

September 10, 2024

SUBJECT: Infrastructure Planning and Delivery Update

PURPOSE

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

1. ON-STREET TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Active Infrastructure Projects

- **Island Highway Transit Priority Upgrades:** The Island Highway Transit Priority Project is being advanced to support the West Shore RapidBus Strategy between the intersection of the Highway 1 exit and entrance ramps in View Royal, and Wale Road in Colwood. The scope of the project includes transit queue jump lanes, bike lanes, sidewalk widening, accessible wheelchair ramps, intersection improvements, crosswalk signage and road painting, street lighting and traffic signals upgrades. A funding application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) was approved in August 2023 for this project. The View Royal section of the project is under construction, with estimated completion in late 2024. The Colwood section of the project is still in the land acquisition phase. Construction will commence once negotiations with private landowners are complete.
- **Bus Shelter Program:** The BC Transit Bus Shelter Program is a province-wide cost sharing program (including provincial and federal funding contributions) to assist municipalities in acquiring new BC Transit-branded shelters with a standardized look, feel and function. Through this program, BC Transit collaborates with local governments to help determine bus shelter locations. Local governments are responsible for site preparation costs and activities and the VRTC contributes the local share of the cost to purchase a shelter (~20%). There are approximately 2,300 bus stops in the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) with the top 500 busiest (highest passenger activity) comprising 85 per cent of total ridership activity. The

majority of these bus stops now have a bus shelter where possible. The program included the following shelter roll-out for the VRTS:

- In 2023/24, six shelters were installed.
- In 2024/25, seven shelters are in the installation phase with a procurement for 26 additional shelters underway. These additional shelters will be installed in the second half of 2024 & first half of 2025.
- The 2025/26 program will be launching in August 2024 with a 'call for applications' from local government partners by January 2025.

Infrastructure Studies

- **Downtown Douglas Street:** In collaboration with City of Victoria, the Downtown Douglas RapidBus Study is being advanced to support the overall RapidBus strategy on Douglas Street between Belleville and Bay Street, with a focus on the downtown core. The intent of the planning work is to establish a multi-modal vision for this portion of the corridor. A report and presentation were provided to City of Victoria Committee of the Whole in May 2024, and the staff report included a recommended concept for transit priority measures and RapidBus stations. The following motion was passed by City of Victoria Council:
 - Transition the current time-limited dedicated bus lanes of Segment A (Hillside Ave to Herald Street) to 24/7 bus lanes starting in late 2024
 - Commence detailed design for dedicated bus lanes along Segment B and C (Herald Street to Belleville Street)
 - Consider ways of integrating cycling, micromobility, and mobility scooters into the overall Douglass Street redevelopment project

Segment A, which includes, signage updates and line painting, was completed by the City of Victoria and BC Transit earlier this month at a cost of \$40,000 dollars, which was funded by the Commission through previously approved funding from the RapidBus Planning budget. Details regarding the next phase of design for Segment B and C are being developed in collaboration with City of Victoria staff and will be presented at the upcoming VRTC Strategic Workshop.

- **McKenzie Corridor Study:** The McKenzie Corridor Study is being advanced to develop the infrastructure components of a McKenzie RapidBus Strategy. The study is in partnership with the District of Saanich and the objectives are to establish a multi-modal vision which combines transit priority, RapidBus stations and active transportation improvements on McKenzie Avenue from Highway 17 to UVic. The preferred long-term vision has been identified and the nearer-term improvements have been developed. The long-term vision for McKenzie is planned to be included in the District of Saanich's Quadra McKenzie (Community Planning) Plan, and Council will receive an update in September 2024. Details regarding the next phase of

design are being developed in collaboration with District of Saanich staff and will be presented at the upcoming Strategic Workshop.

- **Peninsula RapidBus Infrastructure Studies:** Multiple Peninsula RapidBus infrastructure studies have been completed to develop the infrastructure components of the Peninsula RapidBus line. In collaboration with the Town of Sidney, a transit hub study to identify options to integrate a RapidBus Station and local transit service was recently completed. The transit hub concept was supported by the Town of Sidney Council in June 2024. Details regarding the next phase of design are being developed in collaboration with Town of Sidney staff and will be presented at the upcoming Strategic Workshop.
- In collaboration with BC Ferries, the conceptual design and assessment of two potential long-term options to upgrade the Swartz Bay transit terminal were completed. The objectives of the upgrades are to enhance the customer experience and to allow increased bus frequency to the ferry terminal. The next step is to decide with BC Ferries on the preferred short- and long-term upgrades and develop an implementation plan.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Studies

- **Highway 1** – To support the West Shore RapidBus Strategy, MoTI is advancing projects on Highway 1 to support existing BC Transit initiatives. This includes transit priority treatments that align with the BC Transit priorities identified in the Victoria Region Transit Future Plan and the South Island Transportation Strategy:
 - MoTI has initiated construction to add bus-on-shoulder lanes to the Burnside Bridge (between Tillicum Road and McKenzie Avenue).
 - On July 29, 2024, MoTI announced the bus-on-shoulder lane project on Highway 1 between the McKenzie Interchange and Island Highway entrance and exit ramps (Colwood Interchange). The project will soon be tendered, and construction is expected to start in early 2025.
- **Uptown Transit Hub and Transit-Oriented Development Opportunities** – MoTI is continuing to develop plans for a Transit Oriented Development and Transit Hub at Uptown in Saanich. On April 8th, the Province publicly announced plans for housing and transit investments at the Uptown Transit Hub and finalized the purchase of two properties adjacent to the Galloping Goose regional trail – one at 3657 Harriet Road, currently occupied by Budget Rent-a-Car, and another at 28 Crease Avenue, previously occupied by Ryzuk Geotechnical. The purchase price for the Harriet Road Property was \$7.5 million, while the Crease Avenue property cost just over \$1.8 million. Public engagement, commenced in August and continuing into September, will inform project planning and design. Engagement will include project partners such as local governments and BC Transit, as well as First Nations, targeted stakeholders and the broader public, and will consist of meetings, an online questionnaire and an in-person Open House. BC Transit will participate in the public engagement to provide information on transit network and service planning aspects related to the project. BC Transit has requested that MoTI staff include the Transit Commission in their engagement plans to provide an opportunity to discuss the project. Future steps include releasing

the public engagement report, which is expected in the fall/winter 2024. Further conceptual planning is expected to resume in 2025/26.

- **Uptown Transit Priority** – MoTI is advancing design work to develop transit and active transportation priorities and improvements that support near-term RapidBus Strategy objectives that align with the future development of the Uptown site and do not preclude the long-term plan. The plan includes a proposal for a bus lane on Ravine Road, RapidBus Stations on Highway 1 and expanded bus zone capacity on Carey Road. The project is in the design stage and an open house was held on May 1st to provide an opportunity for public input. A construction date has not yet been confirmed. This plan aligns with long-term plans for the Uptown Transit Hub and transit-oriented development opportunities.

2. TRANSIT FACILITY PROJECTS

Active Infrastructure Projects

- **handyDART Centre at 2401 Burnside Road** – The final phase of the building construction is underway with all major steel and brick exteriors complete; in addition, roofing is 90 per cent complete and drywall paint and taping are well underway. The project team is working with the Esquimalt Nation to plan the naming ceremony for the new creek and to consider options for naming the new facility. Indigenous art opportunities are being explored through a draft Call for Artists process.
- **Saanich Transit Centre** – Planning for the Saanich Transit Centre includes Phase 1A, which prepares the site for construction, and Phase 1B, which is the construction of the facility on the prepared site. An application for ICIP funding for Phase 1A was approved by the Federal Government in October 2023. Procurement for design consultant services and an Environmental Monitor for Phase 1A is currently underway. The Treasury Board business plan for Phase 1B is being prepared in collaboration with Infrastructure BC. The design team and quantity surveyor are progressing an indicative design that establishes the budget for the Phase 1B funding request. This includes meeting with BC Hydro to confirm sizing and costing to provide power to the site that accounts for fleet electrification and finalizing the Traffic Impact Assessment. Early outreach efforts have been completed and community and Indigenous engagement are ongoing with a focus on involving First Nations and the community in upcoming activities, establishing effective communication channels, and supporting the archaeological and environmental overview assessment. Saanich Planning and Engineering teams are being engaged to reconfirm their expectations around permitting requirements, new design guidelines, timelines, and other relevant factors. The next step is to decide with Infrastructure BC on the preferred RFP strategy for construction management.

- **Langford Transit Centre Upgrades** – The active Langford Transit Centre modernization project was developed to support the implementation of the Transit Facility Master Plan and received ICIP funding approval in fall 2023. This project optimizes operations to increase maintenance capacity. Stantec was awarded the design services for upgrades at the Langford Transit Centre, with the option to extend the contract to support continuous improvements at this facility until 2030. Workshops have started to update the Master Plan and validate the Phase 1 construction scope to ensure long-term goals for the Langford Transit Center are implemented progressively.

Prepared by:	<u>James Wadsworth</u>		
Position:	<u>Manager, Project Development</u>	Date prepared:	<u>August 23, 2024</u>
Approved by:	<u>Christy Harrold</u>		
Position:	<u>VP, Strategy & Public Affairs</u>	Date reviewed:	<u>August 27, 2024</u>