

Victoria Regional Transit Commission



DATE: September 8, 2026

PREPARED FOR: Victoria Regional Transit Commission

PREPARED BY: Tessa Stewart, Manager, Business Development

SUBJECT: Fare-Free Transit for Winter GoByBike Week

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (VRTC) receive this report and **APPROVE** the introduction of a new annual special fare occurrence in the VRTS, offering fare-free transit for Winter GoByBike Week in addition to Spring and Fall GoByBike Weeks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BC Transit is seeking approval to add Winter GoByBike Week as an annual special fare occurrence in the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) starting in 2027. This would align Winter GoByBike Week with the existing Spring and Fall events, ensuring consistency, reducing customer confusion, and supporting multi-modal sustainable transportation.

The estimated revenue impact is approximately \$38,934 for the week, based on fare revenue analysis from previous GoByBike events. As winter typically sees lower cycling and transit activity, the actual impact may be lower.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the VRTC of the Winter GoByBike week and seek approval to add it as a special annual fare occurrence in the VRTS.

BACKGROUND

The VRTS currently offers seven annual occurrences of special fare days, as outlined below, where complimentary transit is offered to riders using conventional and custom transit. The approved special fare days include fare-free transit for participants of the Spring and Fall GoByBike Weeks. BC Transit is recommending the introduction of fare-free transit for the Winter GoByBike Week to ensure equity for this event and to reduce customer confusion.

8.3 FARE FREE TRANSIT – WINTER GOBYBIKE WEEK

Special Fare Day	Rationale	Eligibility
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation September 30	Supporting BC Transit's efforts towards Indigenous reconciliation	All Indigenous peoples.
Remembrance Day November 11	Recognize service members and reduce vehicle congestion at ceremonies.	Current and retired armed forces and police officers in uniform.
New Year's Eve December 31	Encourage responsible travel choices.	All customers after 6 pm until end of service.
Election Days Varies	Encourage participation in the democratic process and remove barriers to access voting.	All customers on municipal, provincial, and federal election days.
GoByBike Week Fall and Spring	Encourage multi-modal sustainable transportation and support GoByBike in Victoria.	Only those who are using the bike rack or can show their bike helmet are eligible. Each bus has the capacity to carry two bikes.
Earth Day April 22	Encourage environmentally friendly transportation methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	All customers.
Clean Air Day June	Encourage environmentally friendly transportation methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	All customers.

DISCUSSION

The Winter GoByBike Week occurred in February of 2026. This event now happens three times per year in the Capital Region to raise the profile of commuter cycling. The events celebrate multi-modal sustainable transportation by encouraging those who bike to take transit for a portion of their trip. To participate in fare-free transit on BC Transit during GoByBike Week, riders must either use the bus bike rack or show their bike helmet when boarding the bus.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

BC Transit has seven approved special fare occurrences that offer full or partial fare free options for riders, depending on eligibility. In reviewing average daily Single Ride revenue collected in 2025, it is estimated that offering fare-free transit for all customers on any given day would incur an approximate revenue loss of \$39,651. For days offering partial fare-free eligibility, including GoByBike Week, the expected revenue loss is estimated to be much less.

8.3 FARE FREE TRANSIT – WINTER GOBYBIKE WEEK

BC Transit reviewed Umo sales data during Spring GoByBike Week (May 30-June 5, 2026) which indicated revenue from Umo Cash Balance payments during this time, compared to the week prior, resulted in an 11 per cent decrease in revenue. As Winter GoByBike Week occurs in February, a period of generally lower transit and cycling ridership in the region due to weather, the revenue impact of offering fare-free transit during the Winter event is expected to be lower than the estimated impact for the Spring event.

To quantify the potential revenue impact of Winter GoByBike Week, BC Transit applied the 11 per cent decrease observed during Spring GoByBike Week to February Single Ride fare revenue (cash and Umo Cash Balance). This resulted in a conservative estimated revenue loss of \$5,562 per day, or \$38,934 in total if Winter GoByBike week was introduced as an additional fare-free occurrence.

Estimated Revenue Impact of Winter GoByBike Week

Estimated Revenue Impact	Estimated Total Daily Revenue Loss	Estimate Total Revenue Loss
-11%	-\$5,562	-\$38,934

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