

# Transit Future Plan

PRINCE GEORGE | January 2014

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



# Executive Summary

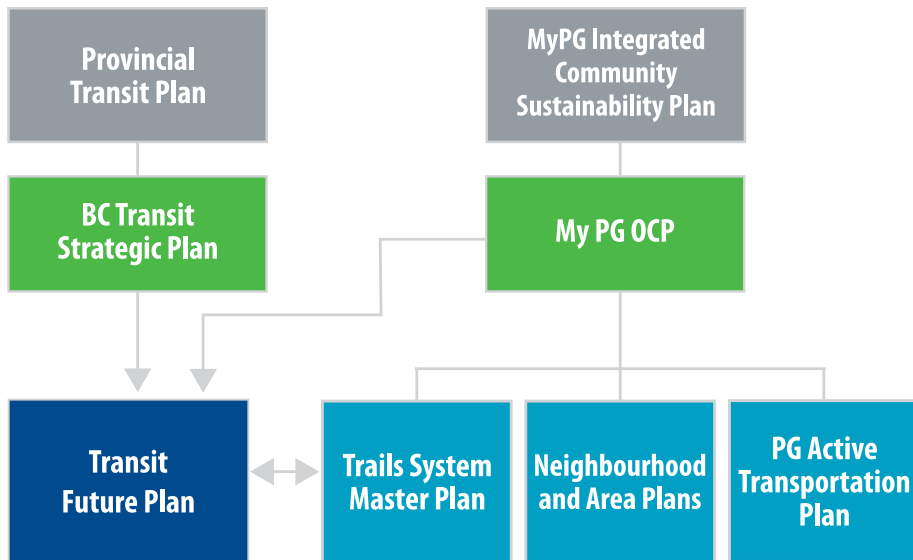
Transit has tremendous potential to contribute to more economically vibrant, livable, and sustainable communities. The need to realize this potential in the City of Prince George (“Prince George”) is increasingly important due to factors such as climate change, population growth, an aging demographic, and availability of affordable transportation choices for individuals who do not have access to a private automobile. Projected future growth in Prince George will place increasing pressure on the existing transportation system.

To address the factors noted above, Prince George has adopted the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (“ICSP”), the Official Community Plan (“OCP”), a number of Neighbourhood and Local Area Plans, as well as an Active Transportation Plan and a Trails System Master Plan. The OCP establishes a policy framework and guidelines to move towards sustainable development. Transit supportive land use and transit oriented development are both important aspects of the OCP.

In addition to these planning initiatives in Prince George, the Transit Future Plan has been informed by the BC Provincial Transit Plan and BC Transit 2030 Strategic Plan. The Transit Future Plan builds on the OCP policies on the transit system and other transit supportive policies and includes an implementation strategy for transit investments. See Figure 1. The Transit Future Plan was developed through a participatory planning process involving a stakeholder advisory group and broad community consultation. The Transit Future Plan envisions the Prince George transit network 25-years from now and describes the services, infrastructure and investments that are needed to achieve that vision.



Figure 1: Transit Future Plan Framework



## Vision and Goals

### Vision

*“The Prince George transit system supports Prince George’s aspirations to be a model for sustainable winter Canadian cities with a healthy environment, robust economy and enviable quality of life for residents.*

*Transit services are focused on connecting neighbourhoods with the downtown and local centres, offering an attractive alternative to driving, with routes and schedules that are frequent, direct, safe, and convenient.*

*The transit system will also be integrated with other active modes of transportation and provides a basic level of mobility for people of all abilities who depend on transit.”*

### Goals

1. The transit system is an attractive transportation choice that provides linkages between neighbourhood centres and the downtown;
2. The transit system supports an equitable, safe, healthy, active and engaged community through access to the transit network;
3. The transit system reduces Prince George’s impact on the environment; and,
4. The transit system supports the local economy and is operated in a fiscally responsible manner.

## Ridership Target

The Transit Future Plan sets a transit mode share target of four percent for all trips by 2038, which will require Prince George’s transit ridership to grow from 2 million to 5.4 million trips per year. This target aligns with the Provincial Transit Plan’s transit mode share target for regional centres in British Columbia.

## The Transit Future Plan Network

### Rapid Transit Network (RTN)

The Rapid Transit Network (“RTN”) moves passengers between major regional destinations along key transportation corridors. Service is very frequent (15 minutes or better between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.) and stops less often than traditional transit services. The RTN uses high capacity buses often branded as Rapidbus and may include future investments along the corridor in transit priority measures, right-of-way improvements, premium transit stations, service branding and off-board ticketing.



### 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 15 minutes transit service between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.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)

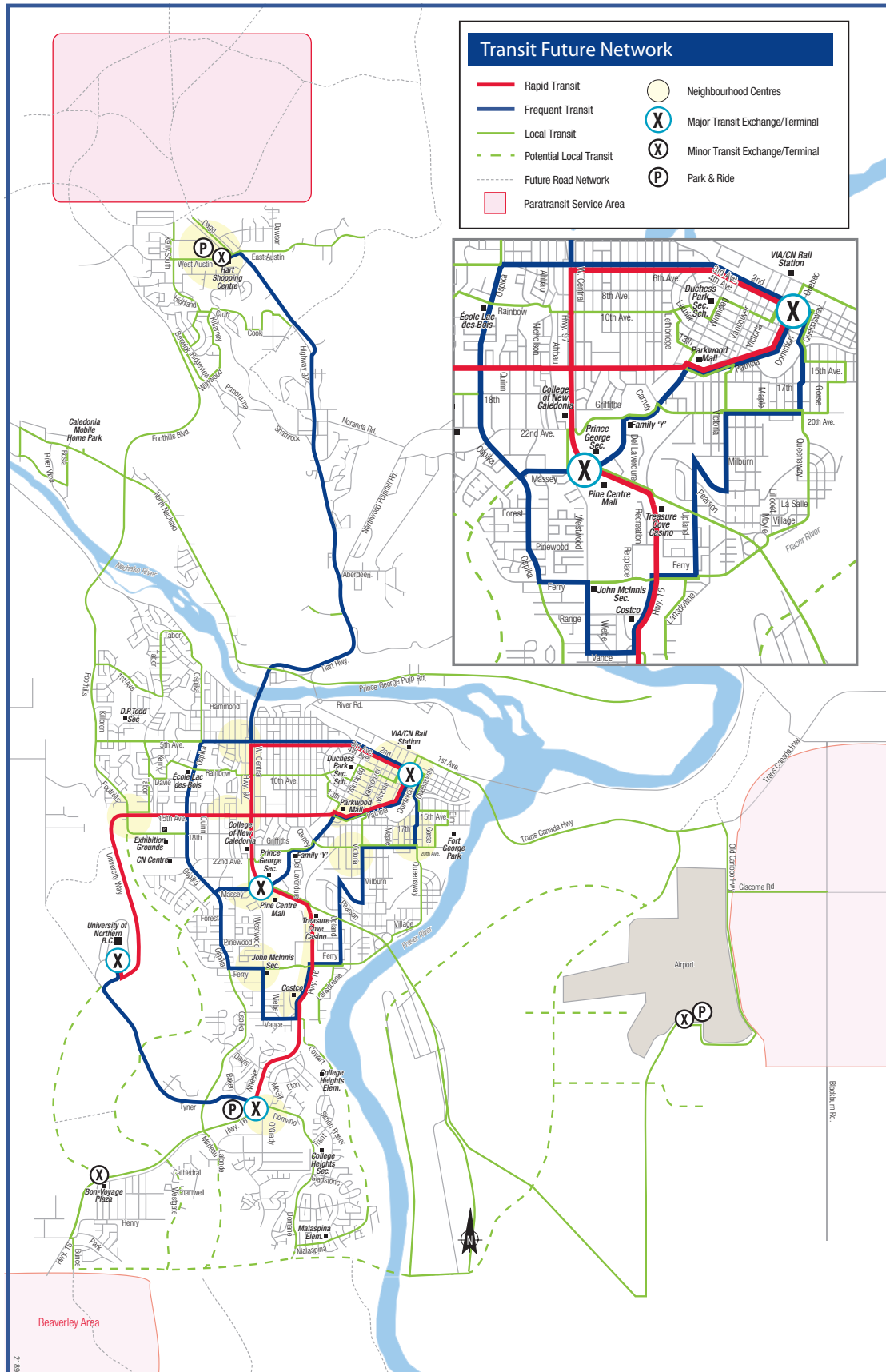
The Local Transit Network (“LTN”) is designed to connect neighbourhoods to local destinations, to the RTN and to the FTN. Frequency and vehicle type are selected based on demand.



### 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, inter-regional, express 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 (0-5 years)	
Service	Infrastructure
Support the UNBC downtown Campus course schedule Provide service on statutory holidays Improve weekend service frequency and increase the span of the service day (earlier morning starts & extended evening hours) Conduct a transit feasibility study for Blackburn and Beaverly including fixed-route paratransit service options Begin to develop the Future Rapid Transit Network Begin to develop the Future Frequent Transit Network	Develop an Operational Facility Master Plan to ensure operations and maintenance infrastructure can support increases in the transit fleet Plan for an expanded transit hub in the downtown core Continue to improve transit customer facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that transit stops are spaced along a corridor at appropriate intervals</li> <li>• Invest in on-street customer amenities</li> <li>• Improve universal accessibility of transit stops</li> <li>• Improve customer Information</li> </ul>
<b>Short-term actions that the City of Prince George could consider to support realization of the goals of the Transit Future Plan?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate the Transit Future Plan with the OCP and other City Transportation Plans and consider the Transit Future Plan when reviewing development proposal and infrastructure projects;</li> <li>• Consider amending city zoning bylaws to fund investments in transit related capital projects, as well as reducing parking requirements for new developments to encourage shifts to active modes of transportation;</li> <li>• Consider expanding the City's reinvestment reserve fund to support transit initiatives; and</li> <li>• Support and encourage transit-oriented development in areas well served by transit.</li> </ul>	

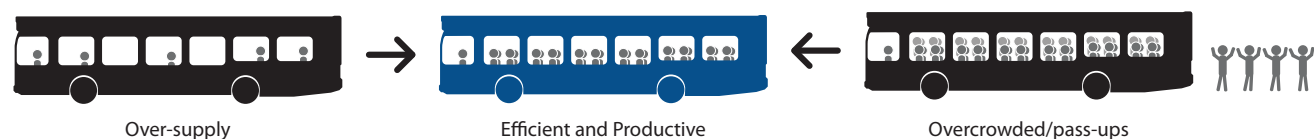
Medium and Long-term Implementation Priorities (5-15+ years)		
Service	Medium Term Infrastructure (5-15 Years)	Long Term Infrastructure (15+ Years)
<p>Enhance service on the RTN and develop the FTN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Rapid Transit service frequency and span of service to support increased population density along the corridors</li> <li>• Increase peak frequency initially to 20 minutes (and ultimately to 15 minutes) Monday to Friday on future FTN corridors</li> </ul> <p>Enhance service on the LTN increasing frequency and span of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the frequency and hours of service on weekends as demand warrants</li> <li>• Expand, or initiate service to areas to support future development</li> <li>• Establish a transit connection to Prince George Airport</li> <li>• Implement paratransit recommendations</li> <li>• Restructure routes as necessary</li> <li>• Replace any paratransit service implemented during the medium term with conventional service in the long term if the population and demand warrants</li> </ul>	<p>Match service to demand by using smaller or larger transit vehicles when appropriate</p> <p>Plan for the critical transit facilities needed to implement the Transit Future Plan network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan for exchanges, terminals and Park &amp; Ride stops for the RTN</li> <li>• Develop a Transit Priority Plan for the RTN</li> <li>• Plan for other minor transit terminals</li> </ul> <p>Establish critical transit facilities needed to support the Transit Future Plan network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a new Downtown Transit Terminal</li> </ul>	<p>Establish critical transit facilities needed to support the Transit Future Plan network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase operational and maintenance facility capacity</li> <li>• Enhance the University of Northern BC Transit Terminal</li> <li>• Expand the Pine Centre Transit Exchange</li> <li>• Establish a Westgate Transit Terminal</li> </ul> <p>Implement Transit Priority Measures on the RTN as required</p> <p>Continue to expand transit facilities as needed to support the Transit Future Plan network</p>

### Enhance Custom Transit Service and Transit accessibility

Custom Transit and Accessibility Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the defined service area for handyDART</li> <li>• Improve handyDART vehicle accessibility with on-going modernization of the bus fleet to exclusively low floor vehicles</li> <li>• Improve handyDART service in the existing service area with 700 annual service hours and an additional bus every 3 years</li> <li>• Expand the handyDART service to Blackburn, Prince George Airport, Pineview, Beaverly and the industrial areas as required</li> <li>• Implement a seniors' oriented service</li> <li>• Formalize and expand the existing travel training program</li> <li>• Continue to expand service over time to meet demand</li> </ul>

## 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 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 Prince George staff to council.



## 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 81,888 hours to approximately 197,000 hours. The plan also calls for capital investments that include:

- Expanding the transit fleet from the existing 35 vehicles to 82 vehicles
- Upgrading and expanding the operations and maintenance centre
- New transit exchanges at UNBC, Downtown, Westgate, Bon Voyage, Pine Centre and Prince George Airport
- 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. BC Transit and its funding partners will need to work together to achieve stable and predictable funding sources beyond the existing funding mechanisms. BC Transit is available to work with local governments to develop a strategy to fund the Transit Future Plan.



## Keys to Success

To guide the plan from vision to reality will require an on-going dialogue between the Province, BC Transit and Prince George on transportation policy, funding and the connection between land use and transit planning.

The Transit Future Plan builds upon previous plans (the Official Community Plan, Neighbourhood/Local Area Plans, and the Active Transportation Plan) and will be used to communicate the vision and direction for transit in Prince George. Prince George has already taken the step of integrating transit system policies and other transit supportive policies within the Official Community Plan. Other steps required to ensure the success of the plan include integrating the transit strategy into other municipal projects, supporting travel demand management measures, transit oriented development and transit supportive land use practices.





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