

**Coalition Demands In-House HandyDART Service
as Translink Board Vote Approaches**

**Transit workers and advocates say it's time to end outsourcing and ensure
safe, reliable, and publicly operated paratransit.**

Media Contact: Sarah Maceda-Maciel, 672-377-3752, smmaciel@atu.org

VANCOVER — TransLink’s Board of Directors is set to vote on insourcing HandyDART operations on
June 25, according to Save Our HandyDART Coalition—a network of rider groups, labour unions, disability advocates, and other community organizations. The vote was originally planned for TransLink’s spring quarterly meeting, but was delayed after the agency removed the item from the agenda, and cancelled registered speakers.

Transdev, a French corporation, currently operates HandyDART service. Following widespread criticism of service quality and working conditions—including a three-week-long strike in 2024—TransLink commissioned a study to compare the cost and benefits of insourcing versus continued private contracting. The BC NDP also included insourcing HandyDART service as part of its campaign platform during the provincial election, shortly after the strike.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Amid recent calls to “buy Canadian” and “invest in Canada,” HandyDART advocates are urging the Provincial government to follow through on its campaign promise, and work with TransLink to bring the service under the public system.

“For more than a decade, riders have called on TransLink to operate HandyDART directly, instead of outsourcing to the lowest bidder,” said Beth McKellar, the co-founder of the HandyDART Riders’ Alliance, which works closely with Save Our HandyDART. “Riders have suffered from years of safety problems caused by bottom-feeding companies’ lack of accountability.”

A major concern among both riders and workers is Transdev’s ongoing failure to attract and retain enough workers to meet service demands. To compensate, the company has increasingly relied on sub-contracted taxis services—raising further concerns about reliability and quality.

While there’s a place for taxis in Vancouver’s transit system, rider groups have long raised concerns about HandyDART’s subcontracted taxis failing to secure wheelchairs, missing trips, and leaving behind vulnerable passengers due to lack of door-to-door assistance. According to TransLink’s 2023 HandyDART review, taxis were responsible for over twice as many missed trips as HandyDART drivers, despite providing only a quarter of the total rides.

“It’s a travesty that TransLink has spent years sending taxpayer dollars to a foreign company while service quality continues to decline,” said **Laura Wylie**, Financial Secretary of **ATU Local 1724**, which represents HandyDART workers and is part of the coalition. “Every decision-maker seems to be passing the buck. It’s time for the TransLink Board and CEO Kevin Quinn to do the right thing—for taxpayers, riders, and workers—and fix the problem at its source: bring HandyDART home under public control.”

Last year, six mayors on TransLink’s Mayors’ Council signed an open letter urging the agency to insource HandyDART service. City Councils in Burnaby, Langley City, Langley Township, Maple Ridge, and North Vancouver also passed resolutions endorsing the call to action.

1. [https://www.bcndp.ca/sites/default/files/bcndp\_platformhighlights\_v2\_printready-web\_0.pdf](https://url.avanan.click/v2/r03/___https%3A//www.bcndp.ca/sites/default/files/bcndp_platformhighlights_v2_printready-web_0.pdf___.YXYyYzphdHVjYW5hZGE6YTpvOjhkOTNmNTM2NGI1ZmQ5MjczNTY3NjM4ZjdlNjE4ODljOjc6ZTQ3MDoxYTc5NDJkZmU5YTc5ZDdjNmQwMDgxOGRhNGVmNjFiM2Y4NmY0NjEyMDJkNTgxMGI4OGI0OGY2ZjFlN2E5OGUyOnA6VDpG) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)