

**November 13, 2012**

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**SUBJECT**

Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) Report

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide the minutes of the September 18, 2012 meeting of the ATAC committee for **INFORMATION**.

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee is to provide advice to the Commission and to BC Transit on transit for persons with a disability in the Victoria region, including review and comment on plans, projects and operating policy/guidelines. The committee consists of nine members appointed for two year periods in staggered terms with a Chair selected annually.

The minutes of the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved by ATAC on October 30,2012.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission receive the meeting minutes for the September 18, 2012 meeting **FOR INFORMATION**.

Respectfully,



Manuel Achadinha  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATAC) Minutes**

Tuesday, September 18, 2012 – 2:00 – 4:00 P.M

BC TRANSIT BOARDROOM, VICTORIA

**Attendance:**

<b>Committee Members:</b>	Marnie Essery (Chair), Pat Danforth (Vice Chair), Jan Robertson, Susan Gallagher, Margaret Sylvester, Chris Marks
<b>Supplemental Attendees</b>	Councillor Marianne Alto, Jackie Irving (for Bob Allen), Mohan Kang, Susan Sowden, Mary Kay Kennedy
<b>BC Transit Staff</b>	Manuel Achadinha, John Palmer, David Guthrie, Meribeth Burton, Danielle Harriott, Shawn Ridout, Bridget Lott (recorder for Linda Moss),
<b>Regrets:</b>	Joanne Neubauer, Dave Douglas, Trevor Matthews, Virve Hultaine,
<b>Guests:</b>	Malcolm MacPhail (CRD)

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marnie Essery, Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a quick round table to introduce everyone to the group.</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Call to Order</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm by Marnie Essery (Chair)</li> </ul>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Approval of Agenda</b></p> <p>MOVED BY CHRIS MARKS AND SECONDED BY JAN ROBERTSON that the agenda be approved as circulated with the additions of the Vicinity: Community Bus presentation and the CRD; Regional Transportation Plan presentation by the CRD and the IBI Group</p> <p align="right"><b>CARRIED</b></p>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Approval of June 19, 2012 Meeting Minutes</b></p> <p>MOVED BY CHRIS MARK AND SECONDED BY MOHAN KANG that the minutes be approved as circulated with 2 additions / changes; Would like the attendance portion of the minutes to mirror the layout of the Agenda to identify members. Please add a bullet in the Bus Stop W/C Signage regarding visibility accessibility.</p> <p align="right"><b>CARRIED</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Vicinity: Community Bus – Presentation</b></p> <p>Marne informed the new members of ATAC that the committee was provided with the opportunity to view and provide input on the prototype Vicinity bus two years ago when the bus was first introduced and this discussion was for BC Transit to outline the changes on the production Vicinity bus.</p> <p>John Palmer noted that the prototype only had one wheelchair spot and the production vehicles being delivered have two wheelchair spots and meet the CSA requirements for two mobility aids.</p> <p>Manuel Achadinha presented the changes to the production Vicinity Community Bus.</p> <p>John Palmer outlined the differences between the Ford Polar (on site) that is currently used for Community Shuttle service in the Victoria Region and the production Vicinity Community Bus (see handout for details)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For the past two years, BC Transit has been working with local government partners across the province on providing a vehicle better suited to meet the needs required for Community Shuttle Service including</li> </ul>

accessibility needs

- The Vicinity Community Bus has the same features and flexibility as the Conventional Bus but on a smaller scale (27.5 feet versus 40 feet)
- Features include; low-floor kneeling, 23 seated – 16 standing capacity, better access for walkers, strollers, wheelchairs & mobility devices (2 positions)
- The prototype vehicle was tested across the province and input has been collected from local government, operating partners and customers to ensure the production bus meets the needs of the communities served by BC Transit
- 15 production buses have been ordered and will be distributed to select communities throughout BC. 5 buses have been offered for testing in the Victoria Region. A number of communities have already secured some of the production buses. Other BC communities are on a waiting list for these buses. Communities expressing interest are being considered on a priority basis to determine who receives the Vicinity buses.

ATAC questions and comments;

- The committee noted the improved capacity for two mobility aids. They did enquire on the ability to maneuver to a seat when two large scooters are on the vehicle.
  - It is expected to be comparable to a 40 foot bus
- ATAC would like to see the production bus tested in Victoria with a variety of different capacity loads and different devices
- ATAC was pleased with the look of the Vicinity bus. The existing vehicles used for Community shuttle service are the same vehicles used for custom transit which is confusing for customers. The Vicinity should address this issue.
- ATAC would like the Vicinity Bus to be as senior-friendly as possible. A bus with less stairs (as is seen with the Ford Polar) is preferred. The bus must meet all needs while maintaining versatility
  - Staff responded that the bus is a low floor vehicle that can kneel and all the seats on the “floor plate” (lower floor) can fold up. Having the back seats on the upper floor fold up has never been done before and would require some testing
- On the prototype Vicinity bus, bikes were only loaded during daylight hours.
  - This issue has been addressed on the production Vicinity Bus

Marnie asked when the buses would be available in the Victoria Region.

- Staff explained that the Commission had not yet agreed to be part of the test group for the 15 production buses. If not supported, the 5 identified buses will be offered to other communities on the wait list.

Councillor Marianne Alto stated that this decision is currently before the VRTC upon receipt of input from ATAC.

ATAC will support for testing the Vicinity buses in Victoria.

### **Regional Transportation Plan (CRD) – Presentation**

Due to time constraints Malcolm MacPhail did a quick introduction of the project and its intent;

- Main goal is to coordinate initiatives for Regional Growth Strategy that were previously being done in silos
- Look at having a full range of choices and develop Regional Multi-Model plan; connections to Transit, access, flexibility, mobility, sustainability

Two hand-outs were provided to the group:

	<p>1. Regional Transportation Plan Issues and Opportunities (Technical Paper)</p> <p>2. The Six Elements of Sustainable Transportation in the CRD</p> <p>Marnie has committed to provide feedback to Malcolm and to book a separate meeting to discuss the project. Marnie also requested all members to pre-read the handouts prior to the next meeting.</p> <p>Questions or comments can be directed to Malcolm by phone or email;  Malcolm MacPhail  250-360-3052  mmacphail@crd.bc.ca</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Goals for 2012</b>
	Deferred to the October 30, 2012 meeting.
<b>8.</b>	<b>RO EX (Royal Oak Exchange) Update</b>
	Deferred to the October 30, 2012 meeting.
<b>9.</b>	<b>Seat Belt Policy Review</b>
	<p>Jaclyn from First attended</p> <p>Update provided;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's been 2.5 months since implemented and it has been almost seamless, there has been little push-back and the operators are continuing to help clients</li> <li>• Concerns were raised regarding people who have had their mobility devices for over 3 years who will likely not have seat belts as well as new users who do not know about the policy and will not know to ask the medical providers to have it installed upon purchasing their wheelchair or scooter.</li> <li>• The group recommends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BC Transit should confirm with medical suppliers that they have the most up-to-date policy regarding seat belt installation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	<b>TaxiSaver Update</b>
	Victoria has no intentions of changing anything around TaxiSaver program at this time.
<b>11.</b>	<b>Bus Stop Signage and Accessibility</b>
	<p>Councilor Marianne Alto informed the group that drivers and compatibility were discussed in the June Commissions meeting. There are concerns from Transit with liability. The next meeting will discuss the pros and cons which she will bring forth to the group at the October 30, 2012 ATAC meeting.</p> <p>Comments and concerns raised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed the lack of accessibility signage and BC Transit's responsibility in the process versus municipalities' responsibilities. People are very frustrated with the lack of signage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dave Guthrie informed the group it is up to the individual municipalities to put up the signs and each municipality works differently and on different timelines; which is why things aren't consistent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Susan raised the point of also ensuring stops are accessible to riders relying on tactile abilities to find the stops; example the Cook Street stop that was just moved</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Dave also informed the group that current discussions are leaning towards having the accessible</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>decision to be made by the rider rather than the driver regardless if signage is present or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Concerns were raised that visitors and new riders rely on the signs to inform them of accessibility</li> </ul> <p>ATAC stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is no signage this will increase frustration and more people will move towards the handyDART system out of fear or simply because it didn't work for them (could get on but not off, etc.)</li> <li>• Options of accessibility to transit; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Keep it easy to find</li> <li>▪ Self-determining</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Marnie encourages all ATAC members to make sure routes and accessibility signage match and to bring forth feedback to Shawn Ridout.</li> </ul>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Senior Ridership</b>
	Deferred to the October 30, 2012 meeting.
<b>13.</b>	<b>Custom Transit Eligibility Update / No-Show Policy</b>
	<p>Danielle gave the group an update regarding the No-Show policy that has been drafted. The policy was drafted to help alleviate no-shows or late cancelations and to encourage people to keep the ride or to call in advance so it can be used by someone else. The Policy indicates if a user has 3 no-shows or late cancelations within 1 month they would receive a 2 week suspension from using the service. The numbers of no-shows and/or late cancelations has been increasing every month. Last month there were over 1100 no-shows and cancellations combined.</p> <p>Comments and concerns raised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed looking at the data regarding group bookings and the number of people booking far in advance</li> <li>• Reminder calls are made the night before</li> <li>• Concerns that the policy could be seen as punitive and a 2 week suspension for some people could be detrimental</li> </ul> <p>Suggestions by ATAC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminder calls could be done 2 days before allowing time for the rider to plan, cancel or the ride used by someone on the wait-list</li> <li>• Make it easier to cancel; some people are confused with which line to call and call the booking line to cancel which can be long and people give up resulting in a no-show or late cancelation</li> <li>• Revise the statement in the User Guide using stronger language and include the human piece; think of others</li> <li>• Riders used to receive notepads or fridge magnets with phone numbers (people really like that); use that media to reinforce the message and phone numbers</li> <li>• Add a message to the booking phone line</li> <li>• Would like to see more around education</li> </ul> <p>The ATAC Committee would like to hear more updates regarding the Eligibility process on an ongoing basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Danielle informed the group that for Victoria, we have not yet brought anything forward formally.</li> </ul>
<b>14.</b>	<b>New Business</b>
	<p>Deferred to the October 30, 2012 meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status of attendants - riding free</li> </ul>

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**Meeting adjourned at: 4:06pm**

**Next meeting: October 30, 2012 - 2:00 – 4:00pm**