

Subject: Councillor R. Brockington – Attendance Report – North American forum of the International Association of Public Transit

File Number: ACS2025-OCC-CCS-0012

Report to Transit Committee on 13 February 2025

Submitted on February 3, 2025 by Riley Brockington, Councillor

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Ward: Citywide

Objet : Rapport relatif à la présence du conseiller Riley Brockington au Forum nord-américain de l'Union internationale des transports publics

Dossier : ACS2025-OCC-CCS-0012

Rapport au Comité du transport en commun

le 13 février 2025

Soumis le 3 février 2025 par Riley Brockington, conseiller

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Quartier : À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Transit Committee receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité du transport en commun prenne connaissance de ce rapport.

BACKGROUND

This report is being submitted by Councillor R. Brockington, pursuant to the [Council Expense Policy](#):

“Members who undertake City-funded travel must submit a report detailing their experiences, what they learned at the conference and how the City’s position or interests were advanced. The report shall be accomplished in writing, either as an information report or as an Information Previously Distributed report, listed on the agenda for the appropriate Standing Committee.”

DISCUSSION

I had the pleasure to attend the North American forum of the International Association of Public Transit (UITP) from June 23-25, 2024 in Vancouver, British Columbia. I did so in my capacity as a Transit Committee Member of OC Transpo.

What is the Union Internationale des Transports Publics

UITP (Union Internationale des Transports Publics) is the International Association of Public Transport and a passionate champion of sustainable urban mobility. Established in 1885, it is the only worldwide network to bring together all public transport stakeholders and all sustainable transport modes.

Across the globe and every day, people rely on public transport to bring them to school, to work, to sports clubs and cafés. In using public transport millions travel more sustainably, safer and actively while bringing economic benefit to their community. UITP supports the entire sector to ultimately guarantee that public transport and its workers continue to bring cities to life.

North American Forum

The International Association of Public Transit (UITP) hosted their annual North America Forum in June 2024 in Vancouver, British Columbia. I attended the Forum.

The UITP North America Forum is an annual conference aimed to offer the North America region UITP’s worldwide resources for global connectivity and knowledge, bringing together the most current information and developments for our urban transit industry. The 7th Edition of UITP North America Forum in Vancouver was an opportunity to bring members from around the world.

TransLink, proud local host, is the transit authority responsible for the regional transportation network of Metro Vancouver, including public transport, major roads and bridges.

The Forum was multimodal including bus electrification, rail automation and on-demand mobility, and also featured several in-person networking opportunities, enabling instant connectivity between industry suppliers and transit operators. UITP’s global presence,

institutional knowledge, network via its members enabled the conference to bring together experts with the most current and relevant information.

“For this edition of the North America Forum, UITP and TransLink have joined forces to encourage the debate around the latest innovative developments taking place in urban transit... Progress is made through collaboration... If we are able to continue developing the sector, then we can grow its image, attract more passengers and employees, and in turn, we can make public transit the logical, obvious, popular choice for city movement.”

Renée Amilcar, UITP President

Key Themes from the Forum

Innovation

Innovation is necessary to ensure that we can continually improve services and become more efficient (that helps solve some of our sector’s other challenges too). From bus rapid transit (BRT), to the digital transformation of rail, and open-loop payment, the North America Forum showcased how innovation is pushing public transport forward.

- **BRT is booming.** BRT projects make up 40 of the 61 public transport projects earmarked for funding by the US Federal Transit Administration.
- **Digitalization is changing ticketing.** Namely, open-loop payments are a potential way forward, with open-loop and closed-loop ticketing likely to coexist.
- **New legislation aids transit.** For example, in British Columbia, Canada, new laws encourage building communities near transit, services, and amenities.
- **Intermodality.** Shared mobility, from shared bikes to micromobility, is helping develop an intermodal system, and many transit agencies are integrating these modes.
- **Zero-emission transit.** While it’s our shared goal, how we get there differs on the local contexts. The transition needs the right workforce, equipment, and infrastructure. During a key panel session, experts from TransLink, EMT Madrid, SFMTA, and Hitachi Energy shared best practices from previous zero emission deployments.

But making innovation happen means funding innovation. For that to be done successfully, we need a collaborative approach.

Funding and Collaboration

During the session *‘Investing in Tomorrow: What are the Funding and Financing Challenges?’*, moderated by UITP’s Andrea Soehnchen, experts outlined the basis for action to address the challenge of funding innovation.

Among the solutions highlighted was public-private-partnerships (PPPs), which are used to transfer risk and provides for innovation and evolution in the market. In the US, their use “depends on each state” and their specific legislation regarding private investment in public infrastructure. On the other hand, Canada has long been a prolific user of PPPs. But today there is a shift towards co-development that involve a more collaborative approach, and this is happening in the US too.

Daniel Farina, the General Manager of CDPQ Infra, noted that the company aims to “partner with local authorities in order to provide expertise and funding to deliver large-scale infrastructure projects”. It’s like this that CDPQ Infra has helped deliver the Réseau express métropolitain (REM).

Increase Demand

Increasing demand, in some places booming even, is bringing passengers to public transport from the lows of 2020. At the end of 2023, ridership data showed that across the United States passenger volumes reached 79% of pre-pandemic levels (as noted in an [APTA Public Transportation Ridership Update](#)), owing to a huge 16% annual increase in trips. But there is still more to go.

For their part, VIA Rail Canada saw an increase of 25% in passenger numbers in 2023 compared to 2022. At the same time, funding remains an issue, especially the instability of budgets. On that note, Mario Peloquin (President and CEO of Via Rail Canada) sees the increasing passenger numbers as an opportunity and that this should be built on by boosting service frequency.

Recruitment and Retention

Attracting and retaining talent is a challenge everywhere and it is affecting the quality of services. Today, 96% of American transit agencies are experiencing workforce shortages. With this, solutions are being brought forward with urgency.

In a discussion with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) President and CEO Nadine Lee, it was noted that DART has approved a “Strategic Plan to Guide Future Priorities and Innovation”, with an empowered workforce as one of the key priorities. The

development of that plan involved input from employees, passengers, city leaders, and regional partners.

What Did I Participate in at the Forum

Opening Roundtable - Innovate, Build, Transform: Leading Figures Delivering Transit into the Future

Cities around the world are going through a transformation. Even though the pandemic affected the public transit sector negatively, it also highlighted the importance of transit to keep cities running. The sector has attracted large capital funding from the federal government in both the USA and Canada. This is a unique opportunity to not only rebuild the aging infrastructure but build it for future generations. Transit CEOs are facing the challenge of running the existing system efficiently as well as executing major capital projects. The panel will discuss the challenges faced by transit leaders and how they are using innovative practices.

- Moderator: **Nadine Lee**, CEO, DART / Chair of UITP North America Division
- **Jeff Busby**, Chief Operating Officer, TransLink
- **Julie Kirschbaum**, Director of Transit, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA)
- **Randy Clarke**, CEO, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

BRT 2.0: Innovative solution for green cities

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is one of the biggest innovations the bus domain has ever seen because of the positive transformative effects on cities in terms of reduction of congestion and air pollution. Many cities around the world, including in the US and Canada, are investing in BRT network. As the buses operate on dedicated corridors, there is an opportunity to launch electric and automated vehicles. The session will highlight how BRT can play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable urban development. Further, how cities can learn some lessons learnt by different cities in planning, designing, implementation and operational challenges.

- Moderator: **Jessica Fletcher**, Director of Public Affairs, TransLink
- **Ricardo Giesen**, Director, BRT+ Center of Excellence; Director & Associate Professor, Department of Transport Engineering & Logistics, Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile

- **Romain Bonifay**, Director of Projects, ARTM Montreal
- **Arno Kerkhof**, Head of Bus Transport Unit, UITP
- **Camilo Forero**, General Counsel, TRANSMILENIO S.A

Planning and Public Transit: Building a connection to benefit our cities

Cities across the world are facing challenge with growing housing needs. There is focus on integrating transit-oriented development principles into urban planning to encourage higher-density developments. The integration of sustainable public transportation into urban planning becomes a crucial strategy for creating livable, efficient, and environmentally friendly urban environments. Further, Efficient curb management is crucial for optimizing urban space, facilitating smooth traffic flow, and ensuring accessibility to public transportation. Government of British Columbia, Canada introduced the new legislation to encourage building more communities near the transit, services and amenities. Besides policymakers, real estate developers will play a key role to make this reality. The session will bring together different stakeholders to share some of the good practices followed by different cities.

- Moderator: **Frédéric Bean**, Director, Strategy and Sales, GIRO
- **Sarah Ross**, Vice-President Transportation Planning & Policy, TransLink
- **Jarrett Walker**, President and Principal Consultant, Jarrett Walker + Associates
- **Brent Boyd**, Manager of Service Quality and Special Operations – Rail Division, Metropolitan Transit System
- **Khelsilem**, Chairperson, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)

The digital transformation of rail: Transforming our urban and commuter rail network

Digitalization is a major and evolving trend in global business and everyday life. The rail sector is witnessing a rapid adoption of technologies. Public transport systems would continue to embrace evolving digitalization for the provision of services such as security, customer service assistance, and operational support. Digitalization will play an important role in Rail operation, asset maintenance, infrastructure maintenance and customer service. The adoption of new technologies will create new cybersecurity risks. Further, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is making headlines with the recent development of large language models (LLM). The session will highlight the case studies of successful

integration of digital technology with rail systems.

- Moderator: **Corentin Wauters**, Head of Rail Unit, UITP
- **Poi Chung Tjhin**, Head of Applied Rail Technologies Department, SMRT
- **Kurt Pregler**, Chief Information Officer, TransLink
- **Tiago Terra**, Executive Manager of Mobility Concession Agreements, CCR Group
- **Adrianna Pieraccini**, Director, Consulting Services, CGI

Power to the Passenger: Designing a Customer-Centric Experience

Riders' behaviour is changing, as the users are looking for more personalised and real-time information. Transit agencies require to use digital tools including wayfinding, MaaS, loyalty program etc. to improve customer experience. The session will highlight some of the case studies and solutions used by mobility sector to enhance customer experience and attract new riders.

- Moderator: **Mathieu Giraudier**, Head of the Development of the Passenger Information, Transports Publics Genevois
- **Steve Vanagas**, VP Customer Communications, TransLink
- **Josephine Kencroft**, Senior Construction Project Manager, Kone
- **Thibault Meynier**, Manager Design & Architecture, RATP
- **Andrew Mead**, Head of Architecture at MTR Corporation
- **Gretchen Newcomb**, Director, Community & Partnerships, North America & Australasia, MobilityData

A Commitment to Achieve: Paving the Way for Zero-Emission Transit

Cities are committing to achieve net zero emission level and exploring different vehicle technologies including in-motion charging, battery electric and hydrogen. However, transitioning to zero emission goal is a systematic process with the workforce, equipment, and infrastructure needed to support the fleet. Each technology will have different financial and resources implications. This session will convene industry experts to share some good practices for zero emission fleet deployments and lessons learned

from previous deployments and available industry resources.

- Moderator: **Mylene Tassy**, Vice President Sales & Marketing, Volvo
- **Ralf Nielsen**, Director – Enterprise Sustainability, TransLink
- **Miguel Ángel Ballesteros**, Manager of the Sanchinarro Bus Depot, EMT Madrid
- **Charles Drane**, Chief Maintenance Officer, SFMTA / Chair of UITP Trolleybus Committee
- **Alexandre Lalonde**, Head of eMobility -North America, Grid Integration Business Unit, Hitachi Energy

Investing in Tomorrow: What are the Funding and Financing Challenges?

Transit agencies are facing significant funding and financing challenges as they are required to invest in growing demand for modern transportation infrastructure. Traditional models often rely heavily on government funding, taxes, and user fees, which may be insufficient or unpredictable. To address these challenges, transport agencies need to explore new funding models including public-private partnerships (PPPs). Additionally, exploring alternative revenue streams such as congestion pricing, value capture mechanisms, and innovative financing instruments like green bonds can provide sustainable funding sources. The session will invite industry leaders to share their approach to overcome the challenge to invest in the future of public transport.

- Moderator: **Andrea Soehnchen**, Consultant, Transfortis
- **Mario Péloquin**, President and Chief Executive Officer, VIA Rail
- **Daniel Farina**, General Manager, CDPQ Infra
- **Brian Wilton**, Chief Legal Officer, New Jersey Transit

The Last Mile Challenge: Seamless Solutions for More Connectivity

The emergence of new mobility options and the evolution of public transportation have put increasing pressure on transit systems all around the world to develop intermodal systems. Many transit agencies are integrating several transportation modes such as microtransit and bike share to provide on-demand transportation options that support their underlying traditional transit bus or rail service. The session will cover the various initiatives launched by different agencies to offer seamless journey experience.

- Moderator: **Sandra Phillips**, President and CEO, Movmi
- **Sascha Meyer**, Chief Executive Officer, MOIA GmbH
- **Jen Shepherd**, General Manager, UBER
- **Kristoffer Vik Hansen**, CEO, Spare
- **Matthew Daus**, Partner and Chair, Windels, Marx, Lane, & Mittendorf LLP

My Personal Takeaways

I appreciated the breadth of plenaries and workshops provided at this forum and learning of best practices from other public transit organizations across the continent. The UITP certainly provides excellent opportunities to learn, participate, share best practices and network.

Since OC Transpo is a member of the UITP, there was no registration fee. My costs were mainly airfare and accommodations and paid from my Office Budget.

2025 Summit

The UITP Summit 2025 takes place in Hamburg, Germany and will welcome transit personnel from across the world. The challenge to innovate, build, and transform public transport continues.

For more information about the UITP, please visit www.uitp.org.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with receiving this report for information.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with receiving this report for information.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLOR(S)

This is a city-wide report.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

No advisory committees were consulted in the preparation of this information report.

CONSULTATION

This report is administrative in nature and therefore no consultation was required.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no accessibility implications associated with this report.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This report has no direct impacts on the City's strategic priorities or directions identified for the current Term of Council.

DISPOSITION

This report is for information purposes.