

Thursday January 18, 2024

Victoria Regional Transit Commission
520 Gorge Road East
Victoria, BC V8W 9T5

Dear Members of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission:

Hello. I want to make a formal complaint about the services of BC Transit because I feel there was a complete lack of planning and respect for customers along Happy Valley Road. I made a complaint about this incident via email to BC Transit, but the response was not satisfactory.

On Tuesday January 9, 2024, I walked from my home on Braeburn Avenue to go to the bus stop at Happy Valley Road/Luxton Road. I work with adults with special needs on Tuesdays. I can't be late, so I had carefully planned my trip. I wanted to take bus #52, then bus #95 to go downtown to work. I arrived at the bus stop at 7:37 a.m., well ahead of the bus that was expected to arrive at that stop at 7:50 a.m.

Upon arrival at the bus stop, I checked the Next Ride app, and it said bus #52 was a 15 to 25-minute wait which I expected. I checked the app again several minutes later, and it said the bus was a 5 to 10-minute wait. With the cold wind and rain that day, it was an uncomfortable wait. However, I was fine with it all because I was stoked about the idea that I could catch a bus close to home and get all the way downtown in time for work – all part of what BC Transit referred to as “significant service improvements” in my area.

The bus did not come at 7:50 a.m. By 7:52 a.m., the bus had still not arrived. I re-checked the app, and it said the next bus would be there in 25 minutes. Obviously, the bus I expected was cancelled. My only option was to walk home (up a hill) and drive to the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre where I knew I could take #95 Blink – Downtown.

I called BC Transit from my car before driving to Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre. A staff person told me there were some mechanical issues that day, and then started giving me information on the next bus I could take, trying to be helpful. However, I told this kind staff person that I could not gamble on BC Transit again.

A well-intentioned BC Transit staff person was stationed at the bus stop at Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre while I waited for bus #95. He listened to my concerns, and mentioned that if I had checked the website, I would have seen that bus #52 was cancelled. I noted that I should not have to check a website in addition to an app every time I want to ride a bus, especially when a bus route is supposed to part of an improved service.

Please note: This complaint is not about the effectiveness of the BC Transit website or the Next Ride app (I was informed by BC Transit staff that day that the Next Ride app is no longer valid and there is a new app in its place). This complaint is about the **lack of reliability of BC Transit in actually showing up at all**, and their **refusal to compensate customers** when they don't show up.

I lost more than an hour of my time due to this incident, in addition to the time spent trying to resolve this matter through email with BC Transit, and the writing of this letter. Compensation for my time would be a gesture of respect, but BC Transit keeps telling me they are not able to compensate customers. I believe that if compensation was mandated, BC Transit would find a solution for stranded passengers.

Why didn't BC Transit create a back-up plan on this route - especially in the first few days of a service that was supposed to be improved?

How is faith in the system going to increase if this is the experience for so many people?

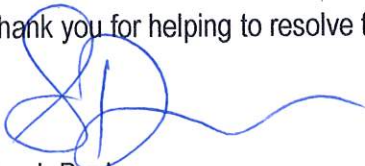
How early does BC Transit expect people along Happy Valley Road to leave for work to accommodate for frequent cancellations and bus breakdowns that may occur?

I was so excited to have improved service in my area. BC Transit let me down again. One year ago, I had a similar experience trying to access a bus from my area, and the very same thing happened.

I would have sent this letter of complaint earlier if the BC Transit website had provided the steps to file a formal complaint.

The best way to reach me is via email: pieceofcakecommunications@yahoo.ca

Thank you for helping to resolve this matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Daviau', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sarah Daviau

Copy: BC Transit