

# GrandeWest Transportation unveils new Vicinity bus

Completely integrated, environmentally-friendly, fully-accessible compact bus took three years to research

GrandeWest Transportation is positioned to redefine what public transport will look like in the years to come.

BC Transit, one of the world's leaders in public transportation, commissioned Langley's GrandeWest Transportation in 2008 to create a solution. After three years of research, design and development, GrandeWest unveiled the "Vicinity", a 27.5 foot, completely-integrated, environmentally-friendly, fully-accessible compact bus.

Almost everywhere in North America, the 40 foot bus is the norm. However, these long buses don't work as well in areas where there is low ridership or narrow streets. A shorter or smaller bus is required. At present, most of the shorter buses that are available are cutaways like a cube van. Unfortunately, these modified buses only have a five year lifespan, are not the most comfortable to ride, and they carry a number of inefficiencies that increase operating costs.

This new, revolutionary bus breaks the public transportation paradigm. Imagine being in a wheelchair and rolling right into the bus from the curb. No lifts and no waiting. Imagine a smooth, quiet ride like you are in a car instead of a noisy box van. Imagine



GrandeWest Transportation's new 27.5 foot bus.

breathing clean air while waiting at the bus stop instead of smoky diesel. And now imagine all this at a lower overall cost to tax payers. What could be better!

According to GrandeWest CEO and President William Trainer, we've been told that "These new buses have proven to be exceptional." Since the prototype, BC Transit has purchased 15 new Vicinity buses that are currently on routes throughout the Lower Mainland, with many more on order. "The feedback we have received has been universally positive," adds Trainer.

GrandeWest VP of Business Development Jean-Marc Landry says

"Our positive test results show substantial long-term cost savings, as well as improved visibility, maneuverability, and a smoother ride." Landry adds, "Launched during the 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, the Vicinity was driven over 90,000 km, through a variety of terrains and weather conditions. With all the steep inclines, maintenance on the Vicinity's brake system was about only one third the cost of a typical 40 foot bus."

GrandeWest CFO John Sutherland adds: "At a purchase price of about \$280,000 and with a 12-year life span, the annual cost of the Vicinity is about \$23,333 as

compared to \$38,000 with a cutaway bus. Then add better gas mileage and lower maintenance costs into the mix, and the Vicinity comes out the clear winner."

The design has proven to be so well engineered that GrandeWest has also completed orders for 13 buses for a company in the province of Quebec, as well as 3 more buses for Nova Scotia Transit Authority. In fact, this innovative design has been so well received over the last two years of production that GrandeWest forecasts sales orders well into the hundreds as transportation companies seek to right-size their fleet over the coming years.

GrandeWest Transportation operates out of a 37,000 square foot warehouse in Aldergrove, of which they are currently only using a portion. All key components are designed and produced in Canada and then shipped to the Weichai Group in China, producer of Greyhound-style Mercedes Benz buses, for assembly into a durable monocoque frame. While North American bus manufacturers did not have the capacity to service GrandeWest, this Asia-Pacific arrangement has enabled GrandeWest to meet Canada's high safety and production standards, while reducing overall costs.

Today, GrandeWest's Vicinity has achieved multiple safety certifications, including the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, Cummins EPA Engine Compliance Approval, and Commercial Vehicle Safety Inspection.

With a staff of 14-25 people (depending on current orders), GrandeWest is just getting started. CEO and President William Trainer notes: "We are excited about the future of this company. We see the potential for sales to skyrocket." From their new larger facility in Langley, GrandeWest is well positioned to reach expanding markets throughout Canada and the US. CFO John Sutherland adds: "Langley is a great place to do business. It provides easy access to markets, lower overhead costs and I get to enjoy a relaxing commute against the traffic. We look forward to many more years of success in the Township of Langley."

"GrandeWest Transportation is just another example of the high caliber of expertise and ingenuity that we have in the Township," adds Township of Langley Economic Development Manager Gary MacKinnon. "Companies like these define the Township as the birthplace of world-class innovation."

www.grandwest.com

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- Is your assessment value equitable?
- Is your property tax classification correct?
- Have you received all available property tax exemptions?
- Should you file an appeal?

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## TOWNSHIP OF LANGLEY EARNS AWARD FOR INTERNET PORTAL

LANGLEY - The Township of Langley recently launched a new open data portal that makes public information on everything from property assessments and business licenses to municipal water systems and conservation areas available at the click of a button. The new portal, which can be found at data.tol.ca, presents non-personal information in a number of different and immediately accessible formats, so that users can find, read, and understand it in ways that work best for them.

In the fall, the Township received a 2014 Spirit of Innovation Award from the Municipal Information Services Association of BC in recognition of the capabilities made available through the new open data portal.

"We were thrilled to win this award, especially since it is based on votes submitted from other municipalities," said Township of Langley IT Manager Steve Scheepmaker. "It is always exciting to be acknowledged by your peers. We knew this was an innovative approach to open data and receiving this honour from MISA confirms it," he said. "Now we encourage

the public to try it and see for themselves."

According to Scheepmaker, introducing the new open data portal was an opportunity for the Township to enhance its transparency and continue to give the public quick and easy access to a number of datasets.

Through the open data portal, information can be read, printed, saved, and exported in a variety of formats. It can even be rearranged and sorted into various views, according to the user's specific search guidelines and how they would like to see the information. Charts and graphs can be created and mapping data can also be easily viewed.

"In addition to being able to download data, users can now visualize it in different ways, without the need for specialized tools," he said. "By helping people understand what they are looking at, we are making the information much more accessible."

In the past, those who wanted maps and other documents from the Township had to request the information from staff, and in some cases, pay a fee. An open data catalogue was created on the Township's website in 2011 to eliminate that process and dedicate staff



Steve Scheepmaker, Information Technology Manager for the Township of Langley and Mayor Jack Froese hold the 2014 Spirit of Innovation Award from the Municipal Information Services Association of BC.

resources to other efforts. The new portal, which was launched in September, has gone several steps further by making the information much more flexible to retrieve.

Because the data is free, updated regularly, and has open licensing rules regarding its use, the Township can ensure its data is up-to-date and relevant for everyone, from members of the public and business people to researchers and software developers.