

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

September 10, 2024

#11

SUBJECT: Route 76 Reinstatement

PURPOSE

To provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (“the Commission”) with information on a possible reinstatement of the Route 76 Swartz Bay/UVic. This report follows a request from the University of Victoria Students’ Society (UVSS) to have this route reinstated. This report is presented to the Commission for APPROVAL.

BACKGROUND

The Route 76 operated historically between UVic and Swartz Bay and was discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a significant drop in interregional travel demand. The Route 76 was not reinstated due to ongoing resource constraints and competing priorities due to increasing ridership, passenger crowding, and travel delay impacts throughout the system. The route operated two Friday trips from UVic to Swartz Bay and three Sunday trips from Swartz Bay to UVic each week during the Fall and Winter service periods while UVic was in full session (schedule shown in Figure 2). The historical Friday trips met the 3pm and 5pm sailing departure times, and the Sunday trips met the 4:30pm, 6:30pm, and 8:30pm ferry sailing arrival times.

The cost for this service was approximately 400 service hours annually and required the use one peak bus¹ on Fridays.

¹ A peak bus is a bus operating when the maximum number of available buses within the fleet are operating scheduled service, and traditionally lines up with key commuter times in the morning and afternoon. Any added service in peak periods requires expansion buses (additional peak buses) to accommodate.

| 76 Swartz Bay 76 UVic | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------|
| Friday only | | | | | |
| | Lv. UVic Exchange | Ar. Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal | Lv. Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal | Ar. UVic Exchange | |
| AF | 1:50 | 2:35 | : | : | |
| AF | 3:50 | 4:35 | : | : | |
| Sunday | | | | | |
| | : | : | P | 4:50 | 5:30 |
| | : | : | P | 6:50 | 7:30 |
| | : | : | P | 8:50 | 9:30 |
| <p>A Trip operates only when UVic is in full session. Stopping Policy: No stops after leaving UVic Exchange until Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal.</p> <p>F Trip operates Friday only.</p> <p>P 76 UVic operates Sundays and certain holidays only when UVic is in full session.</p> <p>Stopping Policy: Stops at Royal Oak Exchange (Bay H), McKenzie and Quadra, McKenzie and Shelbourne, UVic Exchange.</p> <p>Note: This route may not operate on Sunday if the following Monday is a holiday.</p> | | | | | |

Figure 1: Historic Route 76 Schedule

Due to existing peak vehicle limitations on weekdays, until additional expansion buses arrive, the historical Friday trips would need to be adjusted. One option would be to shift the historical Friday trip meeting the 3pm sailing to instead meet the 1pm sailing, and the historical Friday trip meeting the 5pm sailing would need to be shifted to instead meet the 9pm sailing. An alternative feasible option involved operating one or more of the Friday trips on Saturday morning instead. Planning staff engaged with the UVSS around the Friday peak vehicle constraint options, and the UVSS indicated a preference for retaining Friday service meeting the 1pm and 9pm sailings.

Given the low annual service hour cost for reinstatement and growing ridership and passenger crowding on the existing Route 70, Planning staff recommend reinstating the Route 76 for January 2025, subject to availability of sufficient operator numbers.

The alternative would be to defer reintroduction for consideration as part of the 2025/26 draft Annual Service Plan for VRTC review at the November 12, 2024 meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission **APPROVE** the reintroduction of Route 76 for the January 2025 service change, subject to resource availability.

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Date reviewed: August 28, 2024