

November 26, 2024

SUBJECT: 2025/26 DRAFT ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN

PURPOSE

The 2025/26 Draft Annual Service Plan is submitted to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) for **INFORMATION**. The final 2025/26 Annual Service Plan will be brought to the Commission for Approval at the March 2025 meeting.

BACKGROUND

Each year, BC Transit develops an Annual Service Plan for the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) to provide the Commission with a proposal for service improvements over the subsequent fiscal year.

In September 2024, via the Three-Year Expansion report, the Commission endorsed 30,000 annual service hours¹ and 12 buses for service expansion for the 2025/26 fiscal year². Based on BC Transit’s annual Transit Evaluation Process (TEPs)³, this report also recommended the following key strategic investment priorities over the next three years:

- RapidBus and Frequent Transit Network (FTN) service improvements
- Development of the crosstown network on the Admirals/McKenzie corridor
- Simplifying and improving transit service on the Quadra corridor
- Improvements to YYJ Airport and Peninsula service
- Improvements to Sooke and other West Shore routes
- Introductory coverage service in rapidly developing communities

DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides an overview of the seasonal service changes planned for 2025/26 along with service improvements already accounted for within the base budget⁴ for 2025/26. Table 2 outlines the expansion plans associated with the 2025/26 expansion resources, anticipated to start in January of 2026. These proposed service changes are subject to change pending any unforeseen operational or resource challenges. Holiday service levels and special fare days are summarized in Appendix 1.

¹ Based on the expansion start date and the budget annualization process, only 7,500 hours of the approved expansion will be implemented in 2025/26. The full 30,000 hours will be implemented in the 2026/27 fiscal year.

² The Province’s share of funding must be approved in February 2025 to support the implementation of the Commission’s endorsed 2025/26 expansion.

³ TEPs ranks each expansion identified in BC Transit’s strategic planning documents according to several factors including population served, potential ridership, environmental impact, accessibility, reconciliation and impact on service reliability.

⁴ Based on 2024/25 operational usage patterns, BC Transit will reallocate a significant portion of budgeted, operational directed service resources back into the budget for scheduled service, equating to an additional 11,415 annual service hours of scheduled service for the 2025/26 Fiscal year. Additionally, a portion of annualized hours from the 2024/25 Fiscal year’s expansion are still available, contributing to additional hours of scheduled service improvements.

Table 1: 2025/26 Seasonal Service Changes and Base Budget Service Improvements

Service Period	Proposed Service Change	Operational or Strategic
April 14, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal service reductions to post-secondary institutions to align with reduced demand, including routes 4, 7, 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 39, 51, and 76* Seasonal service improvements to routes 70, 72 and 75 to support returning tourism demand for the Swartz Bay ferry terminal and Butchart Gardens Service reliability improvements on Routes 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 70, 71, 72, 81, 82, 83, 85, 87, and 88 in alignment with on-time performance analysis Investments in high-performing routes to address passenger comfort and pass-ups, including Routes 6, 27/28, 70 and 95 	Operational
June 30, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal removal of K-12 school overload and special trips on Routes 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 17, 21, 22, 26, 27, 35, 39, 52, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 72, 81, 82 and 83 Seasonal summer service increases to Butchart Gardens and the Swartz Bay ferry terminal on Routes 70, 72 and 75, including improvements to service span to meet early morning and late-night weekend ferry trips Service reliability improvements on Routes 6, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65 and 95 in alignment with on-time performance analysis Adjustments to the scheduled service levels on routes according to service standards and ridership performance 	Operational
September 2, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in Route 14 to build towards frequent transit service levels (every 15 minutes, 7am to 7pm, 7 days per week) Investment in Hillside service (Routes 4/9) to build towards frequent transit service levels (every 15 minutes, 7am to 7pm, 7 days per week) 	Strategic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstate regular K-12 and post-secondary seasonal service on Routes 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 26, 27, 35, 39, 51, 52, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 72, 76, 81, 82, and 83 Service reliability improvements on Routes 4, 9, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 32, 35 39, 46 and 51 in alignment with on-time performance analysis Adjustments to the scheduled service levels on routes according to service standards and ridership performance 	Operational
December 8, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard seasonal changes matching service with demand Adjustments to the scheduled service levels on routes according to service standards and ridership performance 	Operational
January 5, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinstate regular K-12 and post-secondary seasonal service on Routes 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 26, 27, 35, 39, 51, 52, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 72, 81, 82, and 83 Service reliability improvements on Routes 30, 31 and 75 in alignment with on-time performance analysis Adjustment to the scheduled service levels on routes according to service standards and ridership performance 	Operational

*Route numbers only are provided in the table above; full route names are provided in Appendix 2.

Table 2: 2025/26 Expansion Plan

Service Period	Proposed Service Change	Operational or Strategic	Expansion Resources		
			Annual Hours	2025/26 Fiscal Hours	Peak Exp. Buses
January 5, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Route 40 weekday service in preparation for McKenzie Rapid-Bus launch in 2026/27 Increase span of service to the Victoria International Airport (YYJ) on Route 88 to operate between 6:30am and 11:00pm, 7 days per week 	Strategic	12,000	3,000	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments in high-performing routes to improve service reliability, passenger comfort, and reduce pass-ups. 	Operational	18,000	4,500	6
Total			30,000	7,500	9

*Route numbers only are provided in the table above; full route names are provided in Appendix 2.

Route Class Changes

BC Transit staff make data-reliant changes to service levels on routes in alignment with the service standards and performance guidelines included within the [2013/14 Service Review](#). Changes to service levels within a route’s service standards (associated with its route class) can be made without direct VRTC approval. For this reason, changes to route class are approved by the Commission as part of the Annual Service Plan. The following routes are recommended for classification change as part of the 2025/26 Annual Service Plan:

- Route 3 from Local Transit Network-Ridership (LTN-R) to Local Transit Network-Coverage (LTN-C)
 - Route 3 has been consistently not meeting its performance guidelines for the last year. Further, Route 3 is also not meeting the minimum service standards for LTN-R service, and its recent performance does not rationalize further investment to achieve those minimum service standards.
- Route 30 from FTN to LTN-R
 - Routes 30 and 31 collectively provide approximate FTN service levels along Carey Road between Highway 1 and Ralph Street. Route 30 is currently served at LTN-R service levels and achieves LTN-R performance expectations, whereas Route 31 is currently served at LTN-R service levels but achieves FTN performance expectations. The recently endorsed Regional Corridor Strategy identified Route 31 as the planned FTN corridor between Uptown and Royal Oak Exchange, as it better aligns with planned future density within Saanich and with existing and anticipated future ridership levels.

- Route 58 from LTN-C to LTN-R
 - Route 58 serves the rapidly growing Westhills neighbourhood. Fall weekday performance is far exceeding LTN-C expectations, now achieving LTN-R expectations on weekdays. Service levels are also meeting LTN-R standards outside of Saturday service levels.

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Position:	VP, Strategy and Public Affairs	Date reviewed:	November 10, 2024

Attachment(s):
 Appendix 1a: 2025/26 Holiday Service Levels
 Appendix 1b: 2025/26 Special Fare Days
 Appendix 2: Victoria Regional Transit System Routes

Appendix 1a – 2025/26 Holiday Service Levels

Date	Holiday	Service Level
April 18, 2025 (Friday)	Good Friday	Sunday
April 21, 2025 (Monday)	Easter Monday	Saturday (No late-night service)
May 19, 2025 (Monday)	Victoria Day	Sunday
July 1, 2025 (Tuesday)	Canada Day	Saturday (No late-night service w/ operational overloads)
August 4, 2025 (Monday)	BC Day	Sunday
September 1, 2025 (Sunday)	Labour Day	Sunday (Summer)
September 30, 2025 (Tuesday)	National Day for Truth & Reconciliation	Sunday
October 13, 2025 (Monday)	Thanksgiving	Sunday
November 11, 2025 (Tuesday)	Remembrance Day	Sunday
December 25, 2025 (Thursday)	Christmas Day	Sunday
December 26, 2025 (Friday)	Boxing Day	Saturday
December 31, 2025 (Wednesday)	New Year's Eve	Weekday (+ Late-night service)
January 1, 2026 (Thursday)	New Year's Day	Sunday
February 16, 2026 (Monday)	Family Day	Saturday (No late-night service)

Appendix 1b: Special Fare Days⁵

Date	Special Fare Day(s)	Details
April 22, 2024 (Monday)	Earth Day	Complimentary transit for all riders
June 5, 2024 (Wednesday)	Clean Air Day	Complimentary transit for all riders
September 23 – October 6, 2024	Fall Go By Bike Week	Complimentary transit for riders using the bike rack and/or carrying a bike helmet
November 11, 2024 (Monday)	Remembrance Day	Complimentary transit for all current retired armed forces members and police officers in uniform
December 31, 2024 (Tuesday)	New Year's Eve	Complimentary transit after 6pm
February 2025 (exact dates to be determined)	Winter Go By Bike Week	Complimentary transit for riders using the bike rack and/or carrying a bike helmet
To Be Determined	Election Day	Complimentary transit for riders

⁵ As approved by the VRTC in February 2021 and presented to the VRTC in June 2024 for information.

Appendix 2 - Victoria Regional Transit System Routes

#	Route Name	Service Type	Area
1	South Oak Bay/Downtown	Local Transit - Coverage	Core
2	James Bay/South Oak Bay	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
3	James Bay/Royal Jubilee	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
4	UVic/Downtown	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
5	James Bay/Willows	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
6	Royal Oak Exchange/Downtown	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
7	UVic/Downtown	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
8	Interurban/Tillicum Centre/Oak Bay	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
9	Royal Oak/UVic	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
10	James Bay/Royal Jubilee	Local Transit - Coverage	Core
11	Tillicum Centre/UVic	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
12	University Heights/UVic	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
14	Vic General/UVic	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
15	Esquimalt/UVic	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
17	Cedar Hill	Targeted Routes	Core
21	Interurban/Downtown	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
22	Vic General/Hillside Centre	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
24	Cedar Hill/Tillicum Centre	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
25	Maplewood/Tillicum Centre	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
26	Dockyard/UVic	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
27	Gordon Head/Downtown	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
28	Majestic/Downtown	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
30	Royal Oak Exchange/Downtown	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
31	Royal Oak Exchange/Downtown	Frequent Transit (Planned)	Core
32	Cordova Bay/Royal Oak Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Core
35	Ridge	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
39	Westhills/Interurban/Royal Oak/UVic	Local Transit - Ridership	Core
43	Royal Roads via Belmont Park	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
46	Dockyard/Westhills	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
47	Goldstream Meadows/Downtown	Targeted Routes	Westshore
48	Happy Valley/Downtown	Targeted Routes	Westshore
49	Skirt Mountain/Langford Exchange	Local Transit – Coverage	Westshore

#	Route Name	Service Type	Area
51	Langford/UVic	Targeted Routes	Westshore
52	Colwood Exchange/Bear Mountain	Local Transit – Ridership	Westshore
53	Vic General/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
54	Metchosin/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
55	Happy Valley/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
57	Thetis Heights/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
58	Goldstream Meadows/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Ridership	Westshore
59	Triangle Mountain/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
60	Wishart/Langford Exchange	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
61	Sooke/Langford/Downtown	Local Transit - Ridership	Westshore
63	Otter Point	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
64	Langford Exchange/Sooke via E Sooke and Beecher Bay	Local Transit - Coverage	Westshore
65	Sooke/Downtown via Westhills	Targeted Routes	Westshore
70	Swartz Bay/Downtown	Regional Route	Peninsula
71	Swartz Bay/Downtown	Targeted Routes	Peninsula
72	Swartz Bay/Downtown	Local Transit - Ridership	Peninsula
75	Saanichton/Royal Oak/Downtown	Local Transit - Ridership	Peninsula
76	UVic/Swartz Bay		Peninsula
81	Brentwood/Saanichton/Sidney/Swartz Bay	Local Transit - Coverage	Peninsula
82	Sidney/Saanichton via Stautw	Local Transit - Coverage	Peninsula
83	Sidney/Brentwood/Royal Oak	Local Transit - Coverage	Peninsula
85	North Saanich	Local Transit - Coverage	Peninsula
87	Saanichton/Sidney via Dean Park	Local Transit - Coverage	Peninsula
88	Airport/Sidney	Local Transit - Coverage	Peninsula
95	Langford/Downtown	Rapid Transit	Westshore