

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

September 10, 2024

#16

SUBJECT: Planning Update

PURPOSE

To provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (“the Commission”) with an update on transit service planning in the Victoria Region. This report is presented to the Commission for INFORMATION.

1. TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGES

Fall 2024 Service Change

Effective September 3, 2024, the fall service change includes the following:

- Service levels across multiple post-secondary school-serving routes will be increased for the season.
- Minor service level optimizations and trip time adjustments will be implemented on various routes within the system to improve service reliability.
- Route 81 will be rerouted through Mills Road instead of Henry Avenue in Sidney due to road construction.
- Route 13 will be discontinued due to high overlap with Route 11 and low ridership within the Ten Mile Point neighbourhood.
- The Parkland loop deviation on Route 24 will be discontinued due to low ridership and the recurrence of parked vehicles posing operational challenges.
- Trips across various routes meeting K-12 school times will be reintroduced for the school season¹.
- Route 17 will be reintroduced for the school season.
- A seasonal reduction of service on routes 70 (all days) and 75 (Saturdays) to reflect lower seasonal demand will be implemented.

¹ School District 62 has implemented a policy change to introduce school busing fees for students.

As always, our organization will do our best to accommodate all riders, including students that are shifting to public transit for this coming school year; however, peak resources are constrained and pass ups will occur when buses reach capacity

Holiday Seasonal Service Change

Effective December 9, 2024, the holiday service change includes the following:

- Service will be seasonally reduced to better align with the lower ridership demand from post-secondary education institutions.

Service reductions in December allow us to provide additional service in seasons with higher ridership demand.

2. TRANSIT SERVICE PLANNING INITIATIVES

Victoria Regional Transit Plan

Based on final input and feedback from the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Province, a Request for Proposals (RFP) process is now underway to contract consulting support for the Victoria Regional Transit Plan. We provided a final update on the scope of the Victoria Regional Transit Plan to the CRD's Transportation Working Group on September 5, 2024 and the RFP will be released before the end of September with the expectation of onboarding the successful proponent sometime in October. The plan is still targeting a 12-month process with an anticipated Fall 2025 completion date.

Beyond replacing the outdated 2011 Transit Future Plan, the Victoria Regional Transit Plan will be a key input into the development of an Integrated Regional Plan, which is required to secure funding for the Metro-Region Agreement funding stream of the new Canada Public Transit Fund. Figure 1 below represents the relationship between the upcoming Victoria Regional Transit Plan, the Integrated Regional Plan, and other existing and planned regional and local government planning initiatives.

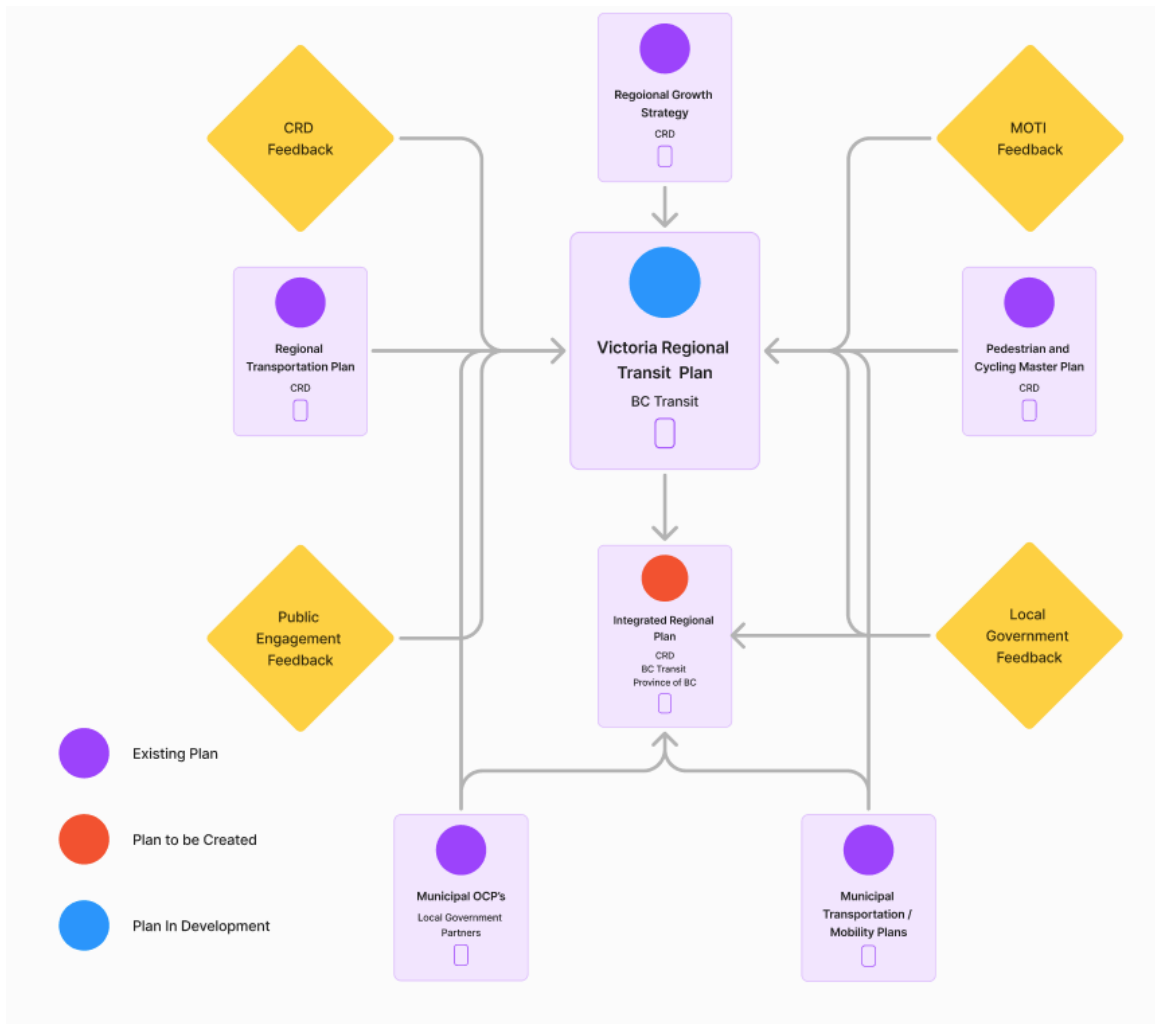


Figure 1: Victoria Regional Transit Plan Relationship Map

Local Area and Corridor Transit Plans (LATP)

Tillicum/McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan

The Tillicum/McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan engagement process is now complete, with a summary of key findings in the attached Engagement Summary Report (#16b). Next steps on this project include drafting the plan, obtaining final feedback from District of Saanich and Township of Esquimalt staff, and a presentation of the final plan for VRTC endorsement at the November 12, 2024 VRTC meeting.

Quadra Corridor Transit Plan

Work continues on the Quadra Corridor Transit Plan process. Technical workshops have been conducted with BC Transit, City of Victoria, and District of Saanich staff, including a review of preliminary transit service and infrastructure concepts. Public engagement is being planned for

November following Saanich's Quadra McKenzie Study engagement and the Provincial election blackout period.

YYJ Service Review

Based on the VRTC motion from the November 2023 meeting, Planning staff will be developing a YYJ Airport Service Options report for the November 2024 meeting to support the draft 2025/26 Annual Service Plan and integration into the Victoria Regional Transit Plan process. The report will present several airport service options and associated trade-offs for VRTC information and direction, including the following:

- Existing service (Route 87 and 88)
- McTavish to YYJ Frequent Transit Route (as per the Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan)
- New direct Victoria to YYJ Route
- Rerouting existing service - Victoria to YYJ

The report will consider a variety of factors including estimated costs, anticipated ridership levels, potential external benefits or impacts, and trade-offs for existing riders. The report will include a review of airport transit service and associated ridership performance from other representative cities in order to estimate likely ridership performance outcomes from the different service options. Finally, the report will include proposed next steps associated with each airport service option, along with a recommendation for the VRTC.

Public Engagement

Upcoming Engagement

Quadra Corridor Transit Plan

Engagement to support this project is planned for November 2024. Public engagement will include an online survey and several open house events.

Other Planning Work

Referrals – Referral-related work undertaken or proposed since the last Commission meeting includes:

- **Bus Stop Improvements** – BC Transit continues to work closely with Local Government Partners within the Victoria Region to coordinate improvements to stop configurations and layout to improve accessibility and customer experience.
- **Development Referral Process** – BC Transit receives and responds to development referrals from Local Governments considering rezoning and large-scale development proposals. BC Transit provides comment on opportunities for transit supportive development, improvements to transit supportive infrastructure such as bus stops and sidewalks and provides comments on the feasibility of future transit service to the proposed development.

Planning staff have received approximately 22 development referrals between May 2024 and July 2024 and provided feedback to six Local Governments.

Service Monitoring

- **Ridership Performance Report** – Planning regularly monitors service performance against the service standards and performance guidelines identified in the 2013/14 Service Review document. Regular performance monitoring allows for a better alignment between service levels and ongoing changes in demand and travel patterns.

The attached Ridership Performance Report (#16a) provides information on ridership performance over the Spring 2024 service period from April 13 to June 30, 2024, and provides information on historical ridership and service reliability trends up to June 30, 2024.

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