

Salt Spring Island

Transit Service Review



Acknowledgements

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Government Representatives and Transit Partners	
Capital Regional District (CRD) Staff & Director	Islands Trust
Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission	Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
Ganges Faerie Minishuttle	MLA, Saanich North and the Islands
Ferries, Transportation and Emergency Services	
BC Ferries	RCMP Salt Spring
ICBC Road Safety	BC Ambulance Service
Main Road	Fire Rescue
Community Groups & Destinations	
Rotary Club of Salt Spring Island	Salt Spring Island Ferry Committee
Island Pathways	Lions Club of Salt Spring Island
Greenwoods Eldercare	Royal Canadian Legion Island
GI Seniors Residence Association	Lady Minto Hospital
Salt Spring Senior Services Society	Meadowbrook
Transition Salt Spring	Salt Spring Climate Action Group
Tourist Information Center	Salt Spring Island Conservancy
Salt Spring Island Foundation	Earth Festival Society
Partners Creating Pathways	Ruckle Park Staff
SSI Library	
Business	
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development Commission
Schools & Education	
School District 64 School Board	Salt Spring Island Middle School
Salt Spring Island Elementary School	Gulf Islands Secondary School

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In partnership with the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC), BC Transit has undertaken a Transit Service Review of the Salt Spring Island Transit System.

As set out in the mutually agreed-upon Terms of Reference, the objectives of the Service Review are to:

- Build awareness of and support for the Salt Spring Island Transit System through the Review's public participation and communication strategy;
- Analyze and report on the performance of the existing Salt Spring Island Transit System, including how Salt Spring Island Transit compares to its peers, its current strengths and opportunities for improvement;
- Examine future transit requirements based on community plans, demographic trends, proposed land development and road network changes, demand at the Ganges Exchange and the Fulford, Long Harbour and Vesuvius ferry terminals and citizen priorities expressed through consultation;
- Outline and recommend service options for consideration by the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission and the Capital Regional District over the short- and longer-term periods to improve transit system performance and/or cost effectiveness; and to build ridership
- Make recommendations on supporting strategies and outline the path towards implementation.

BC Transit seeks to conduct comprehensive service reviews of systems on at least a five year basis. While the last full review of the Salt Spring System was completed in 2009, this review has also built on a study previously undertaken in early 2013. The 2013 study examined immediate issues and opportunities within the system and proposed a number of service options, most of which were implemented in June and September 2013. That 2013 Salt Spring Island Transit Service Options Analysis also outlined a number of service opportunities for exploration as part of this comprehensive review.

Salt Spring Island's adaptive nature and the success of the transit system make this Review timely. Salt Spring's demographics - including overall population, average age, and other socioeconomic indicators - have continued to change, impacting the needs of existing and future transit customers. Additionally, policy directions illustrated in the CRD Regional Transportation Plan and the CRD Salt Spring Island Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan afford consideration for the enhancement of the transit system.

Finally, ridership growth of the system since its inception in 2008 has been substantial, and it is useful to evaluate all services to target where further growth or changes are needed.

1.1 Service Review Process

The following steps were undertaken by BC Transit staff as part of the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review:

- Traveled several times to Salt Spring Island to better understand the local transit dynamics, met with local operations manager, transit staff, customers, general public and stakeholders, Commission, and the CRD;

- Researched current and future demographic and economic trends, reviewed planning documents to determine current and future land use and growth areas, and examined existing transportation options;
- Conducted a full review of the transit system, including both system and route-by-route overviews, and conducted an analysis of ridership, existing system infrastructure, and operational considerations;
- Organized and held public engagement events and activities, including open houses, stakeholder meetings, and online surveys, and obtained and summarized feedback from these activities in two public engagement reports, and;
- Proposed detailed service and infrastructure change options and immediate-, short-, and medium-to-long-term recommendations.

This work was collaborative and included BC Transit, the Capital Regional District (CRD) and its Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC), the staff of Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd. (which operates the transit system), transit passengers, and representatives from a wide array of community organizations. This Review and requisite analysis took place between January 2014 and February 2015.

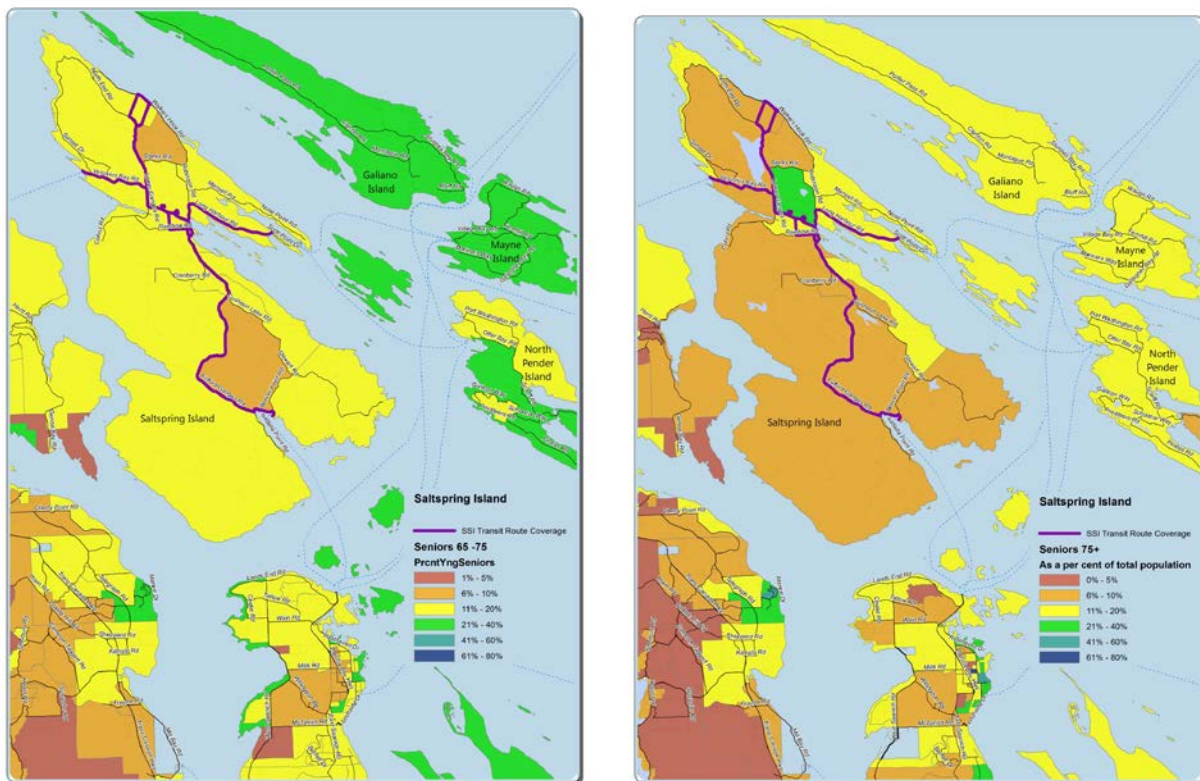
2.0 COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

2.1 Demographics

Salt Spring Island is the largest, most populous, and most amenity-rich of the Gulf Islands off the southwest coast of British Columbia. It is a popular tourist destination from the Pacific coastal region and beyond, with local aquaculture, agriculture, arts industries and markets bolstering Salt Spring Island's economy and tourist appeal. Salt Spring Island is home to seasonal residents as well as to a substantial proportion of year-round residents including retirees and young families.

The 2011 Census reported Salt Spring Island's population at 10,234. Both younger seniors (56 - 74) and older seniors (75+) make up a considerably higher proportion of the Salt Spring Island population than the provincial average, as illustrated in the maps below.

Figures 1 & 2. Distribution of seniors aged 65-75 (Figure 1) and 75+ (Figure 2) on Salt Spring Island.



Combined, these two age groups make up 25% of the population, as further illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Salt Spring Island population by age cohort.

		2006		2011		% Change
		#	%	#	%	2006-2011
Children	0-14 Years	1255		1245	12%	-0.10%
Youth	15-19 Years	565		570	6%	0.05%
Young Adults	20-24 Years	340		330	3%	-0.10%
Adults	25-64 Years	5330		5500	54%	1.76%
Younger Seniors	65-74 Years	1005		1405	14%	4.15%
Older Seniors	75+ Years	1135		1175	11%	0.41%
TOTAL	TOTAL	9,640		10,234	100%	6.16%

Typically, the highest travel demand for these groups (seniors) is in the midday (for example, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm). Combined with Salt Spring Island’s strong tourism population, frequent, reliable and accessible transit for this demographic is important.


2.2 Governance and Planning

Salt Spring Island is governed by the Capital Regional District (CRD), while land use planning decisions are made by the Islands Trust. The Islands Trust does not have the authority to do its own transportation planning, although they are able to make recommendations on initiatives and suggestions for other authorities.

In general, the area is not developing at a rapid pace. Between 2010 and 2013, there were fewer than 100 land development applications. Two major development projects, Channel Ridge Properties and Bullock Lake Resort, may begin development in 2015, though each has been inactive in recent years. Section 6.5.1 describes how land use and transit planning processes can be integrated going forward.

At the local level, transit is overseen by the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC), which acts in an advisory role to the CRD. Today, the Commission is comprised of one CRD Director representing the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area, and eight individuals appointed by the CRD Board and representing the service area.

Transit service on Salt Spring Island is provided through a partnership between BC Transit, the CRD, and the local operating company, Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd. This partnership is formalized through series of agreements, including an Annual Operating Agreement (AOA) which is renewed on an annual basis.



The British Columbia Transit Act and the British Columbia Transit Regulation set out the regulations and formula for sharing costs of transit between BC Transit and the CRD. In the case of Salt Spring Island, BC Transit contributes 52.7% and the CRD contributes 47.3%. Service levels and budgets are approved each year by the CRD, who also set fares and local property taxes to pay their contribution of transit costs.

The Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan (OCP), adopted on October 8, 2008, encourages BC Transit and the SSITC to continue to work at developing the local public transit system and integrate it with other modes of transportation, such as walking and cycling. The OCP also recognizes the desire to limit automobile dependence in the region, recognizing that increase in the variety of transportation choices can help to reduce transportation-related emissions and noise.

In addition to these key transportation goals, the OCP also identifies the following priorities and directives:


- Multi-family dwellings that offer safe walking, cycling, and transit links to village services, schools, and that are in or near villages will be given preference over those that do not.
- Support for future settlement patterns that reduce automobile dependency and encourage walking, cycling, and public transit.
- Village containment boundary policies for Ganges, Fulford, and Channel Ridge in order to “keep development compact, and prevent ‘leap frog’ development.”
- Support for multi-modal transportation for inter-village travel.
- Have a coordinated approach to land use.

The 2014 CRD Regional Transportation Plan identifies transit expansion as a key priority, including:

- Enabling public transit to be a preferred choice, attracting new riders through comfortable, safe, accessible and convenient service.
- Setting high transit, walking and cycling mode share targets for 2026 and shifting travel behavior to achieving these mode share targets.
- Integrating land use and transportation planning, encouraging transit-supportive land use policies
- Integrating active and alternative modes of transportation

The 2014 Salt Spring Island Economic Development Action Plan also acknowledges transit improvement and expansion as important to local economic development initiatives.

Finally, the 2013 Salt Spring Island Edition of the CRD’s Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) also advocates strongly for the accommodation of multi-modal linked trips between walking, cycling, and transit by:



- Appropriately planning for expected demands;
- Providing connections between active transportation and transit networks;
- Providing appropriate facilities at transit destinations and stops;
- Creating convenient pedestrian and bicycle access to transit destinations and stops;
- Accommodating a wide range of pedestrians and cyclists in the physical design of transit destinations and stops.

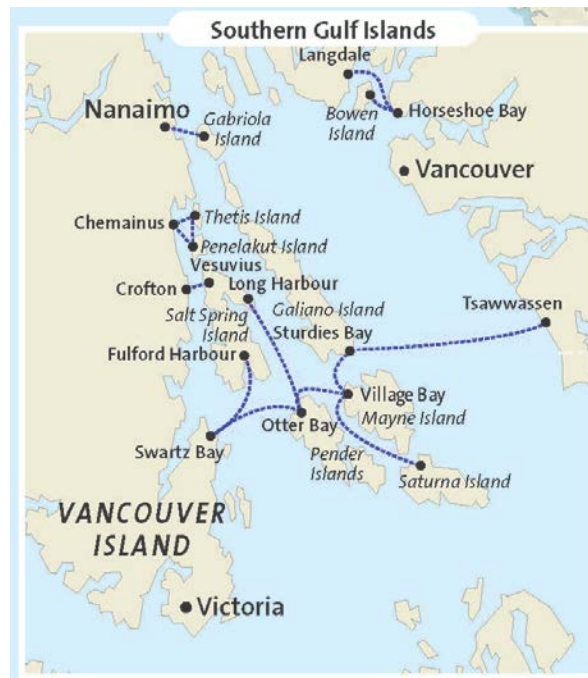
The PCMP also distinguishes that while ease-of-use integration of transit, walking, and cycling is important, physical or visual segregation of those modes within a right of way is also critical to encouraging a modal shift.

There is an opportunity for integration within the existing governance and service delivery model to achieving these ends, and the recommendations included in this report have been made in consideration of the recommendations found in these plans.

2.3 Transportation Options

Salt Spring Island is publicly accessed by seaplane and via three BC Ferries routes. Ferry routes serving the Fulford, Vesuvius Bay, and Long Harbour terminals are pictured below.

Figure 3. BC Ferries Route Map.



The ferry schedules are a key determinant in the design of the service, with at least three ferry schedule changes per year to align with seasonal travel demand.

Walking, cycling, and using transit are relatively common among residents and visitors to and on Salt Spring, complemented by a semiformal and well-used car stop program linked at various locations throughout the Island.

Community-based transportation programs for access to medical care, social services and recreation, such as the bathing program at Greenwoods Eldercare and the day program at Braehaven Assisted Living, are also offered by private organizations.

A small percentage of trips are observed to access the Island by private boat, whether from off-Island locations or from other areas of the large island.

Given the Island's location, size, topography, tourism, and ample supply of no-cost/no-restriction parking, private vehicle use to, from, and on the Island is high. The 2006 CRD Origin and Destination Household Travel Survey reported an average of 1.45 vehicles per household, with only 2% of households reporting having no vehicles. The same report states that about 89% of all trips are made by private vehicle, and that about 66% of those trips are made not for journey-to-or-from-work purposes, but for "personal business".

This travel behavior reflects the demographic characteristics of the Island, and is on par with continued auto trip growth in the entire capital region. The 2011 CRD Origin and Destination Household Travel Survey reported that 61% of weekday trips in the CRD which were shorter than 5 km were taken by private vehicle.

Community Overview Conclusions:

- Salt Spring Island has unique travel needs, including an aging population and travel patterns shaped by its three ferry routes
- Local and regional strategic plans are transit-supportive, and encourage transit expansion and multimodal integration
- Balancing resident and visitor travel needs is important in optimizing the transit system
- Given its culture, its concentrated or centralized local economic development efforts, and its early successes with transit to-date, Salt Spring Island is poised to shift even more trips away from the single occupant vehicle to alternatives such as cycling, using transit, and carpooling

3.0 EXISTING TRANSIT ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

3.1 Salt Spring Island’s Transit History

After several years of studies and efforts to acquire funding, the Salt Spring Island Transit System was implemented in January 2008. At this time, the CRD established the SSITC to oversee the service.

The partnership first acquired two vehicles through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities’ Public Transit Agreement – Public Transit Infrastructure Program (UBCM PTA-PTIP) gas tax funding. This is useful to note, as since this program is now complete for Salt Spring Island, future vehicles will need to be obtained without subsidy.

An introductory level of service of four routes was implemented to ensure that costs remained within budget. The initial service area included Ganges Village and the three ferry terminals. A fifth route was subsequently added to serve the north part of the island.

Ridership for the April 2008 to December 2008 period was 40,000, far exceeding the initial conservative projections for the service.

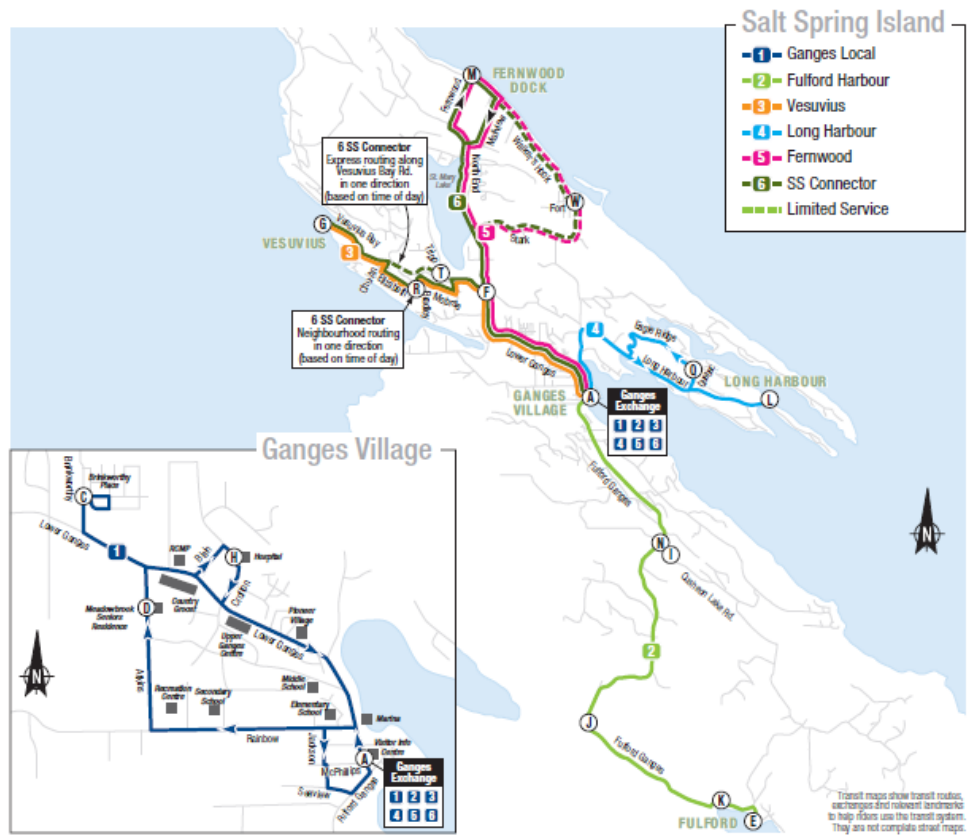
3.2 Salt Spring Island’s Paratransit System Today

Salt Spring Island Transit – Key Milestones	
Jan 2008	– Service implemented
July 2011	– Sunday & Stat Holiday service increase
June 2013	– Additional Saturday pm trips on #2 Fulford Harbour
Sep 2013	– Expanded year-round service to Fernwood, Walker’s Hook and Vesuvius area
Mar 2014	– 100,000 th passenger carried in a single year
Sep 2014	– Weekend & evening service expanded

BC Transit characterizes Paratransit as a system that serves small and/or rural communities using small- and medium-sized buses for flexible routing and schedules.

Salt Spring Island Transit includes six fixed-schedule routes, all operating from the centrally-located Ganges Exchange as illustrated below:

Figure 4. Salt Spring Island Paratransit System.



- **Route 1 Ganges Local** – this loop route provides local access within Ganges Village from the Ganges Exchange, located at the Visitor Info Centre / Chamber of Commerce office. In addition to downtown and the shops along Lower Ganges and Fulford Ganges Roads, major destinations served by this route include Meadowbrook Seniors Centre, Greenwoods Eldercare, Country Grocer, Lady Minto / Gulf Islands Hospital, and several schools.
- **Route 2 Fulford Harbour** – Route 2 is the most-used, most-frequent, and highest-revenue-generating route in the system. This route covers the southeast area of the Island, linking residents and visitors to Ganges Village and Fulford Harbour ferry terminal. Seasonal service along Cusheon Lake and Stewart Roads is also provided.
- **Route 3 Vesuvius** - this route covers the northwest area of the Island, linking residents and visitors to Vesuvius Bay and its ferry terminal and area neighbourhoods.
- **Route 4 Long Harbour** - this is a short loop route providing access to and from the Long Harbour ferry terminal and nearby neighbourhoods.
- **Route 5 Fernwood** – this is a longer route that provides local service to Fernwood Dock and Walker’s Hook areas.
- **Route 6 SS Connector** – this route operates as an “express” service that is directional dependent on the time of day, linking northwest and north neighbourhoods to Ganges Village.

Essentially, this route combines the Route 3 Vesuvius and the Route 5 Fernwood trips at commuter times to enable connections to and from Fulford Harbour.

Other than Fulford Harbour, the most heavily-used ridership corridor on Salt Spring Island is along Lower Ganges Road between Ganges and Central Hall at the intersection of North End, Lower Ganges, Vesuvius Bay and Upper Ganges Roads. A number of routes (1, 3, 5, 6) all serve this corridor to deliver a higher level of frequency.

While all bus routes that directly serve ferry terminals are vulnerable to minor on-time performance issues due to ferry schedule delays, transit generally operates reliably and on time to meet ferry arrivals and departures.

Each of these routes operates seven days per week, each day of the year, excepting Christmas Day and New Year's Day. On all other holidays, transit operates on a Sunday schedule.

3.3 Salt Spring Island Transit Fares

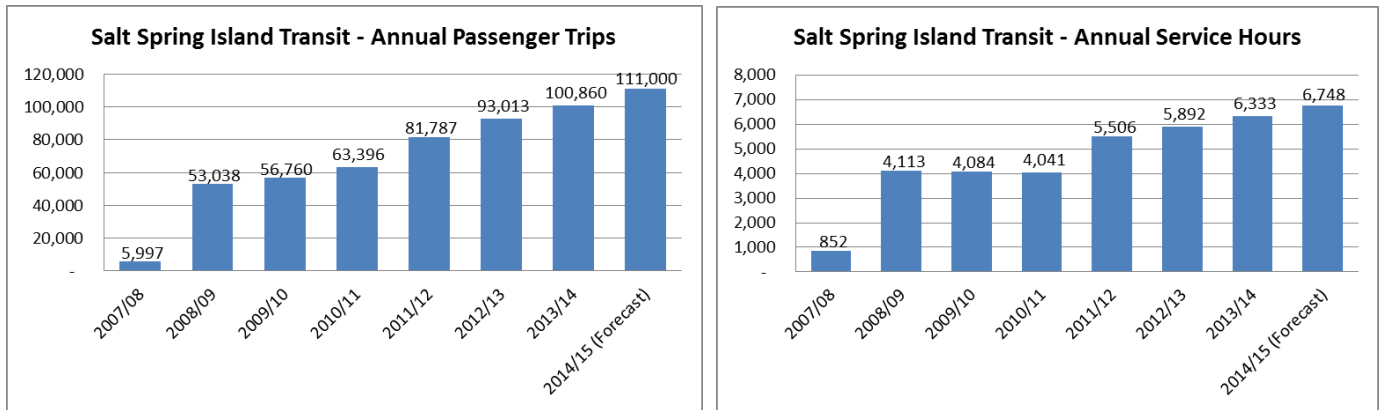
Salt Spring Island Transit charges a flat fare of \$2.25 per passenger. Day passes are available for \$5 each, and monthly passes are available at \$50 each, or \$40 each for students and seniors.

3.4 Salt Spring Island Transit System Ridership

Despite being a relatively new system, the Salt Spring Island Transit System has shown extremely strong ridership growth that also compares well against its peers.

The following two charts illustrate how annual ridership and service hours have grown in the system since it began. Since service hours essentially equate to the amount of resources put on the road to provide service, these charts show that not only has the system historically responded well to increased investment but also that the ridership growth has actually outpaced that of additional hours. (Ridership has more than doubled since 2008/09, while service hours have increased by 64%).

Figures 5 & 6. Annual Passenger Trips (Figure 5) & Annual Service Hours (Figure 6).



Additionally, Salt Spring Island consistently outperforms its peers in terms of ridership, total revenue, and cost recovery. Cost recovery at 38% is among the highest in the province and is a sign that the service generally provides good value for money, both from a taxpayer and passenger perspective.

Table 2 below illustrates how the system compares to other BC Transit systems that serve a similar population as Salt Spring Island Transit does today (Agassiz-Harrison, Quesnel, Williams Lake), the Sunshine Coast Transit System (which is double the size of Salt Spring Island Transit but which also serves ferries and has similar performance to Salt Spring), and the average of all transit systems of BC serving communities of less than 25,000 people.

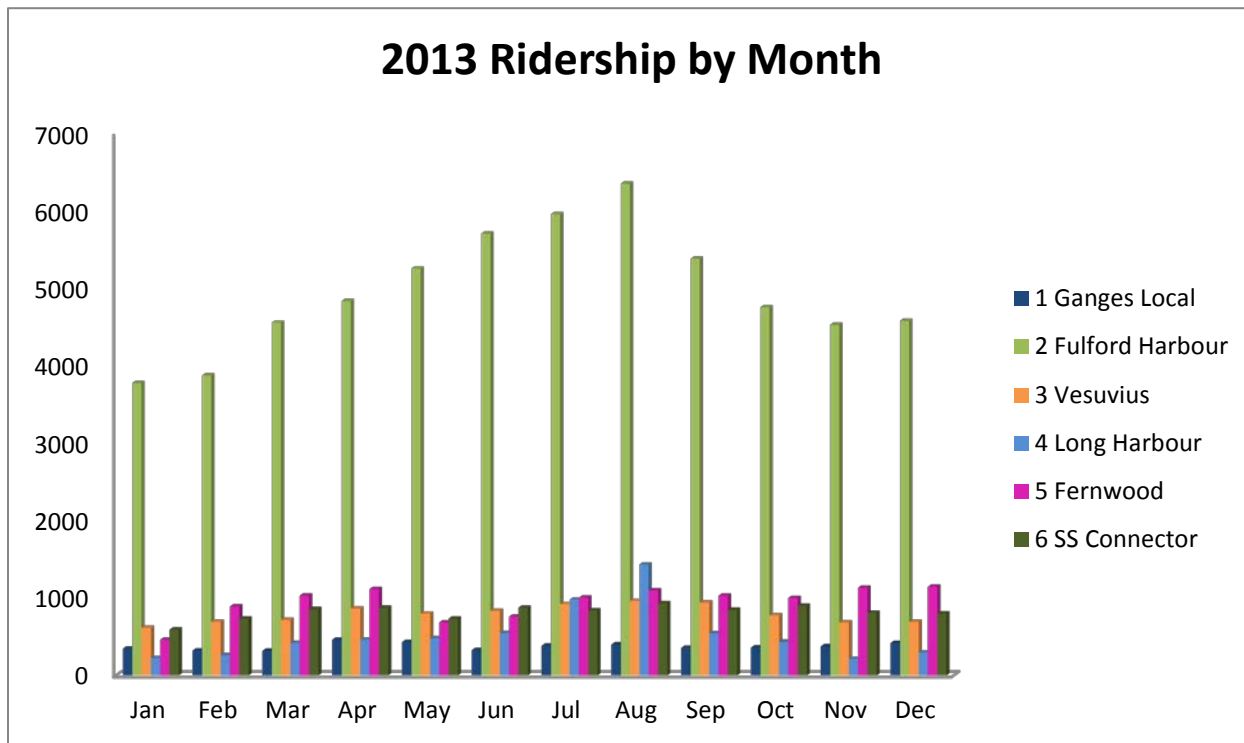
Table 2. Comparison between Salt Spring Island Transit and its operational peers.

Metric	Salt Spring Island	Agassiz-Harrison	Quesnel	Williams Lake	Sunshine Coast	Average of Similar Systems*
Operating Cost per Service Hour	\$74.43	\$70.14	\$82.97	\$100.20	\$110.12	\$111.76
Average Boardings per Service Hour	17.0	8.1	7.5	9.1	24.4	19.3
Cost per Passenger Trip	\$4.67	\$8.69	\$11.01	\$11.07	\$4.51	\$5.66
Cost Recovery	38%	24%	18%	11%	34%	21%

Existing performance based on 2013/14 actuals.

* Average of Similar Systems is the average of all BC conventional transit service systems serving populations of less than 25,000 people

Figure 7 illustrates current (2013) ridership by route and month.



On a route-by-route basis, this analysis shows the following:

- The Route 2 Fulford Harbour is by far the busiest, accounting for 60% of total ridership
- The summer tourism months, coinciding with the Saturday Market in Ganges, host the highest numbers of transit riders
- Route 4 Long Harbour experiences the most considerable change, ranging from on average the least-used route during the winter months, to the second-busiest during the summer
- Route 1 Ganges Local is consistently either the least or second least-used route in the system, likely attributed to lower levels of service than other routes and the small geographic area that it serves. Note, though, that the purpose of this route is to serve the local Ganges population’s day-to-day travel needs, including providing an option to those who can’t easily walk between frequently-accessed / errand-based destinations. This route is focused more on providing area and schedule coverage (particularly in the midday) than on providing frequent peak service, so while its ridership is comparatively low, its social and economic value to the community is high.

Data collection in 2014 also reveals that the system carries nearly 250 people per day in winter, and over 2,000 people per day on Summer Saturdays.

The following table breaks down the data shown in Figure 7 even further, by describing:

- **Average boardings per service hour** - Measures the total volume of ridership as compared to the supply of transit service.
- **Average boardings per trip** - Measures the total number of people that board a vehicle on a specific trip specific trip and route.
- **Cost per boarding** – Measures the operating cost per boarding, typically high costs of boarding are indicative of low ridership.

Table 3. Existing Performance by Route for Salt Spring Island Transit, 2013/14.

Route	Name	Average Boardings per Service Hour	Average Boardings per Trip	Average Cost per Boarding
Route 1	Ganges Local	9	3	\$15
Route 2	Fulford Harbour	26	21	\$2
Route 3	Vesuvius	11	6	\$8
Route 4	Long Harbour	14	8	\$6
Route 5	Fernwood	15	9	\$5
Route 6	SS Connector	10	8	\$6

Note that performance is based on the total performance from September 2013 to August 2014 and so there may be seasonal variations within these numbers.

Overall, transit on Salt Spring Island is a resounding success, with ridership exceeding projected growth year-on-year. The transit system is observed to be a valuable and valued part of the Salt Spring Island community, with many daily riders and enthusiastic first-time tourist passengers expressing satisfaction with the system and its operators.

3.5 Fleet

The system currently uses four 20-passenger high-floor minibuses – any two are in regular service on any given day, with one on standby service in the peak season to meet higher travel demand, and one acting as a spare per BC Transit's operations and maintenance policies. Salt Spring Island Transit buses undergo routine and light maintenance on Salt Spring Island, but must be transported to Vancouver Island for major maintenance, so having this higher spare ratio (two in service, two on standby) is required.



Future fleet expansion is discussed later in this document.

3.6 Infrastructure

3.6.1 Bus Stops

Salt Spring Island Transit is accessed primarily through the use of flag stops, meaning that passengers can flag the bus down or request stops along any given route. There are currently two bus shelters in place, with plans to increase that number outlined later in this report. Passenger culture on the Island is informal, and it is not unusual to see “donated” furniture alongside the road that is used by passengers waiting to flag a bus.

3.6.2 Bus Exchange

All buses are routed to a central bus “exchange” on Lower Ganges Road in front of the Salt Spring Island Visitor Information Centre, in the heart of Ganges.

Figures 9 & 10. Buses at Ganges Exchange.



This “exchange” abuts an on-street parallel parking area (is a continuation of the parking lane) and can accommodate two parallel-parked buses at one time. There is an unenclosed shelter with a bench that can comfortably accommodate fewer than ten waiting passengers, who share the sidewalk the shelter is on with passersby. Schedule information and signage is limited.

The high tourist population seeking information and access on Salt Spring Island, in combination with growing transit ridership, warrant improvement to these functional and passenger-experience limitations. Potential improvements are discussed at a high level later in this document.

3.6.3 Ferry Terminals

Salt Spring Island Transit serves all three ferry terminals on Salt Spring Island – Fulford Harbour, Long Harbour, and Vesuvius Bay, as described below. Each terminal hosts up to thirteen sailings per day at peak season, at times creating transit travel demand in the order of hundreds of passengers per day.

3.6.3.1 FULFORD HARBOUR

Fulford Harbour is Salt Spring Island’s busiest ferry terminal, linking people and goods to Swartz Bay in Victoria. Bus operations at this terminal are challenging due to physical constraints on the ferry apron and on the narrow roads leading to the terminal. The transit passenger waiting area is limited to a 3m sidewalk at the stop, with no information, no shelter or protection from the elements, and no seating. These physical constraints require the bus to arrive and leave in precise and short timeframes, since there is no dedicated travel lane or larger waiting area available for the bus.

Figures 11 & 12. Fulford Harbour bus stop.



Currently, the bus accesses the ferry apron immediately before the ferry docks but after the vehicles waiting to board the next sailing are parked. The bus completes a three-point turn and a several-meter reversal with limited sightlines. While this manoeuver is being completed as safely as possible, BC Transit and the operator are keen to continue working with BC Ferries to improve transit access to the terminal. Elements which could influence operations here are discussed later in this document.

3.6.3.2 LONG HARBOUR

Long Harbour is a sailing hub linking Salt Spring Island to Sturdies Bay (Galiano Island), Village Bay (Mayne Island), Otter Bay (Pender Island), and Tsawwassen (Vancouver). There is ample space for vehicle turnaround, and transit passengers can use the ferry passenger waiting area, which – unlike at Fulford – has windows that face the bus stop.

3.6.3.3 VESUVIUS BAY

Vesuvius Bay links Salt Spring Island with Crofton (Ladysmith). The Route 3 Vesuvius currently stops at the end of the ferry terminal parking lot nearest the ferry ramp. Schedule information and a bus stop sign are posted to an existing ferry terminal shed. The transit passenger waiting area is less than the size of one vehicle parking stall at the unprotected top of a bank, with no shelter or protection from the elements, and no seating. Like at Fulford, the bus completes a three-point turn and a several-meter reversal with limited sightlines. However, while not optimal, the area where buses reverse is far more contained than at Fulford, with fewer conflict points between pedestrians and other vehicles. BC Ferries has been open to exploring opportunities to repaint the parking lot lines to better-designate space for waiting buses. Different to the Fulford terminal, pedestrian access between the ferry and the bus stop is physically segregated.

3.6.4 Bus Parking & Maintenance

Salt Spring Island Transit buses are parked at a CRD-owned uncovered surface lot with limited capacity.

Buses are cleaned and maintained locally through a private third-party mechanic, and heavy-duty maintenance is completed on Vancouver Island in Nanaimo or Victoria

3.7 Existing Transit System Conclusions:

- In a short amount of time, Salt Spring Island has developed a robust and successful public transit system. Investment in more service has paid off in higher ridership and the fact that the system has continued to grow iteratively through small, successive expansions is likely one key factor in its success.
 - The system does well with its resources and routinely outperforms its peers. This success - coupled with the fact that existing service frequencies are low and the road network provides limited alternate routing options - means that there is less to be gained from reallocating the system's existing service hours. Therefore, the focus of improvement for the system should be on other opportunities to grow in terms of service frequencies and areas of service.
 - While there is room for service hour growth in the system, existing system infrastructure is limited and would need expansion to support growth. This includes the amenities at terminals, the Ganges Exchange capacity for vehicles and waiting passengers, and vehicle size.
 - The existing maintenance situation and turnaround constraints at Fulford Harbour also currently limit the size of vehicle that can be considered for the Island.
-

4.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement was conducted for the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review was conducted in two phases; Phase 1, *The Listening Phase*, and Phase 2, *Reporting Back*, to ensure that the final review reflects the needs and priorities of the community. Designed to be inclusive, reaching riders and non-riders alike, the process was led by BC Transit with strong support from the CRD, the SSITC, Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd., and local community members.

A range of tools was used to maximize opportunities for public and stakeholder input. Engagement techniques included:

- **Salt Spring Island Transit webpage hosted at bctransit.com** - a dedicated web page has been established for Salt Spring Island, hosting schedules, maps, information on materials that have been developed throughout the Service Review, as well as updates on opportunities to get involved.
- **Online/paper surveys** – stakeholders and the public (including transit passengers and visitors to the Island) were encouraged to complete online or paper surveys during each phase of public engagement.
- **Key Stakeholder Workshops** – One Key Stakeholder Workshop per phase of engagement was held.
- **Open House Events** – Two open house events were held per phase of public engagement at the Saturday Market and the Ganges Visitor Centre.

Stakeholder organizations and individuals that were invited to be part of the Transit Service Review's Public Engagement process are listed in the Acknowledgements section of this report.

4.1 Phase 1 Public Engagement

The first phase of Public Engagement in support of the Service Review took place from April 2 to May 1, 2014. Key themes emerged from these Public Engagement activities and are summarized in the tables that follow. Note that the priorities are listed in order of prevalence, with the most frequently-heard comments at the top of each category.

Table 4. Key Themes heard in Phase 1 Public Engagement.

Improvements to Existing Services	Service Requested to New Areas
<p>Improvements to Span of Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Later evening service—particularly in the summer--to meet the last Fulford ferry as well as the last Vesuvius ferry. • Earlier and later services on Sundays and Holidays • Earlier service on Saturdays <p>Frequency Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded summer frequency, particularly hourly service on Saturdays between Fulford Harbour and Ganges. • More morning service to Vesuvius ferry • Increased frequency to Walker’s Hook¹ • Improved directness for route 6 Salt Spring Island Connector (which essentially means splitting service into its respective route 3 Vesuvius and 5 Fernwood components). 	<p>Most Common Requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruckle Park (Summer only) • Beddis and Cusheon Lake Roads • Beaver Point / Stewart Road / South end of island • Upper Ganges / Robinson / Cedar Lane / Mansell Roads • Sunset Road to Southey Point • Isabella Point
Fares, Marketing	Infrastructure, Vehicles
<p>Fares</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly pass sales earlier in month • Price break for youth, seniors: Family Travel Program? • UVic U-PASS <p>Marketing / Customer Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Trip Planner • More schedule information at key stops • More transit-related events and advertising, free days? 	<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More shelters at bus stops • Expand size and amenities at main Ganges Exchange, Fulford Harbour • Passenger amenities at ferry terminals • Park & Ride for Fulford Ferry access <p>Vehicles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More passenger capacity • More bike capacity on vehicles or at stops • Bike capacity in the evening • More space for luggage • Green vehicle technology

¹ Note that based on preliminary feedback from transit staff and passengers, another Walker’s Hook trip was able to be added to the schedule starting on April 28, 2014 at no additional cost through time saved from new bus stop pullouts on Lower Ganges Road near Country Grocer.

BC Transit used this feedback and an analysis of the existing transit system to develop options for service and infrastructure improvements. These options were collaboratively refined with the CRD and the SSITC at a workshop held on June 20, 2014 and at a meeting held on August 19, 2014, and were then presented to the public for feedback in Phase 2. A summary of Phase 1 Public Engagement is found in Appendix A.

4.2 Phase 2 Public Engagement

The second phase of Public Engagement was held from September 19 to October 6, 2014. The service and infrastructure options were refined into more specific options in immediate-, short, and medium- to long-term implementation categories and were shared for feedback. Increased frequency on most routes on all days, service to new areas such as Ruckle Park and Beddis / Cusheon Lake Roads, and a discussion on providing custom transit service to people with unique travel needs were all included in the options for discussion, and were among the most heavily-supported by the public in terms of priorities for future expansion.

A summary of Phase 2 Public Engagement is found in Appendix B.

Public Engagement Conclusions:

- Stakeholders and the public value the existing system and are advocating for increased frequency, increased fleet capacity, and improved passenger experience amenities such as information and shelters
- While there is some demand for service to new areas, the highest priorities tend to focus on increasing frequency and improving existing service

5.0 SERVICE OPTIONS

Based on the analysis of existing and future community demographics and land use, existing transit service and feedback from the public engagement process, the following options are presented to guide further investment in the system to continue to improve its effectiveness and community benefit. Refinement of the service options has been informed by the results of Phase 2 Public Engagement process, including ongoing collaboration with the local operator, the SSITC and the CRD.

These refined options are divided into three time horizons for implementation; immediate (options which have already been or can be implemented immediately), short-term, and longer-term for future consideration. Options are presented for implementation / priority based on feedback from the SSITC and the public. Transit system improvements described for the 6-15 year term can be considered in ongoing and future system reviews.

The ultimate order of implementation (including the opportunity to combine multiple options into a single option) will be confirmed in collaboration with the CRD and SSITC as part of the three-year budget process, which occurs annually. This is to say that options are not prescriptive and do not necessarily require linear implementation. However, it is worth noting that the implementation of some options is dependent upon the implementation of other options, since some implementations can only be realized by adding a new bus.

Costs for options are based on 2014/15 Annual Operating Agreement budget figures. Actual costs may vary depending on confirmed budget figures and finalization of operating details at the time of implementation. Options for “summer” service assume end-of-June to end-of-September operation, in alignment with the current summer schedule season of the Fulford Harbour - Swartz Bay Ferry. A table summarizing total hours impact and vehicle requirements for each option is also presented in Section 5.4.

Note that in 2015/16, the system’s existing 20-passenger vehicles are slated to be replaced. Lease fees are based on costs for a new high-floor medium-duty bus. The exact vehicle type will be determined, and does consider physical constraints at Fulford Harbour ferry terminal.

5.1 Immediate Service Options for Implementation within the next 6 months

Option #1. Expanded Weekend Evening Service.

Based on public feedback and discussion with local partners, evening weekend service was extended Friday – Sunday on Route 2 Fulford Harbour and Route 6 SS Connector. Effective September 28, 2014, service has been extended until after 10:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays and until after 8:00pm on Sundays to better connect ferries and key destinations. This change accommodates later ferry sailings for people leaving and arriving on the Island. This change will be reflected in schedules at all times of year.

Option #2. Summer Service to Beaver Point & Ruckle Park.

Proposed for implementation in late-June 2015, this option would introduce summer service as described below.

From June 30 – September 30, the Route 9 Ruckle Park would operate as a loop route, extending to Ruckle Park from Fulford Harbour on two round trips per day, Monday through Sunday.

- Routing uses Fulford Ganges Road and Beaver Point Road per the map below.
- Optimally, trips would operate in the morning and in the late afternoon in order to meet the main check out/check in times at the park of 11:00am/1:00pm, as well as to enable Ruckle Park campers to travel to Ganges and/or Fulford for the afternoon and provide access for Salt Spring residents to the Park.
- At Fulford Harbour, connections would be possible between Route 9 Ruckle Park and Route 2 Fulford Harbour to enable access to Ganges and other areas of Salt Spring Island.



Alternate routes for this option were tested in fall 2014 as follows:

- a. From Fulford Harbour via Fulford Ganges and Beaver Point Roads to the Park, continuing on via Beaver Point, Stewart, Cusheon Lake and Beddis Roads to Ganges on one trip and the reverse on another trip.
- b. Looping back on the northbound return trip from the Park, serving Beaver Point Road via Forest Ridge and King Roads and continuing on to Fulford or Ganges.

While it can be advantageous to provide service to alternate areas, the following disadvantages were observed:

- **Barrier to ease-of-use** – irregular or inconsistent scheduling and routing complicates and discourages passenger use, whether the rider is existing or new. A schedule like this also offers less flexibility in terms of enabling Ruckle Park users to easily access both Fulford and Ganges.

- **Time invested vs. Ridership Gained** – while there may be some residents who would use the service, the projected ridership to be gained from this routing would not likely offset the additional time required to offer this service.

Bearing these considerations in mind, the original routing of the Ruckle Park option is recommended.

Key Benefits: Provides access to residents traveling to and from the Beaver Point area. Also provides introductory service to a key summer destination on Salt Spring Island, plus provides an option for campers who may have accessed the park by means other than car (motorhome, bicycle, etc.) to connect to Fulford and Ganges to see more of the community and to access local area businesses, attractions, and services.

Considerations: The routing assumes that the bus would be able to turn around using the loop road inside the park. Accessing the loop road and placing a stop within the park would require coordination with and approval by BC Parks.

Initial High Level Estimate – Additional Annual Impacts			
Option 2: Summer Service to Ruckle Park			
Service Hours:	260	Passenger Revenue:	\$3,900
Annual Ridership:	2,300	Total Cost*:	\$15,800
Vehicles Required:**	0	Net Local Share of Costs:	\$3,600
		Provincial Share of Costs*:	\$8,300

* Costs shown do not include Provincial contribution to Lease fees.

5.2 Short-Term Service Options (1-5 years)

Option #3. Additional Winter Morning Service.

This option was originally presented as an option for later implementation in the January 2013 Service Options Analysis report. It addresses the following feedback collected through Public Engagement:

- Demand for additional morning service to the Vesuvius ferry
- Demand for more direct service on the Route 6 SS Connector (by splitting into its respective routes).
- Demand for additional Walker’s Hook service

This option would add four hours of service per weekday during winter months, primarily to continue to build year-round ridership among residents travelling to on-island destinations. While the exact nature of service would need to be confirmed through detailed scheduling, the addition of this service would likely provide for:

- Better consistency and continuity between the summer and winter weekday schedules
- A year-round mid-morning (around 10:00am) Route 3 Vesuvius trip, plus potentially an additional morning trip to meet the 8:00am Vesuvius Ferry arrival.
- The introduction of a year-round morning Route 4 Long Harbour trip to increase the span of service for Eagle Ridge / Long Harbour residents
- The opportunity to separate the Route 5 Fernwood leg of the Route 6 Salt Spring Connector morning trips from the Route 3 Vesuvius section, thereby shortening travel times for Route 5

Fernwood residents travelling to Ganges in the morning. (Route 5 Fernwood residents travelling to Fulford Harbour would potentially need to transfer at Ganges, but the overall trip would be 10 minutes shorter).

- An additional Walker’s Hook trip.

Key Benefits: As above, this package of hours is likely the next logical progression to winter scheduled service, particularly in terms of building use of the system by on-island commuters, school students bound for the Cowichan Valley accessing the Vesuvius Bay ferry and commuters travelling to Ganges from Crofton.

Considerations: This option provides substantial benefit to the whole island and addresses a number of concerns heard from the public. While it was not the most frequently-heard request from the Service Review Public Engagement, it addresses a wide range of concerns heard.

Initial High Level Estimate – Additional Annual Impacts			
Option 3: Additional Winter Schedule Morning Service			
Service Hours:	820	Passenger Revenue:	\$13,400
Annual Ridership:	7,900	Total Cost*:	\$49,800
Vehicles Required:	0	Net Local Share of Costs:	\$10,200
		Provincial Share of Costs*:	\$26,200
* Costs shown do not include Provincial contribution to Lease fees.			

Option #4. Increased Summer Saturday Frequency on Route 2 Fulford Harbour.

On Saturdays, service on the 2 Fulford Harbour route would be “disconnected” from the rest of the system’s routes in order to consistently operate every 30 minutes between 10:00am and 5:00pm.

- This option also retains the ability to offer overload trips for the most popular ferry arrival and departure times for passengers travelling to/from the Saturday Market.
- Saturday service on all other routes would be approximately every two hours, as it is now, but minor adjustments to trip scheduling would be required.

Key Benefits: Addresses one of the most commonly-heard requests from the first phase of Public Engagement. The provision of a consistent and frequent link between Fulford and Ganges would generate high ridership, would continue to provide better resilience in the system if the ferry is late, and would make it easier for residents trying to board the bus along the route (i.e. at Fulford Ganges Road & Cusheon Lake Road) to ensure there was enough space for them.

Considerations: Requires an additional vehicle, so while the overall impact on summer ridership would be excellent, once vehicle costs are allocated across the year, the cost per passenger is relatively high.

Initial High Level Estimate – Additional Annual Impacts			
Option 4: Increased Summer Saturday Frequency on 2 Fulford Harbour			
Service Hours:	120	Passenger Revenue:	\$3,200
Annual Ridership:	1,900	Total Cost*:	\$34,600
Vehicles Required:	1	Net Local Share of Costs:	\$26,600
		Provincial Share of Costs*:	\$4,800
* Costs shown do not include Provincial contribution to Lease fees.			

Option #5. Extended Evening Service Monday-Thursday.

This option builds on the evening service added in Option 1. It would extend the level of service provided Friday and Saturday to also operate Monday through Thursday.

Key Benefits: Makes evening service consistent Monday to Saturday and addresses one of the most commonly heard requests from the first phase of Public Engagement. This service also better enables residents and visitors to not only access later ferries, but also to take part in local social and recreation activities taking place in Ganges, Portlock Park, Central Hall, Fulford Hall, etc.

Considerations: Evening service generally carries fewer riders than services at other times of the day, but improved access does offer overall community benefit.

Initial High Level Estimate – Additional Annual Impacts			
Option 5: Extended Evening Service, Monday to Thursday			
Service Hours:	420	Passenger Revenue:	\$4,900
Annual Ridership:	2,900	Total Cost*:	\$25,500
Vehicles Required:	0	Net Local Share of Costs:	\$7,200
		Provincial Share of Costs*:	\$13,400
* Costs shown do not include Provincial contribution to Lease fees.			

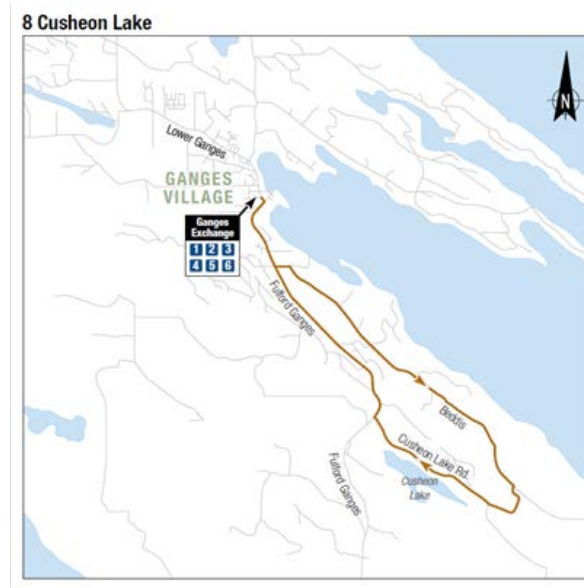
5.3 Future Considerations (6-15 years)

Introductory Service to Beddis & Cusheon Lake Roads.

This option introduces a loop route that would connect Beddis and Cusheon Lake Roads – an area that has a developing number of destinations - to Ganges. It also provides a key benefit of serving Ganges Hill, particularly on Saturdays when the Route 2 Fulford buses are often full at this point.

- Service could include up to three trips per day Monday to Sunday throughout the year.
- From Ganges, routing would be via Lower Ganges, Fulford Ganges, Beddis, Cusheon Lake, Fulford Ganges roads and then back to Ganges.
- For Beddis/Cusheon Lake Road customers connecting to the ferry, it would be possible to schedule connecting transfers on Fulford Ganges Road using the turnaround on Blackburn Road.

Figure 13. Beddis & Cusheon Lake Roads transit service route map.



Key Benefits: Provides increased coverage on Salt Spring Island and serves a number of destinations and visitor accommodations. It also provides additional service along Fulford Ganges Road, meaning that residents from this segment have more options for service if the Route 2 Fulford Harbour bus is at or over-capacity with passengers from the ferry.

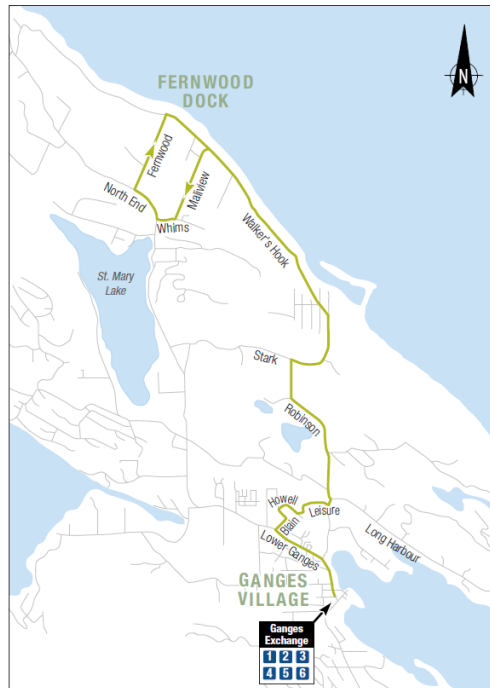
Considerations: Beddis and Cusheon Lake would receive service in this option but it would not serve Stewart Road.

Separation of Fernwood & Walker's Hook, Additional Peak Service.

This option would separate out the existing Walker's Hook service currently provided as part of the Route 5 Fernwood into its own separate route. It would also add three additional trips per day to the Fernwood area and two additional trips on the Route 3 Vesuvius to create hourly service during peak morning and afternoon times Monday to Saturday.

- When originally implemented in 2013, it was envisioned that the introductory Walker's Hook service (then added as an extension to the Route 5 Fernwood) would eventually evolve to its own separate route.
- The two separate routes would both serve the Fernwood/Maliview loop. The Route 5 Fernwood would operate via North Road while the new route (Route 8 Walker's Hook) would operate via Walker's Hook. This routing enables the system to double the amount of service on the more populous Fernwood loop and Lower Ganges Road (where both routes would overlap), and operate a lower amount of two-way service on either North Road or Stark/Walker's Hook Roads.
- The proposed routing also introduces new service to the Robinson/Mansell Roads areas while still maintaining connection to the Hospital/Country Grocer-area for people travelling from Ganges or the Fernwood/Maliview loop.

Figure 14. Fernwood / Walker’s Hook transit service route change map.



Key Benefits: Provides improved morning and afternoon frequency to Lower Ganges Road, the Vesuvius area and the Fernwood/Maliview loop, which are some of the more populous areas on the Island. Improves the ease-of-use and directness of travel for Walker’s Hook residents and makes the Route 5 Fernwood routing easier to understand and more consistent.

Considerations: Requires an additional vehicle. However, this vehicle also enables the other medium-term options to happen. While providing service to new areas on Robinson Road/Leisure Lane, the proposed routing would slightly decrease connection to Portlock Park and Central Hall.

Additional Fulford peak service and year-round service to Beaver Point / Ruckle Park.

This option could see the addition of two AM peak and two PM peak Route 2 Fulford Harbour trips, plus uses time in between each pair of trips to extend midday service to Beaver Point / Ruckle Park.

Key Benefits: Provides increased access on the highest-performing route in the system, and also increases service to residents at Beaver Point and visitors to Ruckle Park.

Considerations: Today, there is no additional cost to serve beaver Point with the initial expansion to Ruckle Park. However, scheduling additional trips to accommodate increased ridership will require integration with other route schedules, and thereby will require additional resources.

Earlier Saturday Service.

This option could add up to 2.5 hours per Saturday on all routes except Route 2 Fulford Harbour. Year-round, this would increase service on these routes to the same level of service that is provided on weekdays.

This change would add a 6:20am Route 6 Salt Spring Connector trip on Saturdays (identical to what is provided on weekdays) to enable Vesuvius and Fernwood residents to connect to the first ferries.

The additional service would also mean that Saturday service to destinations like Vesuvius Bay and Fernwood would consistently have service every two hours during the morning Monday to Saturday (i.e. at approximately 6:00am, 8:00am, 10:00am and noon).

Key Benefits: Continues to improve consistency in the schedule between service days, making the system easier to understand and use.

Considerations: As with the evening service option, early weekend service tends to carry a lower number of passengers per hour than service at other times. However, like evening service it also improves the overall consistency and utility of the service.

Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle + Rural Transit Trip Windows.

Stakeholders and the public on Salt Spring Island identified the need for a transit solution for people who cannot easily or independently use the existing transit system (people of all ages with physical or cognitive impairments). Originally, the service need was centered on seniors, but this type of service could benefit passengers of all ages. Various service concepts were presented to stakeholders and the public for further feedback.

In general, accessible services that include a door-to-door or more rural component have a higher cost than their fixed-route counterparts since they serve a population who require more care and attention when boarding, and may also serve areas that are more spread out with fewer potential passengers. On Salt Spring Island, costs are also impacted by the fact that any door-to-door service would require the system to acquire additional smaller vehicles, since the existing system's vehicles needed to accommodate passenger loads on scheduled services would be too big to provide door-to-door service and access some driveways on the Island.

BC Transit heard that while serving populations with special travel needs is important, Option #10 should not be implemented until some of the shorter-term priorities detailed below have been explored. BC Transit also heard that before implementing anything independently, it would be useful to explore possible partnerships with other groups on the island to see if there is a way that costs could be reduced or assets shared in order to use community resources as effectively as possible.

Ideas and key transit markets that emerged out of the consultative discussion include:

- **For people with physical or cognitive impairments who can't use transit independently**
 - Build on existing programs; create partnerships to maximize efficient use of resources
- **For people who are capable of using transit independently, but who may not use the system for a variety of reasons**
 - Implement a Travel Training program led by an intern or a community member

- Introduce bus drivers to people at local gathering places or facilities in order to help build relationships
- Improve availability of real-time information
- **For people who don't currently have access to transit on SSI (live outside of the transit service area)**
 - Implement Option #10 as described below:
 - Convert some or all of the existing Salt Spring Island Transit Route 1 Ganges Local trips into a flexible service operated by a smaller vehicle. Trips would still operate on the identified route (which already serves key residential, medical and shopping destinations), but additional time would be built into the schedule for off-route pick-ups. These off-route trip windows enable a smaller transit bus to be available for booking during certain periods of the day on specific days. For instance, service could be available from 9:00am - 10:30am and 2:00pm - 3:30pm two days/week to the south end of the island and two days/week to the north.

More details on Option #10 and its sub-options are discussed in Appendix C.

Earlier Sunday & Holiday Service.

This option adds the identical service added to Saturdays in Option 9 and extends it to Sundays and Statutory Holidays.

Key Benefits: As with Option 9, this change to Sundays continues to improve consistency in the schedule between service days, making the system easier to understand and use.

Considerations: Early Sunday service is likely to carry the lowest passengers per hour in the system. However, like evening service, it also improves the overall consistency and utility of the service.

Consideration of Limited Service to Other Areas.

In the first phase of Public Engagement, a number of residents of less densely-populated areas of the Island also requested service, including people on Stewart Road, Sunset Road to Southey Point, and Isabella Point. Stakeholders are hopeful that as population in these areas grows and ages, it may become more viable (from a cost and ridership perspective) to extend service to these areas.

This option creates the provision to consider introducing limited (2 days/week) service to these areas. The exact scope and costs associated with these services would be determined closer to the time of implementation.

5.4 Service Option Summary

The following table summarizes the estimated impacts for all service options presented in the preceding sections in Chapter 5. All figures are annual and are based on estimates that would require review based on actual date of implementation and confirmed service and operational details. For comparative purposes, the anticipated ridership per hour of service and cost per ride of service is also shown.

Salt Spring Island Transit System
Service Option Summary: Preliminary Estimated Additional Annual Impacts*

Service Option	Buses**	Additional total kms	Service Hours	Rides	Total Revenue	Total Costs	Net Local Share of Costs	BC Transit Share of Costs	Rides per Hour	Cost per Ride
Options for Immediate Implementation (Within the next 6 months):										
Option 1: Expanded Weekend Evening Service	0	12,600	400	2,800	\$4,800	\$24,300	\$6,700	\$12,800	7.1	\$8.66
Option 2: Summer Service to Ruckle Park	0	8,200	260	2,300	\$3,900	\$15,800	\$3,600	\$8,300	8.9	\$6.85
Short-Term Options (1-5 Years)										
Option 3: Additional Winter Morning Service	0	25,800	820	7,900	\$13,400	\$49,800	\$10,200	\$26,200	9.7	\$6.29
Option 4: Increased Summer Saturday Frequency on 2 Fulford Harbour	1	3,800	120	1,900	\$3,200	\$34,600	\$26,600	\$4,800	15.8	\$4.75
Option 5: Extended Evening Service Monday - Thursday	0	13,300	420	2,900	\$4,900	\$25,500	\$7,200	\$13,400	6.9	\$8.78
Notes: * Based on 2014/15 AOA Budget. Final costs may change based on final budgets and confirmation of final operational details. ** The vehicle requirements shown here appear feasible but would need to be confirmed by BC Transit's Fleet Standards department closer to the implementation date. Annual local share of lease fee costs for a medium-duty vehicle used in these estimates is \$25,500. Option 5 builds on the service added in Option 1.										

6.0 SUPPORTING ACTIONS

The following priority actions support the service improvements outlined in Chapter 5, and are based on the key themes from Public Engagement and an outlook on their ability to be implemented. **It is recommended that on an annual basis, the CRD, SSITC and BC Transit work together to outline which of these supporting actions should be undertaken in each particular year.**

6.1 Priority Fare-related Actions

A fare review of the Salt Spring Island Transit System was completed in February 2012 and revised fares were implemented in July 2012. The island is scheduled for another fare review in 2015 and so no substantial changes to fares are recommended at this time.

The following changes to fare programs and vendor distribution are proposed in order to respond to passenger and citizen feedback from Public Engagement. These activities would be led by the CRD with the support of BC Transit.

- **Implement a Family Travel Program** – Under this program, up to two youth aged 12 and younger would ride free anytime when travelling with their parent or guardian when that adult or senior pays their fare using a monthly pass or BC Bus Pass. This program would be similar to the one already in place in the Victoria Regional Transit System. It tends to have little impact on revenue and is a positive way to build ridership and good will for the system among regular riders.
- **Implement a Fulford Harbour Fare Vendor Location** – Currently, Fulford Harbour is the only major neighbourhood on the island that does not have a ticket and pass vendor of some kind.
- **Off-Island Day Pass Vendor(s)** – Continue to work with BC Ferries and other potential partners to see if it is possible to establish Day Pass sales for visitors prior to their arrival on Salt Spring Island, such as potentially onboard the Skeena Queen ferry or through one of the Swartz Bay vendor locations.
- **Earlier Monthly Pass Distribution** – Adjust the monthly pass distribution process so that passes are available for sale at Island vendor locations earlier in the month.

It should be noted that some members of the public also requested that the Salt Spring Island fares be integrated with those of the Victoria Regional Transit System (VRTS) and that the VRTS's U-PASS be good for travel on Salt Spring. These are not presented as options here, as they would likely mean revenue loss for the Salt Spring Island Transit System due to the imbalance between the population size of the island versus the population size of the area covered by the Victoria Regional Transit System.

6.2 Priority Marketing / Passenger Information Actions

- **Implement an Online Trip Planner** – Salt Spring Island Transit has been identified as one of the priority transit systems for implementation of an online trip planner, due in part to its high tourist/new-passenger ridership. Exact date is in the process of being confirmed but would likely be within the next three years.
 - **Expand Schedule Availability at Major Stops** – Work with CRD and the system's operator to implement and manage schedule information at key stops.
-

- **Transit Ambassador Program** – Cost-shared through a small increase to the system's existing marketing budget, this program would provide funding towards a position to work with the SSITC, CRD and BC Transit to promote the transit system at key events and look for opportunities to improve links to visitor information.

There may also be value in expanding the CRD's marketing and promotional efforts with an eye to attracting new riders.

6.3 Priority Infrastructure Actions

Immediate Infrastructure Priorities (Within the next 12 months):

- **Fulford Harbour Ferry Terminal** – Elements which could influence operations here include:
 - New vehicles with different turning radii / capability than the current vehicles
 - Minor infrastructure improvements undertaken by BC Ferries on the ferry apron, including extending the curb at the existing bus stop to enable a less complicated turning and backing-in manoeuvre
 - Major infrastructure improvements undertaken by BC Ferries, the CRD, and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on Fulford Ganges Road and/or on Morningside Road
 - Major infrastructure improvements undertaken by BC Ferries on the entire Fulford Harbour ferry terminal and accesses

These elements are all under discussion, though no certain timelines for the occurrence or implementation of any of them have been set.

- **Vesuvius Bay Ferry Terminal** – Line painting in parking lot and improved signage to establish a dedicated area for transit vehicles, and to provide more information to people accessing the Island via ferry. The addition of a universally accessible sidewalk pad at this stop should also be considered in future.
- **Lower Ganges Road Bus Shelter** – A new bus shelter, bench and customer information panel on Lower Ganges Road (near Country Grocer) to be installed.
- **Ganges Exchange** - Clarify maintenance arrangement with CRD for shelter at Ganges Exchange

Short-Term Infrastructure Priorities (1-5 years):

- **Expanded Ganges Exchange, Phase I** – Explore opportunities to work with land holders and area partners to increase passenger amenities and transit vehicle capacity at the main exchange outside the Ganges Visitor Information Centre. As part of this work, establish long-term planning for a further expansion to this Exchange. (See Phase II in the medium- to long-term section below).

- **Long Term Fulford Harbour Ferry Terminal Planning** – Continue to engage with BC Ferries and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to plan for an improved transit turnaround as part of any future development at or near the Fulford Harbour Ferry terminal.
- **Additional Shelters:** As funding becomes available, the following locations should be considered for additional shelters:
 - **Lower Ganges Rd. at Vesuvius Bay Road** (i.e. to serve Central Hall and Portlock Park on Routes 3, 5 and 6).
 - **Fulford Ganges Rd. at Cusheon Lake Road**
 - **Various popular transit passenger areas in Ganges Village**
 - **Mobrae neighbourhood** (exact location to be determined)
- **Conduct longer-term facilities plan** to ensure yard and garage space for the growing system.

Future Considerations for Infrastructure (6-15 years):

- **Park & Ride** – As development occurs, look for an opportunity to re-establish a Park & Ride site.
- **Expanded Ganges Exchange, Phase II** – As service expands, the exchange will likely need two additional vehicle bays either adjacent to the exchange, across the street, or at another location. This option would implement the Phase II recommendations / planning established as part of Phase I.
- **Long-Term Fulford Harbour Ferry Terminal Implementation** – This would implement any of the improvements to the Fulford Harbour ferry terminal transit turnaround determined during the planning phase in the short-term.

6.4 Priority Vehicle Actions

- **Implement Larger Vehicles (2015/16)** – In 2015/16, the system's existing 20-passenger Ford Polar vehicles will be replaced by 4 new vehicles. These vehicles are being selected in consideration of the physical constraints at Fulford Harbour and Vesuvius Bay Ferry Terminals, the rural nature / condition of many of Salt Spring's roads, and current maintenance capacity.
 - **Continue to Evolve Vehicle Amenities, Maintenance Resources, and Fleet Mix (6-15 years)** – As the system, its road network and vehicle technology evolve, Salt Spring Island Transit should continue to look for opportunities to improve onboard amenities and capacity for passengers. As service grows, there may also be an opportunity to use smaller vehicles on some routes and larger ones on others.
-

6.5 Integrated Planning Actions

6.5.1. Development Referral Program

Given that shifting transportation modes to active and alternative options such as transit is a priority of the CRD, integrated land use and transportation planning is critical on Salt Spring Island. BC Transit encourages local governments and other stakeholders to involve it in land use planning exercises to offer a multimodal transportation lens. When new development projects arise, the CRD and Islands Trust can rely on BC Transit's Development Referral program, which enables local governments to send development or rezoning applications to BC Transit for transportation-focused review and comment. As part of this referral process, BC Transit reviews the proposal and provides local government with comments on how the proposed development fits within the existing transit network, the outlook for future transit service to the development area, and comments on pedestrian links or transit amenities that would make the development more transit-friendly.

Development referrals can be sent to developmentreferrals@bctransit.com.

6.5.2 Continued Collaboration

BC Transit and the CRD (via the SSITC and the overseeing Board) should continue to work together not only on transit matters but also on general transportation planning, land use planning, and engineering exercises, with an eye to maximizing efficiency and passenger experience on Salt Spring Island Transit.

6.5.3. Service Standards

Service Standards can be described as a set of best practices by which we can implement changes to and monitor the existing and future transit system. Service Standards define minimum service levels, the transit service area, and tools to determine when new service should be introduced to an area. These measures are meant to ensure an acceptable level of service to the passenger and, along with this Transit Service Review, guide planning decisions and recommendations to the CRD and its SSITC.

Examples of Service Standards include:

Service Design Principles

- Transit service should be focused on major activity centres and residential areas with a higher level of density.
- In general, transit routes should be as direct as possible in denser areas and between major activity centres. Service may be less direct within rural neighbourhoods to improve service area coverage.
- Transit routes should connect residents to their local neighborhood centre and transit trips between neighbourhood centres should be able to be made with no more than one transfer.
- Transit service should connect to other transportation systems to allow passengers to conveniently connect to other modes, in particular pedestrian and cycling networks, ferries, and neighbouring transit systems.

Ease of Use Principles

- To make the transit system easy to understand and use for all passengers, routes should be direct and straightforward, and service frequencies and schedules should be consistent on each route and during each time period, where possible.
- Customer information should be designed to be straightforward with simple route and schedule information.

Bus Stop and Waiting Passenger Amenities Principles for non-flag stops

- Bus stops should be placed at major activity points and scheduled timing points.
- Generally, distance between stops should be about 400 meters in neighbourhoods and a greater distance in more rural areas.
- Bus stops should be located in areas that are safe for passengers to board and alight the bus - ideally near intersections to minimize walking distances to transit - and should be convenient to local land uses.
- Over time, the number of shelters provided in the system should evolve to include all major activity points and at least one shelter in each residential neighbourhood served.

Introducing New Service

The following guidelines will assist to determine if it is feasible to bring transit service into new residential, industrial, commercial and/or recreational developments:

- Minimum density of residents or jobs in line with service already provided to other areas
- Road and pedestrian access that provides for safe access and efficient operation of transit service.
- Analysis of potential service by BC Transit staff that shows proposed service will carry at least 5 passengers per service hour (the point at which the number of passengers carried on a bus offsets the equivalent Greenhouse Gas emissions if they were travelling by automobile).

BC Transit is in the process of developing a new, comprehensive set of best practices or Service Standards that will apply to all transit systems across the province, including Salt Spring Island Transit.

6.5.4 Monitoring & Evaluation

BC Transit and Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd. should continue to collect ridership and other data as needed. On an ongoing basis, BC Transit will analyze key performance indicators such as ridership, on-time performance, vehicle maintenance quality, safety and customer satisfaction, and will report and analyze this through purpose-built analysis as well as its Annual Performance Summary process.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Future Considerations

Gradually and eventually implementing and evaluating the options presented in this Service Review will be advantageous to Salt Spring Island and its transit system. These options have been presented in consideration of iterative and ongoing collaboration with stakeholders, the public, the SSITC, the CRD, and the local operator. This collaboration will continue in the implementation and evaluation of these options, as well as the general operation of the system.

As previously noted, these options are not intended to be prescriptive and do not necessarily need to be implemented linearly. Subsequent monitoring, evaluation, three-year budget planning, and five-year service planning will reflect on the outcomes of this Service Review and will help the partners continue to serve Salt Spring Island's transit needs successfully. The options presented in the medium- to long-term implementation horizon should be revisited in the next Service Review cycle.

It is also recognized that service needs and the CRD's & BC Transit's capacity to fund transit improvements may change over time. Therefore, options for implementation which require expansion to service hours or vehicles will need to be confirmed on an annual basis for the subsequent year as part of the local budget approval. The implementation of any option requiring expansion is dependent on BC Transit's fiscal year budget, total provincial funding, and the allocation of available provincial transit expansion funding between transit systems as determined through BC Transit's Transit Improvement Program (TIP).

Once the CRD has approved a service option or combinations of options for implementation – and local and provincial funding have been approved – an Implementation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be developed for signature by the CRD and BC Transit. This MOU outlines the exact service changes to be developed for implementation and the roles and timeline for implementation.

7.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission:

- **Receive this report for review and comment prior to BC Transit's finalization of the report and subsequent submission to the Capital Regional District;**
- **Receive the Appendices of this report as information.**

Appendix A:

Phase 1

Public Engagement Report

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Public Engagement Phase One

Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review

June 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BC Transit, the Capital Regional District and the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission would like to acknowledge the contributions of the many individuals and organizations who supported the Phase 1 Public Engagement exercise. Thank you to staff at the Capital Regional District, the members of the Commission and staff of the Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd. (the operator of the transit system) for sharing their knowledge and connections and distributing information about the engagement events. Finally, thank you to all who joined us at the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review open house or stakeholder workshop and took the time to complete the online and onboard surveys.

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INTRODUCTION

Community engagement is being conducted at key milestones of the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review to ensure the final review reflects the needs and priorities of the community. Designed to be inclusive, reaching riders and non-riders alike, the process is led by BC Transit with strong support from the Capital Regional District (CRD), the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC) and local community members.

This update provides a summary of Phase 1 of the Engagement: the Listening Phase.

PURPOSE

The two-phased engagement strategy is designed to achieve the following goals:

- Identify and solicit targeted feedback from all major institutions, organizations and other key community groups
- Employ a variety of methods and means to stimulate participants and ensure a wide range of citizens are reached
- Ensure the final result reflects the public's needs and desires by incorporating feedback into the review

The approach incorporates several strategies from the spectrum of engagement, including:

Inform	Provide information that will keep key stakeholders and public up to date and assist them in understanding issues, problems, alternatives, and/or solutions;
Listen and learn	BC Transit, partners, key stakeholders and public listen to and learn about each other's views, plans, concerns and expectations;
Consult	An opportunity for stakeholders and the community to provide feedback on the degree to which the current transit system meets the needs of the community and what role they see transit playing in their community moving forward;
Report Back	Report back to stakeholders and the community the project vision, goals and proposed service and infrastructure improvement options that were developed using background data and their input. This identifies how public feedback was used to analyze issues and build alternatives and thereby make contributions to the decision making process;
Collaborate	BC Transit, the SSITC, CRD and the Ganges Faerie MInishuttle Ltd. (the system's operator) are considered partners in the Transit Service Review development process, including collaboration on analyzing issues, developing options, identifying preferred solutions and making recommendations. The final Transit Service Review is presented to the SSITC and then the CRD for consideration and approval.

SCOPE

The objective of Phase 1 of the public engagement was to provide information about the existing transit system and Transit Service Review process and ask the public for their feedback on how the existing transit system is performing, to what degree it meets or does not meet their needs and what they would like to see for the future of transit over the next 5 years.

METHOD

The Phase 1 participation included a project website, a Commission presentation, a stakeholder workshop, online survey, on-board transit passenger survey, and an open house.

Salt Spring Island Project Website

A dedicated web page has been established for the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review on the Transit Future section of the BC Transit website. This provides information on the Service Review process, as well as updates on upcoming events, reports, presentations and online surveys to solicit feedback during the engagement phases. The website can be found here:

http://www.bctransit.com/transitfuture/ssi_latestupdates.cfm

Commission Presentation

The Terms of Reference for the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review was presented to the Capital Regional District (CRD) for approval, with endorsement by the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC).

Stakeholder Workshop

In addition to the larger public outreach, focused feedback was sought from key stakeholders. A list of key stakeholders to be part of the workshop was developed with input from the CRD and the SSITC. Thirty-nine organizations (*Appendix A*) were invited to participate in a half-day stakeholder workshop to provide feedback on issues with the transit service and opportunities for future improvement to help develop a vision for the Transit Service Review.

On-Board Bus Engagement

Transit riders were encouraged to complete an on-board passenger survey on April 4 and April 5, 2014, including questions related to travel habits and feedback on the existing transit system.

Saturday Market Open House Engagement

BC Transit conducted engagement at an open house booth at the Saturday Market on April 5 from 8:30 am-4:00 pm. This open house was promoted as part of celebrations of Salt Spring Island Transit's 100,000th passenger the day before.

Online Survey

Local residents, workers and visitors to Salt Spring Island were encouraged to complete a survey, available online from April 2 to April 13, 2014.

Advertising & Media

A variety of methods were used to advertise the opportunities to provide input. Print media included a press release, advertisements in local papers and posters on buses.

The stakeholder groups were emailed information on the engagement opportunities and a link to the website. The Salt Spring Island Transit Future website and the BC Transit Facebook page also provided information on engagement opportunities and a link was provided on the CRD website.



100,000th passenger ridership milestone celebration held in conjunction with the Transit Service Review Public Engagement

RESULTS

Response Rate

Table 1 provides a summary of the response rates to the various events from the Phase 1 Engagement.

Table 1: Phase 1 Public Engagement Response Summary

Quick Facts	
Open House Attendees	82
Online Survey Responses	40
On-board Bus Survey Responses	136
Stakeholder Advisory Group Workshop Attendees	23
Number of Open Houses	1

On-Board Bus Survey

Respondents and Ridership

There were a total of 136 responses to the on-board bus survey. Respondents were primarily adults with a mix of other varied ages (*Figure 1*). Of respondents, 96% expressed they were satisfied or very satisfied with the current transit service. Most respondents (74%) were regular transit riders with only 26% riding 1-2 times per month or less. The main purpose for those taking transit was for shopping/errands, work and social/recreational activities (*Figure 2*). For trips on which surveys were completed, 47% of respondents were making a ferry connection and 44% were transferring to another transit route.

Survey results indicated that transit is the only transportation option for 19% of respondents, with the private vehicle and walking being the main alternatives in addition to cycling and hitchhiking.

Transit Priorities

More evening service, summer service, late weekday service and improved connection to BC Ferries were identified as the most important transit improvements. Earlier weekday service, more Sunday/holiday service and more frequent morning service were identified as least important.

The following routes were identified as a top priority for transit improvements:

- Route 2 for more summer service, fall/winter service, improved connection to BC Ferries, more Saturday service, more frequent midday service, later weekday service, earlier weekday service

Figure 1: Respondent Age Classification

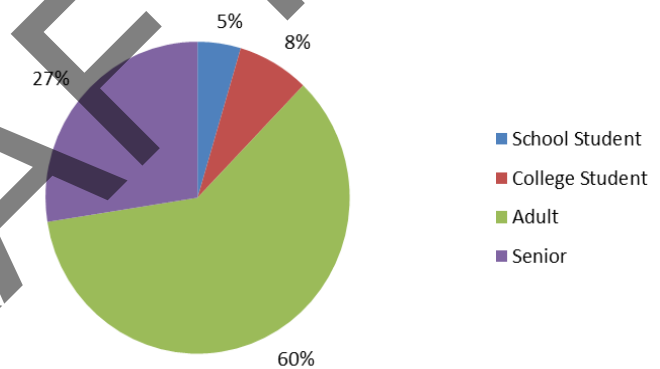
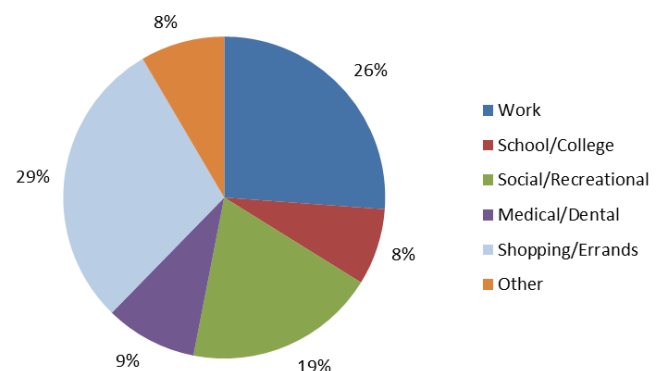


Figure 2: Main Purpose for Transit Trips



- Route 6 for more direct routes
- Route 1, 2, 3 for more Sunday/holiday service
- Route 1, 3 for more frequent morning service
- Route 1, 2, 5, 6 for more evening service

Suggestions for the Future Transit System

Respondents identified many suggestions for improving the Salt Spring Island transit system and the role transit may play in their community in the next 5 years. The key suggestions from many respondents are outlined in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Onboard Bus Survey Suggestions for the Future Transit System

Key Theme	Suggestions
Increased Frequency	In the Summer
Increased Reliability	More buses to avoid pass-ups of locals mid-route as bus fills up at Fulford Harbour Transit/Ferry integration
Increased Hours	Meet first and last ferry at Fulford and Vesuvius ferry terminals More late night and early morning service More Saturday service Hourly trips to Fulford Harbour
Bus Stop Amenities/Vehicles	Accommodate luggage on buses More shelters at bus stops More bike racks on vehicles and at bus stops
New/Improved Service Areas	Ruckle Park Beaver Point Road Bedis Road More routes on local roads
Fares	Provide student and senior discounts Offer monthly bus passes before the end of the month Honor UVic UPASS (semester-based student bus pass)

Stakeholder Advisory Group Workshop

23 representatives attended the afternoon stakeholder workshop at the Harbour House Hotel on May 1, 2014. Objectives for the workshop included:

- Stakeholders gain an understanding of the transit system and Transit Service Review process, including opportunities for input
- Feedback is gathered from stakeholders on the needs of their customers, clients, members and staff
- Issues with the existing transit service are identified
- Opportunities for future transit improvements are identified
- Additional stakeholders are identified as required

Attendees provided significant input to the discussion and took information regarding the public engagement back to their members. Feedback from the session is summarized in *Table 3* on the following page.

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Table 3: Stakeholder Workshop Feedback

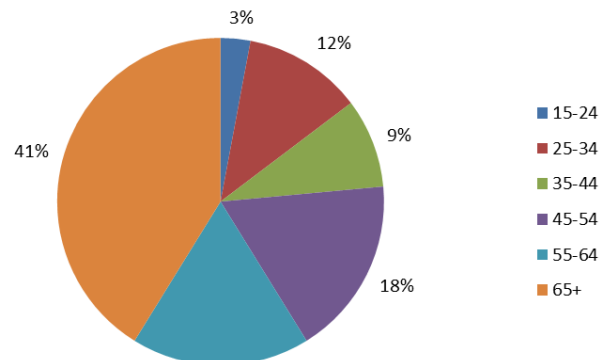
Transit Needs by Age Group	Future Transit Improvements
<p>Youth/Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students going to school off the island- Vesuvius Bay ferry serves 65+ students in the morning and afternoon • Sports teams-travelling to Fulford Harbour and Victoria. Possible charter system? • Service to Skate Park/Rec Centre/Pool • Integrate public transit with school bus system <p>Seniors/People with a Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit critical for independence • Accessible taxi • Potential for HandyDART • Tickets should be less for seniors <p>Commuters/Shopping/Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early service to catch first ferry to Swartz Bay/Crofton • Bus tickets should be available at ferry terminal • Family travel program as transit travel very expensive for parents with children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve bus stop at visitor center- shelter, more benches • Enable bikes on buses after dark • Bike parking at major bus stops • More bus shelters-Fulford Harbour, Meadowbrook • Accessibility for pedestrians is important • Increase frequency • More summer service • Implement flexible schedules to accommodate locals • Meet every single ferry, particularly late ones • Improved service on Sunday and holidays • Larger bus, particularly in the summer at the Saturday market • Express bus from Ganges to Fulford Harbour • Increase capacity for bikes
Transit/Ferry Integration	Current Transit System Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and Ride to access service to Fulford Harbour • Buses leave quickly at ferry terminals • Bus access at Fulford Harbour is a problem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable • Satisfies individual needs of riders • Drivers are fantastic • Sensitive to the needs of the community • Flag stops work well
Future Service Improvements	Community Awareness & Attracting Riders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulford Harbour – More frequency, longer span of service • Ruckle Park – Introduce summer service • Ganges - later and earlier service • More service on weekends and holidays • Beaver Point (major senior destination) • Stewart Road • Stark Road/Walkers Hook/Maliview • Beddis Road/Cusheon Lake Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better availability of bus schedules • More advertising needed • More transit event days to promote the system • Website needs to be revised to reflect the nature of Salt Spring Island • Restrict parking in Ganges-encourages transit use

Online Survey

Respondents and Ridership

There were a total of 40 responses to the online survey. These respondents were primarily aged 65+ with a mix of other ages (Figure 3). More than half the respondents (60%) were transit riders with the rest taking transit less than once a month or never. The main purpose of transit trips was shopping/errands, social/recreation and work (Figure 4). The survey indicated that transit is the main transportation option for approximately 18% of respondents, with the private vehicle providing the main transportation option for 64% of respondents.

Figure 3: Respondent Age Classification

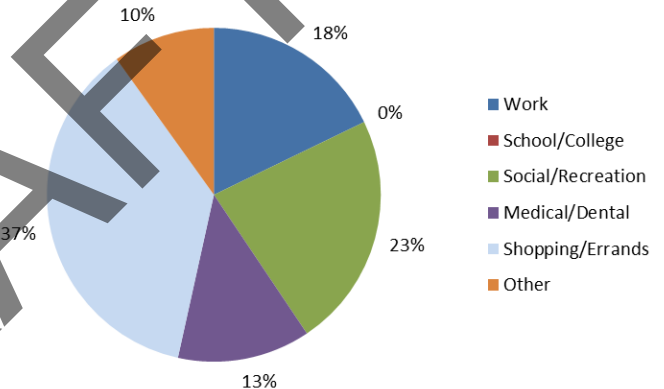


Perception of the Current Transit System

Buses that are in good working order, schedule info at bus stops, buses that are on time and courtesy of drivers were identified as the most important aspects of transit service. Service after midnight and bus stops with shelters were identified as least important.

There is generally good agreement that buses arrive and depart on time, drivers are courteous, the transit system is safe and reliable and buses are comfortable and clean. Respondents outlined that they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with midday frequency, evening frequency, and bus shelter maintenance. Important future transit improvements included improved summer service and more frequent morning and evening service.

Figure 4: Main Purpose for Transit Trips



Suggestions for the Future Transit System

Respondents identified many suggestions for improving the transit system and the role transit may play in their community in the next 5 years. Key suggestions are outlined in *Table 4*.

Table 4: Online Survey Suggestions for the Future Transit System

Key Theme	Suggestions
Increased Frequency	More service to Vesuvius and Fulford ferry terminals
Increased Reliability	On all routes
Increased Hours	Integrate transit schedule with ferry schedule to meet every ferry Meet the last Fulford ferry at 9:35 pm Earlier service on Saturday Earlier and later service on Sunday Extend hours in Summer
Bus Stop Amenities/Vehicles	Larger buses particularly on Saturdays Green buses
New/Improved Service Areas	Ruckle Park Better service to the south end of the Island Cusheon Lake Road Stewart Road Mansell Road Robinson Road Upper Ganges Road

Open House

There were a total of 44 comments from the open house at the Salt Spring Island Market on April 5, 2014. Respondents gave their input regarding improvements to the transit system in the next 5 years. Feedback is shown in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Open House Suggestions for the Transit System

Key Theme	Suggestions
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More bus shelters Bike racks at bus stops Larger buses, more capacity More bike racks on buses
New Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruckle Park Beaver Point Road to Cusheon Lake Road More routes to south end of Island Sunset Road to Southey Point Beaver Point Road via Stewart Road
Schedules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More frequent service Alter transit schedule to ferry schedule Improve connection from Fulford to Vesuvius
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great customer service Possibility of free transit Start a Park & Ride

NEXT STEPS

BC Transit is using these engagement responses to develop future service, infrastructure and fare/marketing improvement options for the future Salt Spring Island Transit System. In addition, a detailed analysis of ridership information and an assessment of current and future vehicle and infrastructure needs will be undertaken over the next month to support option development.

Improvement options will be presented to the SSITC and CRD for feedback prior to undertaking a second phase of consultation in early fall 2014. Once completed, the second phase of consultation will be used to refine options and recommendations and will be incorporated into a final service review report to be presented to the SSITC for endorsement and the CRD for approval. The priorities outlined in the final report will help guide local and provincial budget development and future transit investment.

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS

Table 6 identifies stakeholder organizations and individuals that were invited to be part of the Transit Service Review's Phase 1 Engagement.

Table 6: Stakeholder Advisory Group List

Government Representatives and Transit Partners	
Capital Regional District (CRD) Staff & Director	Islands Trust
Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission	Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
Ganges Faerie Minishuttle	MLA, Saanich North and the Islands
Ferries, Transportation and Emergency Services	
BC Ferries	RCMP Salt Spring
ICBC Road Safety	BC Ambulance Service
Main Road	Fire Rescue
Community Groups & Destinations	
Rotary Club of Salt Spring Island	Salt Spring Island Ferry Committee
Island Pathways	Lions Club of Salt Spring Island
Greenwoods Eldercare	Royal Canadian Legion Island
GI Seniors Residence Association	Lady Minto Hospital
Salt Spring Senior Services Society	Meadowbrook
Transition Salt Spring	Salt Spring Climate Action Group
Tourist Information Center	Salt Spring Island Conservancy
Salt Spring Island Foundation	Earth Festival Society
Partners Creating Pathways	Ruckle Park Staff
SSI Library	
Business	
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development Commission
Schools & Education	
School District 64 School Board	Salt Spring Island Middle School
Salt Spring Island Elementary School	Gulf Islands Secondary School

Appendix B:

Phase 2

Public Engagement Report

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Public Engagement Phase Two

Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review

November 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BC Transit, the Capital Regional District and the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission would like to acknowledge the contributions of the many individuals and organizations who supported the Phase 2 Public Engagement exercise. Thank you to staff at the Capital Regional District, the members of the Commission and staff of the Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd. (the operator of the transit system) for sharing their knowledge and connections and distributing information about the engagement events. Finally, thank you to all who joined us at the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review open houses and stakeholder workshop, and to those who took the time to complete the online and on-board surveys.

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INTRODUCTION

Community engagement has been conducted at key milestones of the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review to ensure the final review reflects the needs and priorities of the community. Designed to be inclusive, reaching riders and non-riders alike, the process has been led by BC Transit with strong support from the Capital Regional District (CRD), the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission (SSITC) and local community members.

This update provides a summary of Phase 2 of the Engagement: the Reporting Back Phase.

PURPOSE

The two-phased engagement strategy is designed to achieve the following goals:

- Identify and solicit targeted feedback from all major institutions, organizations and other key community groups
- Employ a variety of methods and means to stimulate participants and ensure a wide range of citizens are reached
- Ensure the final result reflects the public’s needs and desires by incorporating feedback into the review

The approach incorporates several strategies from the spectrum of engagement, including:

Inform	Provide information that will keep key stakeholders and public up to date and assist them in understanding issues, problems, alternatives, and/or solutions;
Listen and learn	BC Transit, partners, key stakeholders and public listen to and learn about each other’s views, plans, concerns and expectations;
Consult	An opportunity for stakeholders and the community to provide feedback on the degree to which the current transit system meets the needs of the community and what role they see transit playing in their community moving forward;
Report Back	Report back to stakeholders and the community the project vision, goals and proposed service and infrastructure improvement options that were developed using background data and their input. This identifies how public feedback was used to analyze issues and build alternatives and thereby make contributions to the decision making process;
Collaborate	BC Transit, the SSITC, CRD and the Ganges Faerie Minishuttle Ltd. (the system’s Operating Company) are considered partners in the Transit Service Review development process, including collaboration on analyzing issues, developing options, identifying preferred solutions and making recommendations. The final Transit Service Review will be presented to the SSITC and the CRD Board for consideration and approval.

SCOPE

The objective of Phase 2 was to provide information about the Transit Service Review process, to confirm that we'd accurately captured feedback regarding Salt Spring Island residents' priorities for transit service and infrastructure expansion, and to solicit feedback on these priorities.

METHODS

Phase 2 included a project website, ongoing collaboration with the Salt Spring Island Transit Commission, a stakeholder workshop, a survey, and open houses.

Salt Spring Island Project Website

A dedicated web page has been established for the Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review on the Transit Future section of the BC Transit website. This provides information on the Service Review process, as well as updates on upcoming events, reports, presentations and online surveys to solicit feedback during the engagement phases. The website can be found here:

http://www.bctransit.com/transitfuture/ssi_latestupdates.cfm

Stakeholder Workshop

In addition to the larger public outreach, focused feedback was sought from key stakeholders. A list of key stakeholders to be part of the workshop was developed with input from the CRD and the SSITC, and is found in Appendix A.



Stakeholder Workshop discussion

Of the 39 organizations invited, 13 representatives attended the afternoon stakeholder workshop at ArtSpring on October 17, 2014. Objectives of the workshop included exploring:

- Proposed service and infrastructure expansion priorities
- Options and needs for accessible transit service on the island
- Minimum service levels, the service area and when new service should be introduced to an area
- Ridership and performance guidelines that help us measure service effectiveness, monitor how well the transit system is progressing in achieving its goals, and make decisions on which service improvements should be prioritized (See Appendix D for more information).

The conversation at the stakeholder workshop focused mainly on the proposed service and infrastructure expansion options, and the needs and potential solutions for an accessible transit service. A great discussion around the importance of transit to Salt Spring Island residents in the short- and medium-terms also emerged.

Survey

An online survey was open to the public, including local residents, workers and visitors to Salt Spring Island. This survey was hosted on the SSI Transit website from September 19, 2014 – October 6, 2014. An identical paper survey was also available to the public on-board buses and at open house events. A copy of this survey is included in Appendix B.

Open House Engagement

BC Transit hosted two open houses, where staff was stationed to share information, collect feedback, and answer questions on proposed transit service and infrastructure expansion options. This also provided an opportunity to share information about the September 28, 2014 transit service expansion, which included adding later evening trips to Routes 2 and 6 to meet evening ferries. BC Transit and Ganges Faerie Minishuttle staff hosted open houses at:

- 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm at the bus stop outside the Ganges Visitor Info Centre
- 8:30 am – 4:00 pm at the Saturday Market

Advertising & Media

A variety of methods was used to advertise the opportunities to provide input. Print media included a press release, advertisements in local papers and posters on buses.

The stakeholder groups were emailed information on the engagement opportunities and a link to the website. The Salt Spring Island Transit website and the BC Transit Facebook page also provided information on engagement opportunities and a link was provided on the CRD website.

OUTCOMES

Response Rate

Many Salt Spring Island residents and visitors participated in Phase 2 Public Engagement activities, as shown in the table to the right.

Quick Facts	
Open House Attendees	100+
Survey Responses	20
Number of Open Houses	2
Stakeholder Workshop Attendees	13

(numbers are approximate)

Priorities for Salt Spring Island

In the first phase of Engagement, residents provided information about existing transit performance, as well as hopes and desires for the future of transit on Salt Spring Island. BC Transit used this feedback and an analysis of the existing transit system to develop options for service and infrastructure improvements.

Phase 2 Engagement involved soliciting feedback on these proposed improvements; specifically, participants online, at the open houses, and at the stakeholder workshop were asked to rank options within their top 3 priorities. A collation of this feedback is presented below. It's worth noting that these priorities have been determined based on stakeholder and public feedback, as well as an analysis of the existing transit system and Salt Spring Island as a community. All of the options elicited positive feedback, with some rising to the top in terms of order of importance to the community.

SERVICE OPTIONS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION (within the next 12 months):

September 28, 2014: Expanded Weekend Evening Service – Service extended until after 10:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays and until after 8:00pm on Sundays on the Route #2 Fulford Harbour and Route #6 SS Connector to better connect ferries and key destinations.

A high level of support was shown for the introduction of expanded weekend and evening service. People expressed excitement about using the expanded service on the same weekend the public open houses were held.

June 25, 2015: Summer Service to Ruckle Park – Two trips daily during summer. Exact routing and timing to be confirmed through a detailed implementation service discussion document to be completed in early spring 2015.

The majority of participants supported June 2015 service to Ruckle Park, with many residents requesting year-round service to nearby Stewart Road / Beaver Point. This option is being evaluated separately as part of the larger Service Review.

SHORT TERM SERVICE OPTIONS (1-5 years):

PRIORITY #1: Additional Winter Morning Service – More weekday morning trips on the Route #3 Vesuvius and Route #4 Long Harbour, plus more direct morning service from Fernwood and an additional morning Walker's Hook trip to better meet the needs of commuters and shoppers.

PRIORITY #2: Increased Summer Saturday Frequency on Route #2 Fulford Harbour– Service every half hour on the Route #2 Fulford Harbour between 10:00am and 5:00pm.

PRIORITY #3: Introductory Service to Beddis and Cusheon Lake Roads – Three trips per day to link Ganges with these new service areas, as well as providing additional options for residents traveling to/from destinations on the Ganges Hill.

PRIORITY #4: Extended Evening Service Monday-Thursday – Service extended until past 10:00pm Monday to Thursday to align with Friday-Saturday evening service.

MEDIUM TERM SERVICE OPTIONS (6-15 years):

PRIORITY #1: Separation of Fernwood and Walker's Hook, Additional Peak Service
- Existing Walker's Hook service would be separated from Route #5 Fernwood to create a new route also serving Robinson Road, plus additional service would be added to Route #3 Vesuvius and Route #5 Fernwood to create hourly service during morning and afternoon commuter times.

PRIORITY #2: Earlier Saturday Service – Earlier trips on the Route #2 Fulford Harbour and Route #6 SS Connector to meet early ferries at Fulford and Vesuvius and make Saturdays consistent with Weekdays.

In addition to the ranking of options within their priorities, some other service-related feedback that emerged as part of the Phase 2 process included:

- That the 2 Fulford route would merit hourly peak period weekday service at the same time that it was added to the Vesuvius and Fernwood areas, given the ridership that occurs along this route and not just at the Fulford ferry terminal.
- That the introduction of hourly service to the 2 Fulford route also potentially presents an opportunity to implement year-round service (three trips per day) to residents in the vicinity of Beaver Point Road/Ruckle Park.

A discussion on how to best serve accessible travel needs and people on Salt Spring with transit was held at the Stakeholder Workshop. BC Transit heard that while serving populations with special travel needs is important, the following ideas / approaches should not be explored until some of the shorter-term priorities have been implemented or explored. Ideas that emerged include:

- **Youth / Young Families**
 - Ensure transit is affordable; potential for free or reduced-cost transit for people under 16 years of age
 - Implement Family Travel program; one adult with a monthly pass can travel with up to two children under age 12 at no additional cost
 - Targeted marketing activities to encourage youth to use the bus
- **People with Disabilities who can't use transit independently**
 - Build on existing programs; create partnerships to maximize efficient use of resources
- **People who are capable of using transit independently, but who may not use the system for a variety of reasons**
 - Implement a travel training program led by an intern or a community member
 - Introduce bus drivers to people at local gathering places or facilities in order to help build relationships
 - Improve availability of real-time information online
- **People who don't currently have access to transit on SSI**
 - Implement the **Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle + Rural Transit Trip Windows** Option as described in the Accessible Transit Backgrounder (Appendix C); convert some or all of the existing Salt Spring Island Transit Route #1 Ganges Local trips into a flexible service operated by a smaller vehicle. Trips would still operate on an identified route (which already serves key residential, medical and shopping destinations), but additional time would be built into the schedule for off-route pick-ups. These off-route trip windows enable a smaller transit bus to be available for booking during certain periods of the day on specific days. For instance, service could be available from 9:00am - 10:30am and 2:00pm - 3:30pm two days/week to the south end of the island and two days/week to the north.

Based on the second phase of public feedback, the original list of future service options was further developed to add options and adjust timing/prioritization based on what we heard. The revised list of options is presented in the following table, with information on associated fleet and service hour expansion, as well as total costs.

Salt Spring Island Transit System
Service Option Summary: Preliminary Estimated Additional Annual Impacts*

Service Option	Buses**	Additional total kms	Service Hours	Rides	Total Revenue	Total Costs	Net Local Share of Costs	BC Transit Share of Costs	Rides per Hour	Cost per Ride
Options for Immediate Implementation (Within the next 12 months):										
Option 1: Expanded Weekend Evening Service	0	12,600	400	2,800	\$4,800	\$24,300	\$6,700	\$12,800	7.1	\$8.66
Option 2: Summer Service to Ruckle Park	0	8,200	260	2,300	\$3,900	\$15,800	\$3,600	\$8,300	8.9	\$6.85
Short Term Service Options (1-5 Years)										
Option 3: Additional Winter Morning Service	0	25,800	820	7,900	\$13,400	\$49,800	\$10,200	\$26,200	9.7	\$6.29
Option 4: Increased Summer Saturday Frequency on 2 Fulford Harbour	1	3,800	120	1,900	\$3,200	\$34,600	\$26,600	\$4,800	15.8	\$4.75
Option 5: Introductory Service to Beddis & Cusheon Lake Roads	0	17,700	560	2,900	\$4,900	\$34,000	\$11,200	\$17,900	5.2	\$11.71
Option 6: Extended Evening Service Monday - Thursday	0	13,300	420	2,900	\$4,900	\$25,500	\$7,200	\$13,400	6.9	\$8.78
Medium Term Options (6-15 Years)										
Option 7: Separation of Fernwood & Walker's Hook, Additional Peak Service	1	42,800	1,360	14,000	\$23,800	\$109,800	\$41,600	\$44,400	10.3	\$6.02
Option 8: Additional Fulford peak service, and year-round service to Ruckle Park	0	56,100	1,780	13,900	\$23,600	\$108,000	\$27,500	\$56,900	7.8	\$7.77
Option 9: Earlier Saturday Service	0	4,100	130	700	\$1,200	\$7,900	\$2,500	\$4,200	5.1	\$11.26
Option 10: Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle + Rural Transit Trip Windows	2	66,800	2,120	4,900	\$8,300	\$182,000	\$104,100	\$69,600	2.3	\$26.95
Option 11: Earlier Sunday & Holiday Service	0	9,200	290	1,400	\$2,400	\$17,600	\$5,900	\$9,300	4.7	\$12.56
Consideration of Limited Service to Other Areas	To be determined based on future development and system performance.									
Notes: * Based on 2014/15 AOA Budget. Final costs may change based on final budgets and confirmation of final operational details. ** The vehicle requirements shown here appear feasible but would need to be confirmed by BC Transit's Fleet Standards department closer to the implementation date. Annual local share of lease fee costs for a medium-duty vehicle used in these estimates is \$25,500. Options 5 & 8 use the vehicle in Option 4. Option 6 builds on the service added in Option 1.										
Version: November 2014										

Options for exploration later include:

Sunday and Holiday service on Routes #2 and #6, and service to other areas were identified as long-term priorities for implementation.

Some concern was raised regarding the quality and safety of existing road infrastructure on the Island, noting that new service should not be expanded to areas until roadwork updates are complete. Overall, increasing frequency of existing routes was cited as a priority. While there was a great reception for the introduction of a new, larger bus with more capacity, it was also suggested that BC Transit explore buses that use alternative fuel sources such as electricity, or a hybrid option.

Phase 1 Engagement also yielded suggestions for non-service options, such as fare, information, and marketing improvements. Feedback on these options is summarized on the following pages.

PASSENGER EXPERIENCE PRIORITIES:

PRIORITY #1: Expand Schedule Availability at Major Stops – Work with CRD and the system’s operator to implement and manage schedule information at key stops.

PRIORITY #2: Implement a Fulford Harbour Fare Vendor Location – Currently, Fulford Harbour is the only major neighbourhood on the island that does not have a ticket and pass vendor of some kind.

PRIORITY #3: Implement an Online Trip Planner – Salt Spring Island Transit has been identified as one of the priority transit systems for implementation of an online trip planner. Exact date is in the process of being confirmed but would likely be within the next three years.

Options for exploration later include:

- **Transit Ambassador Program** – Cost-shared through a small increase to the system’s existing marketing budget, this program would provide funding towards a summer work term position to work with the SSITC, CRD and BC Transit to promote the transit system at key events and look for opportunities to improve links to visitor information.
- **Implement a Family Travel Program** – Under this program, up to two youth aged 12 and younger would ride free anytime when travelling with their parent or guardian when that adult or senior is using a monthly pass or BC Bus Pass. The adult simply pays the fare using a monthly pass or BC Bus Pass. This program would be similar to that already in place in the Victoria Regional Transit System. It tends to have little impact on revenue but is a positive way to build ridership and good will for the system among regular riders.

- **Off-Island Day Pass Vendor(s)** – Continue to work with BC Ferries and other potential partners to see if it is possible to establish Day Pass sales for visitors prior to their arrival on Salt Spring Island, such as potentially onboard the Skeena Queen ferry or through one of the Swartz Bay vendor locations.
- **Earlier Monthly Pass Distribution** – Adjust the monthly pass distribution process so that passes are available for sale at Island vendor locations earlier in the month.

IMMEDIATE INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES (within the next 12 months):

PRIORITY #1: Fulford Harbour Ferry Terminal– Improvement of vehicle circulation to enable implementation of larger vehicles, with possible curbing and passenger amenity changes.

PRIORITY #2: Vesuvius Bay Ferry Terminal – Line painting in parking lot and improved signage to better establish area for transit vehicles and provide more information for waiting passengers. The addition of an accessible sidewalk pad at this stop should also be considered in future.

PRIORITY #3: Lower Ganges Road Bus Shelter – Installation of bus shelter, bench and customer information on Lower Ganges Road (near Country Grocer).

Salt Spring Island residents expressed concern over not being able to transport bikes on buses after dark. It's BC Transit's policy that bike racks on community buses can only be used during daylight hours, because the bikes block the headlights. This policy will continue to be re-evaluated as other models of buses and bike racks become available.

SHORT-TERM INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES (1-5 years):

PRIORITY #1: Long Term Fulford Ferry Terminal Planning – Continue to engage with BC Ferries and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to plan for an improved transit turnaround as part of any future development at or near the Fulford ferry terminal.

PRIORITY #2: Expanded Ganges Exchange, Phase I – Explore opportunities to work with land holders and area partners to increase passenger amenities and transit vehicle capacity at the main exchange outside the Ganges Visitor Information Centre. As part of this work, establish long term planning for a further expansion to this Exchange. (See Phase II in the medium term).

- **PRIORITY #3: Additional Shelters:** As funding becomes available, the following locations should be considered for additional shelters:
 - **Lower Ganges Rd. at Vesuvius Bay Road** (i.e. to serve Central Hall and Portlock Park on routes 3, 5 and 6).
 - **Fulford Ganges Rd. at Cusheon Lake Road**
 - **Mobrae neighbourhood** (exact location to be determined)

MEDIUM-TERM INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES (6-10 years):

- **Park & Ride** – As development occurs, look for an opportunity to reestablish a Park & Ride location at the old Fulford Inn site or at another suitable location.
- **Expanded Ganges Exchange, Phase II** – As service expands, the exchange will likely need two additional vehicle bays either adjacent to the exchange, across the street or at another location. This option would implement the Phase II recommendations/planning established as part of Phase I.
- **Long Term Fulford Ferry Terminal Implementation** – This would implement any of the improvements to the Fulford Harbour ferry terminal transit turnaround determined during the planning phase in the short term.

A longer-term facilities plan should also be developed to ensure yard and garage space for the growing system.

NEXT STEPS

BC Transit will use the feedback collected in both phases of Public Engagement to refine the Service Review Options Report and its recommendations for short- and longer-term transit service and infrastructure priorities.

Final recommendations will be incorporated into a final service review report to be presented to the SSITC for endorsement and the CRD for approval in early 2015. The priorities outlined in the final report will help guide local and provincial budget development and future transit investment.

APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS

The following table details the stakeholder organizations and individuals that were invited to be part of the Transit Service Review's Phase 2 Public Engagement.

Government Representatives and Transit Partners	
Capital Regional District (CRD) Staff & Director	Islands Trust
Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission	Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure
Ganges Faerie Minishuttle	MLA, Saanich North and the Islands
Ferries, Transportation and Emergency Services	
BC Ferries	RCMP Salt Spring
ICBC Road Safety	BC Ambulance Service
Main Road	Fire Rescue
Community Groups & Destinations	
Rotary Club of Salt Spring Island	Salt Spring Island Ferry Committee
Island Pathways	Lions Club of Salt Spring Island
Greenwoods Eldercare	Royal Canadian Legion Island
GI Seniors Residence Association	Lady Minto Hospital
Salt Spring Senior Services Society	Meadowbrook
Transition Salt Spring	Salt Spring Climate Action Group
Tourist Information Center	Salt Spring Island Conservancy
Salt Spring Island Foundation	Earth Festival Society
Partners Creating Pathways	Ruckle Park Staff
SSI Library	
Business	
Salt Spring Island Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development Commission
Schools & Education	
School District 64 School Board	Salt Spring Island Middle School
Salt Spring Island Elementary School	Gulf Islands Secondary School

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

DRAFT



Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review Survey



BC Transit, the Capital Regional District and the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission are reviewing transit service on Salt Spring Island for possible future changes.

Based on the feedback you provided in Spring 2014, we've put together some proposed service improvements. Please take the survey to share your feedback on the proposed priorities for service, fares, customer information, bus stops, and buses. We'll consider your input, cost, and feasibility in setting short-term, medium-term, and long-term transit priorities on Salt Spring Island.

We heard you: did we get it right?

Q1. Which age category do you fall in?

- Under 15
- 15 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 +
- Prefer not to answer.

Q2. Please indicate your residency status on Salt Spring Island.

- Permanent
- Seasonal
- Part Time
- Visitor

Proposed Service Options

The following sections present the service options developed thus far with the Capital Regional District and Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission. These recommendations are based on the key themes from Phase 1 Public Engagement as well as an analysis of the existing system.

Q3. What are your priorities for Immediate and Short Term Improvements (next 1-5 years)?

Mark your priorities 1 – 4.

- Summer Service to Ruckle Park (Currently slated to start in June 2015)** – Two trips daily during summer between Ruckle Park and Fulford Harbour, connecting to 2 Fulford Harbour.
- Additional Summer Schedule Saturday Service - Half-hourly service frequency on the 2 Fulford Harbour between 10:00am and 5:00pm.**
- Additional Winter Schedule Morning Service** – More weekday morning trips on the 3 Vesuvius and 4 Long Harbour, plus more direct morning service from Fernwood, and an additional morning Walker's Hook trip.
- Introductory Service to Beddis and Cusheon Lake Roads** – Three trips per day to link Ganges with these new service areas, plus additional service to the Ganges Hill area.

Q3a. Please describe any comments or concerns you have with the above proposals. Are there any that you think should shift to the medium term?



Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review Survey



Q3b. Are there any other Short Term Improvements you would like to see? Please describe them below.

Q4. What are your priorities for Medium Term Improvements (next 6–15 years)?

Mark your priorities 1 – 3.

Refer to map of the proposed Walker’s Hook route and map of the proposed short term/medium term complete system.

- Separation of Fernwood and Walker’s Hook** – Existing Walker’s Hook service separated from **5 Fernwood** to create a new **7 Walker’s Hook** route also serving Robinson Road.
- Additional Peak Service** – Trips added to the **3 Vesuvius** and **5 Fernwood** to create hourly service during morning and afternoon commuter times.
- Earlier Saturday Service** – Earlier trips on the **2 Fulford Harbour** and **6 SS Connector** to meet ferries at Fulford and Vesuvius and make Saturdays consistent with Weekdays.
- Extended Evening Service Monday-Thursday** – Service extended until past 10:00pm Monday to Thursday to align with Friday-Saturday evening service.
- Earlier Sunday and Holiday Service** – Earlier trips on the **2 Fulford Harbour** and **6 SS Connector** to meet ferries and make Sundays consistent with the rest of the week.
- Consideration of New Service** – Consideration of limited service (2 days per week) to other currently unserved areas of the Island as population changes and service becomes viable.

Q4a. Please describe any comments or concerns you have with the above proposals. Are there any that you think should be implemented sooner?



Q4b. Are there any other Medium Term Improvements you would like to see? Please describe them below.

Proposed Supporting Options

The following sections present the priority supporting options (such as fares, marketing, and infrastructure) developed thus far with the Capital Regional District and Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission. These options support the service improvements outlined in the previous section and are based on the key themes from Phase 1 Public Engagement and an outlook on their ability to be implemented.

Refer to the detailed description of proposed service options., the SSI Transit 2014 Service Review, drafted Sept. 15, 2014.

Q5. Proposed Fare & Pass Vendor Priorities.

Mark your priorities 1 – 3.

- Implement Family Travel Program** – Monthly pass holders could bring up to two youth under 12 on board the bus for free.
- Implement Fulford Harbour Fare Vendor.**
- Off-Island Day Pass Vendor.**
- Earlier Monthly Pass Distribution.**

Q6. Marketing and Customer Information Priorities.

Mark your priorities 1 – 3.

- Implement Online Trip Planner.**
- Expand Schedule Availability at Major Stops.**
- Transit Ambassador Program** – Part time summer position to help promote transit at festivals and events.

Q7. Infrastructure Priorities (Bus stops, shelters, etc).

Mark your priorities 1 – 3.

- Fulford Harbour** – New curbing and signage.
- Vesuvius Bay** – Line painting at terminal to improve bus zone.
- Uptown** – Installation of new shelter on Lower Ganges Rd. at Crofton.
- Expanded Ganges Exchange, Phase 1** – Explore opportunities to work with land holders and area partners to increase passenger amenities and space for buses.
- Long Term Fulford Ferry Terminal Planning** – Work with BC Ferries and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to plan for an improved transit turnaround.
- Additional Shelters** – Lower Ganges Rd. at Vesuvius Bay Rd.; Portlock Park/Central Hall; Fulford Ganges Rd. at Cusheon Lake Rd.; Mobrae neighbourhood.
- Long Term Facilities Planning** – Ensure yard and garage space for future growth.



Salt Spring Island Transit Service Review Survey



Q8. Are there any other Fare, Customer Information, or Infrastructure priorities you would like to see?
Please describe them below.

Q9. Do you have any additional comments on how we can improve Salt Spring Island Transit?

Thank you for your participation!

Your input will be used to help shape the final draft of the service review and guide the future development of Salt Spring Island Transit.

Check back this Fall to learn more about these exciting transit improvements in your community.

Salt Spring Island Parks and Recreation
145 Vesuvius Bay Road
Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 1K3

For more Information

Visit www.bctransit.com/transitfuture

or e-mail SaltSpringTransit@bctransit.com

Appendix C:

Accessibility Backgrounder

DRAFT

Workshop Discussion Backgrounder: Accessible Transit on Salt Spring Island

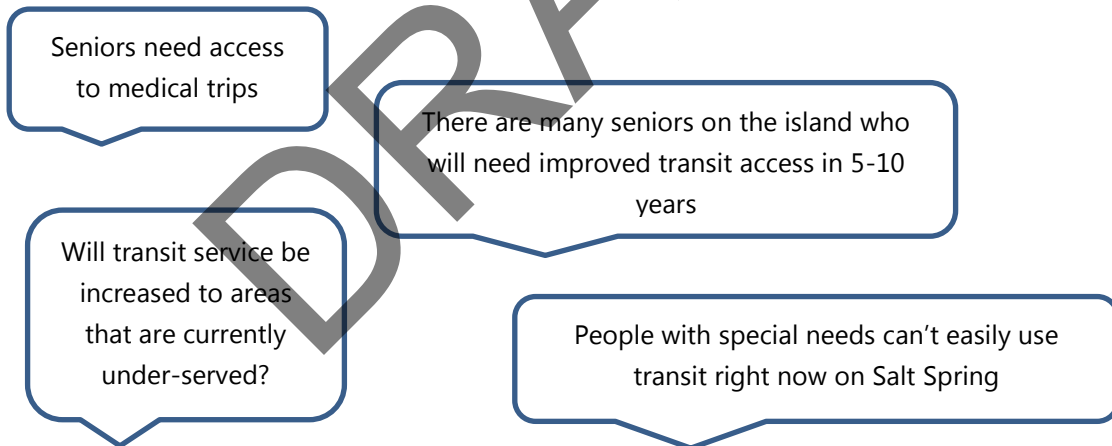
Introduction

In partnership with the Capital Regional District and the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission, BC Transit has been conducting a Service Review of the Salt Spring Island Transit System, including identifying accessible transit needs and options on the Island.

The purpose of this Backgrounder is to provide an overview of findings to date and preliminary options for providing specialized accessible transportation on Salt Spring. The intent is to use this Backgrounder as the starting point for further discussion and development of options by participants at the October 17, 2014 Transit Stakeholder Workshop.



Through conversations with stakeholders and the public since May 2014, BC Transit has heard questions about and interest in accessible transit service for Salt Spring Island. Some of the main themes we have heard include:



One of the objectives of the Transit Service Review is to evaluate service options and the feasibility of providing service specifically to meet the needs of people with disabilities. While conventional transit service will continue to expand on Salt Spring, understanding the specific needs of people requiring different transit options will help us plan and implement the best-fitting solutions for Salt Spring residents.

As part of the Transit Service Review, we want to hear from you. Please come to the workshop prepared to discuss priorities and potential solutions for accessible transit on Salt Spring Island. We're also interested in exploring possible partnerships with other

groups on the island to see if there is a way that costs could be reduced or assets shared in order to use community resources as effectively as possible.

Highlights of What We've Heard/Discovered So Far

On Salt Spring Island, the fixed-route transit system (serving regular routes and schedules) is already a success story and is highly valued by the community. Highlights of accessible service information collected so far include:

- Both younger seniors (ages 56-74) and older seniors (age 75+) make up 25% of the Salt Spring Island population, as shown in the maps below:



- The biggest need for travel by older seniors appears to be midday (for example, 9:00am to 3:00pm). There was much more need expressed for travel on island rather than off-island.
- By far (as shown in the map above at right and based on conversations to date with residents and stakeholders), the highest concentration of older seniors and people with disabilities is within the core of Ganges or along the Lower Ganges Road corridor, an area already well served by existing transit.
- Other than accessing general social and shopping needs, one of the key transportation needs for people with a disability on the island is accessing the bathing program at Greenwoods Eldercare and the day program (operating from 10:00am to 2:30pm) at Braehaven Assisted Living.

- Among existing transportation resources on the Island, Greenwoods Eldercare does have a van that it uses to pick up residents but it can only access those within a 15 minute window. This van may not be available over the longer term.
- If Salt Spring Island Transit were to expand to offer some level of door-to-door service, the nature of roads and driveways on the island means that the existing system vehicles (needed to meet large passenger loads to/from ferries) would be too big. This means that two additional smaller vehicles (one in-service plus one spare) would be required if the transit system were to begin providing door-to-door handyDART style service.
- Transit ridership on Salt Spring Island is already high, with large community support for existing and expanding service. There was a mix of perspectives on how transit should evolve on the island:
 - Many residents wanted to see the existing system expand in frequency first before expanding the type of service offered to include some level of door-to-door service, while others saw the lack of door-to-door service as a high community need.
 - There was a lot of openness expressed to exploring other partnerships and ways of using existing community resources to meet this need.
 - There was need expressed for service to more rural areas of the island, but many of those residents also felt that a lower level of service (ie fewer trips and days per week) made sense given the lower populations.

For your consideration prior to the workshop:

→ *Is there anything you would add to or change about this summary?*

Identifying Needs on Salt Spring Island

When speaking about the need for accessible service on Salt Spring, it's important to reflect on the needs we've heard described on the Island to-date. Overall, three types of potential passengers have been identified:

- **People with a disability not currently using transit**
Example: John – John has a cognitive impairment and is a younger senior. John cannot independently use the conventional transit system, and wants to get to the bathing program at Greenwoods Eldercare, as well as the day program (operating from 10:00am to 2:30pm) at Braehaven Assisted Living. Greenwoods has a van for pick-ups, but John lives just a bit too far out to be picked up within Greenwoods'

15-minute drive window. In a larger urban setting, John would meet the eligibility criteria for handyDART.

- **People living in more rural areas of the Island**

Example: Karl & Kate – Karl and Kate are living in a rural area on Salt Spring, quite a distance from an existing transit route. They'd like to remain living in this area but want an on-demand bus service to use when they need it.

- **Younger seniors who are not currently using transit**

Example: Sally – Sally is a senior who lives on a bus route and is capable of using conventional transit independently. Sally hasn't ever tried using transit on Salt Spring because she has a car and is comfortable driving, but she knows that at night or in bad weather, driving isn't as easy for her anymore. Eventually, she wants to sell her car and use the bus exclusively, and hopes that transit service will be more frequent and reliable by that time.

For your consideration prior to the workshop:

→Are there people whose needs we haven't captured here?

Service Options for Discussion at the October 17th Workshop

Based on information from community stakeholders to date on travel needs and gaps for people with a disability and older seniors living on the island, we'd like to discuss the following service concepts at the workshop:

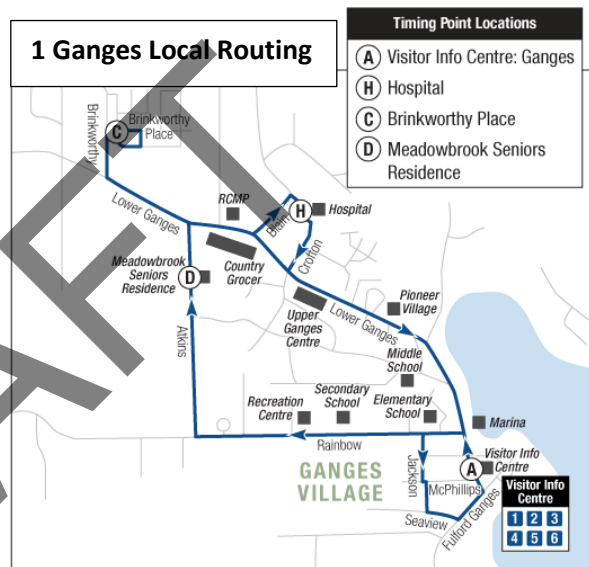
Option 1: Continue to operate specialized service through community groups and focus on building the fixed-route portion of the Salt Spring Island Transit System

– This option would look to see if there are existing local resources or partnerships that could be used to maintain or build door-to-door services for people with disabilities. Over the longer term, the transit system might evolve to also assist with these services but for the short to medium term, the focus would be on building the frequency, reliability and ease of use of existing transit routes on the island. This option would potentially serve the needs of John and Sally from the examples in the previous section.

Option 2: Taxi Supplement - A taxi supplement budget could be established for Salt Spring, which would enable people like John to take trips with people with similar transportation needs / destinations. These passengers would need to be registered with the system and be eligible for service by having a disability sufficiently severe that it prevents them from using regular transit. Trips would be scheduled such that

passengers may share rides. Passengers would pay the transit system fare when they used the taxi and the remainder of the metered amount would be funded by the transit system. The advantage of this method is that it is relatively cost-effective and ensures that the service is available to those who need it most. The disadvantage is that there is currently no wheelchair accessible taxi available on Salt Spring and there may not be adequate availability of taxi vehicles to serve demand.

Option 3: Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle: This option would convert some or all of the existing Salt Spring Island Transit route 1 Ganges Local trips into a flexible service operated by a smaller vehicle. Trips would still operate on an identified route (which already serves key residential, medical and shopping destinations), but additional time would be built into the schedule for off-route pick-ups. The advantage to this method is that it enables the transit system the flexibility to provide door-to-door service in the area with the highest concentration of seniors and people with a disability. The disadvantage is that its cost per passenger carried would be about double that of the existing service (which isn't to say that it's not worth it, but that the community must come to a consensus on how it prioritizes its local transit resources). This option would serve the needs of John described in the previous examples.



Option 4: Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle + Rural Transit Trip Windows: Building on the Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle described in Option 3, this option would provide limited door-to-door service for more rural areas of the island using "trip windows". Trip windows enable a smaller transit bus to be available for booking during certain periods of the day on specific days. For instance, service could be available from 9:00am - 10:30am and 2:00pm - 3:30pm two days/week to the south end of the island and two days/week to the north. This option could provide access to people like John and Karl & Kate.

For your consideration prior to the workshop:

- Are there other options we've missed?
- Are there partners we could work with to provide accessible transit service?