

Meeting notes of the Comox Valley Transit Management Advisory Committee held on April 23, 2020 in the Comox Valley Regional District Civic Room located at 770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC commencing at 10:00 am.

PRESENT:

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| M. Moore, Senior Regional Transit Manager | BC Transit |
| A. McMullen, Transportation Planner | BC Transit |
| J. Wadsworth, Manager of Project Development | BC Transit |
| E. Amador, Transit Planner | BC Transit |
| C. Davidson, Manager of Engineering Projects | City of Courtenay |
| C. Millar, Engineering Technologist | City of Courtenay |
| R. Crisfield, Manager of Operations | Village of Cumberland |
| D. Richards, General Manager | PWT |
| S. Smith, General Manager of Planning and Development Services | CVRD |
| M. Zbarsky, Manager of Transit and Sustainability | CVRD |
| S. Speed, Branch Assistant – Executive Management Branch | CVRD |

ITEMS

Management Report

The management report was reviewed.

Infrastructure Assessment Study

Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) staff explained there are now grants available for infrastructure funding and there's a need to firm up locations, designs and timelines for exchanges and transit priority measures. BC Transit (BCT) staff explained there is a desire to work with all Local Governments in the region and establish a working group with a Terms of Reference. Support from partner municipalities will be key to implement improved transit exchanges and priority measures. BCT will issue an Invitation to Quote to secure an engineering firm to complete a study.

5th Street Bridge Update

City of Courtenay (CoC) staff explained the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their budget approval process but they are still on track for construction to start in spring 2021. CVRD staff inquired if the busses will get priority to go over the bridge during construction and CoC staff confirmed this will be investigated during development of the traffic management plan to be provided to council for approval. The aim is to complete the plan in September 2020.

BC Transit Corporate Update

BC Transit updated on staffing changes.

COVID-19 Update

BC Transit has opened a corporate Emergency Operations Centre to help with enhancements and / or changes as needed. There is an enhanced cleaning level 2 of the busses and they are prepared to enhance further if required. Rear door loading is now required where possible with no fares being collected. The busses are running with a maximum capacity of 40% to allow for as much distancing as possible.

PWTransit Canada (PWT) staff explained the bus drivers are having to pass up riders once or twice a week due to the capacity limits and will provide a list of pass-ups to BCT.

BCT reviewed ridership, compared 2019 to 2020 and explained some routes have decreased more than others. Route 1 is still experiencing the majority of system ridership. BCT noted that ridership during peak times may be down due to people avoiding crowds and choosing to travel at other times.

CVRD staff noted there is approximately \$70,000 in lost revenue per month.

Fare Change Update

The April 1st fare change has been deferred until further notice.

Service Level Reductions

CVRD staff explained the summer transit schedule is currently in place and there is consideration to make further reductions to help with lost revenue.

The committee discussed reduction options including moving to a modified Saturday schedule. There were some concerns regarding the timing of changes and impacts on riders' schedules. BCT staff are looking into possible financial relief from the Province.

Committee members can provide feedback to Mike next week.

Special Event Service Update

Special events have been cancelled until further notice. No special transit service is being considered at this time. TMAC will monitor.

September Expansion

BCT staff advised the 2020/2021 fiscal year expansion has been deferred.

Transit Improvement Plan (TIPS) Update

BCT explained that TIPS will move into year one in 2021 and it may need to be modified or not executed at all. It was agreed there is a need for further discussions.

The Committee discussed the possibility of the transit expansion hours for 2020 and 2021 be used towards the 5th Bridge project then expansion hours in 2022 can be used for a improvements at that time.

BCT staff hope to complete draft updated plan and provide to the CVRD in June.

2020/21 Annual Operating Agreement

BCT advised the agreement was drafted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and does not reflect reality at this time. The draft will be sent to Mike next week and can be amended to reflect reality by the end of June.

Transit Future Action Plan (TFAP) Update

BCT advised public engagement will not be happening at this time and they have been working on more robust online engagement tools to broaden the ability for people to have their say.

BCT advised that the TFAP will include a chapter on COVID-19 response and ridership recovery that will capture different scenarios for each system and recommended responses.

The timing of the TFAP is unknown at this time as a result of the current situation.

Part B

Stakeholder Service /Project Updates

Village of Cumberland is moving forward with a portion of capital projects including upgrades on Windermere.

BCT staff request that if possible, try to advance any projects while traffic is lower.

CoC staff advised Veterans Memorial Parkway will be receiving a second lift of asphalt. Work will commence possibly May.

The committee discussed issues at the intersection at 5th Street and Cliffe Avenue and PWT highlighted some safety concerns. These will be provided to the CVRD and City of Courtenay at a later date.

Next Meeting

The next Transit Management Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for May 21st commencing at 10:30 a.m. in the CVRD Civic Room.

The meeting terminated at 11:45 am.

Recorded By:

S. Speed

S. Speed
Branch Assistant – Executive
Management Branch

Confirmed:

M. Zbarsky

M. Zbarsky
Manager of Transit and Sustainability