

Night Owl Buses:

Towards Social Justice in the Vancouver Region



A Report of the Bus Riders Union

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INTRODUCTION

Public service providers have a primary responsibility to be responsive to the needs of people, not private profit. Public transit is meant to ensure that people who cannot access a vehicle or are unable to operate a vehicle are still able to participate in the political, social and economic life of their communities.

Our current transit system does not meet the needs of transit dependent people. We all have a right, as outlined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to “equal access of social service” in our community¹. When bus riders do not have adequate bus service, they cannot get to important service providers like doctors and support groups. Because of poor bus service, transit dependent people do not have equal access to jobs, cultural activities or social services. They do not have the ability to travel freely and see their family and friends. This is why access to public transit is a human right.

Thousands of bus riders across our region were negatively affected by the transit cuts in 2001. Among those most impacted were the late night workers, women and youth who depended on Night Owl buses to get home after 1:40am. This document will try to explain some of these impacts and put forward new priorities for public transit.

The Bus Riders Union is demanding the return of the Night Owl buses, as a first step towards a massive expansion of bus service and the creation of an affordable, accessible and integrated bus system. We are focusing on the Night Owl buses as an important need for transit dependent people, but our demand for Night Owl buses seven days a week is only one part of our long-term campaigns for *More Buses and Lower Fares* and *End Transit Racism*. We are focusing on the Night Owl buses because the demand intersects between our two umbrella campaigns. The lack of night owl buses is caused by funding priorities that preference expensive SkyTrain projects, and the lack of Night Owl buses diminishes the standard of living for thousands of low wage workers, mainly people of colour, across the region. With political will and the right priorities, the TransLink board has the power to improve the standard of living for thousands of transit dependent people across the region.

¹ United Nations, “Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21”

What is the Bus Riders Union?

The Bus Riders Union is an organization of bus riders working for a first class transit system. We are part of a broader anti-racist social justice movement. We are building on a successful model of grassroots organizing: the Los Angeles Bus Riders Union. The Los Angeles Bus Riders Union has created a multi-racial working class movement, led by women, that has over 3000 members. They fought for and won the return of late night buses, a weekly bus pass, lower bus fares, and 300 new clean air, wheelchair accessible buses. Because of their organizing efforts on the buses and in the communities of Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Transit Authority has been forced to rethink its policy direction.

As we near our three-year anniversary, we, the Vancouver Bus Riders Union, have over 250 members. We have also met thousands of bus riders who identify with the Bus Riders Union and our campaigns. Rather than advocating on behalf of bus riders, the Bus Riders Union was created by and is sustained by the organizing efforts of bus riders themselves. We are building a multi-racial, gender balanced organization that fights to win concrete improvements to the lives of working people and marginalized people.

For two years Bus Riders Union organizers have been riding the buses of the Lower Mainland, talking to bus riders and building a comprehensive analysis of the transit system based on the real lived experiences of bus riders. We take the best traditions of shop floor organizing and community organizing to build a new movement of working class and marginalized people. This means we go into the community and talk to one bus rider at a time about our organization. This ‘on the ground work’ means that we do not work in isolation from our community. We plan and implement our campaigns based on our continuing dialogue with bus riders.

Organizing on the buses is a key part of our work, but we also use other tactics to win our demands and build our movement. We make regular presentations to TransLink to try to persuade TransLink board members to vote for more buses and lower fares. When TransLink clearly refuse to consider the demands and vision of the Bus Riders Union, we take to the streets and engage in direct action to put pressure on decision makers and to show the power of collective organization. We work in solidarity with other organizations and unions working for social justice. While we build the Bus Riders Union, we are also contributing to a broad movement for social justice, led by workers, people of colour and women.

Why a Bus Riders Union?

Our current transit system is an experience of everyday struggle for low-wage workers, unemployed workers, youth, seniors and disabled people across our region. Transit dependent people struggle to pay high fares. They struggle to negotiate their busy lives as parents, workers, students and caregivers using infrequent, unreliable and insufficient buses.

These daily struggles occur in a region of incredible wealth and contradiction. British Columbia has more millionaires than any other province in Canada². At the same time, nineteen percent of workers in BC make less than \$9.24 an hour³. The poorest eleven percent of our province controls three percent of BC's wealth, while the richest eleven percent controls thirty percent⁴. The hardships that bus riders experience everyday are a concrete example of these inequalities in our region.

TransLink has a projected 2003 budget of over 645 million dollars⁵. TransLink is funded by taxes, which are disproportionately paid by working class people⁶ and by fares paid by transit users, who are disproportionately working class. However, TransLink has consistently prioritized projects that serve corporate interests far more than the working people of our region.

While only twenty percent of transit users use Skytrain⁷, TransLink councilors, in April 2003⁸, voted to commit nearly one billion dollars to a SkyTrain to the Airport. The population of our region is growing and the number of people who rely on buses is increasing, but bus service has not grown nearly enough to accommodate new riders. Transit expert Ron Stromberg reports,

“Between 1982 and 1997 the Greater Vancouver Region's bus fleet was expanded from 943 vehicles to 975 vehicles. During the same period, the population served by public transit increased from 1.1 million to 1.5 million. Unfortunately, there were only an additional 32 buses to serve a population increase of 400,000 people”⁹.

² Kerstetter, Steve, “BC's Bountiful Crop of Millionaires”

³ Jackson, Andrew; *Falling Behind: the State of Working Canada, 2000*, p.80.

⁴ Kerstetter, Steve, “BC's Bountiful Crop of Millionaires”

⁵ TransLink, “Three Year Transportation and Financial Plan”, p.6

⁶ Lee, Marc “The Great Tax Cut Giveaway”

⁷ Stromberg, Ron “Greater Vancouver Bus Service: Always Crowded and Most Often Waiting”

⁸ TransLink Meeting April 17, Agenda Item 4.2

⁹ Stromberg, Ron, “Greater Vancouver Bus Service: Always Crowded and Most Often Waiting”

In this context, but riders join the Bus Riders Union to demand their right to economic justice and equality. Because bus riders are so marginalized in transportation planning, we need to be organized in a sustained mass movement to win concrete gains in our transit system.

What does “Transit Dependent” Mean?

‘Transit dependent’ refers to people who ride the bus because they have no other choice. The transit dependent are those who simply can’t afford the high cost of maintaining a car, youth not old enough to drive and those unable to drive due to different physical abilities. Those who must maintain a car because the transit system is wholly inadequate to serve their needs are also partly transit dependent. Many low-income people are just one tune-up or car repair away from total transit dependence.

Transit dependent people are the working class of our region; they are a majority people of colour and women. They are primarily low-wage workers, unemployed people, students and retired people. They are welfare recipients who cannot afford bus fare, let alone a car, to see family and friends, access social services or economic opportunities.

TransLink has historically referred to transit dependent people as the “captive” ridership. Instead of developing transit service to improve the lives of transit dependent or “captive” ridership, TransLink has instead poured money into trying to attract the “choice” rider. The ‘choice’ rider is, of course, the transit user who has other means of transportation available, but chooses to ride transit. The choice rider usually has a higher income, and as such is less likely to be a woman, or a person of colour.

Public transit is a public service that exists primarily to make sure that people without other transit options can have equal access to their community. That is why we believe that catering to the choice rider is the wrong strategy. If we created a first class transit system for the transit dependent, non-transit dependent, or “choice riders” would choose to ride the bus more often.

Public Transit is a Public Service Under Attack

Social services, including public transit, health care and education were won after decades of struggle by working class and marginalized people. They were established to subsidize low wages and to ensure that in a wealthy country like Canada all people had access to a certain minimal standard of living.

After the horror and inequity of the Great Depression, access to health care, transportation and education was determined to be critical to human development. Therefore, these services were not left to be provided by the free market, but rather began to be provided by the state. These services are meant to be free or provided at a rate affordable to everyone, so that all members of our community can access them.

However, like so many other public services in BC, Canada and around the world, our public transit system is being threatened by neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism refers to the dismantling of the welfare state, the destruction of social programs to ensure the reign of free market principles on every aspect of human life.

Neo-liberal governments use strategies of deregulation and privatization to achieve their goals. Neo-liberal governments like the Liberal Party in BC are eliminating labour standards and environmental standards that inhibit profit; this is an example of deregulation. Our right to health, transportation, and education are being turned over to private business to be run for a profit. For example, TransLink has been contracting out different bus routes to Bonny's Taxi and other private contractors. This is a clear example of privatization in action. All levels of Canadian government have at some point participated in sacrificing social justice, human rights and public health to create a social and economic environment friendly to international and local

Reduced service and rising user fees mean that those who most need public services, low wage workers, the under and unemployed, women and children, immigrants and refugees, cannot access them. The need for public services is increasing as wages fall, unemployment soars, and welfare and employment insurance are increasingly difficult to access.

Different Priorities

We know that a transit system built for the transit dependent would be a first class transit system. A transit system built for the transit dependent would draw "choice riders" onto the bus, improving air quality in our region. A bus system built for the transit dependent would have frequent, on-time service, so everyone would have a seat and there would be no unsafe, overcrowded buses. Instead of cutting bus routes, a bus system built for the transit dependent would expand bus routes to the many communities that have little or no bus service.

Transit dependent people are experts about what makes a first class transit system, because they have daily experience with inadequate transit service. In the Bus Riders union, we

draw on the expertise of transit dependent people to create our own vision of a healthy transportation future for the GVRD.

We want healthy air. Non-polluting, clean-air buses would immediately replace all the diesel buses. Car use would go down because drivers would be drawn onto the clean, efficient and affordable bus system. Buses would not idle in traffic jams because they would be given a dedicated bus-only lane. Incidents of asthma and cancer would noticeably decline¹⁰, especially in the inner city and other high traffic areas. Public transit is a public health issue.

We want accessible transit. Bus riders would pay a dollar fare, and a monthly pass would be available for twenty dollars. The zone structure unfairly punishes bus riders who live outside of the economic centre of our region and those who move into the suburbs to find lower rent and cheaper living expenses. The zone structure would be eliminated. Because bus fare is a user fee for a necessary service, and unduly burdens lower income people, bus fare would eventually be eliminated.

We want a bus centred transit system. Eighty percent of transit users ride buses exclusively, or access the SkyTrain by using a bus. Buses are flexible enough to respond to effectively to population growth. We would establish bus-only lanes across the region to facilitate a massive expansion of the bus fleet. After these goals are established, we would consider investing in SkyTrain technology. We are against the large-scale divestment of transit funding away from buses to fund SkyTrain, but we are not inherently against SkyTrain technology.

We want a transit system run by a fully unionized staff. We know that unionized bus drivers and support staff are given more training which is important for the safety of all transit users. We also know that non-unionized bus drivers and support staff do not have equal access to medical or dental benefits, or the same access to holiday pay or sick pay. Drivers and support staff are responsible for the safety of thousands of transit users, and it is important that they have access to good medical care and time off. It is important that all workers make a living wage and can access a good standard of living.

A system built for the transit dependent would run buses twenty four hours a day across the region and would provide better service for both choice and transit dependent riders. It would respect the economic, social and political rights of bus riders and ensure that all people have access to the resources of our region.

¹⁰ Noble, Craig and Gina Solomon; "New Medical Study says Diesel Exhaust may Cause Asthma, not just Aggravate It"

NIGHT OWL BUSES: END THE CURFEW NOW!

History of the Night Owl Cuts

In March 2001, after hearing the objections of over 140 bus riders and transit workers during a record long 11-hour meeting¹¹, the TransLink board cut five million dollars from the bus system including all Night Owl bus service. The Night Owl buses only cost one and a half million dollars yearly to operate¹². TransLink's own staff advised against the cuts, citing insufficient ridership¹³ information and bus driver and bus riders observations that many late night buses were full. In a report submitted in Spring 2001, TransLink staff wrote "unfortunately ridership data is very limited and there is relatively poor information on users of buses during this time period"¹⁴

Since the cuts, bus riders have told the BRU that the buses running after midnight downtown are full to overflowing, a good indication that ridership numbers were high on the late night buses¹⁵. Despite the fact that thousands of bus riders regularly used Night Owl buses, TransLink board members cut all buses leaving Downtown after 1:40am, effectively imposing a curfew on the transit dependent of the GVRD.

In many communities, the 'Night Owl' bus cuts are a misnomer, since the cuts included early evening service as well. In the outlying suburban communities of the GVRD, including Surrey, Langley, Maple Ridge and Port Moody, bus service stops as early as 6pm. This means that intra-municipal travel has effectively been eliminated after 6pm, and the only buses running later than 6pm run to downtown Vancouver only.

At the time, TransLink argued that they were forced to cut buses because of a budget shortfall. Ken Hardie, TransLink spokesperson said, "cuts needed to be made after a two million dollar shortfall projected for the 2001 budget"¹⁶. Since then, TransLink has voted to commit at least 1 billion dollars of Municipal, Provincial and Federal money to a Richmond Airport Vancouver (RAV) SkyTrain Line¹⁷. Based on past TransLink projects, we can be sure

¹¹ March 31, 2001 TransLink Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

¹² Ward, Larry, "Proposed Bus Service Reductions"

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Dallin, Kilani Testimonial¹⁶

¹⁶ Holmes, Jessica "Transit Changes will be Minimal"

¹⁷ May 23, 2003 TransLink Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

that the RAV SkyTrain will go over-budget. We can estimate that the debt servicing on the RAV line will be 22.8 million dollars per year, more than four times the value of the 2001 bus cuts. TransLink is also poised to commit 400 million dollars more to another ultra-expensive Skytrain line in the North-East Sector¹⁸.

The RAV SkyTrain line will be a privatized service, which will provide millions of dollars in profit to private corporations, while charging premium fares of twelve dollars or more.¹⁹ This could make the RAV line service unaffordable to most working people in our region. Even bus riders who work at the Airport have told us that they do not support the RAV Line because they will not be able to afford to ride it.

In July 2003, bowing to public pressure, TransLink brought back limited late night service, running Friday and Saturday nights. This Night Bus service includes four bus routes: the N06, N17, N19 and N35. The N17 will run from the Downtown core to UBC. The N35 will run from the Downtown core to North Burnaby and Simon Fraser University. The N06 will run to the West End of Downtown, and the N17 will run up Kingsway and into New Westminster.

Statistics Canada does not record data on transit dependency. However, using our own grassroots research and common sense we can assume that transit dependency is high in neighbourhoods with high rates of poverty and high rates of transit use.

While clearly transit dependent people deserve access to all parts of our region, many of the neighbourhoods served by the Night Bus program are not those that have the highest need for public transit. For example, the Neighbourhood of West Point Grey has a very low rate of poverty and of transit use, with an average household income of \$82,658 a year, and only 13.4% of the population using transit (as compared with a city wide average of 23.6%)²⁰. Only 17.4% of West Point Grey residents live in low-income households²¹.

The Night Bus program is wholly inadequate. It is a fraction of the original Night Owl service, which was much more comprehensive and included 16 routes²². Entire communities are still left without any late night service. This includes communities with disproportionately high rates of transit use and poverty. For example, the neighbourhoods of Riley Park and

¹⁸ May 23 2003, TransLink Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

¹⁹ Halcrow Group Ltd and TSI Consultants: "Richmond Airport Vancouver Rapid Transit Project Definition Phase: Final Report on Ridership and Revenues: Executive Summary"

²⁰ City of Vancouver/Statistics Canada, "Community Profiles –West Point Grey"

²¹ Ibid.

²² Leicester, Glen "*Launch and Monitoring of NightBus Program*"

Sunset Park are 26% and 23.6% transit users and have poverty rates of 28.8% and 31.1%²³. They are situated along Main Street from 16th Avenue to Marine Drive, and are a community with a very high percentage of people of colour²⁴. The last bus to run down Main Street leaves downtown at 1:01am. The limited late night service is inadequate for the transit dependent people who work five or six days a week, and need late night service to get home (See “Late Night Workers” for further detail).

TransLink never intended the Night Bus service to serve late night workers. The Night Bus logo, marketing campaign and routes are geared to drawing bar patrons onto the buses²⁵. The special signs advertising a Night Bus stop are meant to ‘brand’ the Night Bus as a special service, apart from the regular transit system. Considering TransLink’s special efforts to brand the Night Bus service, it is reasonable to expect that TransLink will try to privatize the routes at some point in the future.

Campaign Overview

This past summer, the Bus Riders Union concentrated on our *Night Owl Buses: End the Curfew NOW!* campaign. For this campaign our volunteer teams of on-the-bus organizers rode the buses twice weekly, beginning in May and riding all the way into the last week of August. In addition to riding the buses of Vancouver, our organizers also set out on many late-night organizing sessions in the downtown core. In addition to distributing information about our campaign, organizers also gathered testimonials from bus riders who are affected by the lack of late night bus service. We used the testimonials form to gather information on bus rider experiences (See Appendix). Collecting testimonials also gives bus riders the opportunity to see that transit hardships are a collective problem experienced by many other bus riders. Bus riders fill out the form themselves, or BRU organizers transcribe their stories, and read them back to ensure accuracy. Many bus riders were enthusiastic about this opportunity to share their experiences. We gathered 73 testimonials from bus riders over a period of three months. These testimonials reflect the collective experience of many, many more bus riders.

While we talked with bus riders we also collected support for our *More Buses! Lower Fares!* Petition. This was also a very successful effort, with bus riders passing the petition

²³ City of Vancouver/Statistics Canada, “Community Profiles –Riley Park”

City of Vancouver/Statistics Canada, “Community Profiles –Sunset”

²⁴ Statistics Canada, Cat No 95-213-XPB “Profiles” p59

²⁵ Leicester, Glen “Launch and Monitoring of NightBus Program”

around and encouraging other riders to support the BRU and our campaign. We gathered 1116 signatures on our petition, a sign that the Bus Riders Union enjoys the support of many hundreds of bus riders and members of the community.

We embarked on this campaign because we wanted to learn the specific impacts of transit cuts on transit dependent people. Our findings are the basis of our demands, so our demands to TransLink truly represent the interests and aspirations of transit dependent people.

Findings

The transit system of the lower mainland, replete with late, overcrowded buses, eliminated routes and slow service shows little respect for the time and dignity of transit dependent people. This is especially evident in the case of the night owl service cuts, as the cuts force transit dependent people to spend hours walking home, spend the night away from home, or stay home and lose out on economic opportunities and social interaction.

While the lack of night owl buses puts all transit dependent people under curfew, some bus riders are disproportionately affected. Service workers, health care workers and shift workers must be available to work late at night or in the very early morning or lose their jobs. Women, gays and lesbians are at a special risk for hate violence without a safe ride home from work or socializing with friends. Youth and students are unable to access education resources and cultural events.

Late night workers gave 45 of the 67 testimonials gathered. Over fifty percent of respondents who identified their race/ethnicity identified themselves as people of colour. Fifty percent of respondents were women. These statistics stand in sharp contrast to the claims of TransLink staff who claimed it was mostly men out socializing who rode the night owl buses. A TransLink representative told CBC journalists in June 2003 “its data shows that most late night bus riders are young men, many of them with a choice about when and how they travel.”²⁶ Our research on the ground shows that transit dependent people do not in fact have a choice about how and when they travel. The 2001 service cuts continues to have a devastating impact on the lives of transit dependent women and men.

1. Late Night Workers

²⁶ CBC News British Columbia, “Riders Call for Late Night Weekday Buses”

“I work as a security guard, and since the Night Owl buses were cut, I’ve had to refuse shifts that end after 1am. Usually it’s a 6pm- 2am shift. The night owl buses on Friday and Saturdays won’t help me. I need seven days a week.”

- Harbhadan, Testimonial 26

Late night workers experience economic hardship and physical and emotional stress because of the lack of late night buses. The workers who filled out testimonials are janitors, hotel staff, hospital workers, security guards, bar workers, entertainment workers and shift workers. These health care and service sectors of the economy disproportionately employ women and people of colour²⁷. Service sector wages are on average below the poverty line at \$8.00 an hour²⁸.

Workers are increasingly dependent on temporary part time employment, and are often forced to take two or three part time jobs just to survive²⁹. Increasingly, as labour legislation is eroded, employers are demanding employees be available to work “flexible hours”, from early morning to late in the evening³⁰. More and more workers are on call, and expected to be available for overtime and hours that vary from week to week³¹.

Transit dependent workers are no exception to this trend, and the inadequate bus service in our region exacerbates their daily struggle to juggle work, family and education responsibilities. Late night workers work nights because they have no other choice, because their employer expects them to be available twenty-four hours a day.

(a) Economic Hardship

Workers lose their jobs or are turned down for employment opportunities because they cannot get to their workplace, or they can’t get home (*see testimonials 11, 25, 29, 33, 40, 50, 60, 66*). Workers also must turn down shifts because they cannot get to work, or because they cannot get home afterwards (*see testimonials 10, 26, 30, 31, 35, 37, 45, 63*). These three bus riders all told similar stories of economic hardship:

²⁷ Jackson, Andrew *Falling Behind: the State of Working Canada, 2000*, p.70

²⁸ Ibid, p.102

²⁹ Ibid, p.100

³⁰ Ibid, p. 65

³¹ Ibid, p.87

- *“I got off work too late to catch the late 1:30AM bus and so I had to trek over 3 hours to get home on foot. After 3 months I had to quit and lost my house because I couldn’t afford my rent.”*³²
- *“I am a Denny’s worker, get off shift at 4AM. 3 workers (all women) had to quit because they can’t get a bus home and the busboy sleeps in the storeroom until bus runs again in the morning.”*³³
- *“I applied for janitorial job. Unable to apply because of lack of late night buses . . . Company asks for employees to have own transport because of late night buses. Suffered depression as a result of loss of job opportunity.”*³⁴

Late night workers who cannot walk long distances home are forced to take cabs that use up considerable portions of their incomes, anywhere from \$7.50 to \$45 dollars (*see testimonials 1, 5, 13, 19, 24, 32, 38, 40, 43, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 55, 61, 65*). Dione, a woman in her twenties, reports the impact of expensive transit on the rest of her life,

*“Spending money on cabs affects my food budget. The last cheque of the month is my rent money, and I don’t want to spend it – so I have to borrow money to pay my rent.”*³⁵

Richard, a service worker, testified,

*“I worked at a bar and was forced to take a taxi at 2AM because there were no buses. I spent 50% of my nightly tips on cabs.”*³⁶

Transit dependent people are disproportionately employed in low wage sectors (see above), and money spent on taxis is often money needed for food or housing. Late night workers end up experiencing a lower standard of living because of the lack of late night bus service.

Late night workers are economically impacted by the Night Owl cuts in a number of ways. They are unable to gain employment because employers will not hire transit dependent workers for late night positions. They lose their jobs or are forced to quit because the lack of late night buses makes commuting logistically impossible. They are forced to turn down shifts that run late into the night, or start early in the morning. To avoid losing their jobs altogether they spend an unaffordable percentage of their wages on cab fare. This is on top of paying transit fares that are already a burden to transit dependent people during the day.

³² Bibby, Matt, Testimonial 11

³³ Ward, Catherine, Testimonial 33

³⁴ Wang, Ta Chang, Testimonial 50

³⁵ Ayivon, Dione, Testimonial 40

³⁶ Willan, Richard, Testimonial 1

(b) Physical Hardship

Late night workers who cannot afford to take a cab home are forced to walk or bike long distances home (*see testimonials 2, 3, 6, 11, 14, 32, 38, 46, 49, 55, 61*). Many bus riders told us they are forced to walk thirty minutes to three hours every night to get home after work.

Late night workers are often engaged in physical labour during their working hours, and then must walk many miles home. For example, food servers and other restaurant workers are on their feet during most or all of their shifts. The same is true for security guards and bar workers. As one bus rider told us,

“All the time when I work overtime (4:00-Midnight) I have to walk all the way to Main and 60th. 3 hour walk home. 6 miles. Put my health and safety at risk – can’t afford a \$20 cab ride!”³⁷

Steven, another bus rider who regularly gets off work after 1:30am commented,

“During the summer I can ride my bike, but during the winter or after a 12 hour shift the last thing you want to do is bike uphill all the way.”³⁸

Another bus rider reported that her father used to work late nights and was required to put in 15-hour shifts, finishing at 3am. He would “*have to get a ride with another employee or walk 1 hour and 40 minutes and get home at 5:45am*”³⁹.

Being forced to bike or walk for hours after work effectively extends the workday by many hours. This leads to physical exhaustion and threatens the health and well being of late night workers.

Sleep deprivation is another health problem that transit dependent late night workers experience regularly (*see testimonials 8, 9, 14, 21, 37*). Late night workers who cannot afford a cab and cannot walk home end up staying awake downtown overnight. They stay in their workplace, a downtown café or convenience store until morning. As one rider told a BRU organizer,

“I produce a radio program that broadcasts midnight until 3AM. The late night bus service used to serve me well until the cut back of services. I now have to remain at the station for an additional two and a half hours, which really and completely throws off my sleeping patterns and forces me to operate in a dangerous sleep deprived state every Thursday.”⁴⁰

³⁷ Wong, Phil, Testimonial 34

³⁸ Neuman, Steven H, Testimonial 43

³⁹ Shackelford, Jennifer, Testimonial 4

⁴⁰ Barbour, Ron. Testimonial 18

Another bus rider, Muhammed, told a BRU organizer that he works as a security guard until 1:30am. If he misses the last bus home, he must wait downtown overnight until the first bus begins in the morning⁴¹.

Sleep deprivation is not a trivial matter. It is a serious infringement on the health and well being of late night workers, as sleep deprivation breaks down the immune system and impairs clear thinking and manual co-ordination. Medical experts agree that sleep deprivation seriously impacts physical and emotional health. Many studies indicate, “sleep deprivation can cause . . . irritability, short temper, and impatience . . . people who didn't have adequate sleep react to stressful situations with more anger, sadness, and fear than they would when adequately rested.”⁴² People who are sleep deprived are more prone to depression, heart disease, reduced immunity and mental capacity, as well as accelerated aging⁴³. Workers who are sleep deprived have an increased potential to suffer workplace injuries or accidents in the home.

(c) Stress and Depression

“ . . . I turn down at least sometimes two shifts a week [because of poor bus service]. It's really stressful not having the income . . . These transit problems make it so much more difficult and stressful . . . ”⁴⁴

Unemployment and under-employment (from losing shifts) lead to economic hardship, which causes stress and frustration. Bus riders experience depression when they clearly see they do not have access to the same social and economic opportunities as other people just because they have a lower income.

Late night workers also have the stress of having to pay their babysitters extra money to stay late if they miss the last bus home, or have to walk home. They also have the stress of having to run frantically from their workplace to catch the last bus home.

Inadequate bus service means that hours of time is taken up by waiting for the bus, walking many miles home, transferring many times and standing on overcrowded, slow buses. This means that transit dependent people miss out on being with their children, partners, parents, other family and friends.

⁴¹ Ijazkhan, Muhammed, Testimonial 8

⁴² Munson, Becky Lien, “ About Sleep Deprivation”

⁴³ Health Source - Consumer Edition, “New Sleep Findings”

⁴⁴ Shmidt, Vivian, Testimonial 44

Transit dependent families also experience stress related of worrying about the safety of other family members who miss the last bus home, or who must regularly walk long distances home (*see testimonial 72*).

2. **Women**

“Have to walk home by myself, feel unsafe- serial rapists running around. I’m a senior. I think the bus service stinks”

-Barb, Testimonial 67

Women are the majority of the transit dependent, and because of systemic discrimination, women are disproportionately employed in the low-wage service industry and health care sector⁴⁵. As workers, women are economically impacted by the night owl cuts (as outlined above). In addition to this financial burden, women are also at a heightened risk of physical and sexual attacks at night.

(a) Risk of hate violence

Women, whether they are workers, students, retired or unemployed are at a special risk for hate violence at night. While assault and rape by strangers is a real fear for many women, most rape and assault on women is committed by men they already know⁴⁶. Inadequate bus service, especially at night, leaves transit dependent women trapped in uncomfortable or unsafe situations.

With no late night bus service women are forced to walk long distances when they would feel safer taking public transportation. Women who are stuck and unable to get home are forced to accept rides from men they are not comfortable with to avoid being stranded, to avoid paying high cab fares and to avoid walking long distances. One transit dependent woman told a BRU organizer,

*“[I] walked home from Metrotown to Main and Marine at 2AM after the SkyTrain stopped. I didn’t feel safe and people were stopping and harassing us. I was stalked”.*⁴⁷

Women who are forced to walk long distances at night are subject to harassment, verbal and physical intimidation by men.

⁴⁵ Jackson, Andrew *Falling Behind: the State of Working Canada, 2000*

⁴⁶ Smith and Woolcott “Myths Mask the Facts about Rape”

⁴⁷ Is, Janelle, Testimonial 27

(b) Loss of Independence

“[I] work in until 2:30AM, miss the last bus. Have to call my son or call a taxi and pay \$16 – this is more than one hours wages.”⁴⁸

Because there are no late night buses, transit dependent women are dependent on others to get home safely and affordably (*see testimonials 43, 45, 52, 59*). Women who work late testified that they have to call family members to pick them up after their shift ends, because they do not feel safe walking home late at night.

Family members experience sleep disruption so that the late night worker can keep their job. This is a challenge to their health. This is upsetting to late night workers, as they are not able to be independent.

(c) Fear and Anxiety

Women who must walk long distances at night experience fear and anxiety, both during and in anticipation of their walk home (*see testimonials 6, 67*). Night owl bus cuts have made many women’s walk home much longer. As one woman told a BRU organizer,

“I work Chinatown, late in a restaurant. Finish work after last bus so I must walk home for two hours. I feel very unsafe walking home at that time of night”⁴⁹

In September 2003 a series of violent rapes prompted police to warn women to stay off the streets at night. These police warnings were useless for those transit dependent women who were forced to continue walking long distances alone late at night. This leaves women feeling angry and afraid. Barb, a bus rider on the #17 bus testified,

“sometimes [I] have to go home and buses run only every half hour after 6:30. Have to walk home by myself, feel unsafe – serial rapists running around.”⁵⁰

It is not just individual attacks that hurt women. Fear and anxiety about a potential attack is a daily burden, and is a violation of every woman’s right to safety and security.

3. The Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Community

Members of the LGBT community are at heightened risk of gay bashing and harassment at night. Members of the LGBT experience verbal assaults, beatings and hate motivated

⁴⁸ Yu, Ada, Testimonial 45

⁴⁹ Wong, Catherine, Testimonial 6

⁵⁰ Edwards, Barb, Testimonial 67

murder. The lack of late night buses means that transit dependent people who are part of the LGBT community must walk long distances at night when they would feel safer catching a bus.

3. Youth and Students

“My partying was affected. I got stranded at Skytrain Station in New West and Burnaby and I had to take a cab on a low student income – like 7 bucks as opposed to I have a bus pass it’s free.”

-Dione, Testimonial 40

Transit dependent youth and students are either too young to drive or cannot afford to buy and maintain a car. Youth are disproportionately employed in temporary, non-union jobs, and need bus service to get to work and get to school⁵¹. Young people need bus service to socialize in bars and clubs and for a safe ride home, especially after drinking. TransLink has a responsibility, not only to get bus riders to work and home, but also to give bus riders access to all that our community has to offer.

(a) Access to education

Transit dependent students do not have equal access to education resources. Post secondary facilities, recognizing that students need to study at all hours of the day, keep their study areas open twenty-four hours a day. Transit dependent students, however, cannot study late into the night or they will be stranded at school. As one student said,

“ I study late and have to go home by 12 midnight even though the library is open 24 hours ”⁵²

Students without access to a car have less study time, and are therefore at a disadvantage economically.

Students from working class families must work part time or full time to pay for tuition, books and living expenses. Many work at night to avoid conflicts with classes, so these student workers experience the economic, physical and emotional hardships that were outlined above. Mitali, a bus rider on the #3 Downtown bus told a BRU organizer,

“When you have to work late at night or just want to come back after a late night with friends . . .we end up spending too much on a cab back which is too expensive for a student.”⁵³

⁵¹ Jackson, Andrew *Falling Behind: The State of Working Canada, 2000*

⁵² Anonymous, Testimonial 51

⁵³ Tayal, Mitali, Testimonial 48

Working students are on a fixed budget, so paying for expensive taxi rides and losing shifts degrades their standard of living.

(b) Access to cultural events

We all have the right to participate in cultural event in our communities. The United Nations Human Rights Declaration states that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, [and] to enjoy the arts . . .”⁵⁴ Many youth testify that they are unable to attend music shows, bars or dances without paying for an expensive taxi ride or spending the night downtown (*see testimonials 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 35, 39, 40, 51, 54, 56, 57, 64*). Thomas, a transit dependent musician testified that after finishing a show on August 13th he got stuck downtown,

*“I needed to get home via Main Street but it wasn’t running – me as well as quite a few other people were in the same problem and the other people had to wait until the buses started up again.”*⁵⁵

Bus riders without access to an affordable ride home are more likely to choose to ride with a drunk driver, with potentially lethal consequences. People have a right to safe transportation, not just to commute to work, but also to access music, art and recreation.

5. The Social Impact of The Night Owl Cuts

*“[I feel] cut-off and isolated”*⁵⁶

Because of inadequate night owl service, transit dependent people do not have equal opportunity to socialize or access cultural activities. They are denied access to their families and friends, political events, support groups and from social events like dances, music shows and movies.

This is especially true for bus riders who live in suburban communities, because “late night” bus service in New Westminster, Langley, Surrey and Burnaby ends as early as 6PM. We all need to see our family and friends as “*an important part of a balanced life*”⁵⁷, and bus riders feel “*isolated and cut off*” from their peers⁵⁸ when they cannot see friends and family.

⁵⁴ United Nations, “Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27”

⁵⁵ Powell, Thomas, Testimonial 57

⁵⁶ Cooley, Patrick E. Testimonial 12

⁵⁷ Anonymous, Testimonial 22

⁵⁸ Cooley, Patrick E, Testimonial 12

Because the buses are cut off so early in suburban communities, transit dependent people must walk great distances or stay overnight away from home in order to have the opportunity to see their families. For example, Paula, a Vancouver resident, writes in her testimonial that

*“Numerous times I’ve had to stay in Surrey due to a lack of transportation back home to Vancouver on SundaysMy mom lives in Surrey”.*⁵⁹

She also writes that her sixteen year old son “*bikes or walks from Vancouver to Surrey*” to visit his family, because “*there’s no bus after 11 in Surrey*”. The lack of late night buses keeps families separated or, in the case of Paula’s family, ensures that transit dependent people endure physical hardship in order to see their loved ones.

Systemic Racism

Systemic racism is when “certain groups are put at a disadvantage when it come to the distribution of scarce resources”⁶⁰. Systemic discrimination in Canadian immigration policy, the education system and hiring practices of individual companies means that people of colour are disproportionately situated in the low-income strata of our communities. In Canada, people of colour make on average 15% less than white people⁶¹.

Canadian immigration policy is constructed to extract cheap labour from new immigrants from the third world. Even before confederation, Chinese men were brought across the ocean to build the railroad, Canadian immigration policy continues to be shaped by the corporate need for cheap labour.

The Live in Caregiver Program (LCP) is a present day example of systemic racism and community underdevelopment. The LCP forces qualified Filipino nurses to work as live-in nannies for two years before they are allowed to apply for landed immigrant status. The nurses in the LCP are paid very low wages for long hours of work. After they finish their two years as nannies, it is difficult and expensive for foreign trained nurses to register and work as nurses in Canada.

Other immigration policies disproportionately exploit working people from the third world, including the Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program and the

⁵⁹ Potter, Paula, Testimonial 7

⁶⁰ Satzewich, Race, “Racism and Racialization: Contested Concepts”

⁶¹ Jackson, Andrew “*Falling Behind: The State of Working Canada, 2000*” p.70

Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers program⁶². These programs all work to foster the underdevelopment of oppressed communities in the GVRD. Visible minority communities, and especially immigrants from the third world have higher rates of unemployment than white communities⁶³.

First Nations people have been systematically plundered of their land, resources and culture. They have endured cultural genocide through residential schools, the continued enforcement of the Indian Act and the British Columbian Treaty Process, among other things. The “Treaty Referendum” sought to incite racism against First Nations people, to accelerate and facilitate the continued theft of First Nations land and resources, further impoverishing and marginalizing First Nations people. First Nations people have the lowest life expectancy in Canada; the average white person can expect to live seven years longer than the average First Nations person⁶⁴. First Nations people in urban areas experience four times the rate of poverty of white people⁶⁵.

All these issues lead to one result: a growing income gap between people of colour and white people across Canada. Social Policy expert Grace-Edward Galabuzi published a 2001 study, “Canada Creeping Economic Apartheid (2001)” which

*“found a persistent and sizeable gap between economic performance of racialized group members and other Canadians . . . He concludes that historical patterns of systemic racial discrimination is key to understanding the persistent over-representation of racialized groups in low paying jobs, low income sectors, higher unemployment, poverty and social marginalization.”*⁶⁶

All levels of government have failed to address this persistent and growing inequality. Social funding is being consistently funneled away from projects that benefit working class people of colour and into neo-liberal projects that benefit corporations and wealthy Canadians. The voices of new immigrants and Canadians of colour are not being heard by decision makers in municipal, provincial and federal governments.

*“The absence of representation from the visible minority communities at the policy-making tables also means an absence of their specific issues in such critical spaces.”*⁶⁷

⁶² Weston, Ann, “Living and Working Conditions for Migrant Farmworkers in Canada: Some Concerns”

⁶³ Gibbon, Ann “Ethnic Chinese and 'ethnic Canadians' culturally distinct”

⁶⁴ Canada, Dept of Indian and Northern Affairs, “Social Development”

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ As cited by Budhu, Chandra in “Research project on Visible Minority Communities in Canada”

⁶⁷ Budhu, Chandra “Research project on Visible Minority Communities in Canada”

Public funding is allocated without proper consideration of the needs and opinions of new immigrants and visible minority communities⁶⁸. This point brings us to our understanding of systemic racism as manifested in the transit system of the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Transit Racism

Immigrants and refugees, First Nations people, and other people of colour are significantly over-represented among transit-dependent people. While recent statistics indicate that Vancouver is home to 36.9% people of colour⁶⁹, in our experience anywhere from 60-90% of the bus riders on the buses running through East Vancouver neighbourhoods are people of colour. This is because the low-income working class of our region are predominantly people of colour.

In our transit system, there is a clear pattern of unequal allocation of transit funds away from the needs of transit dependent communities and into privatization projects. Even though eighty percent of transit users depend on buses exclusively, the bus system is consistently cut and under funded at the same time as massive spending goes to Skytrain, which only six percent of transit users rely on exclusively⁷⁰. For example, the majority of TransLink councilors voted in favour of the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Line, a private public partnership that will put billions of public dollars towards providing profit-making infrastructure for private business.

The fact that TransLink has perpetuated systemic racism does not mean that TransLink councilors or city planners are necessarily racist people, but simply that the outcome of their decisions disproportionately impact people of colour, as people of colour are the majority of the transit dependent.

Transit is a Human Right

The lack of late night buses constitutes a violation of the rights of the transit dependent, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The transit dependent have the right, as outlined in Article 21 to “ a job with just and favorable conditions of work and a living wage”⁷¹. In order to access jobs, working people in the dispersed Greater Vancouver Region require affordable and accessible public transit 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Statistics Canada 2001

⁷⁰ Stromberg, Ron “*Greater Vancouver Bus Service: Always Crowded and Most Often Waiting*”

⁷¹ United Nations, “*Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 21*”

Transit dependent people also have right to “a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family”⁷², which includes personal safety and access to the political, economic and social life of the region. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights explicitly outlines “everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country”. Transit dependent people currently do not have equal access to social services such as affordable housing, health care, education and others. In order to access these services, transit dependent people need affordable, reliable transit running late into the night seven days a week.

Recommendations

1. Towards Putting Transit Dependent People at the Centre of Transit Policy

The 2001 Night Owl cuts were executed without adequate consideration or research, and the transit dependent have suffered the impacts ever since. Those who are most affected by transportation decisions need to be at the centre of transportation planning. The transit dependent need to be meaningfully involved in transportation planning.

As a public service provider funded primarily by working people, TransLink has a primary responsibility to serve working class and marginalized people. However, too often TransLink makes decisions that degrade our public transit system, like hiking fares and cutting bus service. TransLink has argued that budget constraints force them to make decisions that disproportionately impact the transit dependent. They then commit billions of dollars to fund Skytrain projects that do not benefit most transit dependent people. This shows that budget constraints are not the true reason for the lack of Night Owl buses. TransLink board members and staff have prioritized SkyTrain spending over serving the needs of the transit dependent of our region. This is a clear that indication the voices of transit dependent people need to be heard by TransLink board members and staff.

To achieve a truly democratic Transit authority would require a radical restructuring of the current appointment system to ensure some form of direct accountability to bus riders. In the Bus Riders Union we believe that TransLink board members should be directly elected, as we elect the Parks Board and School Board

⁷² United Nations, “*Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25*”

representatives of our communities. In the interim, we believe there are many smaller steps that the TransLink board can take to make TransLink meetings and participation more accessible for transit dependent people.

- *Flexible Meeting Times:* To ensure that night workers and daytime workers can attend TransLink meetings, TransLink meetings should alternate between being held in the daytime and the evening and weekends and weekdays.
- *Eliminate Barriers to Democratic Participation:* The rules for receiving delegations at TransLink meetings are cumbersome and anti-democratic. All people who wish to speak at a TransLink meeting should be heard. If people are not allowed to speak at TransLink meetings, TransLink cannot claim to be a democratic organization.
- *Accessible Meeting Location:* Since the Bus Riders Union began organizing bus riders to attend TransLink Board meetings, the TransLink board has exhibited a sudden interest in moving their meetings around the region, far away from Vancouver. Ostensibly this is meant to allow communities in the outlying regions of the GVRD to participate in the TransLink meetings. In practice, because bus service in the GVRD is concentrated on moving workers in and out of Vancouver (the economic hub of the region) it is impossible, or nearly impossible for bus riders from outside the host city to access the meeting. Even though transit dependent people are deeply impacted by transit decisions, it is very difficult to attend TransLink Board meetings.
- *Transit Subsidies:* High bus fares (especially across more than one zone) prohibit many bus riders from exercising their right to participate in regional democracy. We recommend that TransLink provide transit subsidies for all people who attend TransLink Board meetings, so low-income people can freely participate.
- *Childcare:* TransLink should provide on-site childcare so that low-income parents and single mothers can participate in TransLink Board meetings.

2. Restore Full Night Owl Service

The lack of Night Owl buses in our region is directly related to the spending priorities of TransLink staff and Board members. Glen Leicester, director of TransLink Implementation Planning advised the TransLink Board,

“It is recommended that staff not consider any further requests for NightBus services until the evaluation of the pilot project is complete. The 3 year Plan does not provide for additional budget to expand beyond the pilot project service level, thus if additional service were considered other transit projects would have to be deferred.”⁷³

The Bus Riders Union, our hundreds of members and thousands of community supporters demand that the full restoration of Night Owl Bus service be the first priority of transit spending, as a first step towards a first class bus system. We insist that in fact all SkyTrain *should* be deferred to put Night Owl buses back on the road. We insist that the 1.5 billion public dollars currently allocated for the RAV and North-East SkyTrain lines be immediately put into improving the bus system.

The standard of living for all transit dependent people is compromised every night our region goes without Night Owl buses. We demand that transportation planning reflect the needs of transit dependent people. We expect Night Owl buses to be on the streets by October 10, 2003. This is a reasonable demand considering the impact of the continued curfew on transit dependent people. We consider the date of October 10 to be reasonable, considering that Bus Riders Union delegations have made numerous presentations to TransLink advocating for Night Owl Buses over the past four months.

TransLink has instituted half measures, but continues to delay in fully restoring Night Owl service. The full restoration of Night Owl service is a minimum step on the long road towards establishing equity and social justice in the transit system.

⁷³ Leicester, Glen, “*Launch and Monitoring of NightBus Service*”

RECOMMENDED MOTION: Night Owl Buses: End the Curfew Now!

We recommend that this motion to be passed in the October 1, 2003 TransLink Board meeting:

WHEREAS bus service is a public service necessary to ensure access to the political, social and economic life of our community;

WHEREAS the lack of late night buses constitutes a grave economic hardship on late night workers, as they are often forced to spend unaffordable amounts of their income on taxis or cars;

WHEREAS the lack of late night buses constitutes a grave disregard to the safety of communities at risk of hate violence, including women, gays, lesbians, transgendered people and people of colour;

Therefore, be it resolved:

THAT TransLink re-institute all Night Owl Buses cut in 2001 by October 10, 2003. These routes are the Vancouver routes 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 35 and the suburban routes of 106, 112, 150, 242, 401, 403 and 410.

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Appendix 1: TESTIMONIALS

1.

Name: Richard Willan

Race: Caucasian

Age: 24

Gender: Male

Worked at a bar and forced to take a taxi at 2am because there were no buses. Spend 50% of nightly tips on cab fare.

Organizer: Cameron Dean

Date: July 15, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

2.

Name: Solomon Dowitt

Sometimes work until 2:30am in the Cambie area and have to walk home 30 minutes after my eight-hour shift. Need more buses 7 days a week. New 2 day service doesn't help me.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 15, 2003

Location: #3 Bus

3.

Name: Ricardo Rocha

Work Downtown- sometimes work late in a restaurant until 2 or 3 am. To get home I have to bike, after an eight hour shift, or get a ride with a co worker. Would prefer 7 day/week service.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date July 15, 2003

Location: #3 Bus

4.

Name: Jennifer Shackelford

Race: Canadian

Age: 27

Gender: Female

My dad worked for a shipping receiving company 3 days a week 15 hour shifts. Finished 3am and had to go from Burnaby to New West to get home. Would have to get a ride with another employee or walk 1 hour and 40 minutes and get home at 5:45 am.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

5.

Name: Ros

Gender: Male

Present late night bus service should be extended from Wednesday to Saturday late night. Many times I had to take a cab which I could hardly afford to come from Westside to west end on Wednesdays and Fridays late night.

Thanks

Organizer: Yang Chang

Date: July 15, 2003

Location: #8 Bus

6.

Name: Catherine Wong

Race: Cantonese

Age: 29

Gender: Female

Work in Chinatown, late in a restaurant. Finish work after last bus so I must walk home for 2 hours. I feel very unsafe walking home at that time of night.

Organizer: Yang Chang

Date: July 15, 2003

Location: #8 Bus

7.

Name: Paula Potter

Race: Native

Age 37

Gender: Female

Numerous times I've had to stay in Surrey due to lack of transportation back home to Vancouver on Sundays. Two times me and my son were stuck at New West Station

because there's no bus to connect to at 12pm. The New West bus from downtown used to run late but now there's no bus. You get stuck in New West, you have to wrap up by 10pm to get home. My mom lives in Surrey. My son bikes or walks from Vancouver to Surrey, he's only sixteen, when he comes to visit me, because there's no bus after 11 in Surrey. Buys a monthly pass.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date July 15, 2003

Location #8 Bus

8.

Name: Muhammed Ijazkhan

Age: 63

Gender: Male

I work as a security guard, I usually come until 1:30 in the morning, and if I miss the #8 Fraser bus, I have to wait until morning to get home. It's better to have night buses, people need them. Sometimes we have to reach our job place at 5am, but you cannot get there. Our hours will be less. When we wait in the morning, there's nowhere to wait.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date July 15, 2003

Location #8 Bus

9.

ANONYMOUS

I take the bus from work after 12, when I come to catch the #8, sometimes I wait for 1 hour, sometimes I have to walk. I can't afford to take a taxi. There should be night service until 3:30 am everynight.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: July 15, 2003

Location #8 Fraser Bus

10.

Name: Van_Luu

Used to work more, but now can't work as much. Used to work more in a restaurant. Missed out on wages and hours.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville Street

11.

Name: Mat Bibby

Race: White

Age: 20

Gender: Male

I worked at TGI Fridays and lived by Lougheed mall. I got off work too late to catch the late 130 bus and so I had to trek over 3 hours to get home on foot. After 3 months of this I had to quit and lost my house because I couldn't afford my rent. I now live in a homeless shelter and work downtown. I am a manager and I now will be moving to Commercial Drive. I hope I don't lose another job to this shitty service.

Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond

Date: June 27, 2003

Location: Granville Skytrain Station

12.

Name: Patrick E. Cooley

Race: WASP

Age: 31

Gender: Male

Unable to socialize with peers after midnight – cut off and isolated in Coquitlam.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville Skytrain Station.

13.

Name: Tarquin Schluter

Race: Black

Age: 33

Gender: Male

Working night clubs, I don't leave until 3am. I was always affected. Taking a \$20 cab ride home adds up after a 5 day week. Please bring the buses back.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville Skytrain Station

14.

Name: Duane

Race: Yellow and white

Age: 24

Gender: Male

Every night I had to walk home from Coquitlam Station to home on Hornby Street, about 45 minutes. Times I was stuck at Braid Station, around 1 or 2 am. A few times I stayed at an Internet Café all night.

After I moved downtown, I had to walk from Oak and 41st to Downtown – I caught the last bus, but it didn't run downtown – it just went to the garage.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville Street

15.

Name: Christopher Rayos

Race: Asian

Age 28

Gender Male

We take the last bus home, but we would stay out later if the bus service went later.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date June 26, 2003

Location Granville Street

16.

Name: Kilani Dallin

Race: White

Age: 19

Gender: Female

Mon-Fri I take the 8 Fraser from Granville and Nelson to Fraser at 49th Ave either at 12:30 am 1:00 am or 1:30 am and every night no matter the hour the bus is completely full (every seat full) for my entire 45 min. ride. There has been no major trouble on any of these trips in 8 months I've ridden this route despite the local.

Worker at Blenz on Granville at Nelson.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date June 26, 2003

Location: Granville and Nelson

17.

Name: Michelle Matake

Race: Canadian

Age: 23

Gender: Female

I run several clubnites and my crowd leaves early to catch the last busses (around 12 am) and results in a loss of bar sales! Bus for my nites!

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville Street

18.

Name: Ron Barbour

Race: First Nation

Gender: Male

I produce a radio program that broadcasts midnight until 3 am. The late night bus service used to serve me well until the cut backs of services. I now have to remain at the station for an additional 2 1/2 hours which really and completely throws off my sleeping patterns and FORCES me to operate in a dangerous sleep deprived state EVERY THURSDAY.

Organizer: Leah Sharzer

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville and Nelson

19.

Name: Sean Grove

Age: 22

Gender: Male

I am forced daily to speak \$5-10 per trip via taxi to come and go to work.

BRU Organizer: Colin Stark

Date: June 27, 2003

Location: Downtown

20.

Name: Len Lam

Race: Chinese

End up getting stuck downtown because, the buses shut down early, stuff isn't closed or shows aren't finished but you have to leave early or get stranded downtown

Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond

Date: June 27, 2003

Location: Granville Street (Downtown)

21.

Name: Herb Hulbert

Race: Indigenous

Age: 32

Gender: Male

Sometimes I ride the bus at 3am and I miss the time of the last bus and I need to get home to rest for the next day.

Organizer: Leah Sharzer

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville and Georgia Street.

22.

ANONYMOUS

I lived in Surrey and commuted into Vancouver daily. However, social life in Vancouver was severely restricted by transit hours. Perhaps "Social life" isn't a priority for TransLink providers, however it is an important part of a balanced life and contributes to better communities – even if the Skytrain itself were to stay open later, the suburban buses stop TOO EARLY.

Organizer: Leah Sharzer

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville and Georgia Street.

23.

ANONYMOUS

Got stranded and waited for 3 hours to get picked up from a friend.

Organizer Leah Sharzer

Date: June 26, 2003

Location: Granville and Georgia Street.

24.

Name: Lshwar Singh

Race Indian

Age 32

Gender Male

Work in Vancouver last bus 12:18 finish work at 2:30, if I miss this bus I have to take a cab that I can't afford \$5 and \$7 for Skytrain and I only make \$8/hour work in Vancouver live in Surrey. Janitorial work.

Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond

Date: June 27, 2003

Location: Granville Skytrain Station

25.

Name: Anissa Innes

Race: First Nation

Age: 32

Gender: Female

I use to do night shift, and it was hard getting back – I had to switch from night shift to day shift. I was working in a warehouse at Royal Oak – I couldn't get back. I lost my job altogether.

On Fridays and Saturdays I usually go to a AAA dance, but I have to leave early at 1am to catch the 130 bus back to Fraser and 41st, because I can't get a ride their cars are usually already full. During the week, I have to catch the last bus on Victoria and 41st and go all the way around to the garage. It takes 1 1/2 hours instead of 45 minutes.

Sometimes I'm late to pick up my kid from daycare and lose \$1/2

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: July 4 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

26.

Name: Harbhadan Hoihi

I work as a security guard, and since the Night Owl buses were cut, I've had to refuse shifts that end after 1am. Usually it's a 6pmn-2am shift. The night owl buses on Friday and Saturdays won't help me – I need seven days a week.

Organizer: Beth

Date: July 4 2003

Location: #3Bus

27.

Name: Janelle Is

I walked home from Metrotown to Maine and Marine at 2am, night after Sktyrain stopped. I didn't feel safe and people were stopping and harassing us, I was stalked.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date July 4, 2003

Location #3 Bus

28.

ANONYMOUS

Missed the last bus home, got grounded, lost her allowance, and almost got kicked out of her group home.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date:

Location: Kingsgate Mall.

29.

Name: Manjit Grewal

Necessary night time service because lots of people lost jobs to.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date July 4, 2003

Location #3 Bus

30.

Name: Janaka Jayavwya

Works at a gas station and a restaurant doing cleaning work. He loses 2 hours of work because his shift starts before the first bus and he can't get there on time, then he has to leave early from his other job, at 12am because there's no bus at the end of his shift at 1:30am.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: July 4, 2003

Location: #3 Bus

31.

Name: Deirdre Hamilton

Race: White

Age: 41

Gender: Female

Health care worker – hard to take the buses early. Have to miss shifts that start early because there are no buses. Sometimes late at night there are no buses – have to take cabs, very costly, don't have the money to do that. Soon moving to White Rock, where there is only 1 bus in the AM to Vancouver, Monday to Friday, not on weekends, this means I will be late in the morning getting to work at 41st and Oak. Only evening shifts available to me now.

As new parents and couple on a budget, this is not acceptable. Worked too hard and too long to give up seniority. Jobs don't grow on trees in health care!

Anytime I have made a complaint I have been brushed off and treated like a child. This is unacceptable to treat bus riders, who are educated and intelligent. We deserve better treatment.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

32.

Name: C. Lightfoot

Race: White

Age 32

Gender Female

I live in N. Burnaby, and work in Vancouver. One night a co-worker was late, I missed the last SFU and Skytrain. I ended up spending \$45 to get to Brentwood Mall and at 2:30am walking to my home. This is totally hurtful to people like me who have to work late nights and have no choice but work late nights. Thanks for your hard work.

Organizer: Martha Roberts

Date: July 8, 2003

Location #3 Main Bus

33.

Name: Catherine Ward

Denny's worker get off shift at 4am. 3 workers (all women) had to quit because can't get a bus home and busboy sleeps in the storeroom until bus runs again in the morning

Organizer: Martha Roberts

Date: July 8, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

34.

Name: Phil Wong

All the time when I work overtime (4:00-12:00pm), I have to walk all the way to Main and 60th. 3 hour walk home. 6 miles. Put my health and safety and risk – can't afford a \$20 cab ride!

Outrageous that a city our size doesn't have public transit.

Organizer: Martha Roberts

Date: July 8, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

35.

Name: Amir Parandel

Age: 31

Gender: Male

Three times I was stuck downtown because I missed the last bus home. Had to wait until 5:38AM SkyTrain. I live in Surrey.

I work at Chubb security and also party downtown. Have to miss 6AM shifts and Sunday nights I have to leave 15 minutes early because the last Skytrain finishes at Midnight (12:15)

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 24, 2003

Location: Granville Street

36.

Name: Martha Cabrera

Race: Spanish (Latino)

Age: 20

Gender: Female

In the building I live in I have 3 close friends and between all of us we have 4 kids. They are all under two and in strollers. If I want to go anywhere I have to walk or take the longest route possible to catch accessible buses.

Yesterday we had to walk from 43rd and Fraser to 41st and Fraser to Oakridge Mall to 33rd and Cambie and then back to 43rd and Fraser. We had a double stroller and the driver wouldn't let us on the 41.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 22, 2003

Location: #3 Bus

37.

Name: Sara Mae Brayton

Race: Caucasian

Age: 21

Gender: Female

I had to work late in Pacific Centre. I didn't know the last Skytrain left at 1:30am. I worked until 1:45 am. I had to hitchhike home to Surrey. I didn't get home until 4am, and I had to work again at 9am. Now I have to refuse shifts that go past 11pm.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 24, 2003

Location: Granville Street

38.

Name: Hussain Illi Abboud

Age: 32

Gender: Male

I work two jobs and I bike from E. Broadway to North Van to Downtown. I close at 3AM but there's no buses, so I ride my bike. I used to ride the bus, but now I just bike. One time I had to take a cab from New West home on a holiday at 1AM – I waited for 1/2 an hour, then gave up. I spent \$30, but I'm saving money for my tuition. I think it's a good idea to make the buses work 24 hours, especially in the summer time.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: July 24, 2003

Location: Granville Late Night

39.

ANONYMOUS

I go clubbing and drinking a lot. I don't have a car, and I'm a student so I can't afford to take cabs. We end up calling up our buddies who live downtown, or ringing at their houses. One time we rang the wrong one and these girls let us stay there. But our buddies have to work the next morning. It's a pain to have to leave the club early, missing out on seeing friends and having a good time. I live on the North Shore, so I don't like asking for a ride home. I see people sleeping in the street cause they can't get home. I worry about my girlfriend too. Those Bums.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: July 24, 2003

Location: Granville Late Night

40.

Name: Dione Ayivon

Race: Black

Age: 24

Gender: Female

My partying was affected. I got stranded at Skytrain Stations in New West and Burnaby and I had to take a cab on a low student income – like \$7 bucks as opposed to I have a bus pass it's free. The buses leave earlier than they're scheduled to – like 12:50 instead of 12:58am. Spending money on cabs affects my food budget. The last cheque of the month is my rent money, and I don't want to spend it – so I have to borrow money to pay my rent. I've had to pass up so many job opportunities because I couldn't get a bus – serving jobs, you know the ones with tips.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date July 14, 2003

Location: Granville Late Night

41.

Name: N. Merchant

Age: 51

Gender: Male

There is a 254 bus British Properties at 7:25pm and 9:25pm but no bus at 11:25pm from Park Royal. For those working 3pm – 11pm shift in Downtown Vancouver like myself. So I have to take a taxi from P. Royal to British Properties.

Organizer: Peter Marcus

Date: July 24, 2003

Location Granville Late Night

42.

ANONYMOUS

\$402 Broadway and Granville to Steveston cut. During bus hours and on weekends now takes three buses. Express service only morning and evenings, Monday to Friday – no regular service. #98 only goes to Richmond Centre and then have to take another bus to Steveston.

Bus drivers are friendly. More riders are aware that what TransLink writes in newspaper is not congruent with what's really happening.

Had to get rides for work.

Organizer: Diane Leclare

Date: July 22, 2003

Location: Main and Broadway (#3)

43.

Name: H. Steven Neuman

Race: white

Age: 36

Gender: Male

I work as a technician, sometimes get off after 1:30am. Like when I worked fireworks I could get off at 4am or 10am. Depend on the 3 or the 25 to get home. 25 finished at 12:30, 3 finishes at 1:30am. Feeder buses (135, B-line) finish even earlier or the same time. Sometimes I have to take a cab -\$12 - \$20. During the summer I can ride my bike, but during the winter or after a 12 hour shift last thing you want to do is bike uphill all the way.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location #3 Downtown Bus

44.

Name: Vivian Shmidt

Race: White

Age: 51

Gender: Female

My car is broken and I work in the Surrey Public Library System. I live in Vancouver and it takes me 2.5 to 3 hours to get to work. There at 6-7 branches in Surrey. One or two have a bus to get there, but it stops at 6pm. I have to beg for a ride or take a cab, which costs \$18- \$25 to get to Surrey Central Skytrain Station. I turn down at least sometimes 2 shifts a week. It's really stressful not having the income. I also don't feel safe using the transit system at night. I'm on call, which so many people are, and trying to balance a few different jobs. These transit problems make it so much more difficult and stressful. Like today, I got a call saying I was supposed to be there at 1pm but I can't get there.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: August 8, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

44.

Name: Phoenix Demski

Race: White

Age: 22

Gender: Female

I have a job as a waitress on Commercial Dr Where I often have shifts that go until 2am. On these several nights a week I've got to take a taxi to my home on the West Side. The taxi fare is equivalent to the amount I would make on these nights as a server. This cuts my wages greatly as I'm a student who can only work a couple nights a week.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

45.

Name: Ada Yu

Work in a hotel, work until 2:30am, miss the last bus. Have to call my son or call a taxi and pay \$16 – this is more than one hours wages. I have to work late; I don't have a choice.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location: #3 Downtown Bus

46.

ANONYMOUS

Get off work (kitchen work) at 1:30 am and have to walk 1 hour to get home. Ride the 22 and it ends at midnight

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location: #3 Downtown Bus

47.

Name: Feysal Abdululi

Race: African

Age: 17

Gender Male

Work late, buses don't run and have to catch a cab, or I am out with friends late and I have to catch a cab. I work cleaning and get off at 2AM and I have to spend \$20 on cab fare.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location: #3 Downtown Bus

48.

Name: Mitali Tayal

Race: Indian (East)

Age 21

Gender Female

When you have to work late at night or just want to come back after a late night with friends, it is quite annoying to see the shutters down on the Skytrain Station or no bus. We end up spending too much on a cab back which is too expensive for a student.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location: #3 Downtown Bus

49.

Name: Brad Millar

Race: Caucasian

Age: 24

Gender: Male

I worked graveyard shifts, letting out at 4am. Without bus service, I either need to take a taxicab from South Vancouver to my house in Kitsilano (approx ten times the cost of bus fare) . My other option is to bicycle home, about forty minutes of my time; however, as the bars are letting out after bus service ends (4AM Friday/Saturday, 2AM all other days) the fear of drunk drivers with no bus option is a large risk for a late night bike rider.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: July 29, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

50.

Name: Ta Cheng Wang

Race: Asian

Age: 31

Gender: Male

Applied for janitorial job. Unable to apply because of lack of late night buses. I have a good chance because of a friend who worked there. Company asks for employees to have own transport because of no late night buses. Suffered depression as a result of loss of job opportunity.

Organizer: Yang Chang

Date: July 19, 2003

Location: #3 Bus

51.

ANONYMOUS

Age: 21

Gender Female

When I used to live at 63rd and Arbutus and go out late I would miss the last bus and then I had to walk - no buses and I couldn't get a taxi. It took 1 hour to walk home. Then I moved downtown and go to school at Langara and UBC. I study late and have to go home by 12 midnight even though library is open 24 hours.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date August 15, 2003

Location # 3 Downtown Bus

52.

Name: Julian Haskell

I work downtown at the Caprice Club late (until 1 AM) but then I go out everyday after work. To get home I take a taxi or call a friend to pick me up. It usually costs \$15 to take a taxi to Main and 41st.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date August 15, 2003

Location: #3 Downtown Bus

54.

ANONYMOUS

Sometimes Downtown weekends and can't get home after being out to dinner. Have to walk home to Main and 37th. It takes 1 hour.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: August 15, 2003

Location # 3 Bus

55.

Name: Tammy Dewolfe

Race: White

Age 32

Gender Female

I was working in a restaurant and I couldn't get home. I got off at 2:30 am or 3am. There were no buses so I would walk from downtown to 13th or I would take a cab for \$7.50.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date August 15

Location #3 Bus

56.

ANONYMOUS

Went to see some friends play (music) at Marine club. No bus so I had to cab it.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date August 15, 2003

Location #3 Bus

57.

Name: Thomas Powell

Race: Native

Age 17

Gender: Male

I finished a show at about 2AM on Wednesday August 13th and I needed to get home via the #3 Main St but it wasn't running- Me as well as quite a few other people were in the same problem and the other people had to wait until the buses started up again.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: August 15, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

58.

*Name: Mandeep Sekhon
Race/Ethnicity: East Indian
Age: 23
Gender: Male*

Trouble getting to and from work. Trouble getting a bus home. Routes don't work out for me like no route on 57th, no route between 49th and Marine Drive. More options in terms of routes. We're paying a lot of money, for only an hour and a half transfer. Two bucks for one zone. Bus fare eats my weeks pay. At night tired from work I have to wait half an hour and then the trip isn't so bad but I have to change buses.

*Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond
Date: August 30, 2003
Location: #8 Fraser bus*

59.

ANONYMOUS

Working at night. Finish at four o'clock after a long day. Have to get a ride from my brother.

*Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond
Date: August 30, 2003
Location: #8 Fraser Bus*

60.

Name: S.P. Chana

I lost my day job, and I'm looking for a job with evening shifts. I don't have a car so I'm totally dependent on the bus. Sometimes I can't take a job because there's no bus to get there. I live in Vancouver and I got a job in Delta, but I'm going to lose it if I can't figure out how to get there without a bus. That's the second job I've had that problem with. They should start the service earlier, before 6:30AM.

*Organizer: Beth Grayer
Date: August 30, 2003
Location: #8 Fraser Bus*

61.

ANONYMOUS

Race: Black

Age: 40s

Gender: Male

I work by Main St. Skytrain and I walk there after work. Sometimes I miss the last bus and I walk to 29th and Fraser, or take a cab.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: August 30

Location: #8 Fraser Bus

62.

Name: Sharen Laskeg

Race: Canadian

Age: 50

Gender Female

I need to ride the bus and don't have a car. My friend and I went to church. We thought the buses ran after 1:30AM but then we missed the last bus so I had to walk from Broadway [and Main] to 33rd and Main (two hours). It took a long time because I have Angina and can't walk long. I had to stop at every bench and there aren't many benches anymore.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: August 30, 2003

Location #8 Fraser Bus

63.

ANONYMOUS

Race: Caucasian

Age: 21

Gender: Female

I work at the Airport (passenger screening) and a lot of us can't take late night shifts to the airport. So leaves us to fight for early shifts, so have to work early morning or another shift they don't want. I can't take the shift that starts at 4AM either.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: August 30, 2003

Location: #8 Fraser Bus

64.

Name: Miyako Takahashi

Race: Japanese

Age 32

Gender: Female

I often go back home from downtown at night during weekdays, simply because there's no bus! I can't stay 'til the end of concerts if I take the last bus. . .(and I can't afford a taxi) It takes one hour to walk back on Hastings, where I don't feel 100% secure especially around Clark.

65.

Name: Jorge Escalante

Race: Latin American

Age 21

Gender Male

I work in Deep Cove in a pizza place. I start at 4 o'clock, we close at 12AM or later. The last bus from Deep Cove to Phibbs Exchange is at 11:45 PM, the last bus from Phibbs to downtown it at 12:17AM. If I have to work later, I have a big problem. I have to take a cab from Deep Cove to downtown, or an hour walk, take a cheaper cab.

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: August 22, 2003

Location: Café Rebelde

66.

Name: Adam Popaduk

Age: 32

Gender: Male

Have not been able to get to work, because there was no bus running early in the morning. So unable to support family, and myself. (works at labour unlimited).

Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond

Date: September 5, 2003

Location: #19 Bus

67.

Name: Barb Edwards

Age: 64

Gender: Female

Sometimes have to go home and buses run only every half hour after 6:30pm. Have to walk home by myself, feel unsafe – serial rapists running around. I'm a senior. I think the bus service stinks.

Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond

Date September 5, 2003

Location #19 Bus

68.

Name: Seth Clark

Race: Caucasian

Age: 22

Gender: Male

I work late at a restaurant (until 1AM). I have to split a cab or walk from gastown to Main and Broadway. The Cab usually costs \$8- \$15. I have to take the shifts they give me. I need buses seven days a week.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: September 19, 2003

Location: #8 Bus

69.

Name: Milena K.

Race: Brazil

Age: 15

Gender: Girl

Out late with friends on weekends and go home between 1 and 2 AM. I have to walk home or walk to a friend's house. I walked from waterfront to Main once, or from Burnaby to Vancouver.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: September 19, 2003

Location: #8 Bus

70.

ANONYMOUS

I worked at London Drugs from 5AM to 9Am. I lived five minutes away, but I moved and had to quit because the taxi would have been too much. I didn't make enough to pay for a taxi.

Organizer: Jennifer Efting

Date: September 19, 2003

Location: #8 Bus

71.

Name: Naghmeh

Race: Persian

Age: 28

Gender: Female

We live at SFU, and we are totally isolated without a car. We can't access anywhere. During the strike in 2001, I lost my job, we couldn't go for shopping, we had to ask neighbours we didn't know. We were trapped on Burnaby Mountain

Organizer: Beth Grayer

Date: September 19, 2003

Location: #3 Main Bus

72.

Jully Lea

Race: Caucasian

Age: 49

Gender: Female

My son works at Main and 7th. When he gets off late and misses the last bus from the Skytrain, he has to walk at least 2 miles home very late at night, alone. It's not safe and he's already very tired. This could be alleviated by adding later bus service. My daughter has now started working and I'm afraid for her. I just had my car break down and I can't pick her up.

Organizer: Yang Chang

Date: September 19, 2003

Location: #3 Main

73.

Name: Kevin Garvey

Race: Canadian

Age: 19

Gender: Male

Can't get on the bus anymore. Tried three ways to get to school, 3 or four buses pass totally full and 30 people waiting at the bus stop. Have to walk.

Organizer: Aiyanas Ormond

Date: September 19, 2003

Location: #8 Fraser Bus



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

HEU PROVINCIAL OFFICE
5000 North Fraser Way
Burnaby, B.C. V5J 5M3
Tel: (604) 438-5000
Fax: (604) 739-1510
Web Site: www.heu.org

July 22, 2003

Bus Riders Union
613 – 239 E. Georgia
Vancouver, BC V6A 4J7

Dear Bus Riders Union:

Re: HEU Support for Night Owl Buses Campaign

Since its inception, the Bus Riders Union has been very effective in identifying the needs of public transit users and advocating for improvements to the system. Your current campaign to restore "Night Owl Buses" is an initiative that the Hospital Employees' Union is pleased to endorse.

HEU members reflect exactly the kind of people who need night owl bus services. Most work in health care facilities and social service agencies that operate 24 hours per day, 365 day per year, with shift start and stop times around the clock. Many rely on public transit to get to and from work, but may be forced to extend their already exhausting work day because of inadequate bus service.

Our membership is comprised of 87% women. Many have disabilities, often from work related injuries, and a large number are immigrants from a wide variety of nationalities and visible ethnic groups. Others belong to the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered communities; groups that are extremely vulnerable to nighttime attacks. Mobility and safety issues prohibit walking long distances after dark, and using expensive taxis is simply not an option for most.

Many bus riders experience systemic discrimination and racism in other parts of their lives. Public transportation should not add to this marginalization. We add our voices to the call for 24-hour, affordable public transit with routes and scheduling frequency that matches or exceeds the level that existed before this service was cut in October 2001.

We wish you every success in this important campaign.

In solidarity,

Fred Muzin
President

FM: jh (Bus Riders Union)

Cc: Provincial Executive

FRED MUZIN, President • CHRIS ALLNUTT, Secretary-Business Manager • MARY LaPLANTE, Financial Secretary
The B.C. Health Services Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees

