

Meeting notes of the Comox Valley Transit Management Advisory Committee held on April 28, 2021 via Zoom, commencing at 10:00 am.

## **PRESENT:**

M. Moore, Senior Regional Transit Manager	BC Transit
E. Amador, Transit Planner	BC Transit
J. Wadsworth, Project Development Manager	BC Transit
R. Heart, Regional Transit Manager	BC Transit
S. Ashfield, Director of Operations	Town of Comox
R. Crisfield, Manager of Operations	Village of Cumberland
D. Richards, General Manager	PWT
M. Zbarsky, Manager of Transit and Sustainability	CVRD
S. Speed, Branch Assistant – Executive Management Branch	CVRD

## **ITEMS**

### **BC Transit Corporate Update**

BC Transit (BCT) staff explained that the provincial budget has been announced and this will allow for the maintenance of core service levels across the province and the implementation of expansion plans for 16 systems including the Comox Valley. Service planning for the 3000 and 600 hour expansions can now commence with a target timeline of July for final decisions on service changes.

BCT staff provided updates as follows:

- The Province is interested in a youth, 12 and under ride free campaign with a fall implementation. More information will be provided as it becomes available.
- The Annual Operating Agreement will be provided this week to Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) staff for approval by the end of June.
- June 9<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 to Noon is the BCT virtual annual workshop/update. Invitation will be sent out prior to the date.
- Digital on Demand Program will be piloted in Kelowna and Cranbrook. There has been an RFP issued for a consultant to prepare a feasibility study and develop the pilot. More information will follow after the study has been completed.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Update**

PWT staff explained that the transition into the project has been smooth. There are flaggers in place but the bridge hasn't been reduced to one lane yet. The bus schedule seems to be successful so far but traffic congestion has not occurred yet as result of the lane closure being delayed.

### **Stat Holiday Service**

CVRD staff noted that the Victoria Day long weekend special service to Cumberland has been cancelled due to the uncertainty around the pandemic. The committee discussed Canada Day and BC Day holiday events and there are none planned for this year in Cumberland and Comox. The group discussed offering special transit service levels on these holidays, instead of no service, and agreed there will be a Saturday level service provided.

### **Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility Update**

BCT staff provided an update on the facility study and explained there is \$50,000 available to complete it. The study will cover all questions typically raised by boards and councils and should be completed by the end of 2021.

The group discussed the possibilities of co-purchasing a property i.e. transit and a municipal public works. CVRD staff requested that if committee members are interested in this or if they know of land that their municipality would like developed as industrial to keep the facility in mind and let Mike know.

### **Transit Infrastructure Study Draft Final Report and Staff Report**

CVRD staff explained the staff report and the infrastructure study draft final report will be going to the board in May. CVRD staff are reaching out to municipalities to appear as a delegation at council meetings. CVRD is seeking approval in principle of the contents of the report. This will enable moving forward with grant applications and planning. Next steps would be to seek approval of final plans and costs.

The committee discussed the bus exchange on Comox Avenue and Town of Comox (ToC) staff voiced concerns regarding losing parking spots. ToC staff also shared their concerns regarding proposed traffic lights or four way stop on Port Augusta and BCT staff explained they're not moving forward with anything at that intersection. It was agreed to change the wording in the report to say the project was looked at but not warranted. CVRD also confirmed that the parking spot issue would be reviewed further prior to presenting to council.

The report will be brought to the board in May and councils in June/July.

### **TIPS Expansion Update**

BCT staff explained the TIPS letter will be sent a bit late this year and they will be putting a modified TIPS process and timeline together, likely by late spring/early summer. BCT staff explained that the next TIPS letter will move beyond the already approved 3,000 and 600 hour expansions and focus on the 2022-2025. Recent direction from the provincial budget this year is that there may not be any funding for expansions in future years. BCT indicated this was something that was reviewed annually and would consider any interest from local government partners in further expansions.

### **600 Hour Paratransit Expansion Service Planning**

CVRD staff explained this was a service request along Back Road from K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) and was supported by the board. There are plans to consult with KFN to explore what they need.

BCT staff clarified that the hours allocated are able to provide limited service and that next steps are to engage KFN, finalize options, complete detailed planning and scheduling and finalize in July.

### **System Performance Review**

BCT staff provided a presentation on a draft system performance review and highlighted ridership, revenue and cost recovery. This review will be included in the Transit Future Action Plan later this fall once completed.

### **Stakeholder Service/Project Updates**

ToC staff highlighted the upcoming regional sewer pipeline project that will have a large impact on transit. There will be a need for a transportation plan.

Cumberland – development on 7<sup>th</sup> Street and apartments being built on Dunsmuir.

**Next Meeting**

The next transit management advisory committee meeting is scheduled for June 10, 2021 commencing at 10:00 am via Zoom.

The meeting terminated at 11:55 am.

Recorded By:

S. Speed  
Branch Assistant – Executive  
Management Branch

Confirmed:

M. Zbarsky  
Manager of Transit and Sustainability