

DATE: July 20, 2021

FILE: 8500-20

TO: Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Comox Valley Transit Service Improvements

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek direction from the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board on a previously approved transit service expansion for implementation in March 2022.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District Board approve 3,600 additional transit service hours to be utilized for improvements on routes No. 1, 10 and 12 and the introduction of a Back Road service, with an implementation target of March 2022, as described in this report dated July 20, 2021.

Executive Summary

As part of BC Transit's annual Transit Improvement Program (TIP), at the January 12, 2021 meeting, the CVRD Board approved an expansion of 3,600 service hours for the Comox Valley Regional Transit system. This included 3,000 service hours for the conventional transit service to be initially used to maintain service during the Fifth Street Bridge rehabilitation project, and subsequently used for increased frequency on route No. 1 or as directed by the board. It also included a 600 service hour expansion to be used to address service gaps in the Back Road area.

The service change for the Fifth Street bridge project has been implemented and has been effective at maintaining service levels in the midst of traffic impacts associated with the construction. As part of the traffic management plan for this project, priority lanes for use by public transit vehicles have been included and are working extremely well to keep the transit system moving. These priority measures are identified in the recent Comox Valley Transit Infrastructure Study and will be an important way of reducing ongoing operating costs as well as making transit a more attractive mode of transportation. Should the existing priority lanes east of the bridge remain in place after the rehabilitation project is complete, it is estimated that they would save approximately \$250,000 per year in operating costs. CVRD and City of Courtenay staff are working together to explore whether these priority lanes can remain after the rehabilitation project is completed.

BC Transit and CVRD have been working on the service planning details for when the bridge project is complete. Service will initially resort back to the schedule that was in place prior to the bridge construction. In March 2022 the 3,600 additional service hours could be implemented as follows:

- Route No. 1 Anfield Centre/Comox Mall – This is the most utilized transit route in the system and travels through the highest density areas within the community. This route carries the majority of ridership in the system. Over the past few years the traffic congestion

along this route has increased to the point where it is impacting transit trips by up to several minutes per trip. This trip delay reduces the on-time performance of the system and adds time to each trip, both of which are highly undesirable to customers. Some of the expansion hours would be used to address these delays and some will be invested to further improve the frequency with three additional round trips per weekday. It should be noted that the Comox Valley Transit Infrastructure Study also recommends transit priority infrastructure that will reduce the impact of traffic congestion on the transit service.

- Route No. 10 Fanny Bay and No. 12 Oyster River – The schedules for these routes currently have large gaps during the day where there are no trips available. One additional round trip per weekday will be added to each of the No. 10 Fanny Bay and No. 12 Oyster River to fill these gaps in service.
- Back Road Service – CVRD and BC Transit have been working with staff from K’ómoks First Nation (KFN) to understand their transit needs. A survey has been circulated to KFN members and once the results have been reviewed, the schedule and routing will be finalized. Tentatively the route will run along Back Road from Comox Mall to Ryan Road with three round trips per day every weekday or more trips per day with reduced days of the week.

Prepared by:

Concurrence:

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Government Partners and Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

TMAC	✓
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