

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

BC Transit 520 Gorge Road East
March 10, 2026 | 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; Commissioner Dean Murdock; Commissioner Colin Plant; Commissioner Barbara Desjardins; Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna

Regrets: Commissioner Maja Tait

BC Transit Staff:

Elise Wren, Government Relations Manager; Christy Harrold, Vice-President, Strategy, Planning, and Public Affairs; Ryan Campbell, Manager, Financial Planning and Analysis; Levi Megenbir, Manager, -Service Planning; James Wadsworth, Manager, Infrastructure Planning; Jacob Burnley, Transit Planner; Christine Lewis, Executive Assistant and Divisional Coordinator (Recorder)

1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

2. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Motion MOVED by Commissioner Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Commissioner Barbara Desjardins to approve the agenda as written.

CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 10, 2026

Motion MOVED by Commissioner Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Commissioner Barbara Desjardins to approve Minutes as written.

CARRIED

4. 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.

We are pleased to report that BC Transit has now deployed 25 battery-electric buses in the Victoria Regional Transit System, each eliminating the annual equivalent of a tanker truck of diesel while providing quieter, smoother service supported by overnight charging at the Victoria Transit Centre. The transformation is just beginning, as BC Transit plans to expand its electric

fleet to up to 80 buses across eight BC cities by the end of 2026, and build the infrastructure needed to support zero emission buses provincewide as part of BC Transit's Low Carbon Fleet Program.

5. STAFF REMARKS

Good morning, Commissioners.

As you know, the provincial budget was released on February 17, which confirms provincial funding for the Victoria regional transit system for the upcoming year. This year, there was no new funding allocated for transit service expansion. However, despite a challenging fiscal outlook, we can confirm that funding for the region's core services remain stable. The Province did signal a need to re-pace its capital program, so we are proactively undertaking a comprehensive review of the scope, scale, and timing of our largest projects to ensure they remain economically viable in the current environment. We continue to hear clearly from local governments that expansion is a priority. Communities are growing, and many want to see added service to meet that growth.

A reminder that BC Transit negotiates provincial funding on an annual basis, and we will keep monitoring ridership, demand, and expansion needs as part of our regular annual evaluation process. We'll also continue working closely with the Province to understand future funding requirements and support long-term planning.

Overall, the partnership between the Province, BC Transit, and local governments remains strong, and we're focused on ensuring reliable service today while planning for the growth we know is coming.

Our website plays a key role in helping riders plan their daily travel—whether they're heading to school, work, or medical appointments. It's often the first place people go to understand how to navigate our system.

We're getting ready to launch a redesigned version of the site that will significantly improve the customer experience. The new layout is streamlined, making it quicker and easier for riders to find the information they rely on most.

The updates are directly shaped by the public feedback we received. Riders told us what mattered most, and we've reorganized the site around those priorities—trip planning, schedules, routes, and fares. We will continue to update the Commission on the timeline and next steps as the launch progresses.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 Letter from the Town of Sidney

The Commission received a letter from Mayor and Council from the Town of Sidney sharing a motion passed that states their opposition to any reduction in service in the Sidney transit area as set out in recent engagement regarding options to increase transit service to the Victoria International Airport. The letter also outlined concerns regarding the proposed changes to Route

72 that could impact service for residents in Sidney due to increased commute times, some areas receiving less service and overcrowding on buses causing pass-ups.

6.2 DELEGATIONS

Better Transit YYJ
Sam Holland

Representatives from local advocacy group Better Transit YYJ outlined to the Commission their proposed recommendations on how to improve transit service to airport, increasing speed of transit and support for a new funding model.

7. MOTIONS WITH NOTICE

None

8. REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

8.1 2026/27 BASE BUDGET, TAX REGULATION AND TAX REQUISITION

RYAN CAMPBELL

The Commission heard that the 2026/27 Budget is shaped by stable service levels, rising inflationary and labour costs, and key capital projects such as battery-electric bus implementation. Revenues are projected to increase modestly, while fuel tax revenues remain flat, requiring careful financial planning. To maintain a healthy transit fund balance, the Commission approved staff's budget and recommended Property Tax Option 2 or six per cent tax regulation increase.

MOTION by Commission Colin Plant SECONDED by Commissioner Barbara Desjardins to APPROVE the 2026/27 Base budget AND APPROVE Option 2 in the 2026/27 Base Budget, Tax Regulation and Tax Requisition report.

CARRIED

8.2 2026/27 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN

LEVI MEGENBIR

The Commission heard that although 15,000 service hours and three buses were requested for expansion in 2026/27, the Province's 2026 budget did not include funding for net new improvements, resulting in no planned service expansion for the year. Instead, the plan focuses on base budget, cost neutral adjustments to improve reliability, passenger comfort, school access, and routing refinements, with possible Victoria International Airport service changes pending future Commission direction.

MOTION by Commissioner Colin Plant SECONDED by Commissioner Barbara Desjardins to APPROVE the 2026/27 Annual Service Plan as written.

CARRIED

9. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

9.1 AIRPORT (YYJ) ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

JACOB BURNLEY AND LEVI MEGENBIR

The Commission heard that recent engagement on options for increasing transit service to the Victoria International Airport saw 24,000 survey responses, 6,000 website visits and 160 participants at open houses. Staff also presented to Town of Sidney Council and met with the Victoria Airport Authority. While there is strong overall demand for better transit service to the Victoria International Airport, the short-term, cost neutral proposal to reroute Route 72 received mixed support, with benefits for customers seeking a one-seat ride from downtown to YYJ and concerns from Sidney residents and existing Route 72 riders, due to added travel time, crowding risks, and local service reductions. A clear majority of respondents supported medium or long-term solutions, with the most support for a dedicated direct Downtown–YYJ route (Option C), along with strong calls for earlier and later service to match flight and employee shifts. BC Transit staff will return to the Commission with service options for decision at the next public meeting. Commissioner Caradonna created a motion arising to include the discussion of a pilot option to be brought forward with service planning options.

MOTION by Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna SECONDED BY Commissioner Marianne Alto for staff to bring forward a short-term pilot option for transit service to the airport at the next Commission meeting.

The Airport (YYJ) Engagement Summary was RECEIVED by unanimous consent FOR INFORMATION.

9.2 INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND DELIVERY UPDATE

JAMES WADSWORTH

The Commission heard that major transit infrastructure projects across the region are progressing through updated planning and design phases, with work advancing on the McKenzie RapidBus corridor, Downtown Douglas Street improvements, and the new Sidney Transit Hub. Each project has secured consultants and is moving toward refined designs, public engagement, and next stage development. Overall, the update highlighted steady progress toward enhancing RapidBus capacity, transit priority measures, and station infrastructure.

The Operations update was RECEIVED by unanimous consent FOR INFORMATION.

9.3 PLANNING UPDATE

JACOB BURNLEY AND LEVI MEGENBIR

The Commission heard an update on upcoming transit service changes for Spring and Summer 2026, including targeted improvements to routes serving growing school areas, West Shore neighbourhoods, and key commuter and tourism corridors. They were also briefed on draft themes of the Victoria Regional Transit Plan, highlighting future higher order transit to the West Shore, expanded rapid and express services, including to Victoria International Airport, and refinements to frequent, local, and OnDemand transit networks.

The Planning update was RECEIVED by unanimous consent FOR INFORMATION.

MOTION made by Commissioner Marianne Alto and seconded by Commissioner Jeremy Caradonna to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

May 12, 2026