

# Service Change Plan Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System July 2018 Expansion



## OVERVIEW

In order to continue delivering on the Cowichan Valley Transit Future Plan goals and objectives and to support the success of the transit system, the Cowichan Valley Regional District approved a transit service expansion of 1,500 hours for implementation in July 2018.

This report outlines the planning rationale for the service changes, detailed routes and infrastructure requirements and timeline required for a successful implementation.

The service changes were developed based on action items in the Cowichan Valley Transit Future Plan (2012), review of adopted service standards alongside route performance data, and ongoing feedback from the transit operators, the public and community stakeholders.

The community engagement process for this service change was a collaborative effort by BC Transit, the Cowichan Valley Regional District, and the local operating company, First Canada. Five public input sessions were held and print and online surveys were distributed to collect input on proposed changes. Based on evaluation of the customer benefits and trade-offs, ridership analysis, public feedback, and local government approval, the 1,500-hour service expansion discussed in this report will be implemented on July 2, 2018.





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## 1.0 Introduction

In order to continue delivering on the goals and objectives of the Cowichan Valley Transit Future Plan and to support alignment with adopted service standards and performance guidelines, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) approved a transit service expansion of 1,500 conventional service hours, effective July 2, 2018.

This report outlines the routes, schedules and infrastructure required for successful implementation of the service changes. It provides:

1. An overview of the implementation timeline;
2. A summary of the planning rationale with data analysis and public engagement results;
3. An overview of route changes and trips being added on well performing routes; and
4. An overview of the marketing and communication plans to advise customers about the transit improvements.

**Table 1: Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System Implementation Timeline**

Date*	Deliverable
September 2017	MOU for 2018 Expansion signed
September 2017	Proposed service change options developed for public engagement
October / November 2017	Public Engagement Period
December 2017	Review of engagement results to confirm service changes for scheduling
January – February 2018	Scheduling review to confirm implementation recommendations
February 2018	CVRD Approval of Implementation Recommendations*
March – May 2018	Updates to Riders Guide*
May / June 2018	Rider Alert circulated to preview service and fare changes coming
June 2018	Bus stop and street schedule updates
June 2018	Riders Guide released, website updated and marketing/media
July 2, 2018	Service Implementation

*\*A fare review was also initiated in September 2017 to provide options for changes in cash, ticket, and pass prices to coincide with service changes being implemented in July 2018. New fares are effective July 2. Please see Service Change Summary 2018 for this information.*

## 2.0 Planning Rationale

Based on route performance data and ridership count data collected in March 2017, transit service priorities were developed to improve the transit network. Changes include an expansion of 1,500 annualized service hours. Changes include restructuring Routes 3 Quamichan, Route 4 Maple Bay, and Route 5 Eagle Heights to improve travel times for customers and provide more direct service into the downtown core.

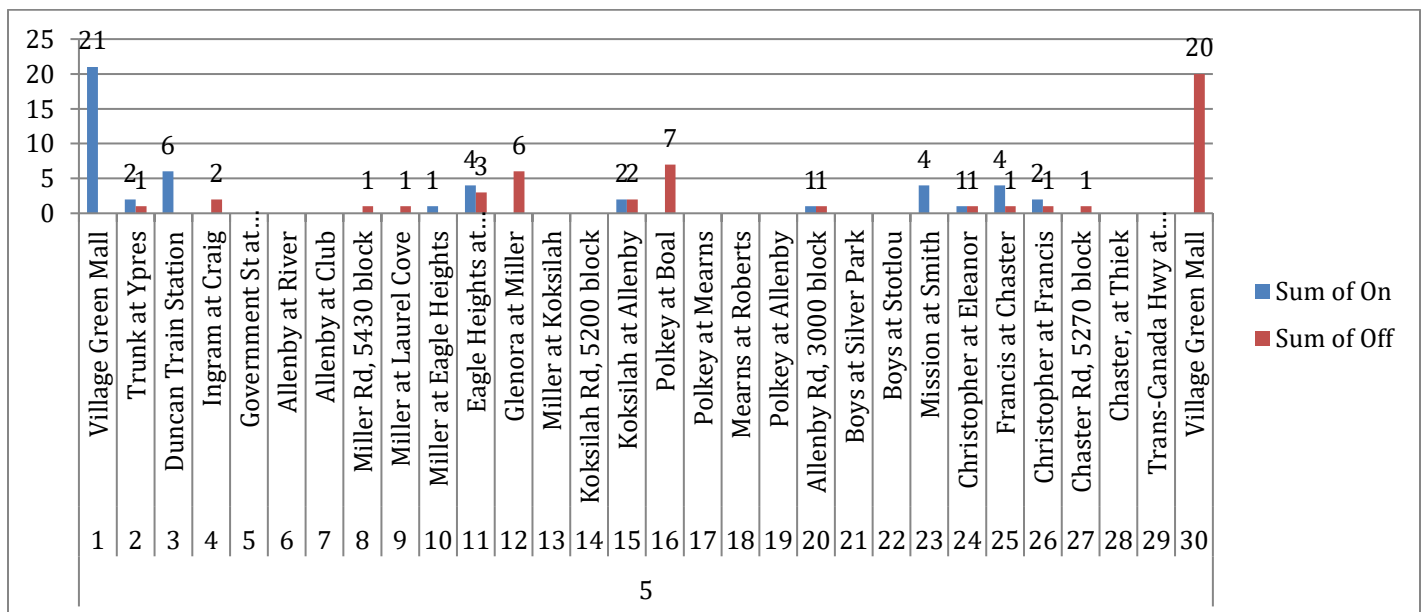
### Key Service Changes for July 2, 2018

- **Route 3:** Restructuring to provide more direct service between Cowichan Commons and the Downtown area.
- **Route 4:** Restructuring to provide more direct service between the Marchmont/McKinstry area and Duncan in both directions.
- **Route 5:** Restructuring to offer improved travel times
- **Route 2:** Two new trips from Cowichan Commons to Village Green Mall
- **Route 6:** New 8:30 am morning trip (departs Village Green Mall)
- **Route 7:** New 7:30 am evening trip (departs Village Green Mall)

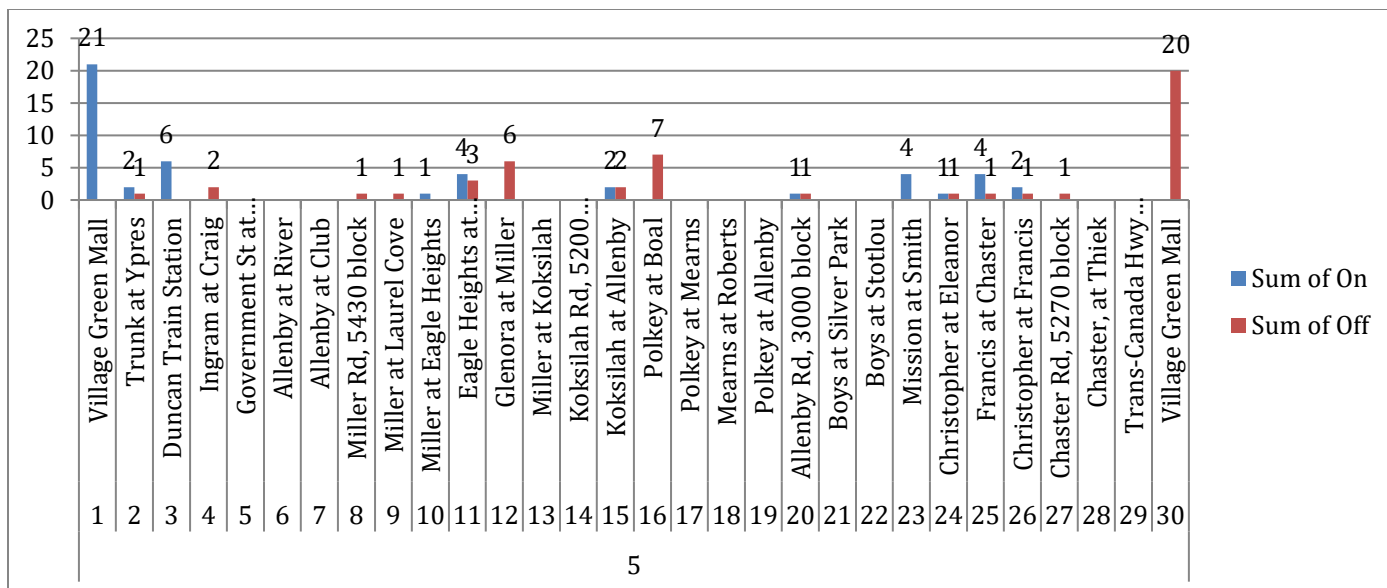
## 2.1 Route 3 Analysis

### Change Overview:

- The changes to this route will offer more direct service between Cowichan Commons and downtown Duncan in both directions.
- Service to the Lakes and Jaynes neighbourhood area has been removed based on low ridership, as shown in the graphs below. Transit service from these areas, however, is still possible via Route 4 on Tzouhalem Road and Route 6 on Lakes Road.
- Service has been added to Howard Avenue in both directions.



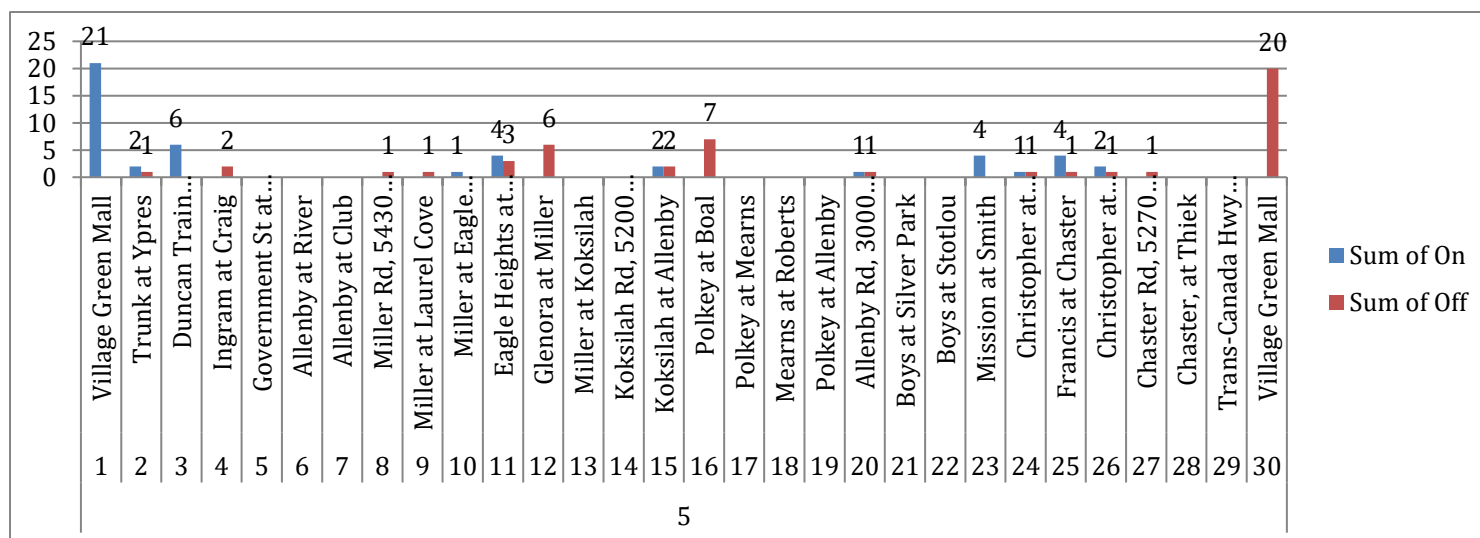


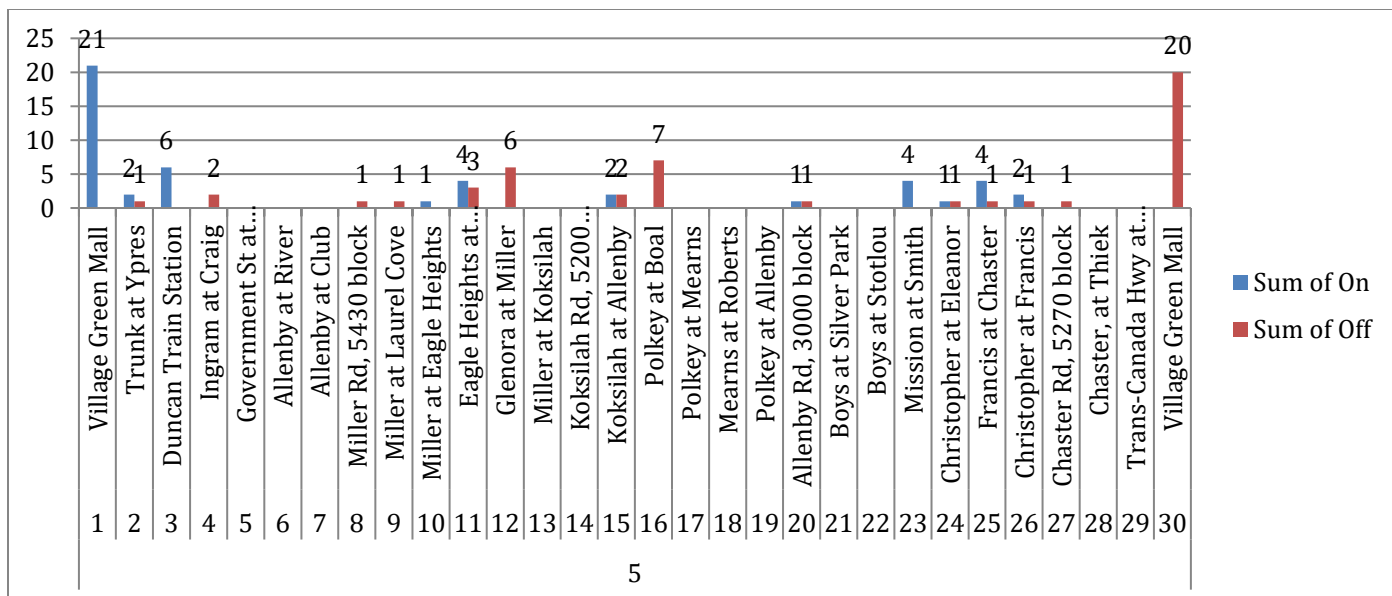


## 2.2 Route 4 Analysis

### Change Overview:

- The changes to this route will provide direct service to the Marchmont/McKinstry neighbourhood in both directions (i.e. on all Route 4 trips).
- Service has been removed from the Osprey, Pacific, Nevilane and McKenzie loop as well as the Everest, Donnay and Stonehouse loop due to low ridership. Analysis, as shown below indicates that these sections generate low ridership.

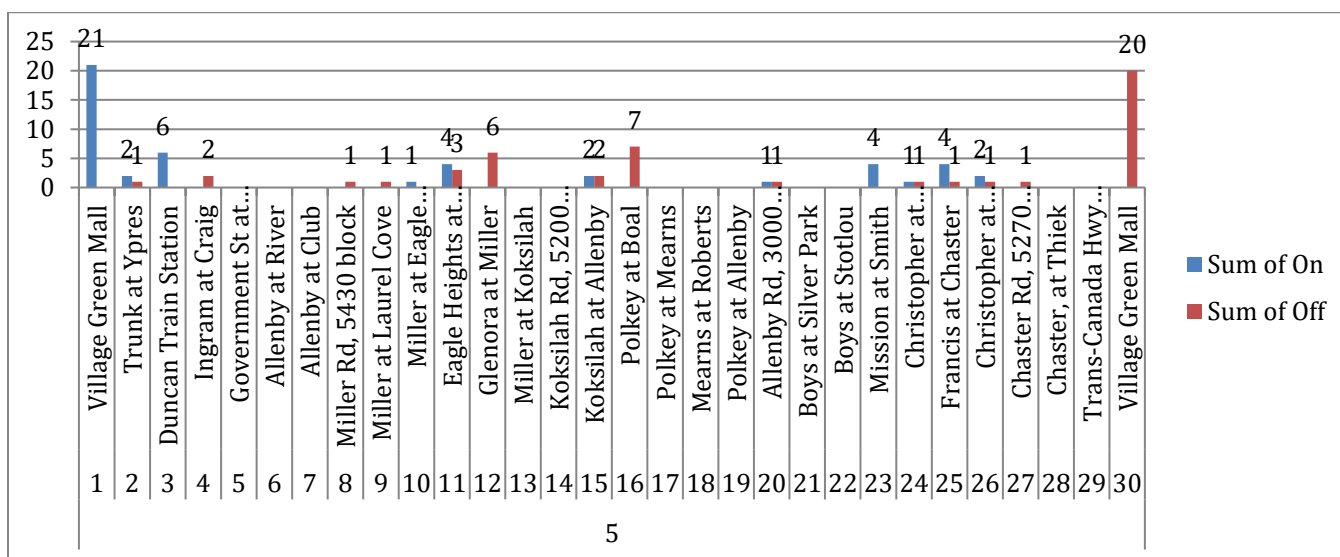




## 2.3 Route 5 Analysis

### Change Overview:

- The changes to this route will provide more direct service by removing segments on Allenby and Boys Road to the west of Highway 1 that were not well used. Analysis, as shown below indicates that these sections generate low ridership.
- Buses will also travel in the opposite direction along Chaster, Mission and Boys Road east of Highway 1 for more direct connections to Duncan.



### 3.0 Public Engagement

As part of the service change process, BC Transit and the Cowichan Valley Regional District hosted five public engagement sessions, engaging with 68 people at these events.

**68 Open House  
Attendees**



**Online Survey  
Paper Survey**

October 23 – November 12

**245 respondents**



#### Five Open Houses



**Cowichan Lake, Country Grocer**

**October 26**

**9:30 – 11:00 am**

**9**

**Duncan, Village Green Mall**

**October 26**

**12:00 – 2:00 pm**

**26**

**Chemainus, 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel Store**

**October 27**

**10:00 – 12:00 pm**

**13**

**Duncan, Train Station**

**March 15**

**11:00 – 1:30 pm**

**7**

**North Cowichan, Walmart Store**

**October 28**

**10:00 – 12:00 pm**

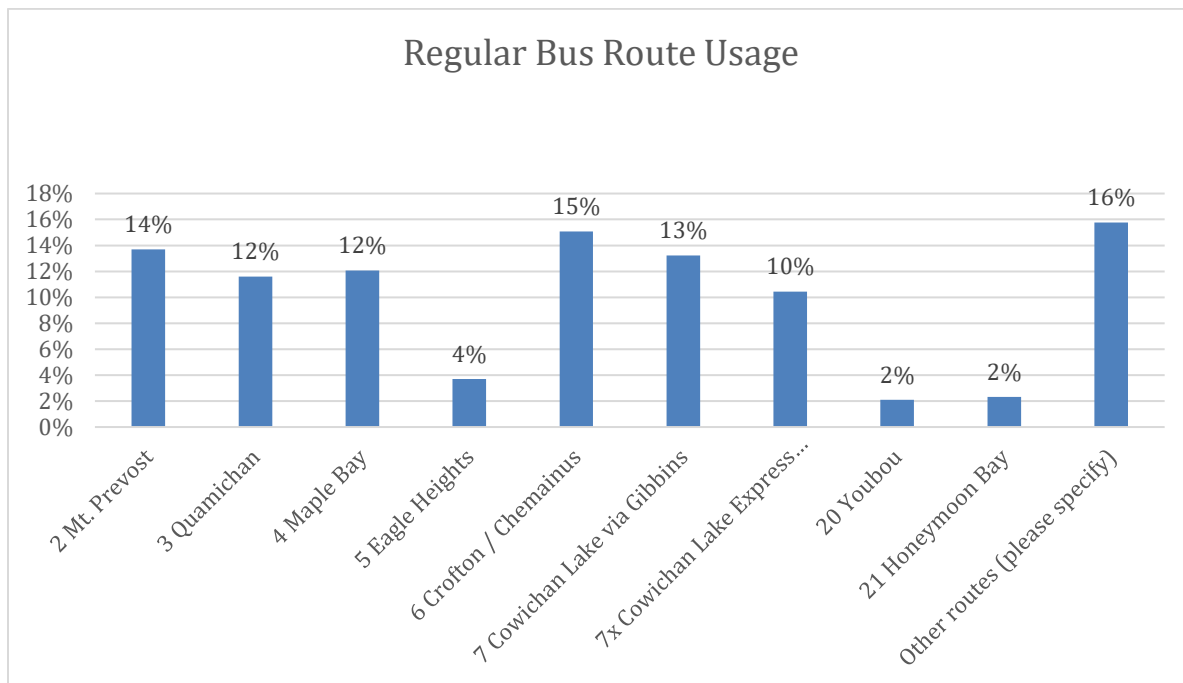
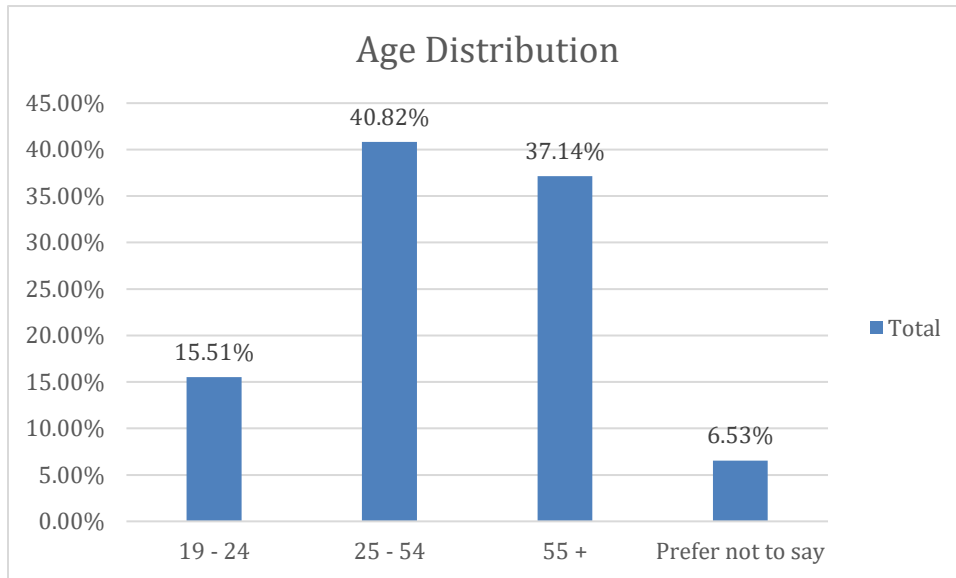
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## 4.0 Engagement Results

The following results represent online survey, paper survey, and open house session information.

### 4.1 Age



Respondents using Other Routes were primarily using Routes 8 and 9 (South Cowichan area), and to a smaller degree, Ladysmith and Cowichan Valley Commuter routes.

## 4.2 Route 3

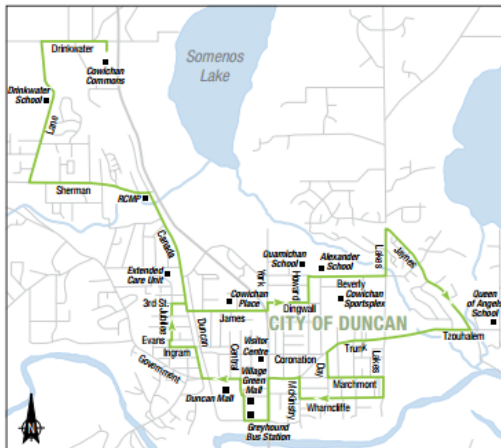
### Proposed Route Changes and Schedule Improvements

#### 3 Quamichan

Significant changes to **3 Quamichan** are proposed to reflect ridership and use of this route. Key proposed changes include:

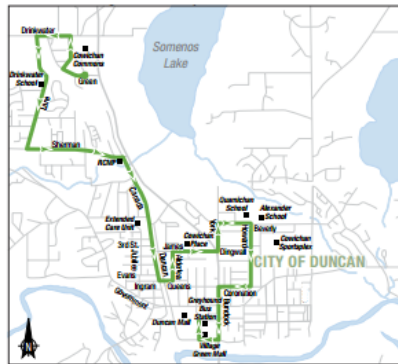
- Creating more direct access between downtown Duncan and Cowichan Commons in both directions (using Canada Avenue, Sherman and Lane Roads)
- Having transit service between Cowichan Commons and the Howard/Beverly neighbourhood area to the east of the TransCanada highway in *both* directions

#### Current Routing

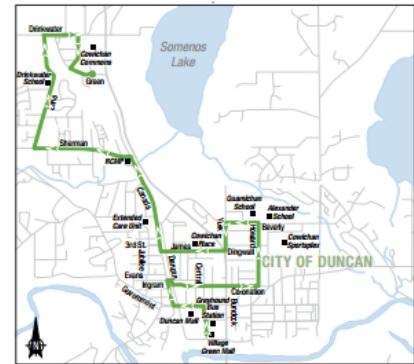


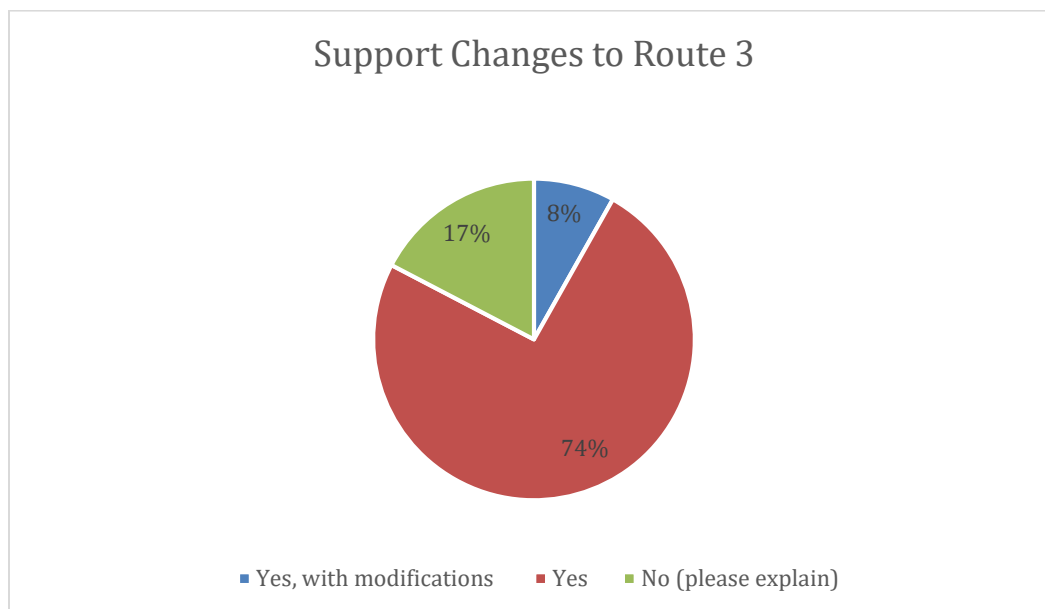
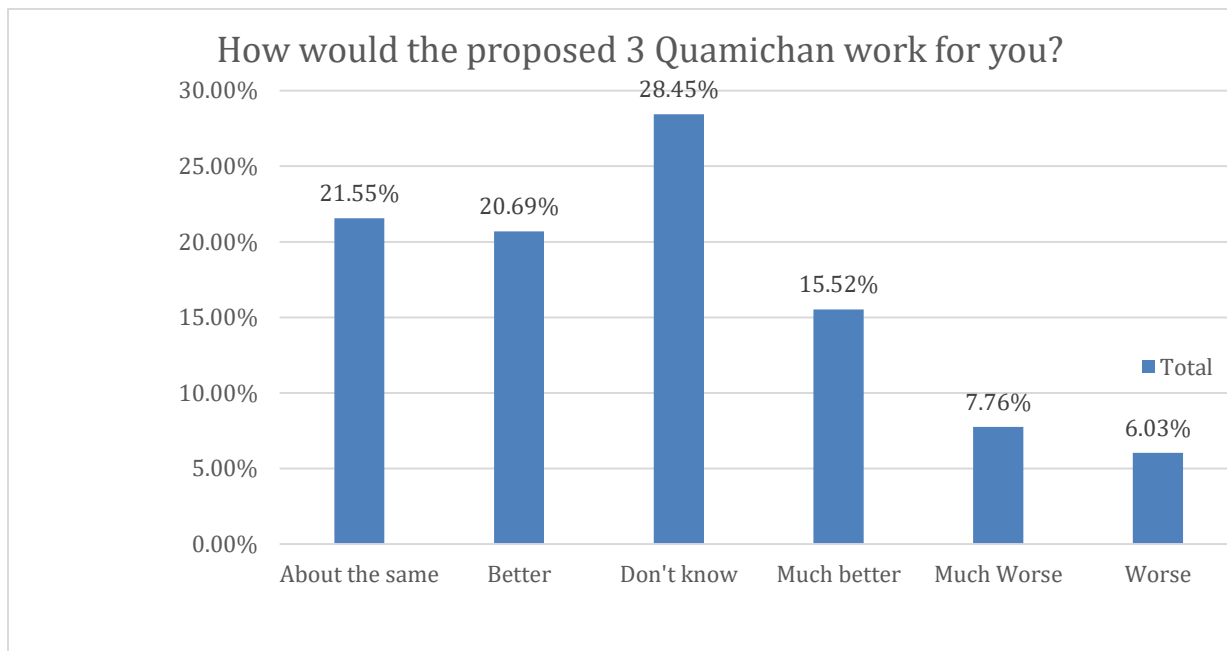
#### Proposed Routing

to Village Green Mall



to Cowichan Commons





Total Respondents = 247

Applicable Respondents: 117

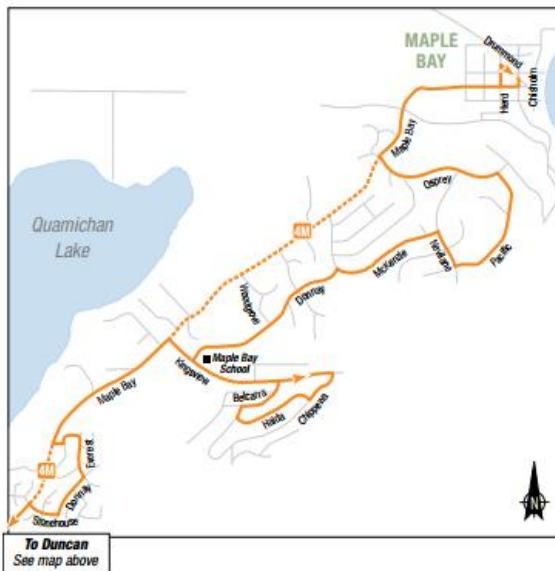
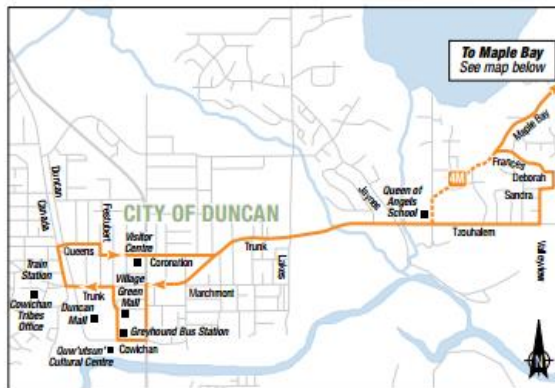
Respondents who selected “this change doesn’t affect me”, or “don’t know” are not included in the subsequent Support Change pie chart statistics. Given that this survey asked about changes to multiple different routes, it is not uncommon for respondents to select “don’t know” when a change is on a route that do not use, or without having full schedule details. The Support Change statistics are specific to respondents indicating that they are impacted by the proposed change. For Route 3, 74% supported the proposed routing updates.

## 4.3 Route 4

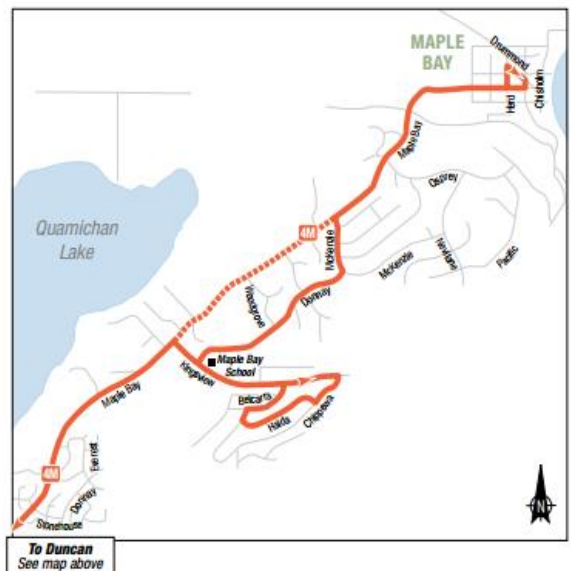
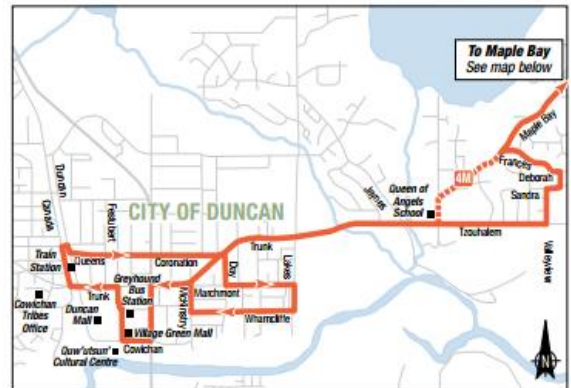
### 4 Maple Bay

Changes are proposed to **4 Maple Bay** to improve service connections to the Marchmont/McKinstry neighbourhood in both directions and to remove route segments not well used in select Maple Bay neighbourhoods.

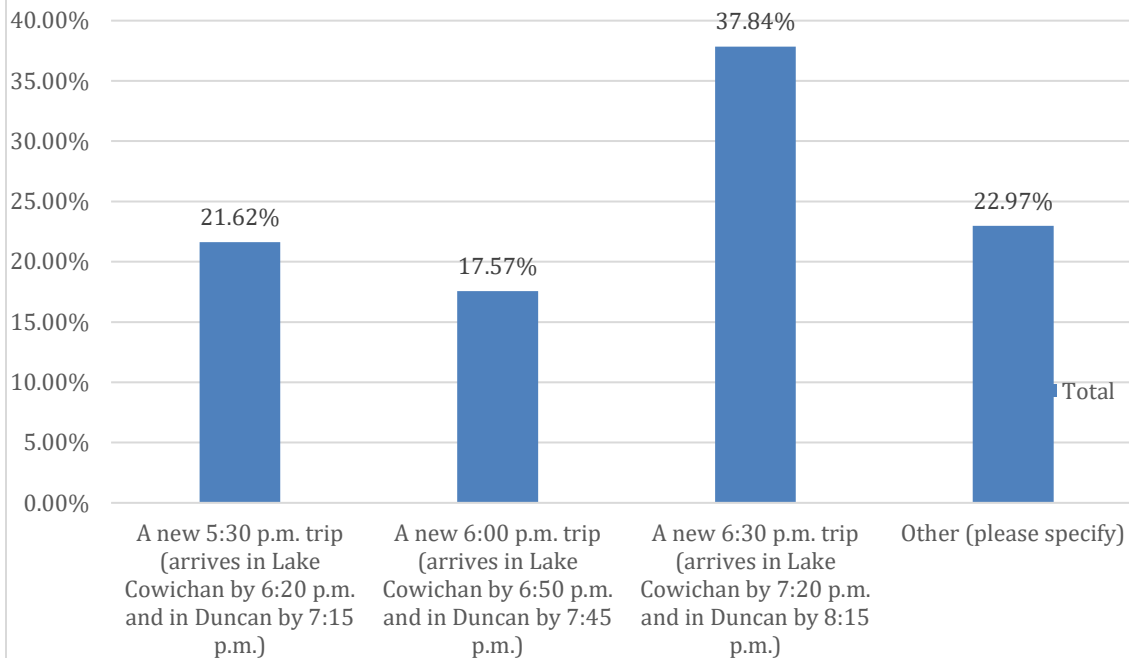
Current Routing



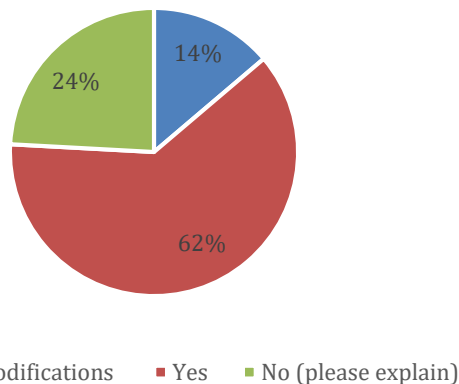
Proposed Routing



### How would the proposed 4 Maple Bay work for you?



### Support Changes to Route 4



Total Respondents = 209

Applicable Respondents: 103

Respondents who selected “this change doesn’t affect me”, or “don’t know” are not included in the subsequent Support Change pie chart statistics. Given that this survey asked about changes to multiple different routes, it is not uncommon for respondents to select “don’t know” when a change is on a route that do not use, or without having full schedule details. The Support Change statistics are

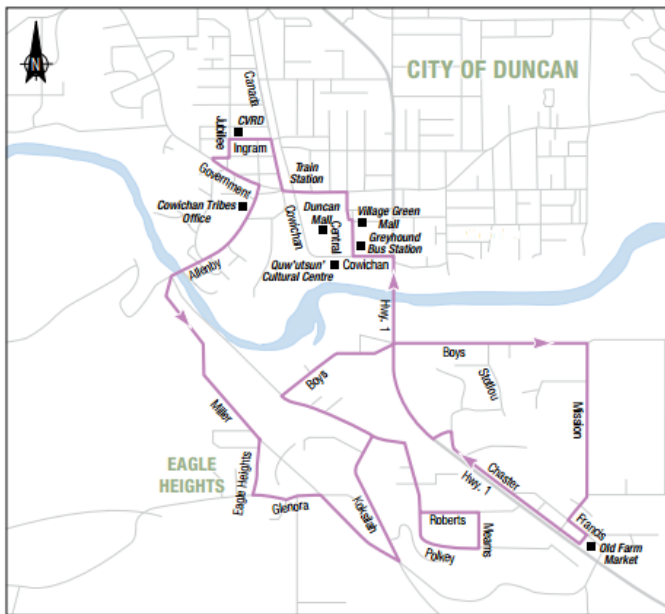
specific to respondents indicating that they are impacted by the proposed change. For Route 4, 62% supported the proposed routing updates.

#### 4.4 Route 5

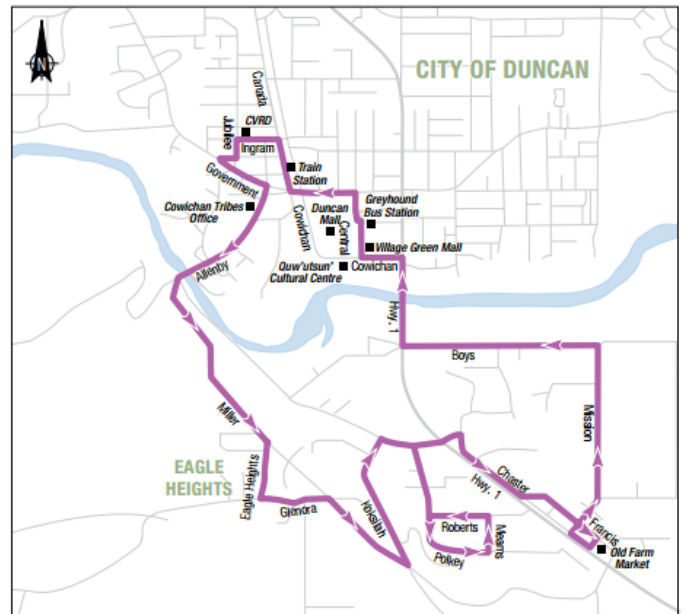
##### 5 Eagle Heights

Small changes are proposed to modify **5 Eagle Heights** to make it more direct for users and to remove route segments not well used.

Current Routing

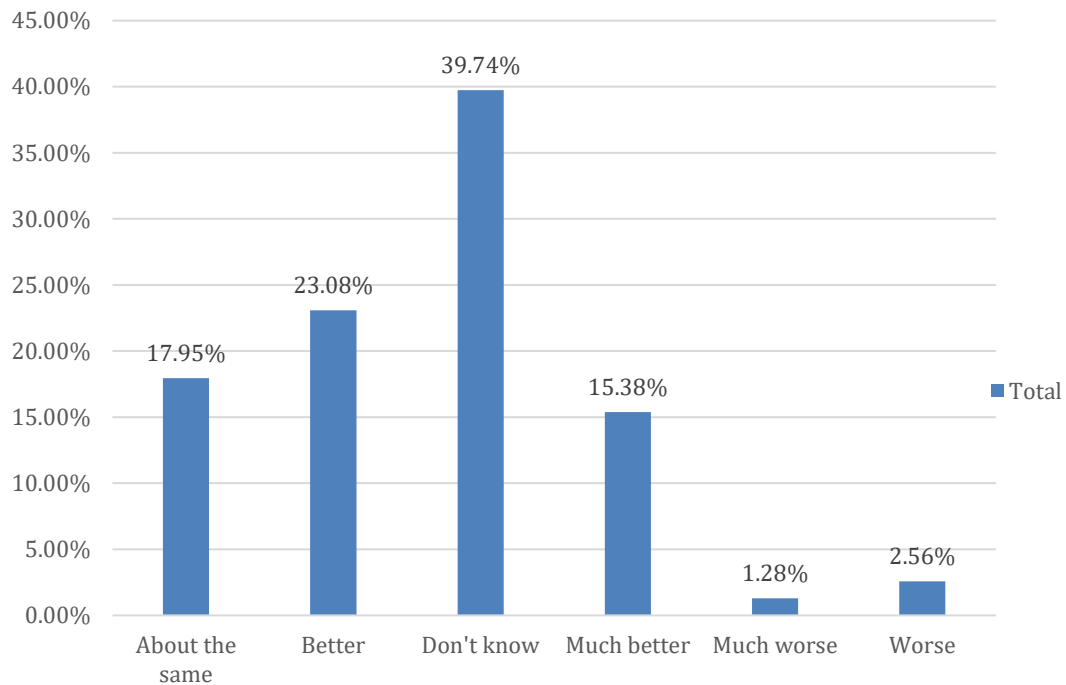


Proposed Routing

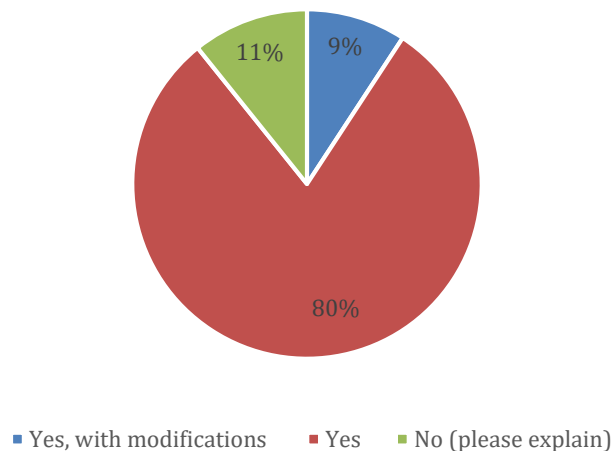




### How would the proposed 5 Eagle Heights work for you?



### Support Changes to Route 5



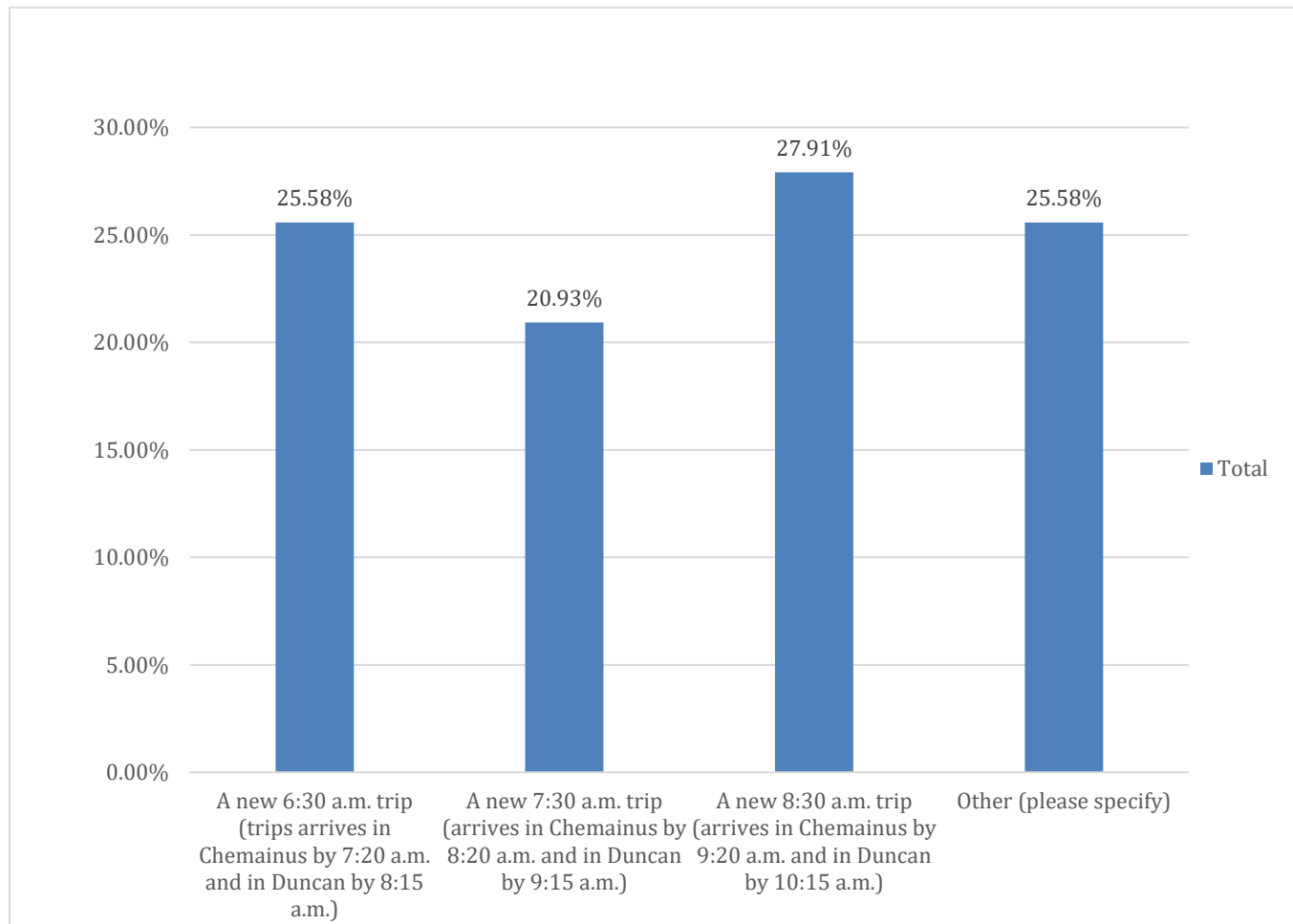
Total Respondents = 210

Applicable Respondents: 78

Respondents who selected “this change doesn’t affect me”, or “don’t know” are not included in the subsequent Support Change pie chart statistics. Given that this survey asked about changes to multiple different routes, it is not uncommon for respondents to select “don’t know” when a change is on

a route that do not use, or without having full schedule details. The Support Change statistics are specific to respondents indicating that they are impacted by the proposed change. For Route 5, 80% supported the proposed routing updates.

#### 4.6 Route 6 (Crofton-Chemainus)



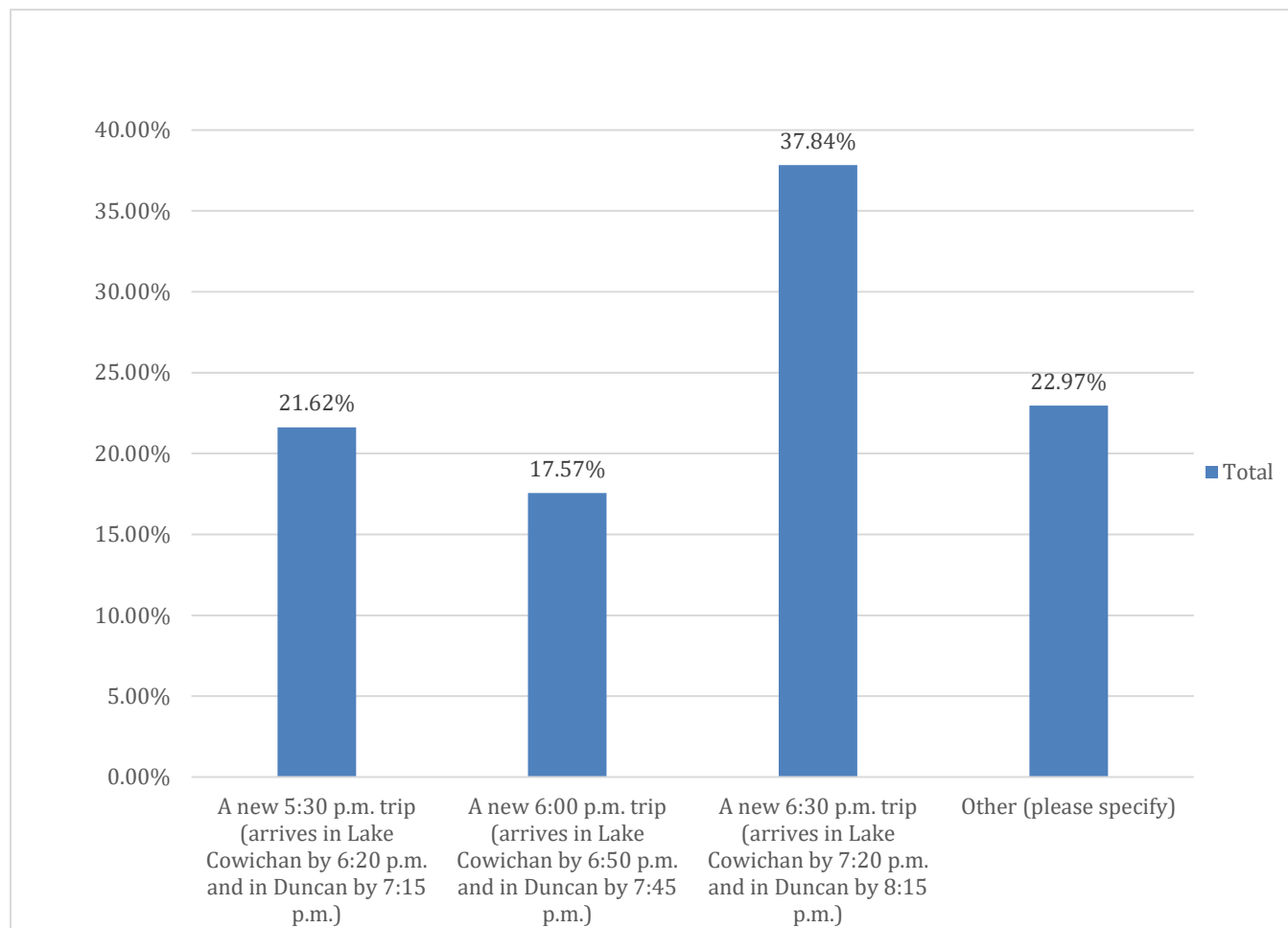
Total Respondents = 199

Applicable Respondents: 86

Participants who selected “Not applicable” are not included in the statistics above. Public support for a new 8:30 a.m. trip leaving Duncan and arriving into Chemainus around 9:20 a.m. and back to Duncan by 10:15 a.m. received the highest levels of support.

- Public expressed a desire for more evening trips and earlier morning trips (before 7 am)

## 4.7 Route 7 (Cowichan Lake via Gibbins)



Total Respondents = 199

Applicable Respondents: 74

Participants who selected “Not applicable” were not included in the statistics above. Public support for a trip around 6:30 p.m. leaving Duncan and arriving into Cowichan Lake around 7:20 a.m. and back to Duncan by 8:15 p.m. received the highest levels of support.

## 5.0 Public Engagement Key Themes

- Participants support changes to Routes 3, 4, and 5.
- Participants indicated they would prefer an 8:30 a.m. weekday trip on Route 6 and a 6:30 p.m. weekday trip on Route 7.

- Results from the online survey and public engagement events suggest demand for evening weekday service and additional weekend service on all routes, particularly on Route 3, 6, 8, and 9.
- Participants expressed a desire for increased service frequency and longer service hours on all routes

With this input BC Transit and CVRD staff reviewed options for scheduling of service changes based on available fleet and scheduling connections with the intent to minimize disruption to existing trips. It must be noted, that changes are being implemented using the existing fleet (i.e. no new buses) so options are constrained by fleet availability and with a heavily interlined system care must be taken to avoid major changes to existing scheduled connections between routes. The following section discusses service change improvements prioritized for implementation in July 2018.

## ***6.0 Marketing and Communication Plan***

A marketing and communication plan has been developed that outlines the steps necessary to communicate this service expansion to the public. The objectives of this plan are outlined below:

- To make the public aware of the new transit service and other transit services in the region
- To ease implementation
- To promote ridership and community support for transit

The plan will include several strategies to achieve the above, including a media release, radio, paper and social media adverts, website promotion, and a Rider's Alert rack card with new route, schedule, and fare information. These media releases will be disseminated six weeks prior to implementation on July 2, 2018.

## ***7.0 Monitoring Plan***

The new transit service will be monitored closely by BC Transit and the Cowichan Valley Regional District following implementation to ensure that the schedules and route alignments are meeting the needs of customers. This will include ridership analysis, on-time performance analysis and customer feedback.