

5-Year Plan Public Consultation Results Summary

As part of the consultation process, information on transit service and a comment form were placed in the regional *News Group* and *Times Colonist* in October.

A response form was published on the BC Transit Website.

A voicemail “hotline” was established to receive comments.

A series of displays were held October 16-18 and October 25 at major malls in the region.

Letters informing agencies about the Consultation process were sent to the MLAs, all Municipal Councils, the Capital Region District, numerous agencies providing services to seniors and persons with disabilities, all Transit ticket vendors, community associations, the three school districts, Royal Roads, Camosun College and the University of Victoria.

Brochures were distributed to all greater Victoria libraries, municipal halls, and community and recreation centres. The material was also made available in an alternative format for persons with visual impairment.

Public consultation sessions attended by Transit Commission members and BC Transit staff were held on October 28, 29 and 30.

A total of 127 letters were received, while the voice mail hotline recorded 112 calls. In addition, a total of 1691 comment forms were returned by mail, email and fax. About 1,000 of these forms were submitted by students from the University of Victoria and Camosun College.

With respect to service, the majority of the respondents supported increased levels of service. Most favoured more frequent service; increased late night service was the second most common suggestion. Other suggestions ranged from accessibility issues to more bike racks at park and ride lots to Rider’s Guide changes.

On the funding issue, a majority favoured increased fuel tax, followed by property tax and then fare increases. Other suggestions included increased federal and provincial support, downtown and mall parking fees, vehicle changes, and community based fund raising.

Despite the extensive promotion of the consultation process, the response rate was extremely low. A total of 1930 written or voice responses were received. Approximately 120 in total attended the three open houses. This level of response is in contrast to the some 80,000 riders who use the system on a regular workday. In other words, response rate represents only some 2.5% of daily ridership.

Comments from Letters and the Hotline

Comment	Occurrences*
Increase level of service, night and Sunday service, capacity and frequency	72
Work within existing resources, rationalize routes and service	45
Increase fuel tax	72
Increase property taxes	56
Do not raise fares, keep them affordable, or reduce them	39
Increase fares, use pay	47
Improve route connections, bus stops, build bus lanes and priority signals, LRT and 90 return transfers	22
Maintain level of service	17
Obtain more funding from province and federal government	18
Do not raise property taxes	23
Reduce administration costs	19
Use smaller buses, feeder routes	13
Do not raise fuel taxes	15
Businesses that benefit from transit should contribute	7
Get fees for car licenses, vehicle purchases, road use fee	6
Impose or raise parking fees	7
Unhappy with September service reductions and changes	15
Get more funds from advertisements or through lotteries	6
Privatize part of system	3
Increase handyDART funding	3

* Note there was more than one suggestion per letter or voice mail

Comment Form Responses

A total of 1691 forms were received. Responses to any question do not necessarily sum to this total due to inconsistencies in response.

Responses to Question 1

Question 1: Should the Victoria regional Transit Commission –

- a) Work within existing resources and revenue levels and reduce service accordingly?
- b) Increase fares and or local taxes only to maintain existing service level
- c) Increase fares and/or local taxes to increase service to accommodate population growth, and increase transit's share of regional travel, in the next five years (about 3% increase in service per annum)
- d) Increase fares and/or local taxes to support an increase in service at a higher level than the Five Year Plan outlines.

Response Choice	Responses
Work within existing resources and revenue levels and reduce service accordingly	86
Increase fares and or local taxes only to maintain existing service level	39
Increase fares and/or local taxes to increase service to accommodate population growth, and increase transit's share of regional travel, in the next five years (about 3% increase in service per annum)	439
Increase fares and/or local taxes to support an increase in service at a higher level than the Five Year Plan outlines	725

Responses to Question 2

Question 2: If you would like to see an increase to existing transit service, what are the three most important improvements to be achieved?

Suggestions	First	Second	Third	Total Responses
More frequency/service	654	594	352	1605
More late night service	397	184	112	693
Operations, e.g., cleaner buses, use alternative fuels, all buses have bike racks, all buses accessible, reduce administration costs & wages, improve scheduling and the Riders' Guide	79	145	132	358
Keep fares affordable, lower fares, free fare	59	39	52	150
More frequency/service to UVIC & Camosun	49	50	23	122
Return system to pre-September 2003, especially Fairfield and James Bay	54	29	15	98
Better connections between buses	29	35	20	84
Provide LRT especially to Western Communities and the Saanich peninsula (airport, ferries), more Park and Ride lots	32	21	29	82
Provide reliable service, e.g., on time	38	20	14	72
Use smaller buses/feeder routes	21	18	24	63
More bus stops, closer together, more schedules at stops, more shelters	16	9	34	59
Increase handyDART service	9	10	12	31
Maintain service level, no increase and match service to demand	12	5	6	23
Increase fares, user pay	12	7		19

Responses to Question 3

Question 3: If additional service is to be provided where should the new money come from?

Funding Option	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
Fares	163	163	666
Property Tax	275	523	199
Fuel Tax	598	277	119

Responses to Question 4

Question 4: What other means of raising local revenues for transit services should be considered?

Funding Suggestion	Responses
Province should provide additional funding for transit	368
Governments should fund transit service	107
Other – Community fund raisers, lotteries, and other activities	102
Apply a parking surcharge on all parking lots in CRD, to encourage less car use	99
Increase advertising on buses, in Riders' guide, on tickets and passes, charge for Riders' Guide	88
Use existing resources more efficiently	78
Establish an annual pass and other pass options	69
Add charge to ICBC e.g., registration, license and insurance fees to encourage less car use	55
Establish a vehicle tax, e.g., luxury tax, purchase tax to encourage less car use	54
Businesses and corporation should sponsor transit	54
Federal government should fund urban transit service	39
Funds should come from lotteries	34
Funds should come from gas tax	30
Increase fares, user pay	30
Establish city tolls like London	18
Funds should come from property tax	13
Charter buses	13
Add a charge to building permits and developments costs to cover to extend or expand service	12
Impose a carbon tax or other environmental fee	9
Cut or eliminate fares	7

Private, public partnerships	5
Lease out routes	3

Responses to Question 5

Question 5: Other Comments?

Comments	Responses
Improve transit service	222
Keep fares affordable, lower fares, free fares	181
Transit is important	97
Keep BC Transit public – do not privatize	90
Operations – lower wages, listen to drivers	79
Increase fares	42
Get government funding	38
Return service to pre-September 2003	33
Drivers are great – some need to improve customer service	33
Advertise and promote transit	27
Increase gas tax	22
Provide LRT	21
Provide reliable service	18
Maintain or rationalize service	9
Use smaller buses , feeder service	9
Increase handyDART service	8
Privatize BC Transit	7
Establish 90 minute transfer for to and from e.g., Vancouver	6
Do not increase gas tax or property tax	5
Impose ICBC tax on vehicles, fees	5
Increase property tax	5
Business and developers should support transit	3

Charge or close parking lots	2
Lotteries	1