



# Transit Future Plan

SUNSHINE COAST | January 2014

Executive Summary

Sunshine Coast  
Regional District



BC Transit and the Sunshine Coast Regional District would like to acknowledge the contributions of the many individuals and organizations that supported the development of the Sunshine Coast Transit Future Plan.

Thank you to staff at the Sunshine Coast Regional District, the District of Sechelt, the Town of Gibsons and the Sechelt Indian Government District for sharing their knowledge and connections and distributing information about the engagement events.

Thank you to those who helped organize venues for our Transit Future Bus, including Gibsons Jazz Festival, Trail Bay Centre, Sunnycrest Mall, Canadian Tire, Market Place IGA in Madeira Park, Harmony Hall Seniors Activity Centre, Sechelt Seniors Activity Centre, the Town of Gibsons, Sechelt Night Market, Kona Winds Charter and BC Ferries staff aboard the Queen of Surrey.

Finally, thank you to all who joined us at the Sunshine Coast Transit Future open houses, stakeholder workshops and who took the time to provide feedback throughout the process.

# Executive Summary

Transit has tremendous potential to contribute to more economically vibrant, livable, and sustainable communities. The need to realize this potential in the Sunshine Coast is increasingly important due to factors such as climate change, an aging demographic, population growth, ferry connections and availability of affordable transportation choices for individuals who do not have access to a private automobile.

In consideration of these issues, the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) has adopted:

- We Envision: The Sunshine Coast Sustainability Plan
- Sunshine Coast Integrated Transportation Study
- Official Community Plans (“OCP”)
- several community action plans

Together these establish a policy framework and guidelines to move towards a more sustainable future. Transit supportive land use and transit oriented development are both important aspects of We Envision, the District of Sechelt OCP, Gibsons Smart Plan OCP and Roberts Creek OCP with a more rural approach to encouraging transit identified in the OCPs of other electoral areas including Egmont/Pender Harbour, Halfmoon Bay, Elphinstone, West Howe Sound, Hillside/Port Mellon and Twin Creeks.

These planning initiatives have informed the development of the Transit Future Plan, in addition to input from the B.C. Provincial Transit Plan and BC Transit 2030 Strategic Plan. The Transit Future Plan builds on the OCP transit-related policies and the actions identified in the Integrated Transportation Study and includes an implementation strategy for transit investments. It was developed through a participatory planning process involving a stakeholder advisory group and broad community consultation. The Transit Future Plan envisions the Sunshine Coast transit network 25 years from now and describes the services, infrastructure and investments that are needed to achieve that vision.



## Vision and Goals

### Vision Statement

*“Sunshine Coast Transit is an essential component of our sustainable community and a preferred method of travel. It enhances mobility by providing a convenient, reliable and affordable alternative to the car that is aligned with sustainable land use decisions and fully integrated with other transport options.”*

### Goals

#### The transit system:

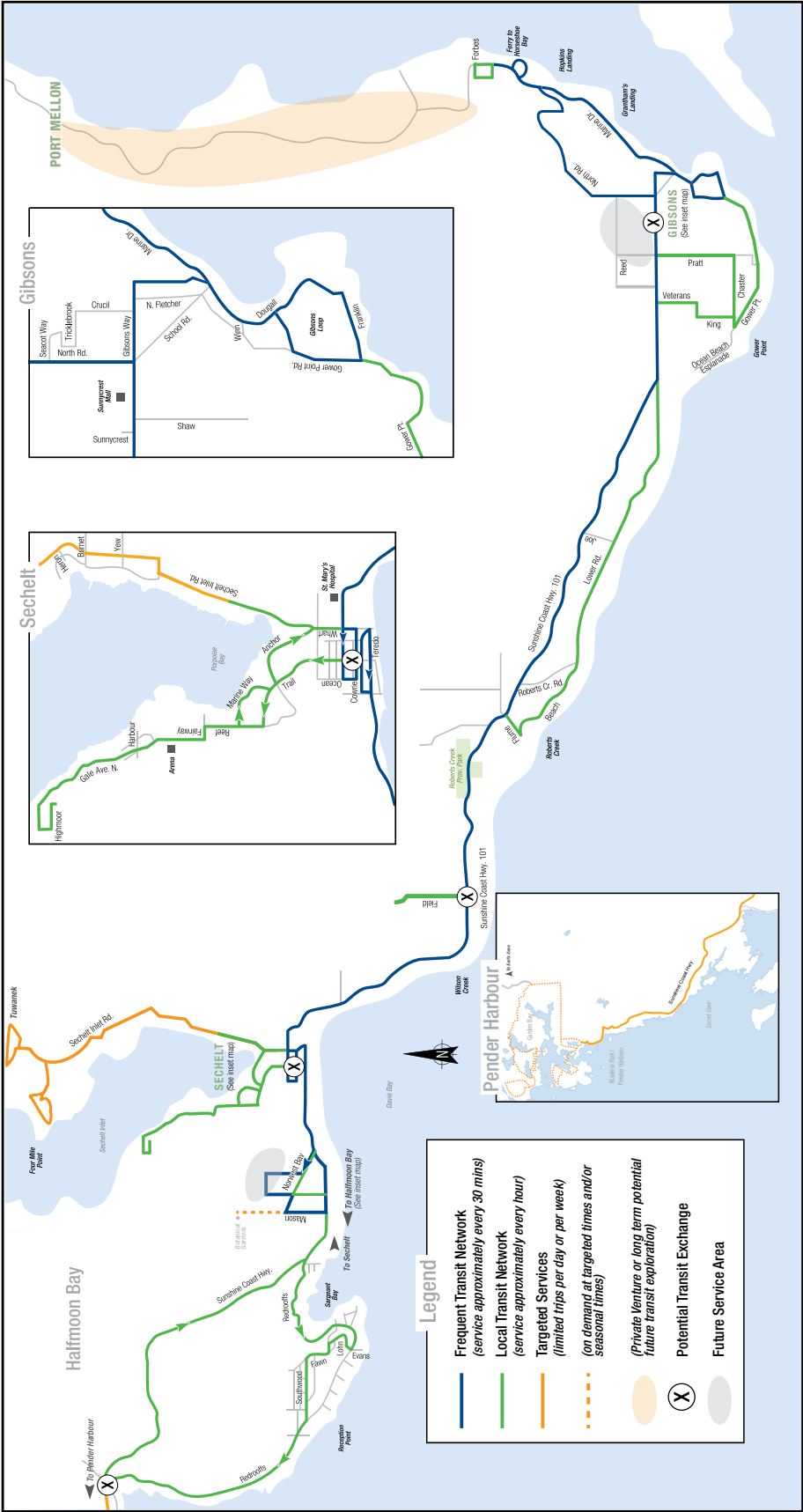
1. Attracts new riders and increases ridership
2. Supports and aligns with sustainable development
3. Is integrated with other modes of transportation
4. Is efficient and cost effective
5. Is safe and accessible
6. Is collaborative and customer focused

## Mode Share and Ridership Target

The Transit Future Plan sets a transit mode share target of 5.4 per cent for all trips by 2038, which will require the Sunshine Coast transit ridership to grow from 0.5 to 1.8 million trips per year. This target aligns with the Provincial Transit Plan’s transit mode share target for regional centres in British Columbia.



Transit Future Plan Network





## The Transit Future Plan Network

### Frequent Transit Network (FTN)

The Frequent Transit Network (“FTN”) provides medium to high density mixed land use corridors with a convenient, reliable, and frequent (at least every 30 minutes) transit service between 5:30 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. The FTN will carry a large share of the transit system’s total ridership, justifying investments in frequent service, a high level of transit stop amenities and service branding.



### Local Transit Network (LTN)

The Local Transit Network (“LTN”) is designed to connect neighbourhoods to local destinations, to the FTN. Frequency and vehicle type are selected based on demand with a preference for smaller vehicles.



### Targeted Services

Targeted services are a collection of transit services that are more focused on the needs of specific customers and include services such as handyDART, seasonal, limited trips and paratransit services.



## Implementation Strategy

Establishing the Transit Future Plan network requires prioritizing transit investments and developing an implementation strategy to transform today's network into the future network.

### Short-term Implementation Priorities (0-3 years)

Service	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide limited service to the Botanical Gardens</li> <li>• Increase transit coverage to West Sechelt</li> <li>• Begin to develop the future Frequent Transit Network (FTN)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increase frequency between Sechelt, Gibsons and Langdale Ferry Terminal to 30 minute service at peak times</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop the Local Transit Network (LTN)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Provide hourly local community bus service with smaller transit vehicles to the eastern Sunshine Coast communities (including Gibsons, Elphinstone and areas of Howe Sound) that feeds into the Frequent Transit Network</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Improve connections between the LTN and FTN in Sechelt</li> <li>• Provide targeted transit service to Pender Harbour</li> <li>• Confirm the Custom Transit service area</li> <li>• Improve custom (handyDART) vehicle accessibility with on-going modernization of the bus fleet to exclusively low floor vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an exchange in Upper Gibsons</li> <li>• Develop an exchange in Wilson Creek on, or near, Field Road</li> <li>• Develop a Park &amp; Ride facility in Sechelt</li> <li>• Expand hoist services at the operations and maintenance facility</li> <li>• Continue to improve transit customer facilities:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Conduct an assessment of transit stops to identify and prioritize stops to be upgraded to universal accessibility standards</li> <li>» Ensure that transit stops are spaced along a corridor at appropriate intervals and at suitable locations near pedestrian connections</li> <li>» Invest in on-street customer amenities</li> <li>» Improve customer information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Short-term and Ongoing actions that the SCRD and local authorities could consider to support the realization of the Transit Future Plan Goals:

- Incorporate the Transit Future Plan within updates to local plans and policy
- Support and encourage transit-oriented development and work with BC Transit to explore incentives to attract high density and mixed-use development to areas well served by transit
- Ensure that local and major development proposals and projects support transit and explore the option to acquire transit facilities as part of the development approval process
- Integrate and consider the Transit Future Plan network when developing sustainable transportation infrastructure plans and projects
- Implement travel demand management strategies that encourage shifting automobile trips to transit, such as executing transit priority measures, marketing, restructuring parking fares, and reducing parking availability/requirements in areas well served by transit
- Work with BC Transit to implement Google Transit
- Work with BC Transit in the completion of a fare review prior to the FTN being introduced to consider options for different fares for the FTN and LTN and timed versus two-way transfers
- Improve pedestrian connections between Lower Road and Highway 101 in Roberts Creek
- Provide ongoing investment in quality cycling and pedestrian feeder infrastructure
- Explore car or van-pool services to Port Mellon in support of Howe Sound Pulp and Paper and Hillside Industrial Park commuters
- Explore Alternate Funding Options for funding portions of capital projects for transit

### Medium-term Implementation Priorities (4-6yrs)

Service	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop the FTN               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increase frequency between Sechelt, Gibsons and Langdale Ferry Terminal to 30 minute service all day</li> <li>» Increase the frequency to West Sechelt to 30 minute service at peak times</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop the LTN               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increase the service frequency to Halfmoon Bay Monday to Saturday</li> <li>» Extend service to East Porpoise Bay Road in Sechelt</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide targeted transit service to Sandy Hook and Tuwanek</li> <li>• Expand custom (handyDART) service over time to meet demand</li> <li>• Expand custom (handyDART) service to evenings, Sundays and Holidays</li> <li>• Implement a travel training program to those individuals who meet the custom (handyDART) eligibility criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the operations and maintenance facility to include an additional bay</li> <li>• Implement Transit Priority Measures on the FTN as required</li> <li>• Develop a Park &amp; Ride facility in Gibsons</li> <li>• Explore the cost benefits of providing a satellite operating facility in Wilson Creek to support local community bus service in the eastern Sunshine Coast communities (including Gibsons, Elphinstone and areas of Howe Sound)</li> </ul>

### Long-term Implementation Priorities (7yrs +)

Service	Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop the FTN               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increase the frequency to West Sechelt to 30 minute service all day</li> <li>» Increase the frequency to Lower Gibsons to 30 minute service all day</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Continue to develop the LTN               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Increase the service frequency to Halfmoon Bay on Sundays and Holidays</li> <li>» Increase frequency to the Sechelt Arena and Gale Avenue North to hourly service all day</li> <li>» Provide hourly two-way service on Gower Point Road in Lower Gibsons and Elphinstone</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Explore targeted transit service to Port Mellon and Hillside Industrial Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Transit Priority Measures on the FTN as required</li> </ul>

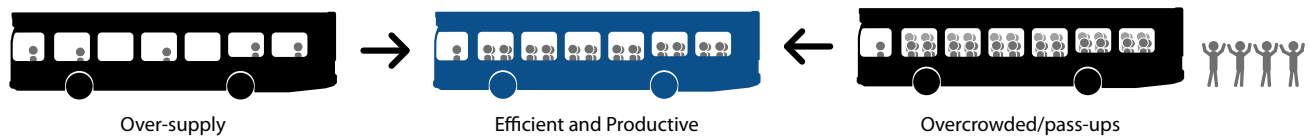
The service change priorities and infrastructure projects identified vary significantly in terms of timelines, complexity, costs and process, meaning that initiatives will not necessarily be completed in a strictly chronological order. Each service change priority will require a more detailed service plan that will finalize route structure, service levels, scheduling, customer information and associated costs and will be presented for approval by the SCRCD prior to implementation.



## Service Design Standards and Performance Guidelines

As part of the on-going management of the transit network, service design standards and performance guidelines have been developed as tools to facilitate service planning decisions and to measure how well the transit system is progressing towards achieving its goals. Service standards define service levels, the service area and when new service should be introduced to an area.

Performance guidelines measure service effectiveness by defining numerical thresholds and targets for the system and its routes and services. These measures are meant to ensure an acceptable level of service quality to the customer and, along with the Transit Future Plan, guide planning decisions and recommendations of BC Transit and SCR D staff to committee and the SCR D Board.



## Moving Forward

### Funding the Plan

Meeting the mode share and ridership targets of this plan will require capital and operating investments in the transit system over the next 25 years. Annual operating costs are based on service hours that are projected to increase from the existing 22,721 hours to approximately 55,601 hours annually. The plan also calls for capital investments that include:

- Expanding the transit fleet from the existing 11 vehicles (2013) to 33 vehicles (2038)
- New transit exchanges at Field Road in Wilson Creek and Upper Gibsons
- Park & Ride facilities in Sechelt and Gibsons
- Exploration of the benefits of a satellite transit operations facility in Wilson Creek
- Improvements to customer amenities at transit stops and transit priority measures as required

Given the level of transit investment anticipated over the coming decades, the way in which transit is funded needs to be reviewed. Today, the transit system in the Sunshine Coast is funded through a combination of provincial funding, local property tax, passenger fares and advertising revenue. With goals to increase service levels significantly over the medium to long term, BC Transit and its funding partners will need to work together to assess additional or alternative funding sources that can support the necessary investment in infrastructure and service expansion.

### Keys to Success

Guiding the plan from vision to reality will require an on-going dialogue between the Province, BC Transit, the SCRCD and local authorities on transportation policy, funding and the linkage between land use and transit planning.

The Transit Future Plan builds upon previous plans (We Envision, the Integrated Transportation Study, OCPs, Neighbourhood / Local Area Plans) and will be used to communicate the vision and direction for transit in the Sunshine Coast. The SCRCD has already taken the step of identifying key transit strategies within the Integrated Transportation Study and supportive policies outlined within We Envision and local OCPs. The ongoing success of the plan will also be reliant on its integration into other municipal projects, land use and development decisions, supporting travel demand management measures, transit oriented development and transit friendly land use practices.





BC Transit would like to thank all those who were involved in the creation of this plan





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