

---

**SUBJECT: SERVICE EXPANSION REQUEST**

**PURPOSE**

This report requests **APPROVAL** from the Victoria Regional Transit Commission (the “Commission”) to confirm expansion plans for 2022/23 transit service plan, and to plan service levels for following two years for budget purposes.

**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 and to allow BC Transit to request funding and resources to implement service expansion.

**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 show widespread support and reinforce the need for expanded transit service. Proposed service improvements are ranked using a range of criteria including population served, potential ridership and impact on service reliability.

BC Transit is actively working towards the goal of achieving a 100% zero emission fleet by 2040. The CNG transition is nearing the tail end of its investment activity, and planning for the next phase of battery electric bus deployments is well underway. In 2022 the first 10 heavy duty battery electric buses deployed in Victoria, with plans to begin purchasing only electric buses in all fleet classification by 2028. Electrification transition planning is also underway to identify the opportunities and constraints associated with a rollout across the province. A change of this magnitude to the provincial fleet will have a significant impact on business, and in particular, the 3 year expansion planning process.

One of the key challenges that BC Transit will face in the coming years will be a higher probability that demand for expansion vehicles will exceed the availability in select fleet categories. More advanced lead times will be required for procurement and delivery of buses, and bus orders will need to be strategically timed in order to align with our deployment plans. While every effort will be made to align bus orders with demand, some expansion initiatives may be impacted by the limited availability of certain vehicle types. Despite these challenges, BC Transit will continue to work with our local government partners to identify and develop expansion priorities, and to align our expansion initiatives with our overall fleet procurement plans.

Despite a reduction in ridership due to COVID-19, it is anticipated ridership will continue to increase and stabilize over time. BC Transit recommends pursuing 20,000 hours of expansion in 2022/23 to pursue key expansion priorities, accommodate ridership growth on higher performing

routes within the transit system, and to ensure a more comfortable and reliable journey for passengers post pandemic.

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 to request funding from the Province to implement service expansion.

**Expansion Initiatives Agreement**

Confirmation of expansion plans for 2022/23-2024/25 is required at this time to:

- Ensure expansion initiatives submit/ed by BC Transit as part of the provincial service planning process are aligned with the expectations of the Commission
- Attain a commitment from the Commission necessary for BC Transit to proceed with the procurement and management of resources necessary to implement any proposed expansion (bus purchases to support service expansion)
- Allow staff to develop the Three-Year Service and Financial Strategy for inclusion in the Commission’s annual budget presented in November.

PROPOSED EXPANSION INITIATIVES						
AOA Period	In Service	Annual Hours	Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Annual Revenue	Estimated Annual Total Costs	Estimated Annual Net Municipal Share
2022/23	January	20,000	0	\$390,600	\$2,320,000	\$1,193,960
		Description	Annual service increase.			
2023/24	September	20,000	0	\$502,200	\$2,420,000	\$1,150,660
		Description	Annual service increase.			
2024/25	September	20,000	6	\$595,200	\$2,974,563	\$1,574,183
		Description	Annual service increase.			

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Commission:

- a) **APPROVE** BC Transit to include 20,000 service hours as part of the provincial funding request to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for future service expansion.

Respectfully,

Lisa Trotter

Senior Manager, Government Relations