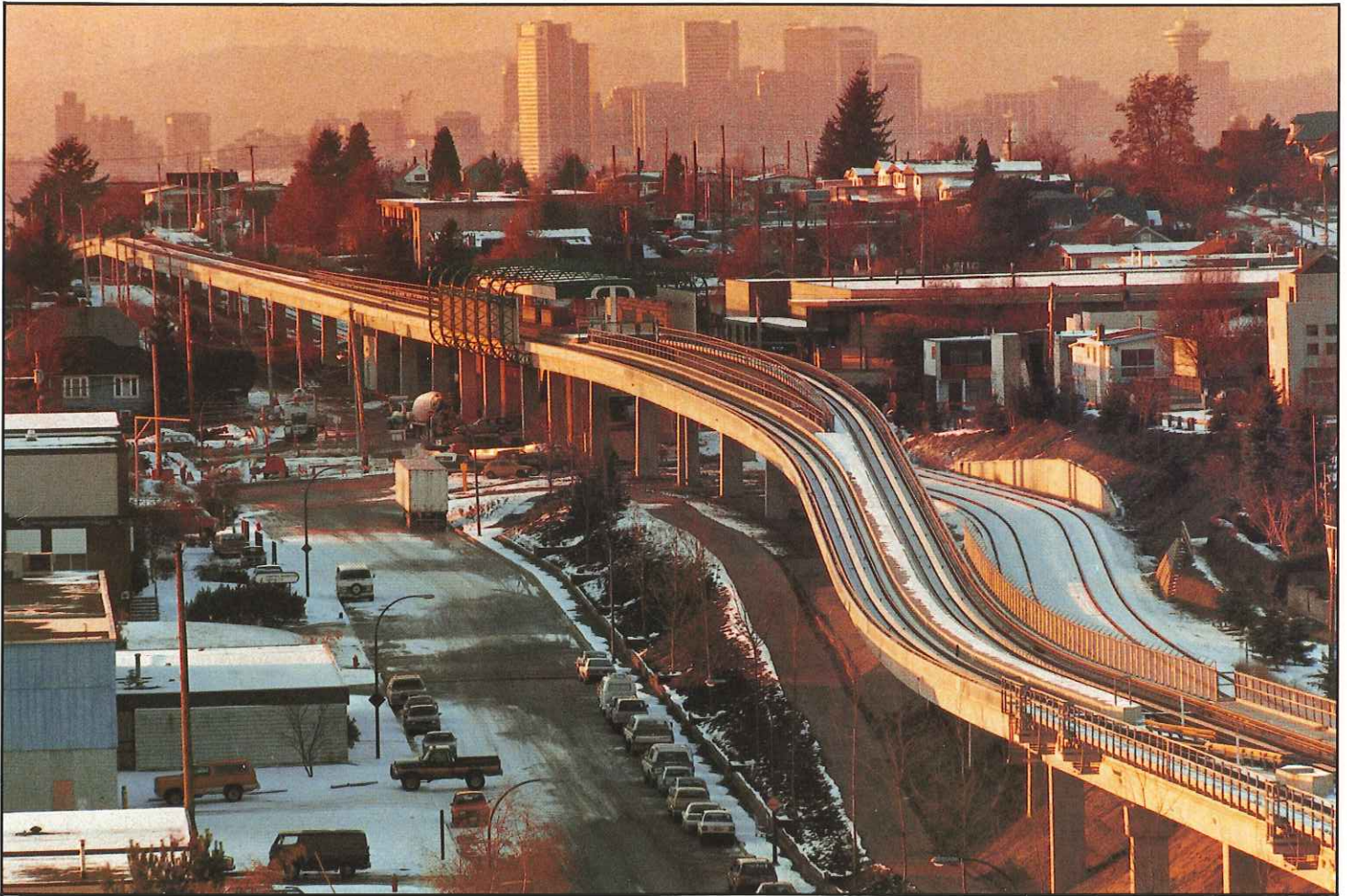
Pitt Meadows Mayor Danny Sharpe and Port Moody Mayor Dave Driscoll joined fellow civic leaders from the Lower Mainland at the Dec. 11 SkyTrain opening and inaugural train ride.

Ride for Rick

Riders on B.C.'s new SkyTrain had a chance to *Take a Ride with Rick* on Friday, Dec. 20.

Grace McCarthy, the minister responsible for B.C. Transit, proclaimed that day as Rick Hansen Day on the SkyTrain. It was the provincial government's way of wishing Hansen a Merry Christmas and saluting him as he headed to Australia and New Zealand for the next big phase of round-the-world wheelchair marathon.

Dec. 20 was the final 'free-ride' day on the SkyTrain. And Man in Motion volunteers were at all 15 SkyTrain stations collecting donations for Hansen's fund for spinal injury research.



— Province photo by Colin Savage

Vancouver skyline forms a distant silhouette as January sunshine is replaced by wintry haze in this SkyTrain guideway photo taken from

B.C. Tel headquarters at Boundary and Kingsway.

SkyTrain leaves Vancouver skyline behind as it heads for Burnaby and New Westminster. During the first two months of revenue service, trains operating every four minutes in rush hour, carried over 50,000 a day.



Community Relations Manager Lorne O'Connor talks to one of many residents living along the 22-kilometre SkyTrain guideway.

