

# Highway 16 Action Plan: Inter-Community Transit Revised Service Options



October 2016



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

BC Transit would like to thank those citizens, community leaders, organizations and communities who provided input into these revised inter-community transit service options for the Highway 16 corridor through one-on-one conversations, community events, group meetings and written and online submissions.

We are especially grateful to all those who shared their space, regions and traditional territories with us to enable us to conduct this work and hear from many others at community events.

While this draft revised service option document presents results to date, it should be noted that the conversation continues. BC Transit welcomes your comments, thoughts or questions at [highway16@bctransit.com](mailto:highway16@bctransit.com)

To learn more about the proposed services and their continued progress please visit our website at [www.bctransit.com/highway16/transitfuture](http://www.bctransit.com/highway16/transitfuture).

## 1.0 Introduction

As part of a comprehensive \$5 million Highway 16 Five Point Action Plan, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) has committed \$2.4 million in funding over a three year period to provide inter-city transit services along the 750 kilometre Highway 16 corridor between Prince Rupert and Prince George.



In collaboration with community leaders, BC Transit undertook a detailed analysis to confirm the feasibility, scope and costs of creating and/or enhancing inter-community public transit service along the Highway 16 corridor. With the support and collaboration of community leaders, these options for service, fares and infrastructure were then presented to the public for feedback through various means from August 17 to September 16, 2016.

Results of that engagement were summarized<sup>1</sup> and presented to community leaders at Regional Transit Committee meetings held September 22-23, 2016.

Based on engagement results and feedback from corridor local governments and First Nations to date, this document provides proposed revised service, fare and infrastructure options for the consideration and feedback of local decision makers. Suggested next steps and recommendations are also included.

This document is presented in draft form to enable further comment and direction as desired from participating local governments, First Nations and Regional Transit Committees. Once any comments or recommended changes have been received, it is expected that this document will then be finalized and posted to the BC Transit website in mid-November 2016.

Based on direction received by the sponsoring local governments for service, the revised options will be further developed, incorporated into a final version of the Highway 16 Action Plan Inter-Community Transit Service Discussion Document and—pending local approval—moved forward for implementation.



*Photos several of the 20 engagement events held along Highway 16 from Prince Rupert to Prince George from August 17 – September 16, 2016. From left: Prince Rupert, Stellaquo, Houston and Moricetown.*

<sup>1</sup> The final engagement report is available at <https://bctransit.com/highway16>.

## 2.0 Revised Service Options, Routing and Schedules

### 2.1 Proposed Revisions to Highway 16 Service Routing and Schedules

Along the length of the Highway 16 corridor, some common themes emerged through the public consultation process:

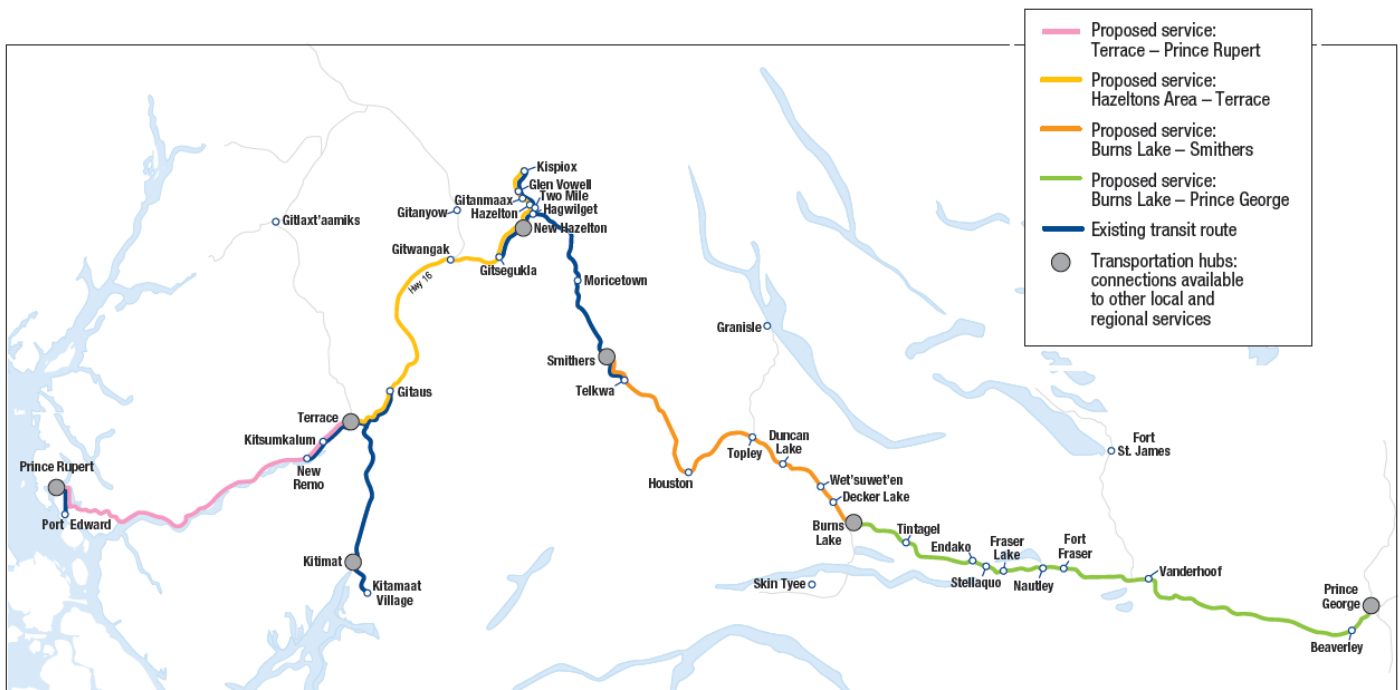
- General support for the proposed transit services.
- A desire for at least three day per week regional service in all segments.
- Requests for higher levels of local service in some communities, especially those that are closer to existing transit hubs, such as Moricetown, Wet'suwet'en and Gitsegukla.
- A desire for a mix of weekday and weekend travel.

Based on these general themes, specific feedback received and further analysis, the following section describes potential service options and changes to the initial service proposals for each service area segment.

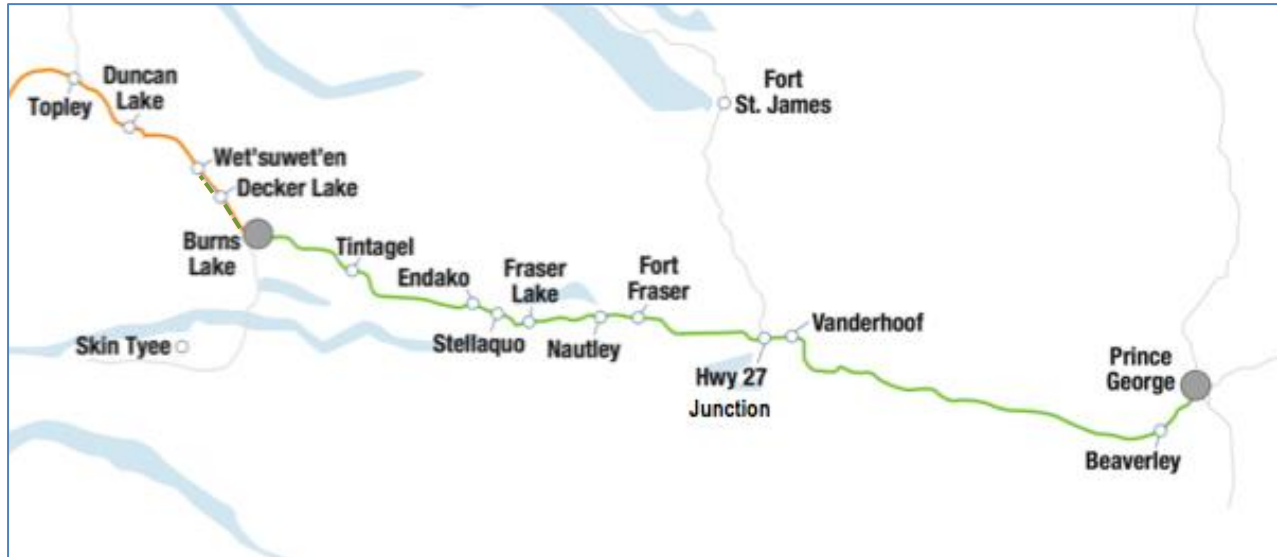
All of the service options presented in this document have been confirmed for enhanced provincial cost-sharing under the Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan.

An additional area segment (Hazeltons Area to Smithers) has been added to this document in recognition that further enhancement to existing service in this area is warranted to meet transportation needs and to bring regional services to a consistent level across the corridor. This means that the service area segments addressed by Highway 16 inter-community transit options in this report are as follows:

1. Burns Lake to Prince George
2. Burns Lake to Smithers
3. Hazeltons Area to Terrace
4. Prince Rupert to Terrace
5. Hazeltons Area (including Moricetown) to Smithers



## Proposed Revised Service Options: Segment 1 - Burns Lake to Prince George



**Frequency:** Three days per week; recommended for Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

**Trips** (See following page for sample schedules):

- **Option 1a – Burns Lake to Prince George:** One round trip per day, enabling four hours of time in Prince George if passengers are travelling to Downtown or 5.5 hours if they are travelling to/from destinations on the way into the city, such as Westgate Mall.
- **Option 1b – Burns Lake to Prince George with Wet'suwet'en Village Connector:** This option is identical to 1a above **but also includes connecting service to Wet'suwet'en Village** at the start and end of trips. For instance, the bus would route to Wet'suwet'en Village first before then completing the local loop of Burns Lake and proceeding to Prince George.

**Local Routing:** Short local loops will be as follows (see Appendix A for complete proposed routing, stops and shelters).

- Wet'suwet'en Village (Option 1b)
- Burns Lake (Final stop details still in process of being confirmed)
- Fraser Lake (via Seniors Centre)
- Nautley (to Nadleh Whuten Gas Bar)
- Vanderhoof (including washroom break opportunity at Plaza and service to Hospital)
- Prince George (via Westgate Mall, Pine Centre, Spruceland Mall, Prince George Hospital and Downtown).

**Summary of Changes Incorporated into Above Proposals Based on Engagement:**

- Three days per week recommended based on need and to increase capacity
- Time in Prince George lengthened further (it had been already been lengthened to four hours based on initial community leader feedback).
- Option for connecting service to Wet'suwet'en Village added.
- Local routing in Fraser Lake and Nautley adjusted based on community feedback and need for a shelter identified for Stellaquo.
- Provision provided for an additional bus to provide service on two days per month as contingency if required to meet over-capacity ridership, particularly at the end of the month.



**Considerations:**

- While the time in Prince George has been widened further to meet public feedback, the amount it can be extended is constrained by the functional limits in terms of the overall length of day for passengers and the transit driver.
- In tandem with options presented in Segment 2 (Burns Lake to Smithers), and depending on outcomes of further discussion with potential First Nation transit funding partners, option 1b means that Wet'suwet'en First Nation residents could potentially have access to Burns Lake six days per week.

**Revised Sample Schedules**

Note that schedule times would be further refined through the implementation process and that not all stops are shown.

<b>Option 1a: Burns Lake to Prince George</b>											
<b>Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday</b>											
<b>To Prince George</b>						<b>To Burns Lake</b>					
Burns Lake Local Loop	Fraser Lake	Vanderhoof	Beaverly	Prince George (Westgate Mall)	Prince George (Downtown)	Prince George (Downtown)	Prince George (Westgate Mall)	Beaverly	Vanderhoof	Fraser Lake	Burns Lake Local Loop
7:25	8:15	9:10	10:25	10:35	11:07	3:15	3:57	4:17	5:27	6:22	7:27

<b>Option 1b: Burns Lake to Prince George, with Wet'suwet'en Village connection</b>													
<b>Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday</b>													
<b>To Prince George</b>						<b>To Burns Lake &amp; Wet'suwet'en Village</b>							
Wet'suwet'en Village	Burns Lake Local Loop	Fraser Lake	Vanderhoof	Beaverly	Prince George (Westgate Mall)	Prince George (Downtown)	Prince George (Downtown)	Prince George (Westgate Mall)	Beaverly	Vanderhoof	Fraser Lake	Burns Lake Local Loop	Wet'suwet'en Village
6:55	7:10	8:15	9:10	10:25	10:35	11:07	3:15	3:57	4:17	5:27	6:22	7:27	7:55

## Proposed Revised Service Options: Segment 2 - Burns Lake to Smithers

**Frequency:** Three days per week; recommended for Monday, Wednesday and Friday

**Trips** (See following page for sample schedules):

- **Option 2a – Burns Lake to Smithers with Topley/Wet’suwet’en Connectors:**

One round trip per day, scheduled for four hours in Smithers. **However, at the start and end of service this option would also provide short half trips from Topley and Wet’suwet’en Village to Burns Lake.**

- For instance the bus would route to Topley and Wet’suwet’en Village first before then doing the local loop of Burns Lake and proceeding back along the highway to Smithers. It would do the reverse on the return trip from Smithers.
- This option enables communities along this section to connect to Smithers while also enabling Topley and Wet’suwet’en residents to connect to Burns Lake.

- **Option 2b – Burns Lake to Smithers, with additional Houston trips and Wet’suwet’en Connector:** This option would provide one round trip per day from Burns Lake to Smithers plus an additional midday round trip between Houston and Smithers.

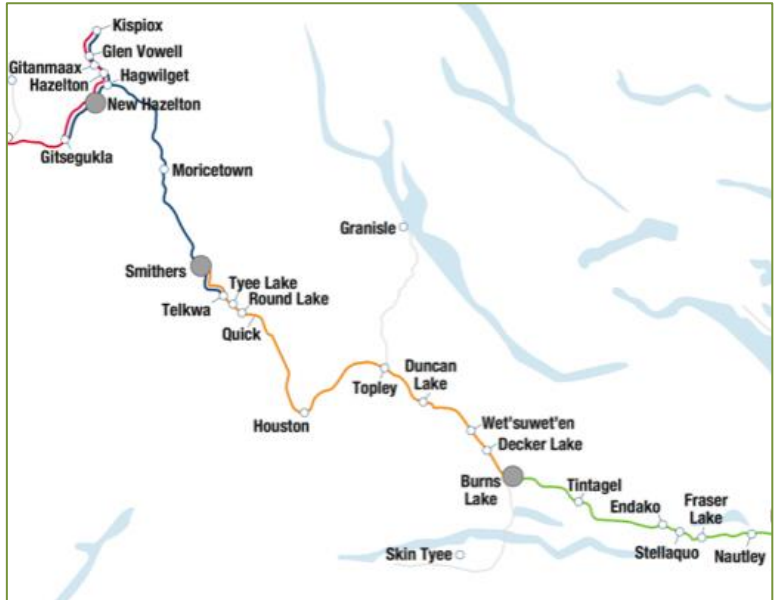
- The scheduling of these trips means that the bus would be in Smithers for 90 minute periods between trips.
- This would therefore enable Burns Lake and other passengers to have five to six hours overall in Smithers, while also making it possible for Houston area passengers to have the option for shorter trips to and from Smithers.
- Similar to Option 2a, **this option could include a half trip connector at the start and end of the service** day from Wet’suwet’en Village to Burns Lake.

**Local Routing:** Short local loops will be as follows (see Appendix A for complete proposed routing, stops and shelters).

- Burns Lake (Final stop details still in process of being confirmed)
- Wet’suwet’en Village
- Topley
- Houston (via Recreation Centre as well as upper bench)
- Smithers (via existing frontage road stops, downtown and the Bulkley Valley District Hospital)

### Summary of Changes Incorporated into Above Proposals Based on Engagement:

- Three days per week recommended based on need and to increase capacity. Days of week remain offset from the Burns Lake to Prince George days of service (to enable service to operate at a lower cost than otherwise possible). However, days of the week



align with those proposed for Hazeltons-Smithers, meaning that connection would be possible from Burns Lake to the Hazeltons area.

- A number of different routing and schedule options were explored based on feedback; overall time in Smithers lengthened in all options.
- Local routing and stops in Houston adjusted based on community feedback and stop added to Recreation Complex to enable closer proximity to nearby senior's housing. Opportunity for a stop in proximity to the Buck Flats intersection with Highway 16 is in the process of being explored. Stop added at the Bulkley Valley District Hospital in Smithers.
- Options for service from Topley and Wet'suwet'en residents to Burns Lake included.

**Considerations:**

- Note that as part of revised option development based on engagement feedback, possible transit connection to the northside Francois Lake Ferry terminal was also examined. However, given the resulting potential impact on transit schedules for other communities and that Southside communities would still need to organize transportation to access the ferry, it is recommended that service to the overall Francois Lake area is still likely better served separately, such as through a community transportation option.
- A commuter service option from Smithers to Houston was also explored. At this time, it is recommended that transit focus on providing introductory travel for those who may have the least access to other transportation. As service is established and evolves, it would be possible in the future to consider other opportunities to layer on daily commuter service through regular BC Transit expansion processes.
- Service to the Tyhee Lake area and growing residential areas in the vicinity of Telkwa was also requested. It is recommended that service to these areas be explored as part of planned expansion to the Smithers & District Transit System.
- Similar to Option 2a, it would be possible in Option 2b to also have the short connector trips operating from Wet'suwet'en to Burns Lake additionally extend as far as Topley. However, there would be an additional cost for this and the distance and time involved means that the schedule becomes less attractive and therefore less likely to be used. BC Transit can provide costs for that further extension if desired by local decision makers or it could be something considered in future.



### Sample Schedules

Note that schedule times would be further refined through the implementation process and not all stops are shown.

Option 2a: Burns Lake to Smithers, with Topley/Wet'suwet'en Connectors									
Monday, Wednesday & Friday									
To Smithers					To Burns Lake				
Burns Lake	Wet'suwet'en Village	Topley	Houston	Smithers	Smithers	Houston	Topley	Wet'suwet'en Village	Burns Lake
7:00	7:13	7:38	-	-	-	-	7:38	8:03	8:16
8:31	8:43	8:54	9:31	10:46	<b>2:46</b>	<b>4:06</b>	<b>4:43</b>	<b>5:03</b>	<b>5:16</b>
5:31	5:44	6:09	-	-	-	-	<b>6:09</b>	<b>6:34</b>	<b>6:47</b>

Option 2b: Burns Lake to Smithers, with additional Houston trips, Wet'suwet'en connector									
Monday, Wednesday & Friday									
To Smithers					To Burns Lake				
Burns Lake	Wet'suwet'en Village	Topley	Houston	Smithers	Smithers	Houston	Topley	Wet'suwet'en Village	Burns Lake
7:00	7:13	-	-	-	-	-	-	7:13	7:26
7:41	7:53	8:04	8:41	9:56	11:26	<b>12:36</b>	-	-	-
-	-	-	<b>1:01</b>	<b>2:11</b>	<b>3:31</b>	<b>4:41</b>	<b>5:18</b>	<b>5:38</b>	<b>5:51</b>
<b>6:06</b>	<b>6:19</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>6:19</b>	<b>6:32</b>

## Proposed Revised Service Options: Segment 3 – Hazeltons Area to Terrace

**Frequency:** Three days per week, recommended for Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

**Trips** (See following pages for sample schedules):

- **Option 3a – Hazeltons Area to Terrace, one round trip per day three days per week:** This option would provide one round trip from Kispiox to Terrace and enables four hours of time in Terrace before returning to the Hazeltons.

- A small amount of time has also been built into the schedule to enable the bus to wait at the Gitwangak Health Centre to enable that location to potentially act as an exchange hub for passengers

connecting from Kitwanga and Gitanyow and other points in the Hazeltons.



- **Option 3b – Hazeltons Area to Terrace, one round trip on Tuesdays and Thursdays, two round trips on Saturday** – This option would provide one round trip on Tuesdays and Thursdays identical to what is outlined for Option 3a. However, on Saturdays two round trips would be operated as follows:
  - In addition to the smaller Hazeltons bus operating from Kispiox to Terrace, a second bus would also be operated on this day. Pending confirmation by the City of Terrace (the formal agreement holder for that service) and final operating logistics, it would be also be possible to bring a larger 35 foot long bus from Terrace to be used for the extra Saturday trips. That bus would pick up passengers at Gitsegukla and Gitwangak and would wait for the smaller bus from Kispiox at the exchange hub at the Gitwangak Health Centre. Having both buses meet there would enable passenger loads to be balanced between the two vehicles—and other passengers from Kitwanga and Gitanyow to board—before proceeding to Terrace.
  - Two return times from Terrace would then be offered: the smaller bus returning to Gitwangak and Kispiox at midday (enabling about two hours of time in Terrace) and the larger bus returning later in the afternoon (enabling about five hours of time in Terrace).
  - On the later time, the small bus would meet the larger bus in Gitwangak, enabling passengers returning all the way to Kispiox to transfer onto it. (The larger bus would drop off passengers in Gitsegukla and potentially New Hazelton based on number of passengers before returning to Terrace).
- This option also includes the ability to operate a second round trip or overload bus on the last Thursday of the month.

**Local Routing:** Short local loops will be as follows (see Appendix A for complete proposed routing, stops and shelters).

- Kispiox, Sik-e-Dakh (Glen Vowell), Hazelton
- New Hazelton
- South Hazelton
- Gitsegukla
- Gitwangak (including stop to pull out on Highway 37 and service to Health Centre as a potential passenger exchange hub for transfers to/from other destinations)
- Gitaus
- Thornhill (This stop has been included here as the Highway 16 planning process has consistently worked to identify areas of significant population along the route that could be accessed by transit; inclusion of these stops could be amended based on local feedback).
- Terrace (including Wal-Mart, Hospital and Downtown/Skeena Mall)

**Summary of Changes Incorporated into Above Proposals Based on Feedback:**

- Three days per week recommended based on need and other corridor scheduling.
- Time in Terrace lengthened further and an option for a second trip added.
- Option 3b provides additional capacity for passengers and parcels on what are likely to be the busiest days of the month.
- Gitwangak Health Centre established as potential exchange hub for new service and its transferring passengers.
- Stop locations in Gitwangak revised and shelter added.
- Overall schedule shifted slightly later in the day.

**Considerations:**

- A scheduling / routing option for Kitwanga was also explored. However, if a community connection from Gitanyow is being organized for the service, ideally it would be better to serve Kitwanga through that means and connect with the Hazeltons-Terrace bus at Gitwangak. This can be explored further based on outcomes of the Highway 16 Community Transportation Grant process and continuing dialogue between local communities.
- This option proposes using one of the Terrace Regional Transit conventional (35 foot long) buses. Amendments to that agreement—for which the City of Terrace is the formal local government partner--would be required in order to make that option possible. It is suggested that use of this vehicle could potentially be reflected as a credit towards Terrace's share of the local costs for the Hazeltons Regional service, should it choose to become a partner. This option would also require confirming operational logistics with the system's operating company First Canada ULC.
- The ability of the Gitwangak Health Centre location to act as a potential connection point is in the process of being confirmed. If this location is unsuitable, another connection point would need to be determined.

### Sample Schedules

Note that schedule times would be further refined through the implementation process and not all stops are shown.

Option 3a: Hazeltons Area to Terrace, 1 round trip per day											
Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday											
To Terrace						To the Hazeltons Area					
Kispiox	Hazelton	Gitsegukla	Gitwangak (Passenger Connection Hub)	Gitaus	Terrace	Terrace	Gitaus	Gitwangak (Passenger Connection Hub)	Gitsegukla	Hazelton	Kispiox
7:20	7:44	8:24	8:40	9:50	10:25	2:30	3:05	4:15	4:31	5:11	5:35

Option 3b: Hazeltons Area to Terrace, 1 round trip Tue & Thu, 2 round trips Sat											
Tuesday & Thursday											
To Terrace						To the Hazeltons Area					
Kispiox	Hazelton	Gitsegukla	Gitwangak (Passenger Connection Hub)	Gitaus	Terrace	Terrace	Gitaus	Gitwangak (Passenger Connection Hub)	Gitsegukla	Hazelton	Kispiox
7:20	7:44	8:24	8:40	9:50	10:25	2:30	3:05	4:15	4:31	5:11	5:35
Saturday											
7:20	7:44	-	8:40	-	10:20	12:30	1:05	2:15	2:31	3:11	3:35
<i>Larger bus--&gt;</i>		8:20	8:40	9:50	10:25	3:10	3:25	4:55	5:15	-	-
3:35	3:59	4:39	4:55	-	-	-	-	4:55	-	5:51	6:15
Connection Point											

## Proposed Revised Service Options: Segment 4 – Prince Rupert to Terrace

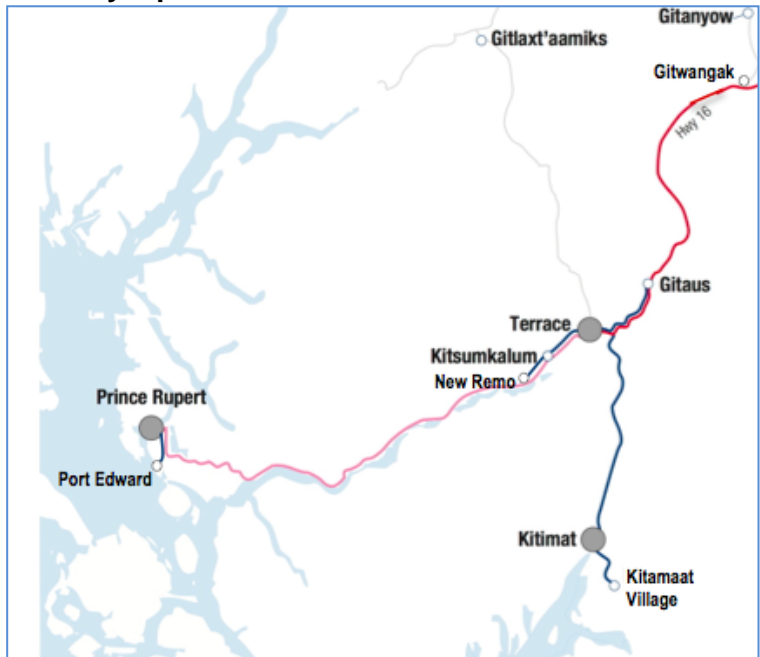
**Frequency:** Either two days per week (Option 4a) or three days per week (Option 4b). **The recommended option is three days per week which would be scheduled for Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday** to align with service from the Hazeltons Area to Terrace.

**Trips** (See the following page for sample schedules):

- **Option 4a – Prince Rupert to Terrace, two round trips per day, two days per week:** This option provides two round trips per day between Terrace and Prince Rupert. Schedule enables four hours of time in Terrace.

- If this option is selected and only two days of service are offered, it is recommended that they operate on a Tuesday and Saturday to align as much as possible with the Hazeltons Regional service to Terrace and provide a mix of day types (weekday and weekend travel)

- **Option 4b – Prince Rupert to Terrace, two round trips per day, three days per week:** Identical to Option 4a but operates an additional day per week. Recommended days would be Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.



**Local Routing:** Short local loops will be as follows (see Appendix A for complete proposed routing, stops and shelters).

- Prince Rupert
- New Remo
- Kitsumkalum
- Terrace (via Hospital, Wal-Mart and Downtown/Skeena Mall).

### Summary of Changes Incorporated into Above Proposals Based on Feedback:

- Three days per week recommended based on need and to ensure capacity
- Time in Terrace lengthened further
- Request for shelter at Kitsumkalum added to stop and shelter plan.

### Considerations:

- Opportunities to coordinate schedules with existing transportation providers are in the process of being explored and may result in further adjustments to the proposal.
- Depending on outcomes of these coordination efforts, there may be advantages to having this service operate out of the Prince Rupert garage instead of Terrace. (Costs are essentially the same for options regardless of operating centre). However, at present Terrace is still the preferred garage location to enable the spare vehicle to support both the Skeena Regional and Hazeltons Regional services.



### Sample Schedules

Note that schedule times would be further refined through the implementation process and not all stops are shown.

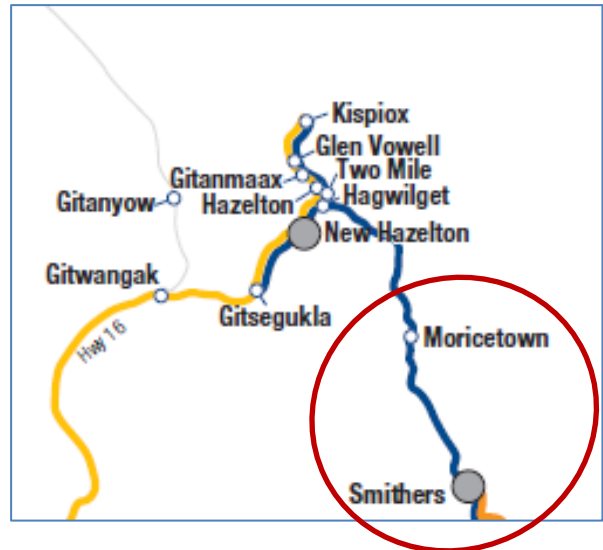
<b>Option 4a: Terrace to Prince Rupert Two Days/Week</b>					
<b>Tuesday &amp; Saturday</b>					
<b>To Prince Rupert</b>			<b>To Terrace</b>		
Terrace	Kitsumkalum	Prince Rupert	Prince Rupert	Kitsumkalum	Terrace
7:05	7:20	9:05	9:35	11:20	11:35
<b>3:40</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>5:40</b>	<b>6:10</b>	<b>7:55</b>	<b>8:10</b>

<b>Option 4b: Terrace to Prince Rupert Three Days/Week</b>					
<b>Tuesday, Thursday &amp; Saturday</b>					
<b>To Prince Rupert</b>			<b>To Terrace</b>		
Terrace	Kitsumkalum	Prince Rupert	Prince Rupert	Kitsumkalum	Terrace
7:05	7:20	9:05	9:35	11:20	11:35
<b>3:40</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>5:40</b>	<b>6:10</b>	<b>7:55</b>	<b>8:10</b>

## Proposed Revised Service Options: Segment 5 – Hazeltons Area (Including Moricetown) to Smithers

### Options for Enhanced Service Between Moricetown and Smithers

- **Option 5a - Smithers - Moricetown Midday Service on Two Additional Weekdays Plus Saturday Service and System Spare:** This option would add two trips on Saturdays as well as two trips during middays on Tuesday and Thursday,
  - These trips would be operated by Smithers & District Transit and would complement and be offset from the proposed days of service for Hazeltons-Smithers trips that also serve Moricetown.
  - A vehicle would also be added to the Smithers system to facilitate this service and to address existing lack of a spare and associated reliability issues.
  - In tandem with the existing Hazeltons Regional service, this option would mean that Moricetown had consistently available midday service to and from Smithers 6 days per week. Since it focusses on midday travel, this enhancement would primarily serve the needs of elders and families.



- **Option 5b - Smithers - Moricetown Weekday Peak Service Plus Saturday Service and System Spare** - Similar to option 5a, this service would be operated by Smithers & District Transit and add an additional spare vehicle to that system. It would also add Saturday service.
  - However, instead of adding midday service on two days per week, this option would instead **add two trips per day at peak times Monday to Friday** (i.e. one morning trip and one late afternoon trip every weekday).
  - Like 5a, this service would be in addition to existing Moricetown service provided by the Hazeltons Regional Transit System. However, it would focus on serving the needs of potential youth and adult commuters since it would offer consistent service at the start and end of each day six days per week.
  - This option would also likely better serve the needs of elders and families as well since they would still have access to midday transit three days per week via the Hazeltons Regionial Transit System as well as increased options on other days.

## Options for Enhanced Service Between the Hazeltons Area and Smithers

- **Option 6 - Hazeltons - Smithers additional service to align with 3 day/week regional trips along corridor:**

This option would convert an existing day of local Hazeltons service into a regional service day between the Hazeltons and Smithers.

- **Recommended days of service would be Monday, Wednesday and Friday.** This would mean that the three regional days for Hazeltons-Smithers would align with those between Burns Lake and Smithers, thereby enabling connections between communities.
- An additional day of regional service on this portion would address capacity issues.
- This option also includes:
  - Additional time required to address schedule reliability on the existing Kispiox to Smithers route so that trips can better run on time.
  - Time to enable two connecting trips per day to be operated between Gitsegukla, Gitwangak and New Hazelton on the days when the regional service to Smithers operate. This change would thereby enable those communities to maintain or gain local connection within the Hazeltons area on those days (including youth travel from after school activities) as well as access regional travel towards Smithers.



### Summary of Changes Incorporated into Above Proposals Based on Engagement:

- The need for Options 5a or 5b and Option 6 were consistently identified by community leaders in the development of the initial Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit Service Discussion Document. They were also frequently highlighted by community members through subsequent public engagement on options and align with past BC Transit analysis of capacity and reliability issues on the existing Smithers & District and Hazeltons Regional Transit Systems.

These options are presented here as part of the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit suite of proposals and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has confirmed that they are eligible for enhanced provincial funding as part of that program.

### Considerations:

- Previously Moricetown residents had experienced times when they were not able to board the Hazeltons Regional trips heading towards Smithers because the bus was already full by the time that it reached their community. BC Transit believes that these past capacity issues will be addressed through the suite of options presented in this document since Hazeltons area residents would now have transit access to Terrace as well and since since Option 6 provides another day of travel between the Hazeltons area and Smithers.
- If Moricetown-Smithers service is operated by Smithers & District Transit as proposed in Options 5a or 5b, it would make sense to adjust the existing Smithers two-zone fare to apply to both Telkwa and Moricetown and similarly make adjustments to the zone structure of the Hazeltons Regional Transit System. .

- While the Moricetown-Smithers route could be implemented as a separate service to start, there are significant opportunities to improve the overall Smithers & District Transit System if these trips are then integrated as part of overall system rescheduling that would take place as part of a planned expansion to Smithers – Telkwa service that is already part of BC Transit’s regular expansion processes planned for 2017/18.

### Sample Schedules

Note that schedule times would be further refined through implementation process and not all stops are shown. It should also be noted that the times shown for Moricetown-Smithers options would be confirmed based on further dialogue with Moricetown around ideal times to meet resident needs.

#### Option 5a & 5b Smithers – Moricetown Sample Schedules

Option 5a: Smithers to Moricetown Additional Midday Trips Tues & Thurs + Saturday Service			
Tuesday & Thursday			
To Moricetown		To Smithers	
Smithers	Moricetown	Moricetown	Smithers
10:30	11:10	11:10	11:50
<b>2:40</b>	<b>3:20</b>	<b>3:20</b>	<b>4:00</b>
Saturday			
9:30	10:10	10:10	10:50
<b>3:15</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>4:35</b>

Option 5b: Smithers to Moricetown Weekday Peak + Saturday Service			
Monday to Friday			
To Moricetown		To Smithers	
Smithers	Moricetown	Moricetown	Smithers
7:20	8:00	8:00	8:40
<b>4:30</b>	<b>5:10</b>	<b>5:10</b>	<b>5:50</b>
Saturday			
9:30	10:10	10:10	10:50
<b>3:15</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>3:55</b>	<b>4:35</b>

#### Option 6 Hazeltons – Smithers Sample Schedules

Option 6: Additional day of Kispiox - Smithers Service, plus schedule adjustments															
Monday, Wednesday & Friday															
To Smithers								To Hazeltons							
Kispiox	Sik-e-Dakh (Glen Vowell)	Hazelton	Hospital	Hagwilget	South Hazelton	New Hazelton	Moricetown	Smithers	Smithers	Moricetown	New Hazelton	Hagwilget	Hospital	Hazelton	Kispiox
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7:38	7:43	-	-	8:06
8:15	8:24	8:39	8:44	8:51	8:55	8:59	9:22	9:54	10:15	10:42	11:08	11:13	11:21	11:26	11:49
12:00	12:09	12:24	12:29	12:36	-	12:40	1:03	1:35	1:50	2:17	2:43	2:48	2:56	3:01	3:24
3:30	3:39	3:54	3:59	4:06	-	4:10	4:33	5:05	5:15	5:42	6:08	6:13	6:21	6:26	6:49
6:50	6:59	-	-	7:12	-	7:16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

West Connector									
Monday, Wednesday & Friday									
To Gitsegukla & Gitwangak					To New Hazelton & Hazelton				
Hazelton	New Hazelton	South Hazelton	Gitsegukla	Gitwangak	Gitwangak	Gitsegukla	South Hazelton	New Hazelton	Hazelton
-	11:10	11:14	11:34	11:52	11:52	12:10	12:30	12:34	<b>12:58</b>
5:46	<b>6:10</b>	<b>6:14</b>	<b>6:34</b>	<b>6:52</b>	<b>6:52</b>	-	-	<b>7:22</b>	-

## 2.2 Service Option Summary: All Options

The following table summarizes the estimated impacts for all service options presented above for comparison purposes. All figures are annual and are based on estimates that would require review based on confirmed service and operational details.

**Note that the following section provides information on the recommended service options.**

**Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit Service  
ALL PRESENTED OPTIONS - Proposed Revised Service Option Summary: Preliminary Estimated Additional Annual Impacts\***

Service Option	Suggested Base Transit System	Buses***	Vehicle Type	Service Hours	Rides	Total Revenue	Total Costs	Enhanced Provincial Cost-Sharing**			Under Traditional Local Govt. Cost-Sharing**
								Net Local Share of Costs	Provincial Share: Operating Costs	Provincial Share: Vehicle Lease Fee Equivalent	Net Local Share of Costs
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 1 - Burns Lake to Prince George</b>											
Option 1: Burns Lake - Prince George one round trip, three days/week	NEW: Burns Lake	1.5	Light Duty	1,990	4,100	\$14,400	\$336,300	\$67,700	\$164,200	\$90,000	\$164,900
Option 1b: Burns Lake - Prince George one round trip, three days/week + Connector to Wet'suwet'en Village	NEW: Burns Lake	1.5	Light Duty	2,110	4,700	\$16,500	\$348,600	\$69,700	\$172,400	\$90,000	\$169,300
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 2 - Burns Lake to Smithers</b>											
Option 2a: Burns Lake - Smithers one round trip, three days/week + Connector to Topley & Wet'suwet'en Village	NEW: Burns Lake	1.5	Light Duty	1,850	3,800	\$13,300	\$322,000	\$64,000	\$154,700	\$90,000	\$158,400
Option 2b: One round trip Burns Lake - Smithers, two round trips Houston - Smithers, three days/week + Connector to Wet'suwet'en Village	NEW: Burns Lake	1.5	Light Duty	1,800	4,400	\$15,400	\$316,900	\$60,200	\$151,300	\$90,000	\$153,500
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 3 - Hazeltons Area to Terrace</b>											
Option 3a: Hazeltons Area - Terrace, one round trip, three days/week	EXISTING: Hazeltons Regional	1.0	Light Duty	1,640	4,700	\$16,500	\$224,500	\$38,300	\$109,700	\$60,000	\$89,700
Option 3b: Hazeltons Area - Terrace, one round trip Tuesday and Thursday, two round trips Saturdays and last Thursday of month	EXISTING: Hazeltons Regional	1.0	Light Duty	2,080	5,100	\$17,900	\$271,800	\$52,700	\$141,200	\$60,000	\$110,700
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 4 - Terrace to Prince Rupert</b>											
Option 4a: Prince Rupert - Terrace, two round trips/day, two days per week	EXISTING: Skeena Regional	2.0	Light Duty	1,060	2,300	\$8,100	\$226,300	\$27,300	\$70,900	\$120,000	\$112,500
Option 4b: Prince Rupert - Terrace, two round trips/day, three days per week	EXISTING: Skeena Regional	2.0	Light Duty	1,590	4,100	\$14,400	\$276,900	\$37,900	\$104,600	\$120,000	\$133,200
<b>Proposed Enhanced Service Options: Segment 5 - Hazeltons Area (Including Moricetown) to Smithers</b>											
Option 5a: Smithers - Moricetown Midday Service Two Additional Weekdays Plus Saturday Service & System Spare	EXISTING: Smithers & District	1.0	Light Duty	390	1,700	\$3,500	\$95,900	\$8,500	\$23,900	\$60,000	\$41,900
Option 5b: Smithers - Moricetown Weekday Peak Service Plus Saturday Service & System Spare	EXISTING: Smithers & District	1.0	Light Duty	910	3,200	\$6,500	\$140,800	\$20,500	\$53,800	\$60,000	\$60,100
Option 6: Hazeltons - Smithers additional service to align with 3 day/week regional trips along corridor	EXISTING: Hazeltons Regional	0.0	Light Duty	760	1,500	\$3,000	\$75,100	\$22,100	\$50,000	\$0	\$32,500

\* Costs based on 2016/17 AOA Amounts + 5-10% rate increase for potential inflation, contract and vehicle type impacts + New System contingency + 10% contingency

\*\* "Enhanced Provincial Cost-Sharing" is based on provincial share of 100% vehicle lease fees, 66.69% operating costs and applies only to new service segments. "Under Traditional Local Govt. Cost-Sharing" shows what the local amount would otherwise be under existing Local Government transit cost-sharing agreements for similar styles of service.

\*\*\* Half vehicles shown for Burns Lake options indicate sharing of vehicle spares between service segments.



## 2.3 Service Option Summary: Recommended Options

Taking account public engagement and community feedback to date and opportunities to deliver the best community value within resources provided, the following options are recommended.

Once service options and funding thresholds are approved, detailed schedules and routing would be refined through the service implementation process to reflect the feedback and confirmed participation of funding partner area local governments and First Nations.

### Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit Service RECOMMENDED OPTIONS - Proposed Revised Service Option Summary: Preliminary Estimated Additional Annual Impacts\*

Service Option	Suggested Base Transit System	Buses***	Vehicle Type	Service Hours	Rides	Total Revenue	Total Costs	Enhanced Provincial Cost-Sharing**			Under Traditional Local Govt. Cost-Sharing**
								Net Local Share of Costs	Provincial Share: Operating Costs	Provincial Share: Vehicle Lease Fee Equivalent	Net Local Share of Costs
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 1 - Burns Lake to Prince George</b>											
Option 1b: Burns Lake - Prince George one round trip, three days/week + Connector to Wet'suwet'en Village	NEW: Burns Lake	1.5	Light Duty	2,110	4,700	\$16,500	\$348,600	\$69,700	\$172,400	\$90,000	\$169,300
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 2 - Burns Lake to Smithers</b>											
Option 2b: One round trip Burns Lake - Smithers, two round trips Houston - Smithers, three days/week + Connector to Wet'suwet'en Village	NEW: Burns Lake	1.5	Light Duty	1,800	4,400	\$15,400	\$316,900	\$60,200	\$151,300	\$90,000	\$153,500
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 3 - Hazeltons Area to Terrace</b>											
Option 3b: Hazeltons Area - Terrace, one round trip Tuesday and Thursday, two round trips Saturdays and last Thursday of month	EXISTING: Hazeltons Regional	1.0	Light Duty	2,080	5,100	\$17,900	\$271,800	\$52,700	\$141,200	\$60,000	\$110,700
<b>Proposed New Service Options: Segment 4 - Terrace to Prince Rupert</b>											
Option 4b: Prince Rupert - Terrace, two round trips/day, three days per week	EXISTING: Skeena Regional	2.0	Light Duty	1,590	4,100	\$14,400	\$276,900	\$37,900	\$104,600	\$120,000	\$133,200
<b>Proposed Enhanced Service Options: Segment 5 - Hazeltons Area (Including Moricetown) to Smithers</b>											
Option 5b: Smithers - Moricetown Weekday Peak Service Plus Saturday Service & System Spare	EXISTING: Smithers & District	1.0	Light Duty	910	3,200	\$6,500	\$140,800	\$20,500	\$53,800	\$60,000	\$60,100
Option 6: Hazeltons - Smithers additional service to align with 3 day/week regional trips along corridor	EXISTING: Hazeltons Regional	0.0	Light Duty	760	1,500	\$3,000	\$75,100	\$22,100	\$50,000	\$0	\$32,500

\* Costs based on 2016/17 AOA Amounts + 5-10% rate increase for potential inflation, contract and vehicle type impacts + New System contingency + 10% contingency

\*\* "Enhanced Provincial Cost-Sharing" is based on provincial share of 100% vehicle lease fees, 66.69% operating costs and applies only to new service segments. "Under Traditional Local Govt. Cost-Sharing" shows what the local amount would otherwise be under existing Local Government transit cost-sharing agreements for similar styles of service.

\*\*\* Half vehicles shown for Burns Lake options indicate sharing of vehicle spares between service segments.

## 2.0 Fares

The proposed fares for the service were generally well supported by the engagement responses.

### Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit Proposed Fares

<b>Proposed Fares</b> (valid on Regional Service only)	Cash fare each trip	\$5.00
	Tickets, sheet of 10	\$45.00

- **All passengers** would pay a cash fare (proposed \$5.00) or one ticket each time they board the bus.
- **A separate fare** is required to connect to any local transit systems.
- **Children aged five and under travel free** when accompanied by a fare-paying guardian.
- **BC Bus Pass** —a universal bus pass available to lower income seniors and people with a disability administered through the BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation—could be used on all Highway 16 transit services.



Two issues that emerged through engagement feedback and resulting recommendations are as follows:

1. **Separate fare for shorter, local trips:** A number of participants and community leaders asked if less expensive local fares for shorter trips could be offered, particularly in cases where regional service will overlap with existing transit (i.e. Telkwa to Smithers, Gitau to Terrace, etc.).
  - **BC Transit's recommendation:** That a separate local fare on the new regional services not be offered at the time of implementation but instead be evaluated after service is up and running. While a separate local fare may be confusing, the main risk with offering it from the outset is that it may impact available capacity on board buses. (Standees are not allowed on the light-duty vehicles proposed for the service).

It would be prudent to start the service and be able to monitor the level of overall passenger demand before layering on lower cost trips.

Similarly, integrating fares with local systems—to better facilitate transfers between local and regional services—could also be examined at a later date.

One case where a lower fare could be considered at time of implementation is for the Moricetown-Smithers service proposed for the Smithers & District Transit System. Since two zone travel between Telkwa and Smithers is \$2.75, it may make sense to apply the same zone system to Smithers-Moricetown travel. This may also mean making an adjustment to the zones and fare structure on the Hazelton Regional Transit System for that same segment.

**2. Alignment with existing Skeena Regional and Hazeltons Regional fares:** Presently the regional fare for services operating between the Hazeltons area and Smithers and Kitimat/Kitamaat Village and Terrace is \$4 not the \$5 proposed for the new Highway 16 services.

- **BC Transit's recommendation:** Regional fares on the Hazeltons system last increased in June 2008 and on the Skeena system in July 2010. From a consistency point of view, it would be advantageous to bring these into alignment with other regional fares in the corridor.

### 3.0 Infrastructure and Bus Stops

**Proposed stop and shelter locations were generally supported in the engagement.** Detailed feedback has been discussed and refined with BC Transit, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and respective local governments, First Nations and property owners and that process continues.

Notable changes to shelter and stop locations are captured in section 1.2 for each of the service area segments and Appendix A provides the full summary of all proposals to date.

Note that stop locations will continue to be refined through the implementation process. Similarly, once service begins it will be possible to consider further infrastructure to support stops, such as bus pull outs required to help access rural settlements where viable pull outs or parallel roads do not exist today.



### 4.0 Policies and Outreach

A number of considerations had previously been presented in tandem with service proposals, including developing contingency strategies for severe weather, mechanical breakdowns and high ridership trips. Similarly, previous information has also noted that a marketing, communications and outreach strategy is required to support the implementation of service.

In addition to what has been previously described, engagement highlighted these other items which should also be considered as part of any service implementation by BC Transit and its partners:

- The need for space on transit vehicles for luggage/parcels.
- Clarification around policies regarding youth travel
- Clarification around policies relating to transit vehicles picking up hitchhikers as well as ensuring onboard safety for passengers.
- Continued communication and outreach in terms of how the proposed transit services work in tandem with existing end-to-end transportation providers (particularly Greyhound and Northern Health Connections) and connecting services via the Community Transportation Grant program.

## 5.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

The revised proposals presented in this document are based on the results of public engagement and discussions to date with area First Nations and local governments. This document meets the deliverables outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding signed with local governments to provide recommended options for inter-community transit service along the Highway 16 corridor.

The present document is being provided in draft form to enable further comment and direction as desired from participating local governments, First Nations and Regional Transit Committees. In mid-November 2016 the document will be finalized and posted to the BC Transit website.

In tandem with the opportunity to provide final comment, it should also be noted that the path to implementing service now lies with area local governments and their partners. BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) have confirmed funding, fleet availability and procurement processes for all of the options presented and have also confirmed staff availability to support local agreement and cost-sharing discussions.

Recognizing the tremendous need for transportation options on Highway 16, BC Transit and MoTI staff stand ready to expedite the implementation of service in each of the segments. We also recognize that in accordance with the *BC Transit Act*, approval to move forward with service rests with each segment's sponsoring local government. The timing of local approval therefore has a critical impact on timing of implementation and the launch of new or expanded services.

The next sections describe the suggested path to implementation for each of the segments.

### 5.1 Recommended Governance and Procurement Strategy

Based on operational considerations and discussions to-date with local governments, the following table describes the recommended transit system, sponsoring local government and transit committee, and the procurement or agreement process that would apply to each service option and its implementation.

- **Sponsoring Local Government** refers to the local government that would be the formal signatory for a service agreement with BC Transit. Formal decisions on routes, service levels, fares and budgets would be made by that organization's council or board, with input from the respective Transit Committee.
- **Transit Committee** refers to the body of local partners—including other local governments, First Nations and participating institutions/organizations—who contribute to local transit through a local funding agreement. Committees typically act as the discussion forum for transit partners and would normally make recommendations on routes, service levels, fares and budgets to the sponsoring local government.
- **Transit System Management Company** refers to the organization that would operate the service through contract, either through an amendment to of an existing agreement with BC Transit or through a Request for Proposals process.

## Recommended Governance and Procurement Strategy for Each Service Option

Transit System	Operating Hub	Sponsoring Local Government	Transit Committee	Transit System Management Company Procurement/Agreement Process	Recommended Transit Options Encompassed
Bulkley Nechako Paratransit (New)	Burns Lake (TBD)	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	Bulkley Nechako Regional Transit Committee (in process of being established)	Request for Proposal process to select a new transit management company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 1b – Burns Lake to Prince George</li> <li>• Option 2b – Burns Lake to Smithers</li> </ul>
Smithers & District Paratransit	Smithers (Telkwa)	Town of Smithers	Smithers & District Transit Committee (expanded as desired to include additional members)	Amendment of existing agreement with Smithers & District Community Services Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 5b – Smithers to Moricetown</li> </ul>
Hazeltons Regional Paratransit	Hazeltons (Two Mile, with contingency support from Terrace to Gitwangak)	Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine	Hazeltons Regional Transit Committee (expanded as desired to include additional members)	Amendment of existing agreement with First Canada ULC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 3b – Hazeltons Area to Terrace</li> <li>• Option 6 – Hazeltons Area to Smithers</li> </ul>
Skeena Regional Paratransit	Terrace	Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine	Skeena Regional Transit Committee (expanded as desired to include additional members)	Amendment of existing agreement with First Canada ULC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option 4b – Terrace to Prince Rupert</li> </ul>



## 5.2 Recommended Path to Implementation – Suggested Next Steps

1. Sponsoring local government convenes meeting of respective transit committee to discuss and confirm:
  - Option(s) to be recommended for approval\*
  - New or additional members to be added to the committee (Note that the Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit Committee is in the process of being established).
  - Local cost-sharing apportionment agreed among members
  - Recommendation to sponsoring local government to move forward with implementation and direct staff to develop and sign an Implementation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding with BC Transit
2. Recommendations received and approved by sponsoring local government board or council. To expedite process, potentially this approval may be made with a “subject to” clause noting that final approval is pending final confirmation of participation by local funding partners.
3. Implementation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding developed by BC Transit in conjunction with sponsoring local government.
  - This document will note work to be done and confirm timelines for implementation, subject to obtaining final approvals.
  - A “soft launch” implementation of transit service requiring minimal marketing materials, changes to underlying transit systems and using an existing operating company may require up to 60 days of lead time from the date of signing. An implementation requiring a RFP process may take up to five months from the date of signing. Timelines will be confirmed as part of the Implementation Agreement.
4. BC Transit begins preliminary implementation work, including:
  - Detailed scheduling and operational planning
  - Development of a marketing and communications plan
  - Negotiation of contract amendments with existing transit management companies or the issue of a Request for Proposal to select a new company.
5. Local partnership agreement developed by sponsoring local government.
6. Resolution sought from funding partners to become part of agreement.
7. Transit function and local agreements approved by the sponsoring local government.
8. Transit system agreements finalized and sent by BC Transit and approved by the local government.
9. Transit service begins, in conjunction with marketing campaign and outreach.

*\* Note that changes to each of the transit systems could be implemented independently from each other. Based on further discussion with BC Transit and the transit management company, it may also be possible to phase implementation within transit systems, such as to “soft launch” additional trips and then integrate them into existing base transit service and materials at a later date.*

## 6.0 Conclusions

The engagement process for the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit Service has been an in depth and collaborative process, drawing on expertise from a wide variety of decision-makers, community members and staff from diverse professions. Overall, the proposals have received positive responses. The revised options and recommendations highlighted in this letter and presented in the attached report are based on the feedback received to date and aim to provide the best value to communities within the resources presented.

BC Transit supports the recommendations and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has confirmed provincial funding through the Highway 16 Action Plan. Staff at both organizations stand by to support implementation based on the feedback of local decision makers.

It is recommended that all local governments and First Nations receiving this letter **provide feedback on revised draft service, fare, infrastructure and policy proposals by November 10.** (Please contact us if your meeting schedule will not allow you to meet this deadline).

Furthermore, in order to move forward to implementation, it is recommended that their respective Transit Committees and sponsoring Local Governments:

- **Select and approve their service option(s)**
- **Direct staff to work with BC Transit to create, finalize and sign an Implementation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding that will initiate the implementation process, commence infrastructure implementation, and enable BC Transit to undertake contract negotiations and/or a procurement process with operating companies for the new service.**

Following local signature of an Implementation Agreement Memorandum of Understanding between BC Transit and the sponsoring local government, the detailed work to implement service would then begin.

**BC Transit  
October 2016**