

# Our transit gets rave reviews worldwide

During the Olympic Games, all eyes were on our beautiful city and our transit system. Here are a few of our favourite quotes from the media.

The city of Vancouver and the ski village of Whistler are terrific hosts for these Olympic Games. The air is clean, the public transit is scarily efficient, and the harbors, with snowcapped mountains for a backdrop, are picturesque.

— *Time Magazine*

This well-planned city seemed more than able to handle the crowds. That's mostly thanks to a transit system that seems futuristic to U.S. residents, even though it has been part of daily life for thousands of Vancouverites since just before Expo 86.

— *The Bellingham Herald*

Trains and buses steal gold for Vancouver – Vancouver's driverless trains have been steady winners at the Winter Olympics during which passengers have poured on to a transit system that has stretched way beyond expected capacity but not snapped.

— *Reuters news agency*

## Travel tips for the Paralympics

The Paralympic Winter Games run from March 12 to 21, and you're encouraged to 'travel smart' during this period.

Leave your vehicle behind and bike, walk, or take transit—visit [travelsmart2010.ca](http://travelsmart2010.ca) for information on transportation changes and options to help you get around!

Just like the Olympic Games, a Paralympic Games event ticket will act as a transit pass for the day. And while transit service levels will return to normal levels and hours of operation on March 1, we will have extra capacity and event-level service available as needed.

Remember, while most road networks have returned to normal, closures and parking restrictions remain around Paralympic venues until the end of March. In Metro Vancouver, these areas include UBC Thunderbird Arena, the Vancouver Paralympic Centre (Hillcrest), Paralympic Village Vancouver and BC Place (for the March 12 Opening Ceremony).

## The Buzzer's contest corner!

**MAY FARECARD WINNER** We had 1,135 eligible entries and **Igor N.** won the FareCard. The answer? The Buzzer publication is 93 years old!



**WIN A FREE FARECARD!** It will be for 1, 2, or 3 zones, based on where the winner travels. Send an e-mail to [thebuzzer@translink.ca](mailto:thebuzzer@translink.ca) with the answer to the question below, your full name, daytime phone number, and where you got the Buzzer (include the route number if you got it on a bus). Make sure you include everything—entries missing any of this info will not be entered to win! One entry per person, please.

**How many requests did TransLink's online Trip Planner handle on Saturday, Feb. 20? (Hint: it's in this issue!)**

Enter by **Fri. March 26 at 9 a.m.**; we'll draw a name from all eligible entries if more than one is right. See who won in the **April** issue!

**PRIVACY POLICY** We use your personal info only for the contest and delete entries after we pick a winner. Here's the long version though: *Your personal information is being collected, pursuant to section 26(c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, solely for the purpose of administering this contest; it will be destroyed upon the determination of a contest winner. Please direct any questions regarding this collection to the Buzzer Editor at TransLink, 1600-4720 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2, or [thebuzzer@translink.ca](mailto:thebuzzer@translink.ca).*

## BACK ISSUES

The Buzzer has been published since June 2, 1916! So in this section we mine through our back issues for nuggets of transit history. Huzzah!

**1953** The September 11, 1953 Buzzer wrote about 'Mystery Trips' offered by Pacific Stage Lines.

*Those popular Mystery Trips are back again, come Sunday! Perhaps you recall how they work: Your Pacific Stage Lines driver gets sealed orders, to be unfolded "chapter by chapter" as the bus rolls along... and you and the other passengers have the fun, from the various clues you can gather, of guessing what the destination will be.*

*Whether you dope the thing out right or not, you're sure of getting four hours of pleasant riding through the beautiful highways and byways near the city—perhaps up the Valley, maybe on the North Shore, or wherever.*

*And the cost is most reasonable: \$2 for adults, half fare for children. Come along and be mystified... you'll enjoy it!*



## FREE PARALYMPIC EVENTS

The following celebration sites, pavilions and activities will remain open during the Paralympic Games from March 12 to 21—check them out, and keep the excitement going!

### City-Sponsored Celebration Sites

- ✓ **LiveCity Downtown** at Georgia and Beatty will feature local, Canadian and international performing artists; special appearances by Olympians and Paralympians; plus a giant screen showing Paralympic events and highlights.
- ✓ **Robson Square GE Ice Plaza** offers skating on Vancouver's only outdoor rink; multimedia displays and live television broadcasts.

### Pavilions and More

- ✓ **BC Hydro Power Smart Village** at Dunsmuir & Hamilton. Tour an energy-efficient home of the future, or join the cheering as Games events are broadcast live on a 65-inch energy-efficient TV.
- ✓ **British Columbia Pavilion** located in the Art Gallery of Georgia and Howe.
- ✓ **Canada's Northern House** (Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon) at Hastings & Seymour (until April 17).
- ✓ **Canada Pavilion** at the LiveCity Downtown site (re-opens March 18).
- ✓ **CentrePlace Manitoba** at the LiveCity Downtown site (re-opens March 18).
- ✓ **PRIDE House Vancouver** located at 1170 Bute Street.
- ✓ **Royal Canadian Mint Pavilion** provides an up-close view of the medals for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.
- ✓ **Vancouver 2010 Olympic Line Demonstration Streetcar** will continue to run until the end of the Paralympic Games and is fully accessible. Catch it at Olympic Village Station or Granville Island.
- ✓ **ZipTrek Vancouver** will continue to offer free zipline rides over the downtown core! Start at the law courts at Robson Square, and you'll zip 170 metres across Robson Street.

### And a few non-Paralympic events....

- ✓ **MEC Bike Maintenance Workshops.** Learn to change a tire, fix a broken chain, adjust brake pads, or true a wheel. Free event, pre-registration suggested. March 11 & 25, 6-8 pm. Info at [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca)
- ✓ Need help with public speaking? Join **ClubMet Toastmasters** every second Thursday at Metrotower II in Burnaby, 21st floor at noon. Next meeting is March 18!

Send your community events to [thebuzzer@translink.ca](mailto:thebuzzer@translink.ca)

## Win a free FareCard!



# BUZZER

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## In this issue...

- » All about our Olympic service experience!
- » Rave reviews from customers & the media

Visit the Buzzer blog at [buzzer.translink.ca](http://buzzer.translink.ca)



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# How we planned transit for the Games

We knew long ago that the 2010 Winter Olympics would be the biggest challenge ever for our transportation system.

"It's like having three Superbowls a day for 17 days," said **Mike Madill**, vice-president of Olympic Transportation at TransLink.

So for over two years, Mike and the 11-member Olympic transportation team focused on those 17 days of events, planning our strategy to serve customers and the demand of the Games.

They worked with our subsidiaries to provide extra service hours, and ensured that our system could carry high volumes.

New vehicles were ordered to arrive for the Games, including 48 new SkyTrain cars on the Expo and Millennium Lines. Older buses were held back from retirement to handle increased loads.

Detailed planning work was involved—like predicting passenger volumes, finding where to store extra buses, and coordinating our routes with Olympic road closures.

The team also worked on reducing car travel by locals in downtown Vancouver, since visitors would boost traffic in the already-busy area. Over 700 businesses were contacted about the traffic challenge, and many pledged to use travel alternatives.

On top of this, TransLink created a transit host program, where 200 staff from TransLink and its subsidiaries helped customers at major transit hubs for the Games. And members of the Olympic team even visited the Beijing Olympics and the Obama inauguration to research crowd transport.

All this work, plus the huge efforts of all our staff, helped us get through the Games successfully! Thanks so much!



## TRANSLINK'S ROLE IN THE OLYMPICS

1. Providing public transit in Metro Vancouver for spectators and the Olympic workforce, plus our existing customers
2. Leading regional initiatives to encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles
3. Co-leading the Transportation Management Centre with VANOC, which connected operation centres of regional transportation partners to ensure smooth Games travel
4. Transit queue management

# Tidbits from our Olympic experience

Everyone at TransLink and its family of companies were involved in the Games—and here are a few stories from our experience! (Visit the Buzzer blog at [buzzer.translink.ca](http://buzzer.translink.ca) for even more stories!)



**Marco**, a transit host at Broadway-City Hall Station, helps a salmon find his way!



Thousands rode the extra West Coast Express Olympic trips!



**Lisa**, a SkyTrain Attendant at Stadium-Chinatown Station, said the Buzzer's free event list really helped people out!



Here's **Elain** helping a rider at Yaletown-Roundhouse Station. She also helped out **Elvis Stojko** on opening day!



**Mechanics Curtis, Marie, and Omar** helped keep our bus fleet in tip top shape!



**Kevin, Gord, and Shawn** from the Road Services division helped fix buses out on the road.



A lineup for the Canada Line at Waterfront Station on Wednesday February 17!



**Michael** repairs part of the SkyTrain tracks during overnight maintenance.



Here's **HandyDART** operator **Dave**! HandyDART had 1,000 bookings for trips to Olympic venues from customers with mobility issues.

## Ridership soars during the Olympic period

Our transit system had a whopping 1.6 million daily riders during the Olympics—that's double our normal daily ridership!

After the first week of the Games, these were the preliminary daily averages for each of our services:

- » **Buses** were up 34%, carrying 975,000 daily riders
- » **SeaBus** was up 200% carrying 48,000 daily riders
- » **West Coast Express** had 19,538 riders, 78% more than Feb 2009
- » **Expo/Millennium Line** was up 54% to 369,700, including a single-day record of 488,000 on Sunday Feb. 14, when the normal Sunday average is around 150,000
- » **Canada Line** averaged over 207,000 per day (in the 28-day period ending Jan. 28, its ridership averaged just under 94,000)

Our online Trip Planner also saw 51,070 online requests on Saturday, Feb. 20. And our Customer Information call centre received a record number of inquiries on the same day: over 8,258 calls, plus 12,882 answered by the Interactive Voice Response system!

# Thanks for all your great compliments!

Our customer service call centre was very busy over the Olympic period, handling 25 to 30 per cent more calls every day. Plus on Sunday, February 21, they found they recorded more commendations than complaints! Here's a sample of what they heard.

*I am an out of town visitor and I have never been to Canada before. Your driver was so helpful and explained how your transit system works. We were impressed by how courteous, helpful and patient they were. We had a very positive experience. You made us feel welcome.*

*Our operator was just like a tour guide, advising everyone of tourist attractions along the way. He went out of his way to help riders. Thanks for the great trip.*

*This was the best bus ride I've ever had!*

*West Coast Express and SkyTrain were great transit experiences for those of use who rarely use transit. On-time performance, minimal waits and friendly staff. Great Olympic experience!!*

*Customer Information was commendable. Clerks were good and pleasant. The information was great!*

*Thank you for providing an excellent service during the Olympics. All of the attendants and security personnel are visible making me feel very safe. Thank you to all your workers, personnel and management for the great work.*

*The increase in service is appreciated and the staff availability at the stations is wonderful. TransLink has done a terrific job for the Olympics!*

## Good Friday & Easter Monday service

Don't forget the Easter weekend holiday service! On **Good Friday, April 2**, transit runs on a holiday service, and you pay a single-zone fare to travel in all zones all day. On **Easter Monday, April 5**, we're back to regular service and fares.