



# Transit Future Plan

NORTH OKANAGAN | March 2014

Executive Summary

City of Vernon  
District of Coldstream  
Regional District of  
North Okanagan



TRANSIT future

# Executive Summary

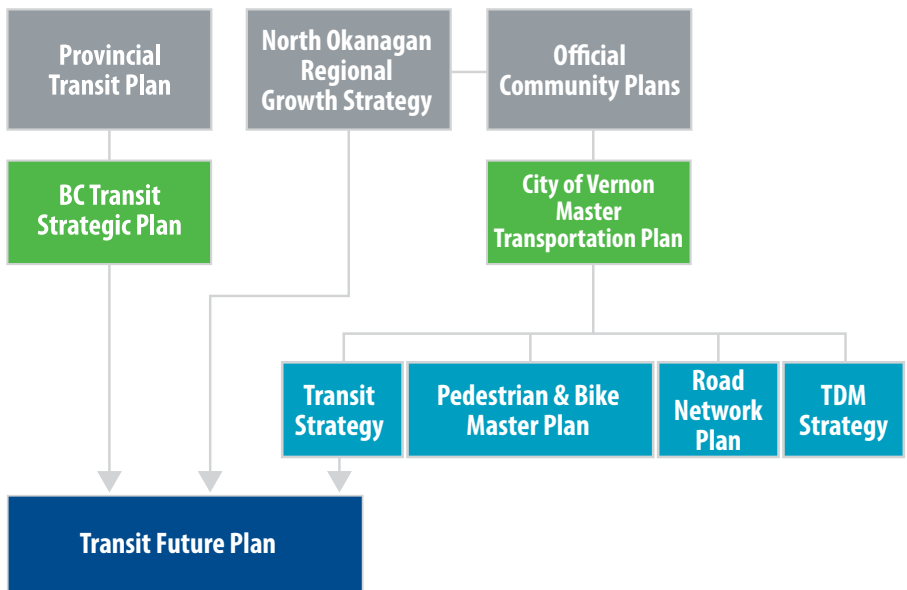
Transit has tremendous potential to contribute to more economically vibrant, livable and sustainable communities. The need to realize this potential in the North Okanagan is increasingly important due to factors such as climate change, population growth, an aging demographic, and availability of affordable transportation choices for individuals who do not have access to a private automobile. Projected future growth in the North Okanagan will place increasing pressure on the existing transportation system.

The region has established a policy framework and guidelines to move towards sustainable development of which transit supportive land use is an important aspect.

In addition to these planning initiatives in the North Okanagan, the *BC Provincial Transit Plan* and BC Transit’s 2030 Strategic Plan inform the Transit Future Plan.

The Transit Future Plan builds on the North Okanagan land use and transportation policies and includes an implementation strategy for transit investments, as shown in Figure 1. The Transit Future Plan was developed through a participatory planning process involving a stakeholder advisory group and broad community consultation. The Transit Future Plan envisions the North Okanagan transit network 25-years from now and describes the services, infrastructure and investments that are needed to achieve that vision.

Figure 1: Transit Future Plan Framework



## Vision and Goals

### Vision Statement

*“The North Okanagan System connects people and communities through cost effective, convenient, safe and accessible services”*

### Goals

The Goals aim to get more people on the bus and make the experience convenient and enjoyable so that they continue to choose transit as their preferred travel mode.

1. The transit system is an attractive alternative to the private vehicle
2. The transit system complements the goal of compact complete communities
3. The transit system aids in reducing environmental impacts
4. The transit system is efficient
5. The transit system is integrated with other land use and transportation plans

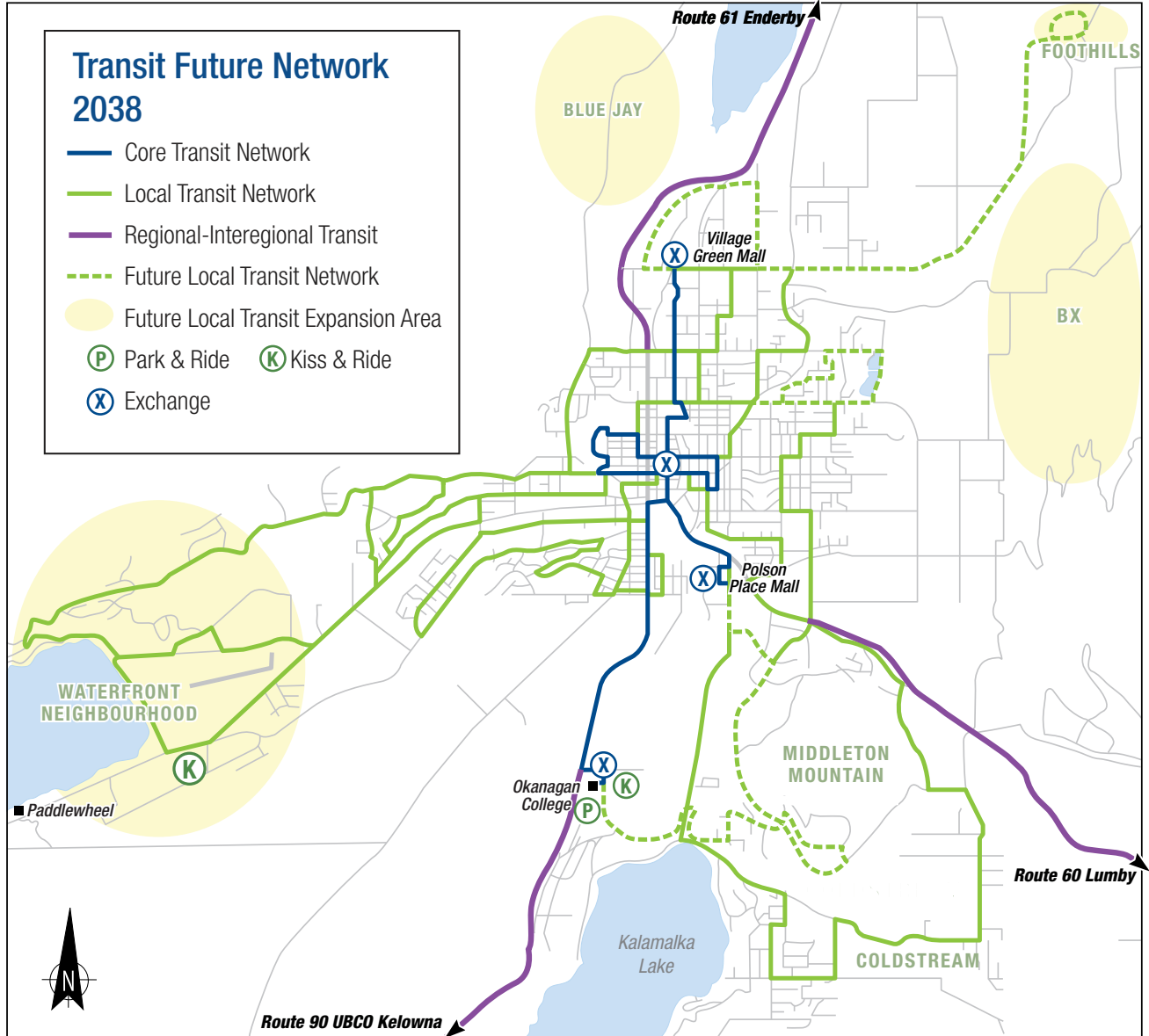
## Ridership Targets

The Transit Future Plan sets a transit mode share target of two and half per cent (2.5%) for all trips by 2038, which will require the Vernon/Coldstream Conventional Network transit ridership to grow from 445,330 to 1.4 million trips per year. This target aligns with the Provincial Transit Plan’s transit mode share target for regional centres in British Columbia.



# The Transit Future Plan Network

The North Okanagan Transit Future Plan network includes four distinct layers of transit service including the urban conventional service in Vernon and Coldstream, the regional connections between the towns of Armstrong, Spallumcheen, Enderby and Lumby, the interregional connection between Vernon and Kelowna and the Custom Transit system. The network is designed to be more competitive with automobile travel by improving the directness, reliability and frequency of the transit system.



## Service Layers

### Core Transit Network (CTN)

The Core Transit Network (CTN) is Vernon's Frequent Transit Network and provides medium- to high-density mixed land use corridors with a convenient, reliable and frequent 15-20 minutes transit service on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. The goal of the CTN is to allow customers to spontaneously travel without having to consult a transit schedule. The CTN will carry the majority of the transit system's total ridership, and for this reason it justifies capital investments such as a high level of transit stop amenities, service branding, right-of-way improvements and transit priority measures.

### Local Transit Network (LTN)

The Local Transit Network (LTN) is designed to connect neighborhoods to local destinations and to the CTN. LTN services allow customers to plan a trip to work, school, and the local shopping centres by transit. Frequency and vehicle types are selected based on demand. The introduction of the Core Transit Network will see route changes within the existing system to remove overlap.

### Targeted Services

Targeted services are a collection of transit services that do not fit into the local transit network definition and are more focused on the needs of specific customers. These services include:

- Regional and Interregional: provide connections outside of the local transit service area (e.g. Kelowna, Vernon, Lumby, Spallumcheen, Armstrong and Enderby)
- Custom/handyDART: door-to-door services for customers unable to use the conventional service





## Implementation Strategy

Establishing the Transit Future Plan network requires prioritizing transit investments and developing an implementation strategy to transform today's network into the future network.

Short-term Implementation Priorities (0–5 years)	
Short-term Service Improvements	
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Introduce Inner City Loop Service for Core Transit Network (CTN)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This core transit route will provide a convenient frequent loop service to the key travel destinations in the center of downtown Vernon</li> <li>• The service will operate Monday to Friday on a 15 minute frequency</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Develop the Core Transit Network (CTN)</b></p> <p><b>Phase 1: Introduce frequent service between the downtown exchange and Village Green Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday services between 7am and 10pm with a 20 minute frequency in the peak and 30 minute frequency all other times</li> <li>• Saturday services between 8am and 10pm, with a 30/60 minute frequency</li> <li>• Sunday services between 9am and 6pm, with a 30/60 minute frequency</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 2: Introduce frequent service between the downtown exchange and Polson Mall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The span and frequency of service would be similar to that introduced in phase 1 above</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Realignment of existing Route 2 Pleasant Valley and Route 3 Alexis Park to compliment CTN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term service changes can begin to develop the CTN spine. Realignment of these routes will avoid overlapping of services once full CTN spine is operational</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Coldstream: Introduce the Local Transit Network (LTN) Service to Middleton Mountain</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be the introduction of a new Local Transit Route</li> <li>• This new weekday service will operate between 6am and 8pm with 60 minute frequency</li> <li>• Introduction of this new LTN route is contingent on the development of the new Polson Place Mall secondary exchange</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Improve frequency and structure to Route 4 East Hill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday services Monday to Friday, 30 minute frequency, operating between 6am and 8pm</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Enhancement of all Urban weekday services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase span of hours between 6am and 10pm</li> <li>• Increase the span and frequency of weekend and holiday services</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Coordinate schedule alignment of Enderby service Route 60 with Salmon Arm service Route 11</b></p>

## Short-term Infrastructure Improvement

1	<p><b>Examine Kiss &amp; Ride Stations at Downtown Vernon exchange and Okanagan College</b></p> <p><b>Downtown Vernon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term option: Convert 3 metered stalls on east side of 31st Street to 15 minute maximum stay to provide Kiss &amp; Ride drop off zone</li> <li>• Long term option: 31st Street to provide Kiss &amp; Ride and handyDART transfer location.</li> </ul> <p><b>Okanagan College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four short stay dedicated car spaces close to bus stops</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Examine secondary exchange improvement possibilities at Village Green Centre, Polson Place Mall and Okanagan College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village Green Centre requires an exchange that can accommodate four bus pull outs complete with shelters and customer amenities. Ideally, the exchange would be situated within the mall parking lot requiring formalized pedestrian and parking lot movements, however an alternate on-road exchange at a key access point can also be considered</li> <li>• Polson Mall future capacity requirements include: three bus stops in pullouts with shelters. These are proposed to be located in the newly constructed road (26th Street being constructed as part of future development)</li> <li>• Okanagan College requires an exchange that can accommodate four bus stops. Ideally this would be situated in the College parking lot, requiring the removal of parking stalls. However, the location of the exchange could also be situated in conjunction with the Park &amp; Ride to be located in Vernon just near the College</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Continue to improve transit customer facilities</b></p> <p>Continued improvement and maintenance of transit facilities and on-street customer amenities are important for the continued operation and future growth of the transit system. Some improvements that have been identified are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider amending regional bylaws to include transit stop improvements as part of required works and services. For example Vernon City Council has Transportation Development Cost Charges (DCC's) which include capacity improvements to all nodes including transit facilities</li> <li>• Space transit stops along a corridor at appropriate intervals between 300m—400m. In some locations, transit stops are spaced too closely together leading to slower transit trips and higher transit stop maintenance costs. Corridor transit and transportation projects should include a review of stop locations prior to investing in infrastructure</li> <li>• Invest in on-street customer amenities such as transit shelters, customer information, benches and pedestrian-oriented lighting at transit stops</li> <li>• Improve universal accessibility of transit stops</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Improve customer information</b></p> <p>The improvement of customer information helps existing customers navigate the transit system and makes it easier for new users to access the transit system for the first time. The following customer information tools are recommended for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional transit information at the stop level</li> <li>• Provide trip planning tools (i.e. Google Transit)</li> </ul>

## Medium and Long-term Implementation Priorities (6–25+ years)

### Medium-term Service Improvements

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Finalize the development of the core transit spine</b></p> <p><b>Phase 3: realignment of Route 6 along Highway 97</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekday services between 7am and 10pm with a 20 minute frequency in the peak and 30 minute frequency all other times</li> <li>• Saturday services between 8am and 10pm with a 30 to 60 minute frequency</li> <li>• Sunday Services between 9am and 6pm, with a 30 to 60 minute frequency</li> <li>• Realignment of this route requires coordination with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and Vernon Jubilee Hospital to install appropriate bus stops and safe pedestrian connections to the hospital across the highway</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Improve Regional connections to Kelowna</b></p> <p><b>Expand service to offer:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hourly trips between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Improve Regional connections to better meet Interregional transfers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 60 Enderby: expansion of service Monday to Friday, between 7am and 7pm, and</li> <li>• Route 61 Lumby: expansion of weekday trips between 7am–7pm</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Introduce New Local Transit Network (LTN) Route</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre</li> <li>• Hourly service Monday to Friday</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Introduce New Local Transit Network (LTN) Route</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foothills to Village Green Centre</li> <li>• Hourly service, Monday to Friday</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Introduce New Local Transit Network (LTN) Route</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue Jay</li> <li>• BX &amp; Paddlewheel</li> <li>• 3-5 trips per day, Monday to Friday</li> </ul>

### Medium-term Infrastructure Improvements

<b>1</b>	<b>Examine construction of Kiss &amp; Ride stations at Foothills and Waterfront Neighborhood Centre</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Identify and develop formalized Park &amp; Ride site near Okanagan College</b>

### Long-term Service Improvements

<b>1</b>	<b>Examine weekend service possibilities to UBCO Kelowna</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Expand evening and weekend service on Routes 60 and 61</b>

### Long-term Infrastructure Improvements

<b>1</b>	<b>Further examine transfer points/secondary exchange possibilities at Okanagan Landing and Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Identify and develop formalized Park &amp; Ride sites in Armstrong and possible site in Swan Lake</b>



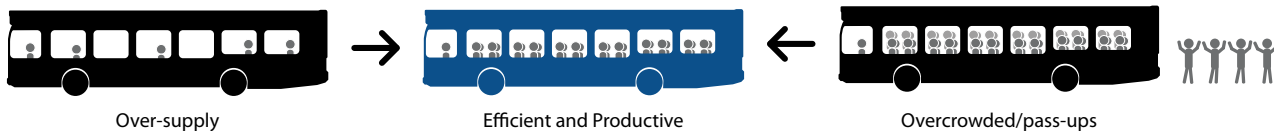
## Custom Transit Service and Transit Accessibility

Short-, Medium- and Long-term Service Improvements		Timeframe
1	<b>Complete the Custom (handyDART) Registration pilot project</b>	2014/15
2	<b>Examine the recertification of existing handyDART registrants</b>	2015/16
3	<p><b>Upon completion of the pilot project examine improvements to the handyDART service in the existing Custom Transit service area</b></p> <p>The following priorities for service improvements have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service on statutory Holidays</li> <li>• Weekday service at peak times</li> <li>• Expanded hours of service on weekdays and weekends</li> </ul>	Short-term
4	<p><b>Expand a travel training program</b></p> <p>A program should be developed to provide travel training to assist individuals who meet the handyDART eligibility criteria in learning to use conventional and handyDART transit systems. The travel training program would be based on handyDART referrals and outreach to seniors and people with a disability. For example, in Kelowna, 95% of training participants have chosen to ride conventional transit following their training.</p>	Medium-term
5	<p><b>Continue to expand service over time to meet demand</b></p> <p>Improve handyDART availability to match conventional service area and hours of operation.</p>	Medium- to long-term



## Service Design Standards and Route Performance Guidelines

As part of the ongoing management of the transit network, service design standards and performance guidelines have been developed as tools to facilitate service planning decisions and measure how well the transit system is progressing towards achieving its goals. Service standards define service levels, the service area and when service should be introduced or reduced to an area. Performance guidelines measure service effectiveness by defining numerical thresholds and targets for the system and its routes and services. These measures are meant to ensure an acceptable level of service quality to the customer, and along with the Transit Future Plan, guide planning decisions and recommendations of BC Transit and the City of Vernon, District of Coldstream and Regional District of North Okanagan staff to the decision makers.



## Moving Forward

### Funding the Plan

Meeting the mode share and ridership targets of this plan will require capital and operating investments in the transit system over the next 25 years. Annual operating costs are based on service hours across all four networks including the Vernon/Coldstream urban conventional network, Custom Transit, and the Regional and Interregional networks that are projected to increase from the existing 47,654 hours overall to approximately 105,439 hours overall. The plan also calls for capital investments that include:

- Expanding the urban, regional, interregional and custom transit fleet from the existing 24 vehicles to 48 vehicles
- New transit exchanges at Village Green Centre, Polson Mall and North Okanagan College
- New Park & Ride facilities at North Okanagan College and Armstrong
- Improvements to customer amenities at transit stops and transit priority measures as required

Given the level of transit investment anticipated over the coming decades, the way in which transit is funded needs to be reviewed. BC Transit and its funding partners will need to work together to achieve stable and predictable funding sources beyond the existing funding mechanisms.

## Keys to Success

To guide the plan from vision to reality will require an on-going dialogue between the Province, BC Transit and the North Okanagan on transportation policy, funding and the connection between land use and transit planning.

The Transit Future Plan builds upon previous plans and will be used to communicate the vision and direction for transit in the North Okanagan.

The City of Vernon has already taken the step of integrating a transit system policy and other transit supportive policies within the Official Community Plan. Other steps required to ensure the success of the plan include integrating the transit strategy into other municipal projects, supporting travel demand management measures and transit supportive land use practices.





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