
SUBJECT: RAPIDBUS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY UPDATE

PURPOSE

This update on the RapidBus Implementation Strategy in the Victoria Region is provided to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) for **INFORMATION**.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In spring 2020, BC Transit initiated a process to develop a RapidBus Implementation Strategy. The intention of this strategy is to create a unifying action plan to accelerate the implementation of RapidBus services throughout the Victoria region. The key components of the plan will include the following:

- A summary of the role RapidBus services may take in supporting regional transportation challenges as well contribute to COVID-19 recovery efforts;
- Description of what a RapidBus service is and the critical features (or ‘toolkit’) needed for the implementation of a RapidBus service. This includes information on required service levels and infrastructure needs and their associated estimated costs;
- The identification of primary corridors for the implementation of RapidBus services and a summary of infrastructure and service needs; and
- A list of actions needed to launch RapidBus services in the Victoria Region and a proposed timeline of critical milestones with clearly identified roles and responsibilities.

The development of this plan has been supported through engagement with local and regional government partners as well as support from the consulting firm Urban Systems. It should be noted that any implementation of RapidBus services in the region will need to be a collaborative partnership between BC Transit, the local government partners and the Ministry of Transportation, particularly with regards to the development of infrastructure projects.

The final plan is expected to be shared with the Victoria Regional Commission at the February 23, 2021 meeting. A more detailed process timeline can be found later in this report.

RAPIDBUS DEFINITION

RapidBus is synonymous with rapid transit – only using buses – designed to connect and support designated urban centres of high density, mixed-use areas of the region with attractive transit services and facilities. RapidBus includes branded services, corridor treatments (e.g. bus-only lanes and queue jumpers) and unique stations. For existing and future transit customers, RapidBus will be connected, frequent, fast and reliable which will increase transit ridership and continue the shift towards sustainable transportation in the Victoria region.

The three primary components of RapidBus service are as follows:

- **Connected** – RapidBus is the cornerstone to supporting sustainable growth in the region. The routes will connect urban centres and support affordable and accessible transportation solutions.
- **Frequent** – RapidBus service will make taking transit easy by providing consistently frequent service throughout all times of the day.
- **Fast & Reliable** – RapidBus speeds and service will be competitive with the personal automobile through investments in transit priority infrastructure.

DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

Based on initial analysis and engagement with the local and regional partners, the implementation of RapidBus services in the Victoria Region will likely occur over two phases. The first phase will see the implementation of the Westshore to Downtown Line. The second phase will see the implementation of RapidBus services in other corridors throughout the region. These two phases are summarized in more detail over the following pages.

Phase I – Westshore to Downtown Line

The Westshore to Downtown Line has been the centre of planning, design, and implementation of infrastructure improvements for many years. BC Transit, along with area municipalities and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, continue to advance improvements that include everything from bus-only lanes and station area enhancements through to service frequency increases along the corridor.

The Westshore Line will connect Langford Centre Station to the Parliament Station in downtown Victoria connecting the regional centres of downtown Victoria, Uptown, Colwood Corners and Langford Centre, as well as several other urban nodes and key destinations. The map below (Figure 1) summarizes the proposed 22 station locations.

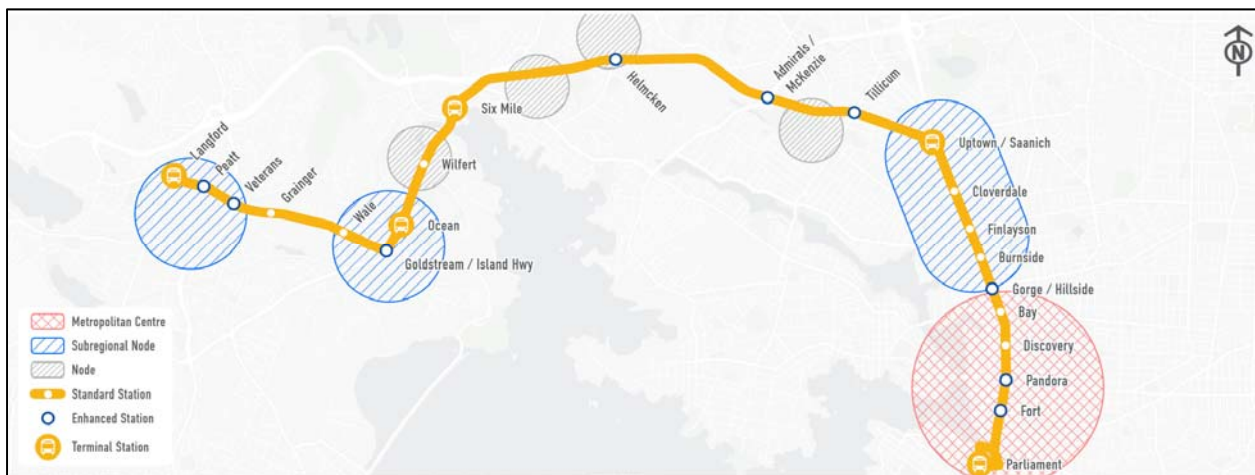


Figure 1 – Conceptual Map of the Proposed Westshore-Downtown Victoria RapidBus

The Westshore to Downtown line is the ideal candidate for the initial introduction of RapidBus services in the Victoria Region for the following reasons:

- A significant amount of transit supportive infrastructure has already been completed on the corridor;
- Additional transit supportive infrastructure has been identified and is currently in the design phases in collaboration with municipal partners;
- Infrastructure investments on this corridor will also benefit other regional transit routes that share the same roadways;
- The corridor currently experiences some of the highest transit demand in the region and is expected to continue to grow; and
- The corridor already has high transit service frequency during all time periods.

Based on the analysis thus far, the implementation of an officially branded RapidBus service connecting the Westshore to Downtown Victoria could take place within the next two years. More detailed information will be shared in the final plan.

Phase II – Implementation of RapidBus Services on Other Corridors in the Region

As part of this plan, other corridors have been analyzed to determine the feasibility of future RapidBus services. Some of the additional corridors that are being analyzed include the following:

- Peninsula to Downtown Victoria
- UVIC to Uptown
- UVIC to Downtown Victoria

These additional corridors still require additional planning and engagement to advance concepts and feasibility with local government partners. Further details on these corridors will be shared in the final plan.

PROCESS TIMELINE

Below is the proposed timeline over the next 12 months towards the implementation of RapidBus services in the Victoria Region.

Date	Action
December 1, 2020	Staff report presented to VRTC for information
December-February 2021	BC Transit to present RapidBus project updates to local government elected officials across the region for information
February 23, 2021	Final RapidBus plan presented to the VRTC for endorsement
Spring 2021	Launch of public information portal (website) and development/completion of the RapidBus branding
Spring 2021	Initiate additional analysis (as required) on Phase II RapidBus corridors through partnerships with local governments
Summer 2021	Public and key stakeholder engagement for the detailed implementation plan of the Westshore to Downtown Victoria RapidBus Line
TBD	Implementation of Westshore to Downtown Victoria Line

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission receive this report for **INFORMATION**.

Respectfully,

Matthew Boyd
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