

TRANSIT *future*

▶ *Local Area Transit* plan

PENINSULA

2022



Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect that BC Transit carries out its work on the traditional territories of indigenous nations throughout British Columbia.

The Saanich Peninsula lies within the ancestral and unceded traditional territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ People, also known as the W̱JOḺEḺP (Tsartlip), S̱ÁUTW (Tsawout), BO̱KÉĆEN (Pauquachin), and W̱SÍKEM (Tseycum) First Nations Communities.

Here in Victoria we are on the lands of the Lekwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations Communities.

We are grateful to live, work, and play on their traditional lands.

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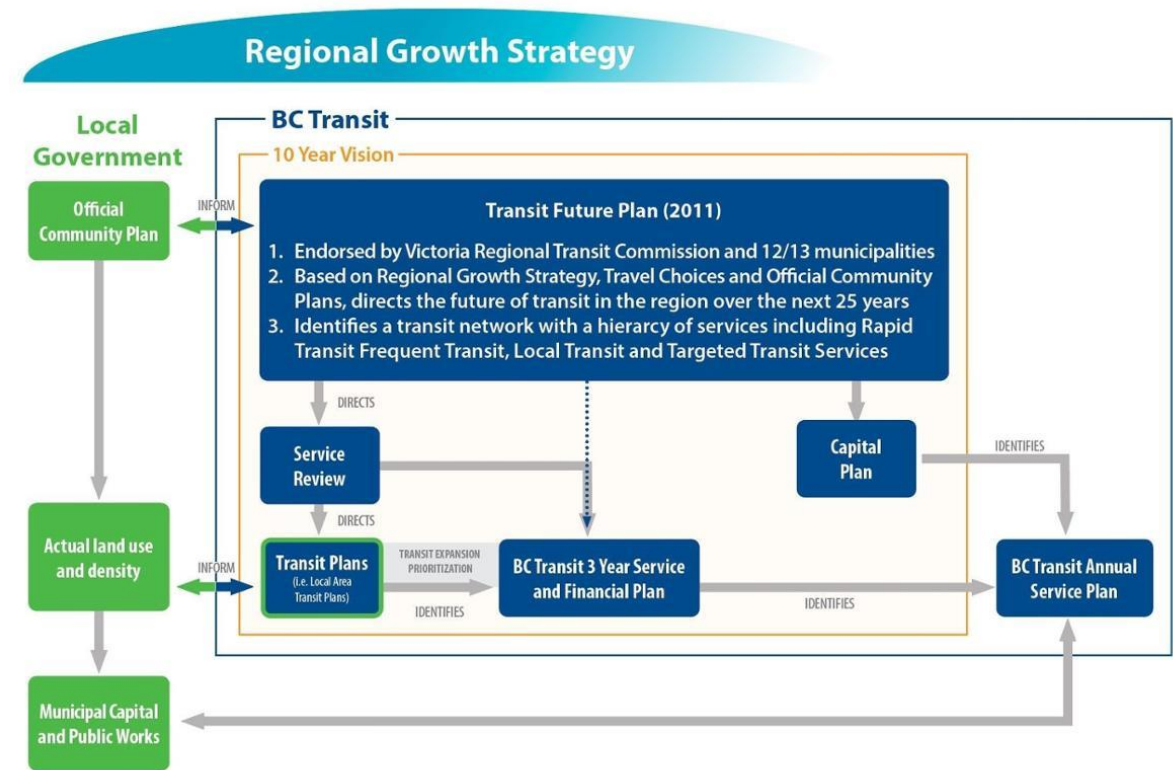
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01 Shaping Your Transit Future

The Victoria Region Transit Future Plan (2011), the 10-Year Vision and the RapidBus Implementation Strategy (2021) are key guiding documents for the Victoria Regional Transit System and set the regional context for Local Area Transit Plans.

The Transit Future Plan established a 25-year vision of an integrated regional transit system to meet the transportation needs of the region. The 10-Year Vision builds upon the Transit Future Plan, providing an annually updated, actionable and measurable strategy that focuses the vision for the Victoria Regional Transit System over the next 10 years. The 10-Year Vision summarizes all of the plans, projects, and priorities seeking to move the transit system towards that focused vision. The RapidBus Implementation Strategy provides the strategic foundation to accelerate the implementation of RapidBus services throughout the Victoria Region.

The Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan (LATP) builds upon these key guiding documents by establishing supporting localized transit service and infrastructure priorities over a five to ten year horizon.



01 Shaping Your Transit Future

The role of the Local Area Transit Plan is to:

Build on the Victoria Region Transit Future Plan and 10-Year Vision and the goals of the Capital Regional District's Regional Growth Strategy

Consider key changes, challenges and opportunities that may shape transit service and/or impact other modes of transportation

Coordinate future transit and land use, aligning with the concurrent updates of the Sidney, Central Saanich, and North Saanich Official Community Plans and BC Transit's RapidBus Implementation Strategy

Explore emerging trends and demands for transit to identify the right service expansion

Assess existing transit infrastructure and identify the need for future transit infrastructure improvements

Engage with the community



Transportation and Land Use to reduce emissions and traffic noise



Coordinated approach to make transit the preferred choice



Transit-supportive land use policies



Development of transit to integrate with active modes



Transit links to key locations, and appropriate facilities at transit stops

02 BC Transit Future Initiatives

BC Transit's Strategic Plan

BC Transit's Strategic Plan provides the blue print for how we will facilitate the transformation and pursue our common vision of the future to create responsive and reliable services, improving integration with other mobility providers, introducing electronic fares, building more transit supportive infrastructure and transitioning to greener fleets.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.bctransit.com/transforming-your-journey>

Low Carbon Fleet Program

<https://www.bctransit.com/low-carbon-fleet-program>

Digital On Demand

Electronic Fare Strategy

<https://www.bctransit.com/umo>

NextRide

<https://www.bctransit.com/nextride-faq>

BC Transit Development Referral Program

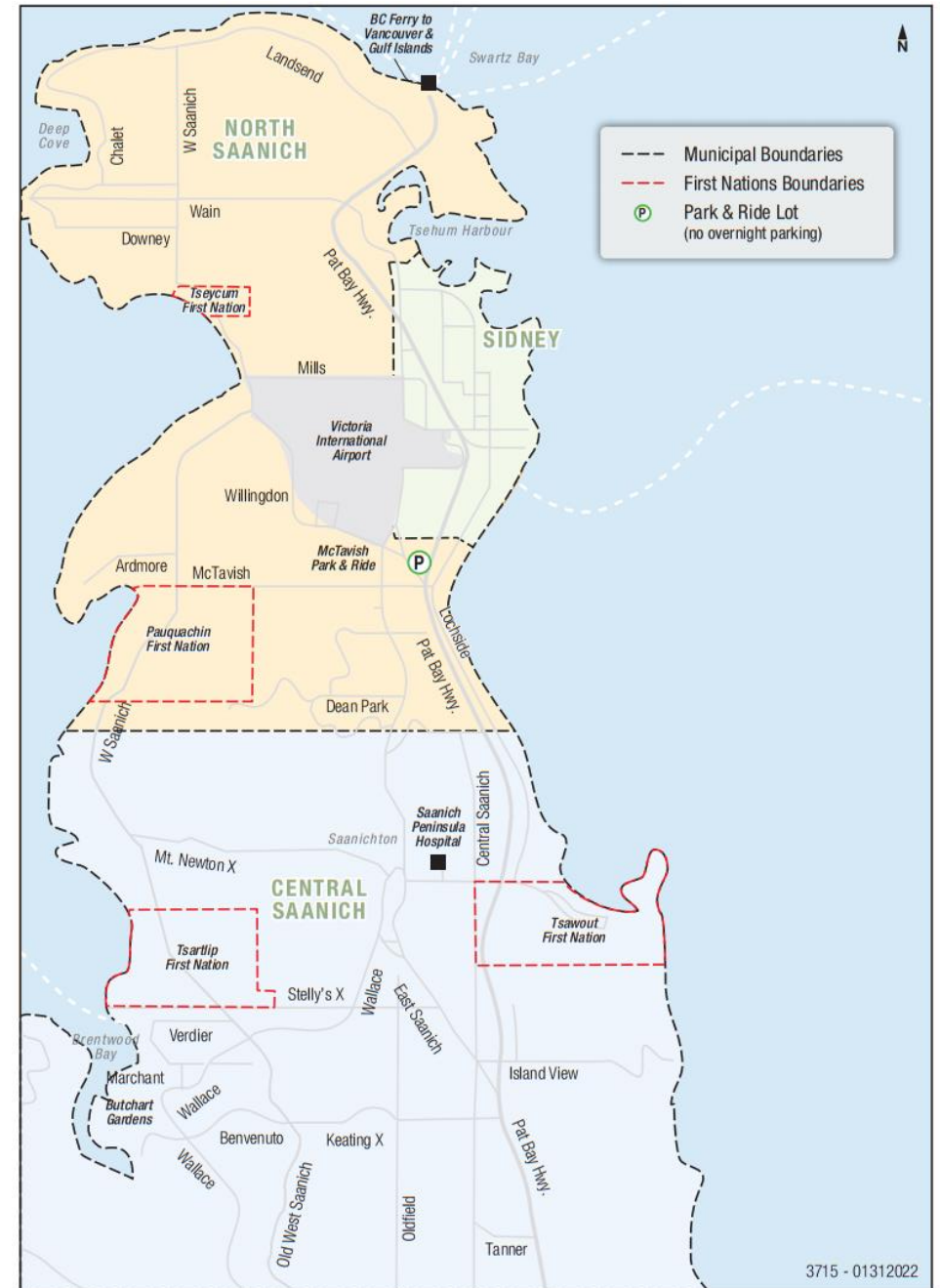
<https://www.bctransit.com/development-referral-program>

03 Plan Area

Peninsula Local Transit Plan Area

The service area for this project encompasses the District of Central Saanich, District of North Saanich and the Town of Sidney. This area also includes four WSÁNEĆ Nations: Tsartlip, Tsawout, Pauquachin, and Tseycum.

The Peninsula is a unique mix of communities on a spectrum between rural and urban, with key population and employment nodes like Sidney, Saanichton, Brentwood Bay, the Victoria International Airport, Swartz Bay, and the Keating Business District separated by large tracts of rural and agricultural land uses.



04 Community Context

The Peninsula celebrates its unique culture

Contrasting the beautiful landscapes and agricultural lands, the Peninsula also boasts centres for population, employment, services and activities.

The Peninsula is currently a primarily **auto-oriented community**. As technology evolves and the population increases, an opportunity to change transportation habits exists. By promoting public transit and other sustainable transportation modes, the Peninsula can be prepared for a shift to more sustainable travel modes.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population; weighted average according to population for each municipality

05 Transit Need

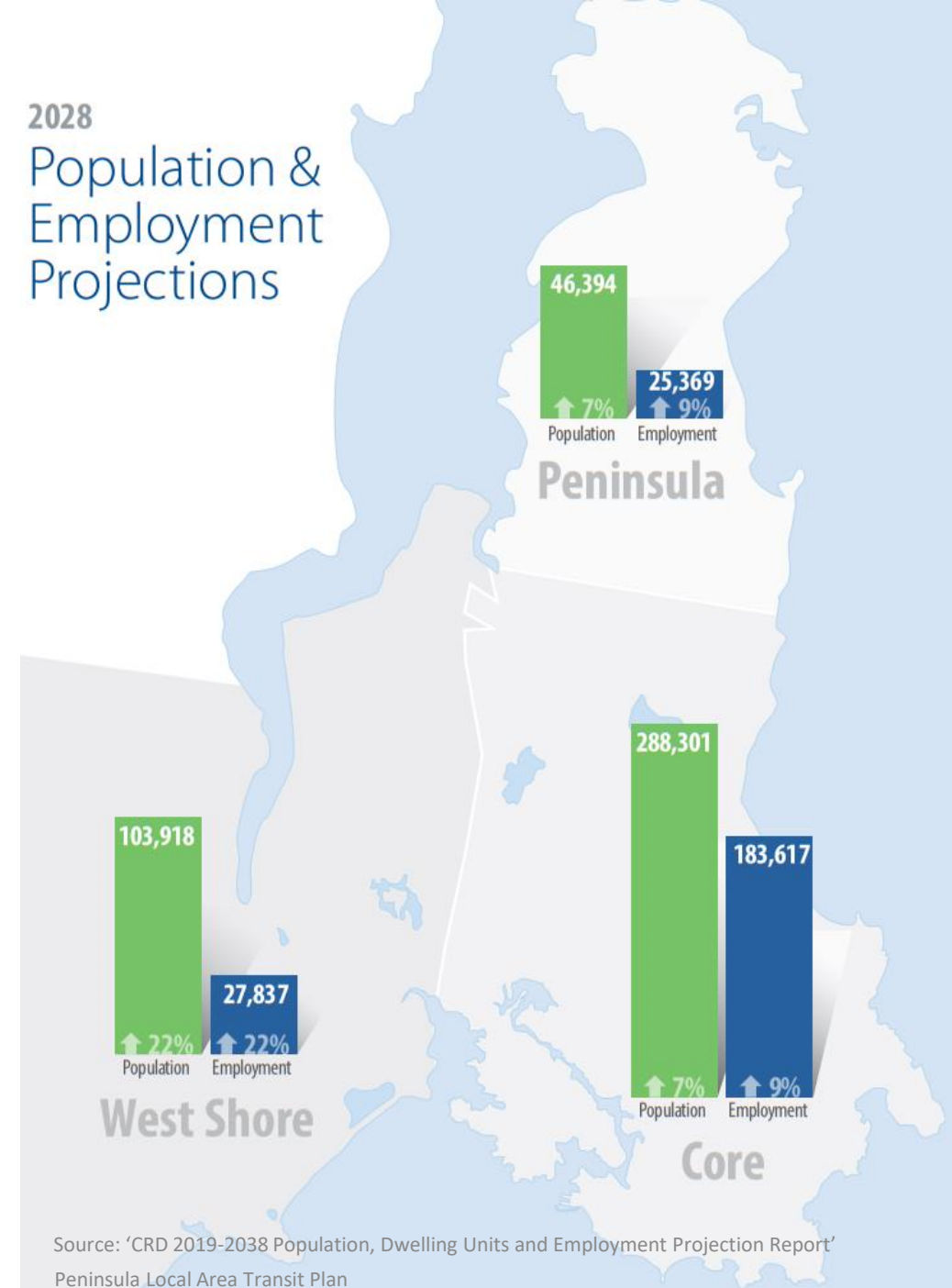
Challenges and Opportunities

Although the Peninsula is projected to grow its population and employment by a modest 7% and 9% respectively between 2019 and 2028, it is still anticipated to be one of the lower population sub-regions within the Victoria Regional Transit System. When combined with the road network, the unique distribution of the Peninsula's population and employment creates challenges for serving every key neighbourhood effectively with direct, high frequency transit service.

The Peninsula is also home to the Victoria International Airport and the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal. This creates additional ridership demand, which helps with providing higher service levels to many key areas within the Peninsula; however, it requires a careful balance to ensure the needs are met for both local and regional travel needs.

This plan seeks to develop a future network with these key challenges and opportunities clearly in mind.

2028 Population & Employment Projections



Source: 'CRD 2019-2038 Population, Dwelling Units and Employment Projection Report'
Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan

06 Transit Today

Peninsula Transit Network

The Peninsula Island Transit network is currently made up of a commuter spine, consisting of routes 70/71/72 and 75, connecting key Peninsula population centers and trip generators to the Victoria Core Sub-Region, with links to other local routes at key transit exchanges on the Peninsula.

Routes 70/71/72 and 75 account for about 90% of all boardings on routes serving the Peninsula.

BC Ferries and the Peninsula

- Swartz Bay is a major driver for ridership on the Peninsula
- Transit service is meant to serve residents and visitors alike and many transit users connect to ferries as walk-on passengers

3.1M

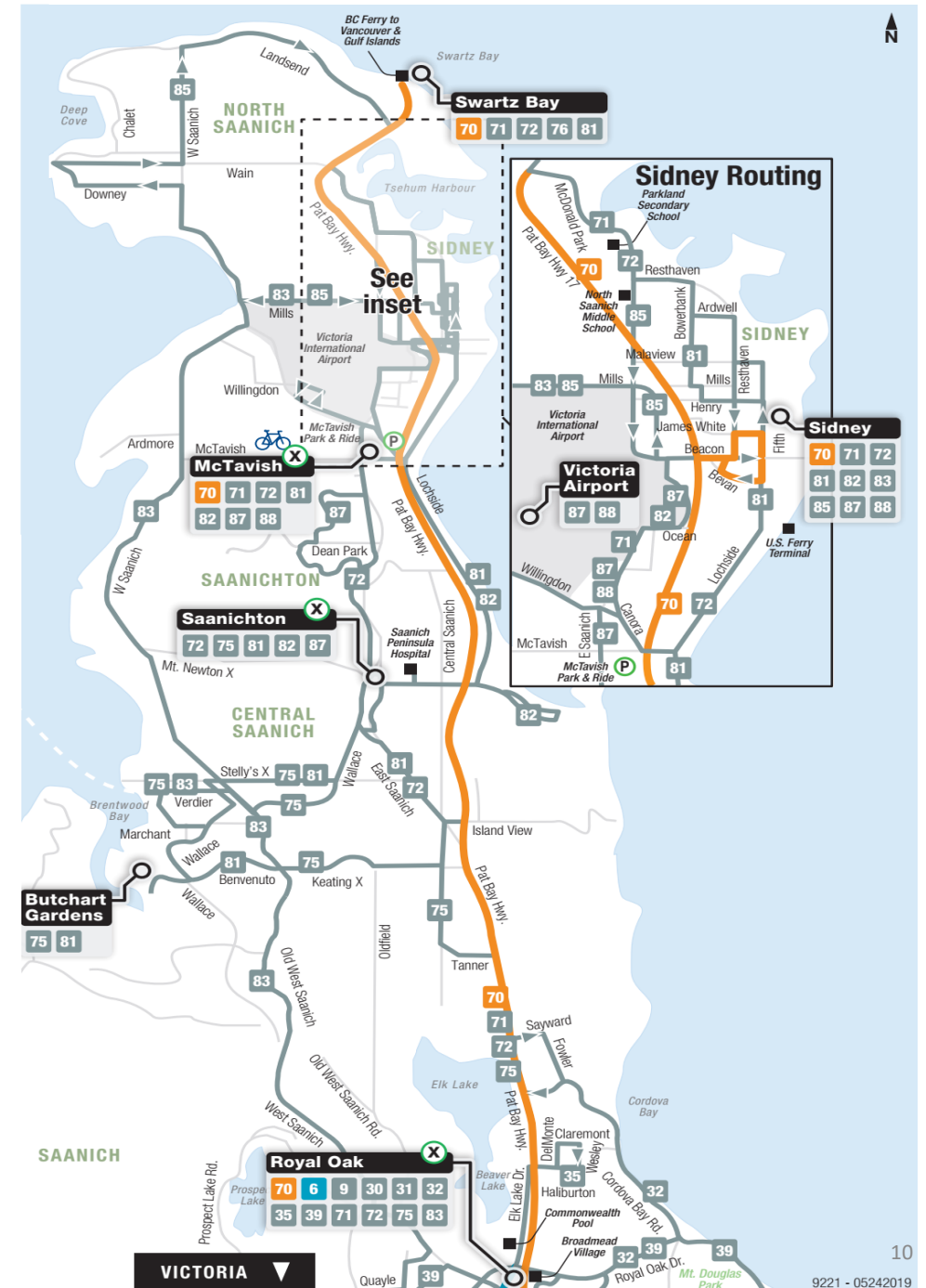
Boardings (2019)

1.2M

Service hours (2019)

10

Transit routes



06 Transit Today

Route 70/71/72 Swartz Bay/Downtown provides regional and local transit services between Swartz Bay and Downtown Victoria while directly serving residents of Sidney and Central Saanich.

Route 75 Saanichton Exch/Royal Oak Exch/Downtown provides local transit service for Saanichton, Brentwood Bay, and the Keating Business District, with connections to Royal Oak Exchange as well as downtown during the AM and PM peaks.

Route 81 Brentwood/Saanichton/Swartz Bay connects Swartz Bay and the Butchart Gardens while providing local transit service to Sidney and Central Saanich.

Route 82 Sidney/Saanichton via Stautw connects Swartz Bay and Sidney with Saanichton via Tsawout First Nation and the Saanich Peninsula Hospital.

Route 83 Sidney/Brentwood/Royal Oak Exch provides an alternate route from Sidney to Royal Oak Exchange via West Saanich Road, Brentwood Bay and Camosun College Interurban Campus.

Route 85 North Saanich connects Sidney and Swartz Bay while providing local transit service throughout North Saanich.

Route 87 Saanichton/Sidney via Dean Park provides local transit service from Sidney to Saanichton via Dean Park and the Victoria International Airport.

Route 88 Airport/Sidney provides a direct link between the Victoria International Airport and Sidney via McTavish Exchange.

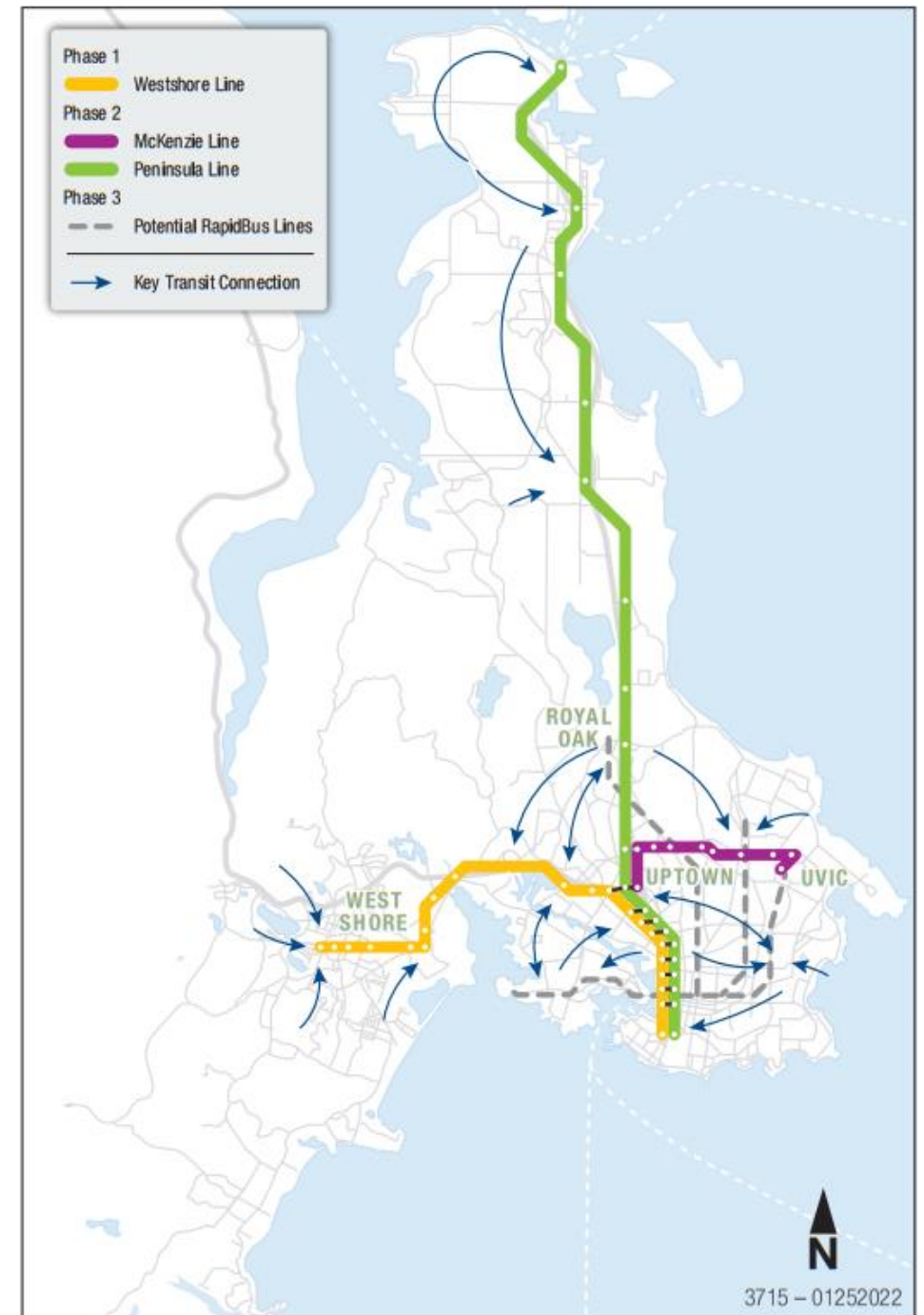
07 Transit Future Network

Peninsula RapidBus Line

The [RapidBus Implementation Strategy](#) classified the Peninsula RapidBus Line as one of the top three priority corridors for RapidBus investment in the Victoria Region. Significant service and infrastructure investment is required to fully actualize the Peninsula RapidBus Line, requiring multiple phases of improvements over the coming years.

Peninsula Transit Future Network

The Peninsula Transit Future Network builds on the concept developed in the 2011 Transit Future Plan. Like RapidBus, it will take shape over multiple phases, initially involving improvements to existing routes, and eventually incorporating a full Peninsula RapidBus Line and a supporting Frequent Transit Network.



07 Transit Future Network

Implementation Phasing Summary

Short-term:

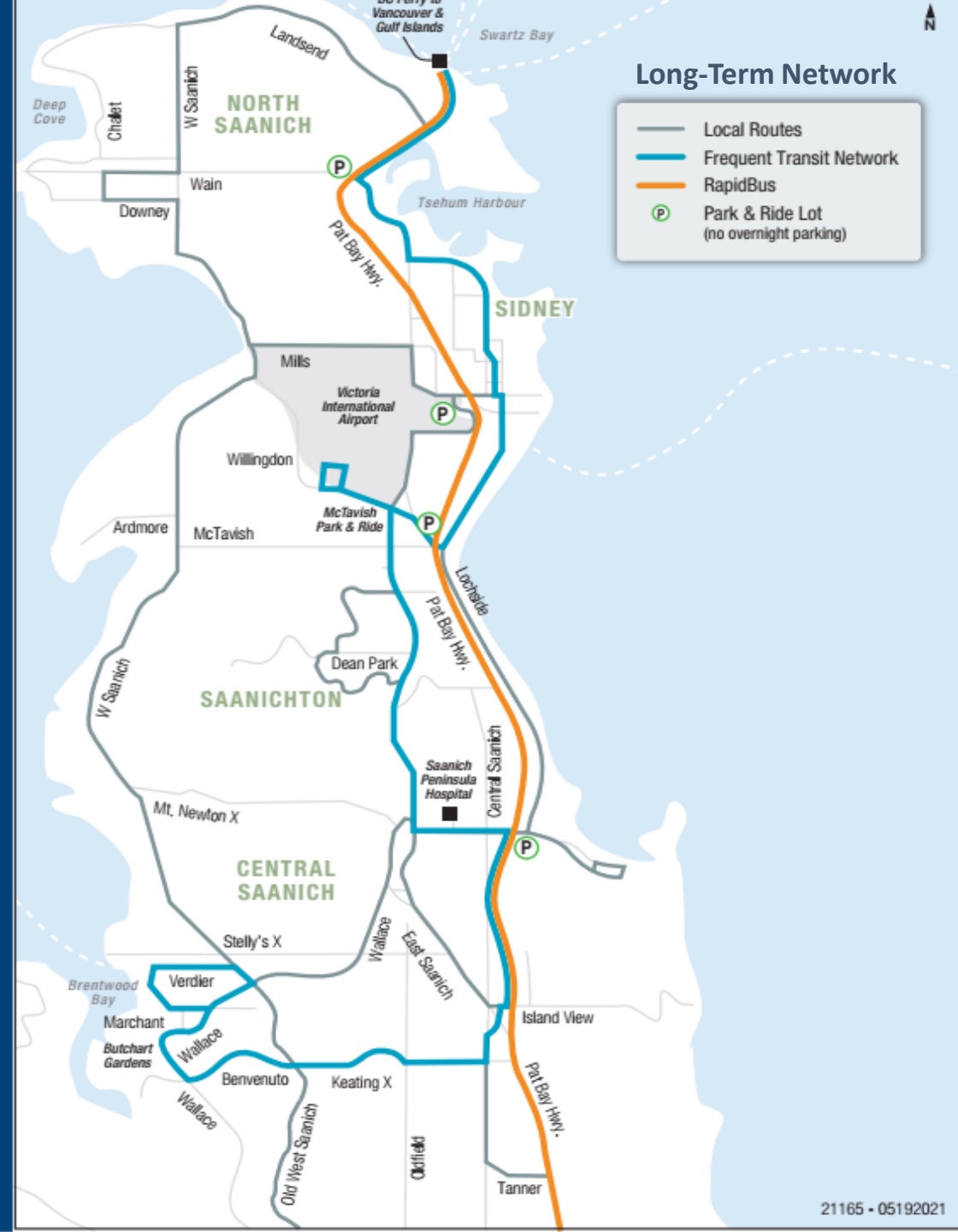
- Prioritize Highway 17 RapidBus infrastructure improvements including improved stations, queue jumpers and Park & Rides
- Service improvements to highest performing routes operating on Highway 17 including Routes 70 and 72.
- Improvements to Airport service and higher-performing local transit routes

Medium-term:

- Continued Hwy 17 RapidBus infrastructure investment
- Initial Peninsula RapidBus implementation, increasing Route 70 to 30-minute all-day service
- Improvements to Routes 71, 75 and other higher-performing local transit routes

Longer-term:

- Implementation of the long-term network, including the full Peninsula RapidBus Line (15-minute frequency, 7am-7pm, seven days a week) and the new Peninsula Frequent Transit Network.



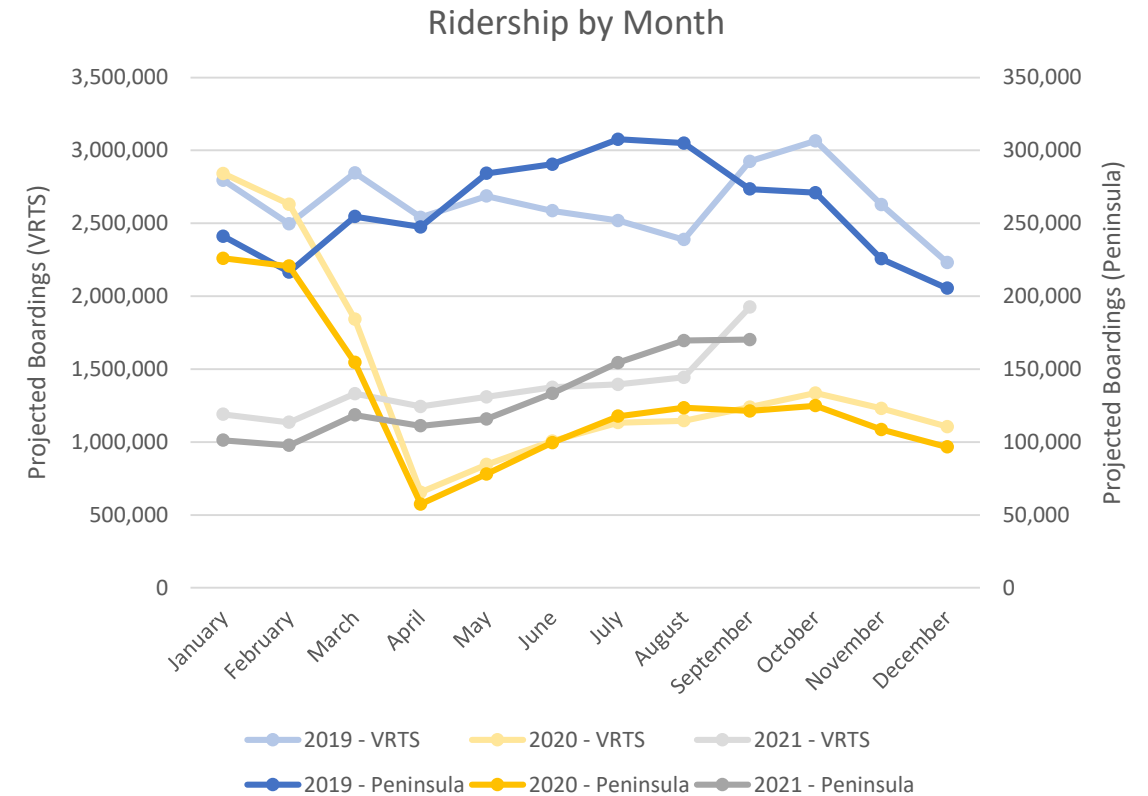
08 System Performance

Ridership by Month

Transit ridership on the Peninsula, based on 2019 data, drops during the fall and increases in the spring and summer. Following the decrease due to the Covid-19 pandemic, ridership continues to increase month over month.

Key Takeaways

- Boardings on the Peninsula have increased by an average of 46% from 2020 to 2021 between April and September (post-Covid).
- As of September 2021, boardings have increased by an average of 6000+ per month in comparison to April 2020.
- Pre-Covid, ridership on the Peninsula performed strongly during the summer months in comparison to the rest of the VRTS. However, post-Covid the Peninsula has performed on par with the rest of the system throughout the summer – potentially indicating a decrease in tourism activities.



46% ↑

Boardings per month (2021 vs. 2020 post-Covid)

63% ↓

Boardings per month (2021 vs. 2019)

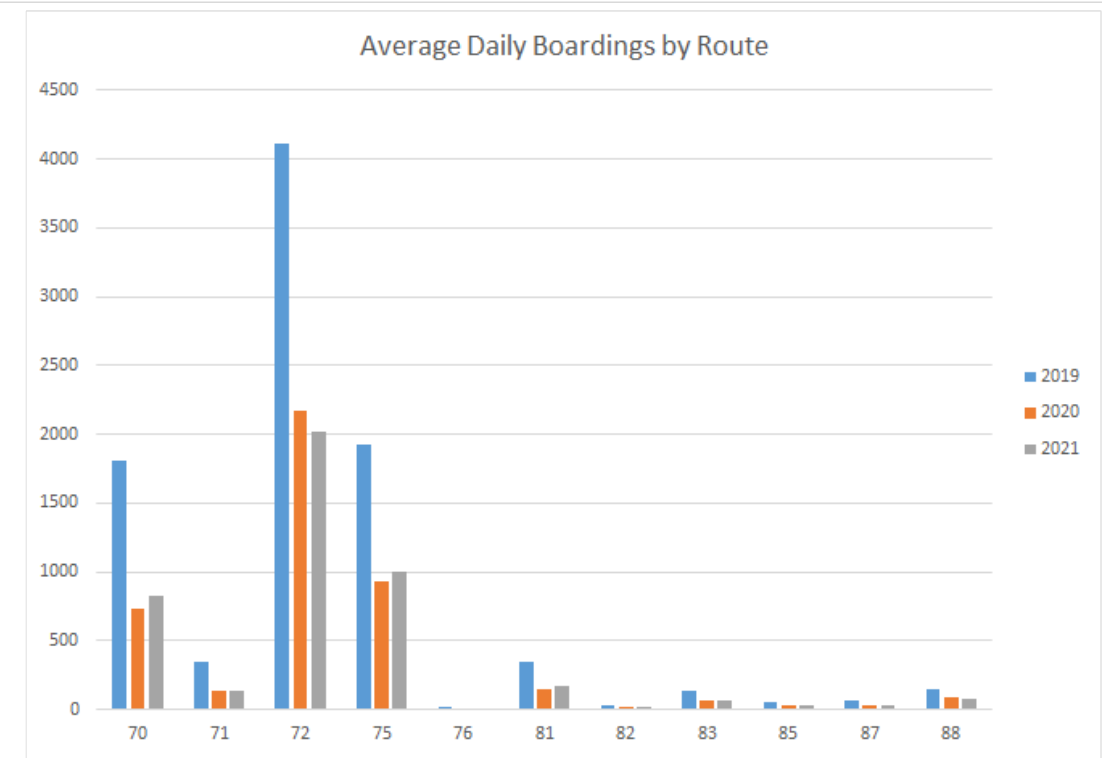
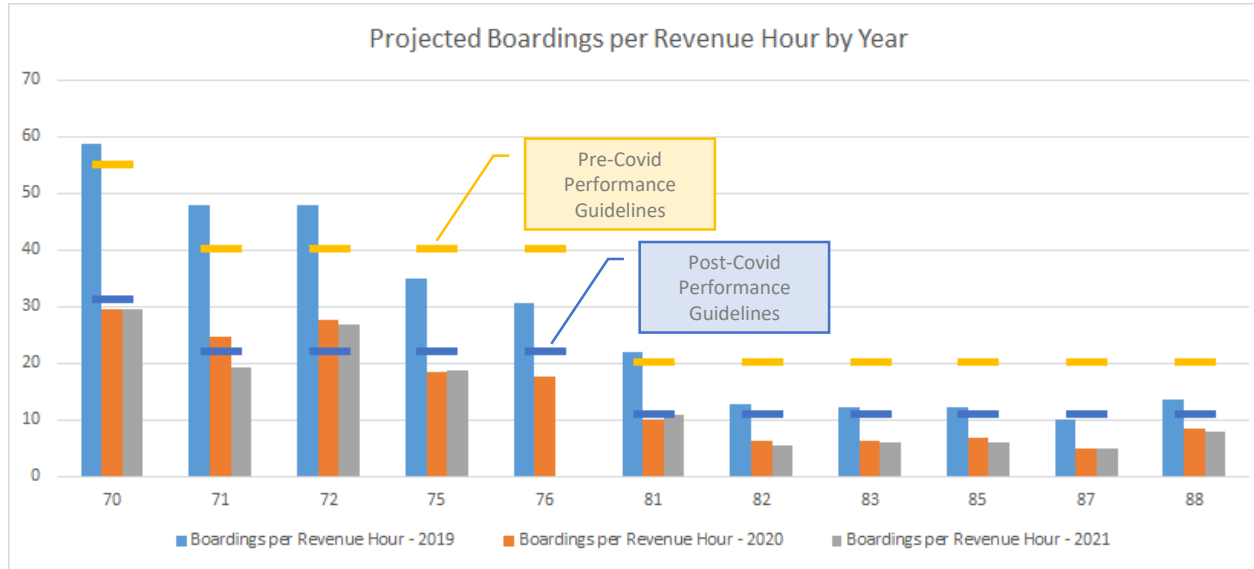
6,000+

Average monthly boardings following April 2020

08 Route Performance

Boardings per Revenue Hour and Total Boardings

- **Routes 70/71/72** are the most productive routes on the Peninsula from a rides per service hour perspective, while routes 72 and 75 see the most total daily ridership. This pattern indicates a strong ridership link between key Peninsula population and employment centers, regional transportation hubs like Swartz Bay, and the Victoria Regional core.
- Although important for providing basic transit service access to residents and employers across the Peninsula including the Victoria International Airport, local coverage **Routes 82-88** have been operating below our performance guideline expectations both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The proposed YYJ Frequent Service proposal in this plan creates an opportunity to explore improving performance on Routes 87 and 88, while also improving service levels to the underserved West Sidney area.



09 COVID-19 Response Plan

BC Transit's top priority is the safety of our passengers and operators.

Following the guidance of the Provincial Health Office and WorkSafeBC and drawing on the best practices of the transit industry worldwide, BC Transit has implemented measures on our buses to respond to COVID-19, and have put a plan together to align with BC's Restart Plan. The key measures are summarized in Figure 1, but the full strategy and details can be found [here](#).

To support ridership return, the Province of British Columbia has provided restart funding to the Local Government sponsors to ensure the continued effective delivery of transit across transit systems in British Columbia.

The **Free Transit for Children 12 and Under** program was introduced in September 2021 and will be instrumental in boosting ridership and rebuilding confidence in our post pandemic recovery. This program also aligns with BC Transit's commitment to delivering initiatives to drive new and effective measures to improve the transit experience. The program will help grow young ridership, create life-long transit users and further reduce congestion on our roads.



Figure 1 - BC Transit's COVID-19 Response Plan

10 Engagement

How we engaged with the Peninsula community

As part of BC Transit's commitment to public engagement, outreach was carried out to identify draft service and infrastructure through workshops, conversations with key stakeholders, and other outreach methods.

Public engagement was launched online from June 28 to July 30, 2021. Marketing to the community was facilitated through a variety of tools including: a project website, news paper ads, bus stop ads, and social media.

Tsartlip, Tsawout, Pauquachin and Tseycum First Nations were invited to participate in the process. One staff representative from Tsawout Nation attended the workshop with interested and affected groups. BC Transit will continue to work towards building relationships with these First Nations to understand transit need in each community and provide the best possible solution.



362 Survey Respondents



875 Total Comments



12 Stakeholder Workshop Attendees



Stay engaged

Check out the full engagement summary report and register for future updates.

10 Who We Heard From

Over 360 respondents completed the online survey:

- Approximately 50 per cent of all respondents reside on the Peninsula.
- The majority of respondents use transit for work, shopping, and errands.
- Although respondents have generally reduced their transit use since the start of COVID-19, 22 per cent of respondents still use transit 5+ days per week
- See the engagement summary [here](#)



10 What We Heard

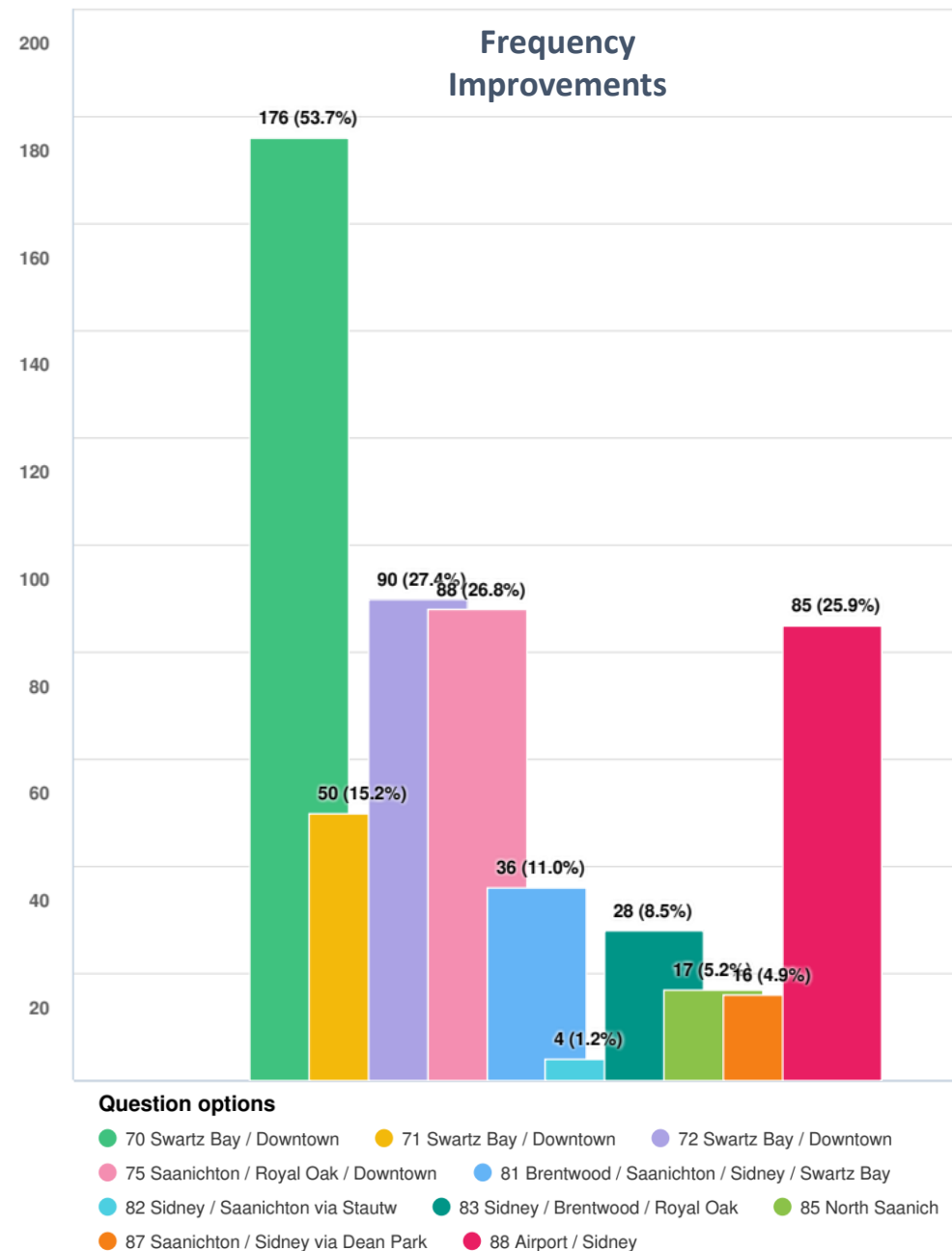
Key Themes

Connections – UVic, Downtown, West Shore, Camosun College Interurban and YYJ were identified as top priorities

Extending and Improving – Existing routes to serve more areas and support peak commuting times

Frequency and Span – desire for more frequency and increased service span on existing routes, with Routes 70, 72, 75, and 88 the most popular candidates

Infrastructure Improvements – RapidBus infrastructure and Saanichton Exchange improvements including improved lighting and shelters



11 Short-Term Service Priorities

Priority	Description	Resources Required
Frequent YYJ Service	New route connecting Victoria International Airport and McTavish Exchange, operating every 15 minutes, and connecting with the future RapidBus and other routes serving McTavish Exchange.	5,000 hours 2 buses
Improved Regional Connections	Improved connections to UVIC, Camosun Interurban, and the West Shore via Royal Oak Exchange. Additional service on Routes 70/72 and 39 as demand warrants	7,000 hours 3 buses
85 North Saanich Connections	Improved connections in the AM and PM peak on Route 85 with Routes 71/72. A morning trip on Route 85 will interline with Route 71 at Swartz Bay and the evening trip will include a timed transfer in Sidney.	Cost Neutral
81 Brentwood/ Saanichton/ Sidney/ Swartz Bay Extension	Extending Route 81 Brentwood/Saanichton/Sidney/Swartz Bay, providing service along Keating Cross Road to Tanner Ridge	1,750 hours 1 bus
Service Optimization	Pursue opportunities to reallocate underperforming service to high ridership growth areas.	TBD

Frequent YYJ Service

New route operating every 15 minutes between the Victoria International Airport (YYJ) and McTavish Exchange from 7am-7pm.

Route would connect directly to the future Peninsula RapidBus line and other existing local transit services. Maps and signage would be improved at YYJ and McTavish Exchange to increase clarity for transfers.

Existing YYJ service on Route 88 would no longer serve between McTavish Exchange and YYJ from 7am-7pm, which may create opportunities for improving service to West Sidney while maintaining some limited direct service between YYJ and Sidney.

5,000

Annual service hours

2

Buses



Frequent YYJ Service

Comparing Service Options – Direct YYJ to Downtown Victoria vs. McTavish Exchange

BC Transit is often asked to provide direct service between Downtown Victoria and YYJ. There are several reasons why BC Transit recommends investing in service frequency between YYJ and McTavish Exchange instead.

- It costs eight times more to extend trips from YYJ to Downtown Victoria instead of McTavish Exchange; for the same cost of providing frequent, 15-minute service between YYJ and McTavish Exchange, we could provide only 120-minute frequency between YYJ and Downtown Victoria.
- The YYJ to McTavish Exchange proposal aligns better with future Peninsula RapidBus plans. In the future, Peninsula RapidBus is planned to serve the Hwy 17 corridor with 15-minute frequency or better. This means transfers to the YYJ to McTavish Exchange service will be easy, fast and reliable.
- Serving YYJ with a direct route from Downtown means either not serving the biggest Peninsula transit ridership generators of Sidney and Swartz Bay or requiring the majority of riders trying to reach Sidney and Swartz Bay to spend an additional 10 minutes on the bus in order to serve YYJ first.
- The significantly higher cost of providing direct, frequent transit service from Downtown Victoria to YYJ means fewer resources available to improve service to key growing Peninsula communities like Sidney, Saanichton, and Brentwood Bay.



Improved Regional Connections

Improved service on Routes 70/72, improving regional connections to UVIC, Camosun Interurban, and the West Shore at Uptown and Royal Oak Exchange.

Uptown is a strategic future multi-modal transit hub, creating a connection between the three initial RapidBus Lines identified in the Victoria Regional RapidBus Implementation Strategy, with effective connections between the Peninsula, the West Shore and UVIC.

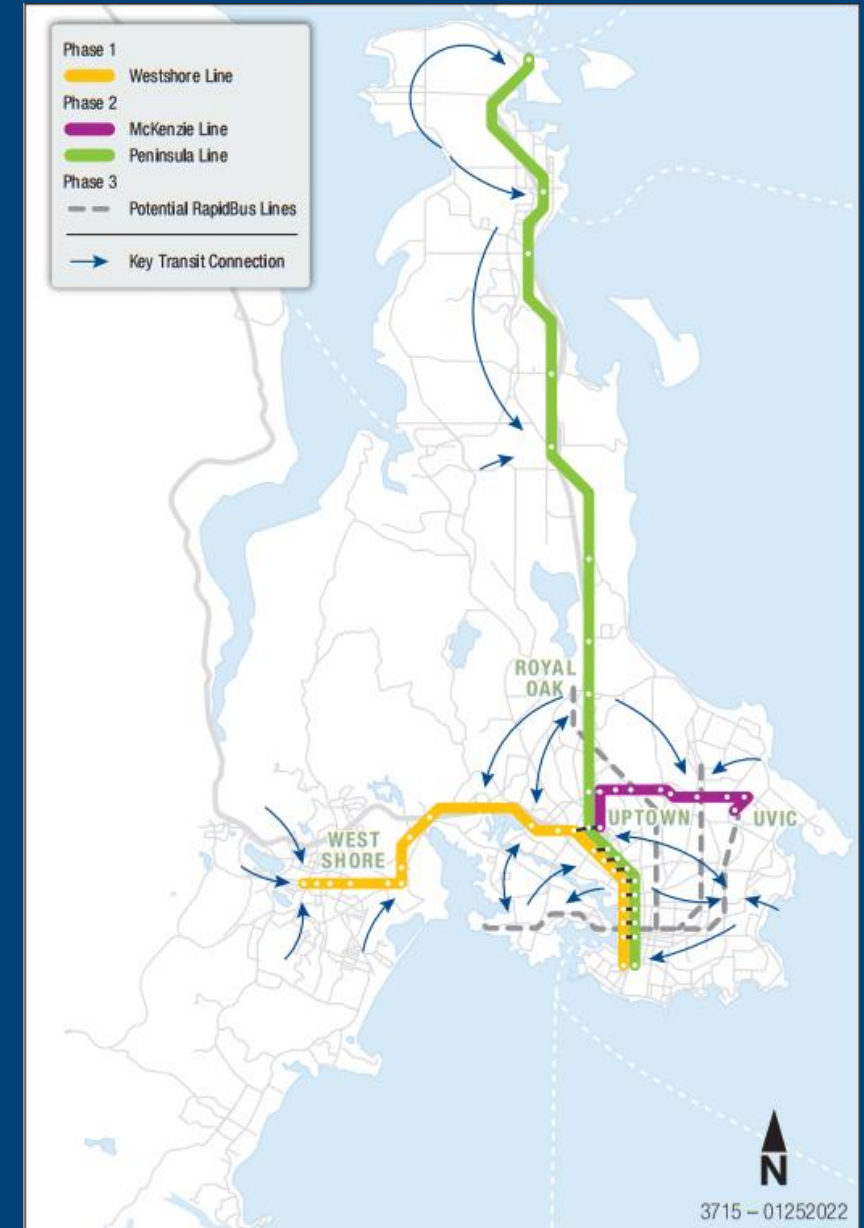
Building service on Routes 70/72 build towards this future RapidBus network implementation.

7,000

Annual service hours

3

Buses



81 Keating Extension

Extension of service to the Keating Business District and Tanner Ridge on Route 81.

This service option addresses the challenges for Peninsula residents accessing the Keating Business District from other areas on the Peninsula by extending Route 81.

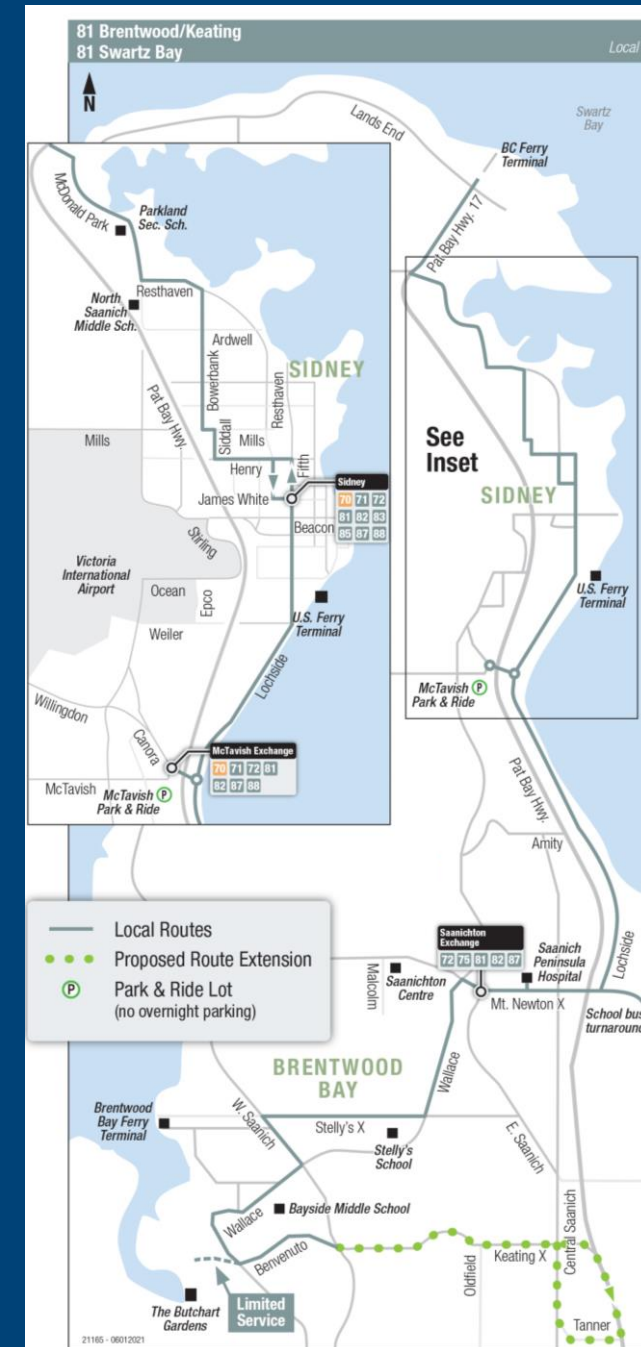
Pending the development of a safe turn around for transit vehicles, there may be future opportunity to extend this route to the Sean Heights industrial area on certain trips.

1,750

Annual service hours

1

Bus



12 Medium-Term Service Priorities

Priority	Description	Resources Required
Peninsula RapidBus Line - Initial Implementation	Improvements to Route 70 to achieve 30-minute all day service, seven days a week.	*17,500 hours
	This priority builds towards the long-term proposed RapidBus service level target of 15-minute service from 7am-7pm, seven days a week.	7 buses
Improvements to Route 71	Increase service level and span on weekdays on Route 71 as warranted by evolving ridership demand.	3,500 hours 2 buses
Improvements Route 75 off-peak and weekend service	Builds towards the future Peninsula Frequent Transit Network service levels. To be prioritized according to ridership demand, and may be used to address seasonal passenger load issues associated with Butchart Gardens.	3,500 hours 2 buses
Improvements to higher performing local coverage service levels	Service improvements to be prioritized according to ridership demand.	2,500 hours 1 bus

*Expansion resources required in relation to Fall 2021 service levels

13 Longer-Term Service Priorities

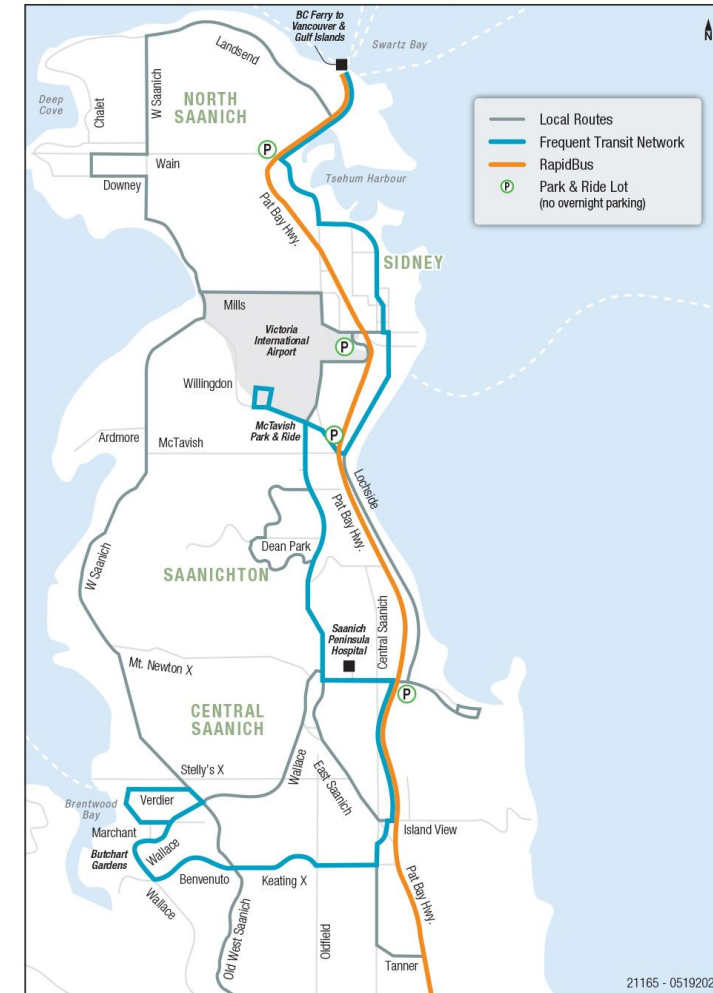
Peninsula RapidBus and Frequent Transit Network

Full implementation of the Peninsula RapidBus Line to 15-minute service from 7am-7pm, seven days per week, and implementation of the Peninsula Frequent Transit Network.

Key commuter trips from Sidney, Saanichton, and Brentwood Bay direct to downtown Victoria would be retained.

Further planning work is required to confirm the new alignment of local routes to support this network restructure along with the costs associated with implementation.

RapidBus Longer Term Network Concept



14 Infrastructure Priorities

Priority	Description	Partners
Hwy 17 RapidBus Infrastructure	Building upon the Highway 17 Planning Study and the South Island Transportation Strategy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation (MOTI) and local government partners, implement infrastructure improvements for Highway 17 including transit priority measures, RapidBus stations, and Park & Ride investments.	MOTI, Local Governments, First Nations, BC Transit
Saanichton Exchange Improvements	Improvements to transit amenities at the Saanichton Exchange were identified through the process. The highest priority improvements included improved lighting and shelters.	Central Saanich, BC Transit
Swartz Bay Exchange	New Exchange facility in alignment with the planned Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal upgrades.	BC Ferries, BC Transit

Hwy 17 RapidBus Infrastructure

Transit Priority Measures

Transit priority treatments being planned with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure initially include queue jumpers at key intersections, and eventually building to dedicated transit lanes to reduce travel times and improve service reliability along the corridor.

Park & Rides

Park & Rides allow residents living in rural or semi-rural areas to access fast, frequent, and reliable transit services. Given the rural nature of large portions of the Peninsula, Park & Rides at the locations identified in Figure 1 are a critical component to ensuring the success of the Peninsula RapidBus Line.

RapidBus Stations

RapidBus Stations will include improved amenities and distinct branding to distinguish them from other bus stops within the region. RapidBus Stations do not currently exist at Island View Road, Mt. Newton Cross Road, and Beacon Avenue, and improvements are required at a number of other RapidBus Station locations indicated in Figure 1. Further details regarding the Beacon Avenue RapidBus Station are included on the next page.

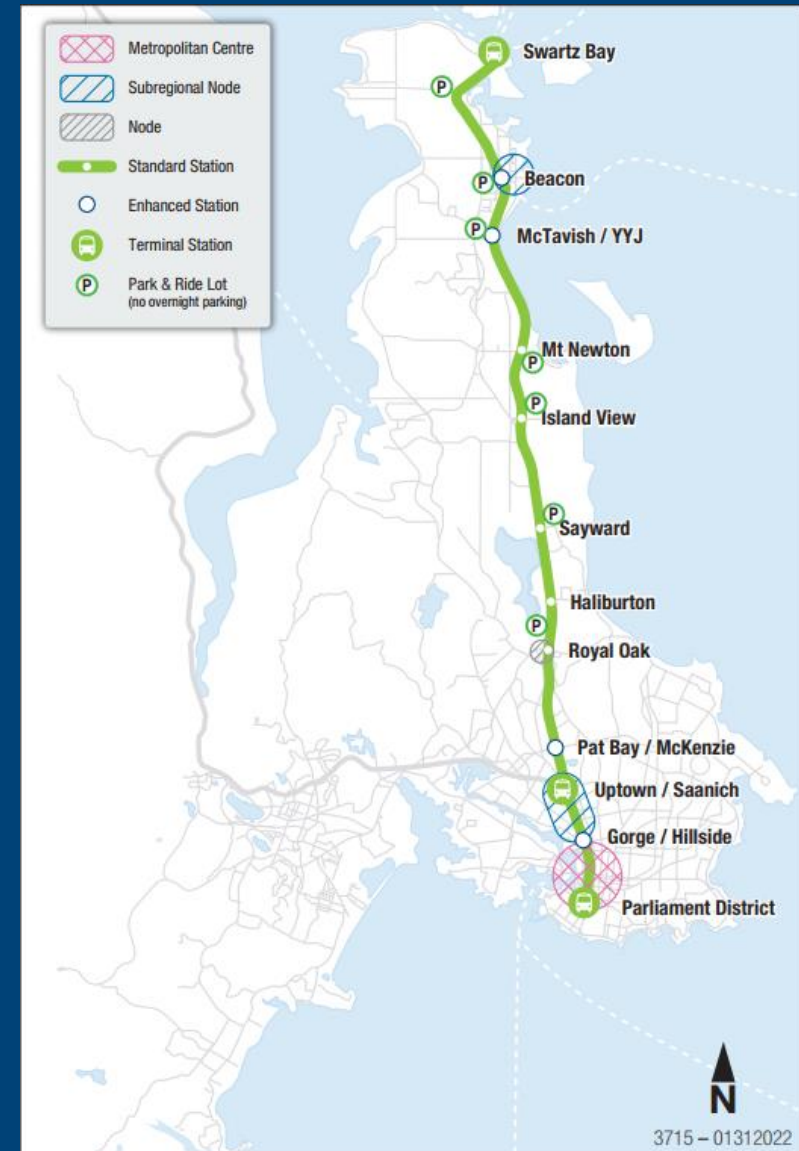


Figure 1 – Peninsula RapidBus Line Stations, Park & Rides, and Designated Urban Areas

Beacon Avenue RapidBus Station

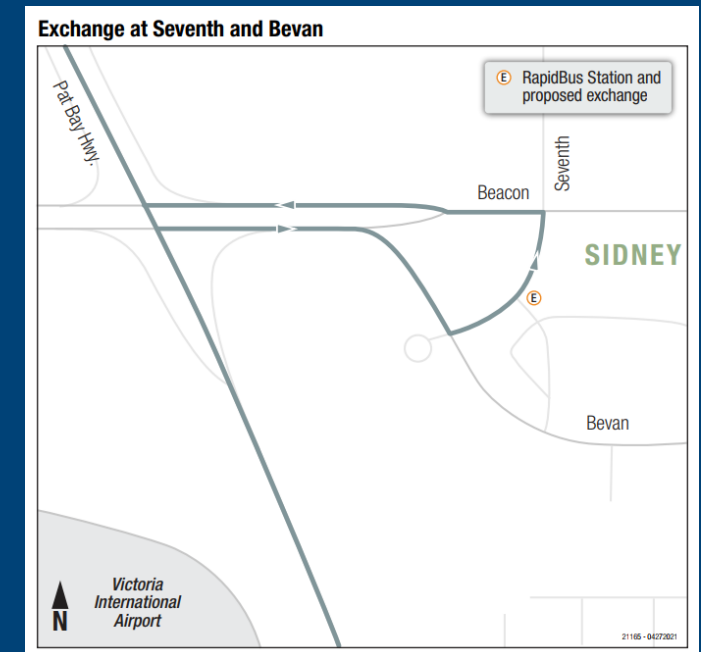
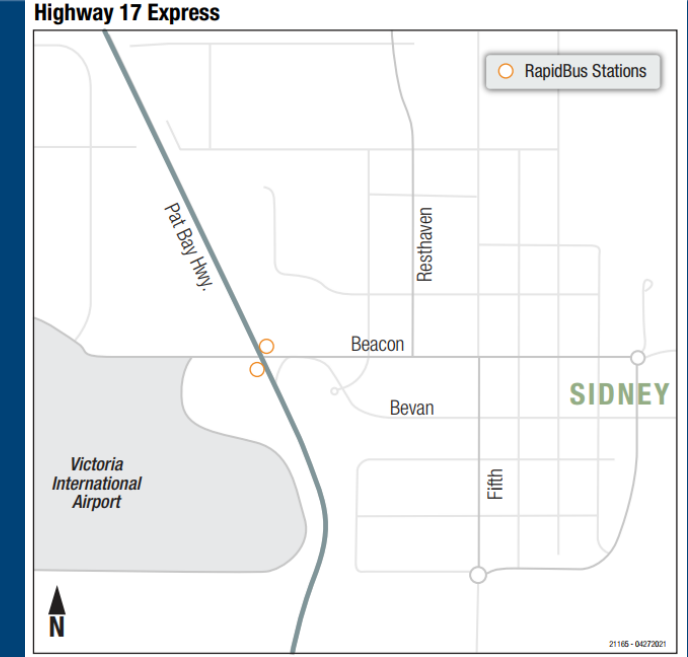
The Route 70 currently deviates significantly into Sidney from Highway 17, reducing the speed and reliability of service along the entire corridor.

In order to better balance the trade-off between service speed and coverage within Sidney, four RapidBus Station options were explored for Sidney, with two emerging from public engagement and key stakeholder discussions as warranting further consideration:

1. Seventh and Bevan Exchange
2. Highway 17 Express

Some of the key trade-offs include integration with the local transit routes in Sidney, and the limitations of the Beacon and Hwy 17 intersection from a vehicle capacity and traffic delay perspective.

Further discussions and planning are required with the Town of Sidney and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure before a preferred option is confirmed.



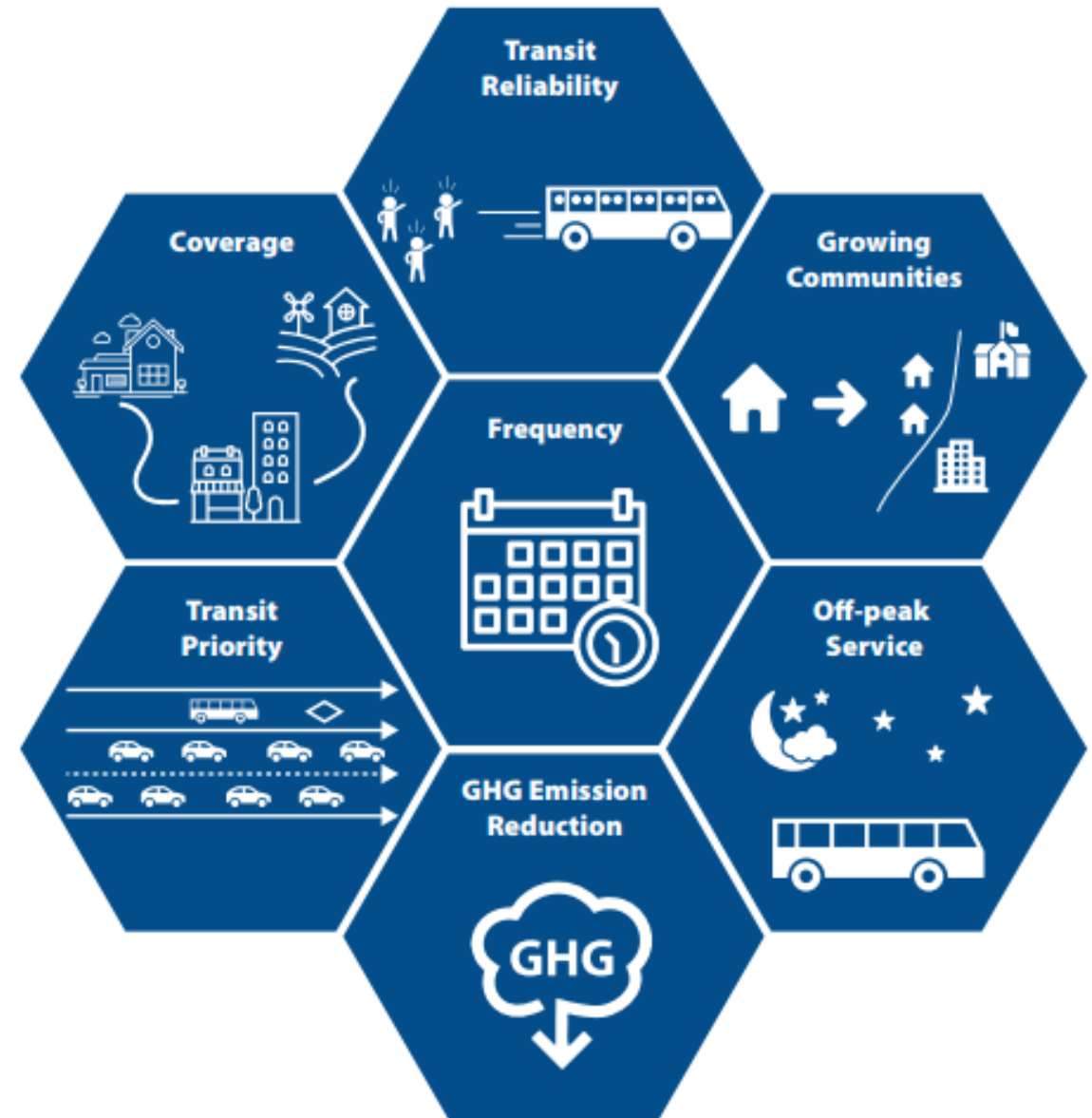
15 Moving Forward

Monitoring + Implementation

The service and infrastructure improvements identified in the plan will be evaluated annually alongside the priorities from all other plans through a Transit Expansion Prioritization process (TEPs). Given the growth and increasing demand for transit in the Victoria Region, there are always competing priorities for what should be changed and improved first. Proposed improvements are currently ranked using a range of criteria including population served, potential ridership, and impact on service reliability. After the TEPs process, the resulting expansion priorities are shared with the Victoria Regional Transit Commission for endorsement in the Annual Service Plan.

Upon implementation, service changes will be monitored to ensure that schedules and routes are meeting the needs of passengers. If any changes are required, they will be made as part of subsequent seasonal service changes. Route ridership performance will be assessed using the Route Level Performance Guidelines identified in the Victoria Regional Transit System Service Review. Route ridership performance is reported in the Planning Reports to the Commission and supports development of changes to network structure to enhance the performance of the overall transit network.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is possible that the timelines laid out in this document will need to be revisited in the future prior to implementation. The transit landscape is continuing to evolve rapidly due to COVID-19, and as community needs shift, so will transit service.



Acknowledgments

Thank you!

BC Transit would like to thank the many individuals, community organizers, local government staff, First Nations, and businesses who assisted in this consultation process.

Thank you to the almost 400 members of the public, riders and non-riders alike, who contributed to the plan's development as a key stake-holder, by taking a survey, or submitting written or verbal comment.

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

