

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

June 17, 2024

#13a

**Attachment: Victoria Regional Transit System
Fall 2024 Ridership Performance Report**

1.0 Introduction

This report compares system-level ridership performance for the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) between 2019 and 2024. Further, this report provides more detailed ridership information at the route-level for the Holiday 2024 service period to the end of the year, between December 9th and December 31st, 2024.

1.1 Data

Ridership information is collected through Automated Passenger Counter (APC) units, which are in place on over 60 per cent of the buses assigned to the Victoria Region's conventional fleet. This system counts the number of persons boarding and disembarking from a vehicle. If a person boards multiple buses in a single journey or on a specific day, this is reflected as multiple boardings. It also collects information on service reliability, comparing scheduled to actual departure times at timing points along the route.

1.2 External Factors

In addition to service changes, there are many external factors that may affect transit ridership. Some of these include fare increases, changing fuel prices, changing community economics, land use changes and major interruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.0 Performance Trends

This report presents ridership performance information at the system and route-level.

2.1 System Level Performance Trends

For the purposes of this report, overall system ridership has been presented weekly from the beginning of 2023 to compare year-over-year ridership trends. Ridership within the VRTS continues to grow, with the transit system carrying an average of 6.9 per cent more riders in the Holiday 2024 service period in comparison to the previous Holiday service period.

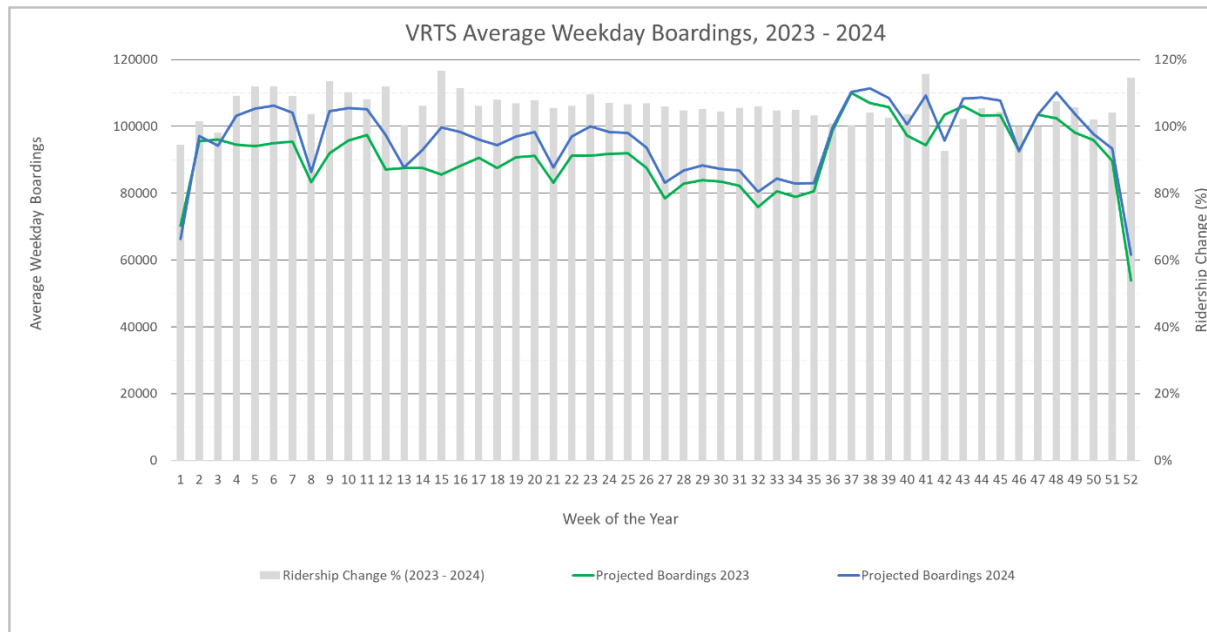


Figure 1: VRTS Average Weekday Boardings, 2023-2024.

2.2 Route Level Performance

For the purposes of this report, ridership has been aggregated and presented in five route-type categories for Holiday 2024, including Rapid Transit, Frequent Transit, Local Transit (Ridership), Local Transit (Coverage) and Targeted Transit. These route-type categories were originally developed in the [2013/14 Service Review](#), and included associated performance targets.

The orange line shown on the following graphs indicates the performance guideline for that route class. Routes exceeding or failing to meet the modified performance targets by ± 25 per cent have been flagged for monitoring and may be considered for future corrective action.

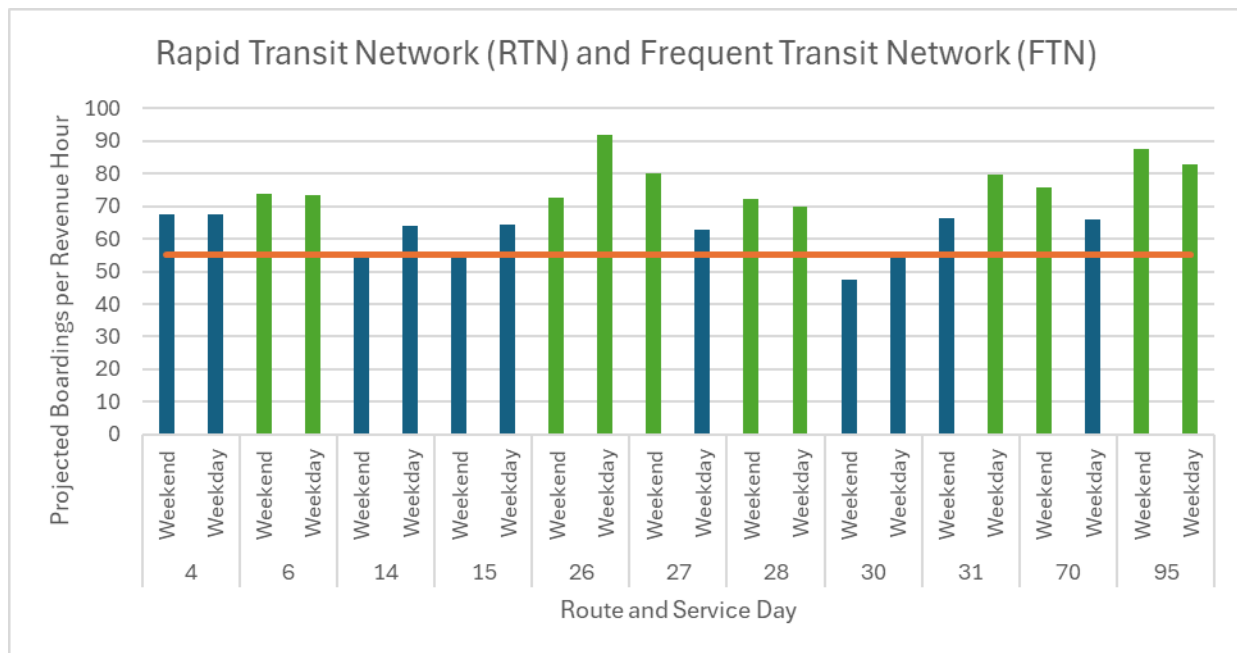


Figure 2: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Rapid Transit Network and Frequent Transit Network, Holiday 2024 (Performance Guideline = 55); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.

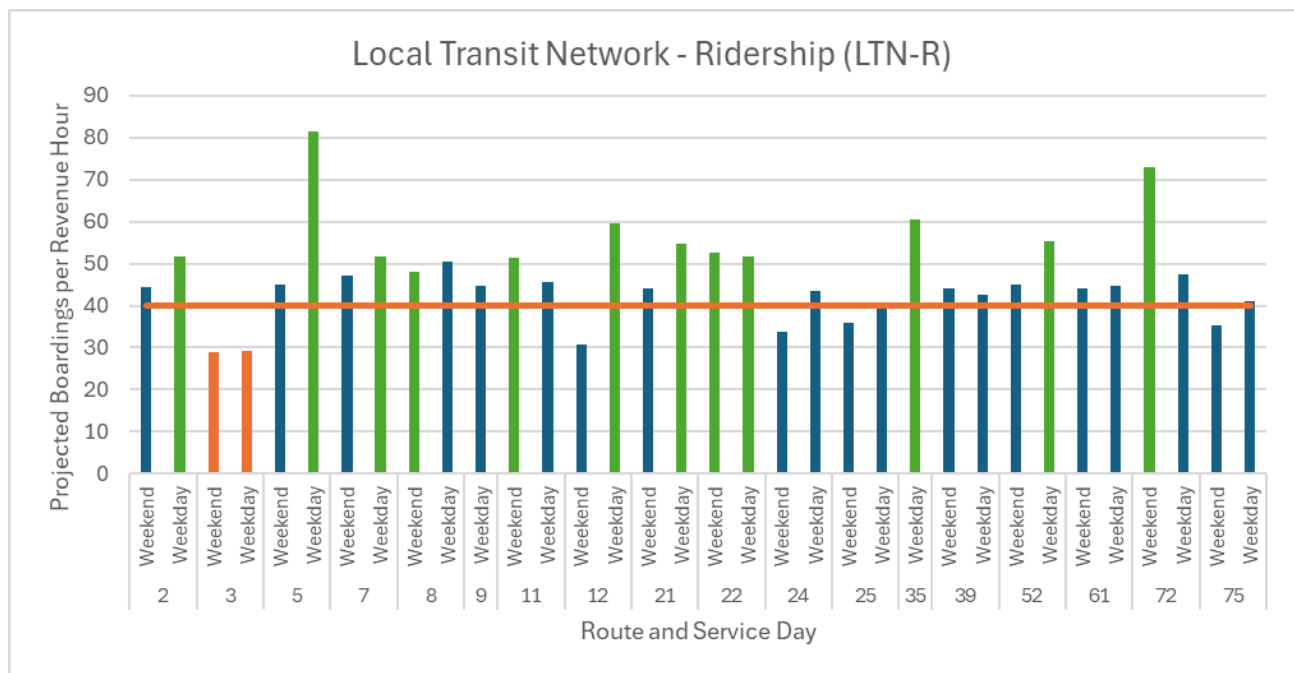


Figure 3: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Local Transit Network - Ridership, Holiday 2024 (Performance Guideline = 40); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.

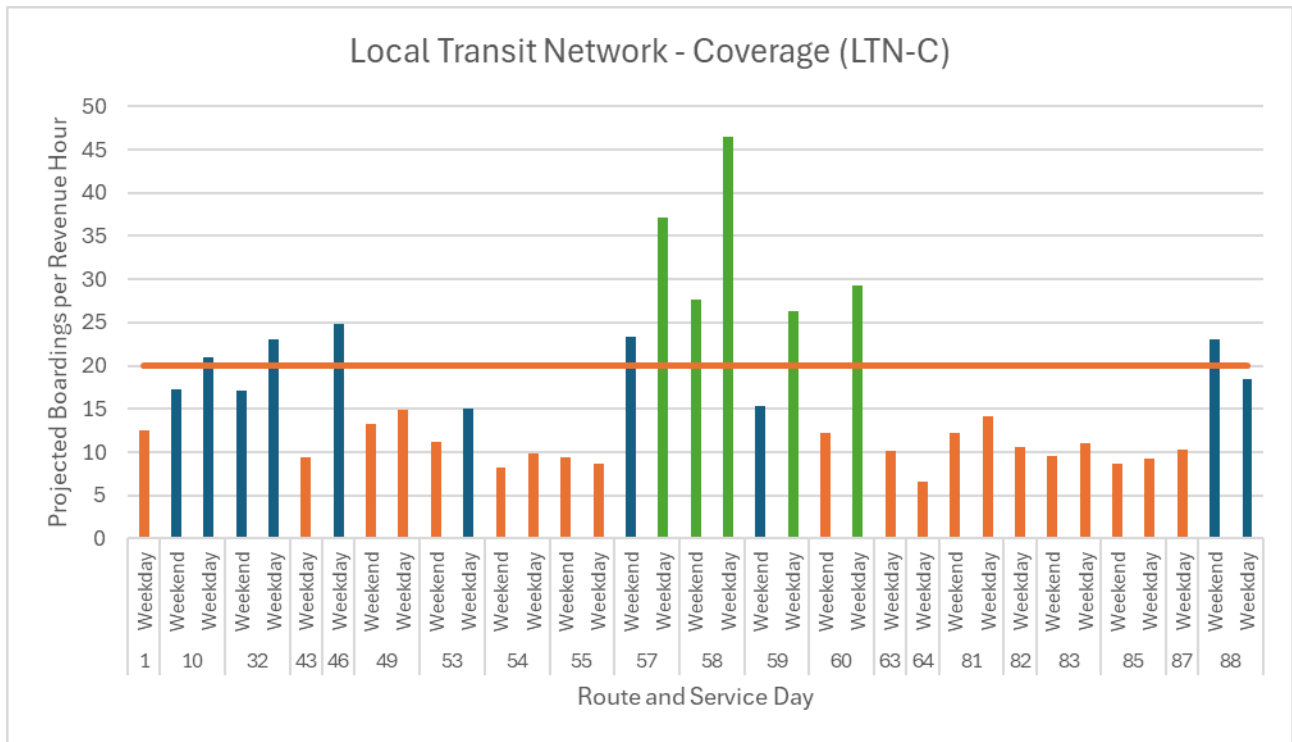


Figure 4: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for the Local Transit Network - Coverage, Holiday 2024 (Performance Guideline = 20); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.

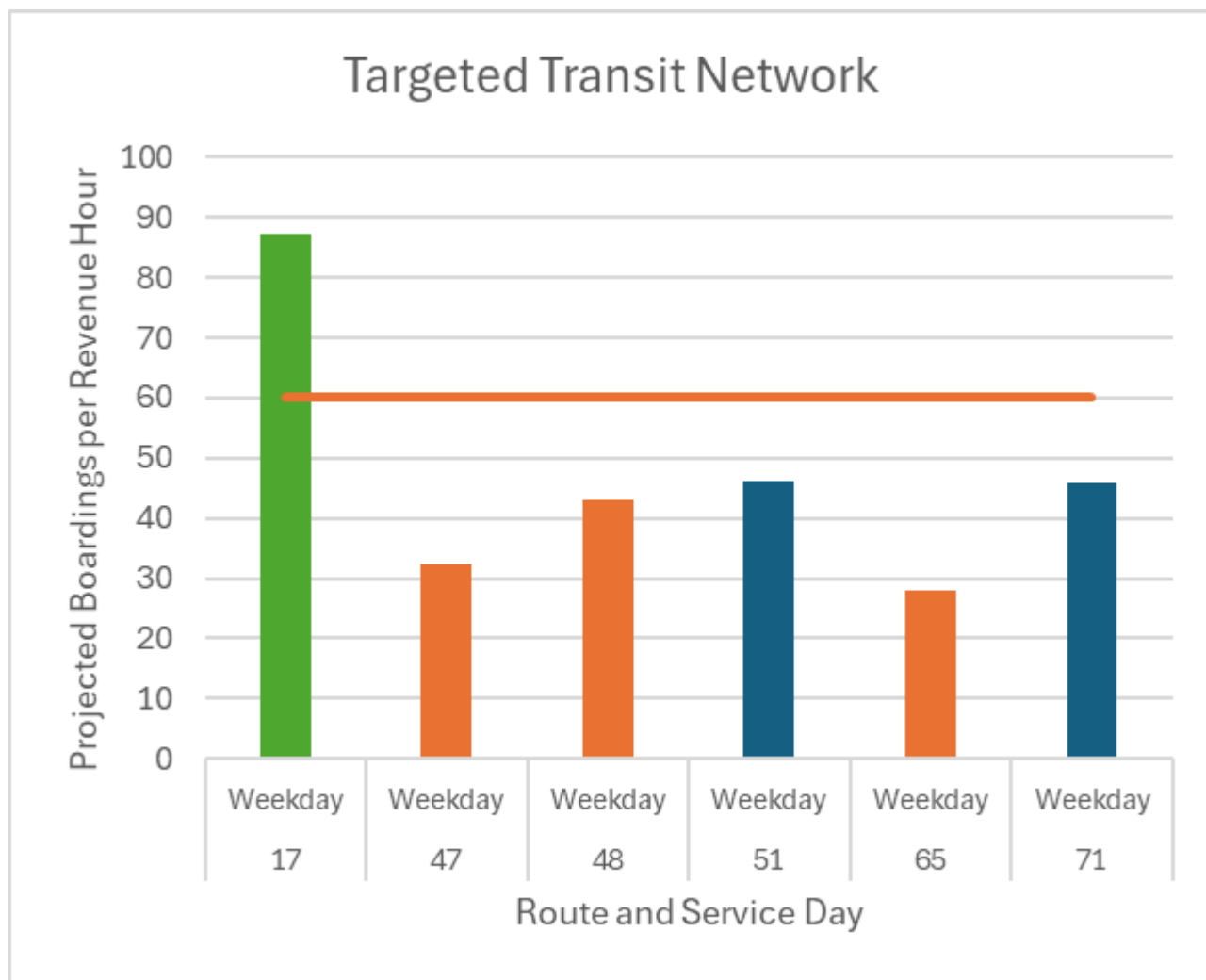


Figure 5: Projected Boardings per Revenue Hour for Targeted Transit, Holiday 2024 (Performance Guideline = 60); Exceeds target by 25%+, within 25% of target, below target by 25%+.

2.3 Service Reliability

Service reliability is crucial for transit service as it ensures that vehicles and routes run on schedule, leading to increased customer satisfaction and ridership. A trip is considered on-time if it departs from a timing point between 1 minute early and 3 minutes late of the scheduled departure time.

For the Holiday 2024 service period, system-level on time performance was below the target of 70 per cent, coming in at 64.8 per cent. Routes 9, 11, 27, 28, 47, 48, 51, 65, 70, 72, 75 and 82 had some of the biggest service reliability challenges. To address these challenges:

- Routes 72 and 75 were rescheduled in Winter 2025
- Route 11 was rescheduled in Spring 2025
 - Route 70 will be rescheduled in Summer 2025

- Route 9, 47, 48, 51, 65 will be rescheduled in Fall 2025
- Several ongoing roadway construction projects across Greater Victoria including Gorge St (Routes 9, 11), Shelbourne St (Routes 27, 28), Keating Cross Overbridge (Routes 70, 72, 75) and Island Highway/Trans-Canada Highway (Routes 47, 48, 51, 65) are still likely contributing significantly to these service reliability challenges. On-time performance on these routes will continue to be monitored over the next few months as construction is wrapped up, with many of the routes planned for reschedule in Fall 2025.



Figure 6: Per Cent On-Time Departures at Timing Points, Monday-Thursday, Holiday 2024 (-1, +3 minutes); 30%+ below target, 15-30% below target, within 15% of target, 15%+ above target.

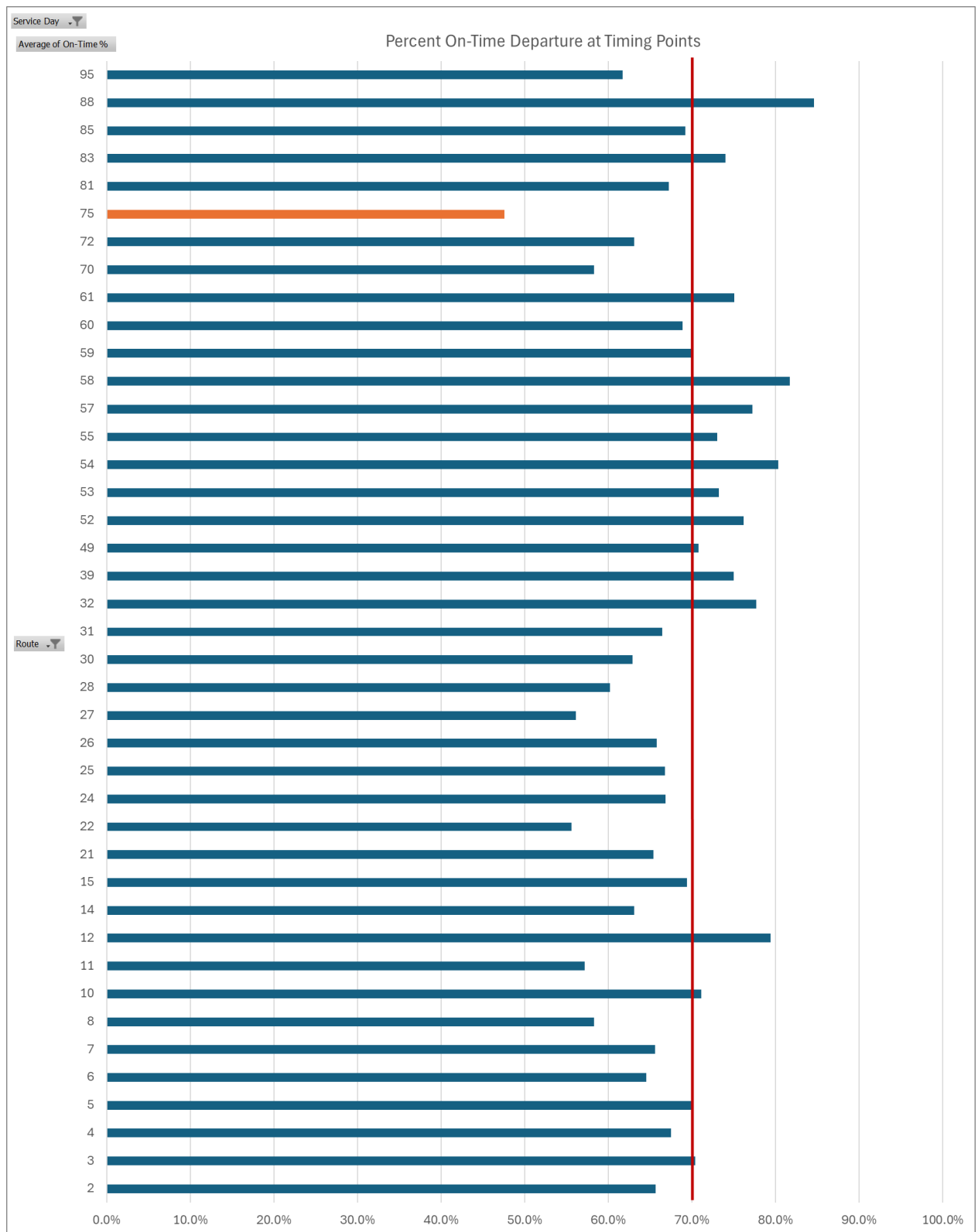


Figure 7: Per Cent On-Time Departures at Timing Points, Saturday – Sunday, Holiday 2024 (-1, +3 minutes); 30%+ below target, 15-30% below target, within 15% of target, 15%+ above target.



Victoria 2025/2026 Service Change

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

MAY 2025



Introduction

- The engagement sought feedback on proposed service changes for the Victoria Regional Transit System, with changes in the Peninsula, West Shore, Royal Oak, UVic, and Sooke areas.
- These changes aim to improve schedule reliability and service coverage and align with recommendations outlined in approved Local Area Transit Plans (LATPs).

Background

- Feedback was requested on the following proposed route improvements:
 - Peninsula Local Routes: Improved service reliability and added service to the West Sidney Industrial Area and Tsawout First Nation.
 - Routes 39 and 51: Faster and more reliable service with improved connections to the new West Shore Campus. Expanded service to higher population areas and additional off-peak service on Route 51.
 - Routes 61 and 65: Improvements in Sooke service coverage in 2025/26, with new local service in 2027+.

Engagement Purpose

- The engagement campaign assessed the level of public support and provided an opportunity for additional input on the proposed changes. Key reasons for the changes include:
 - Routes on the Peninsula, 39 Westhills/UVic, and 51 Langford/UVic are falling behind schedule due to changing road conditions.
 - New bus stop locations and land use changes have created emerging service needs.
 - Priorities from the most recent Local Area Transit Plan (LATP) remain unimplemented.

Engagement Outcome Summary

- The majority of respondents supported the proposed changes across all routes:
 - Route 81 Swartz Bay/Brentwood – 79%.
 - Route 87 Sidney/Tsawout via Dean Park – 74%
 - Route 88 Airport/Sidney – 69%
 - Route 39 Westhills/Interurban/Royal Oak/UVic – 83%
 - Route 51 Langford/UVic – 83%
 - Sooke regional service changes – 88%
 - Sooke local service changes – 71%

Engagement Outcome Summary

- A strong majority of respondents (70%) preferred Sooke regional service Option 2: rerouting route 65 to serve Church and Helgesen and converting two existing route 61 trips (one AM and one PM) to follow the new route 65 routing.
- Key concerns and improvements raised during engagement included:
 - Improved service to the airport.
 - Improved frequency and reliability on local routes.
 - The removal of service on route 51 along Kelly and Sooke Road will require a transfer for existing residents to access schools on McKenzie Ave.

Engagement Outcome Summary

- Concerns were raised about route 51 being re-routed along Jacklin Road and Goldstream Avenue, as it would duplicate service already provided by route 95 RapidBus.
- Concerns about transfers, particularly between the proposed route 38 and route 39 for travel to UVic.
- Request for further service improvements to Tsawout Nation, to Peninsula destinations along Willingdon Road, and to Sunriver in Sooke.

Promotion and Awareness



Project Website

Hub for project information and tools:
engage.bctransit.com/victoria-2025_26-service-change



Bus Stop Signage

Temporary signs were posted at bus stops to promote the engagement.



Transit Ambassadors

Transit Ambassadors were deployed to engage with riders at transit exchanges.



Social Media

We used organic social media posts to raise awareness but did not run paid ads, as we are not currently supporting U.S.-based advertising platforms.



Local Newspapers

Ads were placed in Victoria, Sooke, and the Times Colonist newspapers to share the proposed changes and how to participate.



Website Advertising

A pop-up advertisement was added to BC Transit's Victoria website.

Engagement Strategy

Public Survey

- **Consult:** Gather input on the proposed 2025/2026 service changes to help inform future transit priorities.
- **Inform:** Share details about potential service changes to increase public understanding.

Open Houses

- **Consult:** Engage attendees in dialogue and collect feedback on the proposed 2025/2026 service changes.
- **Inform:** Provide information, answer questions, and raise awareness about the proposed updates to the transit system.

Project Website

- **Inform:** Offer accessible, up-to-date information about the proposed 2025/2026 service changes.

	INFORM	CONSULT
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision

Engagement Overview

Open Houses: April 26th and April 29th

Survey: April 22nd – May 4th



2,001 Page Visitors



376 Online Survey Responses



7,957 Social Media Views



157 Open House Participants

Engagement Results

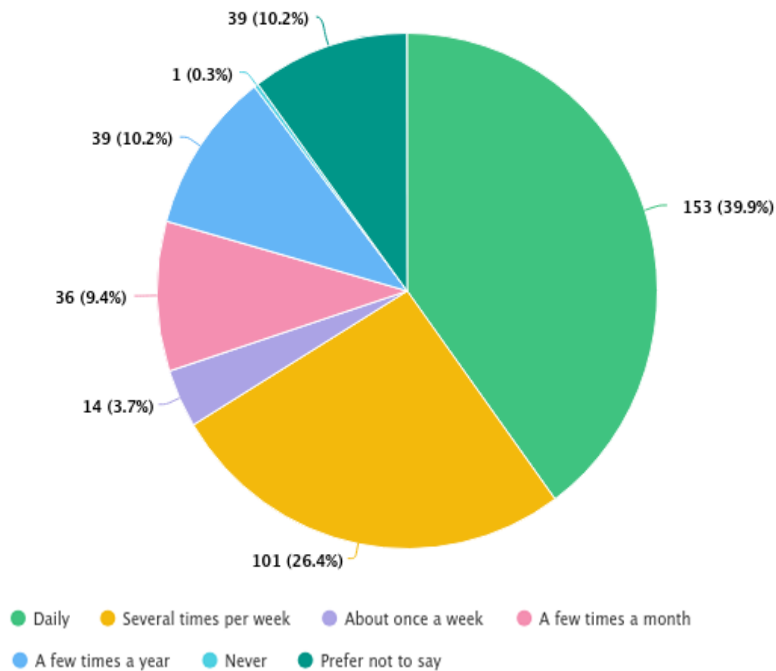
What We Asked

- This engagement presented proposed route changes in the Peninsula, Westshore, Royal Oak, UVic, and Sooke. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for each proposed change and were invited to provide open-ended feedback to share additional opinions and concerns. For example, the majority of questions included the following response options:
 - Yes, I support the proposed route change.
 - No, I do not support the proposed route change.
 - These changes do not affect me.
 - Yes, I support the proposed route change, but with the following modification:

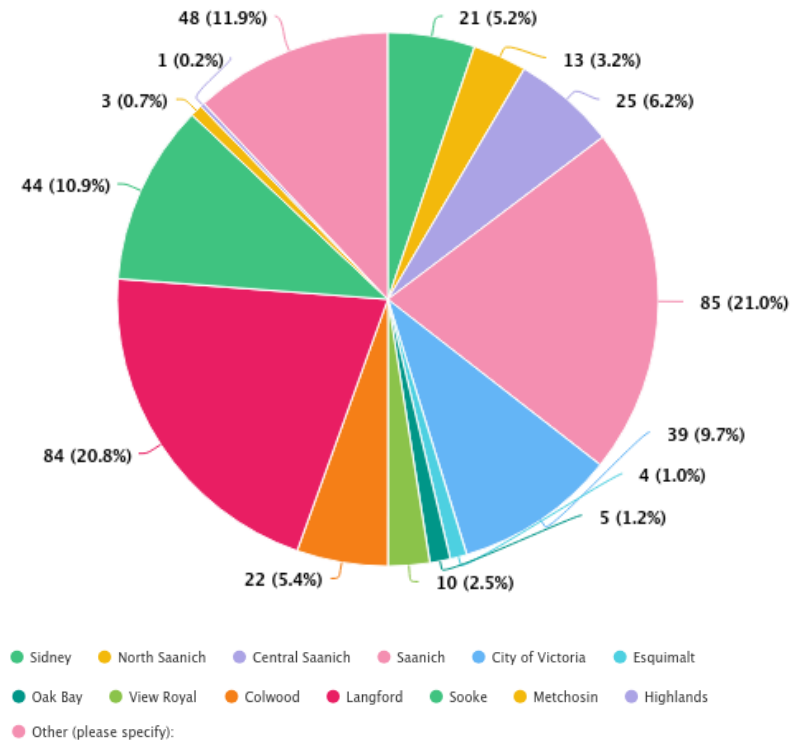
Engagement Results

Who We Heard From

How often do you use transit in the Victoria Regional system?



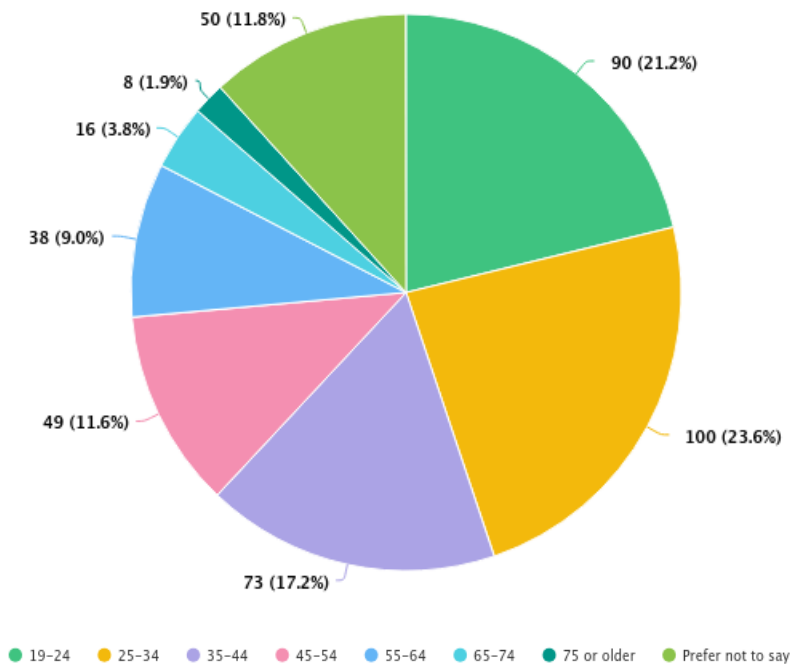
What community do you live in?



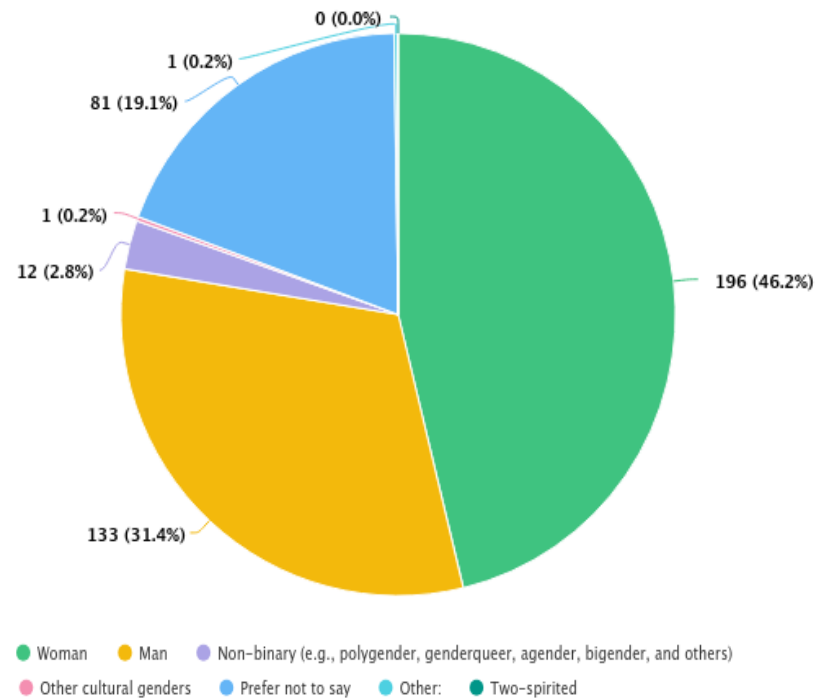
Engagement Results

Who We Heard From

What is your age group?



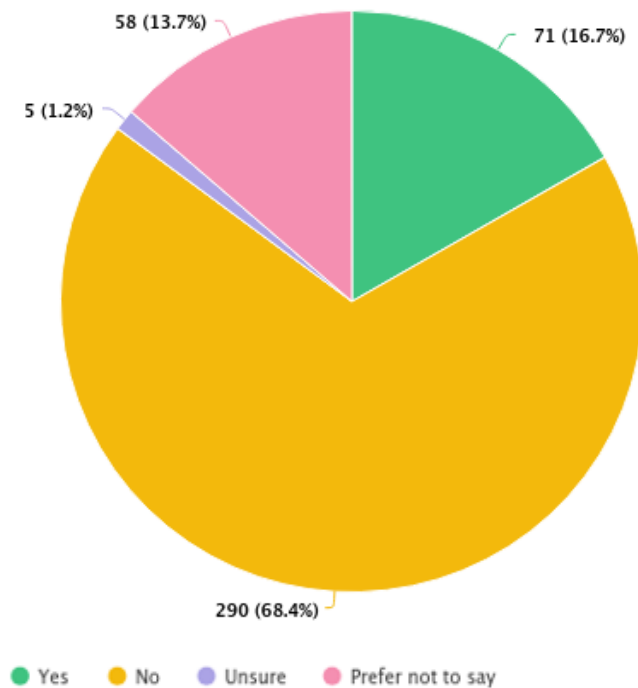
How do you identify?



Engagement Results

Who We Heard From

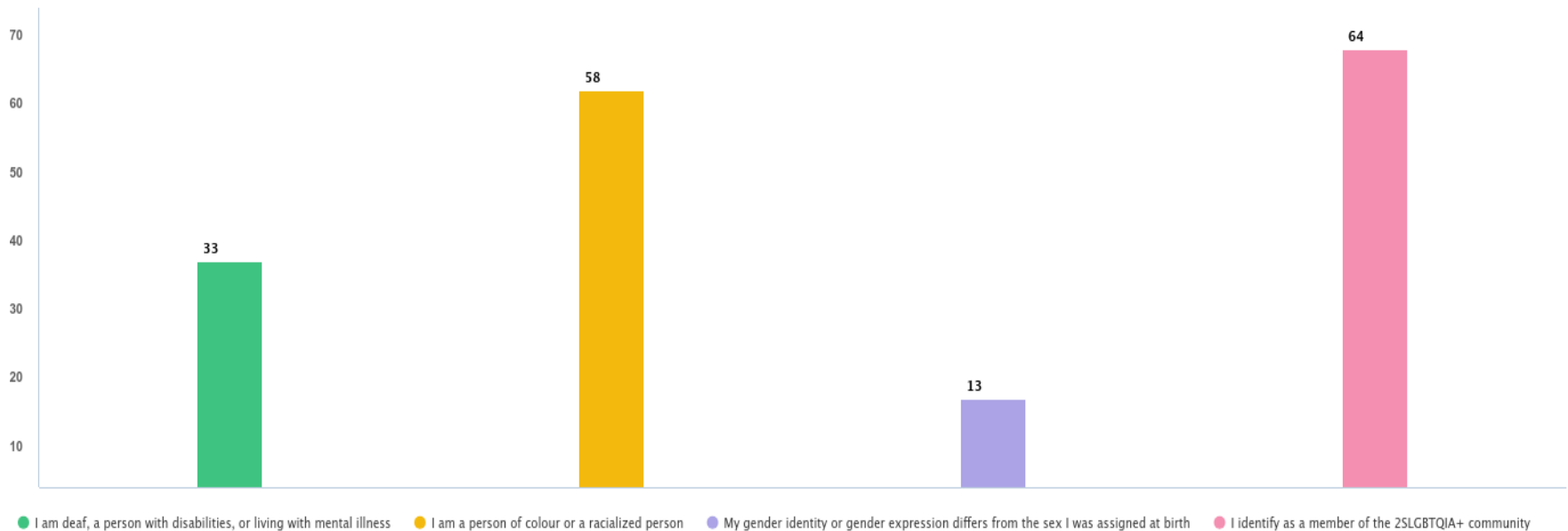
Do you identify as a person with a disability?



Engagement Results

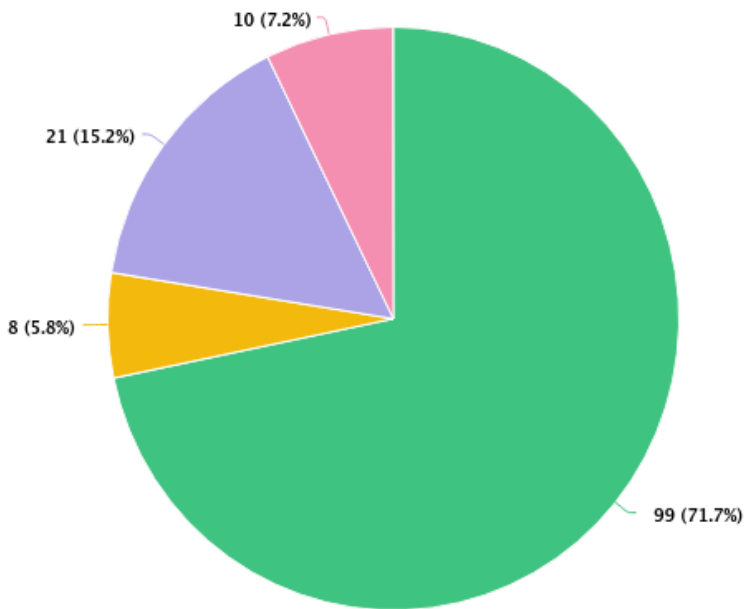
Who We Heard From

Do you identify as belonging to any additional equity-seeking groups?

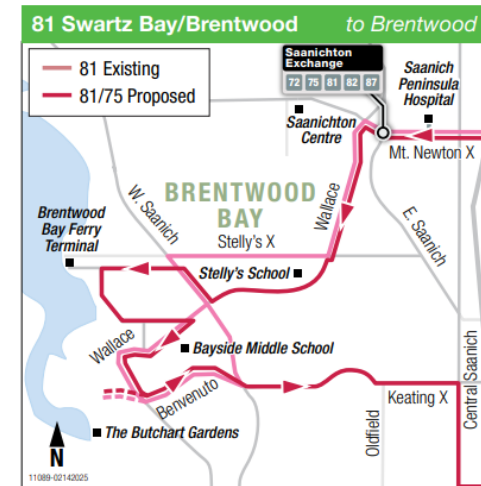
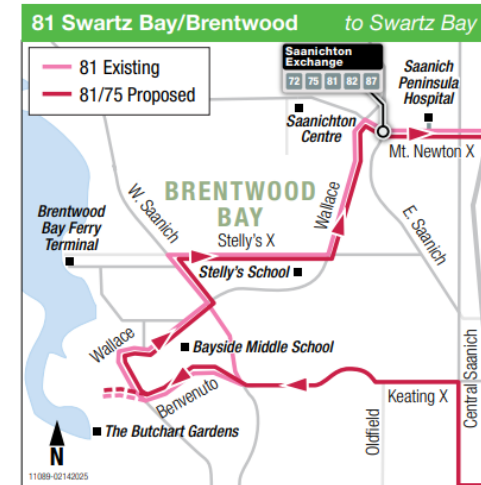
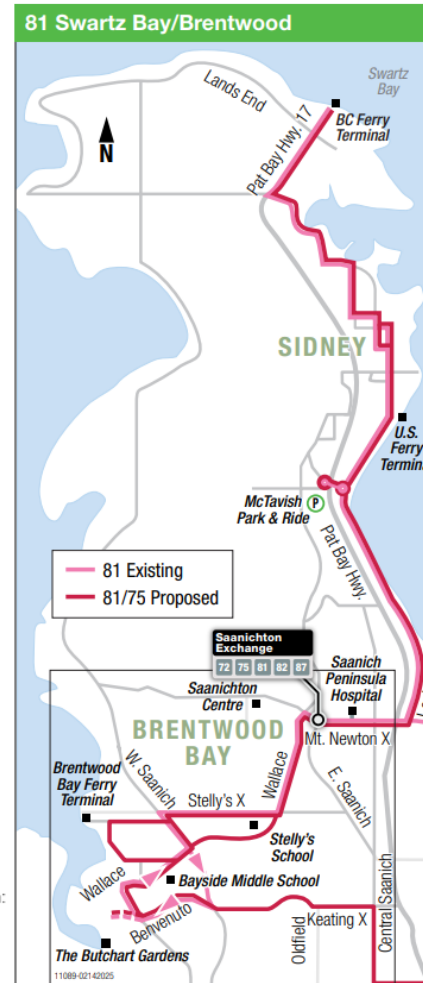


Engagement Results

Do you support the proposed changes to Route 81 Swartz Bay/Brentwood?



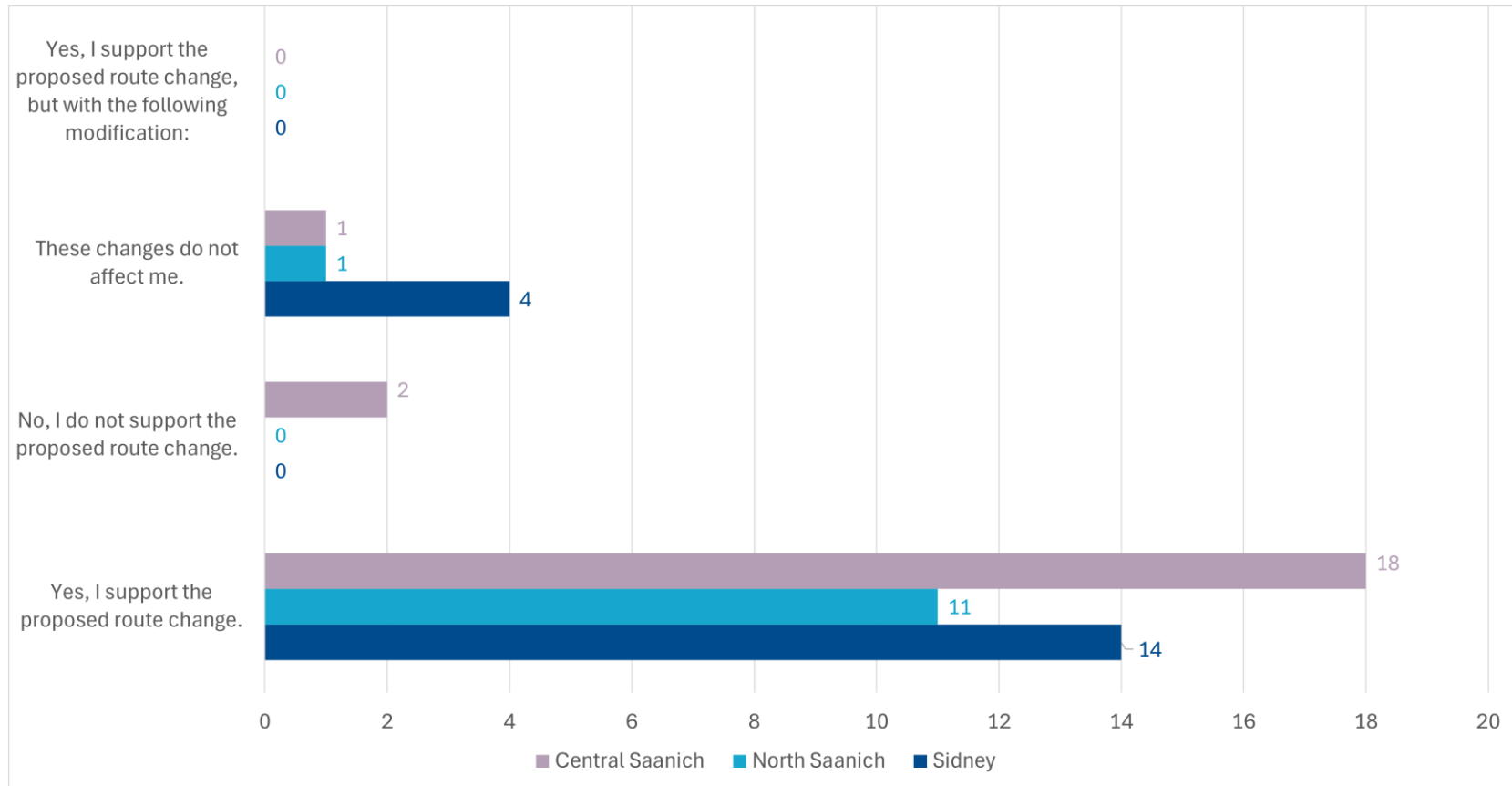
- Yes, I support the proposed route change.
- No, I do not support the proposed route change.
- These changes do not affect me.
- Yes I support the proposed route change, but with the following modification:



Engagement Results

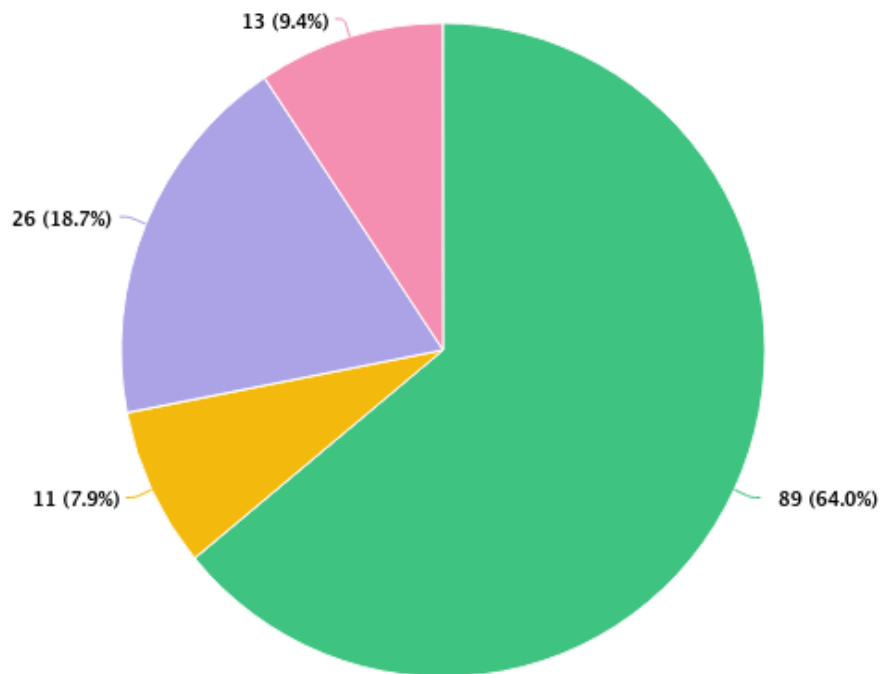
Do you support the proposed changes to Route 81 Swartz Bay/Brentwood?

Filtered by community: Sidney, North Saanich, and Central Saanich



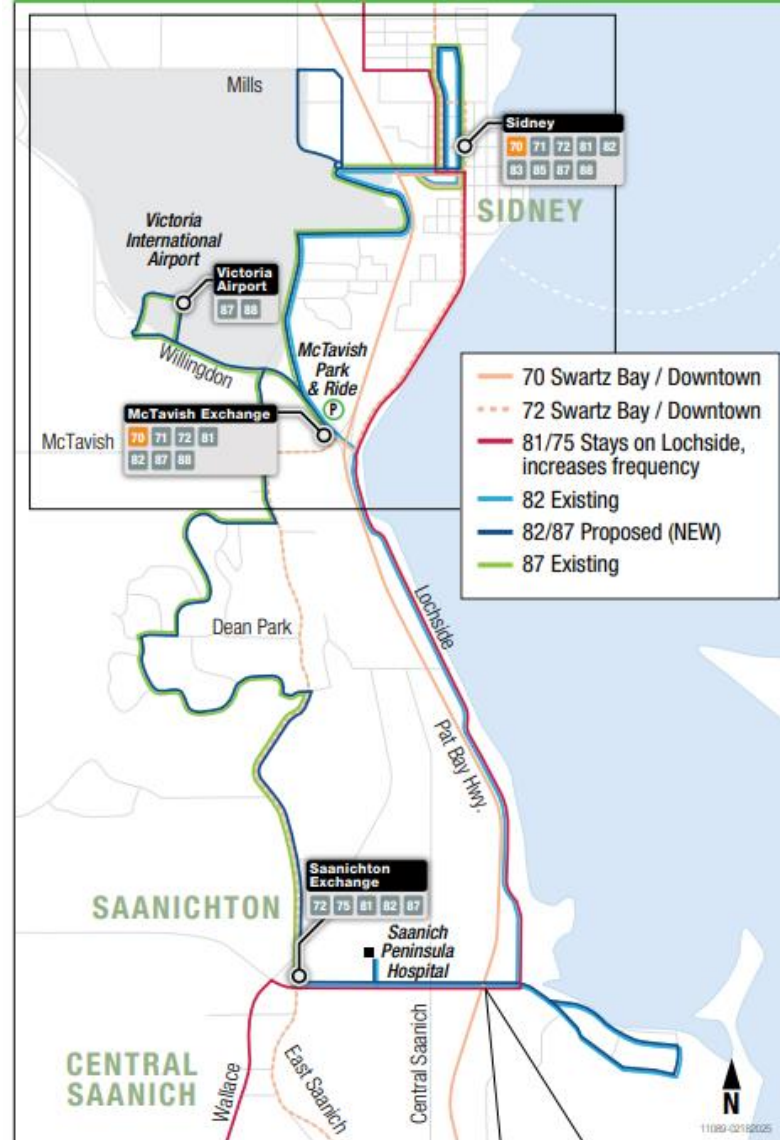
Engagement Results

Do you support combining existing Routes 82 and 87 into the proposed new Route 87?



● Yes, I support the proposed route change.
 ● No, I do not support the proposed route change.
 ● These changes do not affect me.
 ● Yes I support the proposed route change, but with the following modification:

87 Sidney/Tsawout via Dean Park

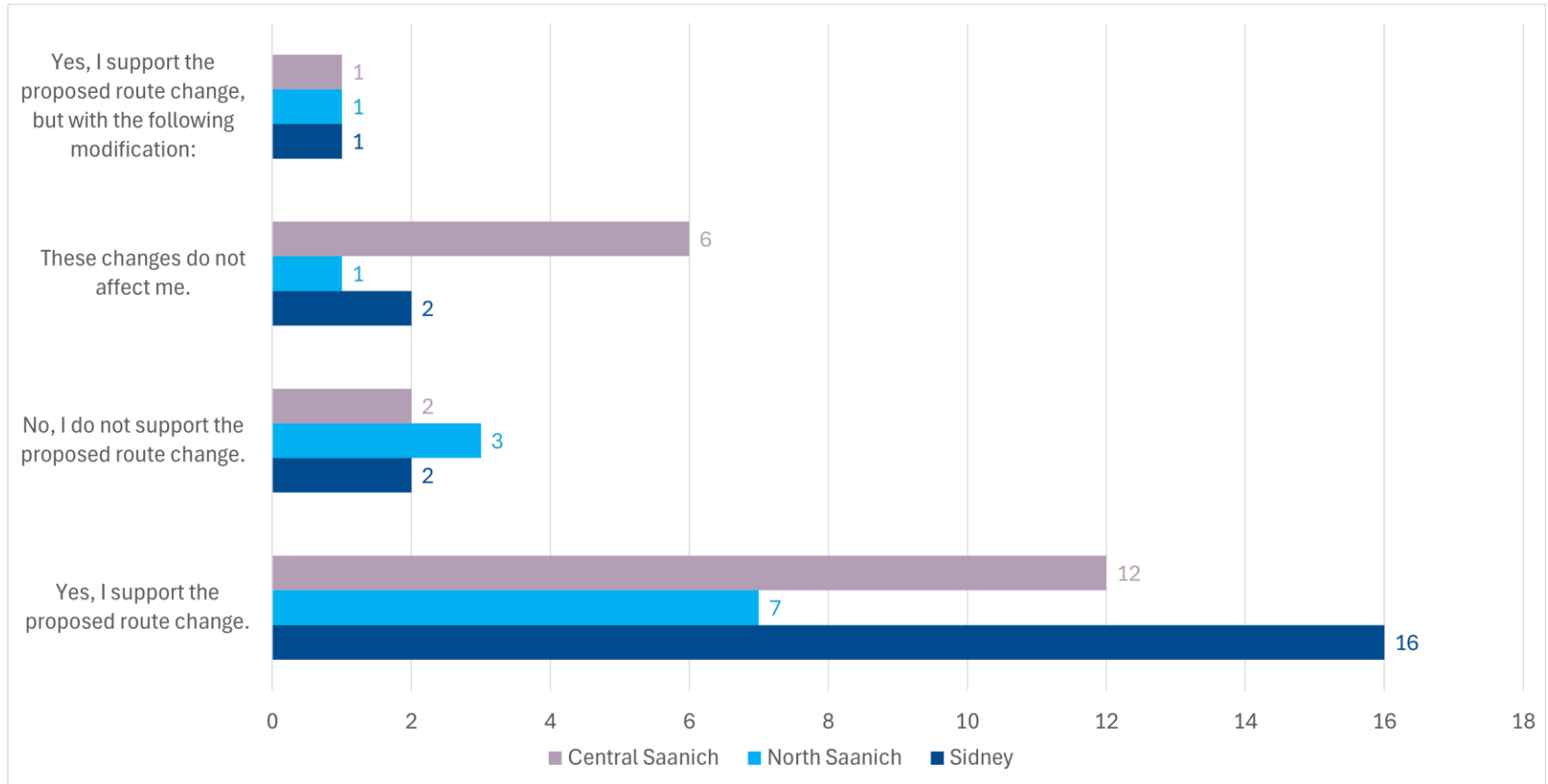


In 2022/23 a pair of stops were added to Route 70 on Highway 17 at Mount Newton Cross Road. This enables more direct access to Sidney and the Core for area residents.

Engagement Results

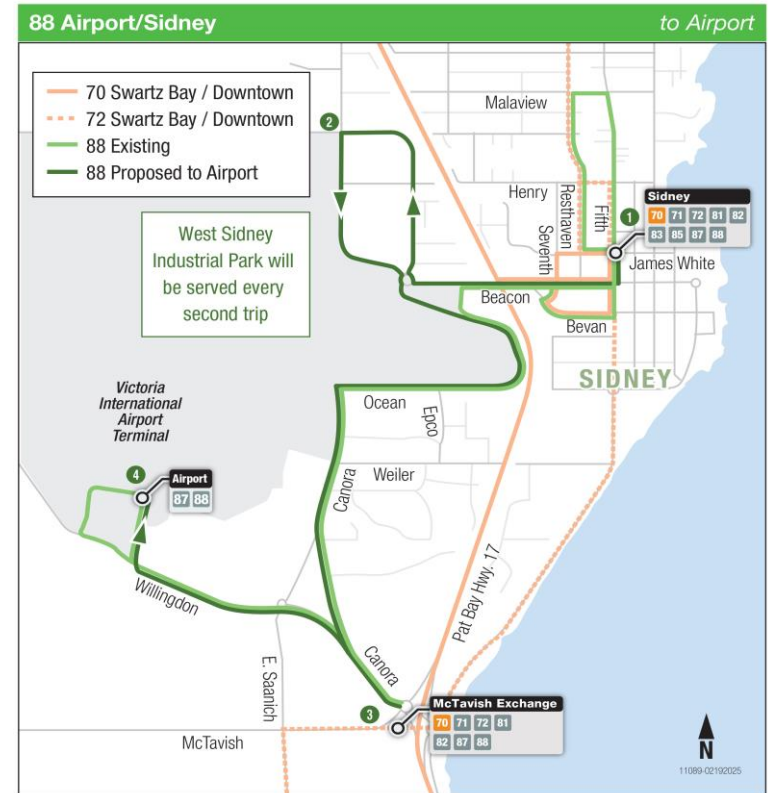
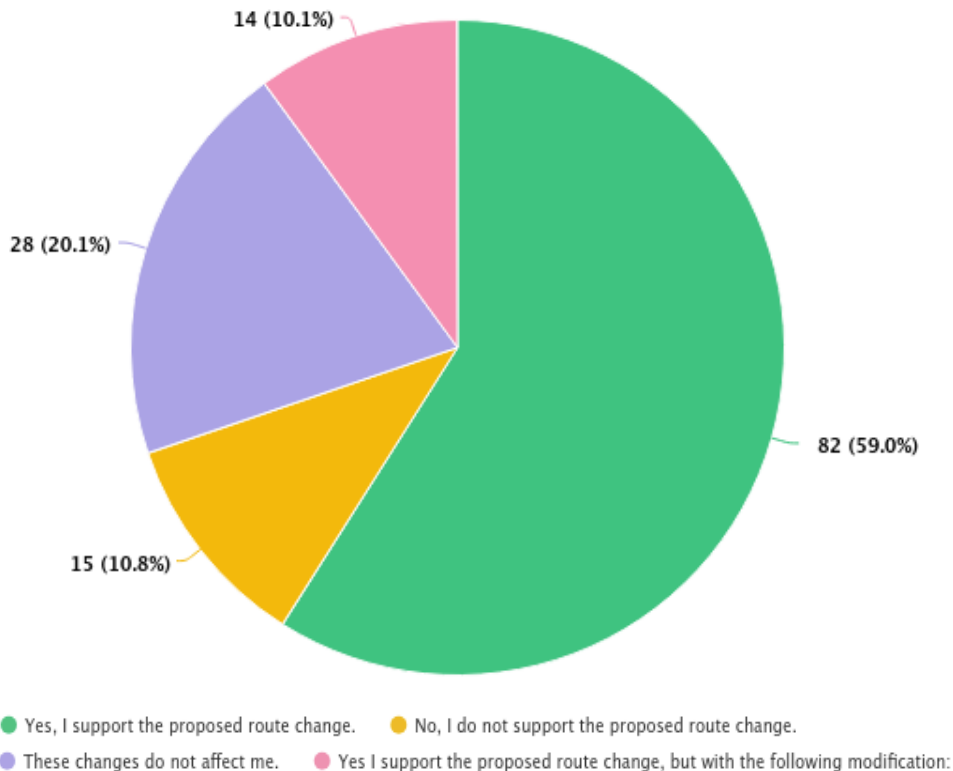
Do you support combining existing Routes 82 and 87 into the proposed new Route 87?

Filtered by community: Sidney, North Saanich, and Central Saanich



Engagement Results

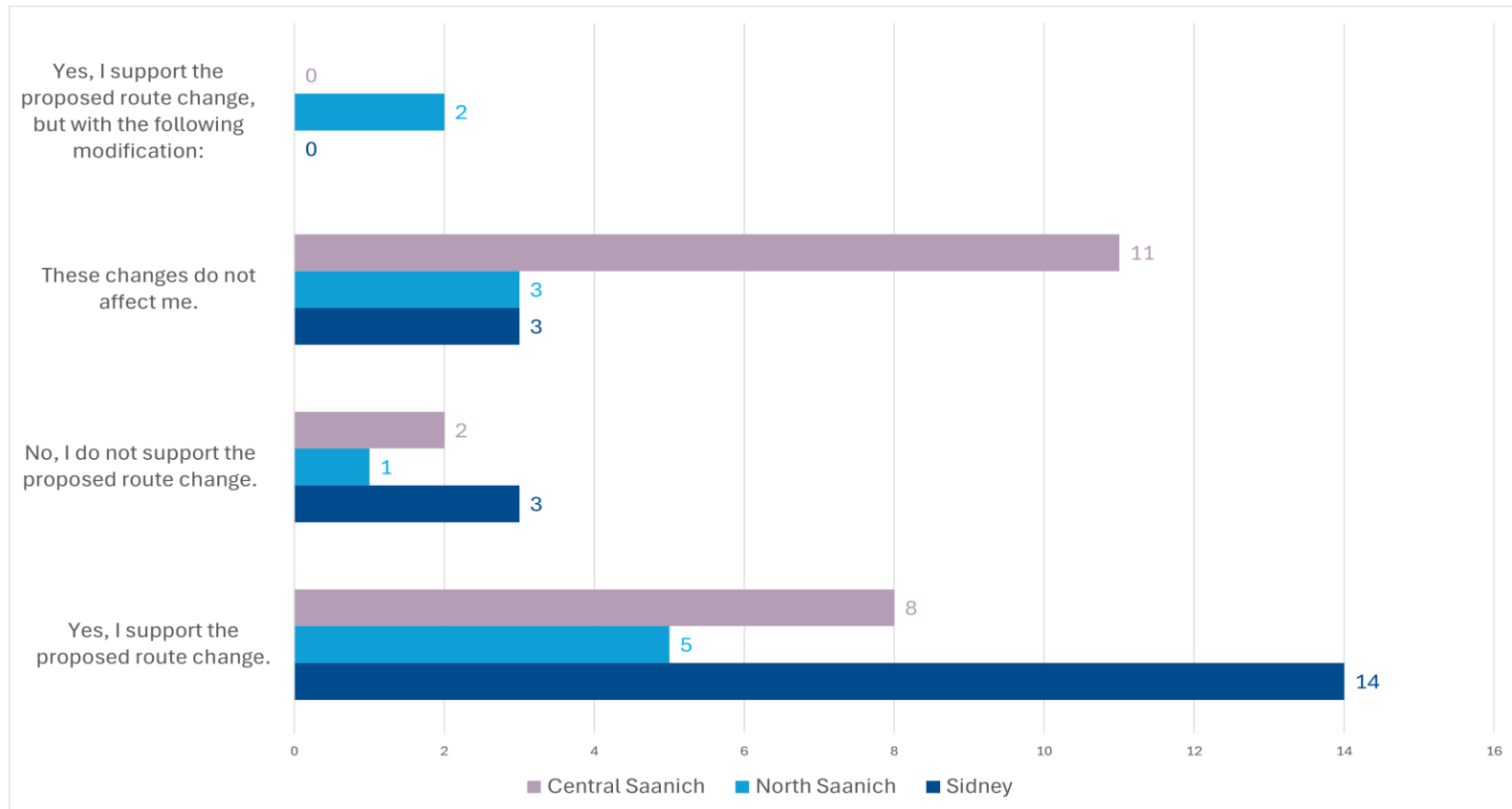
Do you support the proposed changes to Route 88 Airport/Sidney?



Engagement Results

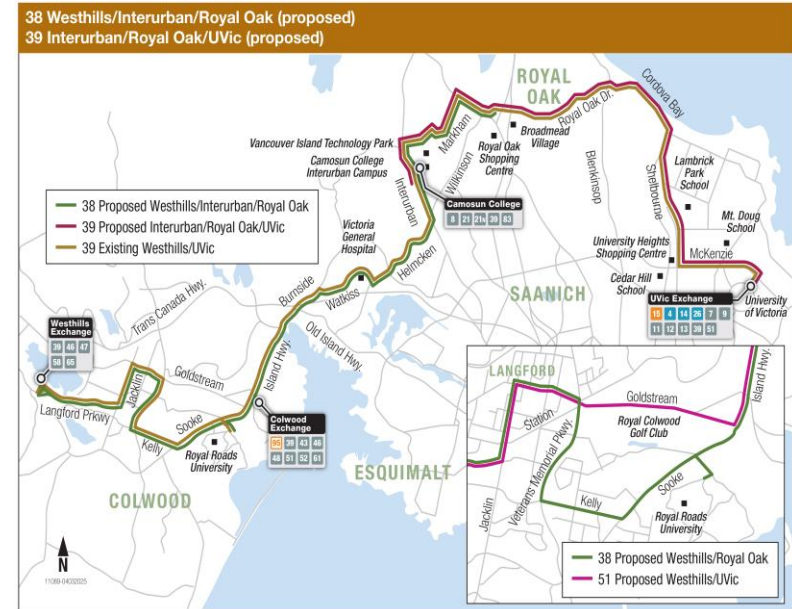
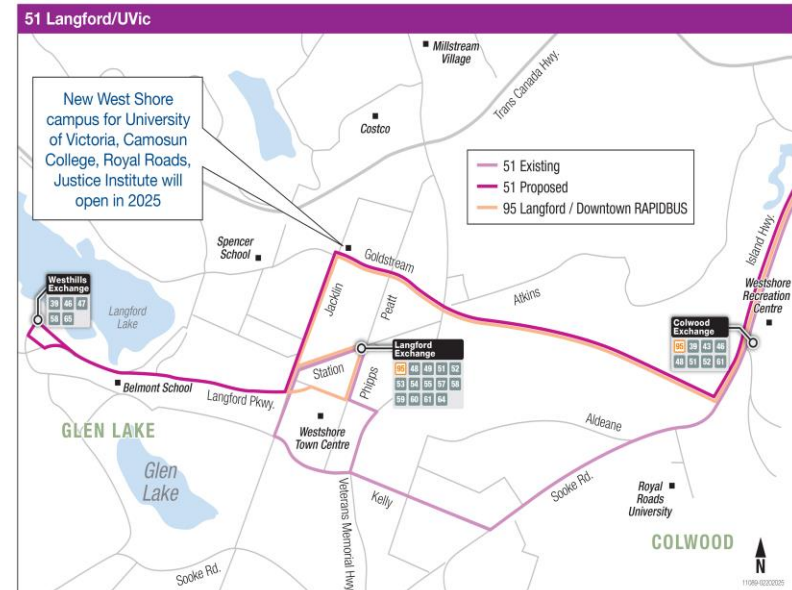
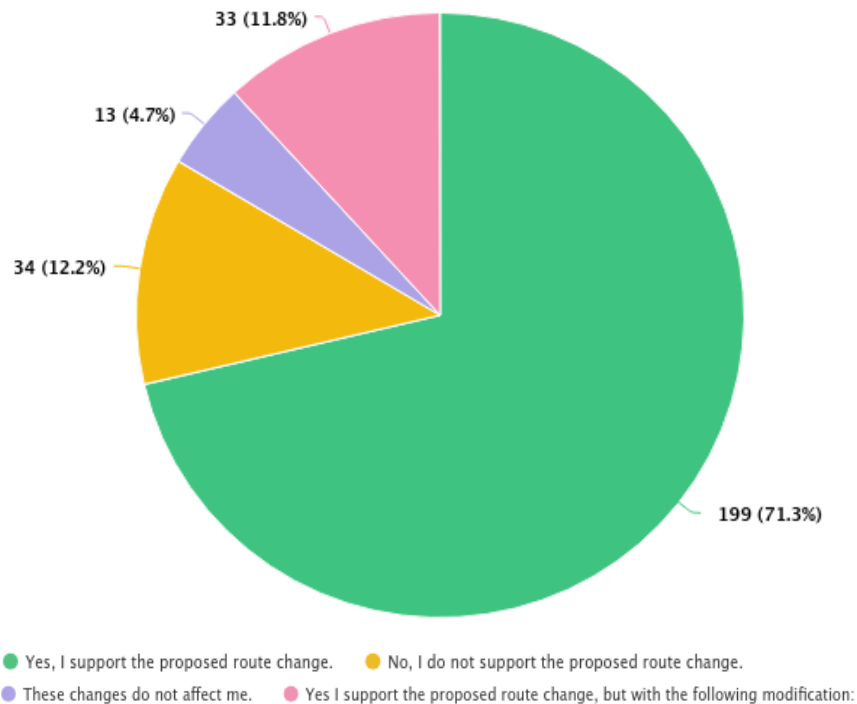
Do you support the proposed changes to Route 88 Airport/Sidney?

Filtered by community: Sidney, North Saanich, and Central Saanich



Engagement Results

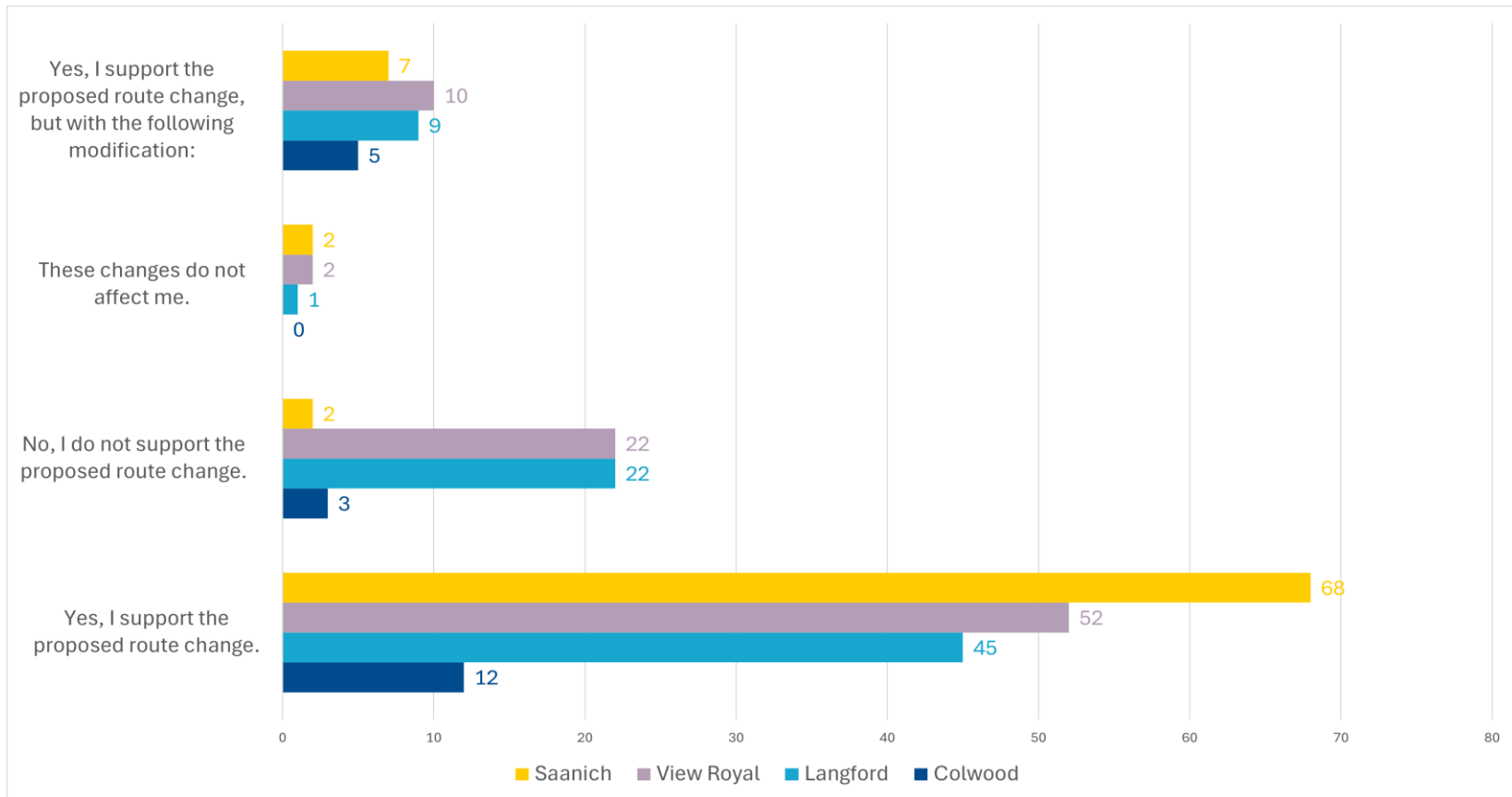
Do you support the proposed changes to Routes 39 and 51?



Engagement Results

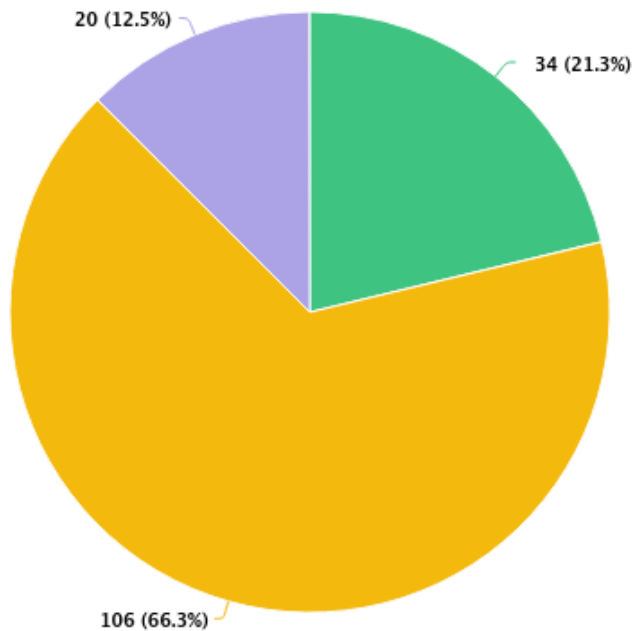
Do you support the proposed changes to Routes 39 and 51?

Filtered by community: Colwood, Langford, View Royal, and Saanich

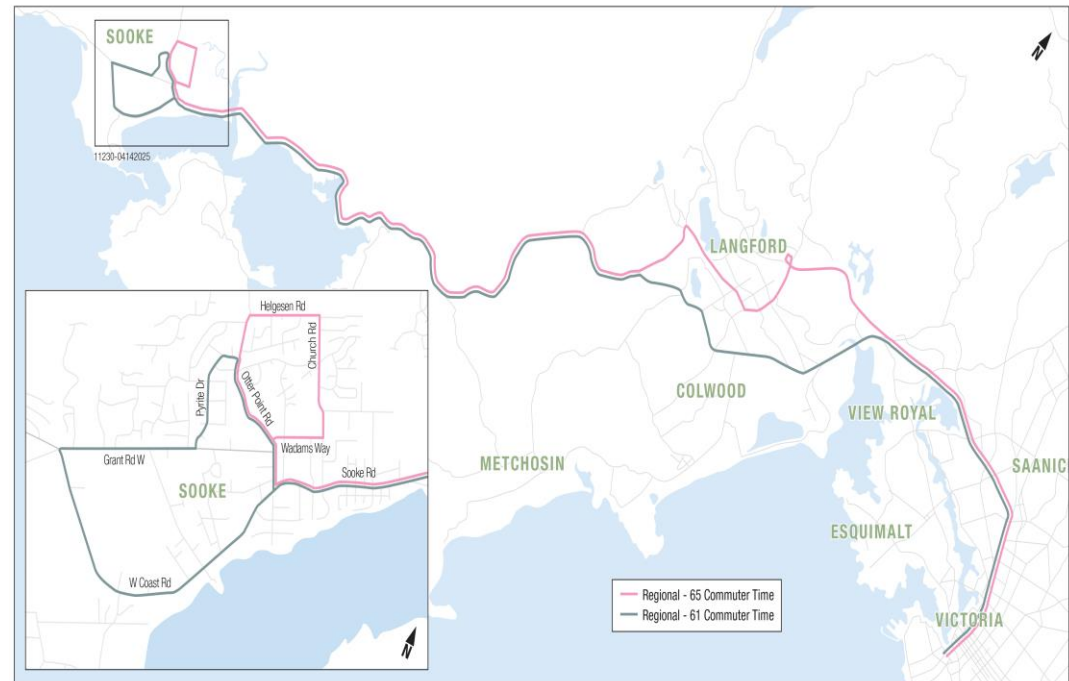


Engagement Results

Which is your preferred option?



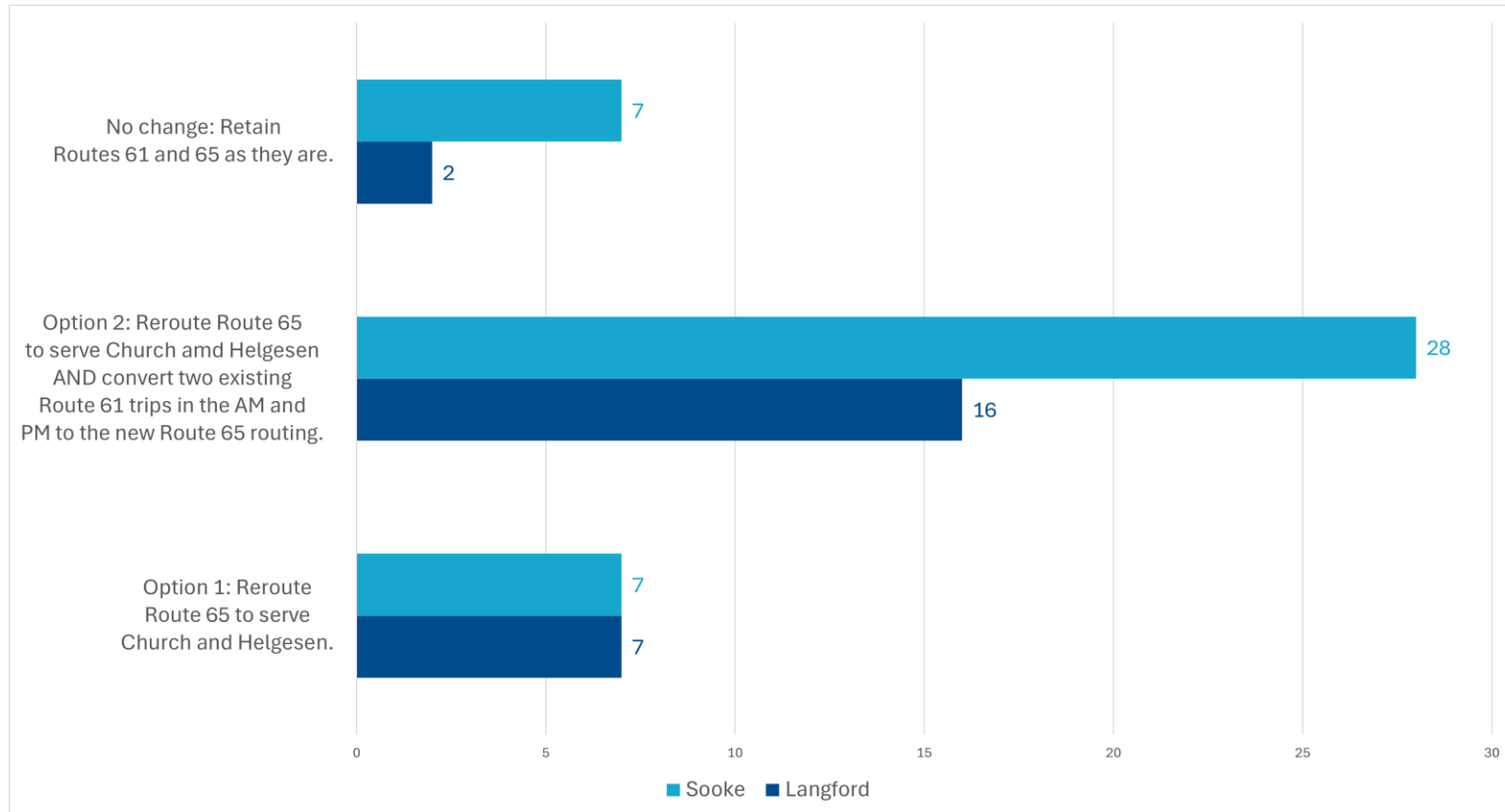
- Option 1: Reroute Route 65 to serve Church and Helgesen.
- Option 2: Reroute Route 65 to serve Church and Helgesen AND convert two existing Route 61 trips in the AM and PM to the new Route 65 routing.
- No change: Retain Routes 61 and 65 as they are.



Engagement Results

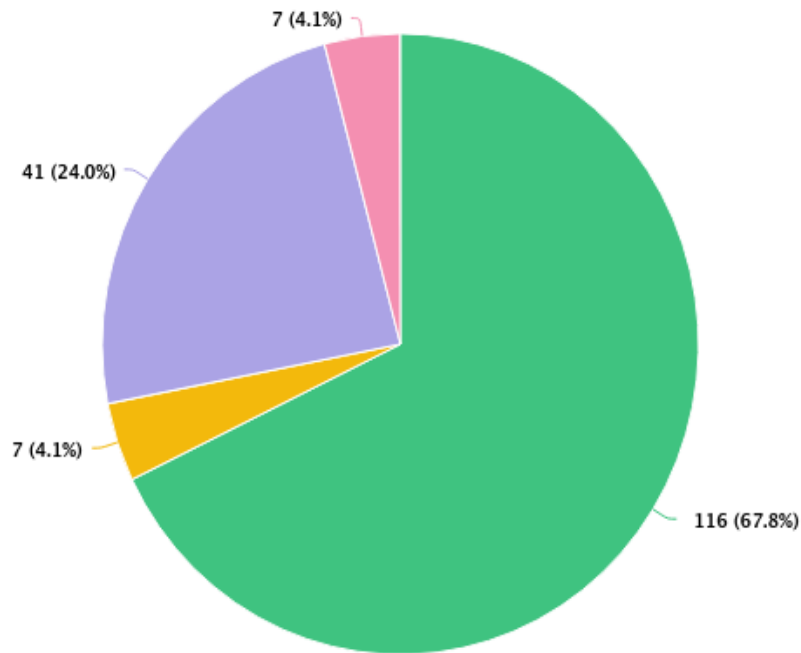
Which is your preferred option?

Filtered by community: Langford and Sooke

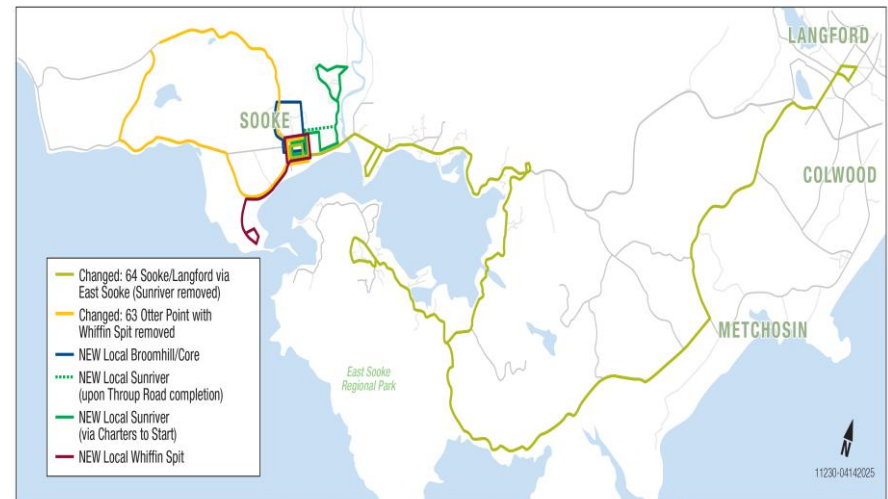
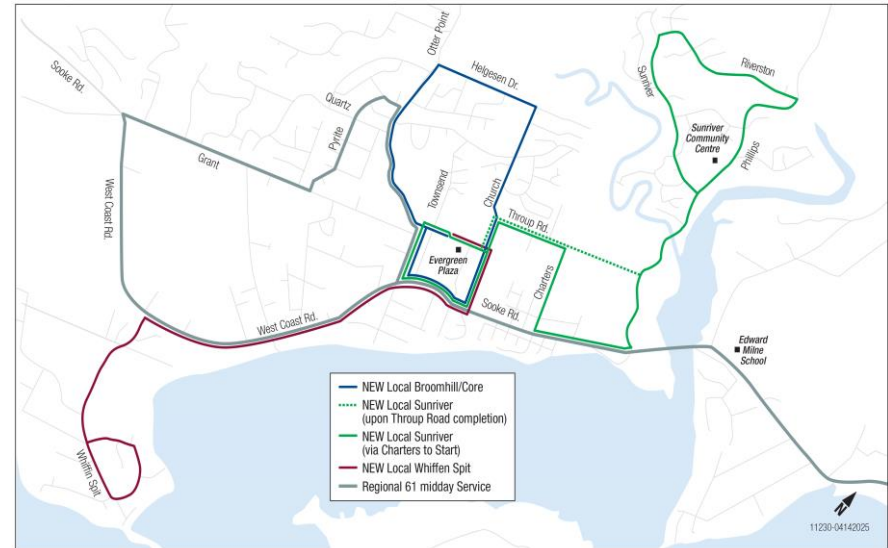


Engagement Results

Do you support the proposed Sooke local service changes?



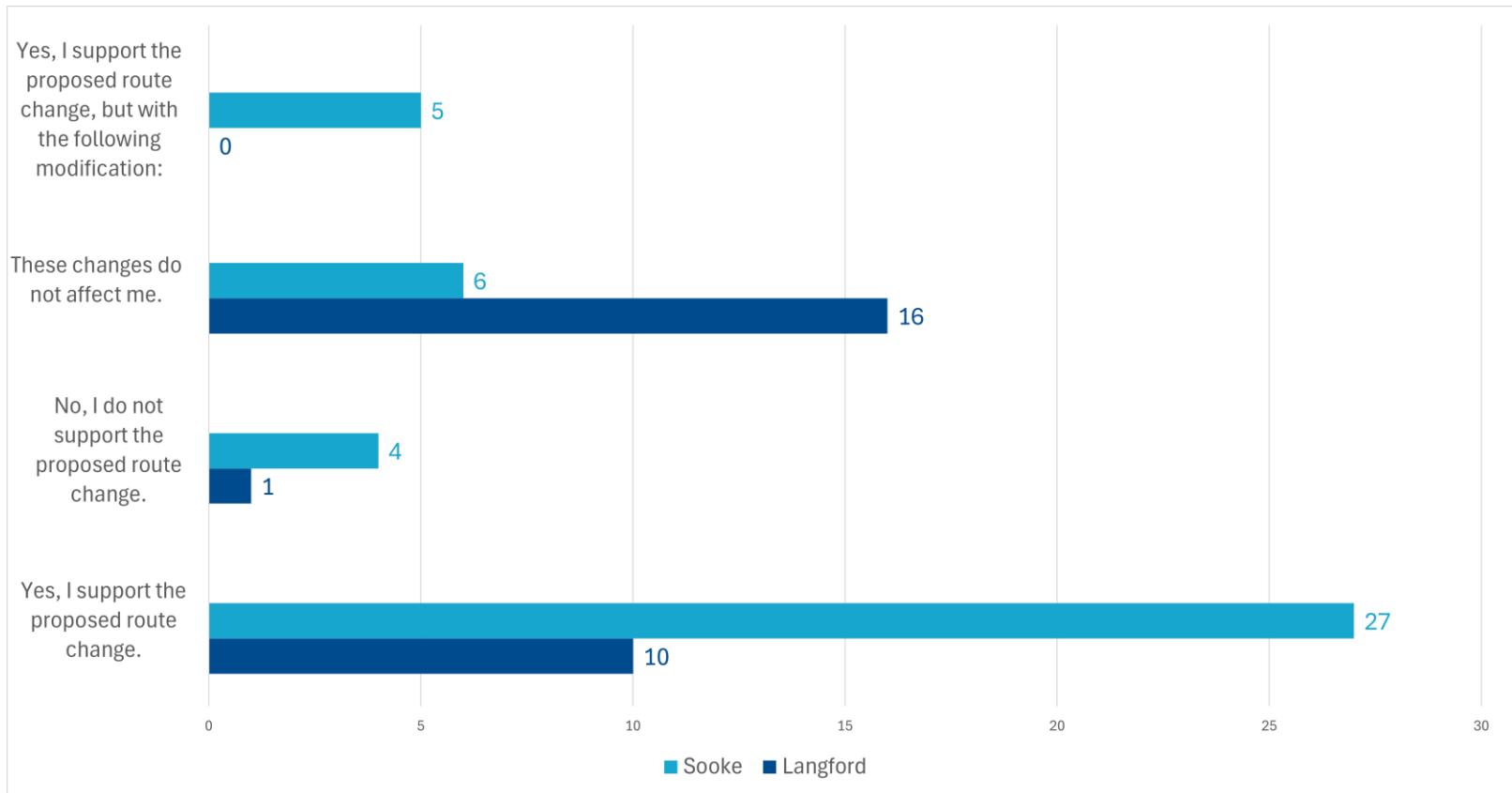
- Yes, I support the proposed route change.
- No, I do not support the proposed route change.
- Yes I support the proposed route change, but with the following modification:
- These changes do not affect me.



Engagement Results

Do you support the proposed Sooke local service changes?

Filtered by community: Langford and Sooke



Engagement Results

What We Heard

Observation	Impact	Implication
A majority of respondents expressed a strong desire for more reliable service to the airport.	Highlights a service gap in the current transit network, suggesting that existing airport transit options are perceived as infrequent and unreliable. This gap leads to increased reliance on personal vehicles, contributing to traffic congestion and reduced parking availability.	Addressing this issue would require notable route adjustments and service improvements. Aligning transit service with the unpredictability of flight schedules presents an operational challenge.
General concerns were raised about the frequency and reliability of the current transit service in all regions.	Lack of confidence in the transit system may reduce ridership and increase reliance on personal vehicles, especially for those who depend on transit, like students, seniors, and individuals with limited transportation options.	Improving reliability and frequency on local routes will require investments in scheduling, resources, and fleet. Ongoing monitoring and communication with riders will ensure changes effectively address concerns.

Engagement Results

What We Heard

Observation	Impact	Implication
A strong majority of respondents (70%) preferred Sooke Option 2: rerouting route 65 to serve Church and Helgesen and converting two existing route 61 trips (one AM and one PM) to follow the new route 65 routing.	Respondents favored improved regional service coverage and better connections between Sooke and the Westshore. However, the shift in routing may impact existing route 61 riders.	Residents living beyond walking distance from Otter Point Road could face longer wait times between trips. Although fewer route 61 trips would run during peak hours, an increase in route 65 service may offset these changes and enhance overall coverage.
Respondents expressed concerns about the loss of service along Kelly and Sooke Road for route 51.	This rerouting would remove direct access to route 51, forcing people to use alternative routes and transfers to reach UVic and other destinations. This could lead to frustration, accessibility challenges, and reduced ridership.	Ensuring efficient transfers at Colwood Exchange and minimizing delays will be crucial to maintaining ridership and accessibility.

Engagement Results

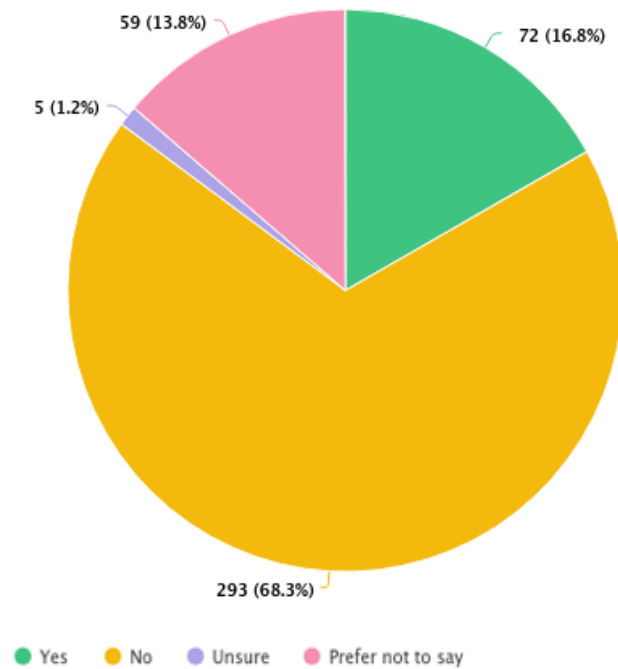
What We Heard

Observation	Impact	Implication
Respondents expressed concern about losing the one-seat ride from Westhills Exchange to UVic on route 39.	Removing the one-seat ride would require transfers, potentially increasing travel time, the risk of missed connections, and inconvenience for commuters traveling between Westhills and UVic.	To reduce the impact, improving transfer reliability and increasing frequency will be essential, requiring greater investment in on-time performance and service levels in the future. Planned investment in route 51 service will help mitigate this impact.
Respondents raised concerns about overcrowding on major routes during peak times in the Peninsula, Westshore, Royal Oak, UVic, and Sooke. A common request was for larger buses during peak periods.	Overcrowding reduces comfort, can lead to pass-ups, and may discourage ridership, especially during peak travel times.	Addressing this issue will require additional service or procuring more high-capacity buses to support peak periods; Planning monitors passenger loads regularly to align vehicle capacity with demand.

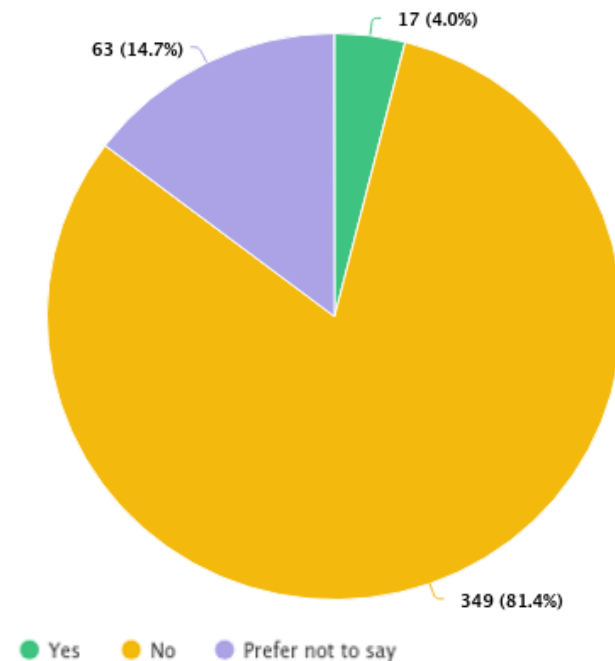
Appendix A

Demographics

Do you identify as a person with a disability?



Do you identify as an Indigenous person? (Aboriginal, First Nation [Status/Non-Status], Métis, or Inuk [Inuit] cultural or ancestral background)



Appendix B

Survey Comments

The tables below highlight key themes and concerns from the surveys and open houses.

Category	Feedback Summary
Service Reliability and Frequency	Improving frequency was the most common comment across nearly all survey responses, highlighting service reliability as a major concern among respondents.
Improved Service to Tsawout First Nation	Respondents provided positive feedback on the improved service to Tsawout First Nation. However, there was strong interest in enhanced seven-day-a-week service, particularly connections between Tsawout First Nation, the airport, West Sidney, and Panorama Recreation Centre.
Airport Connectivity and Regional Access	Improved airport service was one of the most common requests across survey responses in the Peninsula, with calls for better connections between the Victoria Airport, Sidney, downtown Victoria, and other regional destinations. Respondents emphasized the need for improved service to support both travelers and airport employees.
Service Extension Along Willingdon Road Past the Airport	The need for expanded service along Willingdon Road, past the airport, was raised multiple times to better serve employees at the Institute of Ocean Sciences, FedEx, the Military Base, and the Coast Guard station.

Appendix B

Survey Comments

The tables below highlight key themes and concerns from the surveys and open houses.

Category	Feedback Summary
Route 88 Realignment to Serve West Sidney Industrial Park	Participants expressed concern about extending route 88 to the Sidney Industrial Park, noting it could increase travel times. They suggested assigning a separate route label (e.g., 88A) for trips serving the Industrial Park to distinguish them from the main route.
Off-Peak and Weekend Service Enhancements	There was general desire for improved seven-day-a-week service, with particular emphasis on weekends. Many respondents highlighted challenges accessing early morning and evening service, especially on local Sooke routes.
Route 51 Service Removal on Kelly and Sooke Road	As noted in the previous section, many respondents expressed concerns about the loss of service on route 51 along Kelly and Sooke Road. People felt that Goldstream is already well-served by the 95 RapidBus, and removing route 51 service from Kelly and Sooke Road would take away a vital connection for local residents and result in longer travel times.

Appendix B

Survey Comments

The tables below highlight key themes and concerns from the surveys and open houses.

Category	Feedback Summary
Peak and Evening Service Enhancements along Sunriver Road	Many Sooke respondents requested improved service to Sunriver Road, citing challenges with missing the last bus and having to walk long distances home. They also requested 30-minute frequency, along with enhanced peak and evening service.
Route 39 and 38 Transfer Concerns	As noted previously, some respondents expressed concern about losing the one-seat ride from Westhills to UVic, which would make it more challenging for students. There were also concerns about transfer reliability between routes 38 and 39, potentially lengthening the trip to UVic.
Route 51 Service to Langford Exchange	Respondents expressed a desire for route 51 to continue serving the Langford Exchange, as it is a common drop-off point for high school and university students.
Transfer Reliability	There were general concerns about an increase in transfers under the proposed changes. Respondents requested improved transfer times to enhance service reliability.