

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

November 26, 2024

#14

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**.

DISCUSSION

1. TRANSIT SERVICE CHANGES

Winter 2025 Service Change

Effective January 6, 2024, the winter service change includes the following:

- Seasonal service levels across multiple post-secondary school-serving routes will be reinstated.
- Service expansion implemented, including the following:
 - Route 76 UVic/Swartz Bay reinstated.
 - Weekday peak service levels improved on Routes 4, 6, 7, 14, 21, 26, 27, and 28 to reduce passenger crowding and pass-ups.
 - Weekend service improvements on Routes 4, 6, 26, 27/28, and 95 to address passenger crowding.
 - Schedule changes to improve service reliability:
 - Weekend schedules adjusted on routes 75, 95, and all planned frequent transit routes to improve service reliability.
 - Weekday schedules adjusted for Routes 30, 31, 39, and 75.

Spring 2025 Service Change

Effective April 14, 2025, the spring service change includes the following:

- Seasonal service reduction to better align service with lower ridership demand from post-secondary education institutions on routes Routes 4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 39 and 51.
- Service level and vehicle capacity improvements on routes serving key tourism-related demand from BC Ferries and Butchart Gardens, including Routes 70, 75, and 81.

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

2. TRANSIT SERVICE PLANNING INITIATIVES

Victoria Regional Transit Plan

Over the course of the fall, BC Transit staff have been working closely with the Province to align our project timelines with their strategic objectives. While we've been prepared to initiate the Request for Proposal process for this Plan, the Province has requested that we coordinate our project launch with other upcoming initiatives to maximize resources and impact. This alignment reflects our shared dedication to a cohesive approach and will position us to deliver even greater value for the community once we begin. In the meantime, we will be working internally on foundational aspects of the plan in preparation for bringing on a consultant; this approach will facilitate an expedited process, including engagement, once the consultant is onboarded.

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.

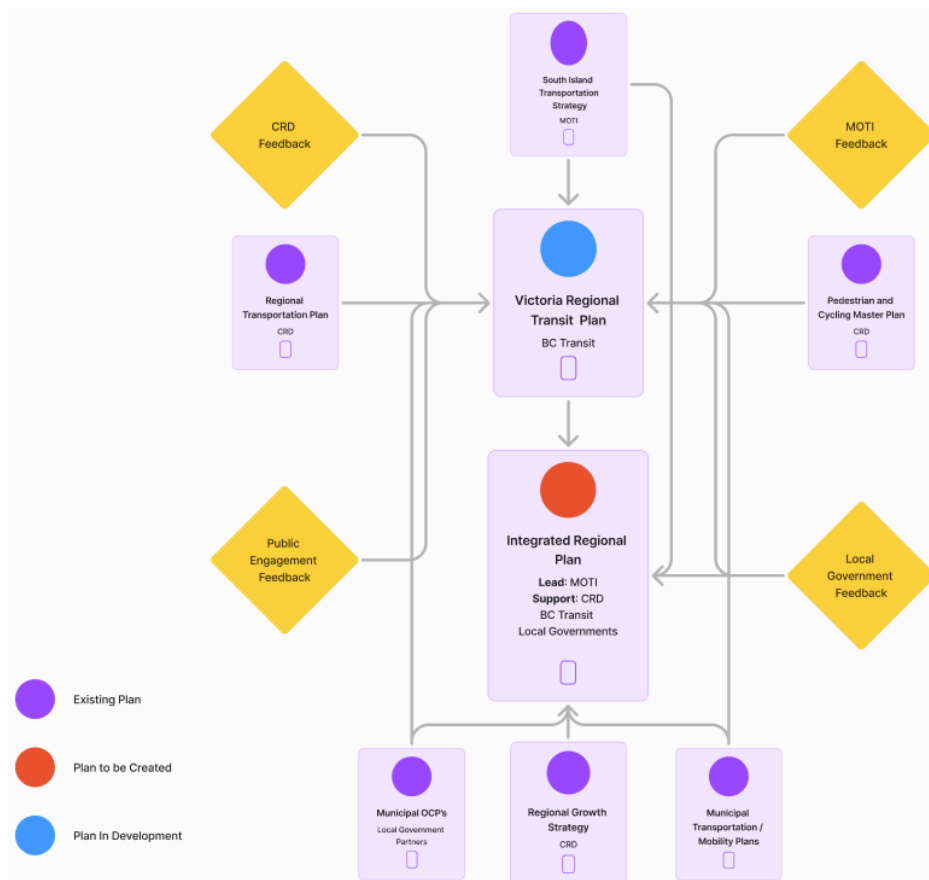


Figure 1: Victoria Regional Transit Plan Relationship Map

Local Area and Corridor Transit Plans (LATP)

Tillicum/McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan

The Tillicum/McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan is nearing completion, with the final report coming to the March 2025 VRTC meeting for formal approval. A brief summary of the key service proposals is included below, for the purpose of supporting the proposal included in the 2025/26 Draft Annual Service Plan.

Due to the significant service hour investment required, the short-term network restructure identified in the draft Tillicum-McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan to launch the McKenzie RapidBus Line has been separated into a multi-phase implementation.

Phase 1 involves an adjustment to Route 25¹ and the implementation of Route 40. Route 40 provides a new regional connection between Dockyard and UVic via Admirals and McKenzie, and functions as the primary service to local bus stops on McKenzie Avenue once the McKenzie RapidBus Line is implemented in Phase 2.

Phase 2 involves restructuring the Route 26, launching the Route 96 Blink RapidBus Line, and implementing the new Route 16 Uptown/UVic via Cedar Hill Cross Road. Under this proposal, Route 26 will change to operate between Dockyard and Uptown (instead of between Dockyard and Uptown, as it currently does), interlining with the new Route 16 to retain some of the existing cross-town service provided on the existing Route 26. Phase 2 is contingent on transit priority infrastructure improvements planned by MOTI in the Uptown area, tentatively scheduled for construction in 2025.

¹ Route 25 will be truncated at Admirals Walk or Dockyard in alignment with this service change, with the final decision to be made based on additional Planning work and engagement with Operations.

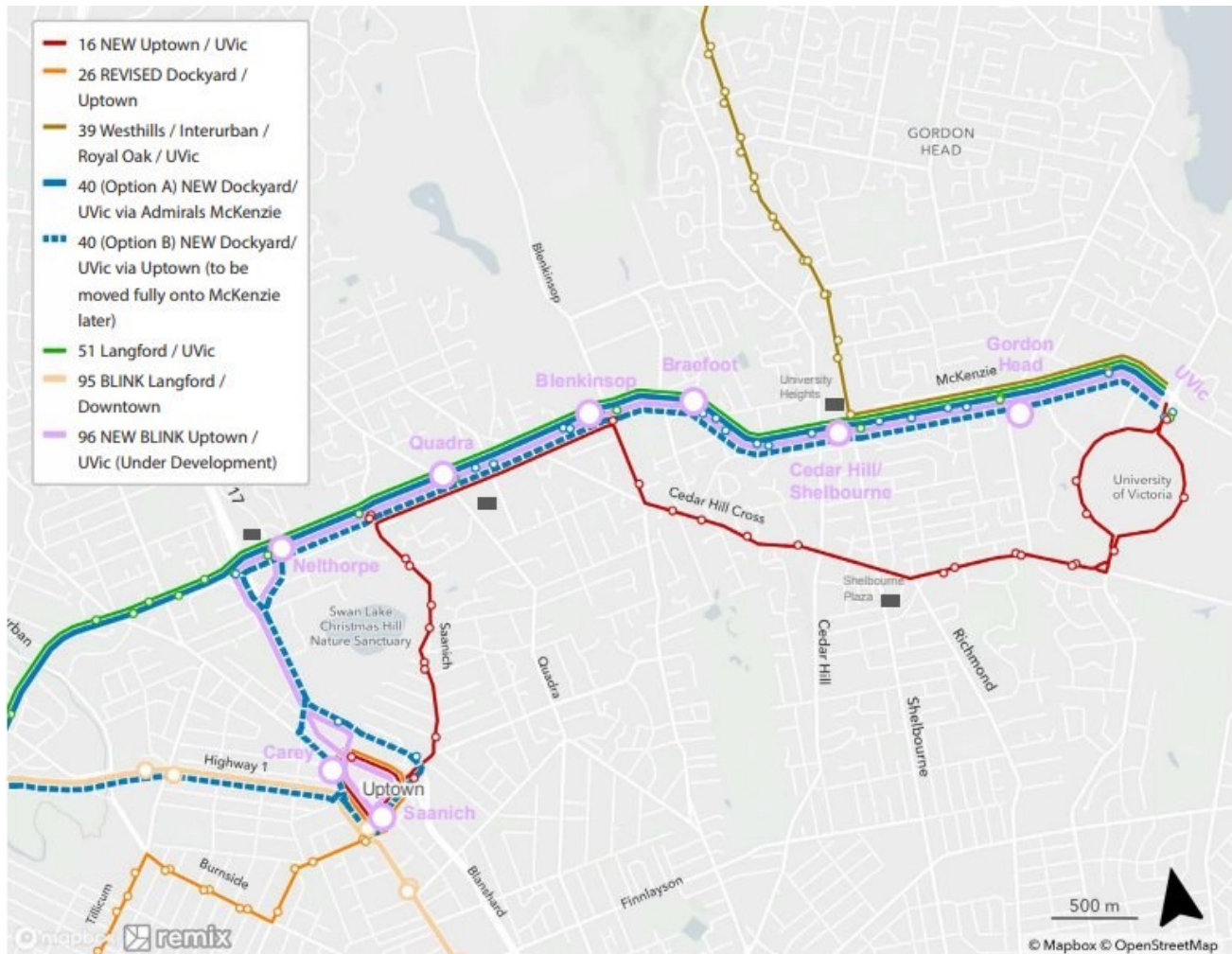


Figure 2: Phase 2 Network – Tillicum/McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan

Quadra Corridor Transit Plan

The Quadra Corridor Transit Plan has been put on hold prior to the planned November 2024 public engagement process. This change follows staff-level discussions between the City of Victoria, District of Saanich, and BC Transit which led to the conclusion that RapidBus service may not be the most appropriate service type to implement on this corridor. This decision included consideration of factors including but not limited to existing land use, future land use, right of way width, opportunities for implementing transit priority measures, block length, and proximity to other RapidBus lines. This change in project scope requires more time and planning work to reassess the alternative longer-term transit network options for the Quadra corridor.

Future corridor planning work will recommence following the completion of the VRTP and will benefit from the conclusions and recommendations of the completed plan. This will result in corridor plans providing a greater degree of clarity and guidance on service types for future corridor

transit plan processes with the benefit of transit system analysis at a regional level that will have been undertaken within the VRTP.

Sooke Transit Service Reallocation Review

As per the direction of the Commission at the September 10, 2024 meeting, initial planning work has started on service reallocation options to improve transit service within the Sooke area. Once a full set of options have been developed and vetted, they will be taken out for public engagement. The earliest feasible date for engagement is March 2025, with a possible September 2025 or January 2026 implementation.

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 40 development referrals between August and October 2024 and provided feedback to seven 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 (#15a) provides information on ridership performance over the Summer 2024 service period from July 1 to September 1, 2024, and provides information on historical ridership and service reliability trends up to September 1, 2024.

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