

TRANSIT *future*

▶ *service plan*

SALT SPRING ISLAND

2021



Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect that BC Transit carries out its work on the traditional territories of indigenous nations throughout British Columbia.

Salt Spring Island lies within the ancestral and unceded traditional territory of the Hul'qumi'num and SENĆOŦEN speaking peoples.

Here in Victoria we are on the lands of the Lekwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations Communities.

We thank them for allowing us to live, work, and play on their lands.

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01 Transit Vision

Transit is the preferred choice for residents and visitors, attracting customers through comfortable, safe, accessible and convenient service.

Transit Future Service Plan upholds community goals and objectives contained in the Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan and works to strengthen the link between transportation and land-use in support of sustainable growth. The Transit Future Service Plan also serves to inform any future local or regional transportation plans.



Transportation and Land Use to reduce emissions and traffic noise



Coordinated approach to make transit the preferred choice



Transit-supportive land use policies



Development of transit to integrate with active modes



Transit links to villages, schools, ferries and appropriate facilities at transit stops

Transit Vision

The Salt Spring Transit vision encapsulates key themes from local plans including: the Official Community Plan (OCP), the 2014 Capital Regional District Regional Transportation Plan, the 2014 Salt Spring Island Economic Development Action Plan, and the 2013 Salt Spring Island Edition of the CRD's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP).

The Official Community Plan (OCP), adopted on October 8, 2008, encourages BC Transit and the Salt Spring Island Transportation Committee (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 increasing the variety of transportation choices can help to reduce transportation-related emissions and noise.

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; and
- Integrating active and alternative modes of transportation

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

The 2013 Salt Spring Island Edition of the CRD's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) 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; and
- Physical or visual separation of transit, walking, and cycling modes within a right of way to encourage a modal shift.

02 Shaping Your Transit Future

The role of the Transit Future Service Plan is to:

Build on existing planning and add service and infrastructure priorities for the community

Review what has changed for the community

Inform both the planning and operational activities

Drive a range of objectives and actions that will deliver a fit for purpose network across the community

Guide decision making to procure and deliver the desired network

Engage with the community



03 BC Transit Future Initiatives

Key objectives for Salt Spring Island includes the electrification of their transit fleet and better integrating transit service with active modes of transportation and ferry service.

BC Transit's Strategic Plan provides the blue print for how we will facilitate the transformation and pursue our common vision of the future to create responsive and reliable services, improving integration with other mobility providers, introducing electronic fares, building more transit supportive infrastructure and transitioning to greener fleets.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.bctransit.com/transforming-your-journey>

Low Carbon Fleet Program

<https://www.bctransit.com/low-carbon-fleet-program>

Digital On Demand

Electronic Fare Strategy

NextRide

BC Transit Development Referral Program

<https://www.bctransit.com/development-referral-program>

BC Transit Future Initiatives

Low Carbon Fleet Program

First deployment of electric buses will happen in the Victoria Regional Transit System in 2022.

BC Hydro will help determine the readiness of the electrical infrastructure to support electric fleets across the province.

BC Transit will work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to refine the anticipated funding requirements for both buses and new operations and maintenance facilities.

Electronic Fare Strategy

Smart ticketing providing new ways to pay. BC Transit is working to improve rider convenience, enable mobility partnerships and create new data collection opportunities. Systems will also accommodate a mix of fare products including cash fares. The system will also be able to operate in areas with low-cell phone coverage/service.

Digital On Demand

Is an exciting initiative that BC Transit is pursuing as an alternative service model for our systems. Currently, the process has developed a request for proposal and is establishing pilot project candidate locations. More information coming soon.

Next Ride

Door to door journey planning. Provides bus location information to customers via transit apps, enhances operations control and route information for the operator.



Development Referral Program

Local governments or developers can send any referrals and supporting information to BC Transit to review and provide comments to the local government or developer about how the proposal may affect or better align with current or future transit service and infrastructure and how the application or plan could be changed to better support current or future transit service and infrastructure.

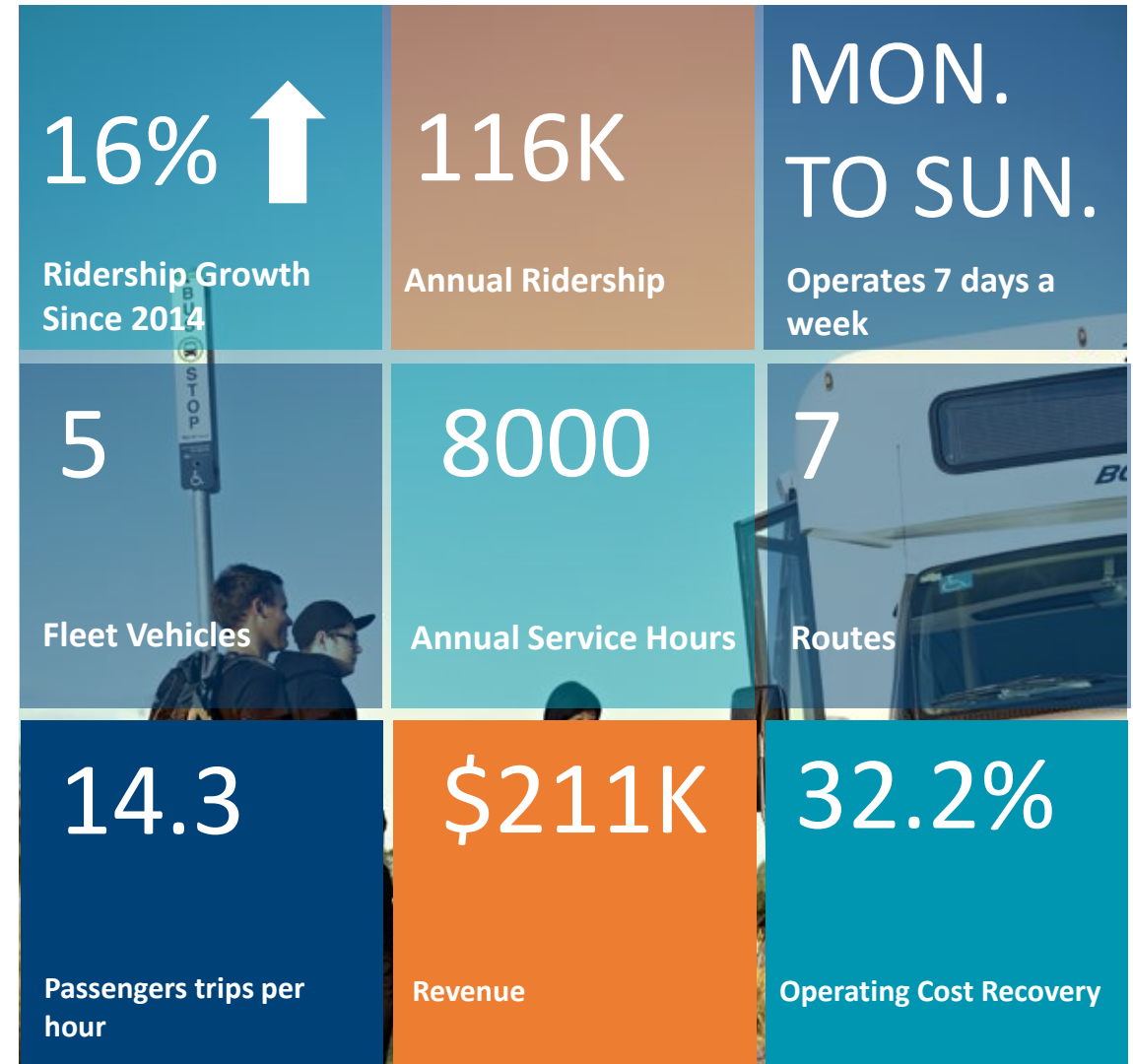
04 Transit Today

Salt Spring Island transit ridership is growing

Inaugurated in 2007, the Salt Spring Island Transit System has seen ridership grow from 100,000 riders in 2014-15 to 116,000 riders in 2019-20. The system is delivered through BC Transit's innovative cost sharing model and in coordination with the Capital Regional District who make the final decisions on fares, routes and service levels.

Recent changes to the system include:

- Expanded evening weekend service
- Summer service to Beaver Point and Ruckle Park
- Additional winter morning service
- Increased summer Saturday frequency on the route 2 Fulford Harbour
- Extended evening service Monday-Thursday



Source BC Transit Annual Performance Summaries (2019-2020)

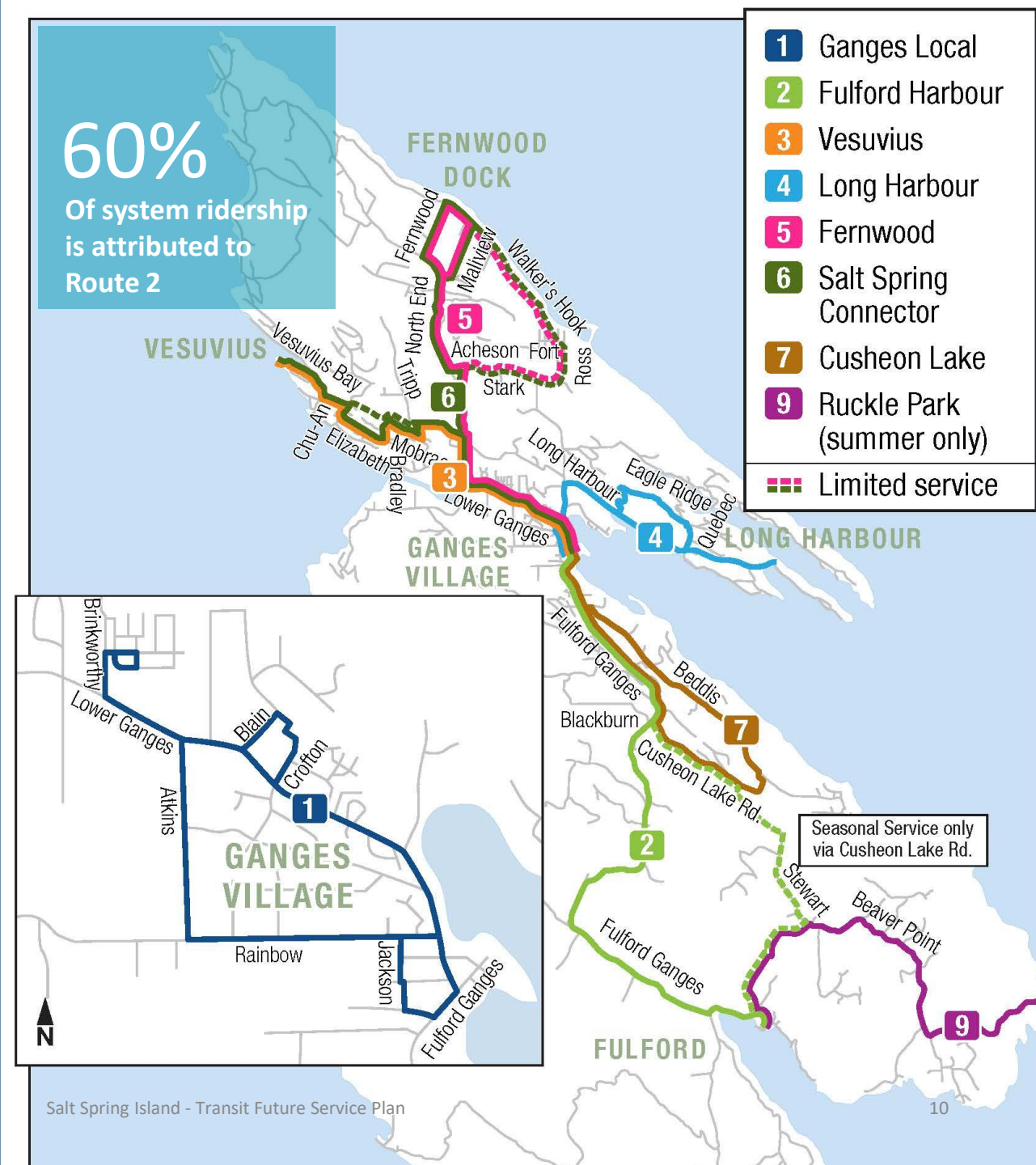
04 Transit Today

Salt Spring Island Transit Network

The Salt Spring Island Transit network is made up of a commuter spine, route 2 Fulford Harbour, connecting Ganges Village to Fulford Harbour and neighborhood routes servicing Long Harbour, Fernwood Dock, and Vesuvius Bay with connections to Ganges Village. Limited service or seasonal service is offered on the existing network to Walker's Hook and Cusheon Lake Rd.

About BC Ferries and Salt Spring Transit

- Long Harbour, Vesuvius Bay, and Fulford Harbour are the main drivers for ridership
- Transit service is meant to serve residents and visitors alike and many transit users connect to ferries as walk-on passengers
- Route 2, Fulford Harbour and Ganges Village carry about 60 per cent of all passengers in the system



Transit Today

The Salt Spring Island Transit network is made up of currently 7 routes. Route 2 Fulford Harbour acts as the spine of the Island's transit network spanning Fulford Harbour to the Ganges Villages. The transit network also provides to connections to multiple neighbourhoods including: Fernwood, Vesuvius, Long Harbour, and Beaver Point-Ruckle Park. Limited service is offered on 5 Fernwood and 6 Salt Spring Connector, and seasonal service to on Route 2 via Cusheon Lake Rd.

Route 1 Ganges Local provides coverage service to Ganges Village, a major commercial and residential centre, Brinkworthy Place, the hospital, and connections to other routes at Ganges Exchange.

Route 2 Fulford Harbour provides connections between Fulford Ferry Terminal with BC Ferry connections to Swartz Bay and Ganges Village. A seasonal service adjustment during spring and summer provides limited Saturday service along Cusheon Lake Road.

Route 3 Vesuvius connects Ganges Village to Vesuvius Bay with BC Ferry connections to Crofton, BC.

Route 4 Long Harbour provides connections from Ganges Village to Long Harbour Ferry Terminal with BC Ferry connections to Vancouver (Tsawwassen)) with uni-directional service to the Quebec and Eagle Ridge area.

Route 5 Fernwood connects the Fernwood neighborhood to Ganges Village with connections to Vesuvius Bay via route 3 at North End and Vesuvius Bay Rd. This route also provides limited service to Walker's Hook.

Route 6 SS Connector provides peak service on all days of the week connecting Ganges Village, Fernwood, and Vesuvius Bay. This route also provides limited service to Walker's Hook and provides additional service to areas serviced by routes 3 and 5.

Route 9 Ruckle Park provides seasonal service to Ruckle Park and Beaver Point from Fulford Harbour from end of June to September.

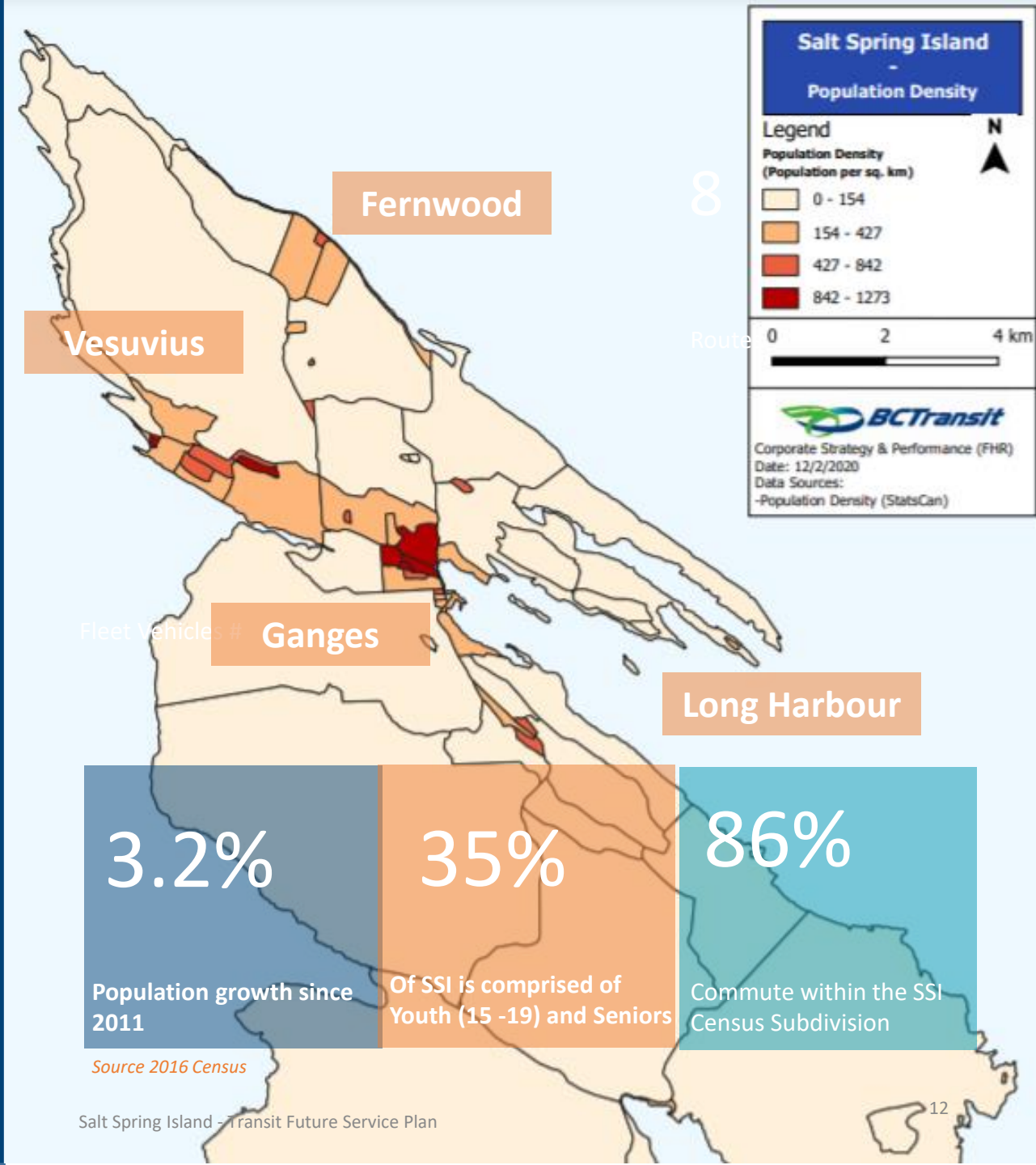
05 Transit Need

Who is Salt Spring Island?

The population in Salt Spring Island grew by 3.2% between 2011 and 2016 (Census 2016) . The population of seniors grew. The map to the right details where people reside on Salt Spring Island.

About Salt Spring Island

- Approximately 7% of commutes originate outside of SSI
- Salt Spring’s population is concentrated around Ganges, Vesuvius, and Fernwood
- Transit mode share was 2.8% in 2016 (Census 2016)

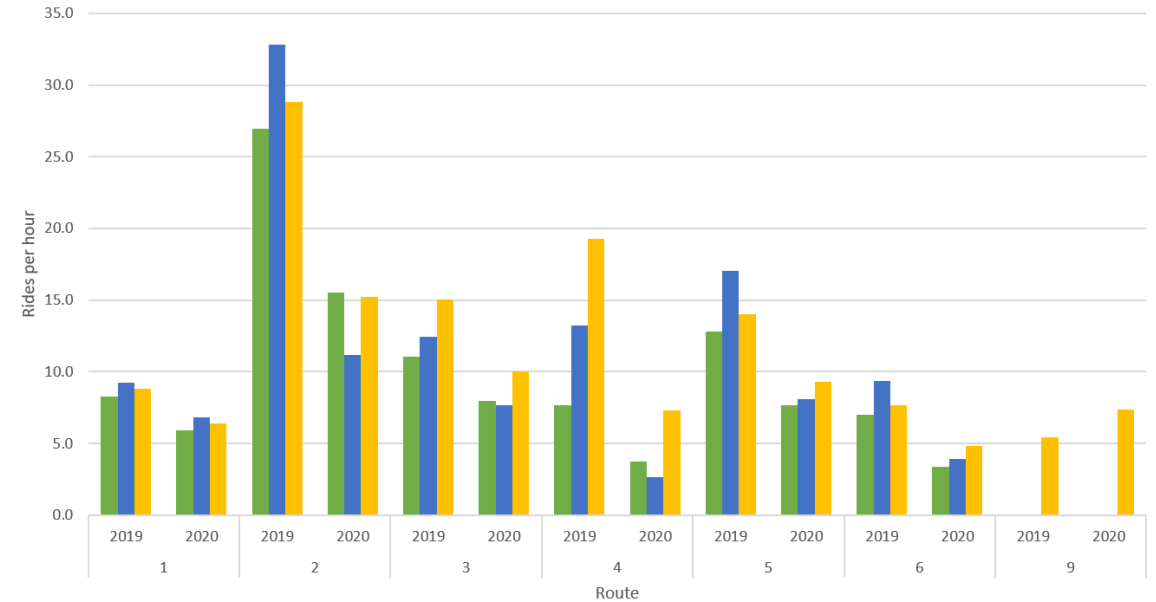


06 System Performance Transit Today

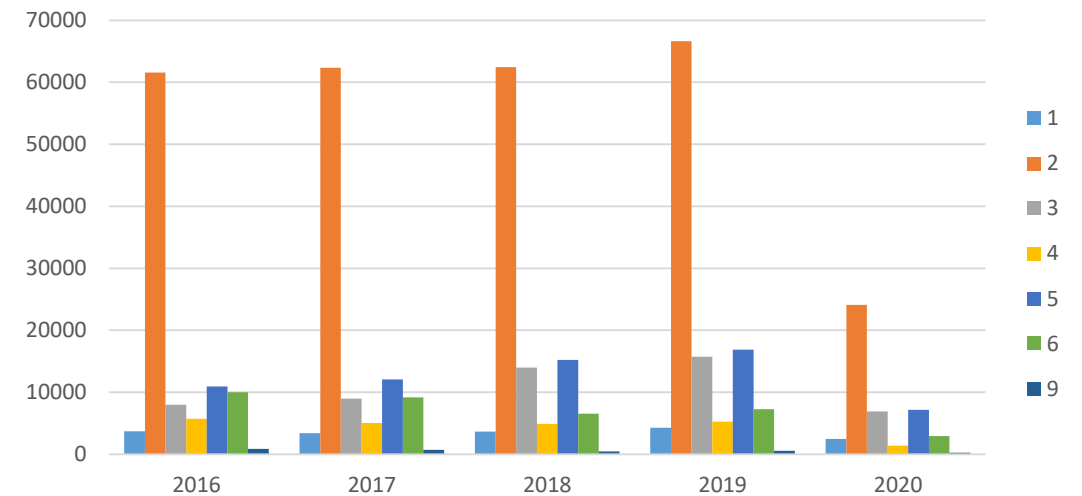
Ridership in 2019 and 2020

- **Route 2 Fulford** is the busiest route in the system, followed by routes 5 Fernwood and 3 Vesuvius which also connect the most populated areas to ferries and Ganges Village.
- **Route 4 Long Harbour** is typically popular in the summer, while route 1 Ganges Local remains mostly constant throughout the seasons and despite the pandemic. Long Harbour was closed for much of summer 2020, likely contributing to low ridership on 4 Long Harbour
- **Route 9** was the only route to gain ridership through the pandemic compared to 2019

Rides per Hour by Route
2019 and 2020



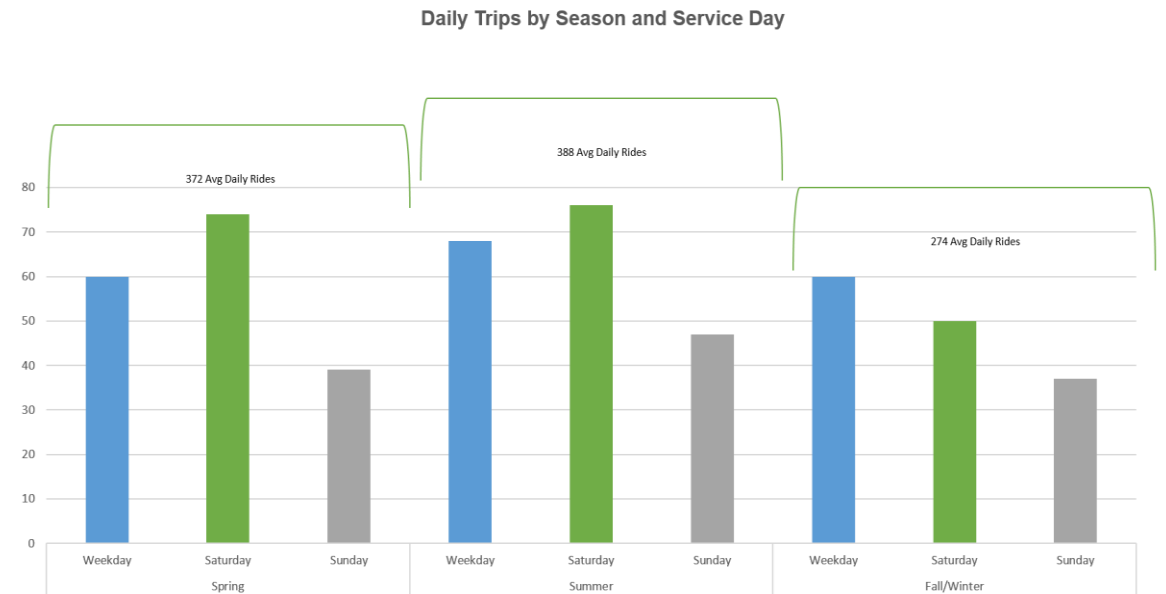
Total Ridership per year and route, 2016 – Aug 2020



06 System Performance

Daily trips by season and service day

Transit service and ridership on Salt Spring Island increases during the summer months and decreases in the winter. The most notable changes occur on weekends.



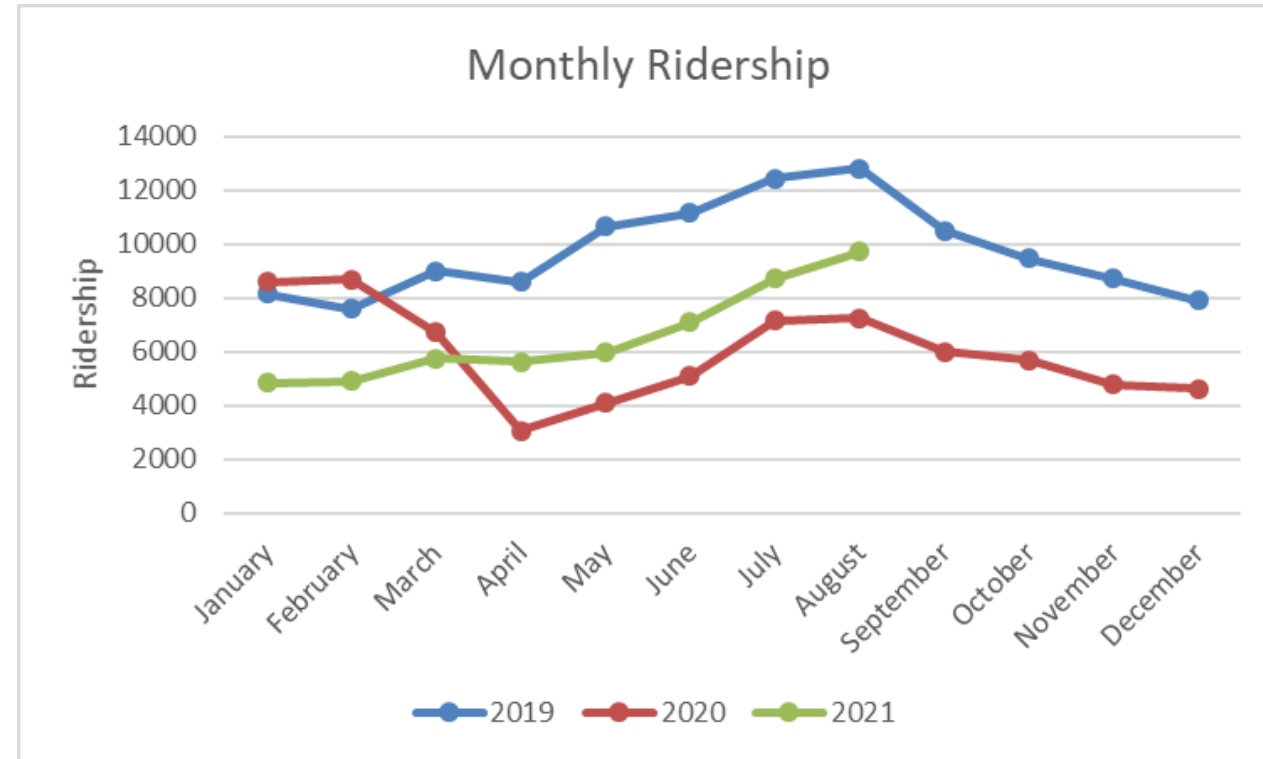
06 System Performance

COVID-19 Impacts

As expected, given the British Columbia's Public Health Officer's advice to limit non-essential travel, transit ridership in Salt Spring Island was impacted, but continues to recover.

Key Takeaways

- Average of 45% growth compared from 2020-2021 after April.
- Ridership fell by up to 65 per cent compared to 2019 levels and has seen a gradual increase as services and some businesses reopened in mid-June.
- prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 ridership levels in Salt Spring were surpassing those in 2019 by about 7%.



7%



Increase in ridership
Pre-pandemic 2020 levels

65%



Decrease in ridership
Compared to 2019 levels

45%



Ridership 2021 vs. 2020

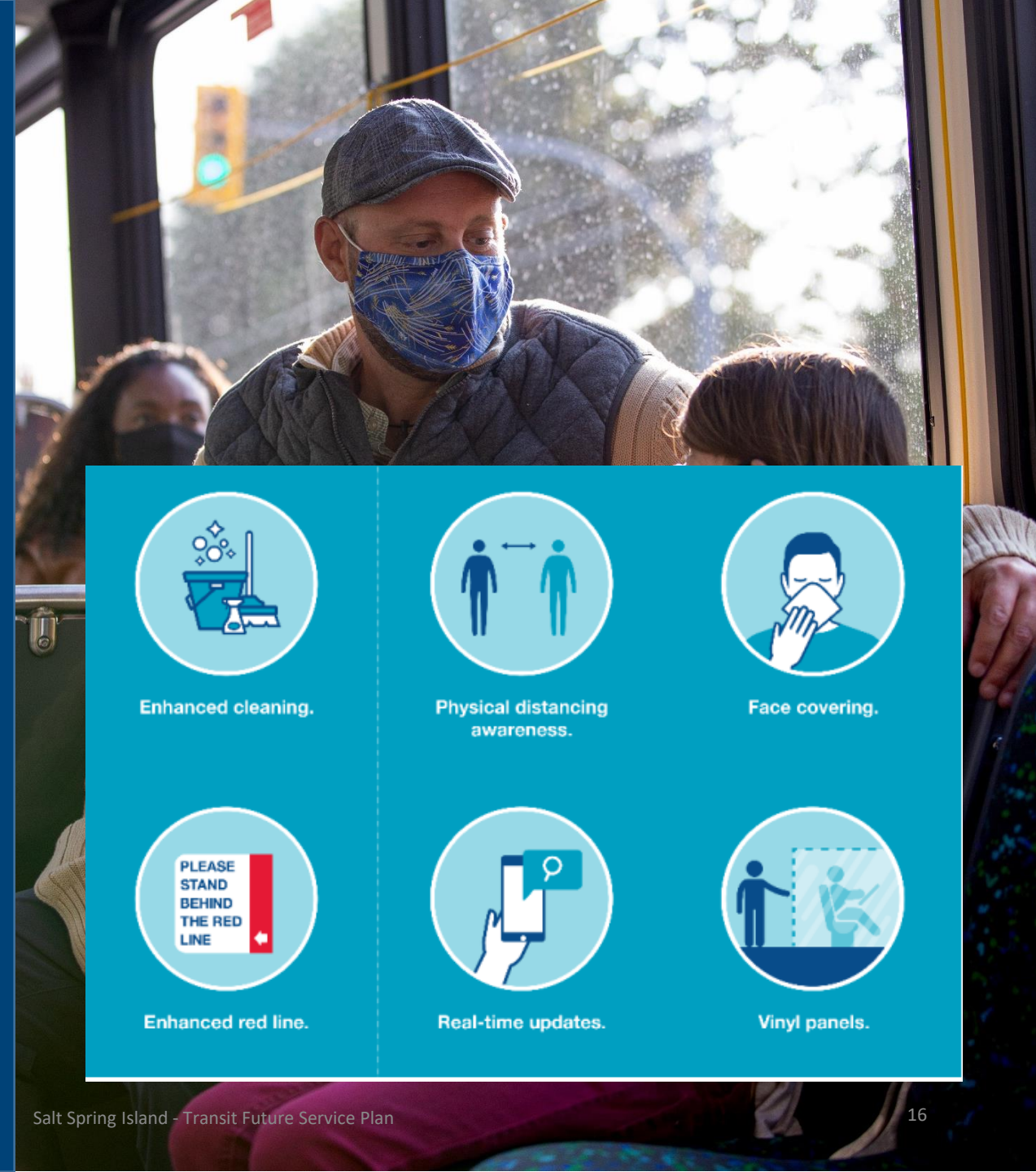
07 COVID-19 Response Plan

BC Transit's top priority is the safety of our passengers and operators.

Following the guidance of the Provincial Health Office and WorkSafeBC and drawing on the best practices of the transit industry worldwide, BC Transit has implemented measures on our buses to respond to COVID-19, and have put a plan together to align with BC's Restart Plan. See the strategy and details at <https://bctransit.com/COVID19>.

To support ridership return, the Province of British Columbia has provided restart funding to the Local Government sponsors to ensure the continued effective delivery of transit across your transit system.

Free Transit for Children 12 and Under program was introduced in September 2021. This aligns with BC Transit's commitment to delivering initiatives to drive new and effective measures to improve the transit experience. The program will help grow young ridership, create life-long transit users and further reduce congestion on our roads.



- Enhanced cleaning.
- Physical distancing awareness.
- Face covering.
- Enhanced red line.
- Real-time updates.
- Vinyl panels.

08 Engagement

How we engaged with the Salt Spring community

As part of BC Transit's commitment to public engagement, outreach was carried out to identify draft service and infrastructure through workshops, conversations with key stakeholders, and a transit operator survey

Public engagement was launched online from April 6, 2021 to May 4, 2021. BC Transit also worked with Salt Spring to deliver paper surveys in response to community feedback. Marketing to the community was facilitated through a variety of tools including: a project website, news paper ads in the Driftwood Newspaper, mail-out ads to residential, internal bus ads, social media, and BC Transit's participation in Ask Salt Spring



5 key stakeholder representatives



965 total comments



295 online survey respondents



34 pins added to map
New bus stops
Key destinations



Check out the full engagement summary report and register for future updates.
<https://engage.bctransit.com/saltspringisland2021>

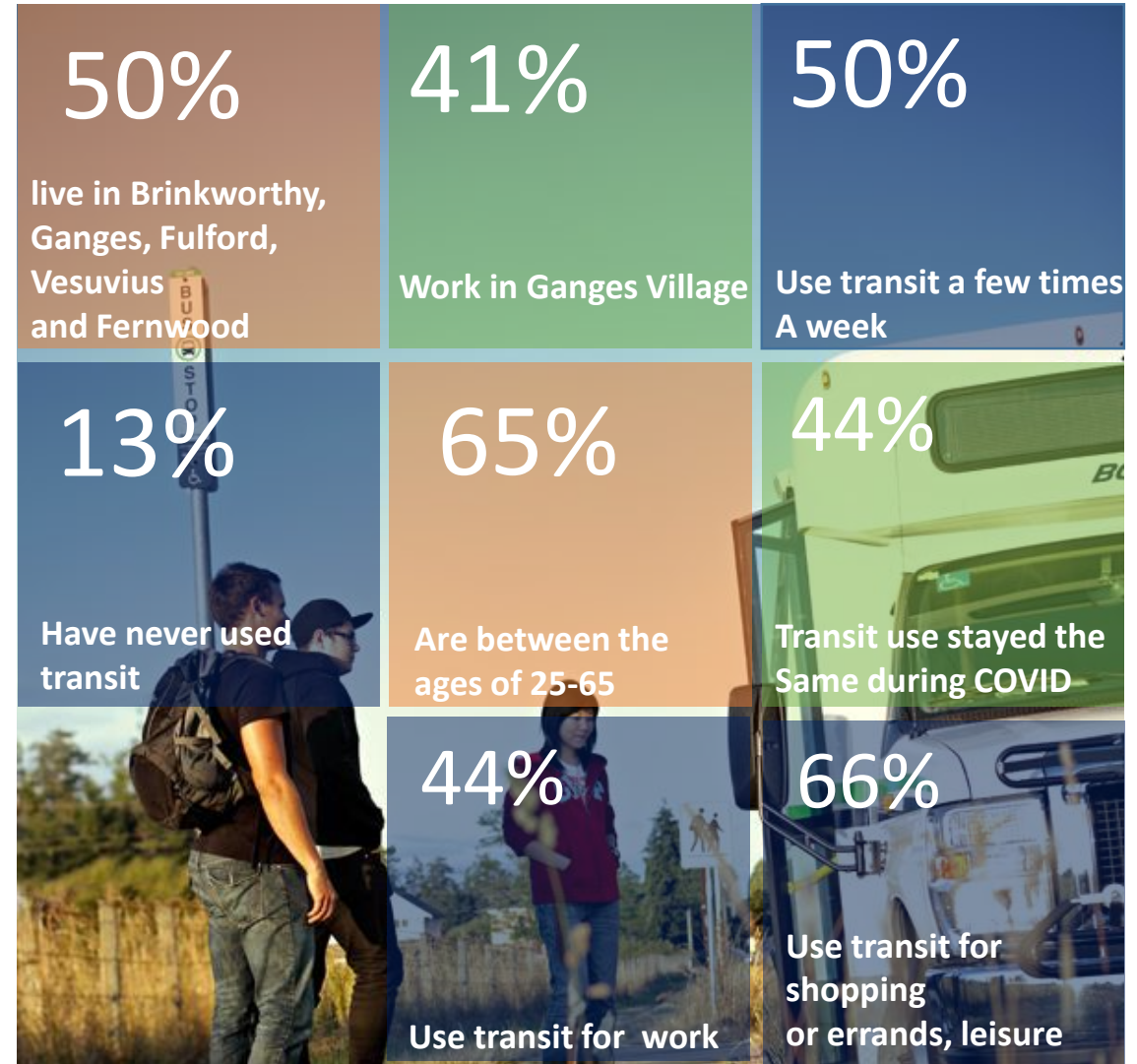
08 Who We Heard From

A majority of Salt Spring Transit customers use the transit for leisure trips

Over 295 responses were received from participants in the public survey portion of engagement

Key findings:

- Most respondents work in the Ganges Village, and are occasional users of public transit
- A minority have never used public transit before
- Most transit riders use transit for shopping, running errands, and social or recreational purposes, and work



08 What We Heard

Improve connections, more service, more places

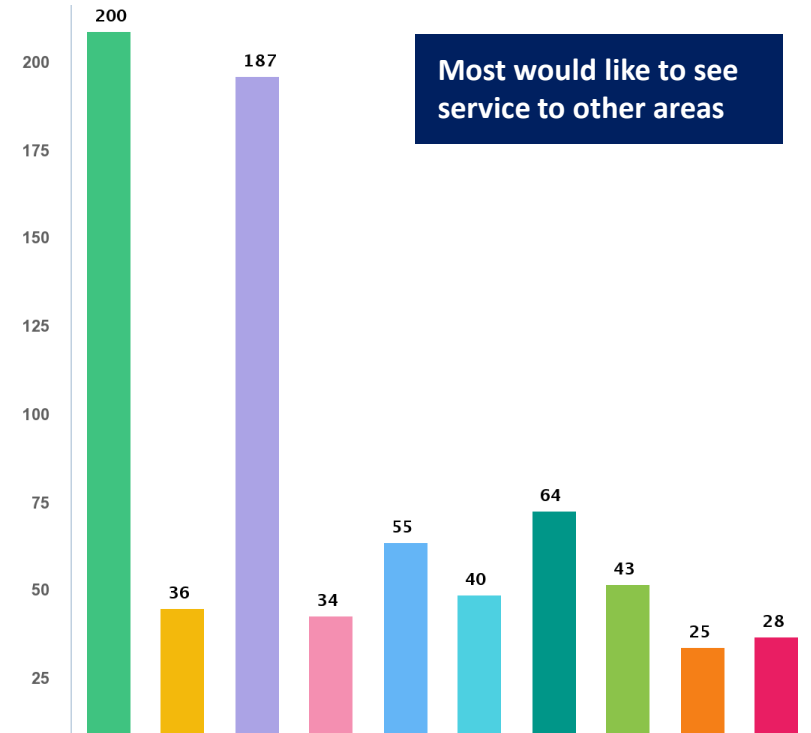
Connections – to ferries remain a top priority especially on 2 Fulford, 3 Vesuvius, and 4 Long Harbor

Flexible Service - Strong interest in flexible and on-demand service for most routes

Frequency and Span - Desire for more frequency and increased service span on existing routes

Service to Other Areas – including North End, Sunset Drive, Rainbow Rd, Isabella Point, Channel Ridge, Southey Point

Service to Beddis Road, Cusheon Lake, Walker’s Hook, and Ruckle Park/Beaver Point also mentioned but are in current plans for implementation



Question options

(Click items to hide)

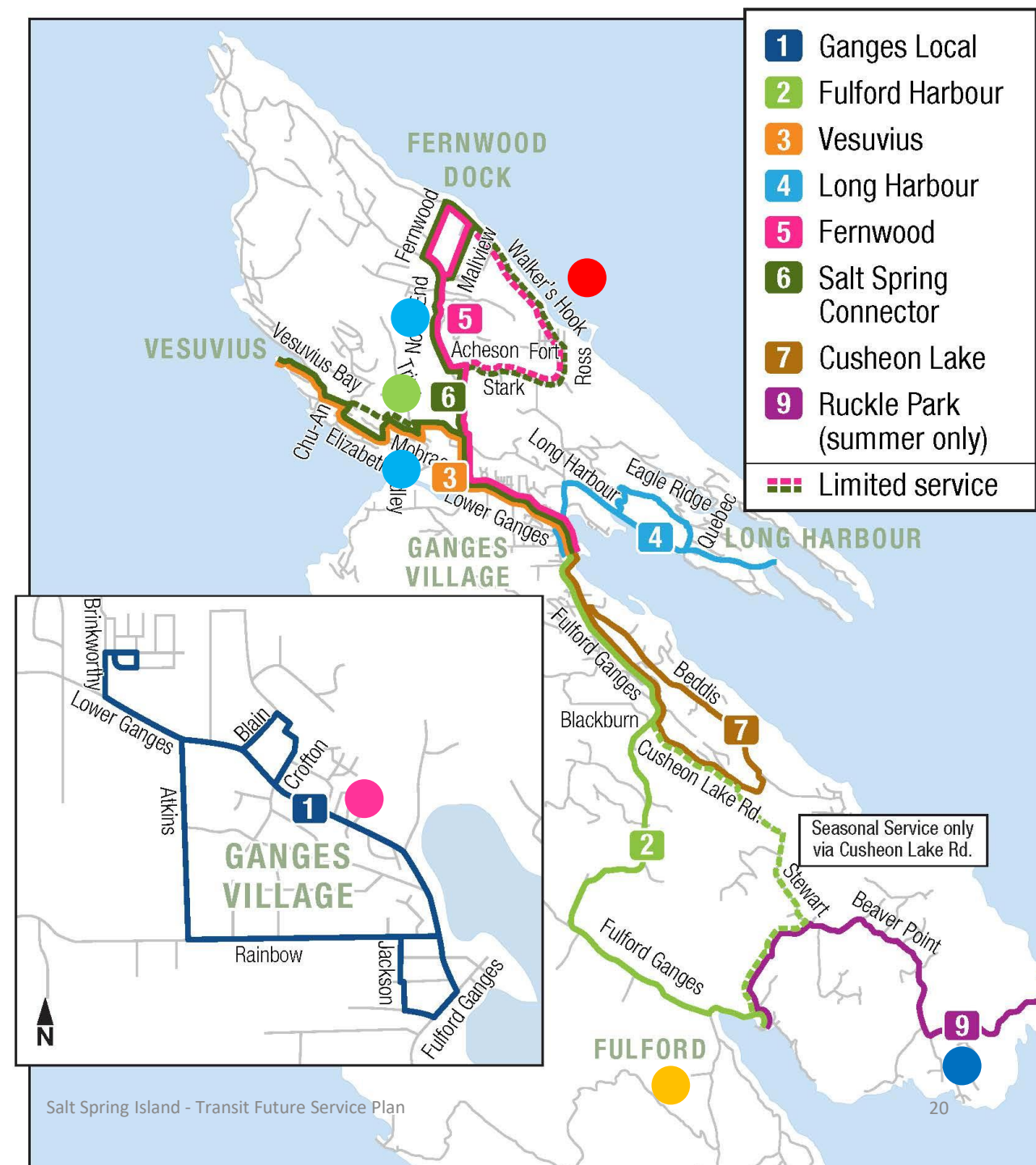
- Other (please specify)
- System Understanding – knowing more about the transit system and how to use it
- On-Demand – buses that come only when I request them by phone or through the internet or mobile app
- Flexibility – a bus that goes off route to pick me up/drop me off closer to my home or destination
- Bus Stops and Infrastructure – more lighting, shelters, benches, concrete pads for easier/safer access to the b
- Service Span – buses that start LATER in the day, more trips in the evening
- Service Span – buses that start EARLIER in the day, more trips in the morning
- Frequency – buses coming more often, more trips during the day
- Reliability – buses coming on schedule
- Service Area – buses going more places, servicing more areas

09 Your Future Network

Service

These service priorities will help to shape Salt Spring Island Transit over the next five years providing improved transit connections.

- 6 Salt Spring Connector Discontinued
- New Route Walker's Hook separated from Route 5
- Route 3 and 5 improved
Span and frequency
- Route 9 Ruckle Park year round
- Route 1 Ganges Local flex routing for Curb to curb service
- Rural Trip windows provide on-demand service to new areas



10 Service Priorities 2022-2026

Priority	Description	Expansion Resources
Additional Fulford peak service and Year-round Beaver Point/Ruckle Park service	Increase 2 Fulford Harbour frequency to 60 min weekday peak and provide route 9 Ruckle Park year-round.	1780 service hours, 1 bus
Flexible Ganges Local shuttle and Rural Trip Windows	On-request rural trip windows to North End, Sunset Drive, Southey Point, Isabella Point	1250 service hours, 1 bus
Separation of Fernwood and Walker's Hook for additional peak service	Separate existing limited Walker's Hook service (Route 5 Fernwood) into new 8 Walker's Hook with 3 trips a day. Two additional trips on 3 Vesuvius for hourly service during peak AM and PM periods Monday to Saturday.	1360 service hours, 1 bus
Reallocation of route 6 SS Connector resources to improve route 3 and 5 service span	Discontinue Route 6. Add additional trips to 3 Vesuvius and 5 Fernwood to increase AM and PM service span.	650 service hours, 1 bus
Later weekend service to Long Harbour	Additional trips to meet later ferries on route 4 Long Harbour, one additional trip on 9 Ruckle Park for 3 trips/day	160 service hours

Fulford Harbour/Ruckle Park

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

This proposal looks to Increase 2 Fulford Harbour service to 60 min service during peak times during the week and provide year-round service to Ruckle Park. Engagement revealed year-round service was strongly preferred by respondents not only benefiting tourists but also residents through improved ferry connections.

1780

Annual service hours

1

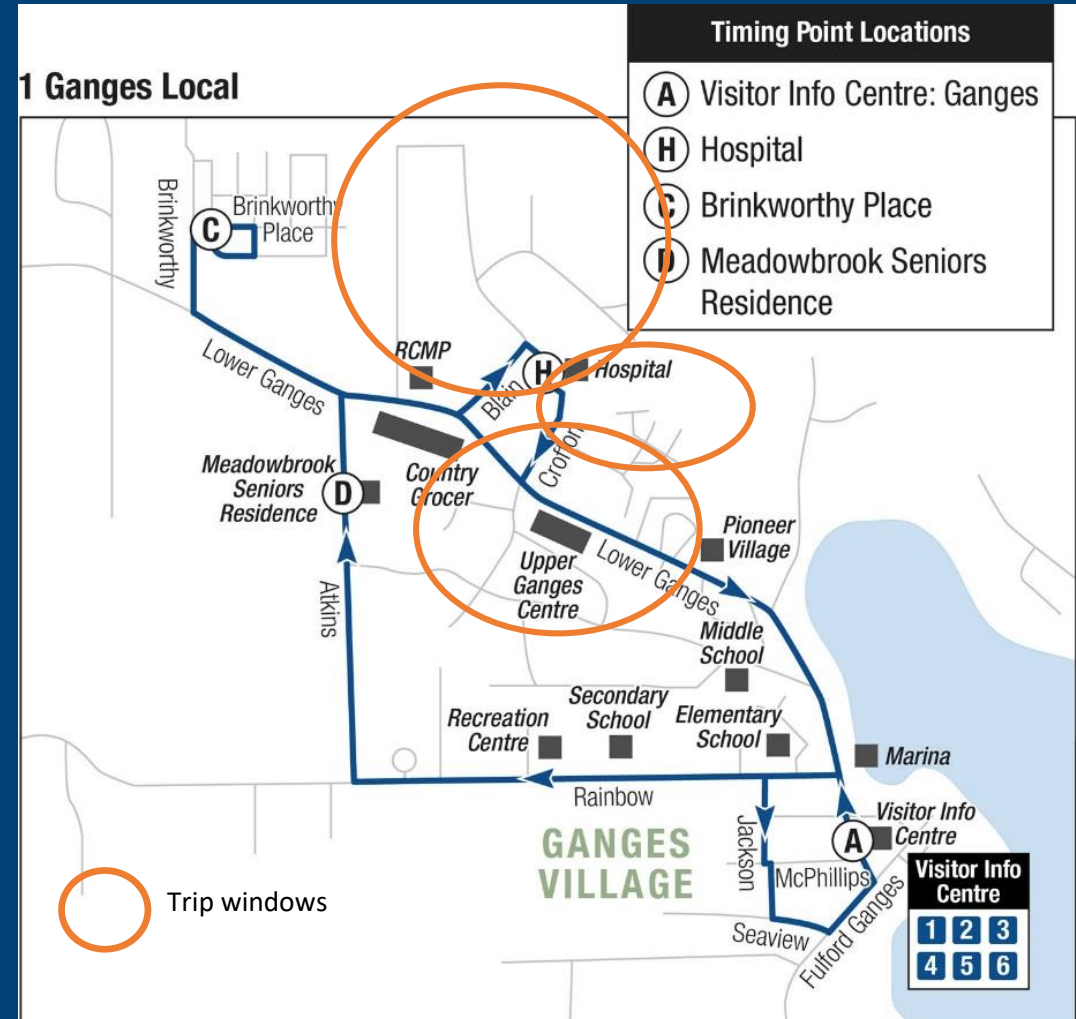
Light-duty vehicle



Flexible Ganges and Rural Trip Windows

Flexible Ganges Local Shuttle

This proposal looks at the integration of flexible off-route pick-up services in coordination with the existing 1 Ganges. These off-route trip windows would provide an option booking trips during certain periods of the day. This proposal will require further analysis to determine days of the week and times throughout the day to provide flexible routing.



Flexible Ganges and Rural Trip Windows

Rural Trip Windows

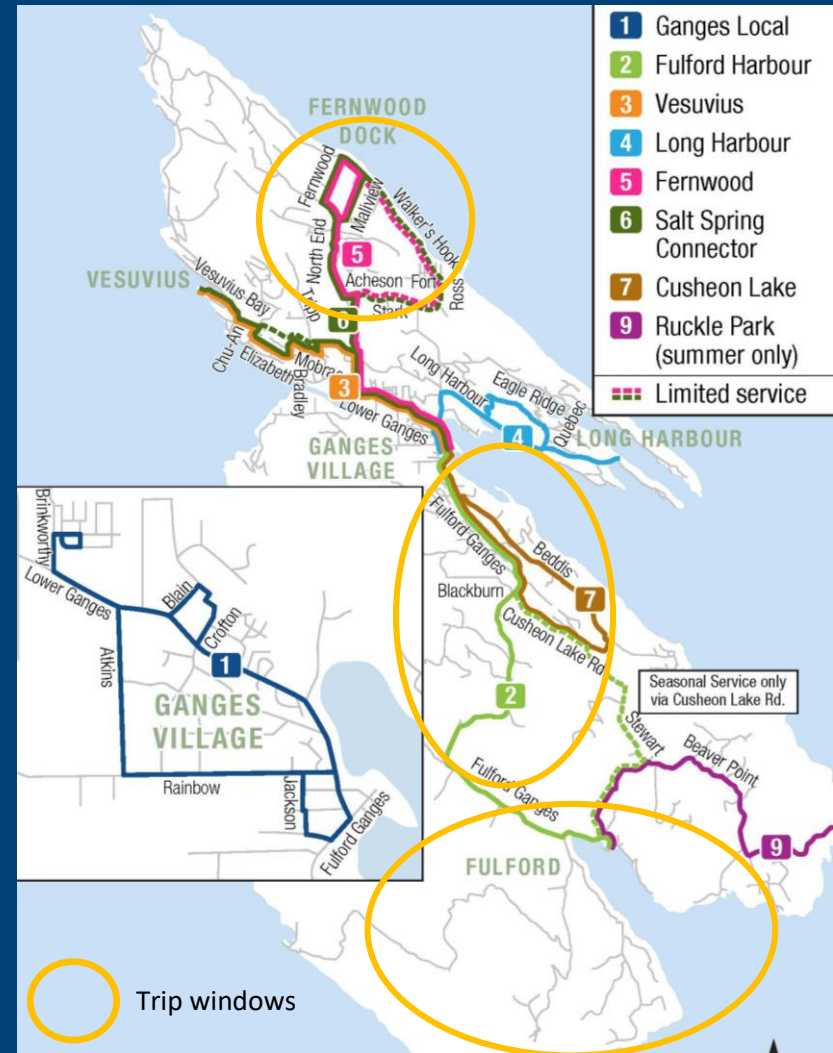
Additionally, this proposal seeks to explore the potential for new flexible on-request services for other existing bus routes to service areas such as North End, Sunset Dr., Southey Point, and Isabella Point. This proposal will require further analysis to determine days of the week and times throughout the day to provide flexible routing.

1250

Annual service hours

1

Light-duty vehicle



Fernwood-Walker's Hook, Vesuvius

Separate Walker's Hook service into a new route and improve service on route 3 Vesuvius

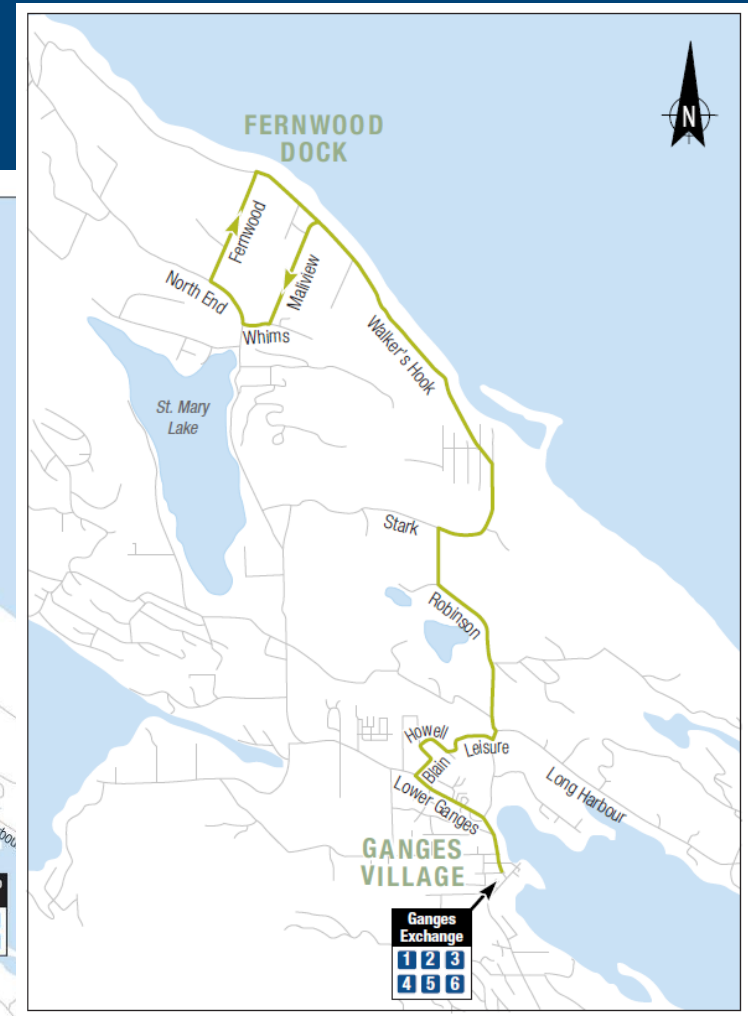
This proposal envisions separating the existing limited 5 Fernwood service to Walker's Hook into a new route, 8 Walker's Hook. This service would provide 3 trips per day on this new route. Additionally, two additional trips would be provided on 3 Vesuvius to hourly service during peak morning and afternoon periods from Monday to Saturday.

1360

Annual service hours

1

Light-duty vehicle



Reallocate 6 SS Connector

Discontinue route 6 Salt Spring Connector and reallocate resources to improve service span to route 3 Vesuvius and route 5 Walkers Hook

Engagement revealed support for discontinuing Route 6 Salt Spring Connector, in favor of reallocating those resources towards Route 3 and Route 5 .

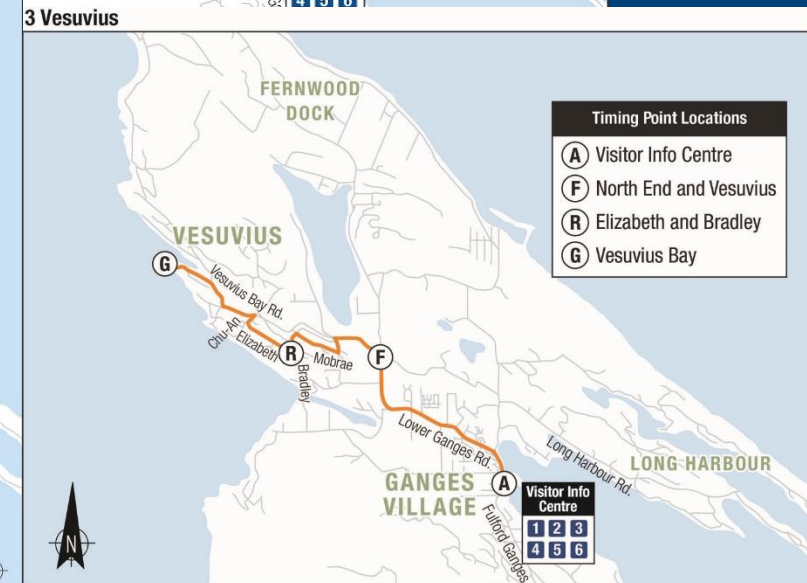
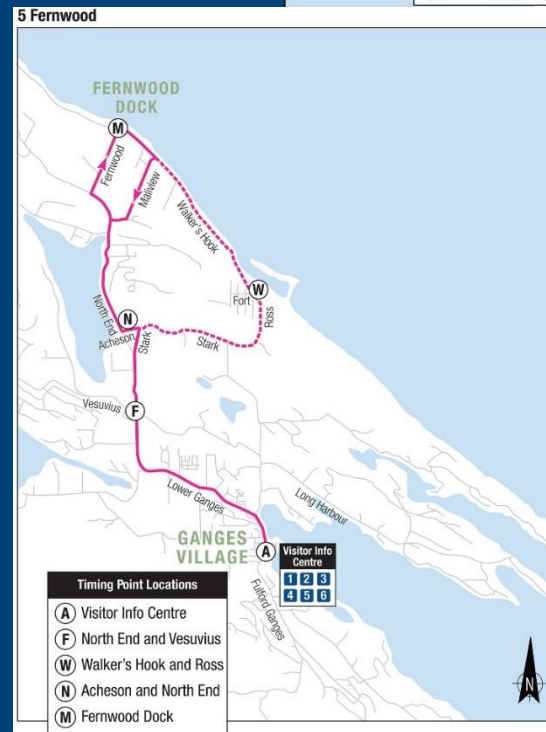
This proposal envisions a similar span of service for Routes 3 and 5 as Route 6 currently has today. This would be accomplished by adding additional trips to Routes 3 and 5.

650

Annual service hours

1

Light-duty vehicle



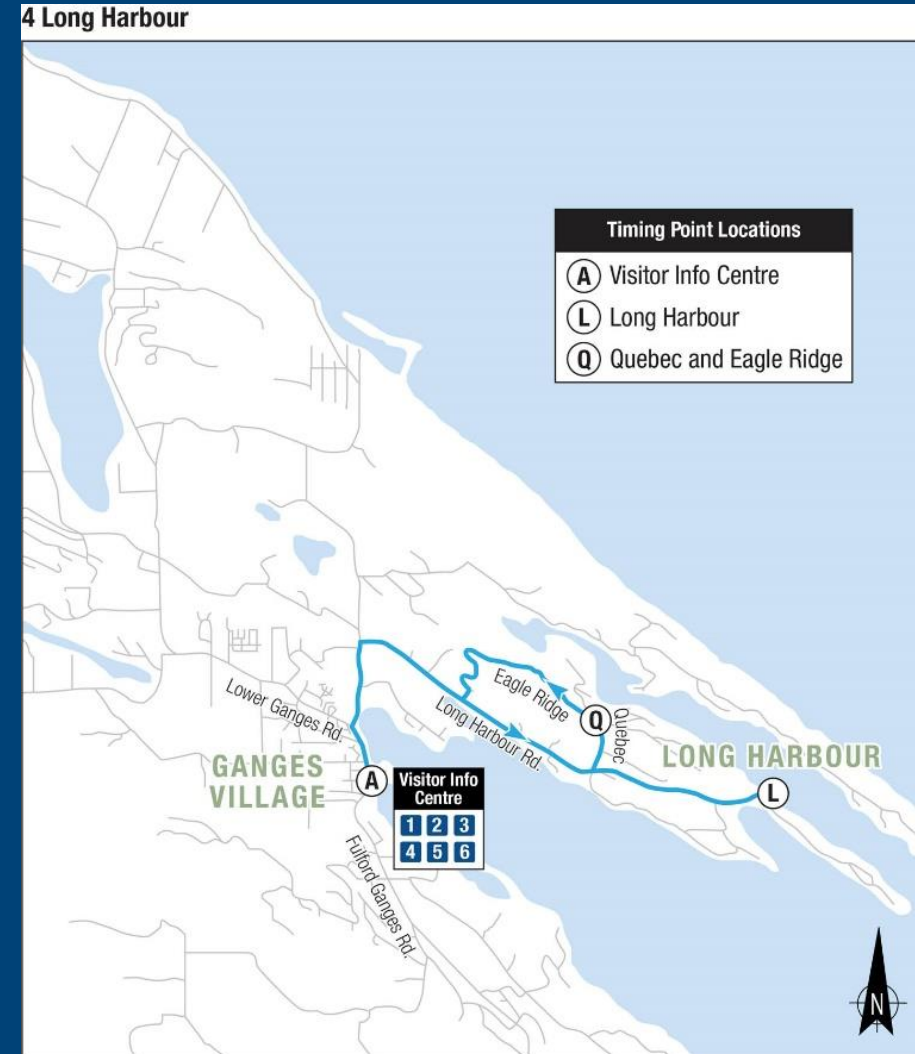
Long Harbour Weekend Service

Additional weekend service for 4 Long Harbour and 9 Ruckle Park

This proposal looks at increasing weekend service to Long Harbour by adding trips to 4 Long Harbour and one additional trip to 9 Ruckle Park for a total of 3 trips per day. This service improves ferry connections for residents and visitors of Long Harbour and the Eagle Ridge Area.

160





Annual service hours

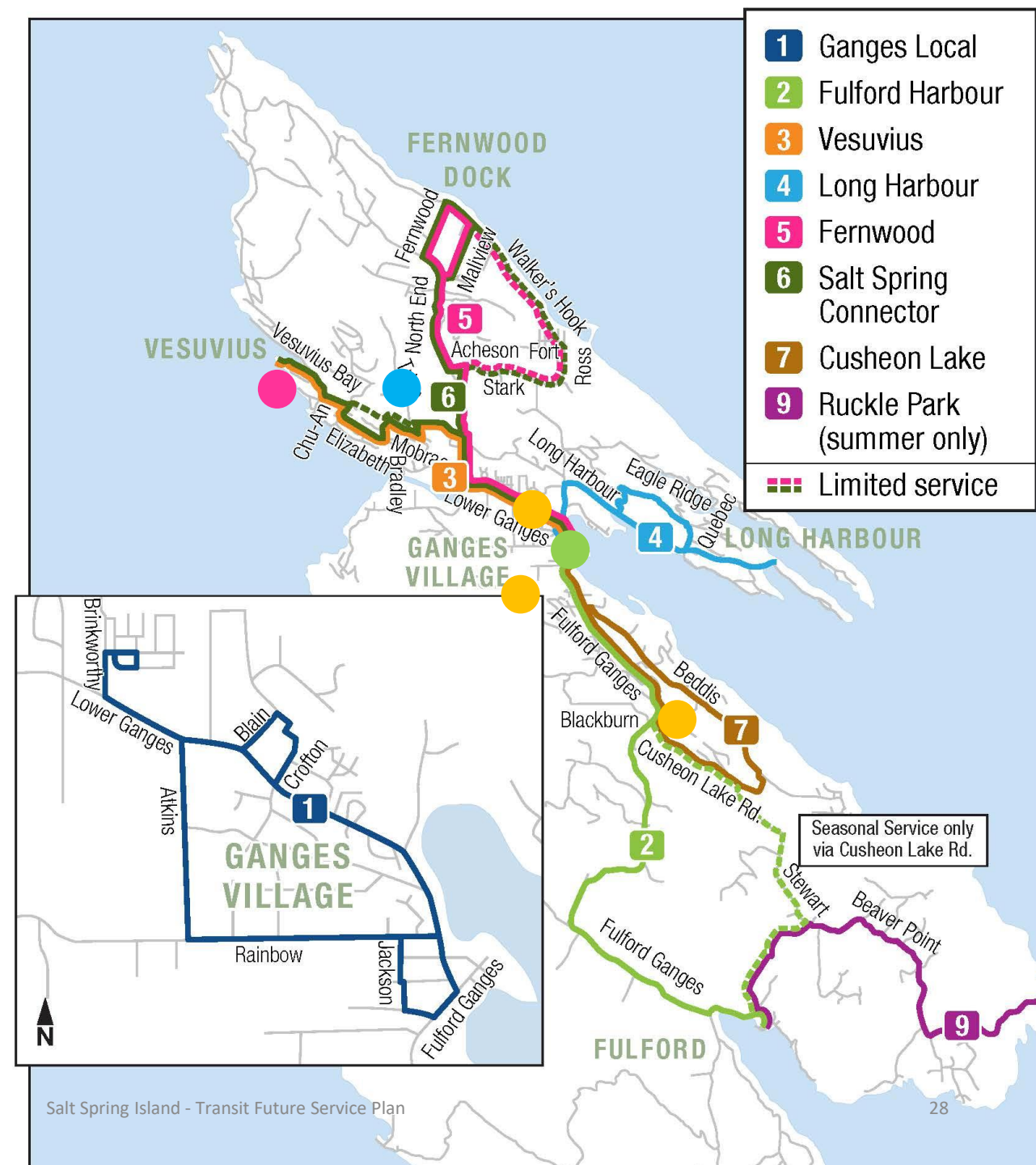


11 Your Future Network

Infrastructure

These infrastructure priorities will help to shape Salt Spring Island Transit over the next five years providing improved transit infrastructure for customer convenience and safety.

-  Ganges Bus Exchange
-  Operations and Maintenance Facility current location
-  Bus waiting area – Vesuvius Bay
-  Key Bus Stop locations and improvements



12 Infrastructure Priorities 2022-2026

Priority	Description	Resources/Partners
Ganges Exchange: 2 Additional Bays	2 additional bays needed for increase of peak service	Ganges Village Plan integration opportunity (Islands Trust)
Operations and Maintenance Facility Plan	O&M facility with secure vehicle parking and BEB charging infrastructure capacity needed to electrify and expand fleet. Shift toward Medium Duty fleet hinges on maintenance capacity (and ferry terminal turnaround infrastructure).	Partners TBD: can include MOTI, BC Ferries, SD64, Islands Trust, etc.
Improved transit vehicle waiting area at Vesuvius Bay	Improved road markings, signage to designate dedicated transit vehicle area	MOTI, BC Ferries, local businesses
Improved Amenities at Key Bus Stops	Locations: Lower Ganges (near Country Grocer), Fulford Ganges Rd at Cusheon Lake, Mobrae Neighborhood, other locations TBD in collaboration with Operator and SSITC	BC Transit Shelter program, MOTI

13 Beyond 2026 Service Priorities

Priority	Description	Estimated Resources
Later weekend service to Fulford Harbour	Add additional trips on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to meet later ferries	170 service hours
Later weekday service to local routes	Additional evening service on routes 1, 4, 9 (7 Cusheon Lake, 8 Walker's Hook) to connect to Route 2 Fulford Harbour and later ferries	1050 service hours
Later weekend service to local routes	Additional evening service on routes 1, 4, 9 (7 Cusheon Lake, 8 Walker's Hook) to connect to Route 2 Fulford Harbour and later ferries	600 service hours
Earlier weekday service to local routes	Additional evening service on routes 1, 4, 9 (7 Cusheon Lake, 8 Walker's Hook) to connect to Route 2 Fulford Harbour and earlier ferries	620 service hours
Increased frequency to new routes (route 7 Cusheon Lake, Route 8 Walker's Hook)	Based on future development, system, and individual route performance	640 service hours

14 Moving Forward

Monitoring and Implementation

Performance of the transit system is monitored on an annual basis, which is typical for transit systems of this size. Performance may be monitored more closely after a significant service change to evaluate the change.

Service improvements will be integrated into the Three Year Transit Improvement Process (TIP), which is updated on an annual basis. Infrastructure improvements will be incorporated into BC Transit's Capital Plan. Prior to implementation of service changes, BC Transit planning staff will work with staff at the Capital Regional District to ensure service improvements appropriately reflect local needs. Additional targeted engagement may be conducted to support future changes.



15 Acknowledgments

Thank you

The development of this Service Plan provides the planning overview for the development of the Saltspring Island Transit System.

This plan was made possible by participation from local governments, key stakeholders and the public. BC Transit would like to thank the following organizations:

- The Capital Regional District
- The Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission
- Ganges Faerie Minishuttle

