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TRAVEL SMART DURING THE 2010 WINTER GAMES; TAKE TRANSIT IN WHISTLER

WHISTLER, B.C.— Getting around during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Whistler is easy with a little planning, preparation and a bus pass. Residents, volunteers, workers, and spectators are encouraged to travel with BC Transit, who will provide frequent bus service in the Sea to Sky corridor from Squamish to Mount Currie.

Driving restrictions will be in effect and public parking will be extremely limited in the resort, making transit one of the best options to get around. Anticipating the need for extra service, BC Transit has increased its fleet from 39 to 135 buses, and the associated level of service by over five times the regular amount.

The extra service begins Monday, February 1, ramping up to full service on Wednesday, February 3, and continues through to Sunday, February 28. Customers will benefit from a number of new neighbourhood routes, later hours, frequent runs, and even 24-hour service on routes connecting Whistler to Squamish and Pemberton.

Sea to Sky residents should purchase passes ahead of time to save time and money. Three discounted passes are available for the month of February: the Whistler February 2010 Pass (\$38.50), Squamish February 2010 Pass (\$95), and Pemberton February 2010 Pass (\$50). All three passes are at least 30 per cent off the current adult monthly bus pass prices. Plus, the Squamish and Pemberton passes are also valid the Whistler Transit System.

“Transit is critical to the success of the Games in Whistler,” said West Vancouver – Sea to Sky MLA Joan McIntyre. “Extra service and deeply discounted bus passes will support the Games, and offer people a greener transportation solution.”

Workers are to prepare for ‘life as unusual’ during the Games. Leave plenty of time to get to work, travel during quieter hours, or if possible, work from home. Businesses may consider modifying hours to avoid peak travel times for employees.

BC Transit is anticipating the largest surge in riders to occur Monday through Friday, between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. for workers traveling from Squamish to Whistler. About 750 customers an hour are expected to travel from Squamish to Whistler during this period. When possible, Squamish commuters should avoid the peak rush hour, which will occur at around 8:00 a.m. The #98 Squamish Connector runs every 10 minutes, starting at 4:00 a.m.

Spectators are encouraged to take transit to their mountain event – event tickets are valid for free, unlimited access on BC Transit buses the day of the event until 4:00 a.m. BC Transit will provide direct service to two Olympic competition venues: Whistler Creekside (Alpine Skiing) and The Whistler Sliding Centre (Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton).

“An estimated 2.1 million customers are expected to use the transit system in February. We’ve designed our expanded service in the Sea to Sky corridor to meet this demand,” said BC Transit’s President and CEO Manuel Achadinha.

Souvenir monthly passes are on sale at a number of outlets in Whistler, Squamish, and Pemberton. Authorized fare dealers are listed online at www.bctransit.com/olympics/fares.cfm. Customers may also purchase passes through www.bctransit.com/olympics or from Tourism Whistler at 1-800-WHISTLER.

Alternatively, cash fares are accepted in February. Existing cash fares and products are still in effect in Squamish and Pemberton. Fares are \$2 on all local Whistler routes. One-way fares for the #99 Pemberton Connector is \$6 per person and \$10 per person for the #98 Squamish Connector.

To ensure quick and efficient boarding, customers are asked to have their fares ready.

Residents and visitors may start planning through BC Transit’s website, www.bctransit.com/olympics, and stay updated on service changes through instant email alerts, following BC Transit on Twitter www.twitter.com/bctransit2010, and becoming a fan of ‘BC Transit’ on Facebook at www.facebook.com.

As of March 1, BC Transit will return to regular winter service levels, with some service enhancements during the Paralympic Games such as the #10 Games Express, running every 15 minutes from 5:00 a.m. to midnight. The #10 Games Express travels along Highway 99, connecting the Whistler Athletes Village to Whistler Village – Gondola Transit Exchange.

For complete travel information during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, visit www.travelsmart2010.ca.

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