

DATE: February 10, 2026

PREPARED FOR: The Victoria Regional Transit Commission

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SUBJECT: Custom Transit Solution Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, BC Transit initiated a negotiated procurement process to secure a standardized technology platform to support all 28 custom transit (commonly known as handyDART) systems across the province. This initiative is a foundational element of BC Transit's Custom Transit Strategy and is intended to modernize service delivery, improve the customer experience, and strengthen data quality, accountability, and service planning capabilities.

Following a competitive and user-informed evaluation process, BC Transit has entered into a contract with Vancouver-based technology company Spare to configure and implement an enterprise paratransit technology suite. The solution will support digital registration and booking, real-time service visibility, improved communication with riders, and enhanced reporting and planning tools. These capabilities directly respond to long-standing rider concerns, particularly in large and complex systems such as the Victoria Regional Transit System.

With the contract now executed, the project team is focused on implementation planning and pilot deployment. While Victoria's handyDART system will not serve as the pilot location, it is anticipated to be the first system to receive the new solution following successful pilot testing. There are no changes to previously established funding assumptions at this stage. BC Transit will provide future updates to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission as key milestones are reached.

Attachment: 9.3 Custom Transit Solution Update

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) with an update on BC Transit’s Custom Transit Solution Project as it pertains to Victoria handyDART. This report is provided **FOR INFORMATION**.

BACKGROUND

In 2024, BC Transit began a Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) process to introduce a standardized technology solution across its 28 handyDART operations, including Victoria. This technology solution forms a core foundation of BC Transit’s Custom Transit Strategy and aims to enhance the handyDART experience for riders, operating partners, BC Transit staff, and Local Government Partners through the introduction of:

- One provincial technology platform
- Automated workflows and standardized processes across registration, eligibility assessment, dispatch, service delivery, reporting, and service planning
- Improved real-time visibility into service delivery, eliminating the reliance on self-reported data
- Digital tools for riders, including online registration, trip booking, and real-time notifications

Collectively, these improvements are intended to deliver more consistent, reliable, and transparent handyDART service across the province, while strengthening BC Transit’s ability to plan and manage service growth with the support of local governments.

The scope of the project was informed through consultation with riders, operating companies, and accessibility experts, including the Victoria Regional Transit System’s Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC), the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), mobility specialists, and government partners. More than 1,300 riders also provided feedback through BC Transit’s handyDART rider survey, which helped shape the project’s requirements and priorities.

DISCUSSION

To support the development of the Custom Transit Solution, the project team undertook a comprehensive review of the end-to-end handyDART customer and operational experience.

This work identified key user groups, including riders, family members, operating partner staff, BC Transit staff, and mobility specialists, and examined how each interacts with handyDART services over time.

This analysis highlighted recurring pain points and system limitations and informed the functional requirements for a new technology solution. These requirements formed the basis of the NRFP process.

9.3 CUSTOM TRANSIT SOLUTION UPDATE

The project team evaluated seven vendor proposals, short-listing the top proponents based on technical capability, service alignment, and implementation readiness. The evaluation included reviewing written proposals, vendor demonstrations and a first of its kind hands-on validation of the top two proponents proposed solutions using real-world scenarios to assess how well each tool met BC Transit's operational and customer service needs. This approach provided the project team with a high level of confidence in the selected solution and reduced implementation risk.

As a result of this process, BC Transit entered negotiations with Spare, a Vancouver-based technology company specializing in custom transit solutions. Negotiations were completed in late 2025, resulting in a contract to configure and implement Spare's enterprise technology suite.

The solution will include:

- An online portal to book and manage trips for riders who prefer not to use a contact centre
- A fully digital registration process
- A mobile app and web portal with real-time notifications and service updates
- On-board trip mapping to support operators with navigation and real-time service information
- Improved data and reporting to support service planning, performance monitoring, and future service expansion and optimization

The proposed operating costs associated with implementation of the Custom Transit Solution fall within the operating cost projections already embedded in the current draft three-year financial forecast which was presented to the Commission in November 2025. No additional operating funding is anticipated at this stage.

NEXT STEPS

With the contract now in place, the project team is focused on finalizing the province-wide implementation schedule and initiating deployment at a pilot site. While Victoria's handyDART system will not serve as the pilot location, it is anticipated to be one of the first systems to receive the new solution following successful pilot testing.

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