

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

BC Transit 520 Gorge Road East
June 17, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

DRAFT MINUTES

The Victoria Regional Transit Commission conducts its business on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations.

Present:

Commissioner Ryan Windsor, Chair; Commissioner Marianne Alto, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Marie-Terese Little, Vice-Chair; Commissioner Dean Murdock; Commissioner Kevin Murdoch; Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna

Regrets:

Commissioner Maja Tait; Commissioner Colin Plant

BC Transit Staff:

Elise Wren, Government Relations Manager; Christy Harrold, Vice-President, Strategy, Planning, and Public Affairs; Stephen Anderson, General Manager, Victoria Regional Transit; Greg Hill, Director, Financial Planning & Analysis; Levi Megenbir, Manager, Service Planning; James Wadsworth, Manager, Project Development; Tessa Stewart, Manager, Business Development; Ryan Drake, Deployment Manager, Electrification; Adam Bishop, Manager, Accessible Transit; Christine Lewis, Executive Assistant and Divisional Coordinator (Recorder)

1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Mayor Ryan Windsor called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Motion MOVED by Commissioner Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna to approve the agenda as written.

CARRIED

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 11, 2025

Motion MOVED by Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna and SECONDED by Commissioner Marianne Alto to approve Minutes as written.

CARRIED

3. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Good morning, everyone. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we're meeting on the unceded traditional territories of the Lekwungen peoples, including the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

As we approach the summer season, service changes will be taking effect on June 30th. To support the increased demand from tourists -

- Route 70 will see added service between downtown and Swartz Bay.
- Route 75 will have more afternoon trips to and from Butchart Gardens.

A few weeks ago, I attended the opening of the new 30,000 square foot Provincial Distribution Centre in Colwood. This facility will support our growing fleet for the next 25 years, reduce costs by eliminating leased storage, and improve efficiency with a new Warehouse Management

System. It also helps us better manage supply chain challenges and consolidate shipping across the province.

The first of ten electric buses have arrived in Victoria with all of them expected to arrive by the fall. Driver training is underway, so you may see them on the road around the region. We'll announce their in-service date soon – we're just as excited as the public to see them roll out.

A new VRTC Student Representative from the University of Victoria has been appointed to the Commission. We are looking forward to welcoming Michael Caryk in person, UVSS Intern Director of Campaigns & Community, after the summer break at our September meeting.

Finally, I'd like to welcome Elise Wren, our new Government Relations Manager, whose role is to support and manage the Commission and also to be the liaison to BC Transit for all thirteen municipalities. Welcome, Elise.

With that, I'll hand it over to Elise for the Staff Update.

Thank you.

4. STAFF REMARKS

Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm honoured to support the Victoria Regional Transit Commission. After two years on the road as Government Relations Manager for the Thompson Kootenay and North regions, it's great to be grounded here in Victoria. I especially enjoyed connecting with riders and operators during the Umo rollout in 2023. Diving into my new role in the VRTS, I've already started meeting with municipal staff at each of the thirteen municipalities. And even some in-person meetings with our handyDART clients.

I want to acknowledge recent concerns in the Victoria Regional Transit System custom handyDART service. Unfortunately, a misconception was created, but there have been no service or funding cuts to handyDART transit. The system is operating within the approved 2025/26 budget.

The issue stemmed from a scheduling error and a miscommunication with our operating partner. This has since been corrected.

We recognize the high demand for handyDART and the challenges some clients are facing with trip availability. We are responding to all feedback through email, phone calls and in-person meetings. We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience and are actively working on the addition of service expansion in January to offset the current high demand for service.

On a positive note, we're excited to welcome nearly 200 attendees to the annual BC Transit Workshop here in Victoria on June 18 and 19. It's a great opportunity to collaborate with local governments, operating companies, and industry partners—and to celebrate excellence at the Transit Superstar Awards.

Thank you again. I'm looking forward to working with all of you.

CORRESPONDENCE

5. TAX LEVY – KELLY FINNIGAN AND CLEAR AIR DAY FREE TRANSIT

Letters were received with no questions or comments from the Commission.

The correspondence was received FOR INFORMATION.

CARRIED

6. DELEGATIONS

None

7. MOTIONS WITH NOTICE

A motion was brought forward by Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna regarding accommodations for Crystal Pool Construction. The City of Victoria held a referendum that was passed for the construction of a new Crystal Pool at its current site. As the pool will be closed for several years, the Motion was brought forward to ask what service could be provided to help users of the Crystal Pool access others in the region. Staff advised that there are currently a few routes that transport riders to recreation facilities across the region. They will look at current data on these routes and then report back the Commission at a later date. The motion was brought forward by City of Victoria to allow up to 18 months of notice for any routing changes that need to happen because of the construction project.

Motion was received FOR INFORMATION.

8. Q4 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – FOR INFORMATION *GREG HILL*

The Commission was presented with a report outlining financial information for the fourth quarter of this fiscal year. In the financial summary, staff outlined a favourable financial outlook due to expenses being under budget while fare revenue remained relatively flat compared to this time last year. This quarter, revenue is slightly below what was budgeted due to delayed expansion, changes to when revenue is recognized with the new UMO system, and UPASS

uptake being slightly down. Advertising is above budget while fuel tax revenue was slightly below budget. Operations came in below budget due to lower operator counts and fuel being below the cost budgeted for. Fleet maintenance is over budget due to higher parts and material costs and labour expenses. The Victoria Regional Transit Fund is currently \$2 million over what was projected.

The Q4 Financial Performance Report was received FOR INFORMATION.

9. FIVE YEAR FARE STRATEGY – FOR INFORMATION
TESSA STEWART

The Commission was presented with a report that showed the last fare review in the Victoria Regional Transit system was conducted in 2024 with new fares implemented April 1, 2025. BC Transit outlined the five-year fare review forecast, which included a recommendation to address the current 30-Day Concession pass pricing that is well outside BC Transit pricing guidelines in 2026, as well as a plan for a multi-year fare review in 2027. Staff will bring forward a report for approval to the Commission at the September 9, 2025 meeting to request their approval to bring forward fare change recommendations early next year.

The Five-Year Fare Strategy report was received FOR INFORMATION.

10. 2025 TRANSIT TARIFF UPDATE – FOR APPROVAL
TESSA STEWART

The Commission was presented with a 2025 Transit Tariff update. This is a public document that was last updated 10 years ago and sets out rules, terms and conditions regarding fares and fare products. The updates presented for approval included new Umo fare types, DayPASS onboard fare capping, Umo fare capping, price increases for single ride and DayPASS implemented this past April and updates to EcoPASS program.

MOTION BY Commissioner Kevin Murdoch and SECONDED by Commissioner Marie-Terese Little to APPROVE the 2025 Transit Tariff Update.

CARRIED

11. FREE TRANSIT ON NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION – FOR APPROVAL
TESSA STEWART

Staff advised that implementing free transit for those who identify as indigenous peoples on September 30th for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was being brought for approval after receiving a recommendation from consultations with Indigenous mentors. Riders would not be required to show any validation that they are Indigenous to access free transit on this date. Commissioners recommended that communication with operators and the public take place to ensure that it is clear that identification is not necessary to take transit for free on this date if you

identify as Indigenous. Commissioners recommended to change the motion wording to remove “for those who identify...”. The amended motion carried was: *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 Indigenous Peoples.*

MOTION by COMMISSIONER Marianne Alto, SECONDED by COMMISSIONER Jeremy Caradonna to APPROVE the Free Transit on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
CARRIED

12. JANUARY 2026 SERVICE CHANGE REPORT – FOR APPROVAL
LEVI MEGENBIR

Staff advised that the service changes being presented for approval align with annual service plan previously approved in March by the Commission. Changes presented include several peninsula local routes 81, 82, 87 and 88 to improve service reliability and align with ferry schedules and improve service to YYJ airport and West Sidney. Changes to routes 39 and 51 are being made to improve transit and reliability and align with new West Shore campus as well as extend serve to the Westhills and create a more direct connection between the Westshore and UVic. Changes to Route 65 in Sooke to improve service and reliability.

MOTION by COMMISSIONER Marianne Alto, SECONDED by COMMISSIONER Marie-Terese Little to APPROVE the 2026 Service Change Report.

CARRIED

13. PLANNING UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION
LEVI MEGENBIR

The Planning department presented the Commission with a report outlining upcoming service changes and planning projects for the fall including holidays. Staff advised that changes include regular reinstatement of school serving routes and implementing Route 40. Victoria Regional Transit Plan next steps will include finalizing an engagement strategy and holding workshops with local government partners. Sooke Transit Service Reallocation Review is complete and includes proposed changes for January 2026.

The Planning Update was received FOR INFORMATION.

14. CUSTOM TRANSIT UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION
ADAM BISHOP

The Commission was presented with an update on the Custom Transit Solution. Since the last report in November, staff have been looking at ways to reduce booking wait times and implementation of electronic fare payment. Work is currently being done to hire a contractor and begin a phased implementation in 2026.

The Custom Transit Update was received FOR INFORMATION.

15. INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND DELIVERY UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION
JAMES WADSWORTH

The Commission heard that RapidBus projects are moving forward with planning on Douglas, McKenzie and Sidney. Staff are working with local governments to set up Memorandums of Understanding for these projects to move forward with design work. Wadams Way transit hub is a new exchange to increase service to and from Sooke and recently received council approval. Staff will bring forward a report to the Commission this fall for approval. The Uptown transit priority will conclude in late 2025 and will expand RapidBus stations on Highway 1 and increase bus capacity on Carey Rd. Work is currently being done to develop a business plan for a new Saanich Transit Centre.

The Infrastructure Planning and Delivery Update was received FOR INFORMATION.

16. ELECTRIFICATION UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION
RYAN DRAKE

The Commission was presented with an overview of BC Transit's current electrification plans. They heard that there are now eight electric buses in Victoria with two more coming soon. Training is currently underway for transit operators and mechanics. So far, they have received very positive feedback from transit operators. Testing is being completed on charging infrastructure. 52 buses have been ordered for 2027 delivery for Victoria Transit Centre 2.

The Electrification Update was received FOR INFORMATION.

17. OPERATIONS UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION
STEPHEN ANDERSON

Staff presented a report to the Commission on recent operations metrics and advised that the conventional transit system delivered 99.4 per cent of scheduled service between February 1 and May 15, 2025. On-time performance was at the 70 per cent target; however, construction was a major factor causing heavier than usual traffic conditions across the city. Staff are working with municipalities and construction companies to ensure transit is prioritized in areas where construction is taking place. Custom transit exceeded projections. Taxi supplement use has also increased due to increased demand for this service.

The Operations Update was received FOR INFORMATION.

18. ATAC UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION
STEPHEN ANDERSON

The Commission received a report on the activities of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) that includes minutes from their last meetings on May 12, 2025. At this meeting, the Committee formally welcomed five new members who were appointed after a recent recruitment process. The members on this committee represent a broad crossover of

handyDART users. At the meeting the Committee were also presented with an update from a representative from the Passenger Transportation Safety Board.

The ATAC Update was received FOR INFORMATION.

MOTION BY Commissioner Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Commissioner Marie-Terese Little to adjourn meeting at 10:42 a.m.

CARRIED

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

September 9, 2025