
SUBJECT: Fare-Free Transit on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) with information regarding introducing a new special fare day in the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) annually on September 30th for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This report is presented to the Commission for **APPROVAL**.

BACKGROUND

As an outcome of discussions with BC Transit’s Indigenous mentors and in furthering BC Transit’s commitment to reconciliation, BC Transit is recommending introducing fare-free transit annually on September 30th, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, for those who identify as Indigenous peoples.

DISCUSSION

The VRTS currently has six annual special fare days where complimentary transit is offered to riders on fixed-route and custom transit, as outlined below.

Approved Special Fare Days:

Special Fare Day	Rationale	Eligibility
Remembrance Day (November 11 th)	Recognize service members and reduce vehicle congestion at ceremonies.	Current and retired armed forces and police officers in uniform.
New Year’s Eve (December 31 st)	Encourage responsible travel choices.	All customers after 6 pm until end of service.
Election Days (Varies)	Encourage participation in the democratic process and remove barriers to access voting.	All customers on municipal, provincial, and federal election days.
Go By Bike Week/Day (Fall and Spring)	Encourage multi-modal sustainable transportation and support Go By Bike in Victoria.	Only those who are using the bike rack or can show their bike helmet are eligible. Each bus has the capacity to carry two bikes.
Earth Day (April 22 nd)	Encourage environmentally friendly transportation methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	All customers.

Clean Air Day (June)	Encourage environmentally friendly transportation methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	All customers.
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BC Transit is recommending the introduction of an additional special fare day on September 30th, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, to accompany the existing approved special fare days. As a part of BC Transit's efforts towards reconciliation, BC Transit is recommending that complimentary transit be offered on this day to individuals that identify as Indigenous peoples. Those that do identify as Indigenous peoples would receive complimentary transit on this day without the requirement of producing validation or identification upon boarding their bus.

Proposed Additional Special Fare Day:

Special Fare Day	Rationale	Eligibility
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30 th)	Supporting BC Transit's efforts towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples	Individuals who identify as Indigenous peoples.

BC Transit completed a previous assessment that estimated the financial impact of offering fare-free transit for all customers on any given day would be approximately \$46,000 of lost revenue from non-pass fare products, based on fixed-route transit figures.

An assessment was completed to estimate the financial impact of offering fare-free transit for those that identify as Indigenous peoples in the VRTS on September 30th. In reviewing 2022 census data, there are 20,195 Indigenous peoples residing in the Capital Regional District (CRD). Using this data, as well as the assumption that approximately 18 per cent of individuals in the CRD use transit regularly (based on the most recent *Vital Signs* citizen survey) and fare product sales are derived from approximately 35% of Single Ride fares, it was estimated that the financial impact of offering fare-free transit on September 30th would be approximately \$8,396. The final figure includes a 10 per cent increase to account for those who may take part in fare-free transit regardless of whether they identify as Indigenous peoples.

System	Total Indigenous Population	Estimated Transit Users - Indigenous Population	Estimated Lost Revenue (with additional 10% buffer)
Victoria Regional Transit System	20,195	3,635	\$8,396

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission receive this report and **APPROVE** the introduction of a new special fare day in the VRTS, offering fare-free transit on September 30th for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation annually for all those who identify as Indigenous peoples.

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Date
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