

# Victoria Regional Transit Commission

BC Transit 520 Gorge Road East  
March 13, 2023 | 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

## DRAFT MINUTES

*The Victoria Regional Transit Commission conducts its business on the homelands of the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations.*

### **Present:**

Mayor Maja Tait, Chair, Mayor Ryan Windsor, Mayor Marie-Terese Little, Mayor Marianne Alto, Mayor Dean Murdock, Mayor Kevin Murdoch, Councillor Chris Coleman, Councillor Colin Plant

### **BC Transit Staff:**

Lindsay Byers, Senior Manager, Government Relations, Chris Fudge, Director, Government Relations; Christy Ridout, Vice-President, Strategy and Public Affairs; Kevin Schubert, General Manager, Victoria Regional Transit; Greg Hill, Director, Financial Planning & Analysis; Matthew Boyd, Director, Corporate Planning and Strategy; Levi Megenbir, Senior Transit Planner; James Wadsworth, Manager, Project Development; Kyle Bowman, Manager, Revenue Program, Jessie Nikkoi, Student Representative, Camosun College; Christine Lewis, Executive Assistant and Divisional Coordinator (Recorder)

### **Regrets:**

None

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### **1. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Mayor Maja Tait called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Motion MOVED by Mayor Ryan Windsor and SECONDED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch the agenda as written.**

**CARRIED**

### **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM AUGUST 23, 2022**

**Motion MOVED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch and SECONDED Mayor Ryan Windsor to approve the minutes as written.**

**CARRIED**

### **3. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

### **4. DELEGATION**

Capital Bike (Corey Burger)

The Commission heard that people want to feel more comfortable riding their bikes. Capital Bike presented three strategies including adding protected bike lanes on transit corridors, expanding bike lockers and building bike racks at local transit stops.

**The presentation was received for INFORMATION.**

### **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

Letter from Town of View Royal

The Commission received a letter from the Town of View Royal. Staff are to verify the contents of the letter and accuracy of information and provide an update to the Commission on their findings.

**MOTION MOVED by Councillor Colin Plant, SECONDED by Mayor Dean Murdock for staff to verify the content and confirm accuracy of the letter from View Royal and send back to the Commission for further consideration.**

**CARRIED**

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

None

**6. VICTORIA REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMISSION CHARTER AMENDMENT**

Amendments to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission Charter were presented to the Commission to amend the language to allow for additional members to be appointed by the Province of British Columbia at their discretion and to allow for the Chair to appoint a delegate in their absence.

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Murdock, SECONDED by Mayor Little to APPROVE the amendment to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission Charter.**

**CARRIED**

**7. FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE REPORT SUMMARY – Q3 – FOR INFORMATION**  
*GREG HILL*

The Commission was presented with a financial report based on third quarter results. Revenue is forecast to be slightly over budget at year-end due to fare revenue as a result of increased transit ridership. Fare revenue is 10% above budget YTD and is forecasted to end the year at 10% above budget. . Fuel costs continue to rise and are 36% over budget YTD, with a year-end forecast of 33% over budget.. Service hours are forecast to be 94,000 below budget due to labour shortages. The balance of the transit fund is higher than forecast as a result of increased fare revenues.

**MOTION MOVED by Councillor Colin Plant, SECONDED by Mayor Ryan Windsor for staff to prepare a report showing a comparison of administration costs for the Victoria Regional Transit system and other transit systems in the province.**

**CARRIED**

**MOTION MOVED by Councillor Chris Coleman, SECONDED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch to RECEIVE the Financial and Performance Summary – Q3 for INFORMATION.**

**CARRIED**

**8. 2023/24 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN, BASE BUDGET AND TAX REGULATION – FOR APPROVAL**  
*GREG HILL AND LEVI MEGENBIR*

The Commission heard that every year we look to improve service across the Victoria transit system. This year's annual service plan reflects top priorities the Commission has identified, including implementing the Westshore RapidBus line in April, regular seasonal changes and adding service to routes for Swartz Bay and Butchart Gardens during peak tourism months. In September we will be looking at adding service to core routes to address crowding and service reliability issues and extending late night service. In January, 2024 we will look to restructure the Westshore network, taking into account the continued growth in this area.

The annual budget is \$173M for 2023/24, which is \$15M higher than last year. For revenues, this reflects a 10% increase, with fares and advertising up 16% over last year's budget. The fuel tax remains unchanged. Expenses are up 10%, in large part due to fuel and labour costs. Fuel budget is up 49% over last year's budget which reflects current diesel prices. As a result of these anticipated costs, a property tax levy of 15% was recommended for this fiscal year. It was recognized that a lot of work has been done in the last few years to keep fares and costs down with the goal to improve services and attract more people to take transit, in addition to meeting climate change demands, and moving towards an electric bus fleet.

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Ryan Windsor, SECONDED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch to APPROVE the 2023/24 Annual Service Plan.**

**CARRIED**

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Ryan Windsor, SECONDED by Mayor Marianne Alto to APPROVE the Base Budget.**

**CARRIED**

The Commission requested staff prepare an analysis report on options for increasing the gas tax historical information on past increases.

**MOTION MOVED by Councillor Colin Plant, SECONDED by Mayor Marie-Terese Little for staff to present a report on gas tax levy options.**

**CARRIED**

**MOTION MOVED to APPROVE Option 2 by Mayor Ryan Windsor, SECONDED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch for the Tax Regulation.**

**In Favour – Mayor Maja Tait, Mayor Ryan Windsor, Mayor Kevin Murdoch, Mayor Marie-Terese Little, Councillor Chris Coleman**

**Opposed – Mayor Marianne Alto, Councillor Colin Plant**

**CARRIED**

**9. REFUGEE PROGRAM – FOR APPROVAL**

*KYLE BOWMAN*

The Commission was presented with a report outlining the current refugee program that is administered by the Intercultural Association to help newcomers access transit passes as they settle into the Greater Victoria region. This program was previously approved on a year-by-year basis and the Commission had requested that staff bring recommendations to make this program a permanently funded program.

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Councillor Colin Plant to APPROVE the Refugee Program permanently.**

**CARRIED**

**10. RAPIDBUS, PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION**

*LEVI MEGENBIR, JAMES WADSWORTH*

The Planning department presented the Commission with information on the launch of the RapidBus line in April, replacing Route 50 with Route 95. The new route 95 will operate along the same route as Route 50 but with 12% more service and fewer bus stops. Route 61 will see significant improvements in service frequency, but customers will now need to transfer between routes 61 and 95 at Langford Exchange in off-peak periods. Planning has completed all Local Area Transit Plans with the exception of Uptown Local Area Transit Plan. To support the future Uptown Mobility Hub, staff are working on an a Regional Corridor Strategy. Ridership is currently at 88% of pre-pandemic rates, and at times we have seen over 100%. Every service period staff assess ridership performance to improve customer experience.

The Commission heard from the infrastructure staff on several active projects including the Island Highway in Colwood and View Royal. The updates at the UVIC exchange went into service this fall with some bus stop work continuing on Ring Road. Staff are working with City of Victoria on Douglas Street bus lanes and improving RapidBus stations. Work continues on the McKenzie Corridor with the Municipality of Saanich. Staff are currently reviewing Highway 17 as a possible future RapidBus corridor.

BC Transit is working with the Ministry to advance work the on Highway 1 corridor and conducting a study on Highway 14. The Ministry is developing a park and ride in View Royal, as well as working on Uptown transit priority and improvements. The Uptown Mobility HUB study. Early work on the new handyDART facility is complete and moving into the construction phase. The local stream restoration has been a success. A new Saanich Transit Centre is a longer-term plan, as well as an upgrade to the operation centre in Victoria, to accommodate additional fleet.

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Ryan Windsor and SECONDED by Councillor Chris Coleman to RECEIVE the RapidBus, Planning & Infrastructure Update for information.**

**CARRIED**

**11. OPERATIONS UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION**  
*KEVIN SCHUBERT*

The Commission heard that service reliability targets are being met, with the exception of adverse weather events. Operator recruitment is going well and hiring continues to focus on the recruitment of mechanics. We are seeing a steady inflow of Operator applicants. Operation staff is focused on preparing for the upcoming changes with RapidBus, Umo and the ten electric buses that will arrive later this year in Victoria.

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch and SECONDED by Councillor Chris Coleman to RECEIVE the Operations Update for information.**

**CARRIED**

**12. ATAC UPDATE AND MINUTES – FOR INFORMATION**  
*KEVIN SCHUBERT*

The Commission received a report that included minutes from the last three ATAC meetings, as well as key performance indicators for handyDART services. At the next meeting staff will advise the Commission on the appointment of new members to ATAC, with recruitment currently underway. At that time, the Commission will also discuss the appointment of a sponsor for this committee going forward.

**MOTION MOVED by Mayor Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch to RECEIVE the ATAC Update and Minutes for information.**

**CARRIED**

**13. STUDENT UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION**  
*JESSIE NIKKOI*

The Commission heard that post-secondary institutions are recruiting new students and at Camosun College they will have an additional 900 students.

**The student update was received FOR INFORMATION by unanimous consent.**

**MOTION BY Mayor Marianne Alto and SECONDED by Mayor Kevin Murdoch to adjourn meeting at 11:33 a.m.**

**CARRIED**

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING**

June 13, 2023