
SUBJECT: VICTORIA REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM FARE REVIEW

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) with a recommended fare option for implementation in the Victoria Regional Transit System (“VRTS”). This report is presented to the Commission for **APPROVAL**.

BACKGROUND

On September 9^h 2025, BC Transit presented a proposal to introduce a fare review in the VRTS with a focus on increasing the Concession Pass, which includes both the 30-Day Concession Pass valid on fixed-route transit and the handyDART Monthly Concession Pass fare, as fare pricing is aligned for both fixed-route and custom transit. BC Transit staff were requested by the Commissioners to provide a fare review report at the subsequent Commission meeting on November 18th with the intention to analyze Concession Pass fare pricing impacts.

DISCUSSION

BC Transit is recommending an increase to the Concession Pass as an outcome of the attached fare review report, as the current discount provided is priced lower than BC Transit’s pricing recommendations (outlined below) at 47 per cent less the Adult Pass rate. The Concession Pass last saw a pricing adjustment in 2013, when it was decreased from \$52.00 to \$45.00, which furthered the pricing gap between the Adult and Concession Passes. Prior to this decrease, the Concession Pass last received a fare increase in 2012.

BC Transit Pricing Recommendations

Product	Audience	Price Guideline	Existing Fare	Current Fare Alignment
Single Ride	All	Base	\$3.00	-
DayPASS	All	2 times Base fare	\$6.00	2 times Base fare
Adult Pass	All	20 to 30 times Base fare	\$85.00	28.3 times Base fare
Concession Pass	Senior/Youth Student	Adult Pass less 15%	\$45.00	Adult Pass less 47%

BC Transit conducted analysis on available fixed-route Umo data, which indicated the Concession Pass is currently providing high value to fixed-route customers. As the value of the product is reached after seven and a half days of travel, users receive an average of eight travel days at no cost over the course of the remaining days the pass is valid. The Concession pass product is also the most frequently used Umo product in the VRTS at 28 per cent of total Umo boardings. Conversely, fare revenue from the product only amounts to 17 per cent of total fare revenues. BC Transit recommends increasing the Concession pass rate to ensure that there is equity amongst fare product pricing when compared to usage and revenue collection to allow for sustainable funding within the transit system.

Umo Fixed-Route Pass Usage January – September 2025

Product	Average Daily Trips / Month	Average Days Travelled / Month	Average Fare per Day	% of Total Boardings
Umo Cash Balance	1.94	4.64	-	19%
30-Day Adult Pass	2.60	17	\$5	16%
30-Day Concession Pass	2.68	15.5	\$2.90	28%

BC Transit is recommending that subsequent fare reviews include multi-year fare change recommendations that allow for more gradual increases in pricing. An increase to the Concession Pass at this time would allow for these gradual increases to be more aligned across all products, without the risk of the pricing gap between the Adult Pass and Concession Pass widening with subsequent increases in fare prices.

BC Transit recommends continuing to align the fare pricing between custom and fixed-route transit, as custom fare products can be utilized on both custom and fixed-route transit interchangeably. Ensuring that there is parity in the pricing of both transit types ensures there is equity for all customers in the VRTS.

Fare Change Options

BC Transit has provided the following fare change options for the Commission's review, with an increase in the Concession Pass fare to \$55.00 (Option Three) being the recommended outcome. Based on the data analyzed, riders would still see high value at this price point, as the value of the pass would be met after nine days of usage with the average fare paid per day equaling \$3.55.

Fare Type	Existing Fare	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Single Ride	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
DayPASS	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
Adult Pass	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00
Concession Pass	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$52.50	\$55.00	\$60.00

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission receive this report and **APPROVE** initiating the recommended fare increase of the 30 Day and Monthly Pass - Concession to \$55.00 as of June 30, 2026.

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Approved by:	<u>Christy Harrold</u>	Date reviewed:	<u>November 6, 2025</u>
Position:	<u>VP, Strategy, Planning & Public Affairs</u>		



Victoria Regional Transit System Fare Review Report

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

November 6, 2025

Submitted by:
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Executive Summary

As recommended to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the Commission) by BC Transit, a fare review report for the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) has been completed. The objective of the fare review is to assess whether the current price of the Concession Pass, which includes the 30-Day Concession Pass (valid on fixed-route transit) and the handyDART Monthly Concession Pass (valid on both fixed-route and custom transit) is appropriate for the system.

Fare Review Context

- BC Transit conducted a fare review in 2024, with the approved direction from the Commission to increase the Single Ride and DayPASS fares (\$3.00 and \$6.00 respectively).
- BC Transit recommended an increase to the 30-Day and Monthly Concession Pass fare (from \$45 to \$55) during the 2024 fare review due to the large discount provided that exceeds BC Transit's recommended pricing guidelines. This recommendation was not approved by the Commission.
- The Concession Pass last saw a pricing adjustment in 2013 with a decrease from \$52.00 to \$45.00. Prior to this decrease, the Concession Pass last received a fare increase in 2012.
- BC Transit is providing this fare review to provide an opportunity for the Concession Pass to be realigned with recommended pricing guidelines that will enable future multi-year incremental fare changes to occur seamlessly for all fare products.
- As there is parity between fixed-route and custom fare pricing, any fare changes within this report will impact both transit types to continue to provide equity for all customers.

Fare Change Options

This report presents four fare change options for consideration with an analysis of revenue impacts on fixed-route transit outlined below. These options are also supported by data analysis that reviews current usage of fare products to assess appropriate fare pricing. The fare options presented apply to fixed-route and custom transit as there is parity in the fare structure for both transit types.

As sustainable funding of transit in the VRTS is a priority, BC Transit is recommending that the Commission endorse Option three, with an increase to the Concession Pass of \$10.00, bringing the fare to \$55.00 with an effective date of June 30, 2026.

Table 1: Proposed Fare Options

Fare Type	Existing Fare	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Single Ride	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
DayPASS	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
Adult Pass	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00
Concession Pass	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$52.50	\$55.00	\$60.00
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Revenue Impact		\$641,123 (+2%)	\$949,215 (3%)	\$1,248,994 (+4%)	\$1,823,612 (+5%)

1.0 Fare Structure and Pricing Guidelines

The existing fare structure in the VRTS applies to both fixed-route and custom transit, with any potential change to fares that are approved impacting both transit types. Umo is currently only available on fixed-route transit, and as such physical fare products continue to be available for custom transit users. Fare pricing is aligned for both transit types as physical fare products available for custom transit users can be utilized on both custom and conventional transit.

BC Transit has formal pricing guidelines that have been created to promote a balance between maximizing fare revenues while maintaining affordability and growing ridership. The guidelines recommend simplified fare product offerings to allow for ease of use, which the VRTS currently adheres to. The pricing guidelines are currently utilized to help guide the pricing of fares, with the alignment of existing product pricing outlined below.

The fare structure in the VRTS has had several adjustments since 2012 that have impacted products and pricing, as outlined below:

2012

The Adult Monthly Pass increased in price, from \$82.50 to \$85.00, and the Concession Monthly Pass increased from \$49.00 to \$52.00

2013

The Concession Single-Ride fare was eliminated, and the Concession Monthly Pass rate decreased from \$52.00 to \$45.00.

2016

Transfers were eliminated and the DayPASS system was introduced, offering unlimited daily travel for the price of two Single Ride fares

2024

With the transition to Umo, fixed-route Monthly Passes were transitioned to 30-Day Passes in Umo, and the 10-Ticket product was eliminated as a fixed-route fare product. To continue to provide equity for custom transit, physical Monthly Passes and 10-Ticket products remain available for purchase at select vendor locations for custom transit users to purchase.

Table 2: Existing VRTS Fares and BC Transit Pricing Guidelines

Product	Audience	Existing Fare	Price Guideline	Fare Alignment
Single Ride*	All	\$3.00	Base	-
DayPASS	All	\$6.00	2 times Base fare	2 times Base fare
Adult Pass	All	\$85.00	20 to 30 times Base fare	28.3 times Base fare
Concession Pass**	Senior/Youth Student	\$45.00	Adult Pass less 15%	Adult Pass less 47%

* Custom transit users will be able to purchase and use tickets at the single ride rate

** Concession fare valid for youth aged 13-18 and persons 65 and over.

2.0 Sources of Fare Revenue

The VRTS currently has several sources of fare revenue from existing fare products, pre-paid fare programs, and supportive transit programs.

Figure 1: Victoria Regional Fixed-Route Fare Revenue 2024/2025

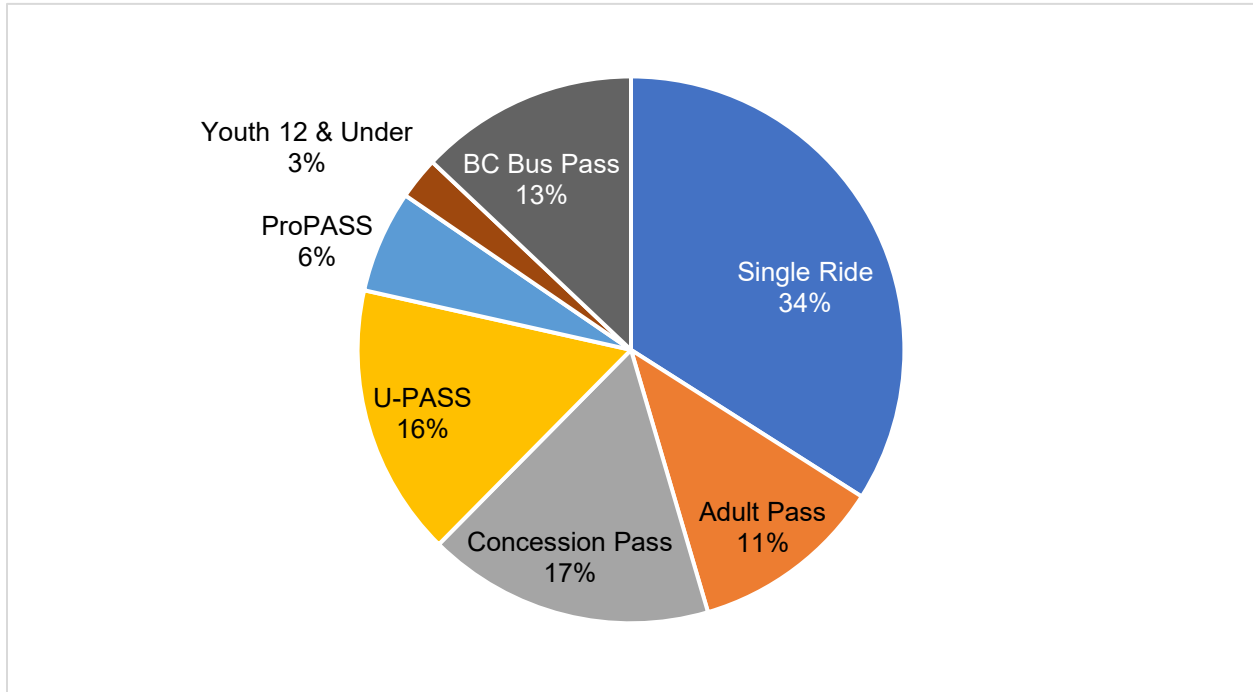
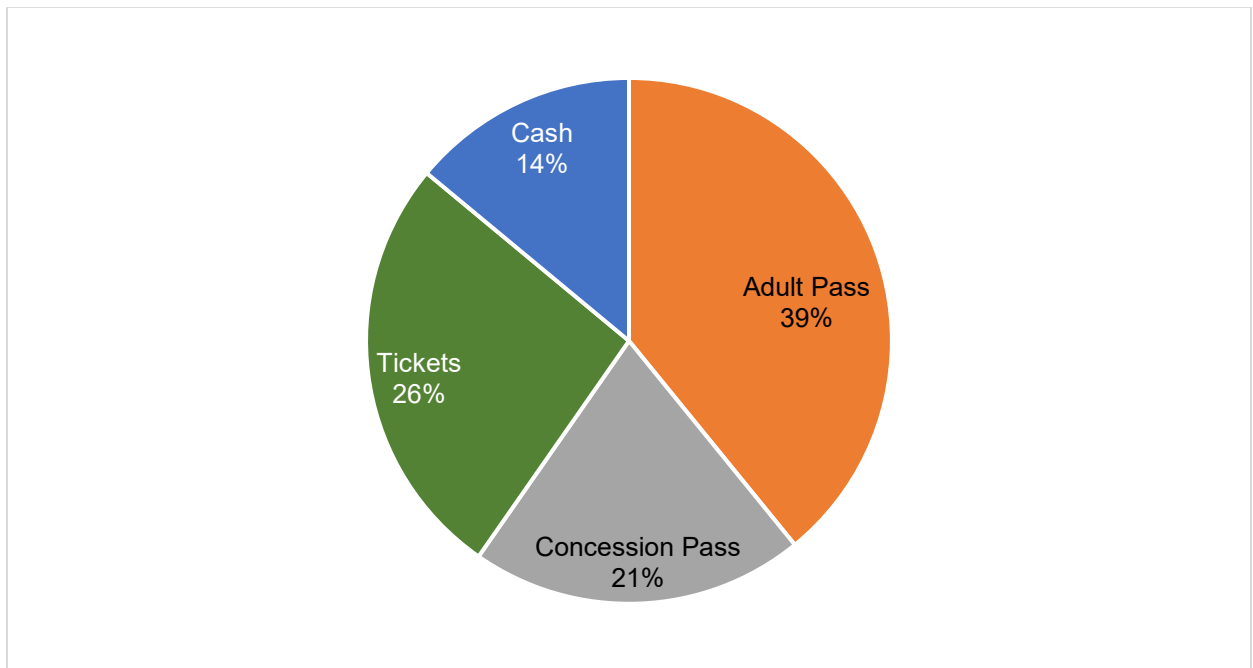


Figure 2: Victoria Regional Custom Fare Revenue October 2024 – March 2025



3.0 Transit System Comparison

To determine reasonable fare levels for the VRTS, the following table provides a sample of Canadian transit system fares that serve similar population sizes, have similar total annual ridership, or are in close proximity to the Victoria Regional Transit System. The data provided is based on the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) 2023 Operating Data report.

Table 3: Comparison of Transit System Fares

Transit System	Population Served	Adult Fare	Adult Pass	Senior Pass	Student Pass
Victoria, BC	397,237	\$3.00	\$85	\$45	\$45
Kelowna, BC	164,014	\$3.00	\$80	\$55	\$65
Vancouver, BC	2,950,509	\$3.15	\$104.90	\$59.95	\$59.95
Halifax, NS	342,048	\$2.75	\$82.50	\$60	\$60
London, ON	418,800	\$3.50	\$112	\$112	\$72
Laval, QU	438,470	\$3.75	\$114.25	\$68.50	\$68.50
Saskatoon	290,750	\$3.00	\$83.00	\$29.00	\$59.00
Canadian Average		\$3.50	\$90.20	\$52.24	\$67.07

4.0 Supportive Transit Programs

To ensure that transit remains accessible, a range of supportive programs have been implemented to assist individuals facing financial or mobility challenges. The following initiatives available in the VRTS are designed to help those in need to access essential services and stay connected to their communities. These programs aim to make public transit more inclusive and equitable. These programs are shared for awareness, and no recommendations for changes will be made as part of this fare review.

[Get on Board Program - Free Transit for Children 12 and Under](#)

The Get on Board program allows children aged 12 and under to ride conventional and handyDART buses for free.

[BC Bus Pass](#)

The BC Bus Pass Program provides unlimited transit access to low-income seniors (\$45/year) and individuals on disability assistance (free).

[Low-Income Transit Assistance Program \(LITA\)](#)

Offered in the VRTS, LITA is provided through a partnership with the Community Social Planning Council (CSPC). BC Transit provides tickets and passes at a 50 per cent discount to the CSPC who in turn allow partner agencies to purchase the products and offer them free of charge to eligible recipients.

Refugee Pass Program

The Refugee Pass Program provides refugees in the Greater Victoria region with temporary free transit for a one-year period to help support their transition to a new community.

Youth U-PASS Programs

The Victoria Regional Transit System has several Youth U-PASS programs offering fare-free transit for eligible youth 13 – 18 years old. All programs are funded independently by the educational institutions or local municipalities.

- City of Victoria Youth U-PASS
- SD61 U-PASS for First Nation's Youth
- Artemis Place U-PASS
- St Andrews School U-PASS

5.0 Fare Change Considerations

BC Transit recognizes the pricing of the Concession Pass as a priority for adjustment. The realignment of the Concession Pass fare price will allow for future incremental annual fare changes to occur without the concern of increasing the pricing gap between the Adult Pass and Concession Pass fares. Also, due to the popularity of the Concession Pass, the low fare price has a sizable impact on fare revenues as it has not stayed consistent with inflationary increases or market standard rates for Concession products.

The Adult Pass rate is not being considered for an increase as it currently is priced at the high end of BC Transit's pricing recommendations, at 28 times the Single Ride fare. If the Adult Pass is increased in a future Fare Review, the pricing gap between the Concession Pass and Adult Pass fares would increase further, making it difficult to adjust this disparity in the future. In reviewing current Umo data outlined below, the Adult Pass appears to be appropriately priced based on the value that users of the product are receiving.

In comparison, users of the Concession Pass receive much greater value due to the discount, with an average daily fare at \$2.90/day based on current usage. The Concession Pass product is also the most frequently purchased and utilized Umo product in the system, with users accounting for 28% of total Umo boardings this year. Due to the existing price structure, fare revenue from the product only amounts to 17% of total fare revenues. Concession Pass ridership puts a higher strain on system demand, both to maintain service levels and ensure space on board for other passengers, despite not yielding a high revenue return. Although it is a priority to maintain an affordable fare for Concession Pass customers, based on analysis provided, the Concession Pass is currently priced below the benchmark for similar and neighboring transit systems and is receiving heavy subsidization to allow for this low fare to be maintained. BC Transit recommends increasing the Concession Pass rate to ensure that there is equity amongst fare product pricing when compared to usage and revenue collection, to allow for sustainable funding within the transit system as a primary goal of fare product pricing.

Table 4: Umo Pass Usage January – September 2025

Product	Average Daily Trips / Month	Average Days Travelled/ Month	Average Fare per Day	% of Total Boardings
Umo Cash Balance	1.94	4.64	-	19%
30-Day Adult Pass	2.60	17	\$5	16%
30-Day Concession Pass	2.68	15.5	\$2.90	28%

BC Transit does not currently have boarding data available for custom transit users in the VRTS, as visual validation is utilized on board and fare product data is limited. BC Transit has vendor sales from October 2024 and beyond to allow for an assessment of how many custom transit users may be impacted by potential fare changes to the Concession Pass. Based on this data, 21 per cent of fare product vendor sales were derived from the Concession Pass over the last 12 months, with approximately 262 users utilizing the product monthly. As custom transit requires a much higher investment to provide this service, with passenger fares recovering less than 2 per cent of operating expenses in the 2024/2025 fiscal year, the pricing of fare products is heavily subsidized and continues to provide high value to customers.

Table 5: Custom Transit Fare Product Sales October 2024 – September 2025

	Adult Pass	Concession Pass	10-Tickets	DayPASS
Monthly Average Product Sales	279	262	725	3
Percentage of Total Fare Product Sales	22%	21%	57%	0%

6.0 Fare Change Options

BC Transit is providing several fare change options that focus on an increase to the Concession Pass fare for custom and fixed-route transit. This adjustment would bring the fare price closer to the previous Concession Pass fare of \$52, as the fare was decreased in 2013 as a compromise for the elimination of the Concession Single Ride fare. A fare increase to the Concession Pass would allow for incremental fare changes to occur in the future without the need to aggressively close the large gap between the Adult and Concession Pass fares.

The fare options below ensure that the Concession Pass is still appropriately priced when considering existing usage, with the average fare per day ranging from \$3.22 - \$3.87 with the options presented, which remains below the current DayPASS rate of \$6.00.

An analysis was conducted to determine the potential revenue impact of increasing the Concession Pass with a basic elasticity model that analyzes current product usage at a standard elasticity rate of .2% (based on industry standards for transit usage). Due to the low elasticity of transit fare products, the impact on ridership would be nominal with any fare change option (~ one per cent). Comparably, the impact on revenue is higher due to the fairly significant portion of revenue that the Concession Pass currently accounts for. As there is limited data available for custom transit, the analysis provided was limited to the impacts that the fare changes would have on fixed-route transit revenue and ridership.

BC Transit recommends continuing to align the fare pricing between custom and fixed-route transit, as custom fare products can be utilized on both custom and fixed-route transit interchangeably. Ensuring that there is parity in the pricing of both transit types ensures there is equity for all customers in the VRTS.

Table 6: Proposed Fare Change Options

Fare Type	Existing Fare	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Single Ride	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
DayPASS	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
Adult Pass	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00	\$85.00
Concession Pass	\$45.00	\$50.00	\$52.50	\$55.00	\$60.00
Estimated Annual Fixed-Route Revenue Impact		\$641,123 (2%)	\$949,215 (3%)	\$1,248,994 (4%)	\$1,823,612 (5%)

7.0 Fare Option Recommendation

Of the four options being considered, BC Transit is recommending the Commission approve Fare Option three (Concession Pass: \$55.00) in the VRTS. This fare option is recommended to bring the product closer to alignment with BC Transit's recommended Fare Guidelines, while still providing high value for existing users.