
SUBJECT: SERVICE EXPANSION REQUEST

PURPOSE

This report requests **APPROVAL** from the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) to continue to pursue the deferred 2020/21 transit service expansion levels.

BACKGROUND

BC Transit confirms service expansion plans with local government partners on an annual basis to coordinate the development of three-year budgets and capital plans with the Provincial Service Plan. The planned expansion for September 2020 of 20,000 hours and 8 double decker buses was deferred due to COVID-19. Confirmation on continued desire to this level of expansion is specifically required to move forward in pursuing funding.

DISCUSSION

Service expansion priorities are collected through transit planning initiatives (e.g. the Transit Future Plan and Local Area Transit Plans) and feedback from local partners and the public. These activities have generated over 150,000 hours of transit service improvements. It is clear that local government engagement sessions in the Capital Region reinforce the need and widespread support for expanded transit service. Proposed service improvements are ranked using a range of criteria including population served, potential ridership and impact on service reliability.

To align with the level of growth identified in the Transit Future Plan and to support meeting the mode shift and ridership goals, a sustained expansion of 20,000 conventional service hours was proposed. This level of investment reflects a 2 to 3 percent expansion. Although ridership has declined due to COVID-19, it is anticipated to increase and stabilize over time. BC Transit recommends continuing to pursue this deferred expansion to ensure potential for growth in ridership on transit frequent transit network corridor and to ensure a more comfortable journey for passengers post COVID-19.

The following table summarizes the general expansion initiatives identified for the VRTS, along with high level costing based on the hourly rates of the system. Confirmation of this general level of investment and intent to commit to the expansion and associated budget is required at the time of approved 20/21 expansion request.

PROPOSED CONVENTIONAL EXPANSION INITIATIVES					
In Service Date	Annual Hours	Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Annual Revenue	Estimated Annual Total Costs	Estimated Annual Net Commission Share
Sep 20	20,000	8 High Capacity Vehicles	\$427,752	\$2,823,784	\$1,685,950
	Description	To be determined through transit plans			
Sep 21	20,000	8 Vehicles	\$492,024	\$3,229,015	\$1,904,003
	Description	To be determined through transit plans			
Sep 22	20,000	8 Vehicles	\$492,024	\$3,088,207	\$1,746,535
	Description	To be determined through transit plans			

All expansion requests are subject to provincial funding

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission:

- a) **APPROVE** BC Transit to submit funding request to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for future service expansion.

Respectfully,

Lisa Trotter
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