
SUBJECT: Sidney Transit Hub

PURPOSE

To provide an update to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) on the infrastructure planning activities to support the Peninsula RapidBus Line and the next steps necessary to continue advancing the RapidBus Implementation Strategy.

This report is presented to the Commission for **APPROVAL** in principle to advance a Sidney Transit Hub Planning and Design Project to support the implementation of the Peninsula RapidBus Line.

BACKGROUND

A key strategy to achieve increased transit mode share is the implementation of RapidBus service in the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS). The Victoria Regional Transit Future Plan (2011) identified a future Peninsula RapidBus Line on Highway 17 that would form the spine of the Peninsula transit network, connecting the major centres of Uptown, Royal Oak and Sidney with the metropolitan core and the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal. The VRTC then approved the RapidBus Implementation Strategy (2021) to accelerate ridership growth along key corridors including the implementation of strategic customer-facing infrastructure investments.

RapidBus service is planned be implemented across several additional key corridors in the VRTS to create a high-capacity transit system in three phases. Phase 1 of the RapidBus Implementation Strategy (2021) was the introduction of the West Shore RapidBus line, which connects Langford, Colwood, and View Royal to the metropolitan core. Phase 2 includes the establishment of the McKenzie and Peninsula Lines.

Transit infrastructure is a critical component of transit systems such that, as investments are made to expand RapidBus service, corresponding investments in new transit infrastructure are often required, such as transit priority measures and improved bus stops. Transit priority measures, such as bus lanes, transit signal priority, or queue jump lanes help improve transit speed and reliability, while expanded RapidBus stations improve accessibility features, provide increased passenger capacity, and allow for “Blink” branding opportunities. These infrastructure investments will complement additional RapidBus service to support attracting new ridership and increasing the transit mode share.

Transit hubs connect local transit service with regional service and are typically located within the activity centres of the community, such as downtown or village centres, in order to reinforce the relationship with land use patterns. If properly planned and designed, transit hubs can become effective multi-modal exchanges and pedestrian-oriented sites. Transit hubs should ideally provide:

- Weather protection
- Seating
- Transit route and schedule information
- Lighting
- Bicycle parking

In addition to the Sidney Transit Hub, two additional transit infrastructure projects are currently underway to advance the Peninsula RapidBus Line: Highway 17 RapidBus Station improvements and transit priority measures, and a Swartz Bay Transit Terminal. Project updates for Highway 17 and the Swartz Bay Transit Terminal will be shared in the near future.

Sidney Transit Hub

The Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan (2022) reviewed options to provide better service to the Victoria International Airport and identified the intersection of Seventh Street and Bevan Avenue as a key transfer location between the planned Peninsula RapidBus Line and local services. Establishing a Transit Hub at Seventh Street and Bevan Avenue would create a faster route through Sidney for the Route 70 which is planned to transition to a RapidBus service. Additional bus stop capacity in Sidney was deemed necessary to support service increases.

BC Transit and the Town of Sidney have developed a multi-modal transit hub concept around the Seventh Street & Bevan Avenue intersection. Figure 1 illustrates the preferred concept that was approved in principle by the Town of Sidney Council in June 2024. Further planning and design work is scheduled for the next 1 to 2 years. The current cost is estimated at \$3M (excluding additional costs for delivering washrooms).

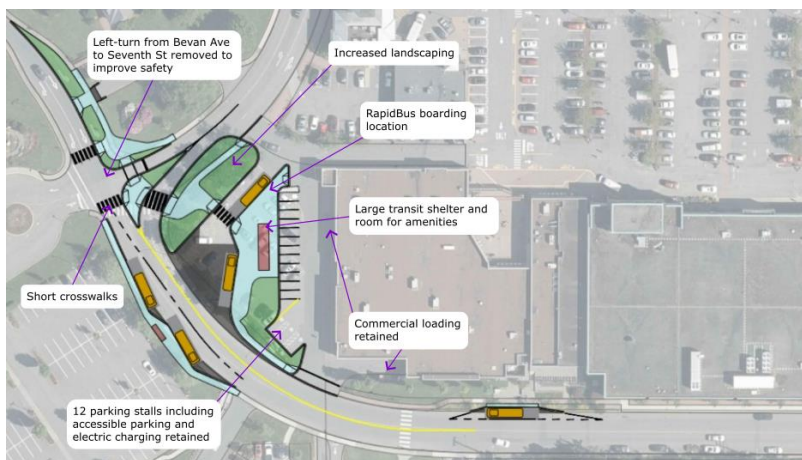


Figure 1. The preferred off-street design for the Sidney Transit Hub

DISCUSSION

To continue advancing the Peninsula RapidBus Line, approval in principle must be secured for the development of the Sidney Transit Hub from the VRTC to fund the design phase. Once approved, the parties will continue advancing preliminary and detailed designs through a Planning and Design project, which will be a collaborative effort with the Town of Sidney, with the following key milestones:

- Development and execution of a Memorandum of Understanding confirming the scope, roles, and responsibilities for BC Transit and the Town of Sidney
- Procurement of consultant to develop:
- 90 per cent design for the Sidney Transit Hub
- Class B cost estimate
- Business case preparation

The design phase is anticipated to take approximately 18 months with an estimated cost of \$300,000, which will be cost shared with the Province at the traditional ratio of 68.3% VRTC funding, 31.7% Provincial funding. The VRTC share of the planning and design budget will be funded through future lease fees that are not incurred until the project is in service. If the project does not proceed the costs will be recovered as a one-time operating expense. After the design phase is complete, staff will come back to the Commission to seek VRTC approval to proceed with submitting a funding application. Completion of the design phase will support the pursuit of future federal funding programs, which are expected in 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the VRTC **APPROVE** the development of the Sidney Transit Hub in principle to support the development of the Peninsula RapidBus Line.

It is further recommended that the VRTC **APPROVE** the planning and design work to further develop designs and cost estimates for the Sidney Transit Hub for the development of a business case and future funding application.

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