

# Victoria Regional Transit Commission



**DATE:** February 10, 2026

**PREPARED BY:** Elise Wren, Government Relations Manager

**SUBJECT:** West Shore Representation on the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (VRTC)

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## RECOMMENDATION

That the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (VRTC):

1. **Direct Staff to write to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT)** on behalf of the VRTC requesting that, following the October 2026 municipal election, **one of the West Shore appointments to the VRTC be allocated to the Mayor of Langford** as an immediate, practical strategy to better align representation with current population and transit demand; and
  2. **Direct BC Transit staff to work with MoTT on a long-term amendment to the BC Transit Act** to modernize the VRTC's governance and commission structure so that representation is better aligned with current and projected population within the Victoria Region.
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rapid population growth in the West Shore, particularly in the City of Langford, has outpaced the governance structure of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission. While the West Shore collectively holds two VRTC seats, Langford alone represents nearly half of the West Shore population and more than one quarter of the region's total population yet does not have a guaranteed seat according to the *BC Transit Act*.

Given the anticipated timelines associated with an Order-in-Council appointment, and the October 2026 municipal election, reallocating representation immediately would likely result in a short-term appointment requiring orientation over the summer of 2026, followed by the potential of Commission member turnover shortly thereafter. A post-election approach provides greater stability and value for both the Commission and our provincial partner.

This submission recommends a **near-term, pragmatic approach**, requesting that one West Shore appointment following the 2026 municipal election be allocated to the Mayor of Langford, paired with a **long-term policy solution** to modernize the *BC Transit Act* and VRTC commission structure to reflect current population realities.

### PURPOSE

To seek approval for a recommended approach to addressing West Shore representation on the VRTC that balances short-term practicality with long-term governance modernization, ensuring Commission membership reflects current regional growth and transit demand.

### BACKGROUND

The VRTC consists of local elected officials from within the Capital Regional District who are responsible for determining routes and fares for the Victoria Regional Transit System, as well as reviewing and making recommendations for the prioritization of operating and capital funding. The VRTC is also responsible for setting property taxation rates for transit on an annual basis. The mandate for the Commission's purpose and operating principles are outlined in the Victoria Regional Transit Commission [Charter](#).

Composition of the VRTC is established through the *BC Transit Act*, with Section 25(7) identifying membership as follows:

The following persons must be appointed under subsection (4) as members of the regional transit commission for the greater Victoria metropolitan area:

- (a) the Mayor of Victoria;
- (b) a Victoria councillor;
- (c) the Mayor of Esquimalt or Oak Bay;
- (d) the Mayor of Saanich;
- (e) a Saanich councillor;
- (f) one of the following:
  - (i) the Mayor of Sidney;
  - (ii) the Mayor of North Saanich;
  - (iii) the Mayor of Central Saanich;
- (g) one of the following:
  - (i) the Mayor of Colwood;
  - (ii) the Mayor of Metchosin;
  - (iii) the Mayor of View Royal;
  - (iv) the Mayor of Langford;
  - (v) the Mayor of the Highlands;
  - (vi) the Mayor of Sooke;
  - (vii) the electoral area director of the Juan de Fuca electoral area.

There is also one non-voting student seat that is rotated between student representatives from the region's post-secondary institutions.

## 8.1 VRTC WEST SHORE REPRESENTATION

Historically, the municipalities in the core of the region have held a higher number of seats given population levels, with the VRTC required to hold two seats for Victoria and two for Saanich specifically. The seat that is shared between Oak Bay/Esquimalt and the two shared amongst the West Shore communities are rotated between members. Commissioners are appointed by Order-In-Council and serve at the pleasure of the provincial government, but their term ends when they leave elected office, as the Act stipulates members must hold municipal or regional office. Representation is not guaranteed for any specific municipality unless appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Over the past decade, population, density and development have increased dramatically in West Shore communities, in particular the City of Langford, and there is concern that the existing composition of the VRTC does not represent where projected growth patterns for transit will occur. Langford's population grew from 35,000 in 2016 to over 46,500 in 2021 and is projected to exceed 68,000 in 2026. This imbalance risks fragmented decision-making and erodes confidence in regional transit governance. Given the significant growth of service levels required in the West Shore, as well as planned completion of RapidBus lines (and in future a higher order transit model), consideration should be given to revisiting VRTC composition.

Previous adjustments to VRTC membership demonstrate precedent for addressing representation needs. In June 2015, the VRTC formally requested an additional member to strengthen regional representation and in October 2016, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure approved adding an additional West Shore member to the VRTC ([BC Government News release](#)).

As the region experiences rapid population and density growth, particularly in the West Shore, the current VRTC composition no longer reflects these dynamics. Despite strong collaboration amongst staff at BC Transit and local governments, this imbalance has contributed to the perception of fragmented decision-making and reduced confidence in the Commission's ability to guide transit planning. Updating representation now will strengthen political trust, improve transparency, and position BC Transit as a collaborative leader in shaping the region's transit future.

### DISCUSSION

#### Strategic Context

Addressing West Shore representation on the VRTC directly supports BC Transit's strategic priority of strengthening governance and collaboration around regional transit planning. The Victoria Regional Transit Plan (VRTP) will guide future service, infrastructure, and funding decisions, including the recognition that higher-order transit options evaluated in the future will have a focus on the West Shore region. These initiatives require unified decision-making and representation that reflects current and projected growth patterns. The *BC Transit Act*, which governs Commission composition, is increasingly outdated given regional growth trends.

## 8.1 VRTC WEST SHORE REPRESENTATION

### Trends and Developments

Population Growth: Langford’s population grew from 35,000 in 2016 to over 46,500 in 2021 and is projected to exceed 68,000 in 2026. Langford accounts for nearly half of the West Shore population, which now represents over one-quarter of the region’s total population.

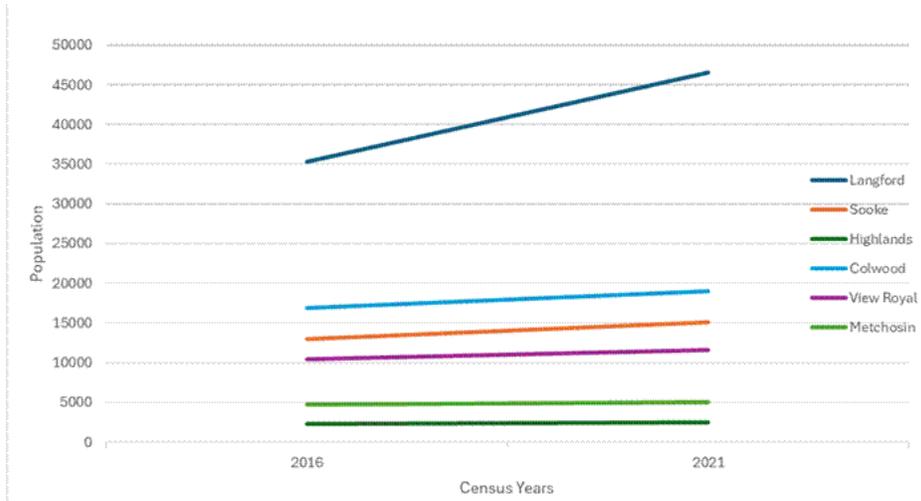


Figure 1: West Shore Population Growth

Municipality	Population (2021 Census)
Langford	46,584
Colwood	18,961
View Royal	11,575
Sooke	15,086
Metchosin	5,067

Figure 2: 2021 Census data

- Representation Imbalance: While the West Shore collectively holds two VRTC seats, which aligns with its overall population share, the representation does not reflect internal growth dynamics. The City of Langford alone accounts for approximately 47 per cent of the West Shore population and over 25 per cent of the region’s total population (according to 2021 census data). The majority of West Shore residents live in Langford, yet Langford does not have a guaranteed seat, limiting its ability to influence decisions that significantly impact its rapidly growing community.

### Population Analysis & Representation

Region	Population	VRTC Seats	Pop. Share	Seat Share
Victoria Core	245,125	5	63.4%	62.5%
West Shore	99,755	2	25.8%	25.0%
Peninsula	41,938	1	10.8%	12.5%

## 8.1 VRTC WEST SHORE REPRESENTATION

<b>Total</b>	<b>386,818</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
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Figure 3: Population share vs. Commission seat share using 2021 census data

- Stakeholder Advocacy: Elected officials from Langford have raised concerns about underrepresentation and have engaged BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit on this issue. Governance amendments are also being pursued by the CRD in an effort to create a unified regional voice, albeit implications to the existing VRTC governance model have not been directly discussed and legislative amendments would be required.

### Timing and Practical Considerations

An immediate reallocation of a West Shore seat would require an Order-In-Council appointment. In practice, this process can take several months, potentially resulting in a Langford mayor joining the Commission in summer 2026. With a municipal election scheduled for October 2026, this approach risks:

- Potentially short tenure and limited value for orientation and onboarding;
- Potential disruption due to post-election turnover;
- Reduced effectiveness of both provincial and Commission efforts.

A post-election approach aligns better with electoral cycles, ensures continuity and maximizes value from Commission onboarding and participation while still acknowledging the need and proactively requesting a representative change from the Province.

### Governance Modernization

While near-term adjustments can be achieved administratively, the underlying governance issue remains legislative. The *BC Transit Act* no longer reflects contemporary population distributions or growth projections. A longer-term solution is needed to ensure sustained alignment between representation and regional transit demand.

## OPTIONS

### Option 1 – Status Quo (No Action)

**Description:** Maintain existing West Shore representation and rotational appointments.

**Pros:**

- No administrative or political effort required.

**Cons:**

- Continued mismatch between representation and population;
- Risk of eroded trust and fragmented regional decision-making;
- Limits effectiveness of long-term transit planning in growth areas.

### Option 2 – Post-2026 Election Reallocation (Recommended – Immediate Term)

**Description:** Request that MoTT allocate one West Shore VRTC seat to the Mayor of Langford following the October 2026 municipal election.

**Pros:**

- Aligns representation with population growth;
- Avoids short-term appointments and election-related disruption;
- Requires no legislative amendment;
- Low resource and administrative impact.

**Cons:**

- Does not on its own address structural governance issues long-term

### Option 3 – Legislative Amendment to the *BC Transit Act* (Recommended – Long Term)

**Description:** Amend legislation to modernize VRTC composition based on current and projected population, potentially establishing a permanent Langford seat with a second rotating West Shore seat.

**Pros:**

- Durable, future-focused governance solution;
- Aligns representation with regional growth trends;
- Reduces need for recurring ad hoc adjustments.

**Cons:**

- Requires provincial prioritization and legislative timelines;
- Longer implementation horizon.

## CONSULTATIONS

This review was informed by discussions with internal BC Transit Staff, the VRTC Chair, and engagement with provincial counterparts. Input from West Shore elected officials – particularly the City of Langford – has highlighted the importance of improved representation aligned with growth and service impacts.

## NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Commission:

- BC Transit Staff to draft and send a formal letter from the VRTC Chair to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit outlining the post-2026 election recommendation for Langford representation;

## 8.1 VRTC WEST SHORE REPRESENTATION

- Include VRTC representation modernization as part of BC Transit's ongoing policy dialogue with MoTT;
- Initiate longer-term staff-level engagement with MoTT on potential amendments to the *BC Transit Act*.

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Date: January 27, 2026