

Victoria Regional Transit Commission

Chair and Members

February 22, 2022

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SUBJECT: Electronic Fare Collection System

PURPOSE

To provide the Commission with a summary report regarding the Electronic Fare Collection System project and solution. This report is presented to the Commission for **INFORMATION**.

BACKGROUND

On January 25, 2022, BC Transit announced its partnership with Cubic Transportation Systems Ltd. (“Cubic”) to introduce the Umo solution on buses throughout the province as part of the Electronic Fare Collection System (“EFCS”) project. The EFCS project has the goals of improving rider convenience, creating new data intelligence, optimizing fare administration, improving service reliability, enabling mobility partnerships, and ultimately increasing ridership, all of which will be made possible by the Umo solution.

DISCUSSION

Upon introduction, the Umo solution will enable customers to pay for their transit journeys through a variety of options. The Umo app will allow customers to create and manage an account, load a payment source, purchase fare products or load stored value, and validate their fares on the bus through the convenience of their mobile phone. Along with the fare payment functionality, the Umo app includes a variety of additional customer-centric features including trip planning, real-time bus location, customer alerts, rate your experience surveys, and a loyalty rewards program to incentivize increased transit ridership. Along with having these features, the Umo app has been designed as a multi-modal platform and will enable BC Transit to partner with other mobility providers in the future to offer a seamless mobility-as-a-service solution for BC Transit customers.

For customers not wanting or able to use the Umo app, a reloadable Near-Field Communication (“NFC”)-compliant card will be available for purchase and use. These cards will be made available through a retail vendor network and customers will be able to reuse the same card by either using the Umo web portal to purchase products or stored value or by returning to a retail vendor to reload it. Shortly following the introduction of the mobile app and reloadable smart cards, customers will also be able to purchase single rides and all-day passes by tapping their credit card, debit card and digital wallets when boarding the bus.

Onboard the bus, new fare validator hardware will be installed as part of the project to enable customers to pay for or validate their fare. These validators will be located near the existing farebox and are designed to provide both visual and audible cues for customers upon fare validation. While this technology is encouraging customers to transition away from the use of cash to pay for their fares, it is important to note that cash will continue to be accepted on buses for those riders that choose or need to use it.

Along with new customer-facing components, BC Transit will also be receiving considerable new functionality and data as part of the solution that will enable improved administration of fares and

programs and better insights on fare policy changes and opportunities for new products and programs. The tools available will provide more options and a better experience for administering fare programs such as U-Pass, ProPASS and subsidized special-audience programs and will enable BC Transit to effectively transition these legacy programs into the new environment. Along with this, BC Transit will now also be able to better understand the patterns of fare product purchase and use that will be used to inform recommendations to the Commission on further improvements to existing fare policies.

With the introduction of new payment technologies come new standards that BC Transit will adhere to with respects to the collection of customer payment details and personal information. In providing digital payment options, BC Transit will be required to comply with industry-standard Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI-DSS) that guide the appropriate safeguarding and use of transactional data. Along with preparing for this, BC Transit proactively ensured that the Umo solution adheres to provincial privacy and data security regulations and required that any data generated through the solution be solely stored within Canadian borders. From a technology standpoint, the Umo solution provides several privacy and data security features including encrypting and tokenizing all onboard fare purchases, limiting the personally identifiable information collected and anonymizing customer account details.

To support customers with the transition to the Umo solution and with ongoing issue resolution, BC Transit will be leveraging Cubic's experience with providing customer support services for the TransLink Compass program. Coinciding with the launch of the solution, a new Umo customer support centre and phone line will be established for customers to contact for any account support and issue resolution needs. This customer support centre will also provide support through the chat features available within the Umo app.

BC Transit has selected the Victoria Regional Transit System ("VRTS") for the project pilot and the first transit system to launch to solution to customers. The onboard validators are scheduled to start being installed on buses in the late summer and will be followed by a pilot of the mobile app and reloadable card components using BC Transit staff and selected additional audiences. Following a successful pilot window, the Umo app, reloadable cards and onboard validators will be made available for public use in the fall. Once the mobile app and reloadable card components are established, the focus will then shift towards piloting onboard credit card tap payments with the intent to make that functionality available to the public as soon as is reasonable. It is expected that onboard debit tap payments will then follow the introduction of onboard credit card tap payments.

To support customers' transition to the Umo solution, BC Transit will develop and execute a comprehensive marketing and engagement plan. This plan will focus on educating customers on their best option within the Umo solution and guide them towards transitioning from the existing fare products towards purchasing and using those products with either the mobile app, reloadable card or their credit and/or debit card. The engagement plan will utilize a variety of channels in order to reach the various customer audience types in the VRTS including digital and social media advertising, print advertising, interior bus cards, temporary bus stop signage, and direct mail campaigns along with in-person engagement throughout the region. In addition to this, efforts will be made to cater some engagements to specific audience types such as seniors and youth. Additional change management support will also be made available for programs such as U-Pass, ProPASS and other subsidized fare programs.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Victoria Regional Transit Commission **RECEIVE** this report on the Electronic Fare Collection System for **INFORMATION**.

Prepared by: Ryan Dennis

Phone: _____

Position: Program Manager, Electronic Fare Collection System

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