To: TransLink Board of Directors, Senior Executive Team
From: Jordan Zhao, Student ENGL 301 Technical Writing UBC
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Subject: Proposal for Improving Ridership Efficiency on the Bus Route 49 to UBC, as part of TransLink Metro Vancouver

**Introduction**

The Metro Vancouver Transportation Authority, TransLink, has been providing their services for many years though operations which includes the subsidiary Coast Mountain Bus Company. For many years and years to come, the company has provided a valuable service to students as a direct route to the University of British Columbia and many other institutions. However, there has been reports of increased wait times and boarding complications attributed to the major bus route 49 to UBC. With the uncertainty of the current COVID-19 complications, inefficiency in the ridership quality will be expected to continue indefinitely.

In the case that customers end up missing their bus, the number of riders waiting to board a bus gradually builds up. These factors contribute to the continuous cycle of the inefficiency seen in ridership quality and resultingly leads to alternative sources of transportation. TransLink is the main provider for transportation to students over the lower mainland of Vancouver, they oversee all operations and could improve efficiency on bus route 49 by acting on recommendations.

**Statement of Problem**

Currently, passengers are precautious with the current COVID situation at hand which leaves them hesitant to move toward the back or stand close to others. This leads the drivers to mistakenly believe that the bus is at full capacity which leads to potential waiting riders getting passed at bus stops. The following buses need to constantly try to pick up passengers as a result and at times end up filling the bus. However, this continues to leave passengers further down the route waiting for a indefinite period of time. This is a concern as many of the riders include students that rely on this bus route. They end up falling behind on their schedule which leads to negative remarks on the outlook of the company. Furthermore, these individuals may try to account for the time delays by having to depart earlier in preparation for these delays and evidently waste even more time than necessary.

**Proposed Solution**

One possible solution to the inefficiency seen in the Bus Route 49 is to switch the current boarding system to match another bus route that expects greater ridership numbers. The two major bus routes R4 and 99 work around a heavy volume of passengers. These routes reduce wait times via a boarding system that utilizes all doors of a bus. Sharing this implementation with the bus route 49 could lead to a more efficient ridership quality.

**Scope**

To assess the possibility of implementing this method of boarding access, I plan to pursue research in the following areas of inquiry:

1. When are the hours of operations with the greatest influx of ridership?
2. Would optimization of boarding access on specific this bus route be enough to service passengers?
3. What are the costs of implementing changes to the current bus route system?
4. What other bus routes share a similar problem as the bus route 49, and what may be their solutions to increasing efficiency?
5. What is the current boarding protocol for a driver of any bus route, and how does the current COVID-19 restrictions change this protocol?
6. What is the average travel time on this route to UBC, and how much time could be saved for the passengers of this bus route?

**Methods**

My primary method of data collection will include a consultation with a current employee of the Bus Route 49. I will also aim to survey passengers of the route and understand the complications they may have with this route. I intend to discuss these concerns reported by riders and portray areas of improvement to the TransLink board of directors. Furthermore, I will also inspect ride quality and observe travel time at various peak hours of operation to take the varying conditions into consideration.

**My Qualifications**

I have been a fellow passenger of the bus route 49 for over 5 years and am aware of the many issues at hand. I am familiar with the route as a current student attending UBC which also gives me firsthand exposure to the entire bus route.

**Conclusion**

Ridership quality and efficiency is of great concern, especially among students who cannot afford to accept the consequences of arriving late to exams. By conducting comprehensive research in the areas of inquiry, I aim to determine if the ridership efficiency on the Bus Route 49 can be improved to benefit the passengers. With approval of this project, I hope to begin thorough review and investigate potential recommendations.