

Victoria Regional Transit System  
Sooke Local Area Transit Plan



February 2020

BC Transit would like to thank the many individuals, community organizers, Sooke District staff, and businesses who assisted in this consultation process.

Your support in working to improve transit in our community is appreciated.

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Background & Context.....	6
2.1 SLATP Area .....	6
2.2 Informing the Plan .....	6
2.3 Existing Transit Service .....	7
2.4 Daily Ridership .....	8
2.5 Population Characteristics .....	8
2.6 Travel Patterns .....	9
2.7 Land Use .....	13
2.8 Key Destinations.....	14
3. Public Engagement Summary.....	16
3.1 Phase 1 – Fall 2018.....	16
3.2 Phase 2 – Fall 2019.....	17
4. Performance Review .....	20
4.1 Ridership over time.....	20
4.2 Detailed Performance Review .....	22
5. Discussion .....	23
6. Service Proposals.....	24
6.1 New or realigned route priorities .....	24
6.2 Proposed Service Design for New Local Sooke Routes.....	31
6.2 Expansion Priorities.....	32
6.3 Service Change Expansion Resources Required .....	34
6.4 Sooke Transit before and after the plan .....	35
7. Proposed Infrastructure .....	36
7.1 Waddams Way Transit Exchange.....	36
7.4 Connie Road Park & Ride.....	37
7.5 Bus Stops.....	37
7.6 Viability Study for a Satellite Garage.....	38
7.7 Continued Support for Transit Priority Measures .....	38
8. Information.....	38
8.1 Route Renumbering .....	39
8.2 Review Rider's Guide .....	39
8.3 Marketing and Awareness .....	39
8.4 Sign Refresh.....	39
8.5 Real-time bus departure displays .....	39
9. Conclusion.....	40
10. Next Steps.....	40



## 1. Introduction

The [Victoria Region Transit Future Plan \(May 2011\)](#) (TFP) established a 25-year vision of an integrated regional transit system to meet the transportation needs of the region. The subsequent [2013/14 Service Review](#) built upon the Transit Future Plan by identifying specific transit priority measures, infrastructure needs and service initiatives to effectively implement the Transit Future Plan.

The Sooke Local Area Transit Plan (SLATP) is one of several local area transit plans undertaken for the Victoria Regional Transit System. Each Local Area Transit Plan builds upon the vision and goals of the TFP and sets out the transit service and infrastructure priorities for their respective areas in the short-term (1-4 years) and medium term (3-7 years).

The District of Sooke is among the fastest growing municipalities in the Victoria Central Metropolitan Area (CMA) and has demonstrated a strong market demand for transit. Continued population growth and land use changes driving increased density in residential development provide opportunity for future transit investment and growth in transit mode share in the Sooke community.

The Sooke area is currently provided with two types of transit service – one that connects Sooke to Langford and Victoria, routes 61 and 65; and another that services rural communities on the periphery of Sooke, routes 63 and 64. The SLATP process includes a performance review of these existing transit routes and their ridership against the Victoria Service Design Standards and Performance Guidelines. Additionally, population growth and land use trends are evaluated.

Using this information, the goals of the SLATP are to:

- Identify opportunities for new transit serving local travel needs within the Sooke area and improve connections to the rest of the Victoria CMA
- Identify route alignments to provide coverage to Sooke neighbourhoods currently without transit service
- Prioritize the development and improvement of new transit routes over the short and medium terms
- Identify the infrastructure needed to support both transit passengers and future transit operations.

The SLATP provides recommendations for service and infrastructure improvements.

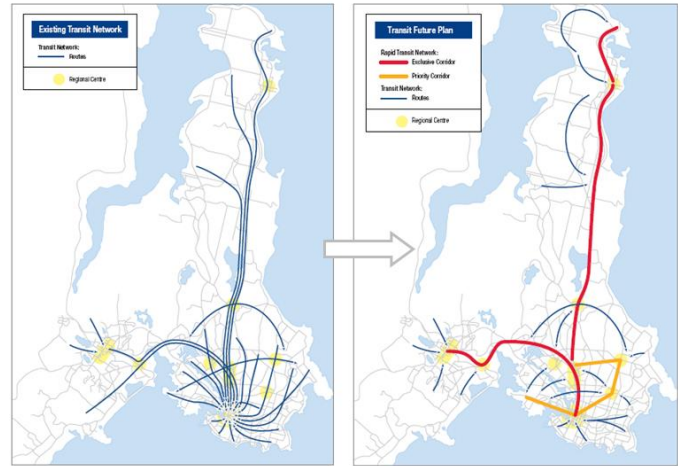


Figure 1: Concept of the Transit Future Plan



## 2. Background & Context

### 2.1 SLATP Area

Centered on the District of Sooke, the SLATP encompasses a broad area that includes T'Sou-ke Nation, Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) Nation and rural Otter Point and East Sooke (Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Part 1).

Although the SLATP and service proposals focus heavily on portions of Sooke contained within the Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Urban Containment and Policy Area (UCPA), rural areas outside of the UCPA presently or previously served by transit are within geographic scope of the SLATP.

### 2.2 Informing the Plan

The Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw (2018) reinforces concepts of sustainable development, and sets out ten common objectives to guide growth and change across the municipalities of the CRD and Juan de Fuca Electoral Area:

- Significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions
- Keep urban settlement compact
- Protect the integrity of rural communities
- Protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health
- Deliver services consistent with Regional Growth Strategy objectives
- Create safe and complete communities
- Improve housing affordability
- Increase transportation choice
- Strengthen the regional economy
- Foster a resilient food and agriculture system.

Transit service plays a valuable role in fulfilling many of these objectives – most directly in aiding towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, keeping urban settlement compact, creating safe and complete communities, increasing transportation choices and strengthening the regional economy.

The *District of Sooke Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw (2010)* contains the long-term vision for the District. Many of the objectives and policies within the OCP support transit use and continued partnership between BC Transit and the District of Sooke is required to achieve the following:

- Creating a well-designed, complete community through accessible and efficient transportation initiatives
- Encourage transit-oriented development
- Increasing the availability of high quality transit services
- Improving bus shelters and cross walks
- Creating multi-modal streets for pedestrians, bicycles, and mass transit.



**Figure 2:** Sooke Local Area Transit Plan Area

The District of Sooke is in the final development stages of a new Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The TMP and SLATP have been developed in coordination of each other to achieve mutually supportive and harmonized transit solutions for the District of Sooke.

The Province of British Columbia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is responsible for all highways as well as road infrastructure in rural Otter Point and East Sooke areas (Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Part 1). Since 2018, several substantial infrastructure projects have been announced including bus stop upgrades (completed) and the realignment of Highway 14 in the area of Gillespie and Connie Roads (final planning stages). This latter project includes an overpass, new Park & Ride facility and bus stop facilities. Rural road improvements in the Otter Point area are also underway which will include the resurfacing and widening of some sections of Otter Point Road.

### 2.3 Existing Transit Service

Sooke is served by four routes:

- 61 Sooke/Langford/Downtown
- 65 Sooke/Langford/Downtown via Westhills
- 63 Otter Point
- 64 East Sooke

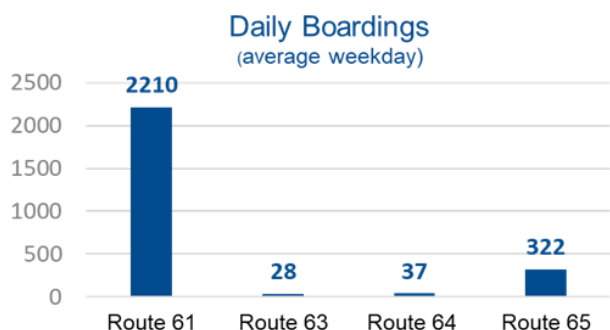
These routes serve approximately 2,500 passengers per day with 24,844 annual service hours.



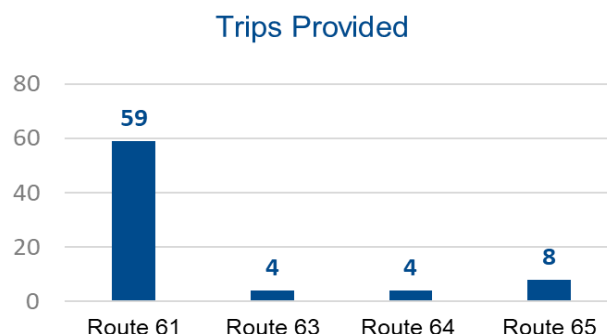
**Figure 3:** Map of the routes that serve Sooke

## 2.4 Daily Ridership

Ridership in Sooke is strongly reflective of the service levels provided. Figure 4 shows the number of people who ride each route on a daily basis and Figure 5 shows the number of daily trips provided on those routes.



**Figure 4:** Daily ridership in Sooke



**Figure 5:** Daily trips provided in Sooke

## 2.5 Population Characteristics

Growth and change in the Sooke area, particularly within the District of Sooke, suggests opportunity to establish and grow local transit ridership as well as to further grow transit ridership from Sooke to other areas. These would both encourage further mode shifts away from single occupancy vehicle use.

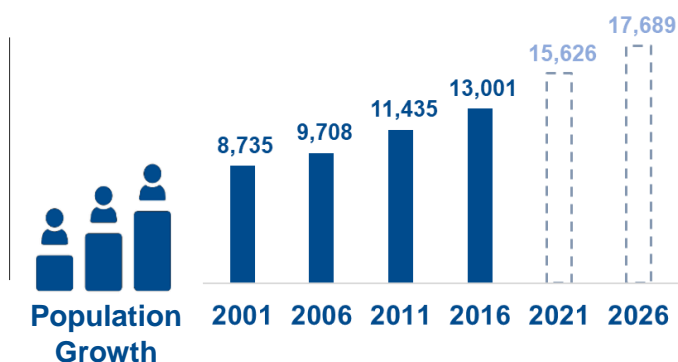
### 2.5.1 Growth & Density

Sooke is among the fastest growing municipalities in the Victoria CMA. Between 2001 and 2016, the municipality's population grew by 50% from 8,735 to 13,001. In the same period, the core municipalities of the Victoria CMA grew by 15%. Sooke areas are achieving population density supportive of transit – most areas range from 15 to 30 people per hectare, with several newer developments reaching 43 people per hectare.

Outlying rural areas such as East Sooke and Otter Point have also grown, but growth rates are modest. With less than two people per hectare, these areas remain among the least densely populated areas of the CMA and are not transit-supportive. See **Appendix A** for population density maps.



Sooke: 13,001  
Victoria CMA: 367,770



**Figure 6:** Sooke 2016 population compared to Victoria CMA

**Figure 7:** Sooke population growth from 2001-2016



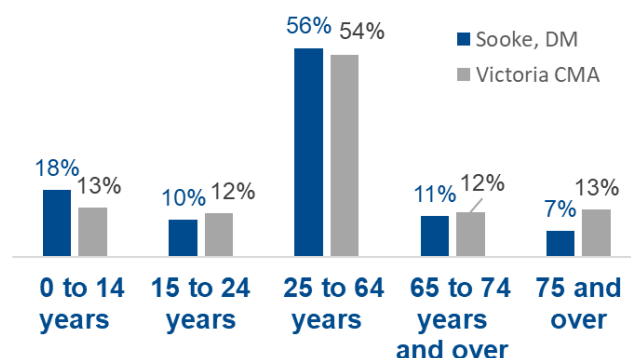
Sooke is forecast to continue experiencing rapid growth – based on BC Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. projections, the District of Sooke will be nearing a population of 18,000 by 2026. This population estimate correlates to the 2016 size of the Township of Esquimalt or District of Colwood.

- **Transit opportunity:** The transit service should be developed to enable local travel to key destinations within Sooke.

### 2.5.2 Age Distribution

Sooke has a higher proportion of children under 15 (18%) compared to the Victoria CMA (13%). Conversely, the proportion of seniors in Sooke is lower (18 %) than the rest of the CMA (25%). See **Appendix A** for age distribution maps.

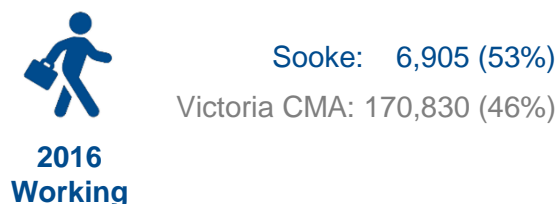
- **Transit opportunity:** The transit service to be developed to accommodate increasing youth and post-secondary oriented travel.



**Figure 8:** Sooke population proportions compared to Victoria CMA

### 2.5.3 Labour Force Participation

In Sooke 53% of the population participates in the labour force, which is markedly higher than the 46% participation rate of the Victoria CMA. In the coming years the upcoming wave of youth will likely continue to sustain a higher labour force participation than that of the Victoria CMA.



- **Transit opportunity:** A full time working individual makes nearly 500 trips per year to or from work, usually at regular times to regular destinations. The high proportion of working Sooke residents represents further opportunity to improve transit mode share of Sooke residents.

## 2.6 Travel Patterns

Information relating to the travel patterns of Sooke residents is available through two primary sources: the CRD 2017 Origin Destination (OD) Travel Survey data<sup>1</sup> and Statistics Canada 2016 Census Journey to Work<sup>2</sup>.

Residents of Sooke primarily commute throughout the Westshore and Core municipalities, with less than 1% of trips made to the Peninsula. Most Sooke residents travel over 30 minutes to commute to work, and over half depart for work before 8 a.m. Despite longer journeys and earlier starts, Sooke residents are strong transit users in the Victoria CMA.

<sup>1</sup> CRD OD Surveys examine all types of trips, and include trips made by people aged five and older.

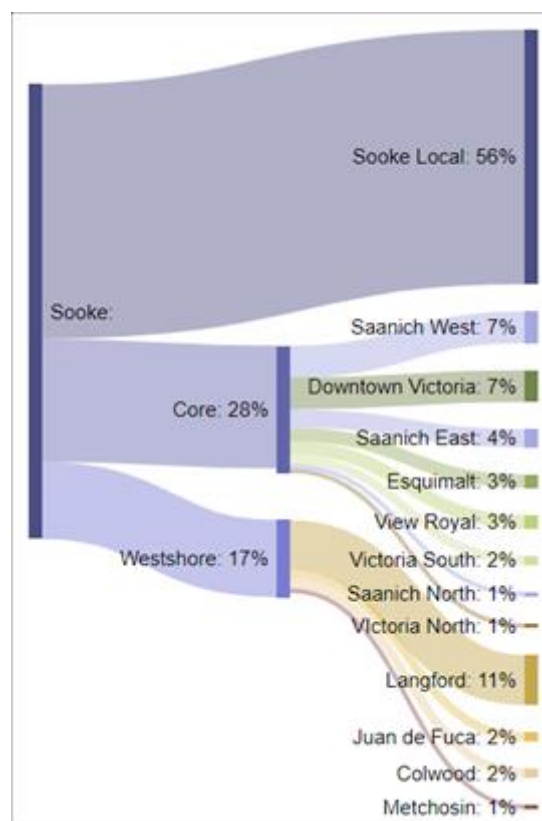
<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada Census Journey to Work examines only trips made for work purposes.

## 2.6.1 Destinations

Based on the CRD 2017 OD survey, during the morning peak (from 6:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m.), 7,200 trips are made from the District of Sooke for all purposes. Of these, 56% or 4,020 are made within Sooke<sup>3</sup>.

The remaining 3,160 trips are split between the Core (28%), Westshore (17%) and Peninsula (0.5%) destinations. At a municipal scale the majority of external trips are made to Saanich (12%), Langford (11%), and Victoria (10%).

- **Transit opportunity:** Peak transit service to and from Sooke is oriented to enable access to Victoria and Saanich West; new transit resources could be developed to enable similar connectivity to employment areas in Langford.

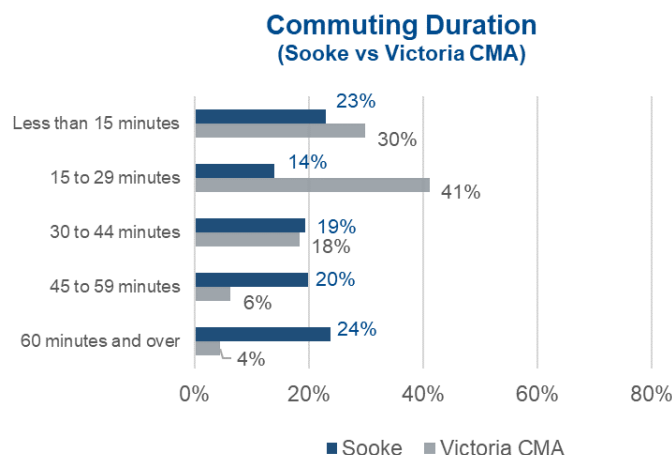


**Figure 9:** Destinations of trips originating within the District of Sooke during the weekday a.m. peak  
Source: 2017 CRD OD Travel Survey

## 2.6.2 Travel Time

As expected given the destinations outlined above, residents of Sooke experience much longer commute durations than other residents of the Victoria CMA. 63% of Sooke residents commute for more than 30 minutes to reach work. At a CMA-wide scale only 28% of residents commute more than 30 minutes.

- **Transit opportunities:**
  1. The duration of travel means that mode choices for many Sooke residents may be constrained to motorized modes. This potentially makes transit a more competitive option within Sooke than other non-auto modes.
  2. The duration of travel means that choices to use transit (over driving) made by Sooke residents represent a meaningful contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions generated by that community.



**Figure 10:** Commuting duration for the employed labour force aged 15 years and over in private households with a usual place of work or no fixed workplace address - 25% sample data  
Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada

<sup>3</sup> Examples may include youth travelling to school, parents making trips to drop off a child, or individuals travelling to work locally.

### 2.6.3 Departure Time

Sooke residents leave for work earlier than most residents of the Victoria CMA. Departures between 5:00 a.m. and 5:59 a.m. are more than twice as likely for residents of Sooke. By 6:59 a.m. 36% of Sooke residents people have departed, compared to 20% of residents at the Victoria CMA.

- **Transit opportunity:** The morning peak in Sooke begins earlier than in most parts of the Victoria CMA. New transit trips introduced between 5:00 a.m. and 5:45 a.m. would not require additional peak vehicles

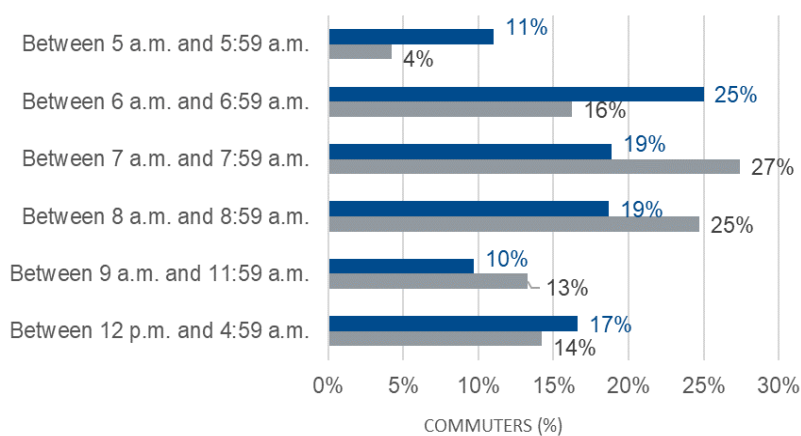
### 2.6.4 Mode Share

Sooke residents are among the most committed transit customers in the Victoria CMA. The high propensity to use transit during peak travel times means that Sooke transit users contribute to reducing road congestion during high demand times.

During the morning peak (from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.), 22% of Sooke residents use transit for their journey. This is tied with transit use among residents of Esquimalt for the morning peak.

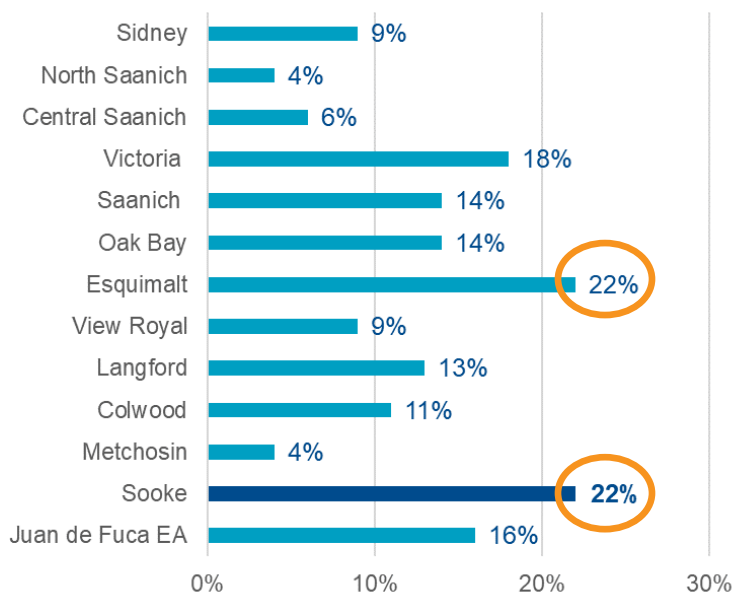
- **Transit opportunity:** A higher transit mode share is possible. Peak transit service to and from Sooke is heavily oriented to enable access to Victoria and Saanich West. New transit resources to access other key destinations at peak times would make transit an option for more Sooke residents and further increase the transit mode share.

**Time Leaving for Work  
(District of Sooke vs Victoria CMA)**



**Figure 11:** Time leaving for work for the employed labour force aged 15 years and over in private households with a usual place of work or no fixed workplace address - 25% sample data  
Source: 2016 Census, Statistics Canada

**Transit Mode Share by Municipality during the A.M. Peak (06:00-08:59)**



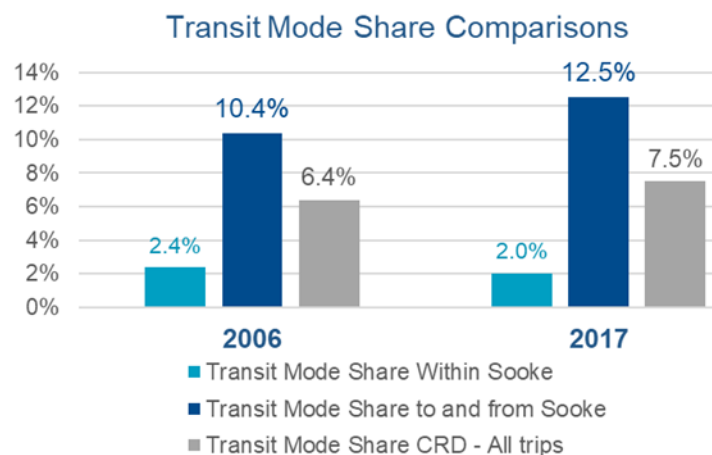
**Figure 12:** Trips by Travel Mode, Persons 5+, AM Peak  
Source: 2017 CRD OD Travel Survey

Examining trips made to and from Sooke over a 24-hour period, Sooke has a 12.5% transit mode share. Conversely, transit is only used for 2% of transit trips within Sooke.

The overall 24-hour period transit mode share across the Victoria CMA is 7.8%.

The Transit Future Plan aims to achieve a transit mode share of 12% for the Victoria Regional Transit System.

- **Transit opportunity:** The low proportion of transit use for trips made within Sooke is most likely a reflection of the limited transit service available for trips within the district. The substantial transit ridership for trips made to and from Sooke shows a strong demand for a more robust local transit service.



**Figure 13:** Trips by Travel Mode, Persons 5+, 24 Hours  
Source: 2017 CRD OD Travel Survey

## 2.7 Land Use

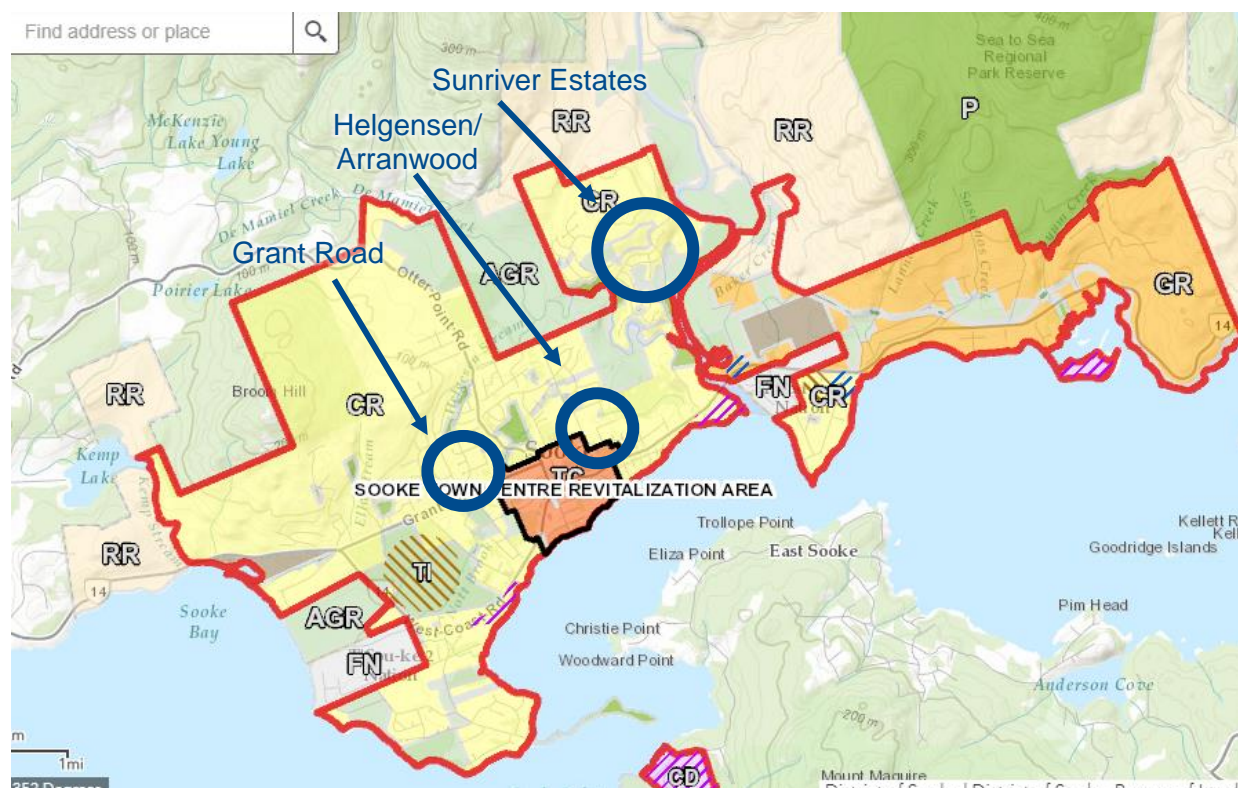
Transit-supportive land use is critical for the success of the transit system and, conversely, transit must be integrated with land use in order to best serve community members.

### 2.7.1 Residential Development

Within the lands designated as Community Residential, the Sunriver, Helgensen/Arranwood and Grant areas have seen substantial new residential development and intensification. From 2011 to 2018, an average of 95 new dwellings units were added per year, with most of these new dwellings being accommodated in these three areas. The base household density associated with Community Residential is 10 dwelling units per hectare.

Detached, row and duplex housing that have heavily characterized new development with secondary suites are also permitted in many areas, creating further opportunities for soft increases in household density.

Higher density multifamily units are limited to more exclusive water view developments (within the Town Centre), and several BC Housing subsidized developments which are underway around the periphery of the Town Centre. The base household density associated with the Town Centre designation is 30 dwelling units per hectare.



**Figure 14:** Primary areas of residential development  
Base map: District of Sooke Official Community Plan Land Use Map



## **2.7.2 Commercial Development**

The Sooke OCP designates the Town Centre as the primary commercial hub of Sooke, and specifies that retail uses, services, personal services, facilities and entertainment be focused within this area. Development in the past decade has been modest, but steady. The most recent large development is a moderate intensification occurring on the Evergreen Centre site, adjacent to the main Sooke Town Centre bus stop in the westbound direction.

## **2.8 Key Destinations**

Destinations shown in Figure 12 within Sooke were identified through a combination of:

- Review of Sooke OCP and CRD Regional Growth Strategy
- Destination surveys in Phase 1 engagement
- Community mapping exercises conducted during stakeholder workshops.

### **2.8.1 Town Centre**

Sooke Town Centre is designated by the OCP to become the most dynamic, dense and commercial section of Sooke. The town centre, or destinations within it, were the most frequently referenced destination in both Phase 1 surveys (61 mentions) and community mapping exercises.

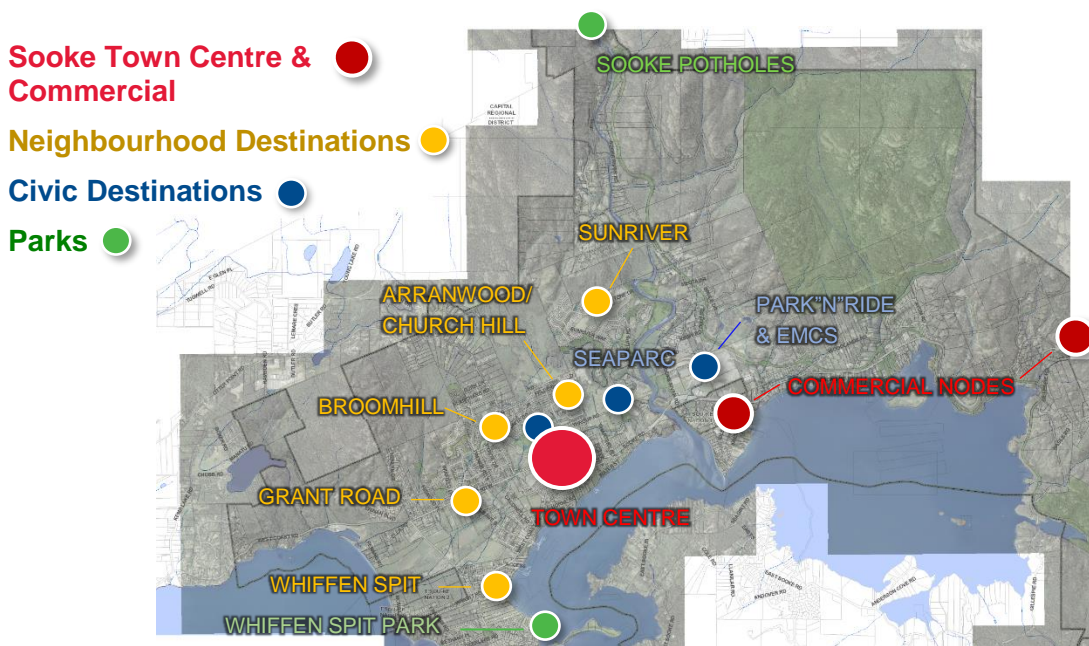
### **2.8.2 Commercial Nodes**

In addition to the Town Centre, the Sooke OCP designates two commercial nodes outside of the Town Centre for secondary neighbourhood-scale commercial development. These locations were not frequently cited as major destinations during Phase 1 surveys and community mapping exercises.

### **2.8.3 Neighbourhood Destinations**

Phase 1 surveys and community mapping exercises within the Community Residential lands most frequently referenced (mentions):

- |                             |                                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Sunriver Estates (29)     | • Broomhill (8)                   |
| • Arranwood/Church Hill (9) | • Grant Road                      |
| • Whiffen Spit (4)          | • Otter Point (various locations) |



**Figure 15:** Key Destinations most cited during engagement surveys and stakeholder workshops

### 2.8.4 Civic Destinations

Following the Town Centre and Sunriver, the next most cited destinations in the surveys were civic locations – SeaParc (27), Park & Ride (11), EMCS (6), and the Sooke Health Unit (4)

### 2.8.5 Parks

Following the Town Centre and Sunriver, the next most cited destinations in the surveys were civic locations – SeaParc (27), Park & Ride (11), EMCS (6), and the Sooke Health Unit (4)

### 3. Public Engagement Summary

Public engagement events for the SLATP happened in two phases. Each phase included events developed for different audiences, various tools to solicit input and feedback and opportunities for one-on-one conversations with project staff. Engagement is critical in providing transit staff with insights into community priorities and needs to enable the further shaping of service.

Public engagement events for the SLATP were carried out in two phases from fall of 2018 to fall of 2019.

In total 1,274 people participated in the consultation. The majority (81%) completed online surveys, while over 200 people attended scheduled events. See **Appendix B** SLATP Engagement Report.

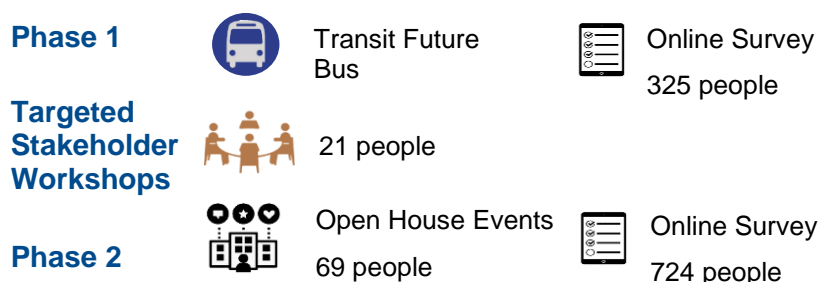


Figure 16: Public engagement participation summary

#### 3.1 Phase 1 – Fall 2018

Gathered information on service-level and destination priorities and confirmed plan goals. Over 460 individuals participated, with regular transit users well represented. Participants supported the plan goals of:

- Identifying route alignments to provide coverage to Sooke neighbourhoods currently without transit service
- Establishing the order of priority for the development and improvement of new transit routes over the near term and medium term
- Identifying infrastructure needed to support both transit passengers and future transit operations.

##### 3.1.1 Phase 1 Challenges and Opportunities

- Participants requested more commuter trips on Routes 61 and 65 to address overcrowding
- Earlier service starts for weekdays on Routes 61 and 65 were requested
- There is strong support for transit priority measures and any tools to make transit rides shorter and more direct
- There are concerns with lighting and visibility at bus stop locations
- Participants expressed frustration with the different variants of Route 61
  - The route has two variants that each follow different route alignments and terminate in different places, but have the same number.

### 3.1.2 Phase 1 Opportunities for Service Improvements

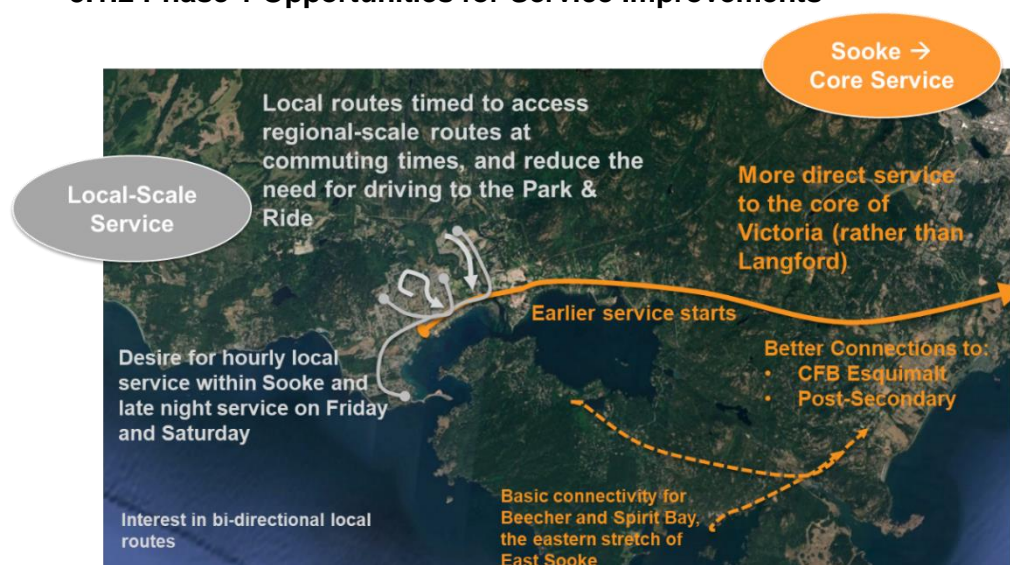


Figure 17: Community service improvement priorities identified during Phase 1 engagement

### 3.1.3 Phase 1 Outcomes

- A new earlier Route 61 trip commenced in September 2019, departing at 5:03 a.m.
- The scope of the LATP was expanded to investigate issues and performance of the Sooke/Langford/Victoria Service (regional-scale) routes
- Draft service proposals were prepared for Phase 2.

## 3.2 Phase 2 – Fall 2019

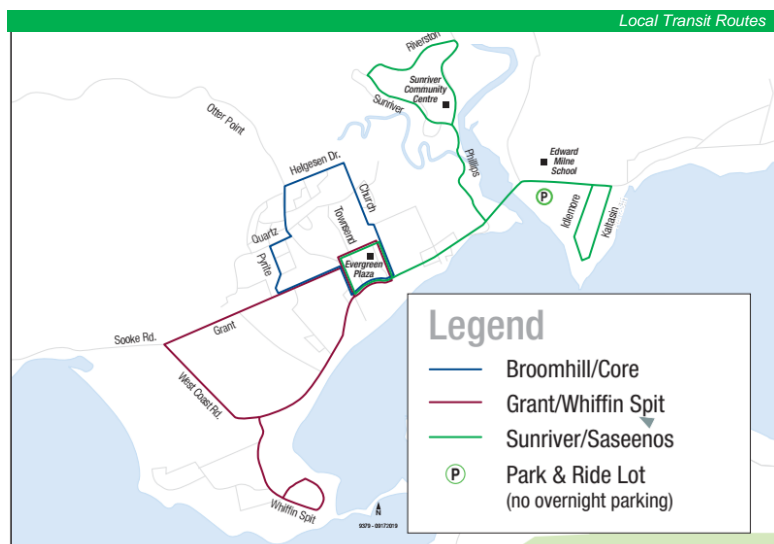
Phase 2 engagement was focused on gauging responses to draft service proposals for Sooke transit service. Over 793 people participated in Phase 2 with the online survey garnering 724 responses. Draft service proposals were well received at both Open Houses and in the online survey – about 95% of all participants supported the concepts proposed at each scale of service.

### 3.2.1 Phase 2 Challenges and Opportunities

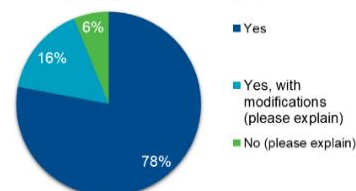
- The timing of implementation – there is frustration that transit service has been slow to grow despite being well-used
- The duration of regional-scale transit trips due to interlining with Route 50 and delays caused by congestion was frequently mentioned as a concern
- Participants reported experiencing significant delays in their travel due to pass-ups at stops in the central core (Uptown)
- Participants expressed very strong interest and support for more transit priority measures, specifically citing dedicated bus lanes.

### 3.2.2 Phase 2 Outcomes

- The draft concepts proposed a distinct new rural route serving Beecher Bay, in addition to a realigned rural route serving East Sooke. Based on consultation, service to East Sooke and Beecher Bay can be combined into one route.
- The draft concepts show seasonal service to the Sooke Potholes as a spur from a rural route. As local transit service within Sooke is developed and school-oriented trips are scheduled within the local transit coverage routes, it would be more viable to reallocate resources for local school-oriented trips to serve the Sooke Potholes in the July and August.



Do you support these changes?



Compared to today, how would these local transit services work for you?

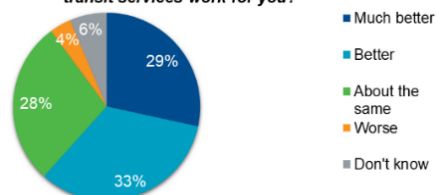
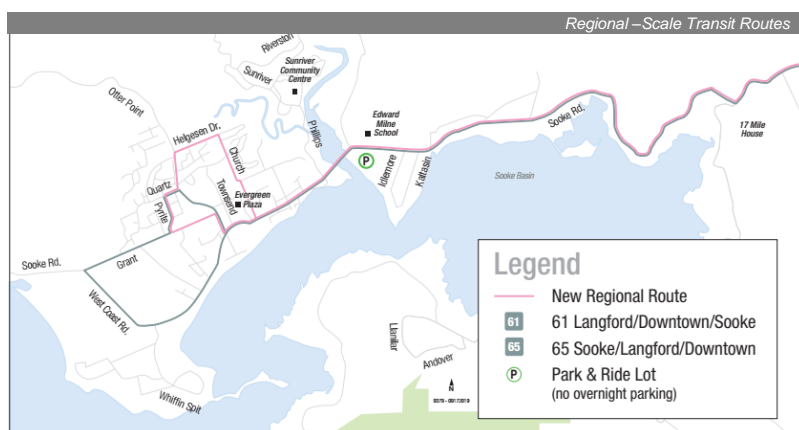
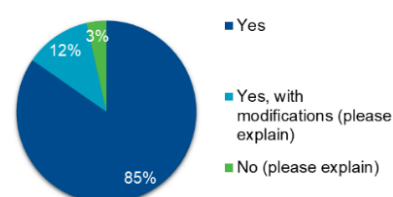


Figure 18: Response to Local-Scale Transit Service Concepts



Do you support these changes?



Compared to today, how would these regional-scale transit services work for you?

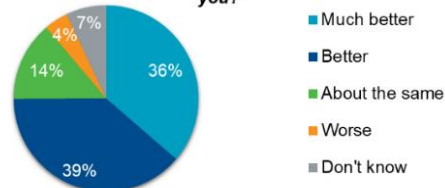
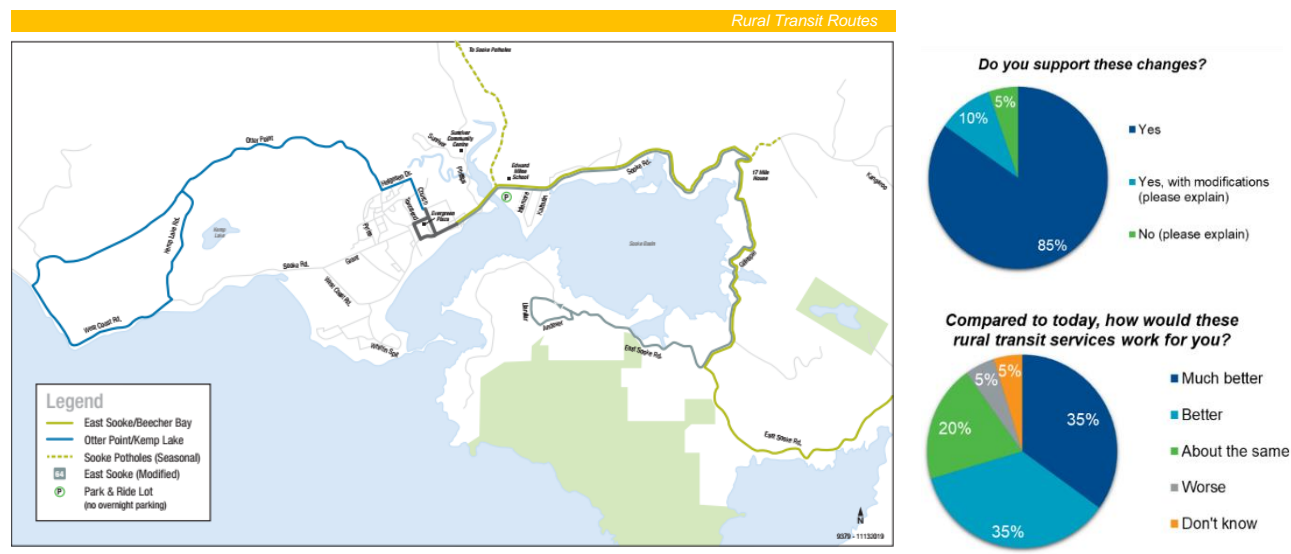
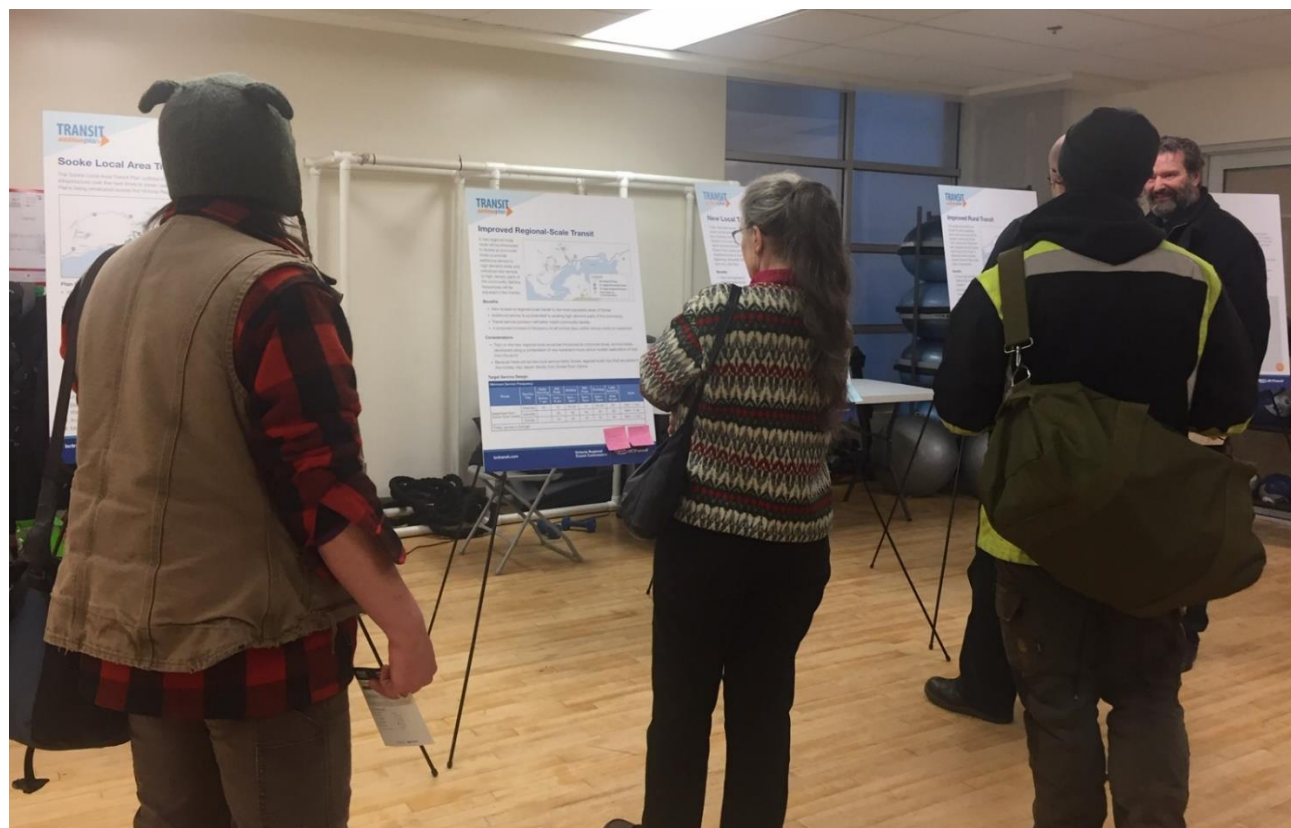


Figure 19: Response to Regional-Scale Transit Service Concepts





**Figure 20:** Response to Rural-Scale Transit Service Concepts

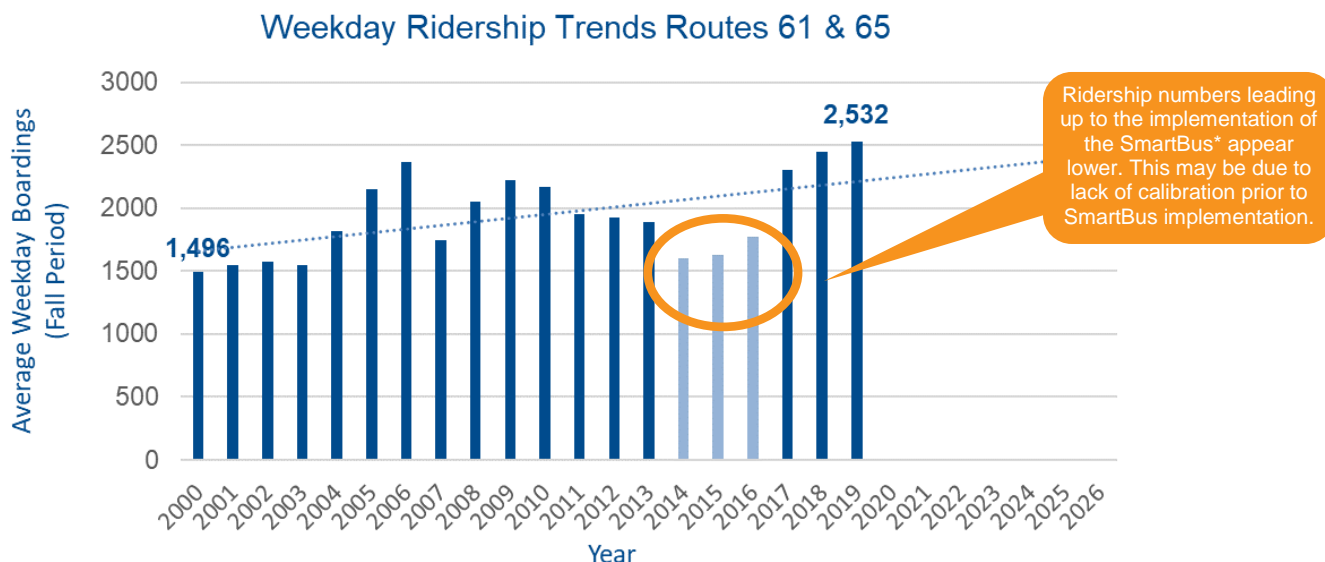


Open House participants from the consultation held at SEAPARC Leisure Centre on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## 4. Performance Review

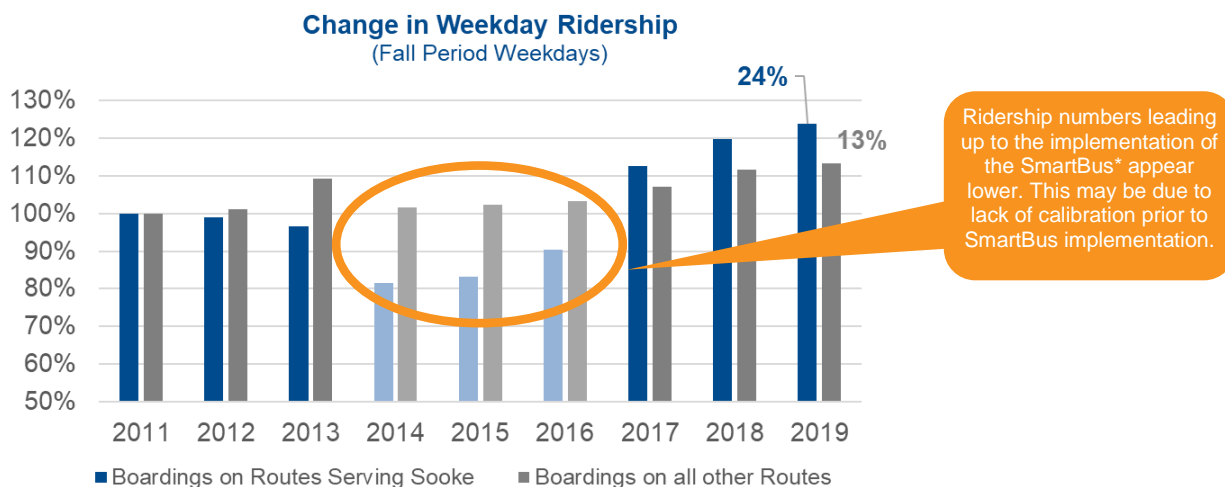
### 4.1 Ridership

Ridership on routes 61 and 65 has shown an increase since 2001, rising 63% from about 1,500 boardings per day to nearly 2,500 boardings per day in the fall of 2018. This growth is in spite of very modest service level increases during this time period and likely heavily influenced by the growing population of Sooke.

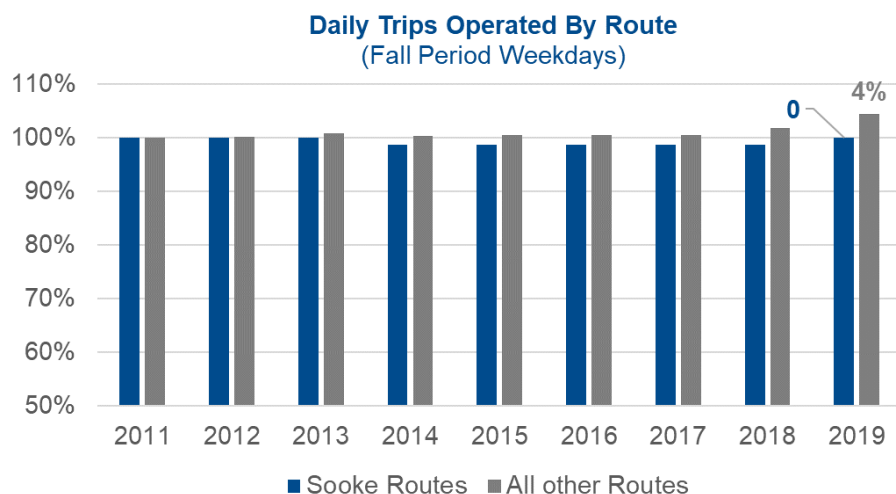


**Figure 21:** Increase in ridership on Routes 61 and 65

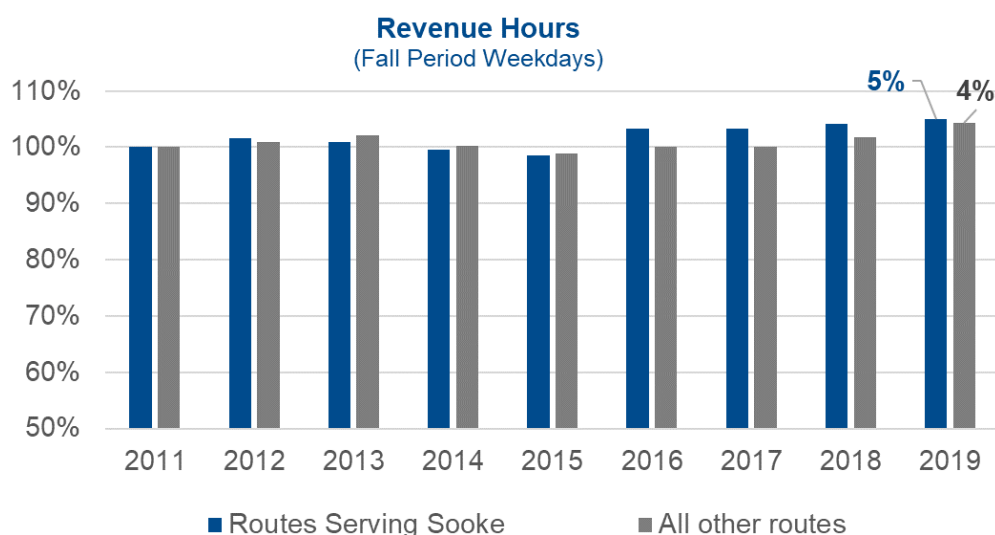
Looking in a shorter period and compared to the Victoria Regional Transit System, between 2011 and 2019 boardings on routes serving Sooke rose by 24%, compared to a 13% rise across other Victoria Regional Transit routes. Since 2011 the number of trips provided on routes serving Sooke has remained flat, while in the number trips provided across the system rose by 4%. Since 2011 the hours provided on Sooke routes has risen by 5%, while hours provided across the system have by 4%.



**Figure 22:** Change in weekday ridership, by route 2011 to 2019



**Figure 23:** Change in trips operated by route, 2011 to 2019



**Figure 24:** Change in revenue hours by route, 2011 to 2019

The service hours added to routes serving Sooke have been consumed by lengthening time needed to operate each trip due to congestion. Meanwhile growth of ridership in Sooke has outpaced the growth of the transit trips operated.

Together, routes 61 and 65 are classified in the Victoria Transit Future Plan as Local High Demand Transit. Routes 63 and 64 have been loosely classified as Local Coverage Transit Routes, however their service levels fall well below minimums for this classification. See **Appendix C** for Service Standards and Performance Guidelines for details of Route Classifications.

#### SmartBus\*

Route-level ridership in the Victoria Regional Transit system is now provided by Automatic Passenger Count (APC) units which are mounted within more than 70% of conventional buses and integrated with other SmartBus features such as Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. Vehicles are rotated throughout blocks ensuring that each conventional trip is sampled regularly. The integration with GPS provides much more granular data showing where passengers are boarding and alighting and subsequently which sections of each route (by trip level) have the highest loads or maximum load.

## 4.2 Detailed Performance Review

A detailed performance review of existing service rates was undertaken following the high degree of concerns expressed during Phase 1 engagement surrounding Sooke/Langford/Victoria service. See **Appendix C** for the full details of the performance review.

The findings are as follows:

- At a route level, routes 61 and 65 serving Sooke are exceeding targets set for “High-Demand Local Transit”
- Deeper examination at a trip-level shows that boardings on some peak trips have reached capacity. These peak times are **critical priorities** for the following future service frequency improvements:
  - In the mornings 10-minute frequencies should begin with one eastbound trip added around 5:43 a.m., and another additional eastbound trip timed to occur 10 minutes before or after the 7:24 a.m. trip. Both of these new trips should bypass Langford Exchange to connect between Sooke and Victoria.
  - In the afternoons have one additional westbound trip departing downtown between 3:15 p.m. and 3:53 p.m. and another additional westbound trip between 4:30 p.m. and 4:50 p.m. Both of these new trips should connect between Sooke and Victoria. Both of these new trips should bypass Langford Exchange to connect between Victoria and Sooke.
- Weekend service on route 61 does not meet the required service span set out in the service design guide for this route.
  - On Saturdays a new 61 trip should be added in the morning to depart Sooke around 6:00 a.m.
  - On Sundays a new 61 trip should be added in the morning to depart Sooke around 6:15 a.m. and a new trip added to arrive in Sooke near midnight
- There appears to be unmet demand for improved access between Sooke and the core municipalities. Moving forward trips departing and destined to Sooke in the midday should alternate between Langford Exchange and downtown Victoria
- Additionally, there is likely unmet demand for more direct access to Langford at commuter times. Regional-scale trips departing Sooke after 6 a.m. begin to see increasing alightings at key intersections in Langford such as Sooke Road at Happy Valley and Sooke Road at Jacklin. Access to Langford could be improved by:
  - Developing timed transfers between Langford routes and route 61 at key locations along Sooke Road
  - Aligning a new regional-scale trip or an existing route 61 trip to operate along the route 65 alignment
  - The introduction of Sooke to Langford regional-scale trips at commuter times
- Sooke transit service produces more boardings and operates at a more productive rate than that in communities with transit systems that are similarly sized (in hours)
- Most communities with a local transit service and a similar or smaller population than Sooke operate more local hours than Sooke. If the ratio of local/regional scale service found across these communities were applied to Sooke, the area could expect to have about 9,100 local-scale transit service hours.

## 5. Discussion

There is a strong case to be made for ongoing investment in transit service oriented to Sooke and Sooke-area residents.

**Rapid growth and densifying communities.** Ongoing population growth and transit-supportive densification of many Sooke areas are creating a strong market for local transit service connecting Sooke neighbourhoods with key local destinations such as the Town Centre and SeaParc. Establishing a locally-oriented transit service in Sooke will work to further improve the community's transit mode share and support ongoing efforts to reduce carbon, improve social connectivity opportunities and bolster access to local employment.

**Strong increases in market demand.** Transit use among Sooke residents is higher and increasing faster than many other parts of the Victoria Regional Transit System. This shows a strong transit-orientation among many residents and anticipates excellent receptiveness to local transit. New local routes operating within Sooke would likely perform at equal or higher ridership levels to local routes within Langford.

**Improving connections to major external destinations.** Peak transit service to and from Sooke is heavily oriented to enable access to Victoria and Saanich West; however, Langford is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common external municipal destination for Sooke residents. As employment destinations continue to grow within Langford, improving access and connections from Sooke to these areas at commuter times will be essential to further shifting mode shares towards transit.

**Underserved areas.** The Beecher Bay community and eastern portions of East Sooke Road do not have access to base service levels. About a decade ago, Beecher Bay was served by route 66, but that service was discontinued. Restoration of transit service to provide basic connectivity to employment, services and education is strongly recommended to support equity across the Victoria Regional Transit System.

**Downstream benefits.** The commuter version of routes 61 and 65 serves rapidly densifying and economically developing parts of Langford. Increasing service on the corridors served by routes 61 and 65 also supports transit mode choices for new residents in these parts of Langford.

**Critical priorities.** Sooke residents are among the most avid transit users in the Victoria Regional Transit System; however, avid use combined with rapid community growth has resulted in transit demand outpacing the growth of the transit service. The existing route 61 and 65 have trips which are overloaded and should be prioritized for additional service investments.





## 6. Service Proposals

The following provides an overview of the proposed service changes recommended for the SLATP. A proposed Implementation Plan can be found in **Appendix D**. Proposed service changes include:

### New or realigned route priorities

- Three Targeted Transit priorities
  - One new targeted commuter route serving travel from Sooke-Langford/Victoria (supplementing Routes 61 and 65)
  - Two redesigned targeted routes serving rural areas, and replacing the existing routes 63 and 64.
- Three Local Coverage Transit priorities

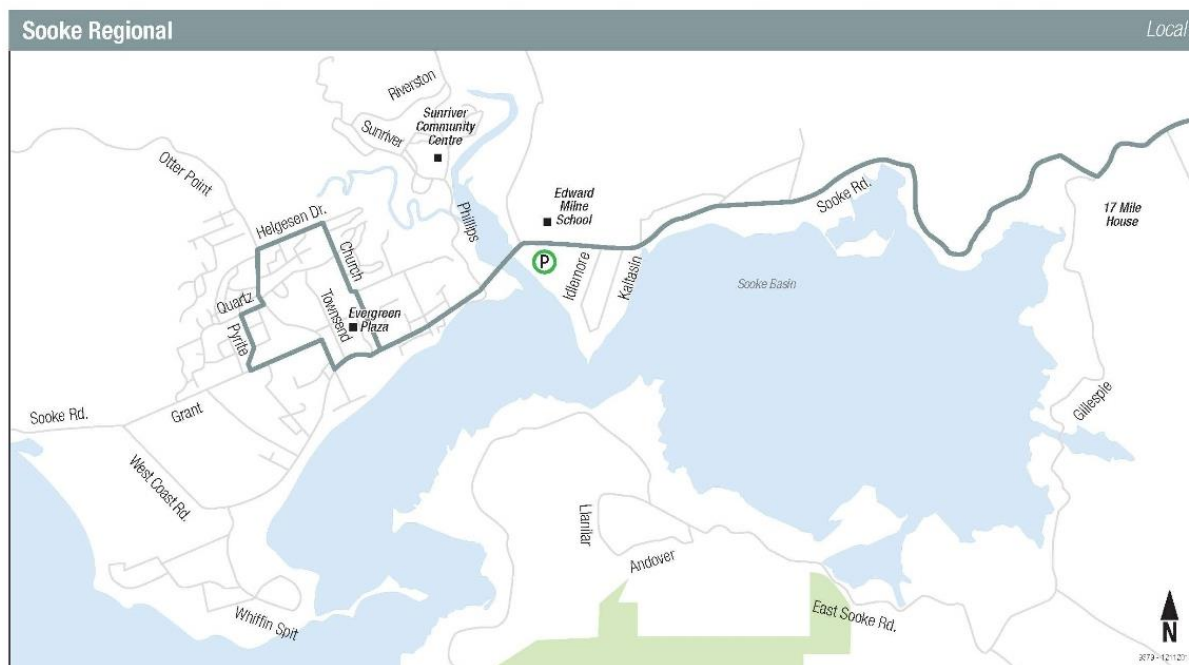
### Expansion priorities

- Expansion of route 61 Sooke-Langford service on weekends
- Expansion of route 61 Sooke-Langford/Victoria service on weekdays

### 6.1 New or Realigned Route Priorities

#### 6.1.1 New Targeted Commuter Route connecting Sooke to Langford and Downtown Victoria.

This new route would provide access from the highest density area in Sooke to Victoria via Westhills.



**Figure 25:** Map of new regional route in Sooke

## Rationale

- The 61 Sooke and the 65 Sooke are facing capacity issues during peak times with buses at or nearing maximum capacity. Therefore, additional service is required.
- Based on feedback from the public, additional service into the core is needed at peak times. A new route would provide additional service to Victoria while also serving densifying residential and employment areas within Langford.
- Supports the goals of the Transit Future Action Plan by:
  - Making transit an attractive alternative to the private vehicle by providing fast, direct, and convenient service that is accessible to everyone; and
  - Making the transit system efficient by matching transit services and service levels to demand.
- The developed service area meets the population density thresholds of over ten people per hectare set out in the Service Design Standards.
- The developed service area is within the urban containment boundary of Sooke.

## Considerations

- Any new route serving Sooke requires a new transit exchange in Sooke in order to have an adequate layover space and efficiently provide transfers between routes.
- This new route would work in conjunction with routes 61 and 65 to achieve the service design parameters below.

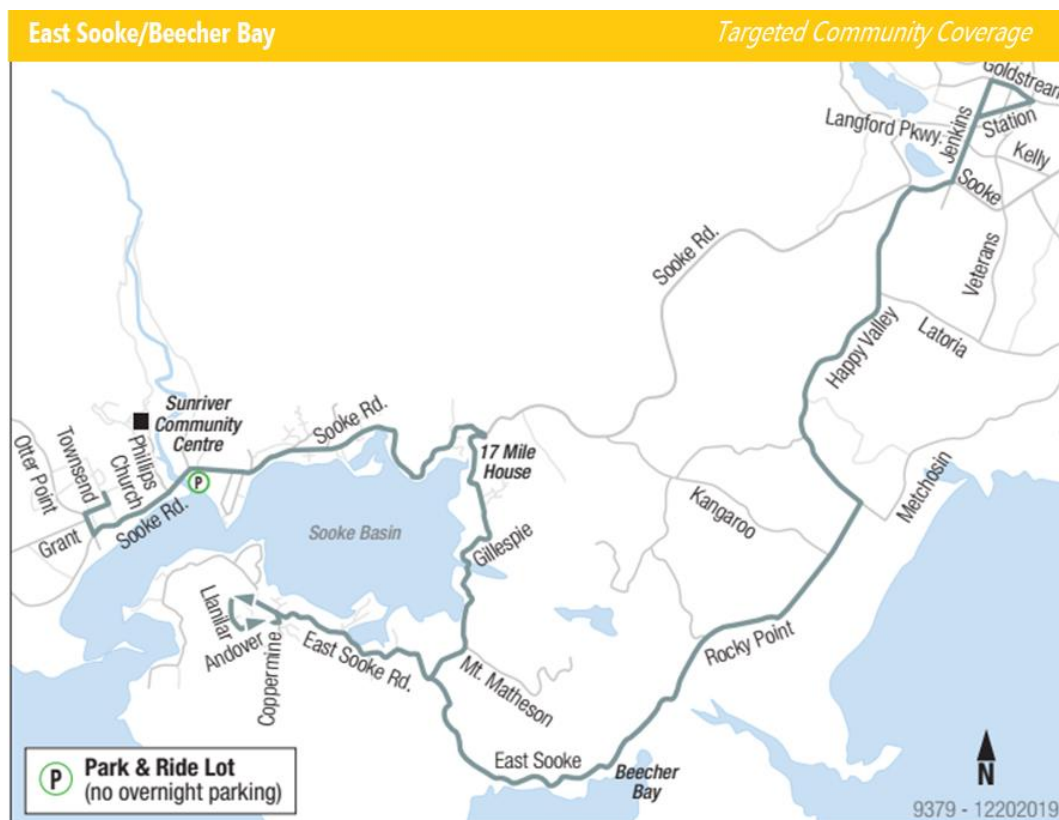
### Targeted Service Design Parameters for combined service on routes (61, 65, new) serving Sooke/Langford Victoria

Service Day	Frequency						Span
	Before 7 a.m.	7 a.m. - 9 a.m.	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.	3 p.m. - 6 p.m.	6 p.m. - 10 p.m.	After 10 p.m.	
Weekday	30	15	30 - 45	15	30 - 45	60	5 a.m. – 1 a.m.
Saturday	-	30	45	45	45	60	6 a.m. – 1 a.m.
Sunday	-	45	45	45	60	60	6 a.m. – 11 p.m.

**Table 1:** Service design parameters for combined routes (61, 65, new) serving Sooke-Langford/Victoria

### 6.1.2 Sooke to Langford via Beecher Bay & East Sooke

A realigned and extended rural transit service between Sooke, East Sooke, Beecher Bay and Langford via Metchosin. This will replace the existing 64 East Sooke.



**Figure 26:** Map for the redesigned and reclassified route serving East Sooke and Beecher Bay (route 64)

#### Rationale

- Beecher Bay is currently unserved by transit and providing a basic level of service would allow for connections into the regional transit system and improve access to employment, services and education for community members.

#### Considerations

- This new route replaces and absorbs the hours currently allocated to 64 East Sooke.
- As this new route no longer serves Billings Spit or Sunriver, implementation should be paired with the implementation of the new Local Transit Sunriver/Billings Spit Route.

Service Day	Existing	Proposed	Target Frequency	Span
Weekday	-	5 - 6 trips/day	2 - 3 hours	6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday	-	5 - 6 trips/day	2 - 3 hours	6 a.m. - 9 p.m.

**Table 2** Service design parameters for new East Sooke/Beecher Bay Route

### 6.1.3 Otter Point/Kemp Lake

Improved rural transit service in the Otter Point and Kemp Lake area along West Coast Road and a more direct route into Sooke with the removal of service to Whiffen Spit. This will replace 63 Otter Point.



**Figure 27:** Map for amended and reclassified Otter Point/Kemp Lake route

#### Rationale

- Greater area of coverage in the Otter Point and Kemp Lake areas.
- This new route will replace and absorb the hours currently allocated to 63 Otter Point.
- The area previously served by route 63 in Whiffen Spit will be served by a new local transit route.
- Supports the goals of the Transit Future Action Plan by:
  - Making transit an attractive alternative to the private vehicle by providing convenient service which is accessible to everyone; and
  - Making the transit system efficient by matching transit services to demand.

#### Considerations

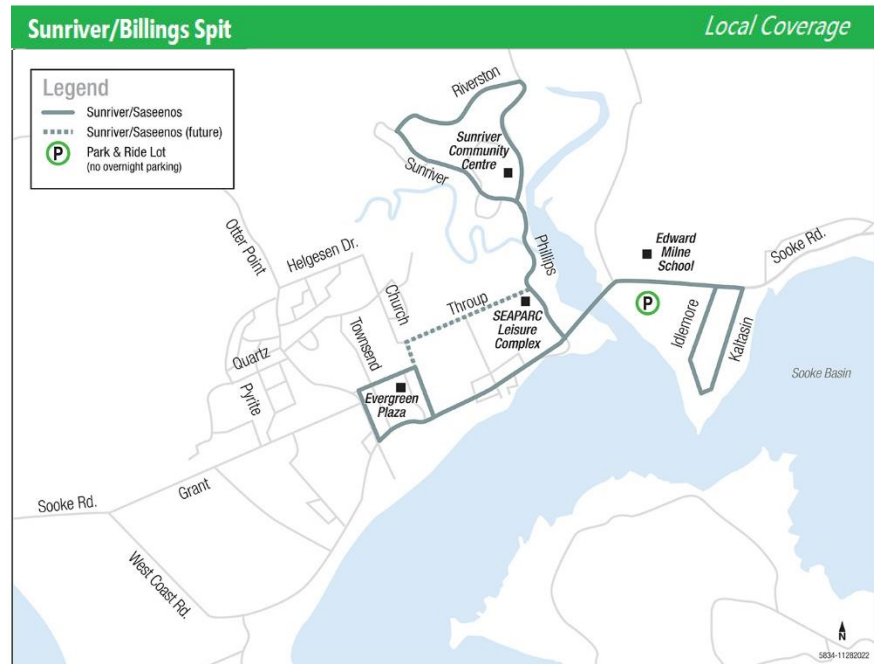
- Implementation of this service change should be after implementation of the local transit service along Grant Road and Whiffen Spit.

Service Day	Existing	Proposed	Target Frequency	Span
Weekday	4 trips/day	8 - 9 trips/day	2 hours	6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday	-	8 - 9 trips/day	2 hours	6 a.m. - 9 p.m.

**Table 3:** Service design parameters for an amended Otter Point route

### 6.1.4 Sunriver/Billings Spit

A new local coverage route connecting the neighbourhoods of Sunriver and Billings Spit to Sooke, while providing access to SeaParc Leisure Centre, Edward Milne School and the Sooke Park & Ride.



**Figure 28:** Map of new Sunriver/Billings Spit route

### Rationale

- There is no local transit network within Sooke. Local transit routes provide access to local destinations as well as higher order transit routes, such as regional or rapid transit networks.
- Local transit service is a priority identified in the 2013 Victoria Service Review and through public engagement
- The areas of Sunriver and Billings Spit have limited transit service along the route 64, and are respectively about 3 km away from Sooke Town Centre
- Sunriver Estate is one of the fastest-growing neighbourhoods within Sooke and demand for transit service is increasing rapidly
- This route will provide local transit connections to SeaParc Recreation Centre, Edward Milne School and the Sooke River Road Park & Ride
- Supports the goals of the Transit Future Action Plan by:
  - Making transit an attractive alternative to the private vehicle by providing convenient service which is accessible to everyone; and
  - Making the transit system efficient by matching transit services to demand.
- 3,598 persons reside within 400 meters of proposed services (2016 Census)

### Considerations

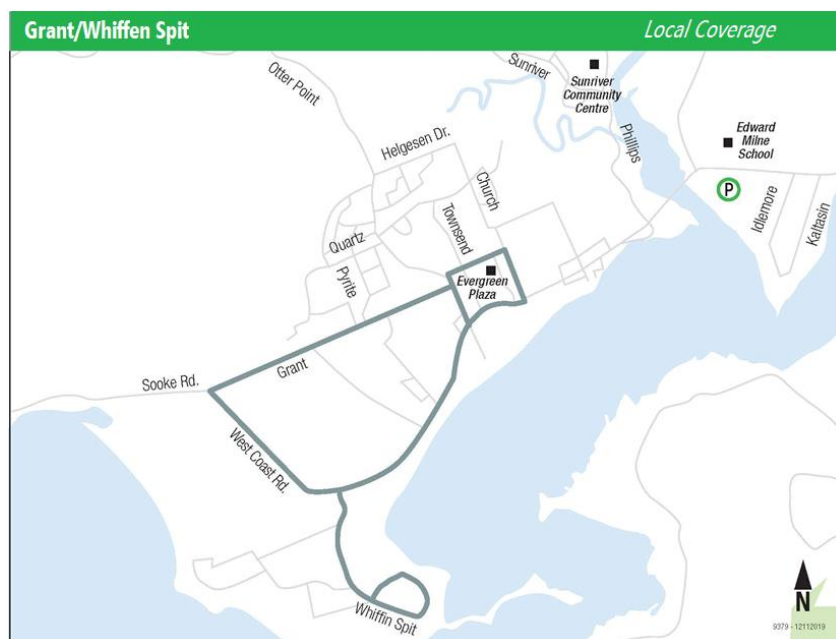
- Using the new Throup Road will broaden access to residents while saving time
- Implementation of this route should be paired with the implementation of the re-aligned route 64 service for East Sooke and Beecher Bay.



- Any new route within Sooke requires a new transit exchange in Sooke

### 6.1.5 Grant/Whiffen Spit

A new local coverage route along Grant Road and to Whiffen Spit.



**Figure 29:** Map for new Grant/Whiffen Spit route

### Rationale

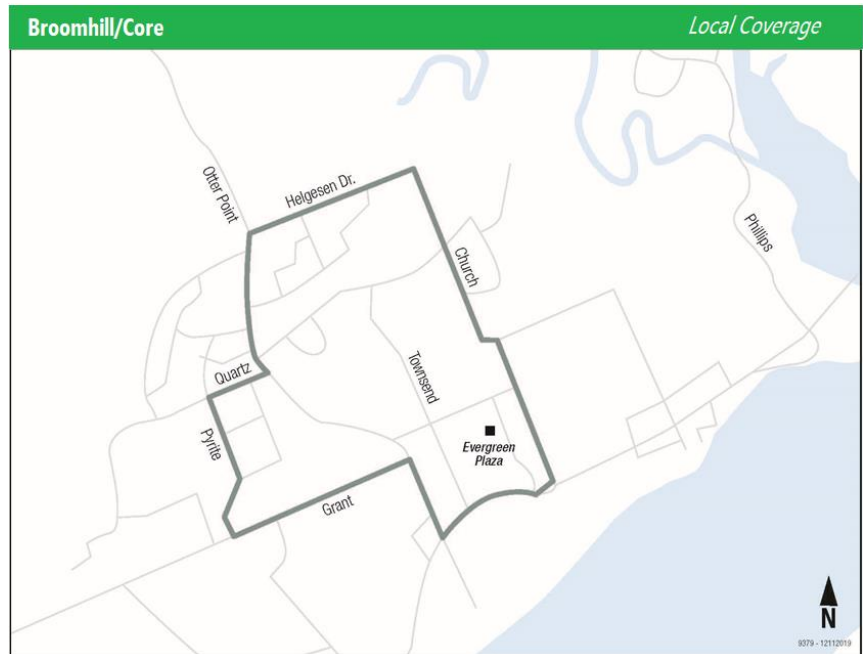
- There is no local transit network within Sooke. Local transit routes provide access to local destinations as well as higher order transit routes, such as regional or rapid transit networks.
- Local transit service is a priority identified in the 2013 Victoria Service Review and through public engagement
- This new transit route provides service to the residents along Grant Road and the residents of Whiffen Spit and allows them to connect to the other local or regional transit routes
- Supports the goals of the Transit Future Action Plan by:
  - Making transit an attractive alternative to the private vehicle by providing convenient service which is accessible to everyone; and
  - Making the transit system efficient by matching transit services to demand.
- The serviced area meets the population density thresholds set out in the Service Design Standards of over ten people per hectare
- The service area is within the urban containment boundary of Sooke
- 4,823 persons reside within 400 meters of proposed services.

### Considerations

- Once this service is implemented, this portion of routes 61 and 65 may be removed from off-peak times to avoid duplication. Instead, a timed transfer between this route and 61 or 65 can enable passengers to avoid waits while the 61 or 65 has recovery time.
- Any new route within Sooke requires a new transit exchange in Sooke in order to have an adequate layover space and efficiently provide transfers between routes.

### 6.1.6 Broomhill/Core

A new transit service around the core of Sooke and the Broomhill neighbourhood.



**Figure 30:** Map of new Broomhill/Core route

#### Rationale

- There is no local transit network within Sooke. Local transit routes provide access to local destinations as well as higher order transit routes, such as regional or rapid transit networks.
- Local transit service is a priority identified in the 2013 Victoria Service Review and through public engagement
- This route will provide service to the most densely populated area of Sooke; higher density provides more potential customers for transit service.
- Supports the goals of the Transit Future Action Plan by:
  - Making transit an attractive alternative to the private vehicle by providing convenient service which is accessible to everyone; and
  - Making the transit system efficient by matching transit services to demand.
- The developed service area meets the population density thresholds set out in the Service Design Standards of over ten people per hectare.
- The developed service area is within the urban containment boundary of Sooke
- 4,959 persons reside within 400 meters of proposed services

#### Considerations

- Any new route within Sooke requires a new transit exchange in Sooke in order to have an adequate layover space and efficiently provide transfers between routes
- On a per-kilometer basis the Broomhill/Core route has the potential for the highest productivity as the largest number of residents are located near to it.

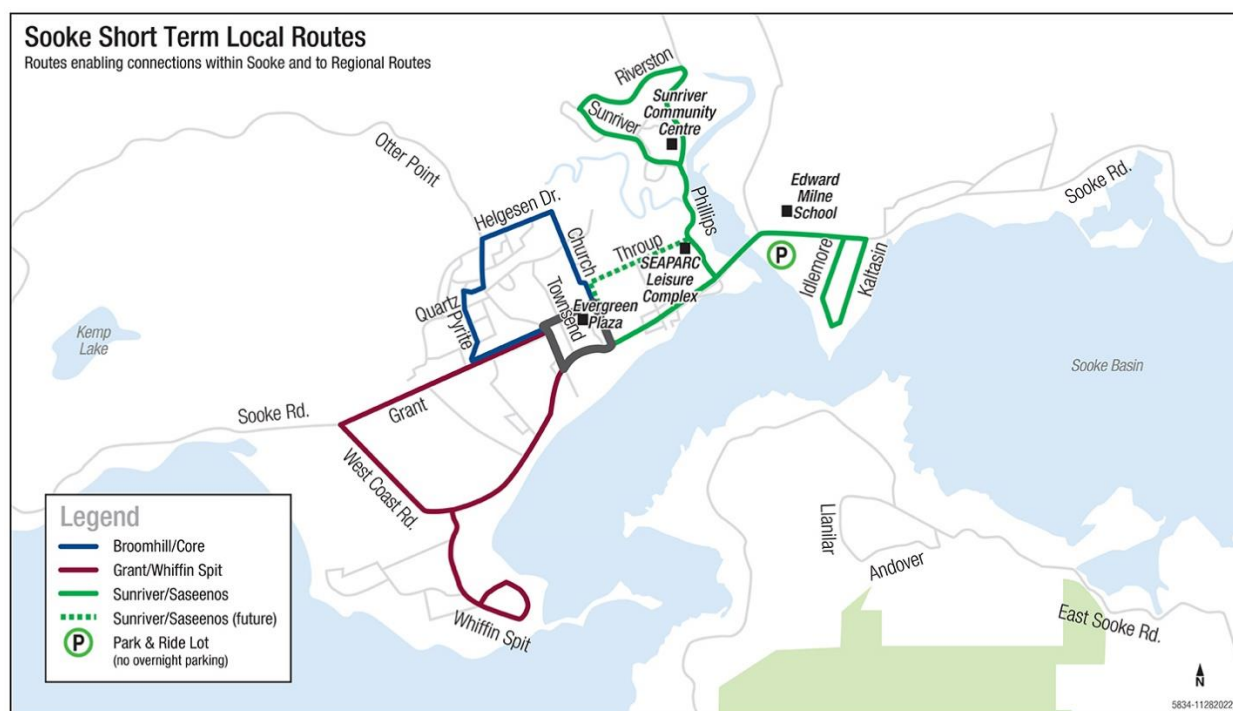
## 6.2 Proposed Service Design for New Local Sooke Routes

Upon full implementation of this plan, each of the following new local coverage routes should target the service design parameters shown in table 4.

- Sunriver/Billings Spit
- Grant/Whiffen Spit
- Broomhill/Core

Service Day	Frequency						Span
	Before 7 a.m.	7 a.m. - 9 a.m.	9 a.m. - 3 p.m.	3 p.m. - 6 p.m.	6 p.m. - 10 p.m.	After 10 p.m.	
Weekday	30	60	60	30	60	60	6 a.m. – 10 p.m.
Saturday	60	60	60	60	60	60	7 a.m. – 12 a.m.
Sunday	-	120	120	120	120	-	7 a.m. – 11 p.m.

**Table 4:** Target service design guidelines for each of the new local coverage routes identified in this plan.

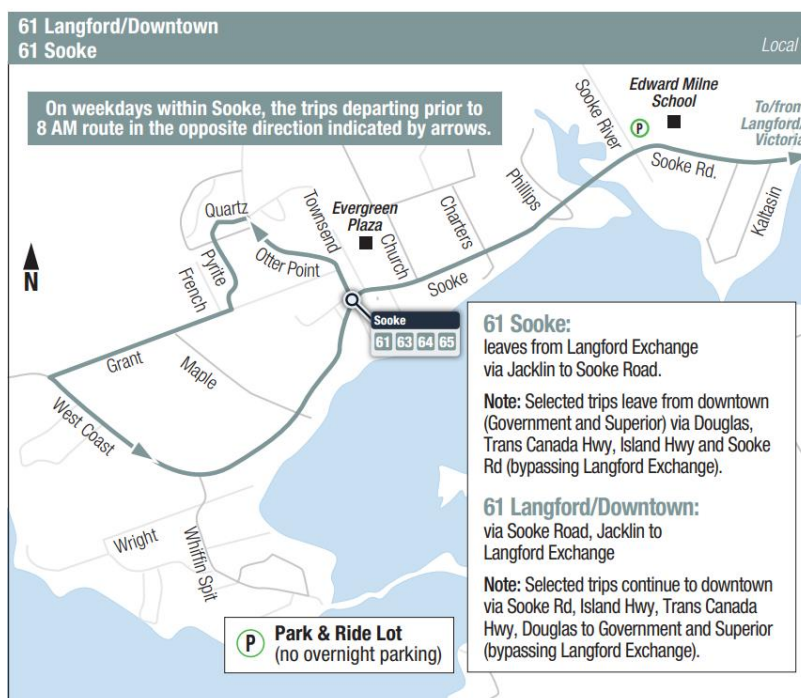


**Figure 31:** Combined New Local Routes

## 6.3 Expansion Priorities

### 6.3.1 Sooke/Langford – Weekends

New weekend trips to meet the span in the service design guideline and address priorities communicated through consultation.



**Figure 32:** Map of the existing route 61

#### Rationale

- Weekend improvements on routes connecting outside of Sooke were the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest priority identified through consultation
- On Saturdays and Sundays the existing route 61 service begins later than the service design guideline for this route
- On Sundays the existing route 61 service ends earlier than the service design guideline for this route
- Early morning service from Sooke to other parts of the Victoria CMA is a priority identified through consultation
- Sooke transit riders who commute to work demonstrate a strong pattern of early morning ridership

#### Considerations

- An additional earlier Saturday 61 trip could be interlined with the 50 Downtown trip departing Langford exchange at 6:40 a.m.
- An additional earlier Sunday 61 trip could be interlined with the 50 Downtown trip departing Langford exchange at 7:01 a.m.
- Interlining the Sunday night 50 Langford trip arriving at Langford Exchange at 10:37 p.m. into a 61 Sooke trip.

### 6.3.2 Sooke/Langford – Weekdays

New weekday trips to meet the frequencies in the service design guideline

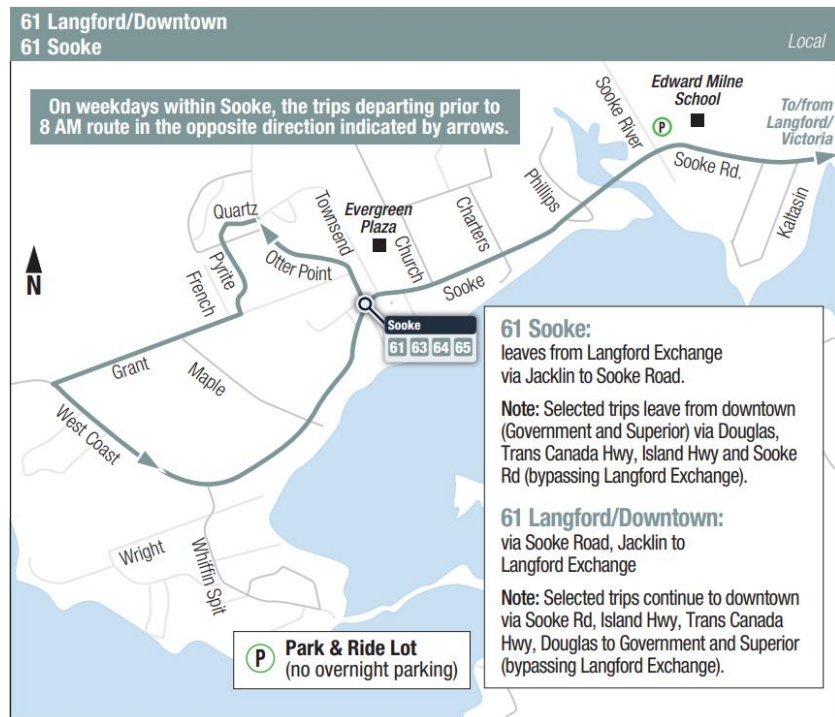


Figure 33: Map of the existing route 61

#### Rationale

- On weekdays service on Sooke-Langford/Victoria routes does not meet the target 30-minute midday frequencies in the service design guideline, nor the 15-minute peak frequencies identified for 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
- Evening and midday service improvements between Sooke and other parts of the Victoria CMA are a priority identified through consultation.

#### Considerations

- As new trips are added to the midday service, transit should alternate between serving Langford Exchange and downtown Victoria
- Once the Whiffin/Grant loop local transit service is established and can be timed to connect with route 61, that portion of route 61 travelling along Grant Road should be removed in order to limit duplication. These hours can be reinvested into the provision of new midday trips between Sooke-Langford/Victoria
- In total, an additional 6 to 8 round trips are suggested for service between Sooke-Langford/Victoria. These should be distributed as per the service design standards between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. and after 6 p.m.



## 6.4 Service Change Expansion Resources Required

The SLATP identifies a number of areas served by existing rural routes 63 and 64 which will be transitioned to service by new local routes. In order to ensure that coverage is maintained, the implementation of service changes to targeted community coverage routes (rural routes) must be done in conjunction with the introduction of local transit service. Service priorities are included as critical fix, short term and medium term.

### Critical Fix

Description	Estimated trips	Net change in hours	Net change in peak buses
0. Critical Fix of Sooke/Langford/Victoria by the introduction of a new commuter route connecting Sooke to Victoria via Westhills	4	+ 2,800*	+ 2 double decker

\*this route would also provide Langford-Victoria service

### Short Term

Description	Estimated Weekday trips	Net change in hours	Net change in peak buses
1. Discontinue existing 64 East Sooke	- 8	+2,700	+ 2 light duty
2. Introduce new East Sooke and Beecher Bay Targeted Community Coverage Route	+ 10		
3. Introduce Sunriver and Billings Spit Local Coverage Transit Route. Realign to use the Throup Road Connector as soon as possible.	+ 18	+3,400	
4. Discontinue existing 63 Otter Point	- 4	+ 2,800	+ 1 light duty
5. Introduce New Otter Point/Kemp Lake Targeted Community Coverage Route	+ 8		
6. Introduce Grant Road/Whiffin Spit Local Coverage Transit Route	+12	+1,600	
7. Introduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. New early morning Saturday and Sunday Sooke/Langford trips</li> <li>b. A new later Sunday night Langford/Sooke trip</li> <li>c. 4 new weekday* roundtrips between Sooke/Langford/Victoria</li> </ul>	+3 per weekend  +4	+3,500	+1 double decker

To maintain coverage for Sunriver and Billings Spit, these implementations should happen at the same time

To maintain coverage for Whiffin Spit, these implementations should happen at the same time

\*this would also provide Langford-Victoria service

**Medium Term**

Description	New Estimated Weekday trips	Net change in hours	Net change in buses
8. Improve Local Transit Routes in Sooke as follows: a. Introduce weekend service on all local routes b. Introduce Broomhill/Core Local Route c. Service level increase weekdays of routes i. Sunriver/Billings Spit ii. Grant Road/Whiffen Spit	+18    27 21	+6,500	+ 1 light duty
9. Introduce: weekend service on targeted community coverage routes		+2,000	+1 light duty
10. Introduce: a. 4 new weekday* round trips off-peak between Sooke/Langford/Victoria b. Realign off-peak trips to be staggered between Sooke-Langford and Sooke-Victoria	+4	+3,000	+ 1 heavy duty

\*this would also provide Langford-Victoria service

**6.5 Sooke Transit before and after the plan**

Transit routes serving Sooke currently account for 24,843 annual hours or 3% of the total Victoria Conventional hours and generate about 930,000 or 3.5% of boardings within the Victoria Regional Transit System. Under the proposed service changes outlined in section 6.3 of the report, transit routes serving Sooke would more than double to form about 6% of the total Victoria conventional hours, and are estimated to generate about 6% of the boardings within the Victoria Regional Transit System.

	BEFORE THE PLAN			AFTER THE PLAN		
	Annual hours by type	Peak Buses	Annual Boardings (Extrapolated from Fall 2019)	Annual hours by type	Peak Buses	Annual Boardings (once established)
Service Connecting Sooke-Langford/Victoria	21,180 85%	24 DD/HD	904,386	30,480 59%	28 DD/HD	1,280,160
Rural Transit Service	3,663 15%	1 LD	30,403	9,663 19%	2 MD	96,630
Local Transit Service	0 0%	0	0	12,000 23%	4 MD	240,000
	24,843		934,789	52,143		1,616,790

**Table 2:** Sooke transit before and after the plan

## 7. Proposed Infrastructure

### 7.1 Waddams Way Transit Exchange

#### Rationale:

The existing downtown transit exchange in Sooke is at capacity with no room for additional buses and limiting opportunities for timed transfers between routes. To allow for growth in the local system, a new on-street exchange is proposed along Waddams Way. Centrally located in Sooke, it is also near the future site of the new library, immediately adjacent to a large development site and a short walk from many densely populated parts of the District.



**Figure 34:** Design concept for Waddams Way  
Source: District of Sooke Lot A Report, May 16, 2019

#### Considerations:

- A modest increase in runtime may be required for regional-scale routes to reach this location
- Vehicles will likely turn around using the planned roundabout at the intersection of Church and Throup
- All trips should continue to serve the existing town centre bus stops as that area will remain the commercial core of the community for the midterm.
- A temporary layover solution may be required until the exchange is completed

### 7.2 Throup Road Connector

Intersection density, short blocks and diversity of routing options support active transportation and provide a more resilient transportation network. Connecting Throup Road to Phillips will provide a new option for transit routing that emphasizes local service within Sooke. BC Transit supports the development of the Throup Road connector and recommends moving local routes serving Sunriver and SeaParc to Throup Road.

## 7.4 Connie Road Park & Ride

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is developing a new Park & Ride on Highway 14 near Connie Road.

## 7.5 Bus Stops

BC Transit will continue to work with and support the District of Sooke's installation of new bus stops, including accessible boarding pads and other passenger amenities such as shelters and benches. In order to help prioritize which bus stops to improve, the tables below contain the list of the top ten bus stops by activity without key amenities such as an accessible boarding pad or shelter; Table 6 for roads under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Table 7 for roads under the jurisdiction of the District of Sooke.

Activity Ranking	Bus Stop Name
1	Sooke Road at Church Rd. (Westbound)
2	Sooke Road at Kaltasin (Westbound)
3	Sooke Road 6350 Block (Westbound)
4	Sooke Road 5100 Block (Northbound)
5	Sooke Road 5110 Block (Southbound)
6	Sooke Road at Charters Road (Westbound)
7	Sooke Road at Ludlow Road (Westbound)
8	Sooke Road at Glinz Lake Road (Northbound)
9	Sooke Road at Ludlow Road (Eastbound)
10	Sooke Road at Saseenos (Eastbound)

**Table 3:** Bus stop improvement priorities on Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure roads

Activity Ranking	Bus Stop Name
1	Quartz Road at Gatewood Road (Eastbound)
2	Grant Road at French Road (Westbound)
3	Grant Road at French Road (Eastbound)
4	Otter Point Road at Eustace (Southbound) )
5	Pyrite Drive at Beaton (Northbound)

**Table 4:** Bus stop improvement priorities on District of Sooke roads

**Rationale**

- Amenities such as shelters and benches improve the comfort of customers waiting for buses
- Clear, level surfaces with sufficient space make a stop accessible which removes barriers to transit use
- Branded transit stops help improve the visibility of the transit system, increasing the ease of use
- Supports the goals of the Transit Future Action Plan and Service Design Standards by making transit an attractive alternative to the private vehicle by improving customer comfort and accessibility and making the system easier to use

**Considerations**

- Transit stop improvements can be synergistically completed in conjunction with other nearby road works or development on adjacent lands. There may be opportunities to upgrade other bus stops not in Tables 6 and 7.
- Transit stop improvements are best done with improvements to pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks so that more than just the immediate area around the bus stop is accessible.

**7.6 Viability Study for a Satellite Garage**

BC Transit will conduct a study to determine if efficiencies gained by developing a satellite transit facility in Sooke would be cost-effective over the long term.

**Rationale:**

The transit service improvements contained within this plan will lead to an increase in deadhead time from about 4 hours (currently) to up to 8 hours per weekday and Saturday. Using 2019 estimates, this will cost about \$250,000 - \$300,000 per year.

**Considerations:**

- There is an ample pool of qualified transit operators residing in Sooke
- Land values within Sooke will continue to increase

**7.7 Continued Support for Transit Priority Measures**

BC Transit will continue to work with MOTI and municipal partners to identify, plan and construct transit priority measures along the Island Highway and other strategic corridors to support the faster movement of transit passengers through areas of congestion and reduce transit travel times.

**8. Information**

Many of the priorities communicated through consultation relate to how transit information is presented for Sooke routes. This section outlines improvements to information for transit customers intended to make transit more user friendly.



### 8.1 Route Renumbering

BC Transit will renumber the variants of route 61 into distinct numbers to improve clarity and ease of use of the connections enabled by this route.

### 8.2 Review Rider's Guide

BC Transit scheduling and marketing staff will examine the viability of adding Legislature departure times to the weekday route 61 schedule for trips which are interlined from route 50.

### 8.3 Marketing and Awareness

BC Transit will examine introducing periodic information to assist Sooke residents in reaching high-demand regional destinations using transit routes. These destinations include but are not limited to CFB Esquimalt and Camosun Interurban.

### 8.4 Sign Refresh

BC Transit will work with MOTI and District of Sooke staff to gradually transition bus stop signage in the Sooke area from the existing strip-sign format to the more visible flag-sign format.

### 8.5 Real-time bus departure displays

Bus stops at Sooke Town Centre and at the new Waddams Way Terminal are the priority locations for the installation of new real-time digital signage indicating when the next bus departure will be.

## 9. Conclusion

Once this document has been endorsed, it will become a guiding document for making future decisions regarding transit connecting to, from and within the Sooke area. A first full review of this plan will need to take into account the directions contained in the new District of Sooke Master Transportation Plan, expected to be completed later by mid-year of 2020.

Sooke is a dynamic community. Development patterns, demographic shifts, increasing ridership and traffic congestion all impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the transit system. Planning and budgeting processes need to address the shifting nature of this operating environment in order to maintain and build transit ridership and achieve community environmental, social and economic goals. It is recommended that an assessment take place at least annually to monitor service issues, transit performance levels, markets and demand, and to plan and budget for corresponding adjustments.

## 10. Next Steps

- Endorsement of this plan by the Victoria Regional Transit Commission
- Integration of the short term service change recommendations contained in this plan document into the Victoria Three Year Service and Financial Strategy
  - Service changes details may be further refined through additional detailed planning and scheduling work
  - The implementation of service changes constitutes a partial restructure of transit within Sooke – an enhanced public awareness effort is recommended to support implementation of the service changes.
- Integration of the Waddams Way Transit Terminal into Capital Planning as a high priority
- Inclusion of this plan into the 2020 Victoria Transit Future Action Plan, including any minor amendments resulting from the completion of the Sooke Master Transportation Plan.

## **Appendices**

A – Demographic & Employment Review

B – Public Engagement Report

C – Performance Review

D – Implementation Plan