

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

November 18th, 2025

#16a

Attachment: Victoria Regional Transit Plan – Engagement Summary

Background

As part of BC Transit's commitment to public engagement, outreach was carried out through an online survey, open house events, workshops with key stakeholders and rightsholders, and other outreach methods. The engagement focused on getting feedback on proposed route and network design guidelines and identifying priorities and values for developing the transit system over the next 25 years.

Public engagement was launched through the Fall of 2025, with targeted marketing to the community facilitated through a project website, media release, bus stop posters, and newspaper and social media advertisements.

As part of the project, BC Transit reached out to local Indigenous communities in partnership with the Capital Regional District for participation and engagement, including Sc'ianew/Chenuh (Beecher Bay First Nation), T'Sou-ke Nation, Xwsepsum Nation, Songhees First Nation, Pauquachin First Nation, Tsartlip First Nation and Tseycum First Nation. Conversations with several nations have now begun, and BC Transit will continue to work towards building these relationships to better understand transportation needs, support reconciliation goals, and facilitate improved accessibility.

Engagement Participation Summary

1,857	Online Survey Respondents
350+	Open House Participants
181	Supplemental Open House Comments
23	Key Stakeholder Groups Consulted

Who We Heard From

During the public engagement process, BC Transit staff engaged with the general public, existing transit riders, local government representatives, transit operators, key community stakeholders and employers and local neighbourhood associations. Transit users in Greater Victoria rely on transit to connect to a variety of daily activities, with access to work, recreational/leisure amenities, shopping, social activities, and school widely reported. Conversations with First Nations are ongoing, and feedback will be woven into the process as the plan process continues.

What We Heard

Overarching key themes that emerged as common threads across all engagement platforms included the following:

- Improved service frequency, reliability, and direct/simplified routes were the most requested improvements for the transit system.
- Support for additional transit-priority measures to improve on-time performance, service reliability, and transit competitiveness.
- Strong support for express-oriented and rapid service between key regional centres (including but not limited to Downtown, Uptown, Westshore, UVIC, Swartz Bay).
- Strong support for improving connections within the transit system, with a general preference for a more efficient, direct, and connective network to supports more frequent service.
- A general willingness amongst riders to make more connections between routes if frequency of service is increased, transfer points are safe and comfortable, transfer wait times improved, and the current fare policy for transfers revisited.
- Desire for improved service levels and span in the Westshore and the Peninsula.
- Interest in more direct transit connections to the Victoria International Airport.
- Interest and support for further exploration around higher-order transit (BRT, Light Rail), and suggestions for utilization of the E&N corridor.
- Support for additional Park and Ride facilities to support residents in outlying areas in accessing the future core network.

Online Survey

An online survey was available via the engage.bctransit.com website between Oct. 1st and Oct. 26th, with a targeted marketing campaign and media release to support outreach. During this period, BC Transit saw 1,857 surveys completed. The goal of the 20-30 minute survey was to canvas transit users and non-users on desired service levels, system trade-offs, balancing ridership needs with supporting effective coverage service, and understanding users lived experiences with the local transit system overall.

The survey saw a broad representation of respondents both regionally and based on experience using the transit system (Figures 1 and 2).

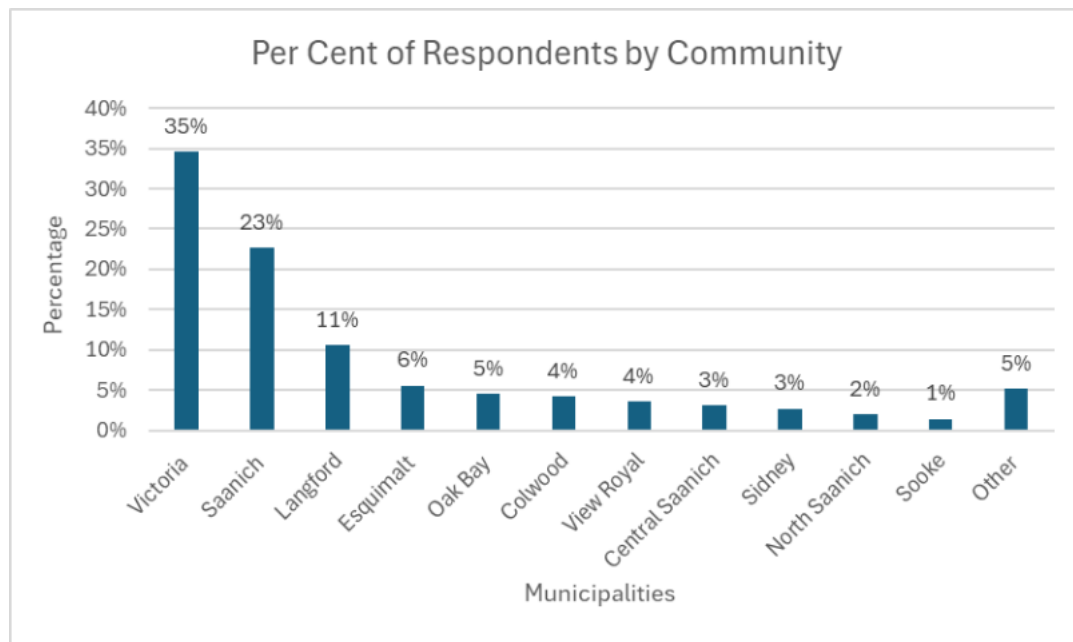


Figure 1: Number of Respondents by Community

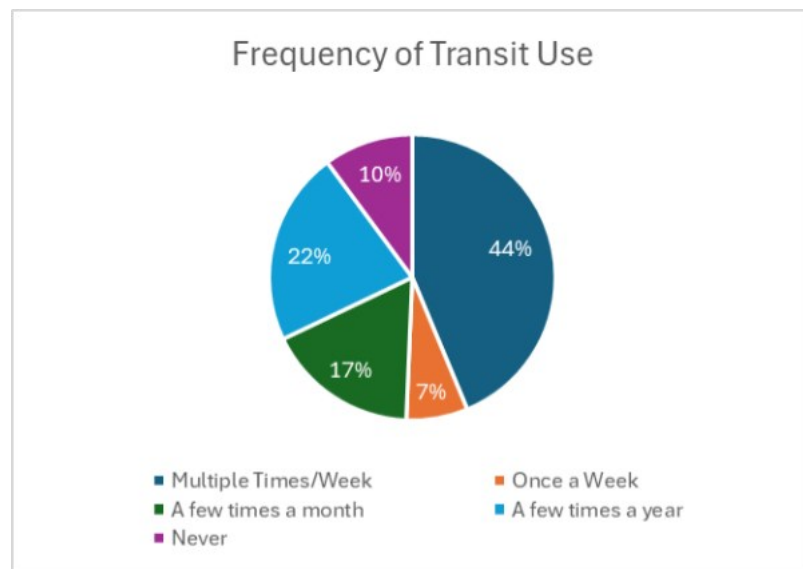


Figure 2: Per Cent of Responses by Frequency of Transit Use

Frequency of service and total trip time to destinations were identified by participants as the most important factors when deciding to utilize transit for choice trips (Figure 3). When asked, frequency, reliability and direct/simplified routes were deemed as the top priorities for future investment (Figure 4).

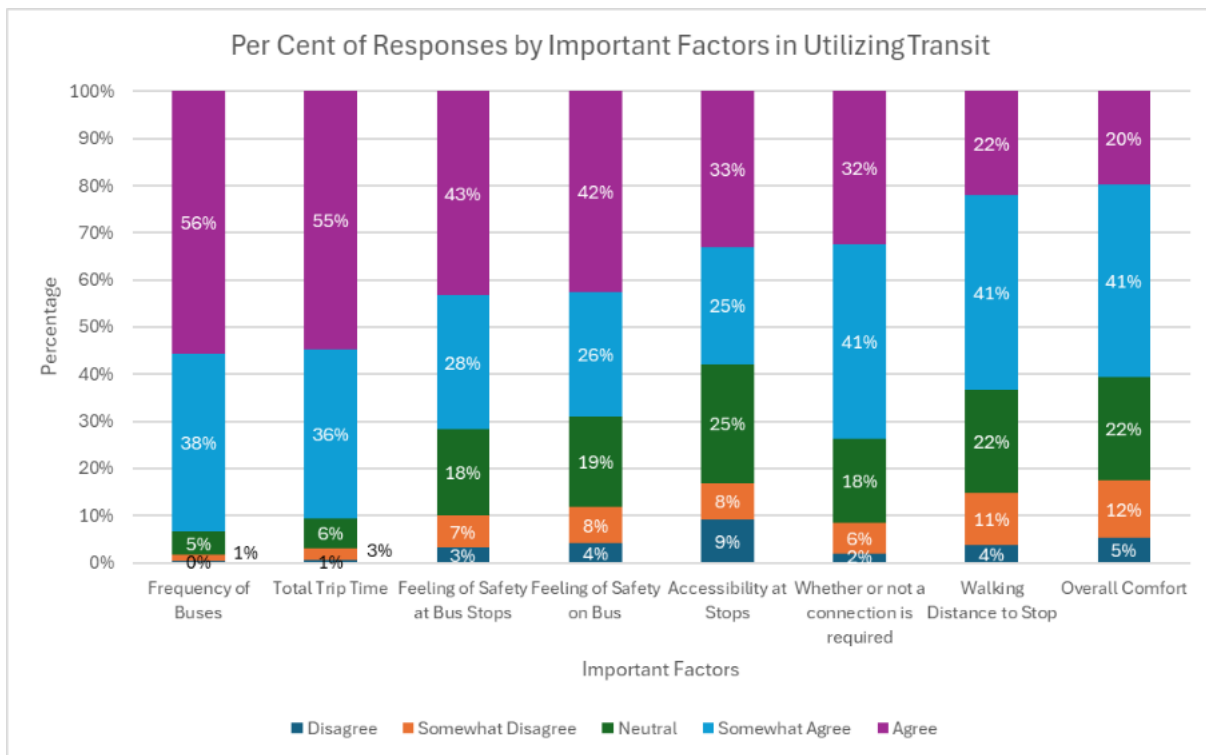


Figure 3: Per Cent of Responses by Important Factors in Utilizing Transit

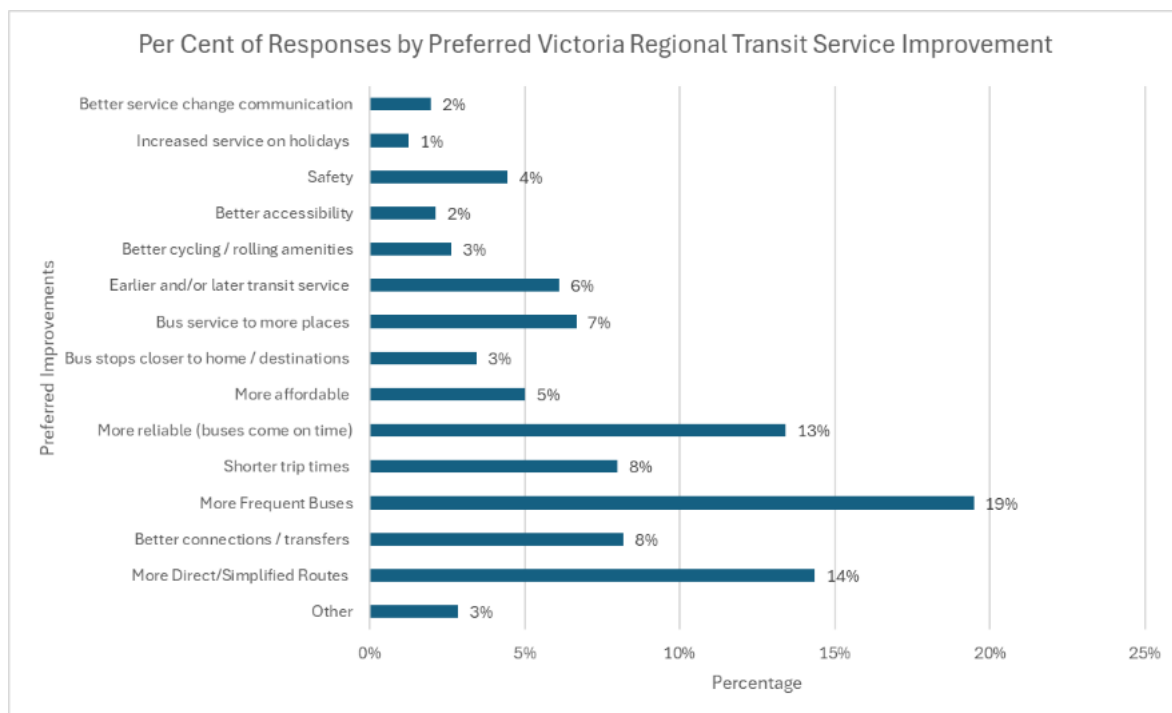


Figure 4: Per Cent of Responses by Preferred Victoria Regional Transit Service Improvements

Participants were asked to identify and prioritize their top 3 key desired regional destinations across Greater Victoria for the fewest required connections within the transit network. The Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal, YYJ Airport, and UVic were the most popular choices (Figure 5). Participants also noted overwhelming support for the further incorporation of additional express service across the region to connect to these and other key destinations, with 84 per cent of respondents canvassed either strongly or somewhat in support of additional investment in this service type (Figure 6).

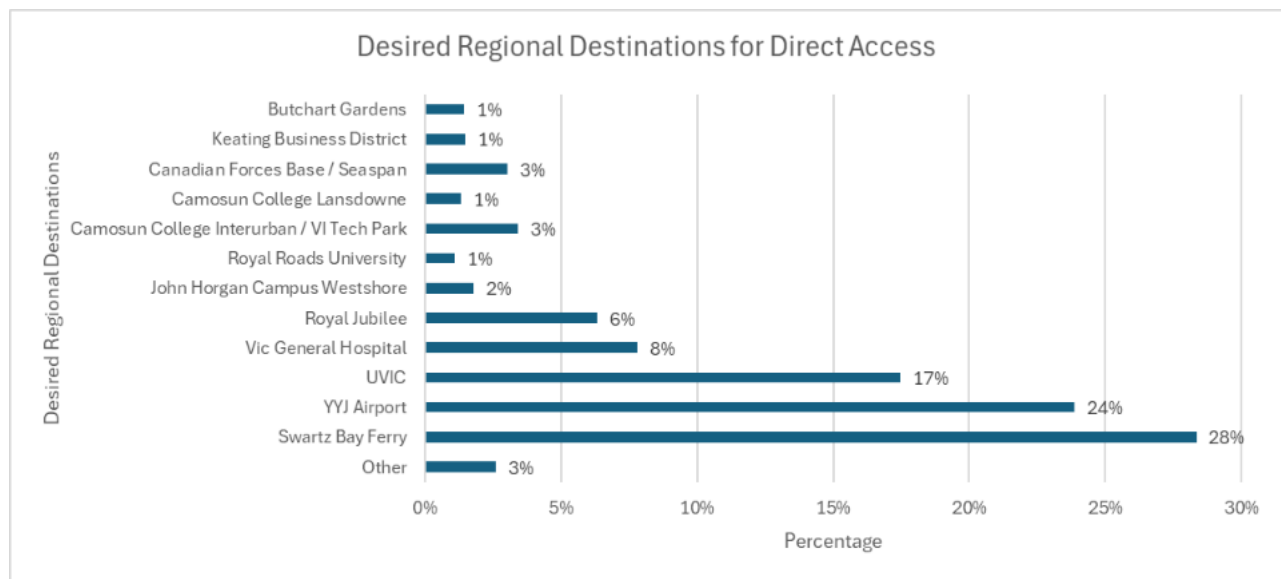


Figure 5: Per Cent of Responses by Desired Regional Destinations for Direct Access

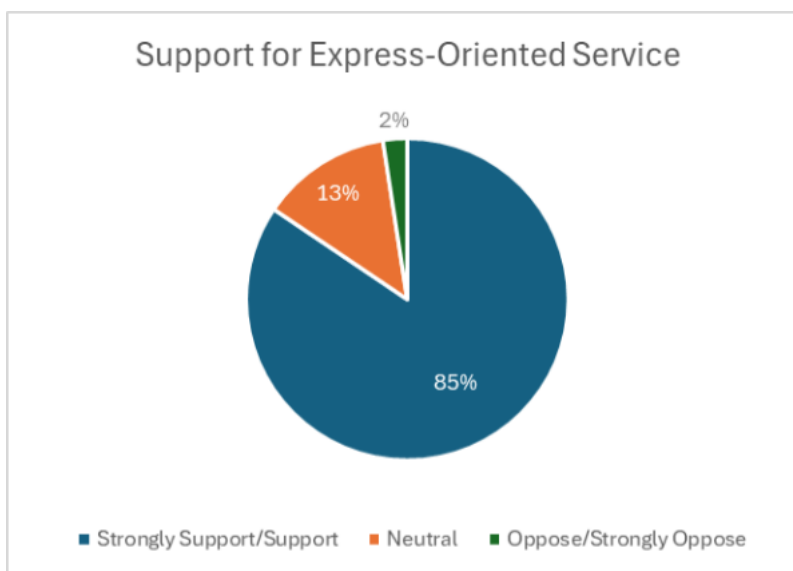


Figure 6: Per Cent of Responses Supporting Express-Oriented Services

The survey also noted the willingness of transit users to support connections/transfers, so long as the frequency and service reliability of connecting services are improved. When considering

connections between buses, most respondents (86 per cent) noted a desire for maximum wait times of 15 minutes or less between services.

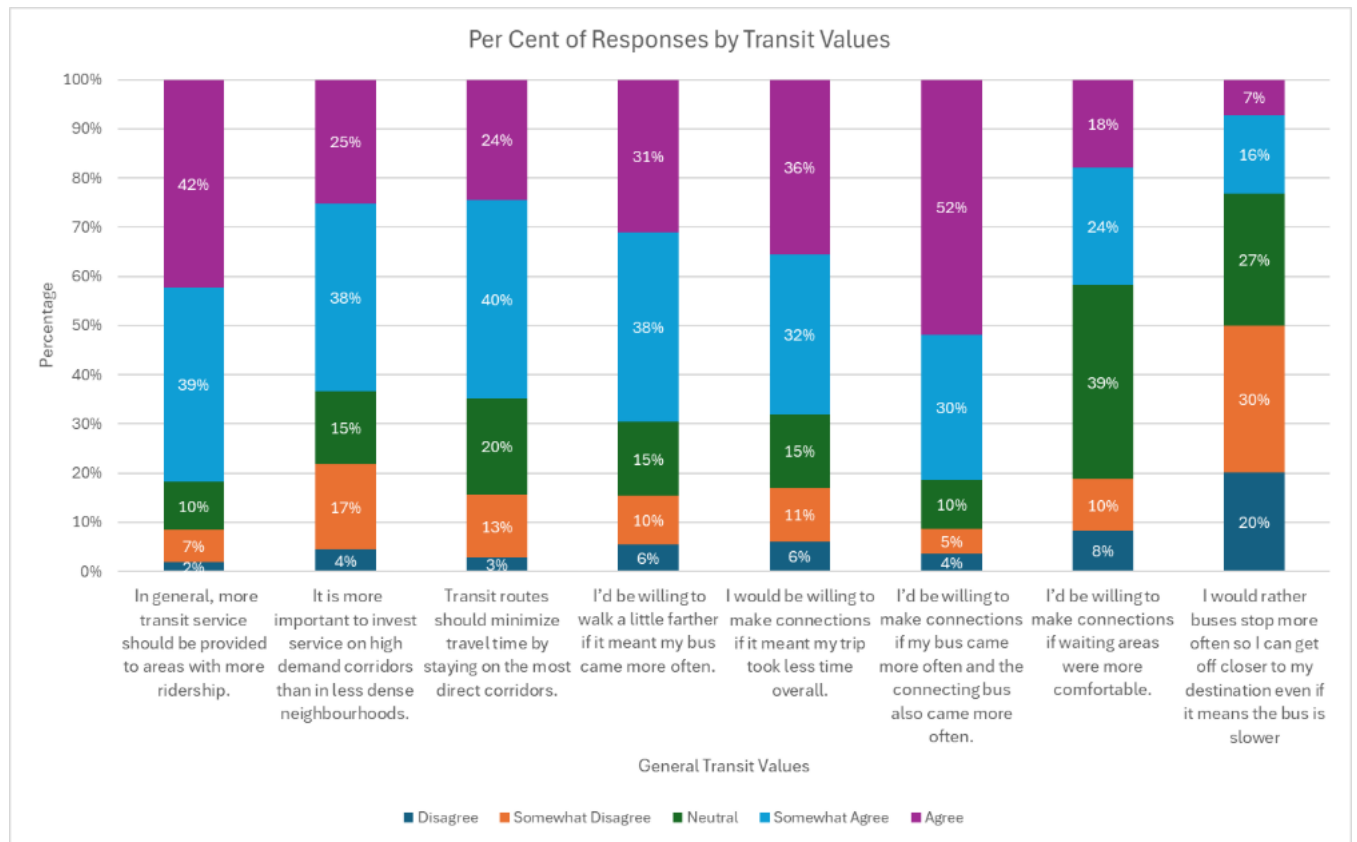


Figure 7: Per Cent of Responses by Transit Values

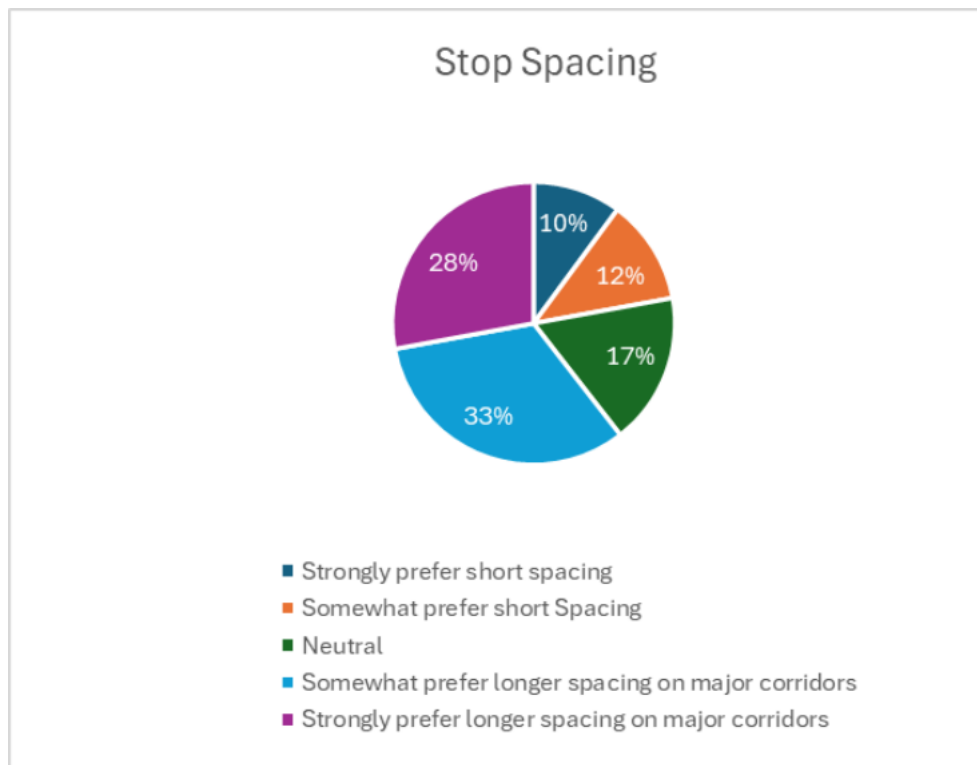


Figure 8: Per Cent of Open House Responses by Stop Spacing

When it came to canvassing users on replacing low frequency fixed routes with future on-demand service, approximately 44 per cent of respondents preferred traditional fixed route service versus only 28 per cent preferring on-demand, with many citing the variability in pick-up times coming from on-demand service, the cost-effectiveness and growth limitations of the service, and the reduced ability to pre-plan around specific consistent trip times being a concern (Figure 7). Most respondents (61 per cent) prefer increasing stop spacing for standard or basic routes on major corridors (Figure 8).

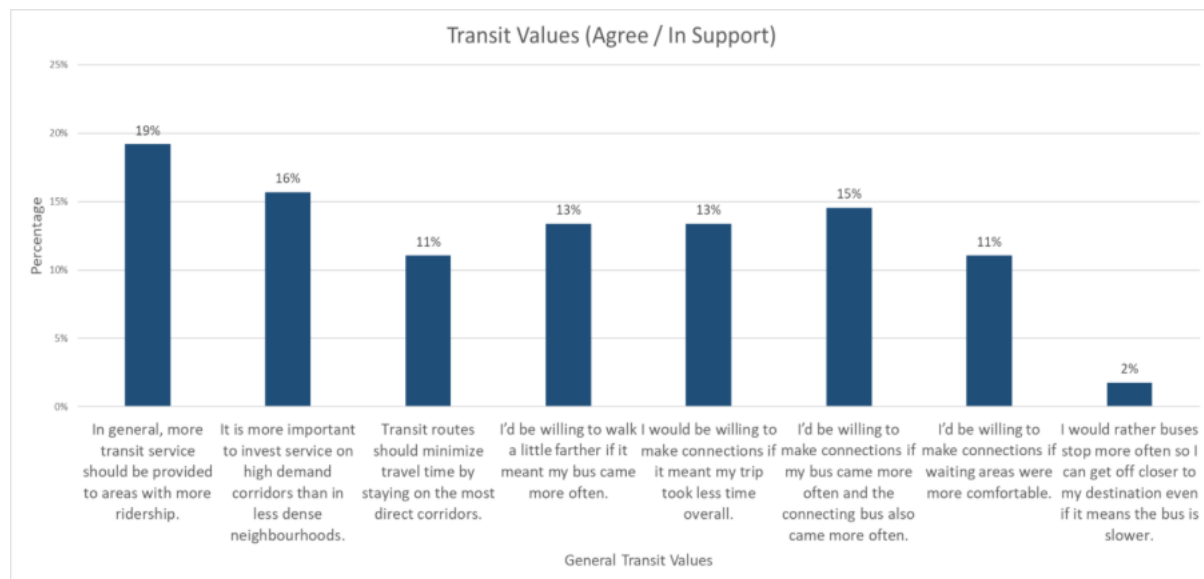
Additional supplemental/open-ended responses provided via the Online Survey will be disseminated and categorized in the coming weeks, however key themes noted at a high-level were similarly centered around service frequency, interest in LRT, and direct service between key community hub locations (core areas, hospitals, universities, airport, ferry).

Open House Events

BC Transit hosted nine community-focused open house events to support in-person, face-to-face engagement with local residents and transit users. Over 350 attendees participated in open house sessions, interacting with BC Transit staff across the region through mid-October. Attendees were provided opportunities to learn about the VRTP, and to engage in various exercises focusing on the participant's preferred prioritization of specific values and features within a future redesigned transit system.

Open House Event Locations	Date
UVic Exchange, Camosun Interurban Campus	October 14 th
Centennial Square (Victoria)	October 15 th
Sooke Exchange, Langford Exchange	October 16 th
Esquimalt (Archie Browning Arena), Sidney (Save-on-Foods)	October 17 th
Uptown Walmart	October 22 nd , October 25 th

Participants at the events voted on the engagement boards using sticky dots, with a method similar to the online survey.



Figure

9: Per Cent of Supportive Open House Responses by Transit Values

For general value questions (Figure 9), respondents prefer efficient, fast and frequent service with reliable connections over denser stop spacing and coverage service. These findings are consistent with the results from the online survey, reinforcing the findings that planners may prioritize changes that reduce travel time and improve reliability (i.e., higher frequency, transfer coordination, and transit-priority treatments) rather than adding stop density that would slow service.

Top priorities among respondents are clear (Figure 10): more frequent buses (20 per cent), more reliable service (15 per cent), better connections/transfers (10 per cent), earlier and/or later service (10 per cent), and more direct / simplified routes (8 per cent). Taken together, these top five point to a consistent rider preference for faster, more reliable, and better-connected service.

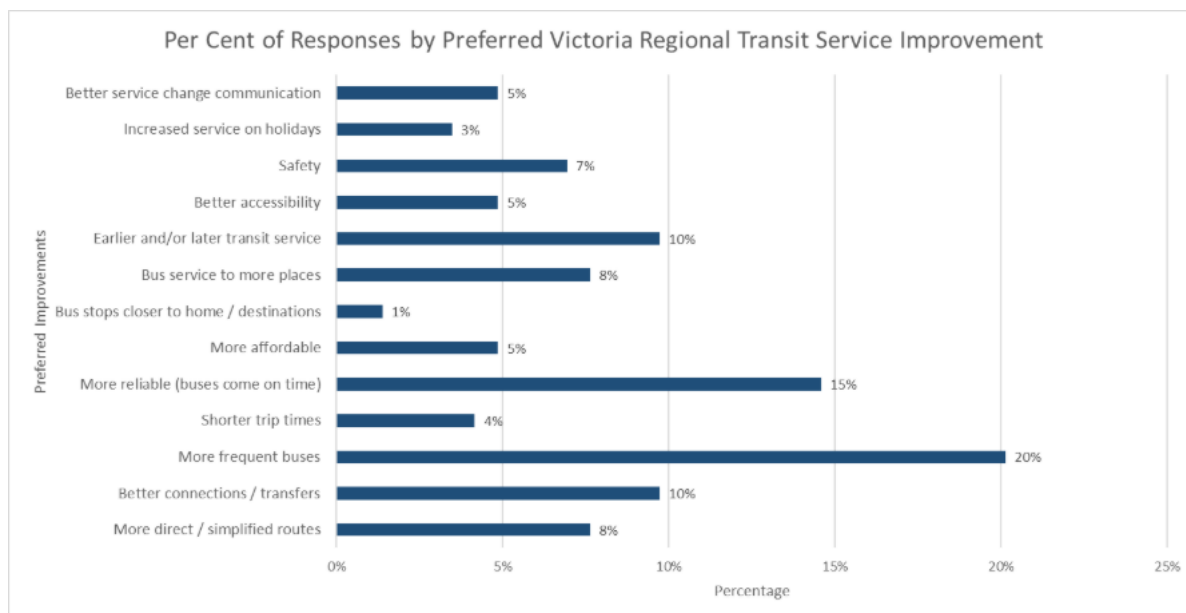


Figure 10: Per Cent of Open House Responses by Preferred Victoria Regional Transit Service Improvement

Regarding the route guidelines and service layers, providing on-demand service instead of low-frequency fixed-route service received about 56 per cent support, which is in opposition to the general preference for fixed-route service from the online survey results. Similar to the online survey, BC Transit's current express services (70X, 27X, 28X) were supported by 100 per cent of respondents. Incorporating more express services in the future received roughly 89 per cent support. Improving minimum Rapid Transit frequency to 10 minutes or better (from 15 minutes) was also supported by 100 per cent of respondents.

Overall, respondents show overwhelming support for express services and for improved Rapid Transit frequency, indicating strong public preference for faster, higher-capacity service.

Regarding bus stop spacing (Figure 11), approximately 92 per cent of open house attendees support longer stop spacing on major corridors and approximately 8 per cent support closer stop spacing. In alignment with the online survey, these results show a general public preference for stop consolidation on major corridors to speed up travel and improve reliability.

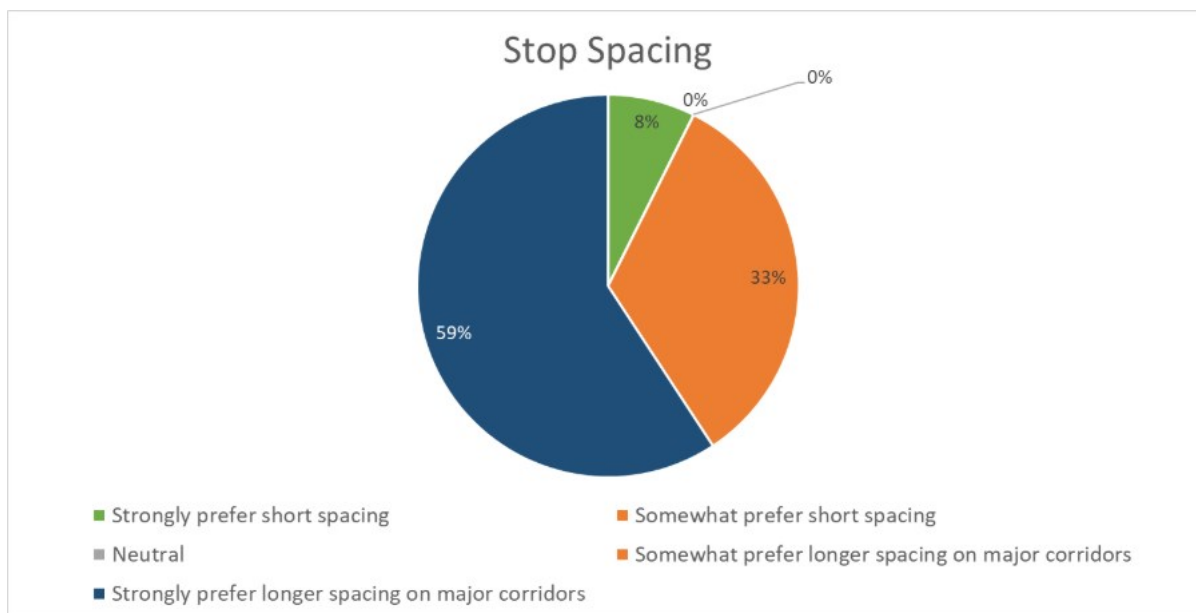


Figure 11: Per Cent of Open House Responses by Stop Spacing

Open House Feedback: Thematic Summaries

Similar to other engagement channels, feedback received via Open House events emphasized improving transit service quality and coverage across Greater Victoria.

Frequency & Span	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated calls for more frequent service and extended hours (even 24/7). Overcrowding linked to low frequency, especially on key corridors.
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent complaints of overcrowding and pass-ups on Routes 6, 8, 61, 70, 72. Requests for increased capacity (double-deckers) and bus-priority lanes.
Connections & Transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong desire for better timed-connections and clear transfer points. Suggestions for free or time-based transfers and simplified route maps.
Infrastructure (Shelters/Stops/Terminals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top request across all regions: increased coverage of, and safer shelters. Specific needs: lighting, seating, weather protection, and wayfinding signage. Calls for better pedestrian and cycling access at major exchanges.

Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about on-board behavior (vaping, harassment) and nighttime safety. Requests for improved lighting, visible security, and safer crossings.
Scheduling & Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for floating headways instead of fixed times. Calls for real-time arrival info, accurate displays, and early-morning and late evening services.
Priority & Bus Lanes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very strong support for bus-only lanes and signal priority. Corridors frequently mentioned: Douglas St., Fort St., Island Hwy, Goldstream Ave.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desire for larger wheelchair spaces, accessible on-demand buses, and simplified HandyDART registration. Support for Compass card integration with HandyDART.
HandyDART	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about long booking times, doctor verification requirements, and inflexibility. Requests for shorter notice periods, subscription options, and digital booking tools.
Youth/School-Oriented Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues with overcrowded school buses, mismatched bell times, and small buses. Suggestions for student transit education programs and discounts for school staff.
Fare Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests for lower monthly passes, free transfers, and simpler Umo integration. Concerns about paying per trip instead of time-based fares.
Marketing & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations for free-ride promotions, marketing campaigns, and public education. Desire for clear communication about route or service changes.
Service Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widespread interest in regional connections and rapid transit. Strong advocacy for Rapid Transit to ferry, airport, and Langford.

Additionally, BC Transit staff supported two transit operator-specific open house sessions at our facilities, with the purpose of connecting with local operators to capture and understand their on-

the-ground experience in delivering service, to identify key areas of concerns for future improvements, and to receive feedback on proposed route and network design guidelines.

Victoria Transit Centre	October 20 th
Langford Transit Centre	October 20 th

High-level key feedback received from local transit operators was centered around the following:

- Requests for turning lanes and signal priority at major intersections.
- Need for more frequent crosstown service.
- Consistent reporting of overcrowding on ferry routes, with support for double-deckers.
- Strong desire for better shelters to improve transfer experience.

Key Stakeholder Workshops

In early October, BC Transit staff held virtual roundtable workshops with representatives from key major employers, destinations, and local neighbourhood associations.

The first workshop focused on major employers and destinations, with representatives from 15 out of 24 invited organizations in attendance. Representatives from the following organizations participated in this phase of public consultation:

University of Victoria	Island Health
Camosun College	CFB Esquimalt
YYJ International Airport	School District 61
BC Ferries	School District 62
Butchart Gardens	School District 63
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce	Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce
Westshore Chamber of Commerce	Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Sidney Business Improvement Area Society	

In workshop discussions with the major employers and key stakeholders listed above, the following key themes and topics were raised for consideration:

- Desire for more resources to support Westshore and Peninsula to Victoria Core and UVic connections.
- Improved early morning/evening service span to support employees at key healthcare facilities/hospitals (most notably Royal Jubilee and Victoria General). Ensure connections are available through the core and from the Westshore.

- Alignment of services with school bell times/dismissal. Greater support for incorporation of school-oriented trips to meet growing student demand and changing catchments. Consideration of through-travel opportunities from schools to key employment centres to allow for seamless travel for parents.
- Desire for improved first/last-mile connections to/from transit exchanges and key stops to support multi-modal journeys and route directness.
- Future increased demand for transit services to support CFB Esquimalt. More residential growth and development on-base.
- Strong connections exist between select major centres, but travel internally within individual communities (i.e. Langford, View Royal) remains challenging.

A second workshop invitation was sent to a total of 38 neighborhood associations, with members from eight organizations attending.

Victoria Downtown Residents Assoc. (VDRA)	Gorge Tillicum Community Assoc.
Fairfield Gonzales Community Assoc.	Royal Oak Community Assoc.
James Bay Neighbourhood Assoc.	Gordon Head Residents' Assoc.
Cordova Bay Assoc. for Community Affairs	Broadmead Area Residents' Assoc.

In workshop discussion with the neighbourhood associations listed above, the following key themes and topics were raised for consideration:

- Improving the frequency of service and the directness of routing should be considered a top priority.
- Concerns with service reliability and length of trips between key destinations. Desire for transit-priority on congested corridors.
- Desire for improved infrastructure, amenities, and conditions at transit exchanges and future connection points.
- Desire for increased service span on local routes to support evening connections and access to local employment.