



TransLink launches HandyDART Modernization Program

TransLink seeks feedback on Compass rollout, changes to fares, and registration process

March 29, 2021

NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C. – TransLink is launching the HandyDART Modernization Program, a package of updates designed to ensure the service remains accessible and flexible for those who need it now and in the future. The program represents one of the biggest customer improvements to HandyDART since its inception in 1980 and will prepare the region as Metro Vancouver’s population continues to grow and get older.

Between March 29 and April 25, TransLink is seeking feedback from current and future HandyDART customers, caregivers, family members, service providers, and accessibility champions on the following:

- **Bringing Compass to HandyDART**
Compass will launch for HandyDART customers this fall to provide more convenient payment options. With Compass and Tap to Pay, it will be easier for customers to access both HandyDART and conventional transit.
- **Potential changes to fares**
TransLink is seeking feedback on new fares that would decrease the amount paid by approximately 70 per cent of HandyDART users while keeping fares the same for the remaining 30 per cent. This would allow customers aged under 18 and over 65 to pay concession rates to better match fares on conventional transit. For example, under today’s fares, a HandyDART customer over the age of 65 would pay \$1.95 instead of the \$3 they are currently paying with cash.
- **Potential new registration process**
TransLink is seeking feedback on a potential new registration process to better support customers. This would include a personal consultation with a healthcare professional who can match customers with the transit services that best meet their needs. The new process may include a combination of in-person, virtual, or phone consultation, with interview or mobility assessment components.

While Compass has been confirmed for HandyDART, feedback from the engagement will inform how TransLink rolls out the feature. The engagement will also shape the potential changes to fares and registration process, which will require TransLink Board approval. If approved, the new fare structure would be timed with the rollout of Compass in fall 2021 and the new registration process would be implemented in 2023.

The HandyDART Modernization Program is also committed to introducing an online booking system to supplement the existing phone booking system. This new booking option will go online in the next year and will not be included in the engagement process.



MEDIA RELEASE

The program builds upon the recommendations of the [2017 Custom Transit Service Delivery Review](#) and is a continuation of TransLink's ongoing efforts to improve HandyDART service.

Quick Facts:

- HandyDART is currently delivering trips at approximately 40% of pre-pandemic ridership.
- TransLink's latest projections predict a 30% increase in HandyDART trip demand over the next decade, compared to 2019 ridership of more than 1.3 million trips.
- TransLink was the first transit system in the world to introduce Universal Faregate access, allowing customers who are unable to tap a Compass Card to open faregates automatically.

Quotes:

Gigi Chen-Kuo, Interim CEO, TransLink

"HandyDART is an essential part of the region's transit network, and demand for the service will grow as the region's population continues to increase and get older. Making improvements now will help manage growth sustainably and improve service for our customers for many years to come."

Tim Louis, HandyDART User's Advisory Committee Chair, lawyer, and former Vancouver City Councillor

"The disability community is very pleased with TransLink's decision to bring Compass to HandyDART. This is yet another example of TransLink's commitment to HandyDART and its customers. The installation of Compass readers in all HandyDART vehicles will make payment so much easier. I would strongly encourage individuals from the disability community to provide TransLink with feedback on the proposed initiatives."

Pam Horton, Past Chair, Access Transit Users Advisory Committee

"As a long-time advocate for accessible transit in Metro Vancouver, I am proud of the progress made on transit in this region since I first started using HandyDART in the 1980s. The region's transportation system has come a long way in its accessibility for people with disabilities. As a result, I have been able to change from HandyDART to taking all of my trips on bus, SeaBus, and SkyTrain. There is of course more that can be done to make transit more accessible, and I am excited to have worked with TransLink to find possible new solutions to transit service that could benefit people in this region both now and in the future."

More information:

- Visit translink.ca/hdm to learn more, sign up for the telephone townhall and virtual workshops, and complete the survey.
- [Media can download b-roll here](#)

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HandyDART User's Advisory Committee

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