

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

February 22, 2022

#12

SUBJECT: RapidBus, Planning and Infrastructure Update

PURPOSE

To provide the Victoria Regional Transit Commission with an update on transit service planning, infrastructure planning and construction activities in the Victoria Region. This report is presented to the Commission for **INFORMATION**.

SERVICE CHANGES

Spring 2022 Seasonal Service Change (Effective April 4, 2022)

In anticipation of most post-secondary students going on summer holidays, routes serving post-secondary institutions will have their service levels reduced to better align with demand. Routes 3 and 10 will no longer interline in James Bay to better align service levels with demand. Seasonal improvements to service levels on routes serving tourism locations will support anticipated higher summer ridership.

PLANNING INITIATIVES

Local Area Transit Plans

Two Local Area Transit Plans (LATP) that have been underway since 2021 are now completed, and one Local Area Transit Plan is scheduled to begin later in 2022.

Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan

The Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan has been completed, and will be presented at this Commission Meeting for approval.

West Shore Local Area Transit Plan

The West Shore Local Area Transit Plan has been completed, and will be presented at this Commission Meeting for approval.

Uptown Local Area Transit Plan

The Uptown Local Area Transit Plan is being conducted to support the development of the Uptown Mobility Hub from a future service planning perspective. This new planning process is tentatively scheduled to begin in summer 2022.

Referrals

Referral-related work undertaken or proposed since the last Commission meeting includes:

- Bus Stop Improvements – BC Transit continues to work closely with local government partners within the Victoria Region to coordinate improvements to stop configurations and layout to improve accessibility and customer experience.
- Development Referral Process – BC Transit receives and responds to development referrals from local governments considering rezoning and large-scale development proposals. BC Transit provides comment on opportunities for transit supportive development, improvements to transit supportive infrastructure such as bus stops and sidewalks, and provides comments on the feasibility of future transit service to the proposed development.

Planning staff have received approximately 32 development referrals since the last Commission Meeting between November and January and provided comment to five local governments.

Service Monitoring

Ridership Performance Report

Planning regularly monitors service performance against the service standards and performance guidelines identified in the 2013/14 Service Review document. Regular performance monitoring allows for a better alignment between service levels and ongoing changes in demand patterns.

The attached Ridership Performance Report (#10a) provides information on ridership performance over the summer 2021 service period from September 6 and December 5, 2021, and provides information on ridership trends through the period impacted by the COVID pandemic up to December 5, 2021.

RAPIDBUS

The [Victoria Regional RapidBus Implementation Strategy](#) was completed in summer 2021. RapidBus is transit service that outperforms the personal automobile in speed, comfort and reliability. Over time, the RapidBus system will be implemented across several corridors to create a high capacity transit system. There are a number of transit service planning and infrastructure activities that support advancing the RapidBus strategy. These include the following:

- West Shore-Downtown RapidBus Line
 - The West Shore-Downtown RapidBus Line is proposed to launch in September 2022. The launch will include the conversion of the Route 50 West Shore-Downtown to a uniquely branded RapidBus service. The launch will also include expanded service frequency (using deferred expansion resources), streamlined bus stops and improved station amenities at targeted locations.
 - Further implementation details will be provided to the VRTC in June, 2022. The proposed routing and stop locations for the initial West Shore-

Downtown RapidBus Line are included in the updated West Shore Local Area Transit Plan.

- The unique RapidBus branding is in final development and will be released in advance of the proposed September 2022 launch.

Active Infrastructure Projects

- **Island Highway Transit Priority Upgrades:** BC Hydro is currently updating their designs to integrate the transit priority improvements along the Island Highway and minor statutory right of ways with private land owners will be completed and registered where the design elements affect their properties. BC Transit is in the process of securing financial approvals for construction, which if successful will permit the project to move forward with the RFP and into the construction phase in 2022, subject to the completion of the statutory right of way tasks. A full tender ready design has been completed for the Island Highway Transit Priority Project to construct transit priority improvements along the Island Highway between the interchange with Highway 1 in the Town of View Royal, and at the Wale Road intersection in the City of Colwood. BC Transit is developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the construction phase of the project to allow for an issuance to potential construction vendors.

Infrastructure Studies

- **RapidBus Stations:** A consultant has been retained to complete planning and conceptual design services. Workshops with Local Government Partners are currently occurring and the study is expected to be complete by the end of 2022.
- **West Shore Transit Priority Study:** Phase 2 detail design planning will begin this year for advancement of transit priority concepts approved in principle for Sooke Rd. and Goldstream Ave. A plan will be developed to complete the detailed design process that includes retaining an engineering consultant and working with local government staff to further develop a design that is agreeable to all stakeholders, and is ready for tendering and construction.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) Studies

- **Highway 1:** MoTI is advancing planning work along the Douglas Street/Hwy 1 Corridor to support existing BC Transit initiatives. This work includes exploring transit priority treatments that align with the BC Transit priorities identified through the Victoria Transit Future Plan and the South Island Transportation Strategy.
- **Uptown Transit Priority** - MoTI is advancing planning work to develop transit and active transportation priorities and improvements to serve near-term goals that will align with the future development of the Uptown site and do not preclude the long-term plan. The plan includes a proposal for bus only lanes on Ravine Rd & Vernon Ave, a Rapid Bus station on Highway 1 and expanded bus zone capacity on Carey Rd. This plan will support BC Transit advancing long-term plans for the Uptown Transit Hub and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities.
- **Six Mile Mobility Hub** - MoTI is advancing planning work for a Mobility Hub in View Royal along the RapidBus corridor on the Island Hwy to support existing BC Transit initiatives and active transportation. This work includes exploring transit park & ride

options that align BC Transit priorities identified through the Victoria Transit Future Plan and the South Island Transportation Strategy.

- **Peninsula RapidBus**

- The Peninsula Local Area Transit Plan is now complete, and identified the steps required to implement the Peninsula RapidBus Line. Further coordination and planning with MOTI and Sidney is required before implementing the Peninsula RapidBus Line, along with significant service and infrastructure investment; consequently, the Local Area Transit Plan outlines a phased approach to implement this service, capable of supporting the diversity of local and regional travel needs on the Peninsula moving forward.

MOTI Active Projects Infrastructure

- **Highway 17:** MOTI announced a project for Transit Priority Queue-jump Lanes and RapidBus Stations at the intersection of Highway 17 and Mt Newton. The project will support the VRTC RapidBus Strategy, Transit Future Plan and the South Island Transportation Plan.

- **McKenzie RapidBus**

Active Infrastructure Projects

- **UVic Exchange:** The University of Victoria (UVIC) Transit Exchange project will bring the outstanding portions of the transit exchange to a similar standard as implemented in Phase 1 on the opposite side of Finnerty Road. The project includes replacing bus pads, curbing and paving, new shelters, addressing pedestrian concerns, and adding designated layover bays. The project also enhances three bus stops on campus located on Ring Road. A Project Agreement between UVic and BC Transit was executed in October 2021. UVIC has engaged McElhanney design consultants to complete the design, tender and future construction administration services for the project. The design has progressed to 50 per cent including collaborated reviews and comments from stakeholders of both parties. Draft reports for SAFE Design certification and an electric bus charging feasibility study have also been completed in support of the design. Design will be completed and ready for tender in April 2022 with construction through summer of 2022. A post project completion operating agreement will be executed between UVIC and BC Transit prior to the in-service date in September 2022.

Infrastructure Studies

- **McKenzie Corridor Study:** In partnership with Saanich, a consultant has been retained to develop Transit Priority and RapidBus Station concepts while also incorporating Saanich's multi-modal vision for this street. Data analysis is underway and the study is expected to conclude in early 2023.

MAJOR FACILITIES UPDATE

ACTIVE PROJECTS:

handyDART Centre at 2401 Burnside Road: Project activities for the new handyDART centre in View Royal continue to advance. The first phase of early works construction is underway and includes improvements to Burnside Rd, realignment of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, landscaping and the addition of two new bus shelters to support the local transit network. The second phase of work includes creek realignment and rough grading of the site, the commencement of which is dependent on the receipt of Provincial permits but estimated late February.

Indigenous economic opportunities associated with the above tender packages were incorporated into the RFP and specific opportunities are under discussion with the Nations, and we continue to explore the opportunity for a site blessing. The project team continues to advance discussions with Esquimalt Nation to inform cultural recognition opportunities and provide project updates.

Following completion of the second phase of work, a period of site settlement will occur and full construction mobilization will take place in winter/spring 2022/23.

Public engagement has transitioned to the construction phase, and includes the introduction of an e-newsletter to continue to inform the community of activities on site on a timely basis and the creation of a 'Construction Activities' page on the website where traffic impacts and other construction related activities will occur. The project team continues to engage with the Neighbourhood Working Group and Streamkeepers, having recently conducted an on-site tour to demonstrate creek protection and erosion and sediment control measures planned and underway.

Planning is underway for a ground breaking ceremony in the near future.

New Operations Centre: Early project activities for a third conventional Operations and Maintenance (O&M) centre in the Victoria area are underway. A contract for a Public Engagement consultant has been awarded and an RFP for an Indigenous Relations consultant has closed and is in evaluation. Preparation on tendering for preliminary design has begun with the goal of posting in late Spring/early Summer 2022 with the intention of preparing a business case facilitating detailed land studies, design and an Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) funding request.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Transit Related Projects

MOTI is advancing transit infrastructure initiatives that supports the development of the Victoria Regional Transit System including:

- **Highway 14 Connie Rd to Glinz Lake Rd Realignment and Park & Ride** – The highway 14 realignment includes a new park & ride near Connie Rd and new transit stops with bus pullouts to improve safety and passenger amenities that are under construction.

PROJECTS IN PLANNING OR DEVELOPMENT

Uptown Mobility Hub Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan - BC Transit/MOTI/BCTFA have initiated a study with Perkins & Will (P&W) and Nelson & Nygaard for a preliminary concept design of a multi-modal hub with TOD potential. The objective is to establish an initial concept

design to advance to Saanich, CRD and MOTI for further concept development & discussion in the summer/fall of 2022. The study will provide high level concepts that address transit functional requirements alongside potential commercial development opportunities that can possibly be integrated into a Transit Exchange and TOD. The study will provide the information necessary to start a discussion within a greater sphere of stakeholders including Saanich and the CRD initially and may indicate whether or not to advance the project to the concept refinement phase. Future steps may include a further refinement of concepts based on MOTI's, Saanich's and CRD's inputs, refinement of scope, high level feasibility of whether there are reasonable housing or commercial opportunities, cost estimates, development proposal, traffic impact studies, stakeholder engagement and preparing a business case. The study should be completed in early 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission receive this report for **INFORMATION**.

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