



Kelowna Transit Future Action Plan

Phase 2 Engagement Summary



November 2017

BC Transit would like to thank the many individuals, First Nations, local governments, businesses and community events organizers who assisted in making this engagement process a reality.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Okanagan Transit Future Action Plan builds upon the Transit Future Plan, and will refine the goals and priorities for the Kelowna Regional Transit System over the next 5 years. The development of this plan will include two phases of public engagement. Phase 1 was a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey conducted in 2016. This report details Phase 2 of the public engagement process for the Transit Future Action Plan.

Phase 2 began in March 2017 with a series of open houses in the City of Kelowna, Ellison, Peachland and Lake Country; an online survey accompanied these events. The public was asked to comment on specific service change proposals and the development of service standards and performance guidelines for the transit system.

Phase 2 continued with open houses in West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation in August 2017. A second online survey accompanied these two events, with questions focusing on service change proposals affecting the West Kelowna area. All of the open houses and online surveys held throughout Phase 2 were open to all members of the general public.

Almost 1,300 people participated in Phase 2. The largest numbers of responses came from people who used transit primarily in the City of Kelowna at least 3 days per week on a university student or adult fare. Responses showed a slight preference for core transit service over coverage services, although there was clear support for the idea that all citizens should have access to transit.

Respondents generally supported the proposed changes in the City of Kelowna, particularly the proposed introduction of service to Academy Way. Those who were affected by proposed changes in Peachland, Ellison and Lake Country were in favour of any improvements that could be made in those areas, particularly increased frequency of service. The proposed changes for West Kelowna included service cuts to allow increased service elsewhere in the area. Respondents were supportive of those proposals, though additional comments showed concern for the areas that would lose service.

General comments raised concerns about the state of the transit system in the Central Okanagan, particularly relating to reliability, lack of service to key areas such as the airport and rapidly developing neighbourhoods, and the overall customer experience. However, a majority of respondents were likely to continue using transit and expressed a willingness to recommend the service to others.

The combined results from both phases of public engagement will assist the development of service options for the short, medium and long term, as well as the development of comprehensive service standards and performance guidelines for the Kelowna Regional Transit System.

BC Transit will continue to work with key stakeholders in developing the full Transit Future Action Plan, to be completed in 2018.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 2012 Central Okanagan Transit Future Plan outlined goals and priorities for transit service in the region for the next 25 years. Building upon that work, BC Transit is now completing a Transit Future Action Plan to refine those priorities and guide decision making over the next 5 years.

Phase 1 of the public engagement process for this plan began with a customer satisfaction survey in the spring of 2016. This report details Phase 2 of the public engagement process for the Central Okanagan Transit Future Action Plan.

Phase 2 public engagement for the Kelowna Transit Future Action Plan occurred in the spring and summer of 2017 and included two stages of open house events and accompanying online surveys. The first stage focused on developing service standards and performance guidelines for the Kelowna Regional Transit System and identifying transit service priorities for the City of Kelowna, Lake Country, Ellison, and Peachland areas. The second stage focused on identifying transit service priorities for the City of West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation.

2.0 ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Open Houses

Both stages of Phase 2 included open houses, as detailed in Table 1. The material presented in the open houses included questions related to service standards, performance guidelines, specific service change proposals, and transit expansion priorities; participants were also invited to offer any additional comments. In total, 311 people attended 9 open houses.

Table 1: Open House Attendance

Date	Community	Location	Participants
March 14, 2017	City of Kelowna	Queensway Exchange	93
March 15, 2017	Peachland	Community Centre	1
March 15, 2017	Lake Country	Lake Country Municipal Hall	8
March 16, 2017	City of Kelowna	Parkinson Recreation Centre	37
March 16, 2017	City of Kelowna	Rutland Activity Centre	11
March 22, 2017	City of Kelowna	UBCO	56
March 22, 2017	Ellison	Ellison Community Centre	32
August 25, 2017	City of West Kelowna	Westbank Lions Community Centre	10
August 25, 2017	City of West Kelowna	Memorial Park	63
Total			311



Online Surveys

An online survey accompanied both stages of open house events. Both surveys were available to all members of the general public. The survey questions related to service standards, performance guidelines, proposed service changes, and general feedback on the Kelowna Regional Transit System. The first survey was available online from March 13, 2017 to April 1, 2017. The second survey was available from August 21, 2017 to September 11, 2017.

Digital Ad Campaign

To promote the surveys and open houses, BC Transit advertised using banner ads on frequently visited websites and social media ads on Facebook and Instagram. These advertisements had substantial reach. For example, in the West Kelowna stage of engagement, the Facebook ads reached 8,655 people and the Instagram ads reached 4,429 people. Combined, there have been over 60 engagements, including 53 link clicks and 4 new Facebook page likes. The digital ad campaign served 273,148 impressions.

3.0 RESULTS

This section outlines the key results from the phase 2 engagement including participation levels, demographics and travel information, service standards and performance guidelines, proposed service changes, and transit expansion prioritization.

Participation

Table 2 provides a summary of the participation numbers from the phase 2 engagement. Although the open house events were generally well-attended, the majority of participants contributed through the online survey.

Table 2: Engagement Participation

Engagement Quick Facts	
Open House Attendees	311
Online Survey Respondents	976
Total Participants	1,287

Demographics and Travel Information

Over 80 per cent of survey respondents were either university students or adults, as identified by their fare category. The largest portion of the remaining respondents were public school students, followed by seniors and college students.

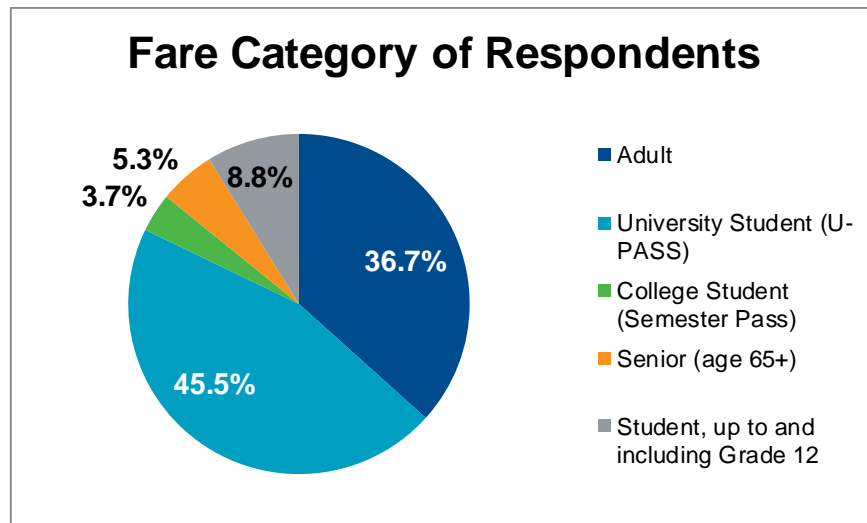


Figure 1: Fare category of respondents

Over 60 per cent of respondents use transit 3 days a week or more, and over 75 per cent use transit at least once a week. Of the remaining respondents, most were at least occasional transit customers; only 4 per cent of respondents never use transit.

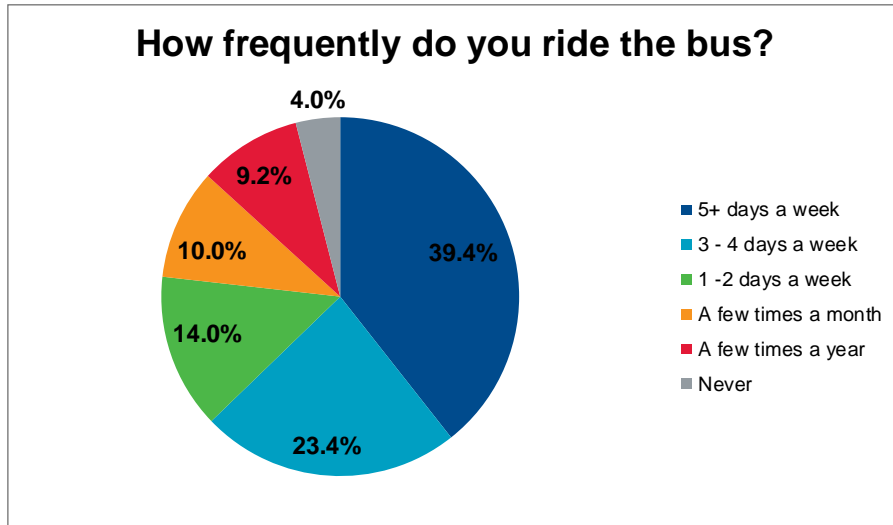


Figure 2: Respondents by transit use

Respondents were able to identify the areas they primarily use transit. The vast majority of respondents use the bus within the City of Kelowna (Figure 3). West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation was the next most common area of use. Substantially fewer respondents listed Lake Country, Ellison or Peachland as areas where they take transit.

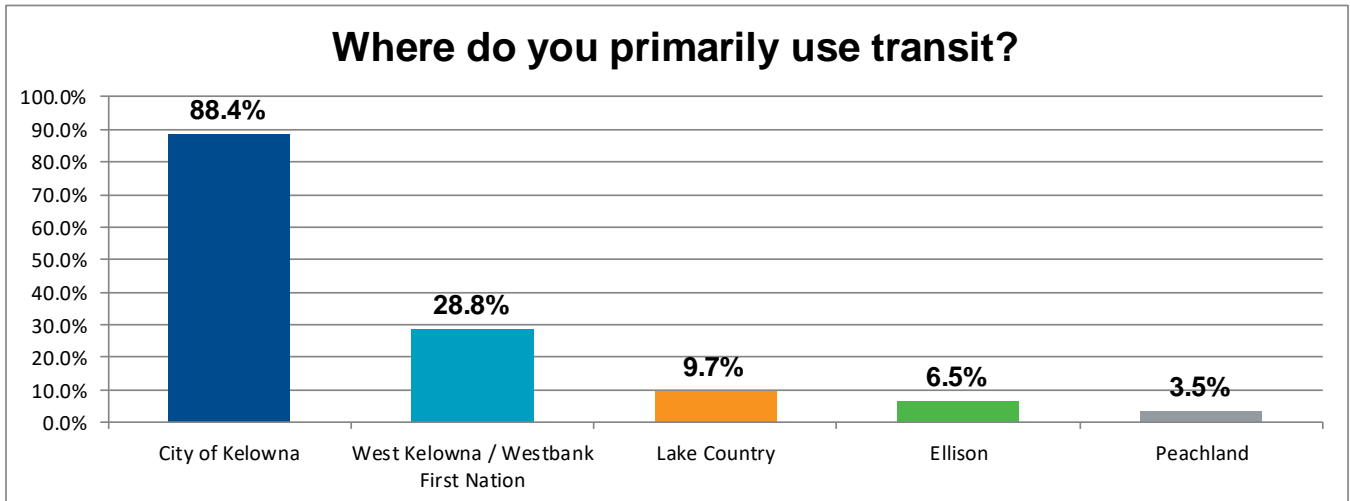


Figure 3: Respondents by area of transit use

Service Standards and Performance Guidelines

Service standards and performance guidelines provide a vision, goals and targets for a transit system's performance and development. They serve the following purposes:

1. Ensure that all transit services provide an acceptable level of service quality to customers;
2. Provide a consistent and fair basis for evaluating proposed improvements to existing transit services and for considering new transit services; and
3. Balance improving the level of transit services with the need to use transit resources efficiently.

The Central Okanagan Transit Future Plan includes a basic outline of service standards and performance guidelines. This public engagement process sought to build upon that foundation, focusing on tradeoffs in the following areas:

- Moving People More Efficiently
- Enabling Access for All
- Connecting Communities
- Prioritizing efficiency, access and connections

Moving People More Efficiently

Prioritizing between service coverage and service directness is a central challenge for transit planning. Direct routes with fewer stops allow buses to move faster and run more frequently. On the other hand, direct routes are likely to increase the typical walking distance to each bus stop. Focusing on reducing that walking distance can provide service to more neighbourhoods, but it is more difficult to run that service efficiently. Participants in this public engagement process demonstrated a preference for service directness over service coverage.

Participants were asked for their level of agreement with two statements. The first, representing service directness, was “I prefer to walk a bit farther to a bus stop if that means the bus comes more often and gets me to my destination more quickly.” The second, representing service coverage, was “I prefer to have a bus stop closer to my door, even if it means the bus comes less often and takes longer to get to my destination.”

70 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the first statement reflecting service directness (Figure 4), whereas only 40 per cent of respondents agreed to the second reflecting service coverage (Figure 5). Approximately 40 per cent of respondents also disagreed with the second statement. These results indicate a clear preference for direct service over service coverage.

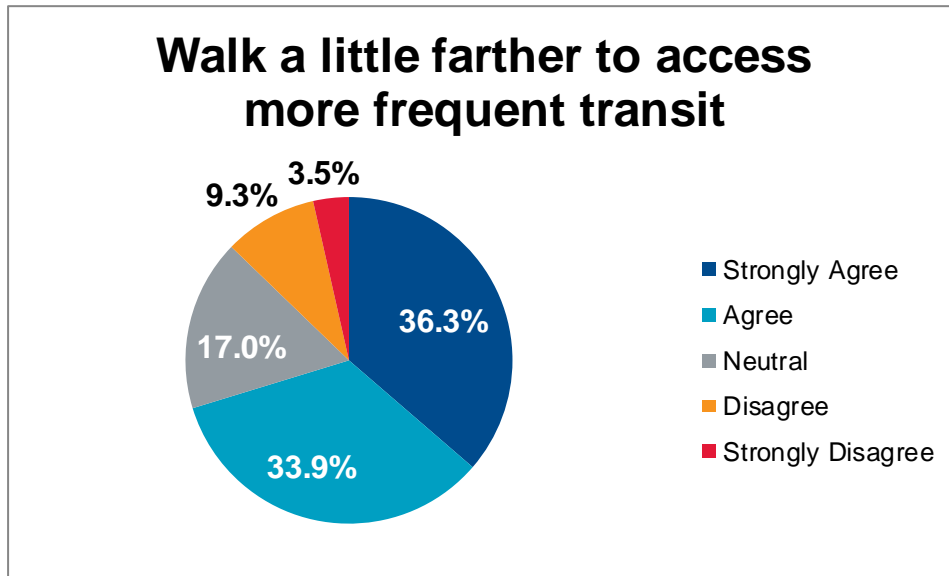


Figure 4: A longer walk to more frequent transit

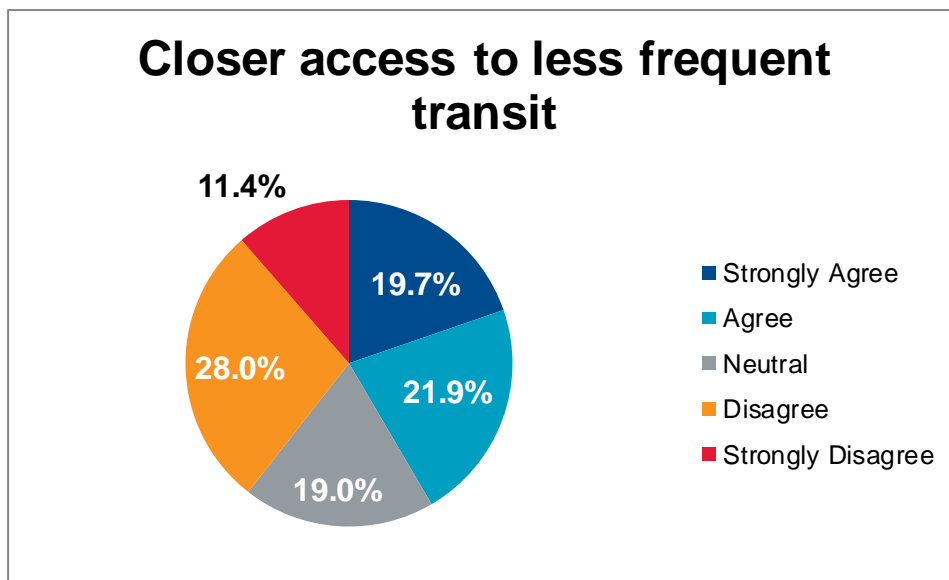


Figure 5: Closer access to less frequent transit

Enabling Access for All

The distribution of transit service between the core and coverage areas of a community is another essential tradeoff within transit planning. The core area is where transit is most sustainable and can compete with other modes of transport. Coverage areas are where transit demand is low, but some level of service may be warranted.

In the Kelowna region, the Transit Core Area is defined as areas with 30 or more residents, students, or jobs per hectare. The Transit Coverage Area is defined as areas with between 10 and 30 residents, students, or jobs per hectare. Many people who rely on transit live in the Transit Core Area of Kelowna. For example, 82% of senior homes and 80% of rental households are located within the Core Area.

After presenting the information above, the online survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with two statements. The first corresponded to service for the core area: “Transit service should provide a convenient way for the majority of people who don’t have access to other means to get around independently.” The second corresponded to service for the coverage area: “Basic service should be provided to as many neighbourhoods as possible, at the expense of quality, core services.”

A majority of respondents agreed with both statements; however, the level of agreement was significantly higher for the statement relating to core service, as shown in Figure 6. Over 50 per cent of respondents strongly agreed, and a further 30 per cent agreed. Fewer than 2 per cent of respondents disagreed.

The spread of responses was much wider to the statement corresponding to coverage service, as shown in Figure 7. Around 65 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with it; over 20 per cent remained neutral and over 10 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

These results indicate clearer support for focusing service in the Transit Core Area. Although respondents showed their support for coverage service as well, the overall response to the Transit Coverage Area preference statement was more mixed.

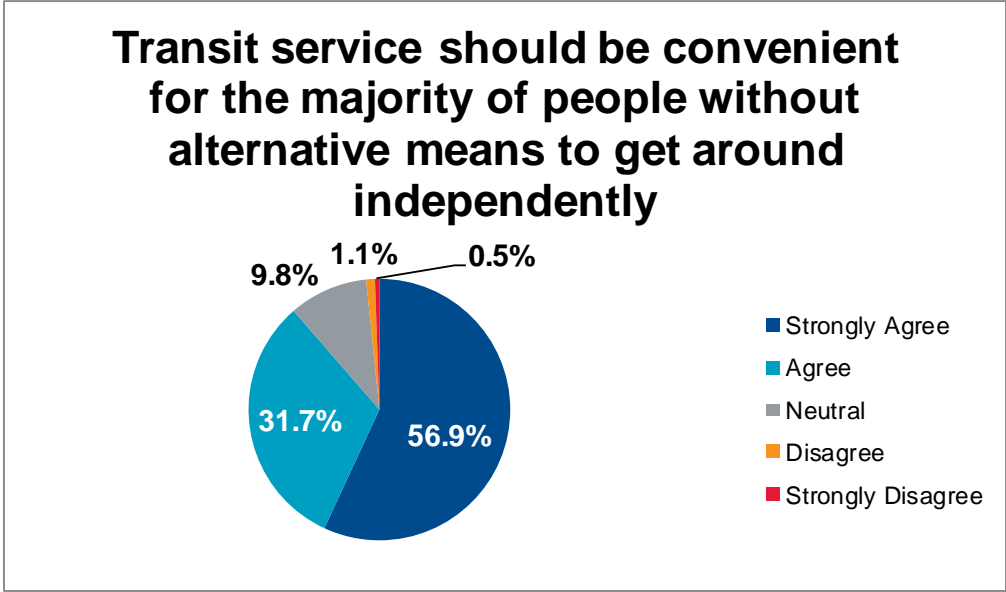


Figure 6: Convenience for the majority of people without alternative means of transport

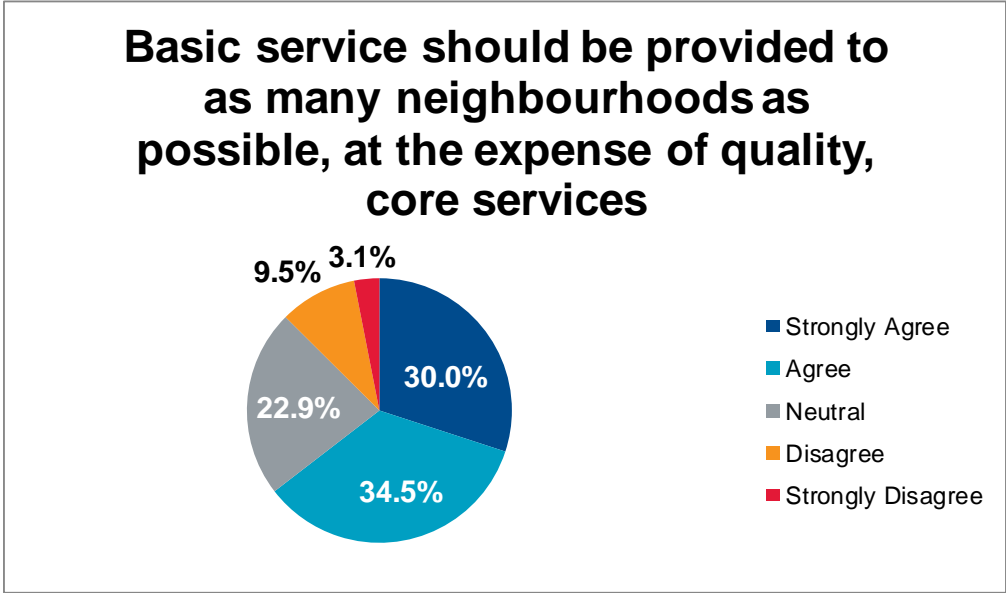


Figure 7: Coverage to as many neighbourhoods as possible

Connecting Communities

Another essential tradeoff with transit planning relates to different approaches for connecting communities: investing transit resources in existing high-performing transit routes or proactively developing transit in developing communities where demand is low but expected to grow over time. Based on the online survey results, there was general support for focusing service improvements on high demand routes before expanding service to proactively shape developing neighbourhoods around transit.

The online survey asked respondents to rate their level of agreement with two statements relating to this tradeoff. The first was: “service should be added to high-demand routes, where capacity may be an issue.” The second was: “service should be added proactively to shape neighbourhoods around transit.” While respondents generally agreed with both statements, the support for increasing capacity on high-demand routes was stronger.

As shown in Figure 6, over 80 per cent of respondents agreed with the first statement. Only 4 per cent of respondents disagreed with that statement, indicating a high level of support for supplementing service on high demand routes.

As shown in Figure 7, the portion of respondents who supported the statement “add service proactively to shape neighbourhoods around transit” was only slightly smaller, at around 75 per cent. The portion of those disagreeing was noticeably higher than the previous question, as was the portion of those remaining neutral.

Respondents were enthusiastic about transit expansion for both purposes; however, these results indicate a slight preference for increasing capacity on high-demand routes.

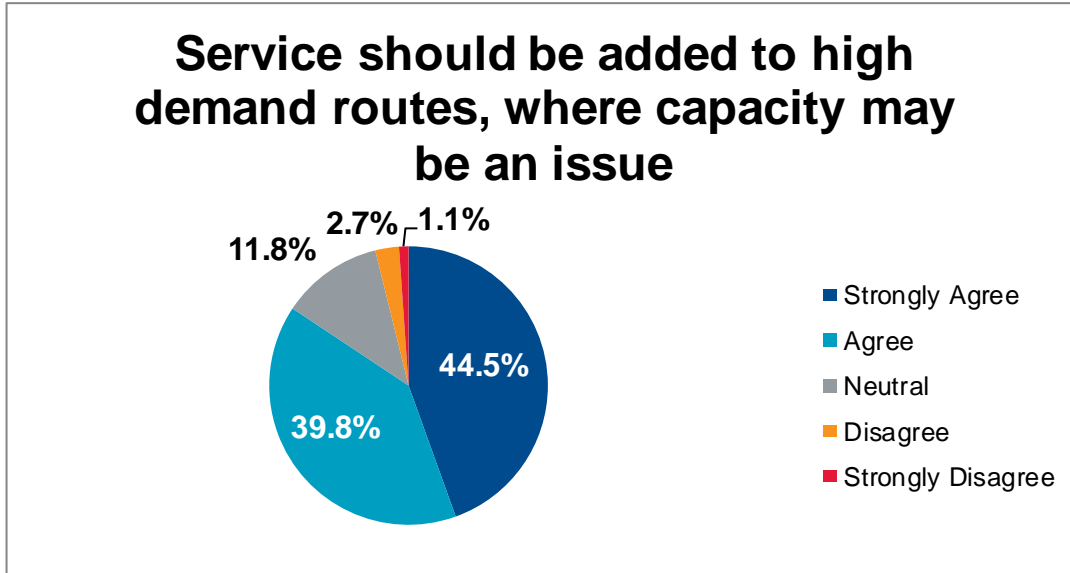


Figure 6: Improve high-demand routes

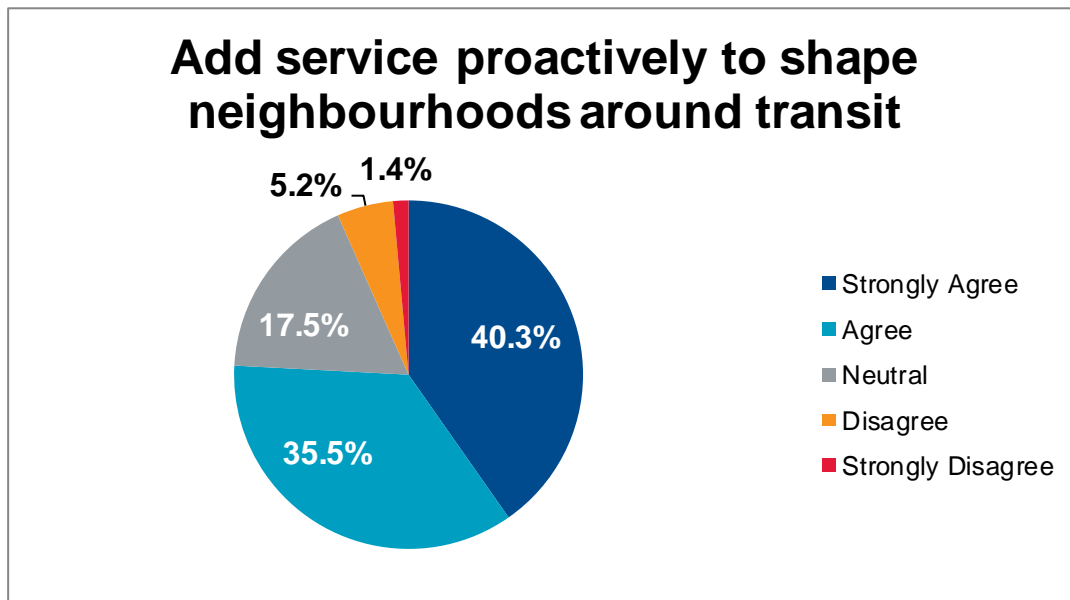


Figure 7: Service developing areas

Prioritizing Efficiency, Access or Connections

Choosing between competing priorities is a central challenge of transit planning. In the previous three sections, respondents generally supported most of the suggestions for improvements to the transit system. Taken individually, all forms of expansion are appealing. To distribute limited resources most effectively, it is necessary to prioritize some initiatives above others.

This question asked respondents to distribute 10 points among the following three categories: “Moving people more efficiently”, “enabling access for all”, and “connecting communities.” Assigning a limited number of points effectively required respondents to rank their priorities.

The results paint a more complex picture than those from previous questions. Respondents valued access most, with over 40 per cent of points being assigned to “enabling access for all.” “Moving people more efficiently” received the second-most support, at 31 per cent and “connecting communities” followed closely with 28 per cent (Figure 8).

These priorities are intricately interconnected; emphasizing any one will have impacts on the others. For instance, focusing on shaping developing neighbourhoods around transit is likely to reduce the resources available to improve efficiency on routes in established areas. Likewise, improving efficiency on existing routes will likely limit the potential for service expansion in new areas.

It is also possible for these priorities to complement each other. In Kelowna specifically, there is a clear opportunity for overlap between the priorities of accessibility and efficiency. As mentioned previously, 82% of senior homes and 80% of rental households are located within the Core Transit Area. Those figures suggest that a large majority of the population that is dependent on public transit also lives within the area that is easiest to serve by public transit. Therefore, improving accessibility for those who need it most can also support the goal of improving efficiency on core services.

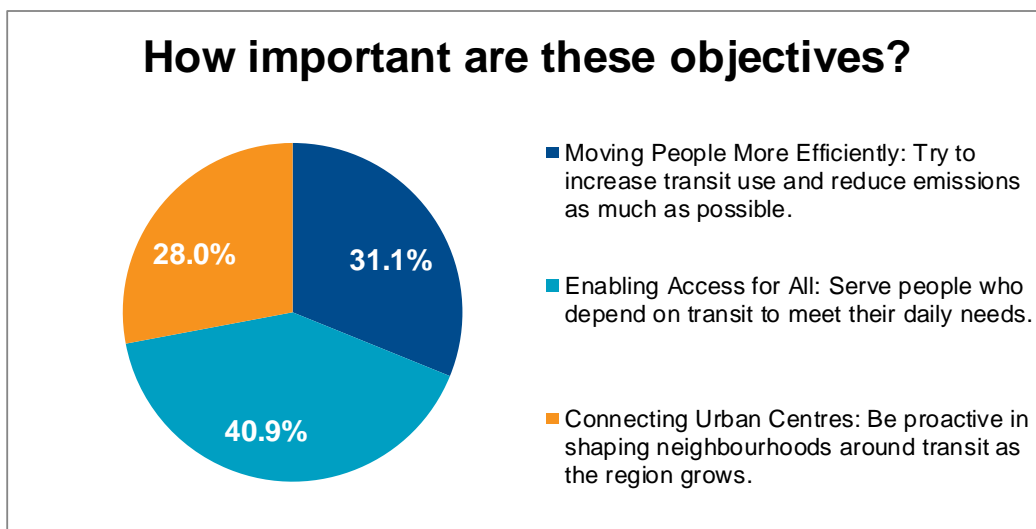


Figure 8: How important are these objectives? (assign 10 points)

Proposed Service Changes and Expansion Priorities

The open houses and online surveys asked for feedback on specific proposed changes to transit service in the City of Kelowna, West Kelowna/Westbank First Nation, and Lake Country. Respondents were also asked to identify their priorities for the future of transit service in those areas, as well as in Peachland and Ellison.

City of Kelowna

The survey identified three specific transit service options within the City of Kelowna including options for the Landmark District, Academy Way, and the Glenmore area. The questions relating to these service options were in open response format, and the charts displayed in this report represent a qualitative summary of the responses. The question relating to expansion priorities was presented as a multiple-choice, and the chart displaying the results reflects that structure.

Landmark District Service

The Landmark District is a mixed-use area with several new developments that is currently underserved by transit. One of the proposed service changes is to re-route the 11 Rutland through the Landmark District, moving service from a portion of Burtch Road and Springfield Road to Dickson Way and Dayton Street. These proposed changes are depicted in Figure 9.

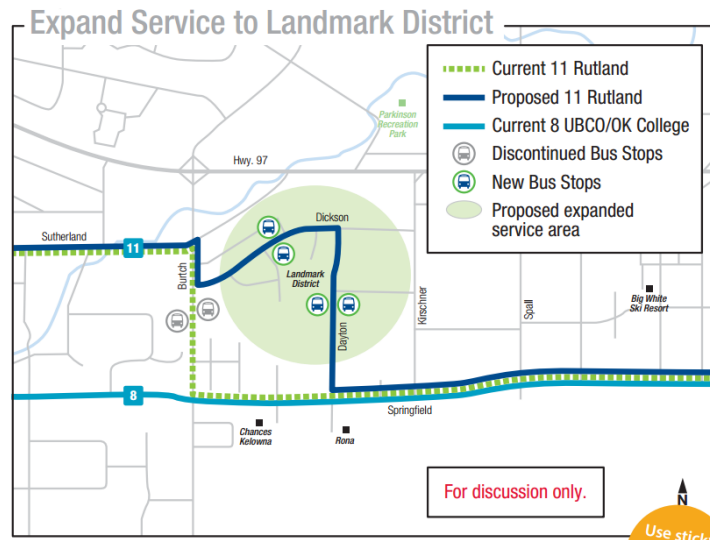


Figure 9: Proposed 11 Rutland changes

Over 60 per cent of respondents supported redirecting the 11 Rutland through the Landmark District. The level of opposition was low, with more than twice as many respondents stating they would not be

affected by the change as opposed it. Respondents' concerns generally related to the possibility of this change slowing down the service on the 11 Rutland and the challenges of running a bus through an area with relatively narrow streets.

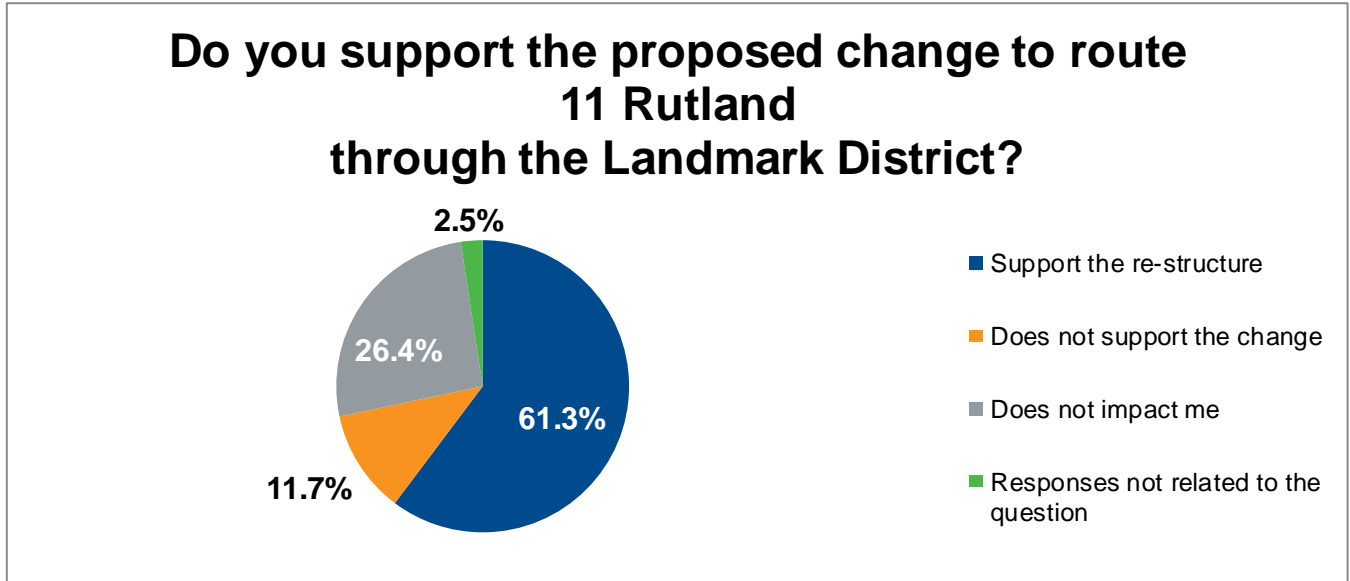


Figure 10: Support for 11 Rutland proposal

Academy Way Service

The proposed Academy Way service involved re-routing the 4 Pandosy/UBCO Express via Sexsmith and Academy Way, connecting to UBCO via John Hindle Drive once it is completed. Academy Way currently has no transit service.

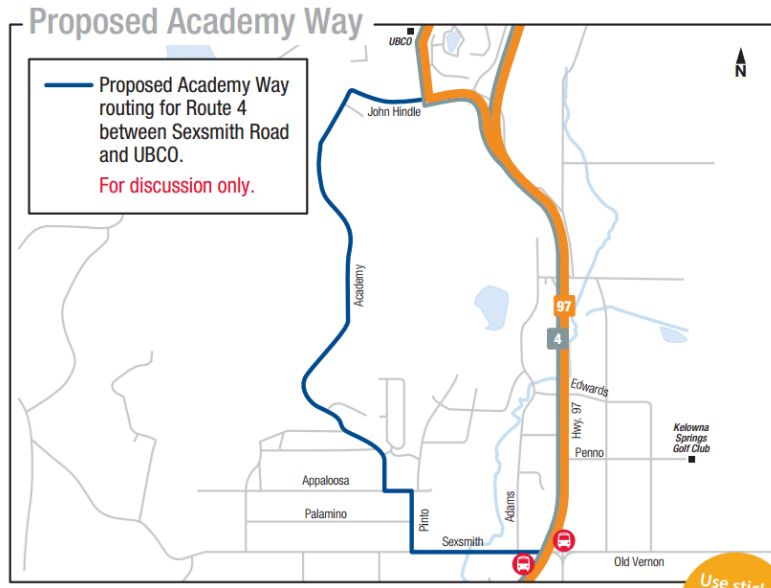


Figure 11: Proposed Route 4 changes

The overwhelming majority of respondents support the proposed addition of service to Academy Way. Many comments referred to the number of students who live on Academy Way that would now have transit service. Some respondents expressed concern about the frequency and seasonality of the service, but supported the routing changes. There were more respondents who had no comment or would not be impacted than those who opposed the proposal.

BC Transit will be conducting additional public engagement in the future to comprehensively review service options for the Academy Way area.

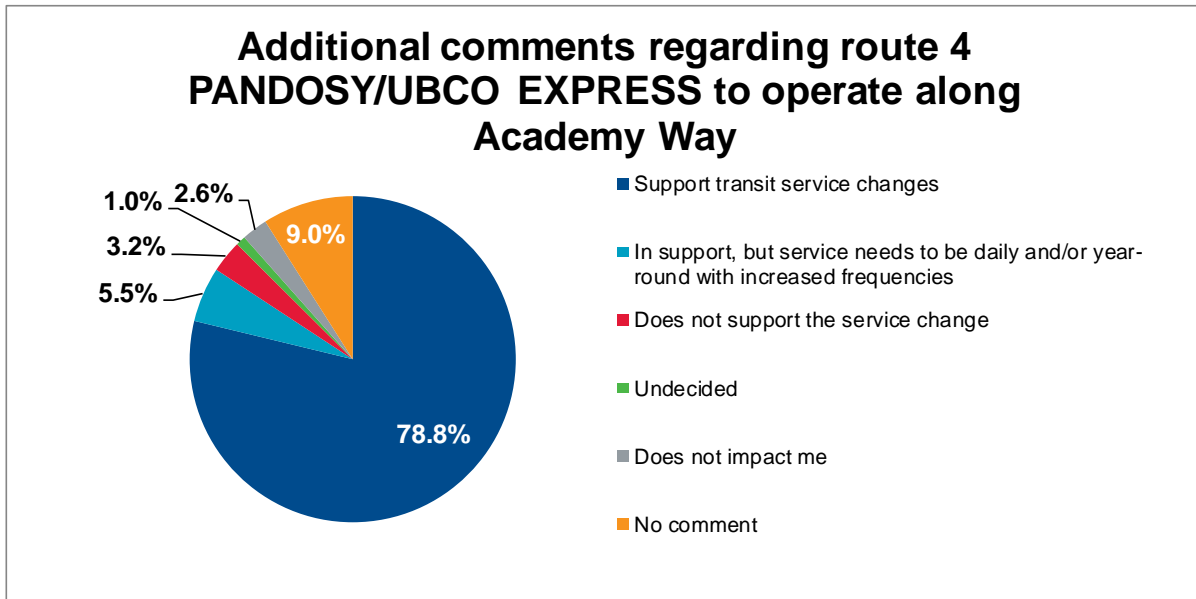


Figure 12: Comments on Route 4 proposal

Service to Glenmore

John Hindle Drive is being extended to connect UBCO to Glenmore Road. Once completed, this link will greatly increase the possibilities for service along Glenmore. Respondents and open house attendees were asked to identify priority destinations for service from Glenmore.

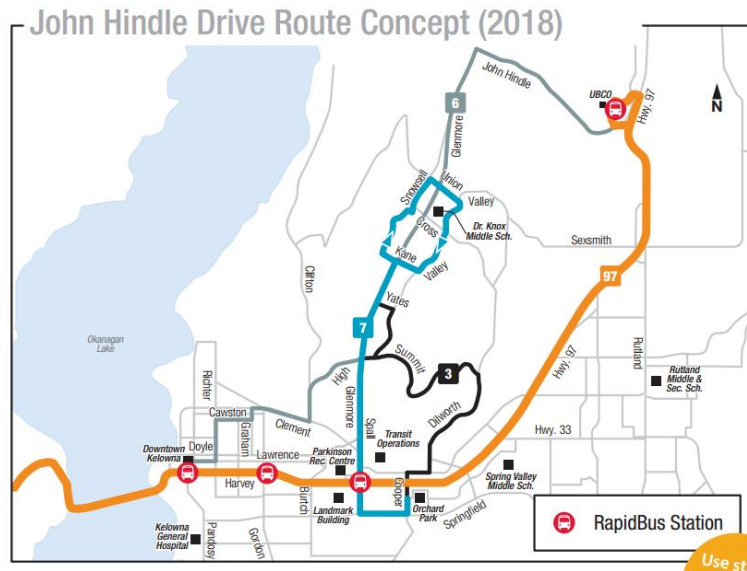


Figure 13: Glenmore routing options

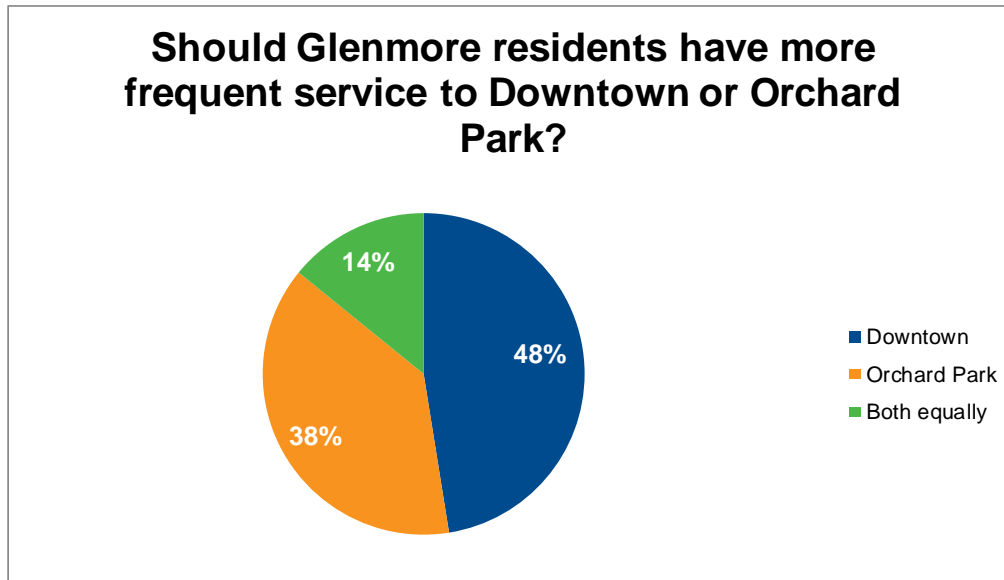


Figure 14: Glenmore priority destinations

Those who expressed a preferred destination from Glenmore were closely split between Downtown and Orchard Park. 10 per cent more respondents selected Downtown over Orchard Park, but 14 per cent suggested both destinations were equally important. It is therefore difficult to discern a clear preference. Some respondents also suggested UBCO as an alternative destination.

Based on the results of this engagement, additional service options were developed, and further engagement was conducted in October 2017 to support a comprehensive restructure of transit service to the Glenmore area for implementation in September 2018.

Transit Improvement Priorities

In order to provide direction for future service changes, the online survey asked participants to identify their priority areas for transit improvements.

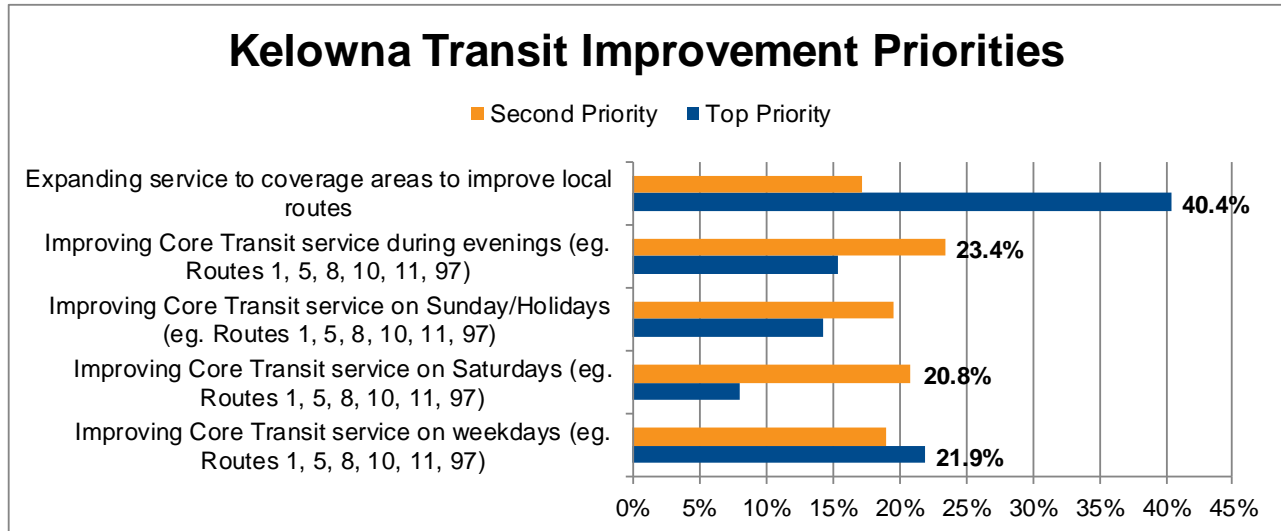


Figure 15: Transit priorities for City of Kelowna

A plurality of respondents selected “expanding service to coverage areas to improve local routes” as their top priority. This was the clearest takeaway from these responses; other responses were about half as common. Coupling this result with that of the previous question points to a preference for coverage service.

The next most common first priority listed was “improving core transit service on weekdays.” Respondents’ second priorities were evenly dispersed, although improving core services on Saturdays and evenings were slightly more popular responses than others.

Peachland

There is currently a single paratransit route connecting Peachland to West Kelowna. Community members were offered four possible means of improving service: introducing a park & ride facility in Peachland; improving service frequencies; extending the existing route to Butt Road Station in West Kelowna; and reducing service to Princeton Avenue (due to low ridership) and reinvesting it elsewhere in Peachland.

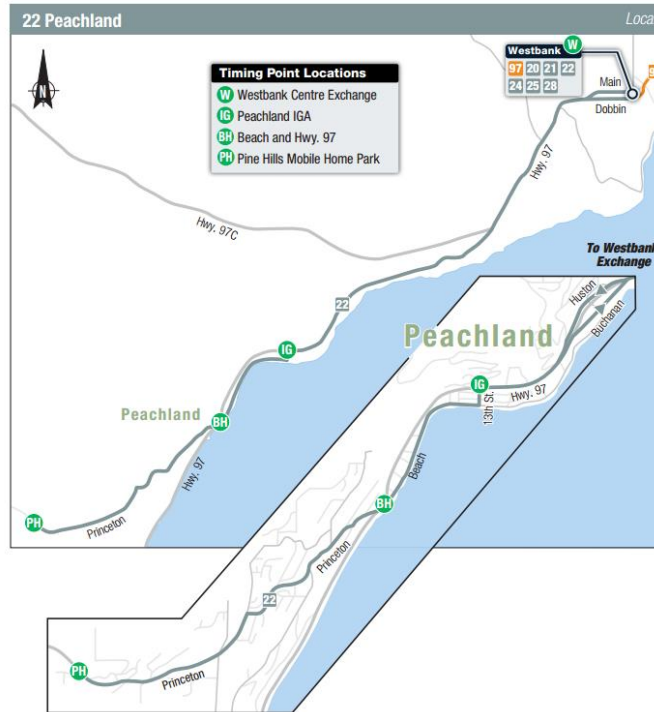


Figure 16: Peachland context map

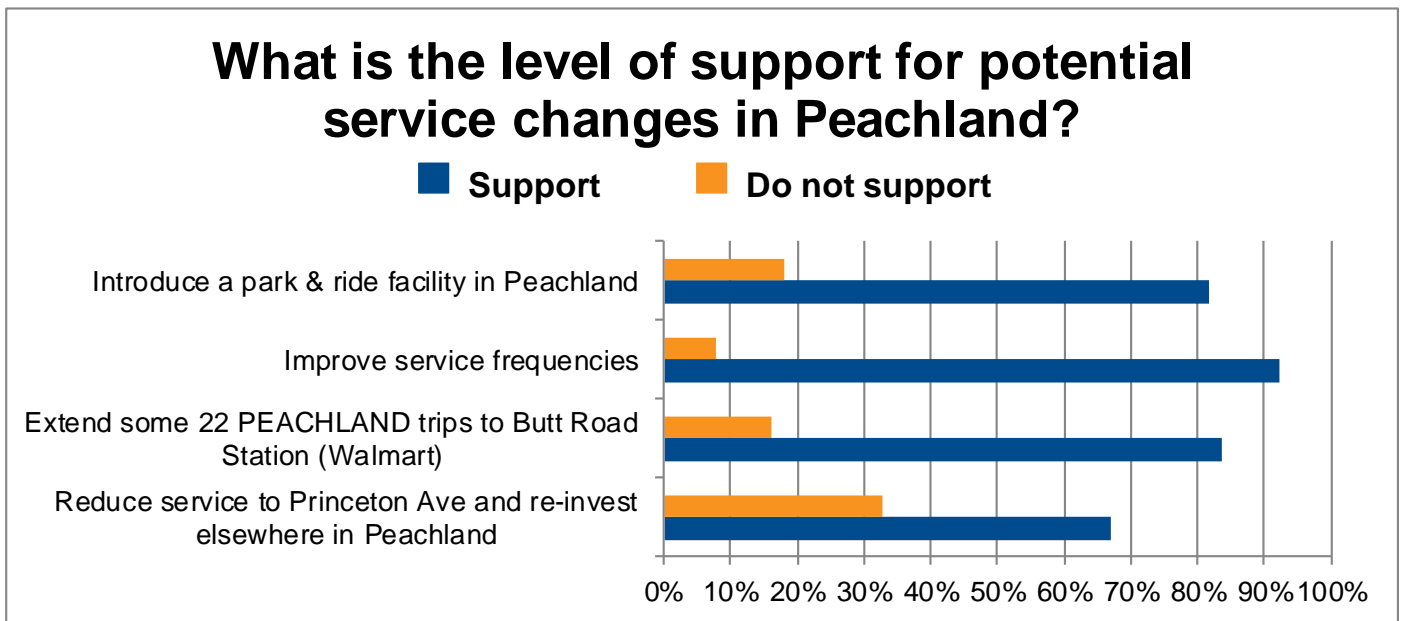


Figure 17: Support for Peachland changes

The vast majority of respondents were not affected by potential changes to service in Peachland, which is consistent with the earlier data showing that Peachland was the area least frequently travelled by respondents. Those respondents who were affected were overwhelmingly supportive of all service

change options. The most popular response was “improve service frequencies”, followed closely by extending trips to Butt Road Station and introducing a park & ride facility. The least popular, and most opposed service change was a reduction in service to Princeton Avenue to allow investment in other parts of the community. Even that change was supported by over 60 per cent of affected respondents. The level of support for changes among Peachland transit customers is indicative of a desire for general improvements in this part of the Kelowna Regional Transit system.

Lake Country

The Kelowna Regional Transit System currently operates two routes in Lake Country. One of the routes is underperforming, presenting an opportunity to redistribute those resources elsewhere in the area. The survey asked respondents how they would prefer to use those resources.

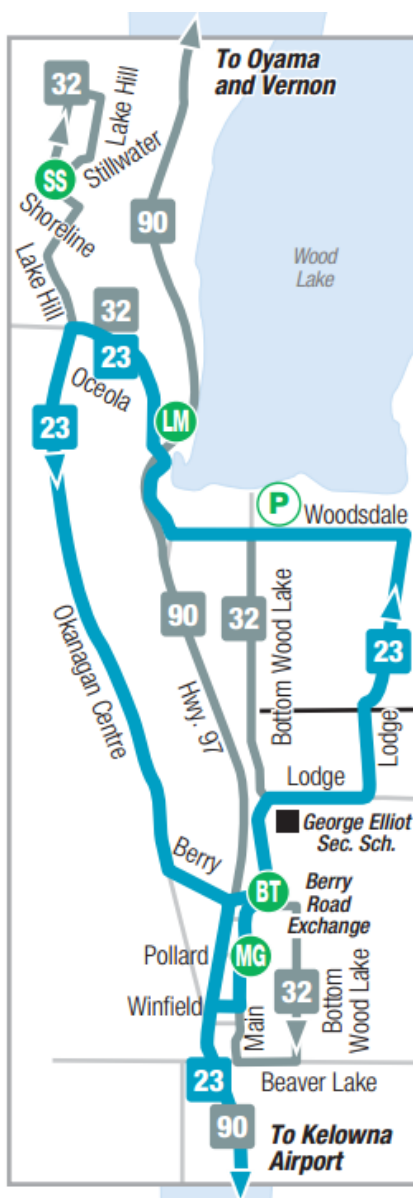


Figure 18: Lake Country context map

32 The Lakes has low ridership. The survey presented two options for re-allocating resources from 32 The Lakes: either to provide new coverage to other communities such as Lakestone and Oyama, or to provide that new coverage and expand service to include middays, evenings and weekends.

As with service changes to Peachland, the vast majority of respondents stated that they would not be impacted by changes to 32 The Lakes. Those who were affected overwhelmingly supported both options, especially the second.

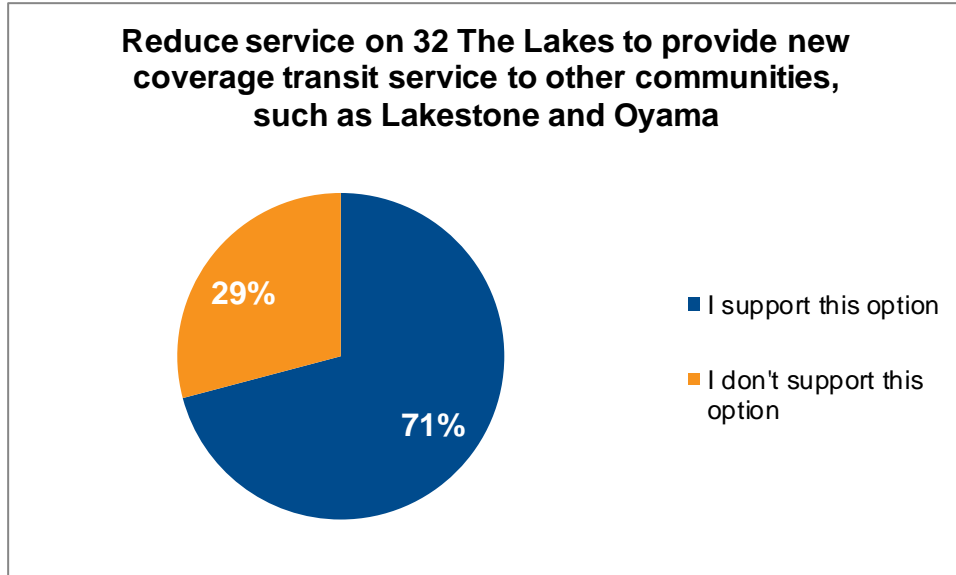


Figure 19: Support for 32 The Lakes Option 1

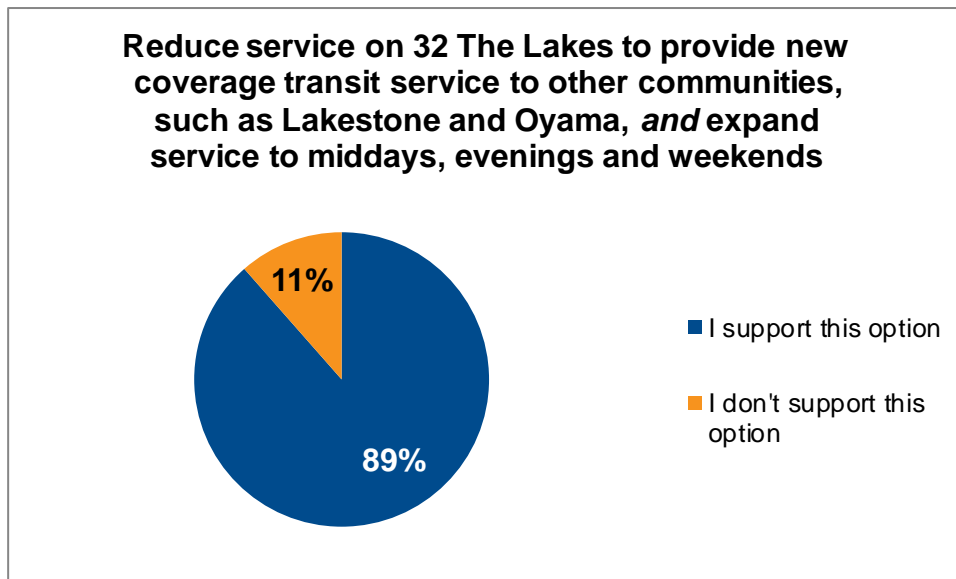


Figure 20: Support for 32 The Lakes Option 2

Ellison

Ellison currently has very limited transit service, with only two trips per day serving the area six days a week. The majority of respondents said they would not be affected by changes in service to the area. Those who would be affected were unequivocal in their responses. Over 90 per cent of participants opposed the idea of discontinuing all service to Ellison, and over 80 per cent of participants supported all three suggestions for expansion in the area. The idea of introducing two new peak period trips in addition to the existing service received the most support, at 92 per cent; rescheduling the existing trips to commuter times and reinstating handyDART service received 88 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively.

As with Peachland and Lake Country, respondents appeared to share a general desire for improvements to transit service in an underserved area.

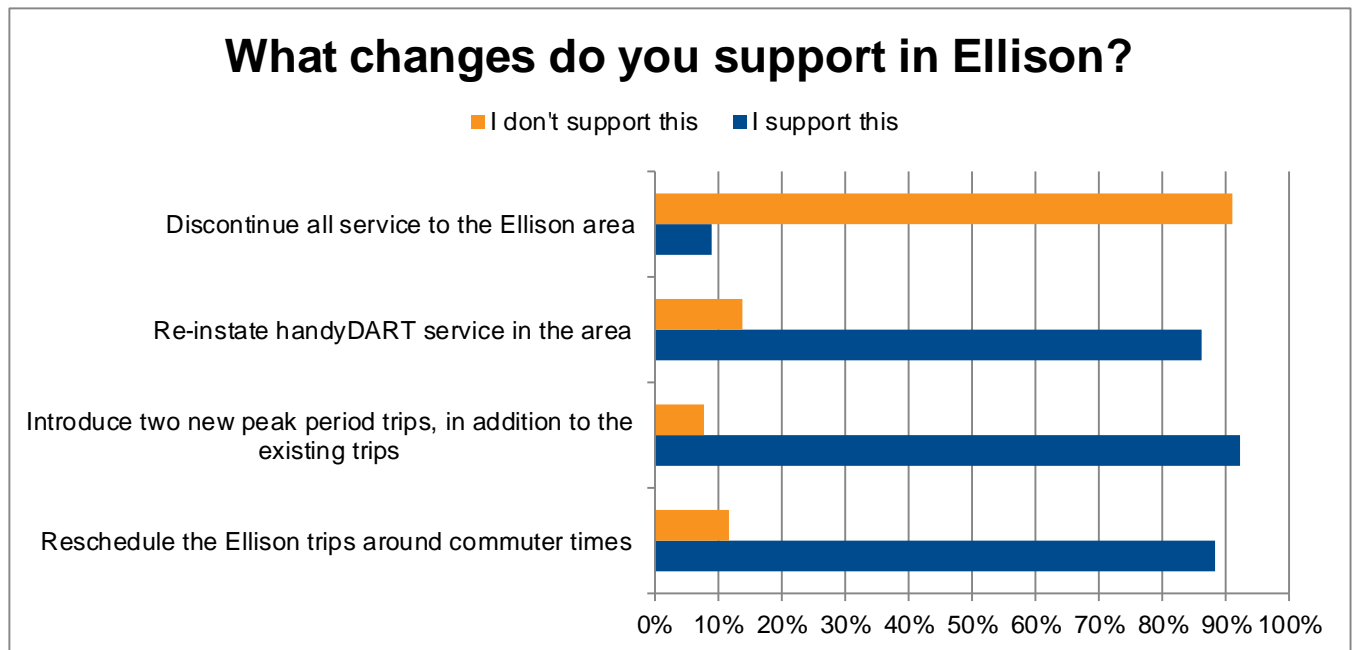


Figure 21: Support for changes in Ellison

West Kelowna

The online survey and open houses presented two service change proposals and asked respondents for their top two priorities for future transit expansion. The first proposal suggested combining two existing routes, the 27 Horizon and the 29 Bear Creek; the second suggested reducing service on an underperforming route in a developing area. For priorities for future improvements, the survey presented four options: improving the existing core route (97 Okanagan); improving existing coverage services; adding a proposed coverage service to the Shannon Lake area; and adding a proposed coverage service to Gellatly.

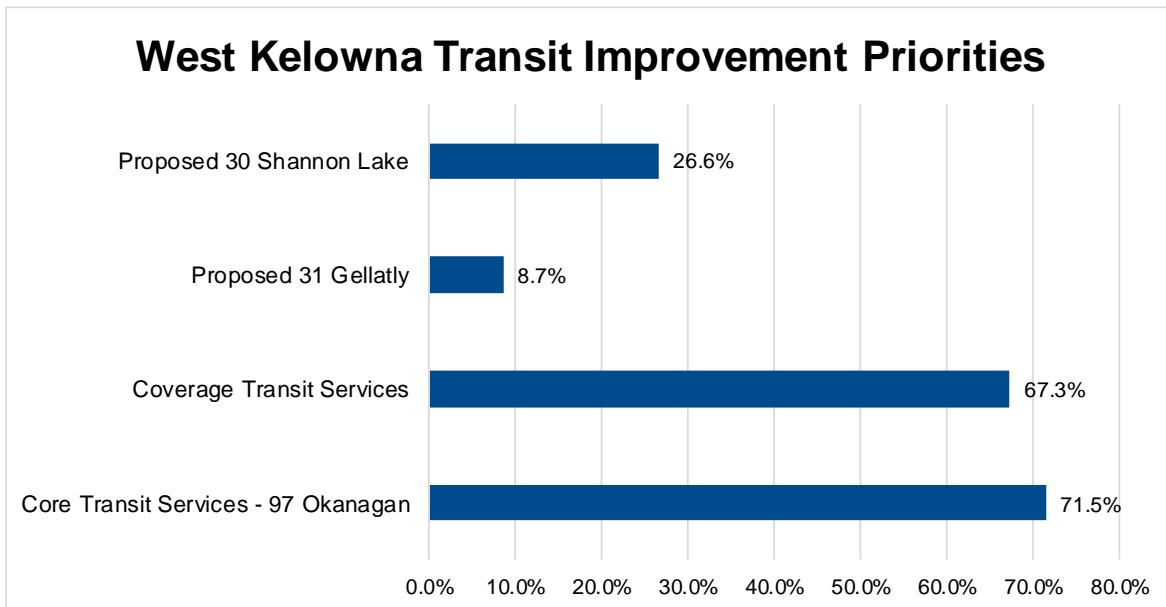


Figure 22: Transit improvement priorities in West Kelowna

Figure shows the results of the question regarding transit improvement priorities for West Kelowna. The question asked respondents to identify their top two priorities. Improving service on the 97 Okanagan was the most popular choice, with improving existing coverage services close behind. Of the two specific proposals for new coverage services, the 30 Shannon Lake was considerably more popular, with over a quarter of respondents expressing support. Service to Shannon Lake was also a theme that arose in additional comments to the online survey and in conversations at the open house.

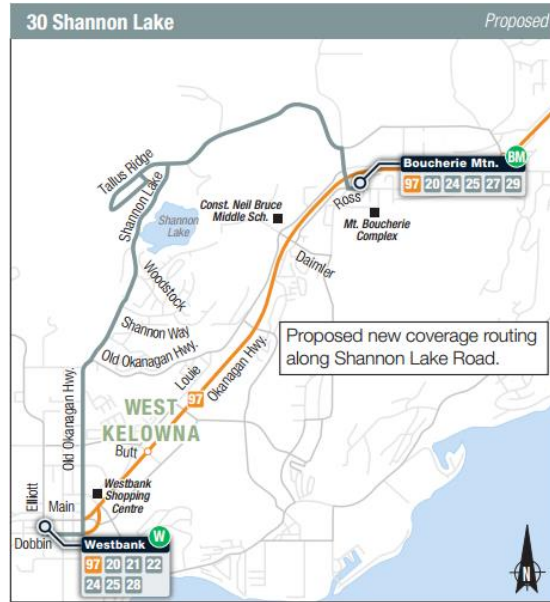


Figure 23: Proposed 30 Shannon Lake

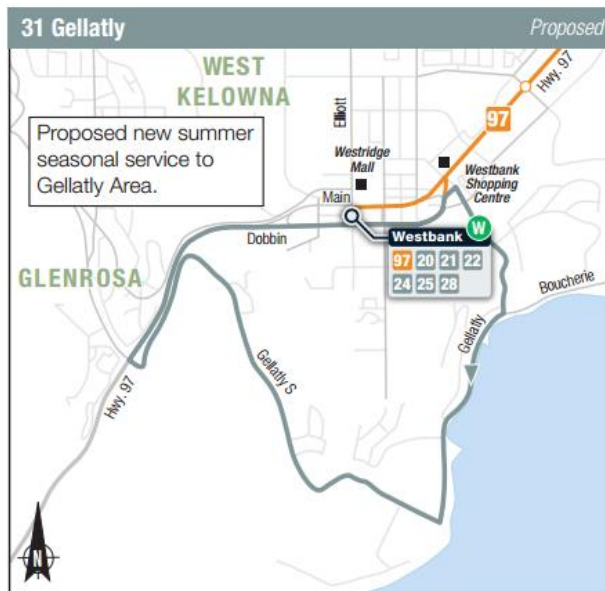


Figure 24: Proposed 31 Gellatly

27 Horizon

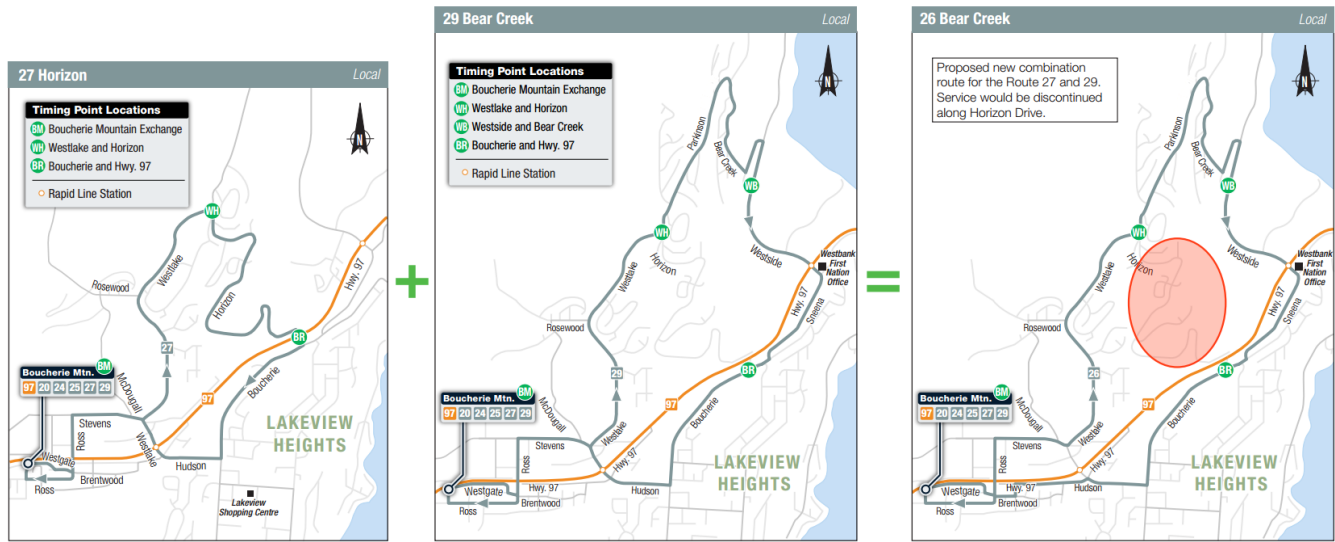


Figure 25: Proposed combination of 27 Horizon and 29 Bear Creek

Horizon Drive is a segment of the current 27 Horizon with low ridership. Removing this segment would allow the routing of 27 Horizon and 29 Bear Creek to be combined into one route. The proposed change could create the 26 Bear Creek, as depicted in Figure 25. Approximately 90 per cent of survey respondents supported the proposed changes to Routes 27 and 29 that would remove service on Horizon Drive.

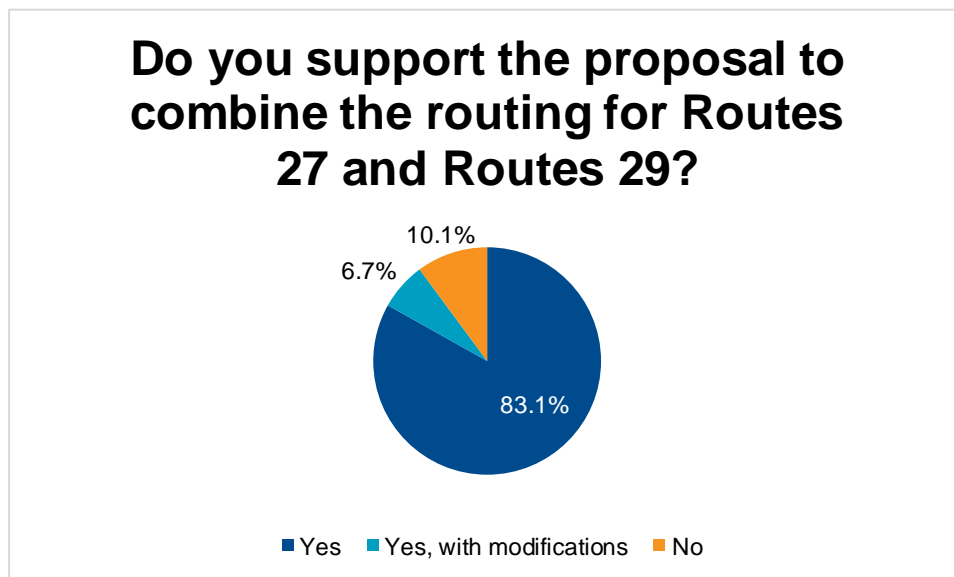


Figure 26: Support for proposed combination of routes 27 and 29

20 Lakeview

20 Lakeview has low ridership and reducing service on the route could make resources available to enhance other routes in the system. The survey asked respondents if they would support a reduction, then presented two approaches to that reduction. Option 1 would change the routing to save running time; option 2 would maintain the existing routing while reducing weekend service. Figure 27 below shows the routing changes proposed in option 1.

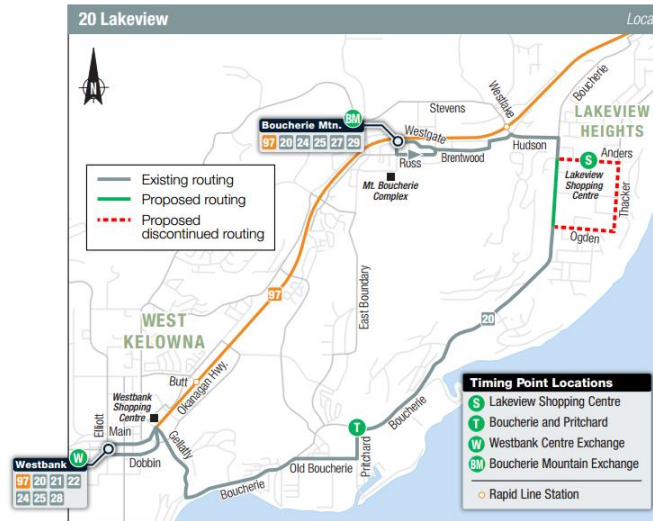


Figure 27: 20 Lakeview proposed re-routing

Survey respondents gave overwhelming support to the proposal to reduce service on the 20 Lakeview. In combination with the responses to the previous question, these results indicate a general preference for improved service frequency over coverage.

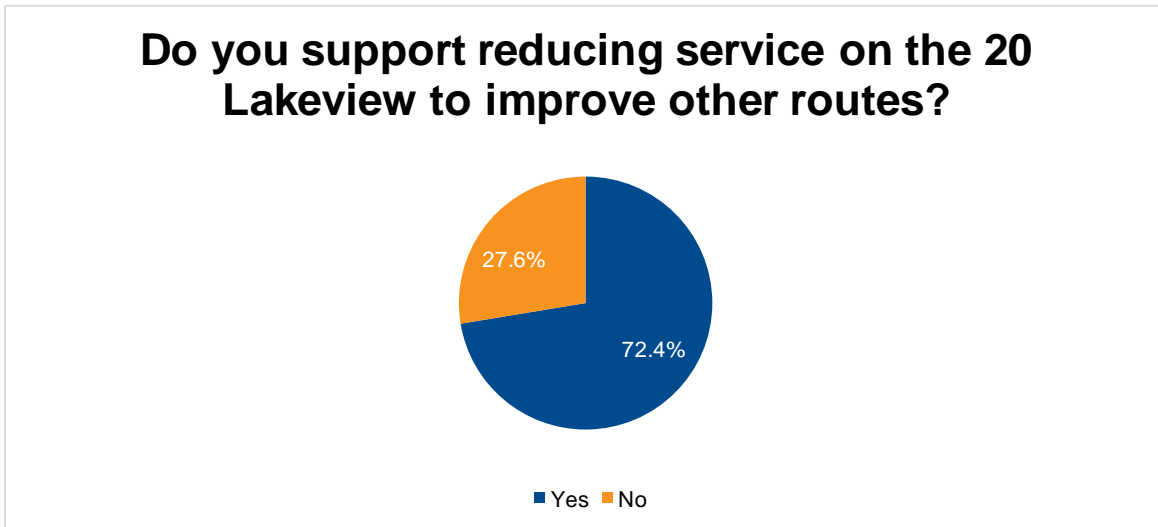


Figure 28: Support for reducing 20 Lakeview service

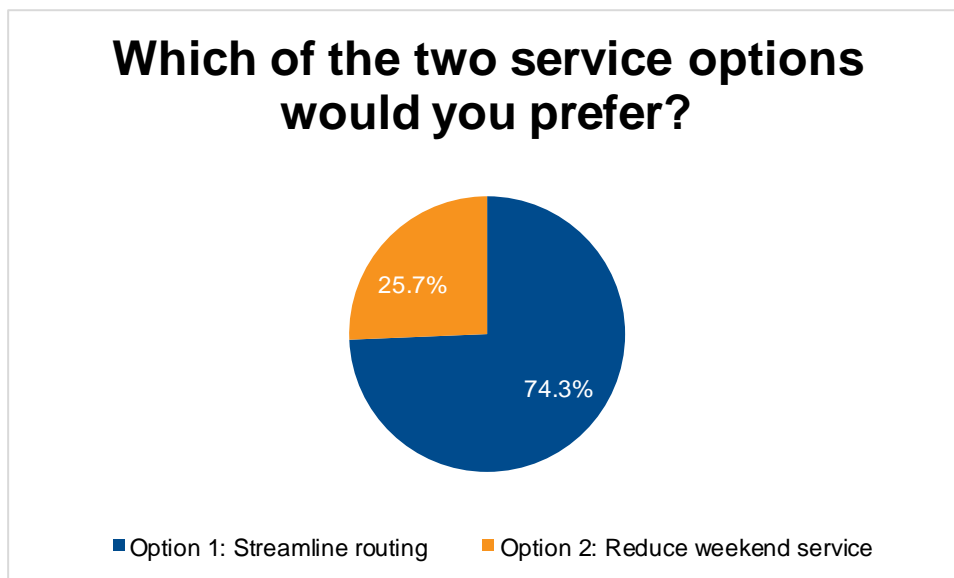


Figure 29: Options for 20 Lakeview service reduction

Of the two suggested options for service reduction on the 20 Lakeview, respondents overwhelmingly favoured changes to the routing. Additional comments reinforced this conclusion; numerous respondents mentioned that existing weekend service is already extremely limited.

Despite the relatively strong community support for this option, through discussions with local staff and the local community association, it became clear that substantial development is planned within the area. This planned future development would likely increase the transit ridership potential.

General Feedback

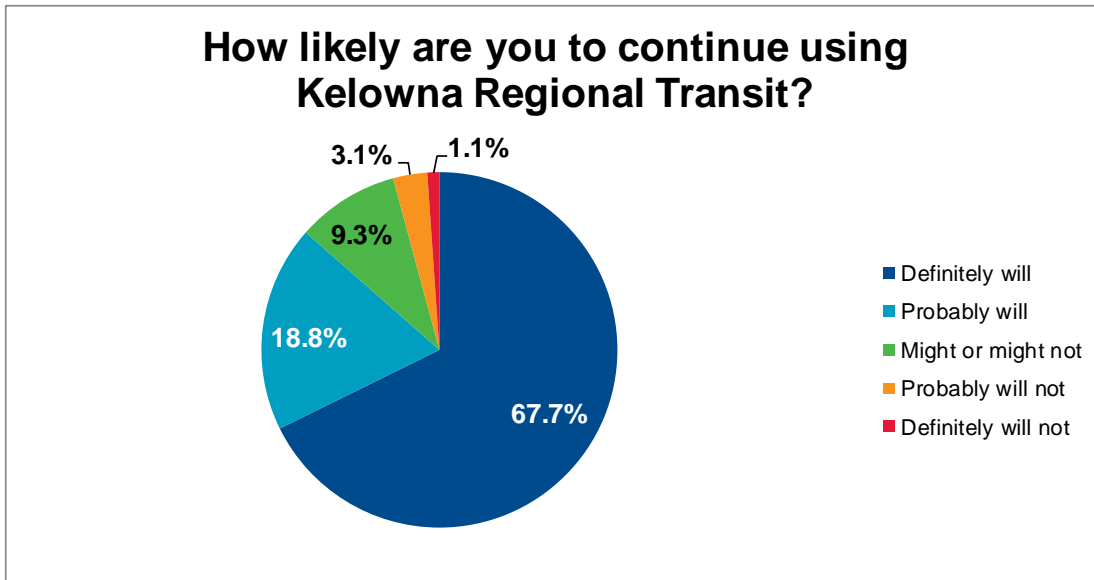


Figure 30: Likelihood of continuing to use Kelowna Regional Transit

Over 85 per cent of respondents said they were likely to continue using transit in Kelowna, with two-thirds saying they definitely will. On the other hand, less than 5 per cent said it was unlikely that they would continue using transit. UBCO students made up a large portion of respondents; their U-Pass offers unlimited transit throughout the semester. It is also likely that some of those who definitely will continue to use transit have limited alternative transportation options. Even bearing in mind these factors, these results are encouraging. Respondents will be able to see service changes borne out in practice and contribute to future planning processes.

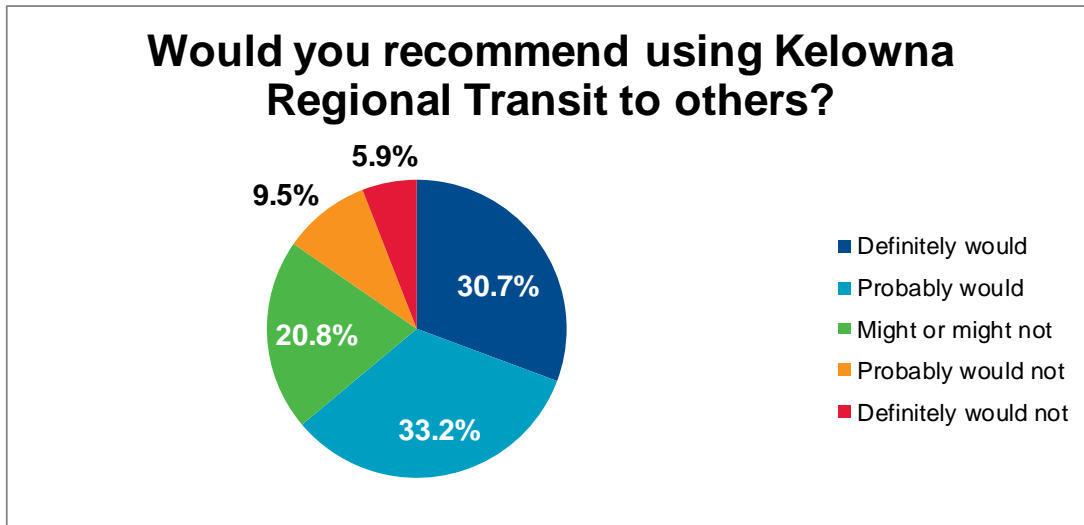


Figure 31: Likelihood of recommending Kelowna Regional Transit

Over 60 per cent of respondents said they would recommend the Kelowna Regional Transit System to others; only 5.9 per cent said they would definitely not recommend it. The portion who said they definitely would recommend the service is about half of the portion who said they definitely will continue using it. That distinction may indicate that a large number of respondents are dependent on transit.

Regardless, this result is an encouraging sign for the future of the system. While some customers are likely dependent on the transit system, a significant portion appear to use it by choice. Above all, there appears to be a solid core of customers who will continue to use transit as improvements are introduced and who will be able to provide valuable information in future planning processes.

Additional Comments

The surveys and open houses invited additional comments from community members. BC Transit received over 350 open responses. Several themes emerged from this material.

Routing: There was widespread additional support for the proposed changes to the 4 Academy Way. Increased service to Ellison and the airport were common requests. In West Kelowna, many respondents pointed to a need for transit service in the Shannon Lake Drive/Tallus Ridge area.

Reliability: Community members were concerned about inconsistent service spans, poor on-time performance, long gaps in service, and the difficulty of making transfers successfully.

The remaining comments touched on a diverse array of topics. Some expressed strong opposition to specific service reductions. Others discussed a need for improved connections throughout the Okanagan region, including services to Vernon and Penticton. There were also concerns about the safety, cleanliness and customer service experience of the system.

4.0 SUMMARY & NEXT STEPS

Phase 2 of the public engagement process for the Central Okanagan Transit Future Action Plan reached over 1,200 community members. The feedback was diverse and enthusiastic, providing a useful foundation for the continuation of this project.

With the conclusion of Phase 2, public engagement for the Central Okanagan Transit Future Action Plan is now complete. The combined results from all phases of public engagement will assist in the development of service options for the short, medium and long term, as well as the development of comprehensive service standards and performance guidelines for the Kelowna Regional Transit System.

BC Transit will continue to work with key stakeholders in developing the full Transit Future Action Plan, which will be publicly available in 2018.