

DATE: July 4, 2017

FILE: 8500-20/CV

TO: Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

RE: Service Changes for the Comox Valley Transit System

Purpose

To seek board direction on service changes for the Comox Valley transit system.

Policy analysis

At the November 13, 2014 meeting of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) board the following motion was carried:

THAT the Comox Valley 25-year transit future plan, 2014 as attached to the staff report dated October 29, 2014 be approved.

At the June 28, 2016 meeting of the CVRD board the following motions were carried:

THAT the HandyDART system within the electoral areas be expanded by 900 hours per year at the estimated annual cost of \$40,000, to be implemented in September 2017.

THAT BC Transit be advised the Comox Valley Regional District wishes to review and consider the following reports being completed by BC Transit:

- a) Frequent transit corridor study to be completed by October 2016;
- b) Fare review to be completed by January 2017; and
- c) Service discussion document to be completed by January 2017;

prior to providing a firm commitment to expansion of the conventional transit system as follows:

- 4,000 hours in 2018, and
- 2,000 hours in 2019;

AND FURTHER THAT BC Transit be advised that the Comox Valley Regional District wishes to retain the opportunity for cost sharing with the provincial government for expanded service hours in 2018 and 2019;

AND FINALLY THAT the Comox Valley Regional District will confirm with BC Transit the cost share commitment of future expansion hours for 2018 by May 31st, 2017 and for 2019 by May 31st, 2018 in order for BC Transit to secure the appropriate fleet levels to meet the Comox Valley service needs.

Executive summary

As transit service expansions are cost shared between the CVRD and the province, BC Transit has requested confirmation (appendix A) from CVRD on our intentions with respect to expansion. The service discussion document prepared by BC Transit and attached in appendix B provides details on a proposed 4,000 hour expansion for 2018 (identified as the preferred option B1). This includes a

significant next phase of the frequent transit network (FTN) which is the primary improvement identified in the transit future plan (TFP). The FTN would see 15-20 minute frequency between downtown Comox, North Island College, downtown Courtenay and the Driftwood Mall/Anfield Centre areas. This improvement would carry the majority of the transit system's total ridership and result in significant ridership increases (estimated to be up to 100,000/year). At the same time, the FTN expansion would trigger a significant restructuring and improvement of other local routes to integrate with the FTN and to address system needs identified by BC Transit, the Dantec analysis and customers. The 4,000 hour expansion would cost the CVRD approximately \$234,197 net of revenues from bus fares. While not detailed in the service discussion document, the proposed 2,000 hour 2019 expansion would be used to implement the remainder of the TFP short term priorities.

An important issue to address prior to determining any service expansion is with regards to how to service the new Comox Valley hospital. BC Transit and the Dantec analysis recommend that conventional service stay on Lerwick Road rather than route through the hospital parking lot primarily due to the additional time that would be added to each trip (up to six minutes) as well as operational issues. The additional trip time totals 650 hours per year for the #6 and #12 routes that currently travel on Lerwick Road to the new hospital (equivalent to approximately \$50,000 for CVRD share). The conventional transit service currently uses bus stops on Lerwick Road approximately 300 meters from the front door of the new hospital and BC Transit has identified new locations which would be approximately 100 meters away. The HandyDART service will provide door-to-door pickup/drop off for people with disabilities wanting to visit the hospital.

The Comox Valley TFP has a mode share target of three per cent by 2038 and the transit service will need to attract new riders to the system in order to achieve this. Direct, higher frequency service is the number one request from both existing and potential transit riders and the 4,000 hour expansion is a key step toward this. As such, staff are recommending that CVRD pursue the 4,000 hour expansion at this time. Routing the buses through the hospital parking lot is undesirable to the majority of current and future bus riders and will decrease system ridership.

In addition to the proposed expansion, BC Transit has recommended that current community bus service in the Cape Lazo/Point Holmes and Huband Road/Seal Bay be discontinued from service. These services have historically had extremely low ridership and there has been no usage for several months.

Recommendations from the Chief Administrative Officer:

1. THAT the conventional transit service be expanded by 4,000 hours per year, as described as option B1 in the BC Transit service discussion document, to be implemented in September 2018.
2. THAT the conventional transit service routes that travel to the new Comox Valley hospital remain on Lerwick Road rather than routing through the hospital parking lot.
3. THAT the Cape Lazo/Point Holmes (route 21) and Huband Road/Seal Bay (route 22) community bus service areas be discontinued from service starting in September 2017.

Respectfully:

R. Dyson

Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Background/current situation

The Comox Valley TFP identifies a number of short term improvements including some that will require an expansion of service levels. Some of the short term priorities were implemented in January 2015 including phase 1 of the frequent transit network (#34 C2C Express) and improved routing of the #12 North Valley Connector and #2 Cumberland. As transit service expansions are cost shared between the CVRD and the province, BC Transit has requested confirmation from CVRD on our intentions with respect to expansion.

A similar request was made in 2016 whereby BC Transit proposed 6,900 hours of service expansion and the CVRD board supported only a 900 hour expansion for a rural community shuttle service (currently planned for implementation in September 2017). The board advised BC Transit that it wished to retain the opportunity to cost share in the other expansion hours but that it wanted to review various transit planning initiatives prior to providing a firm commitment. A description of these initiatives and their status is provide below:

- Frequent Transit Corridor Study
 - Completed and presented to board in March 2017
 - Identifies preferred corridors for high frequency transit
 - Identifies new transit exchange locations and transit priority infrastructure
 - To be used as a guide in future transit service and infrastructure planning
- Service Discussion Documents
 - Completed and to be presented by BC Transit at part of this report.
 - Provides information for CVRD decisions regarding transit expansion and routing options.
- Fare Review
 - Initiated by BC Transit and expected to be complete summer of 2017
 - Target fare change in 2018

Proposed Expansion

The service discussion document prepared by BC Transit and attached in appendix B provides details on the proposed 4,000 hour expansion (identified as the preferred option B1). This includes a significant next phase of the FTN which is the primary improvement identified in the transit future plan. The FTN would see increased frequency between downtown Comox, North Island College, downtown Courtenay and the Driftwood Mall/Anfield Centre areas. As a result of the 4,000 hour expansion, frequency would be 15-20 minutes during peak times and this improvement would carry the majority of the transit system's total ridership and result in significant ridership increases (estimated to be up to 100,000/year). At the same time, the FTN expansion would trigger a significant restructuring and improvement of local routes such as the #2, 3, 7, 8 and 10 to integrate with the FTN and to address system needs identified by BC Transit, the Dantec analysis and customers. A new route #9 would also be added to service the Lake Trail, Arden and Cousins corridors. In addition to the 4,000 expansion hours these changes would require reallocation of 16,200 existing service hours from routes #1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 34.

While not detailed in the service discussion document, the proposed 2,000 hour 2019 expansion would be used to implement the remainder of the TFP short term priorities including increased frequency on the #12 North Valley Connector and #7 Arden as well as increased span and frequency of the #6 Uplands.

Table 1 below summarizes the conventional service expansions included in the BC Transit request. No HandyDART expansions are currently identified.

Table 1

Implementation	Service Hours	CVRD Annual Cost*	Additional Vehicles
2018	4,000	\$234,197	2
2019	2,000	\$102,139	1

* Costs are inclusive of additional vehicles and net of revenue. Costs based on 12 months and would be less for the first year based on the implementation dates.

An important issue to address prior to determining any service expansion is with regards to how to service the new Comox Valley hospital. In October 2013 the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee sent a letter to the CVRD chair and board and City of Courtenay council expressing concern that the new hospital was not planning to accommodate transit on their site. The board chair responded by letter and indicated that CVRD and BC Transit had met with Island Health to discuss transit at the new hospital, that HandyDART would travel directly onto the hospital site but that it was undesirable to route large conventional transit buses onsite. CVRD's response also noted that a new transit exchange central to the hospital, aquatic centre and NIC was envisioned (this is also the recommendation from the recent FTN Corridor Study). The City of Courtenay council also responded to the accessibility committee letter and at their November 18, 2013 meeting carried a motion that Council write to BC Transit to advocate for a bus stop immediately adjacent to the hospital entrance.

BC Transit has reviewed this request and recommends that conventional service stay on Lerwick Road rather than route through the hospital parking lot primarily due to the additional time that would be added to each trip (up to six minutes) as well as operational issues. The additional trip time totals 650 hours per year for the #6 and #12 routes that currently travel on Lerwick Road to the new hospital (equivalent to approximately \$50,000 for CVRD share). The conventional transit service currently uses bus stops on Lerwick Road approximately 300 meters from the front door of the new hospital and BC Transit has identified new locations which would be approximately 100 meters away. The Dantec Transit Service Analysis recommends that conventional transit not enter the hospital parking lot and that it should service bus stops on Lerwick road. The HandyDART service will provide door-to-door pickup/drop off for people with disabilities wanting to visit the hospital.

Should the CVRD wish to direct service through the hospital site, the BC Transit service discussion document identifies how to accommodate this in a no-expansion scenario as well as with expansion hours. In the first case, where expansion is not supported by CVRD, the 650 hours would need to be reallocated from elsewhere in the system by cutting the #1 Fitzgerald completely and parts of route #7 Arden and #8 Willemar as well as changes to the transit schedule throughout (described as option A in service discussion document). Alternatively, should CVRD approve the 4,000 hour expansion, 650 of these hours would be used to route through the hospital site (option B2) resulting in less service being added on other routes, including the frequent transit network.

The Comox Valley TFP has a mode share target of three per cent by 2038 (currently approximately one percent) and the transit service will need to attract new riders to the system in order to achieve this. Direct, higher frequency service is the number one request from both existing and potential transit riders. The 4,000 hour expansion is a key step toward increasing ridership as further implementation of the FTN will provide much more direct and frequent service to the highest density areas of the Comox Valley. In addition to increasing ridership the FTN will also improve

accessibility, encourage active transportation, improve air quality as well as reduce traffic congestion and associated capital road work costs. Routing the buses through the hospital site will reduce the benefits of the expansion, or should no expansion be supported, would result in a decrease to ridership.

Community Bus

In addition to the proposed expansion BC Transit has recommended that current community bus service in the Cape Lazo/Point Holmes (route 21) and Huband Road/Seal Bay (route 22) be discontinued from service. These bus routes provide door-door service within specified areas not currently serviced by conventional service (appendix C). Residents in those areas must book a trip ahead of time and will be brought into a connection point with the conventional service. These services have historically had extremely low ridership and there has been no bookings for several months. The service hours allocated for these areas are currently being used for providing additional HandyDART service. It is recommended to make this service change for September 2017 which coincides with the introduction of the two new rural community shuttle routes (#13 Merville-Seal Bay and #14 Union Bay).

Options

The board has the following options:

1. Approve the request for the 4,000 hour expansion in 2018 as described in the service discussion document as option B1.
2. Approve a different option from the service discussion document.
3. Direct staff to work with BC Transit to identify alternative options not currently included in the service discussion document.

Staff are recommending option 1 as implementing the next phase of the FTN is key to working toward the transit future plan goals and targets. Decisions about the additional 2,000 hour expansion should be put off until the results of the 4,000 hour expansion are clear.

Financial factors

The CVRD has been requested to provide a commitment to expansion in order for BC Transit to secure the provincial share of funding and to secure new buses in time for service implementation. Should the board support the expansion, the CVRD share of funding will be included in the 2018 - 2022 budget as part of the upcoming financial planning process.

The 4,000 hour expansion would cost approximately \$455,289 in total with CVRD's share coming in at approximately \$279,231. CVRD would receive 100% of the revenue from this expansion, estimated at \$45,034, to help cover the increased operating costs with the remainder (\$234,197) required to be covered by an increase to requisition.

The current financial plan includes a budget of \$2,665,593 for 2018 with the estimated tax rate at \$0.1280 per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$44.80 for a \$350,000 home). The target date for implementation of the 4,000 hour expansion is currently September 2018. Due to the fact that implementation would occur later in the year, CVRD's share for 2018 would be only \$92,983 and after revenue is accounted for the requisition increase would be \$77,987 which equates to an approximate tax rate increase of \$0.0058 per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$2.03 for a \$350,000 home).

The tax rate increase in 2019, the first full year of operating costs, would be approximately \$0.0191 per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$6.68 for a \$350,000 home) bringing the overall tax rate to \$0.1529 per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$53.52 for a \$350,000 home).

It should be noted that if the CVRD chooses to retract its commitment at a later date, BC Transit will continue to bill the CVRD for the additional bus lease fees.

Legal factors

The annual operating agreement between BC Transit and the CVRD stipulates responsibilities of each partner. The CVRD is solely responsible for decisions on service levels and fares.

Regional growth strategy implications

The provision of effective public transit within the Comox Valley has been identified in the regional growth strategy (RGS) as key to reducing the environmental impact of new and existing development, providing a reliable alternative to the use of private automobiles, and providing measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The RGS includes policies and targets aimed at densifying growth, jobs and schools in core settlement areas around transit corridors, increasing transit mode share and increasing transit service frequency.

Intergovernmental factors

Transit Management Advisory Committee members are supportive of the proposed expansions. Representatives from the City of Courtenay expressed concern with the recommendation to not route the bus through the hospital parking lot as it did not address the city council's request. Staff from the CVRD and BC Transit will work closely with municipal staff to develop the service improvements.

Interdepartmental involvement

The service improvements and fare structure updates will be led by staff from the community services branch with assistance from other departments including financial services and corporate services.

Citizen/public relations

Public transit is important to the community and forms the primary transportation mode for many residents with the majority of riders being adults followed by students, persons with disabilities and then seniors.

The public were heavily involved in the creation of the transit future plan including over 2,000 attendees to the transit future bus events throughout the community. The priorities included in the report reflect the desires of the public and will provide a transit system that will benefit all members of the community.

Prepared by:

M. Zbarsky

Michael Zbarsky, B.Sc. AScT
Manager of Transit and Sustainability

Concurrence:

J. Zbinden

Jennifer Zbinden
Acting General Manager of Community
Services

Attachments: Appendix A – “BC Transit Letter Dated June 29, 2017”
Appendix B – “BC Transit Service Discussion Document”
Appendix C – “Bus Route Maps”



June 29, 2017

Attn: Michael Zbarsky, Manager of Transit and Sustainability
Comox Valley Regional District
600 Comox Road
Courtenay, BC
V9N 3P6t

Re: 3 Year Expansion Initiatives

Dear Mike,

As your transit system has service initiatives requiring expansion funding, we have attached a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the process of securing provincial funding on your behalf. This MOU summarizes specific initiatives for the subsequent three operating years of 2018-2019 through to 2020-2021. These initiatives are derived from recommendations outlined in the most recent service plan(s) received by your council/board and validated in collaboration with local government staff.

Expansion initiatives are an important component to sustaining and growing a successful transit system. This investment in your transit system comes with several considerations. To support council/board decision making, we have provided order-of-magnitude costing for each initiative based on the estimated annual expansion hours required. Where proposed expansion is dependent on other infrastructure investment, this dependency will be noted in the proposed expansion initiatives table. If your expansion requires additional vehicles, this is identified and is factored into your estimated total costs. Please keep in mind that should funding be secured to support your expansion initiative and you determine that expansion is no longer desired, the lease fees related to the new buses will still be added to your operating budget for a minimum of a one year period.

By communicating proposed expansion initiatives as far in advance as possible we are trying to achieve three important goals:

1. Ensure 3 year expansion initiatives are aligned with the expectations of local governments
2. Attain a commitment from local governments that allow BC Transit to proceed with the procurement and management of resources necessary to implement transit service expansions
3. Provide local government partners with enhanced 3 year forecasts that identify longer term funding requirements.

Upon confirmation of your council/board's commitment to the expansion initiatives, we will include your request in BC Transit's draft Service Plan to the Province to seek the matching funding required for operating and capital costs. If your proposed expansion requires additional vehicles in 2018-2019, a commitment from your Board is required by end of July 2017 to ensure sufficient time for BC Transit included your requirements in our procurement process. It is important to note that in the event expansion requests exceed the available funding, a prioritization process is used known as the Transit Enhancement Process.

Following confirmation of the provincial budget, I will confirm with you if sufficient funding is available and initiate an implementation plan, including the development of more detailed costing based on routing and schedules. I look forward to working with you on the continued improvement of your transit service and encourage you to contact me if you have any questions regarding these proposed expansion initiatives.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Myrna Moore
Senior Regional Transit Manager
BC Transit

Expansion Memorandum of Understanding

Date	June 29, 2017
Expiry	July 30, 2017
System	Comox Valley Regional District

Expansion Initiatives Agreement

The following outlines expansion initiatives identified for your transit system along with a high level annual costing based on the hourly rates of your system. Please confirm these initiatives are aligned with the expectations of your local government. Upon confirmation of your local government's intent to commit to the expansion and budget, we will proceed with the request to secure funding from the Province on your behalf.

PROPOSED EXPANSION INITIATIVES						
AOA Period	In Service Date	Annual Hours	Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Annual Revenue	Estimated Annual Total Costs	Estimated Annual Net Municipal Share
2018/19	Sept-18	4,000	2	\$45,034	\$450,298	\$229,206
		Description	TFP recommendation: Ridership estimate: 60,000 rides Development of the Frequent Transit Network. These proposed service expansions require expansion of the primary downtown Courtenay Exchange and improvements to the North Island College and Driftwood Mall/Anfield Centre secondary exchanges			
2019/20	April -19	2,000	1	\$38,814	\$232,505	\$102,139
		Description	TFP Recommendations: Ridership estimate: 24,000 rides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Structure and Frequency to the Route 12 North Valley Connector • Improved Structure and Frequency to the Route 7 Arden Expansion of services to Route 6 Uplands			
2020/21						
		Description	No Expansion			

PROPOSED PARATRANSIT EXPANSION INITIATIVES

AOA Period	In Service Date	Annual Hours	Vehicle Requirements	Estimated Annual Revenue	Estimated Annual Total Costs	Estimated Annual Net Municipal Share
2018/19						
		Description	No Expansion			
2019/20						
		Description	No Expansion			
2020/21						
		Description	No Expansion			

Approval

On behalf of the Comox Valley Regional District, I am confirming to BC Transit to proceed with the request for funding to the province on our behalf and that we are committed to budget accordingly as per the advice provided and with the knowledge a more detailed budget will follow as service details are confirmed.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

On behalf of BC Transit, prepared by



Signature:

Date: June 29, 2017

Name: Myrna Moore

Position: Senior Regional Transit Manager



June 2, 2017

Michael Zbarsky
Manager of Transit and Sustainability
Comox Valley Regional District
600 Comox Road
Courtenay, BC, V9N 3P6

Dear Mr. Zbarsky:

RE: Service Discussion Document

1.0 PURPOSE

To provide the Comox Valley Regional District with information to guide decision-making around the 2017/18 Transit Improvement Process (TIPs) and changes to the conventional transit system for April 2018.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO SERVICE EXPANSION REQUEST

Expansion Process

In May every year, the Comox Valley Regional District has the opportunity to review its three-year transit expansion initiatives through BC Transit's Transit Improvement Plan (TIPs) process. The TIPs process includes the signing of an Expansion Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which formalizes the process of securing expansion funding for the following year.

For the April 2018 conventional transit system service change process, once the Expansion MOU is signed:

- work can begin in support of the April 2018 Implementation Plan (including public consultation); and
- the expansion requests can be included in BC Transit's draft Service Plan to the Province (early the following year) to seek the matching Provincial funding needed for the expansion operating costs.

Following confirmation of the provincial budget in February of the following year, the Comox Valley Regional District would be informed of allowable funding by BC Transit, which will initiate the finalization of the Implementation Plan and Implementation MOU for the April 2018 service change. The details of this process are outlined within the Next Steps section of this report.

Expansion Funding Background

In last year's TIPs process, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) board carried a motion requesting that BC Transit retain the cost sharing opportunity for:

- 4,000 additional service hours and two expansion buses for 2018/19 to develop the Frequent Transit Network; and
- 2,000 service hours and one expansion bus for 2019/20 to further improve the transit system (see Appendix A).

In that motion, the CVRD Board identified several transit service planning initiatives that it wanted to review and consider before committing to the 4000 service hour expansion for 2018/19 (Table 1)¹.

Table 1 – CVRD Board Requirements

Deliverable	Completion Date
Frequent Transit Corridor Study	February, 2017
This Service Discussion Document ²	May, 2017
Fare Review	Currently underway

For 2018/19, the proposed transit system improvements included in the 4000 hour expansion (planned for April 2018) is outlined below:

- implement the Frequent Transit Network;
- improve and restructure local routes around the Frequent Transit Network; and
- implement Clockface Headways where feasible.

These expansion initiatives were identified as priorities within the 2014 Comox Valley Transit Future Plan, the Dantec Transit Service Analysis Report, and through the Transit Management Advisory Committee (TMAC).

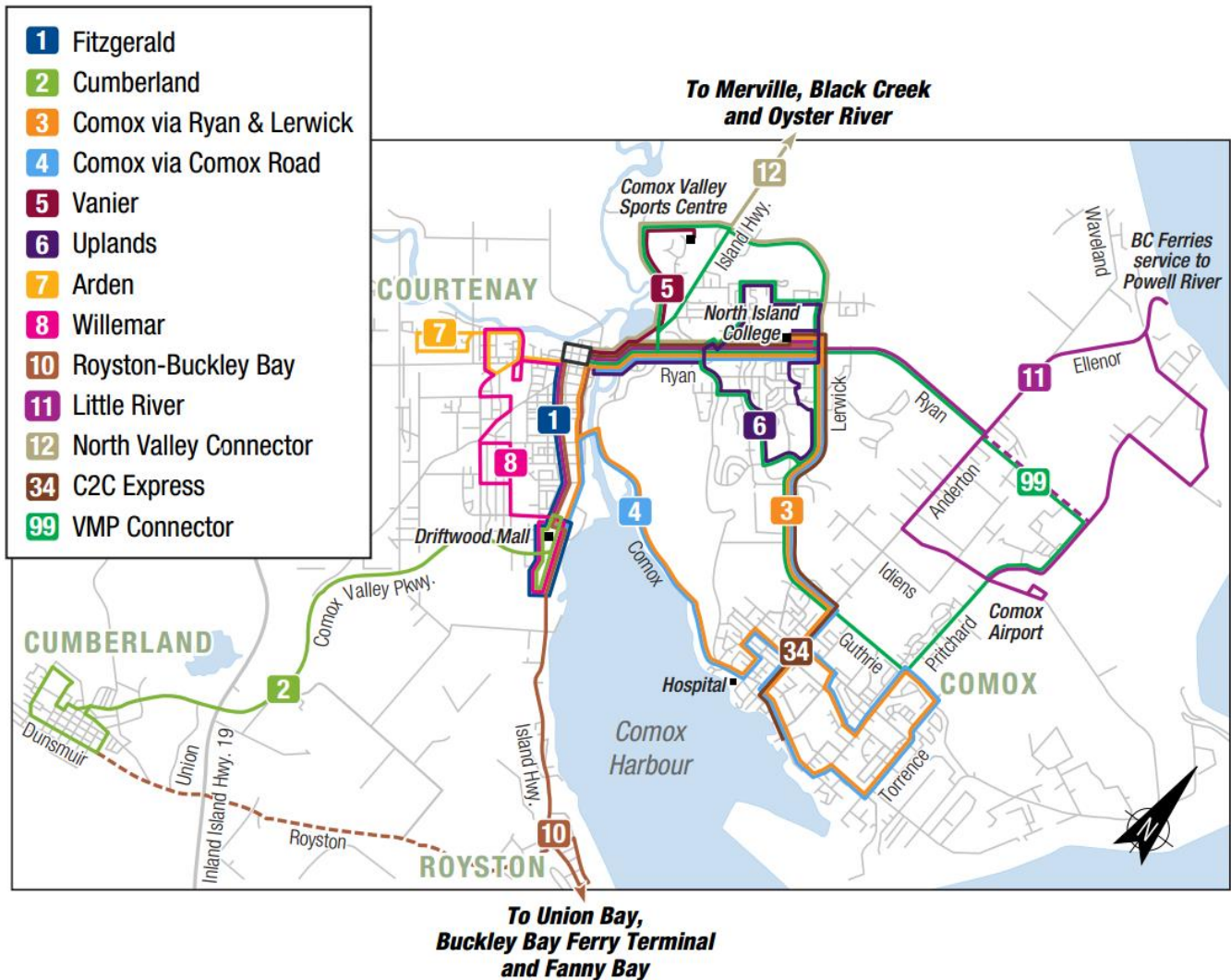
¹ See Appendix B for additional details on the CVRD Board requests

² Includes a plan to implement the Frequent Transit Network expansion, reorganize route structure (including clock face headways), identify options for serving the new hospital, and to address on time performance issues.

Current Transit System

The Comox Valley Transit System was inaugurated in 1990, with ridership growing from 271,500 in 2003 to 585,800 in 2016. The Comox Valley Transit System is a regional system comprised of 13 routes (Figure 1), and operates seven days a week with the exception of handyDART service which operates from Monday to Friday.

Figure 1: Comox Valley Transit System



3.0 Conventional Service Options (April 2018 Implementation)

In consultation with TMAC, four conventional service options (Status Quo [SQ], A, B1, and B2) were developed for consideration as a result of the CVRD Board's stated interest in the conventional service expansion option identified for 2018/19. These options vary regarding the level of expansion required, the impact to the transit system, and the service approach for the North Island Hospital. Before outlining these four conventional service options, this report considers some of the key conventional service priorities for the Comox Valley Transit System, where those priorities originated from, and which conventional service options address each priority.

Conventional Transit Service Priorities

There are multiple conventional transit service priorities that have been identified through planning processes in the Comox Valley including the Comox Valley Transit Future Plan, the Dantec Transit Service Analysis Report, discussions at the Transit Management Advisory Committee, and other sources (Table 2). Although all four service options provide varying levels of access to the North Island Hospital, options B1 and B2 also meet multiple other conventional service priorities.

Table 2 – Conventional Transit Service Priorities in the Comox Valley

Service	Origin of Service Priority	Service Options			
		SQ	A	B1	B2
Frequent Transit Network	Transit Future Plan, Dantec Report			XX	X
Clockface Headways	Dantec Report, Transit Future Plan			X	X
Route 7 and 8 Structure and Frequency Improvements	Transit Future Plan, Dantec Report, TMAC			X	X
Route 7 and 9 Sunday service	Transit Future Plan			X	
Comox Local Service Improvements (Service along Beaufort Avenue ³)	Transit Future Plan, TMAC			X	X
Reducing Large One-Way Loops	Dantec Report			X	X
North Island Hospital Service	Courtenay, Comox Valley Accessibility Committee	X	X	X	X
Route 6 Service Span Improvements	Transit Future Plan				
Route 12 Frequency Improvements	Transit Future Plan				
Route 2 Frequency Improvements	Transit Future Plan				

³ As per community request, service along Beaufort Avenue would provide direct access to several key destinations in Comox including the library, city hall, seniors facilities etc.

Frequent Transit Network

Phase 2 of the Frequent Transit Network involves further developing the spine of the Comox Valley Transit Network connecting the key destinations within the Comox Valley including Anfield Centre, Driftwood Mall, Downtown Courtenay, North Island College and Hospital, and Downtown Comox (Figure 2).

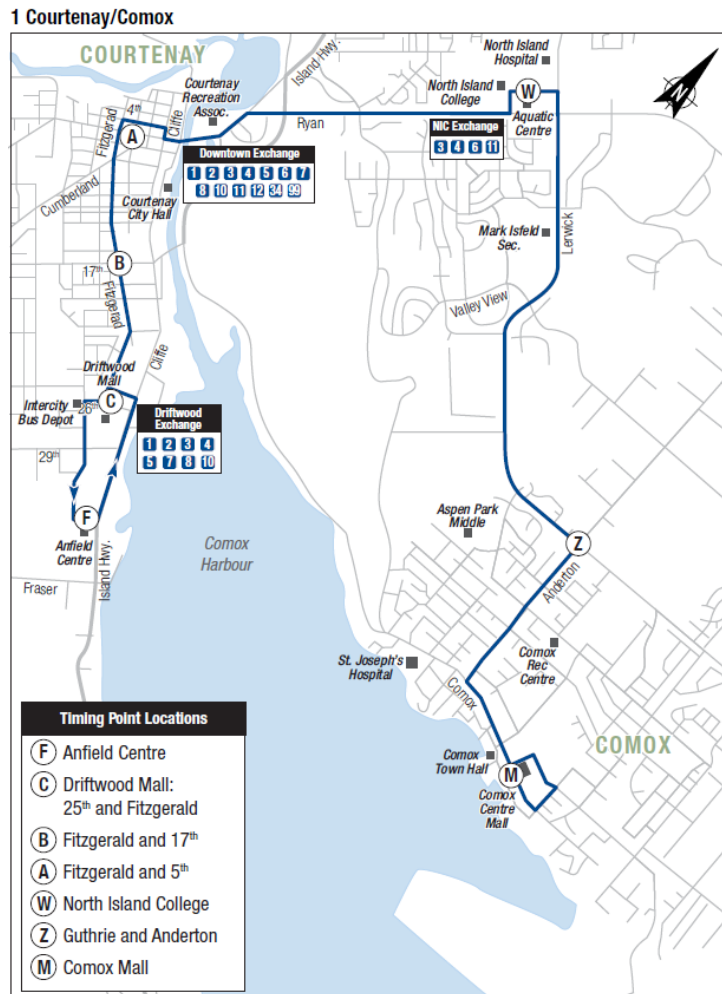
The Frequent Transit Network (FTN) provides the medium-to high-density mixed land use corridors with a convenient, reliable and frequent (30 minutes or better and 15-20 minute service in the peaks) weekday transit service between 6:00 am and 10:00 pm. The goal of the FTN is to allow customers to spontaneously travel without having to consult a transit schedule. The FTN will carry the majority of the transit system's total ridership, and for this reason it justifies capital investments such as a high level of transit stop amenities, service branding and transit priority measures.

Frequent Transit Network Benefits

The benefits of a higher-order transit system (that would be established with the Frequent Transit Network) are outlined in detail within the Comox Valley Transit Future Plan (pg. 77), but include:

- Building social capital through improved community accessibility;
- Better health by encouraging active transportation;
- Improved ridership potential;
- Decreased traffic congestion;
- improved air quality; and
- Reduced infrastructure construction and maintenance costs.

Figure 2 – Proposed Frequent Transit Network Routing



3.1 Preferred Service Option

Service Option B1

As identified within

Table 2, this service option provides a number of key conventional transit service priorities for the Comox Valley Transit System:

- **Implementing the Frequent Transit Network (Phase 2)**
 - More frequent service than with Service Option B2
- **Improvements to local routes**
 - Improve frequency and structure to Local Transit Routes 7 Arden and 8 Willemar
 - Introduction of route 9 Lake Trail
 - Reduction of large, one-way loop routes
 - Sunday service on routes 7 Arden and 9 Lake Trail
 - Realignment of existing Local Transit Route 3 Comox
 - New service along Beaufort Avenue
- **Regular service to North Island Hospital**
 - 100m walk to main entrance from proposed Lerwick bus stops
 - Service approach supported by the Transit Future Plan, the Dantec Report, and by Transit Planning best practices
- **Introduction of clockface headways where feasible**

This service option requires the 4,000 service hour expansion and two expansion buses identified in the 2016/17 TIPs process.

Implementing the Frequent Transit Network

Phase 2 of the Frequent Transit Network involves further developing the spine of the Comox Valley Transit Network connecting the key destinations within the Comox Valley including Anfield Centre, Driftwood Mall, Downtown Courtenay, North Island College and Hospital, and Downtown Comox.

Frequent Transit Network Service Details

Figure 3 identifies the proposed routing for the Frequent Transit Network as identified through the Frequent Transit Corridor Study, and Table 3 outlines the service details including service span, peak and off-peak service frequency, number of daily round trips, and the number of annual service hours required for the proposed weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service levels.

Figure 3 – Proposed Frequent Transit Network Routing

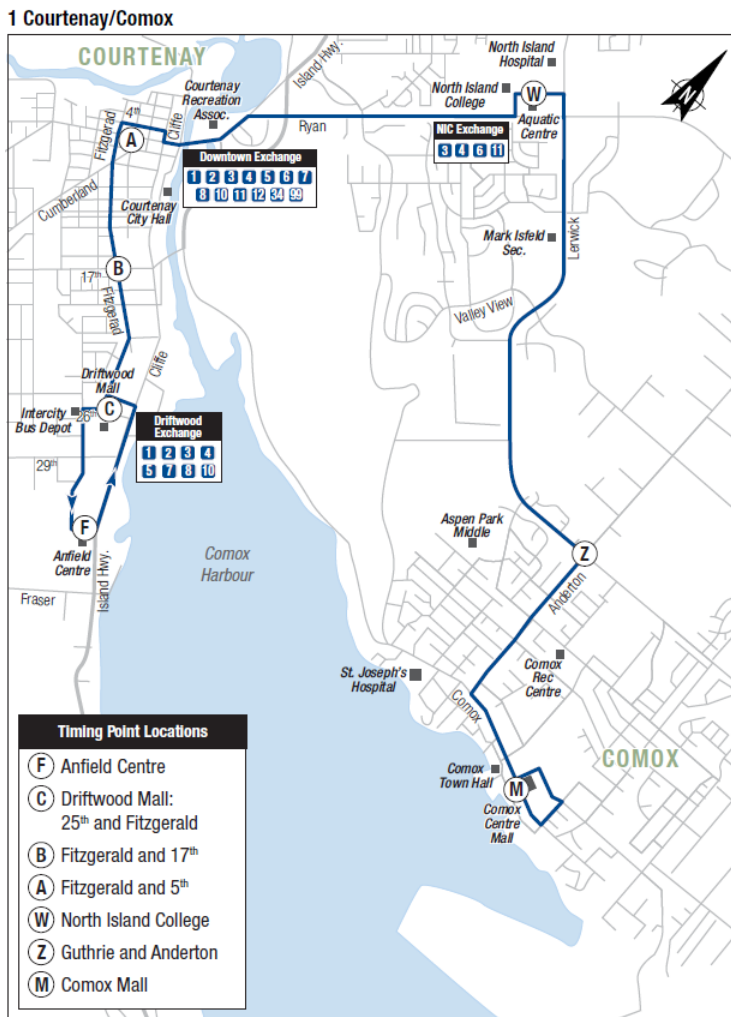


Table 3 – Proposed Frequent Transit Network Service Details

Day Type	Span	Peak Frequency	Off Peak Frequency	Daily Round Trips	Annual Hours
Weekday	6am-10pm	15-20min	30-60min	30	12,600
Saturday	8am-10pm	30min	30-60min	26	
Sunday	9am-6pm	60min	60min	9	

Improvements to Local Routes

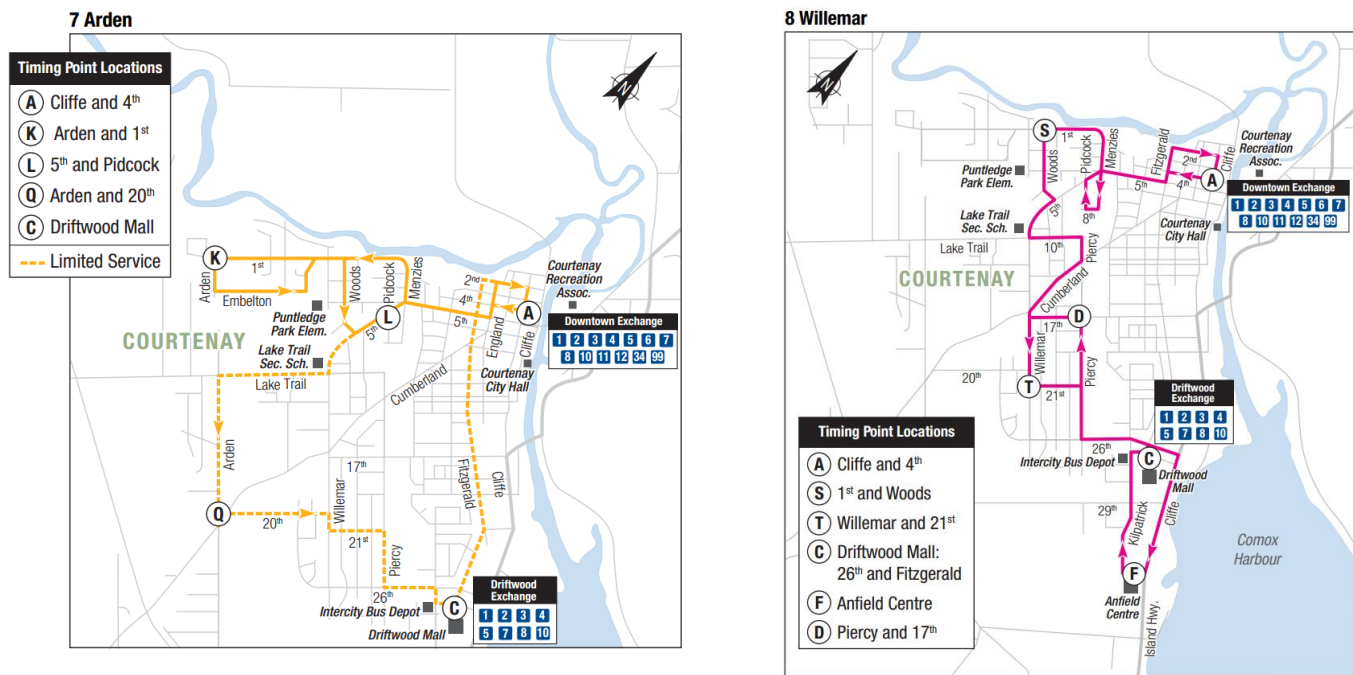
The introduction of the second phase of the Frequent Transit Network will require realignment and schedule adjustments to many of the routes within the network. This provides the opportunity to reduce overlapping services and improve the overall transit network.

With Service Option B1, this would likely include integrating route 2 Cumberland with the Frequent Transit Network at the Anfield Centre or Driftwood Mall, rerouting route 10 Royston-Buckley Bay within Courtenay from Fitzgerald Avenue to Cliffe Avenue, and more comprehensive route restructuring within Comox with route 3 Comox and within West Courtenay with routes 7 Arden and 8 Willemar.

Improve frequency and structure to Local Transit Routes 7 Arden and 8 Willemar

West Courtenay is currently served by the 7 Arden and the 8 Willemar (Figure 4). The Comox Valley Transit Future Plan identified restructuring the 7 Arden to improve service to the Lake Trail Road area and improve weekday and Saturday evening service. Additionally, the Dantec Report identified moving away from large, one-way loop routes where feasible. This provided the opportunity to look at service to West Courtenay holistically to improve the service design and level of service to this area to coincide with the Frequent Transit Network implementation.

Figure 4 – Current Route 7 Arden and 8 Willemar Routing



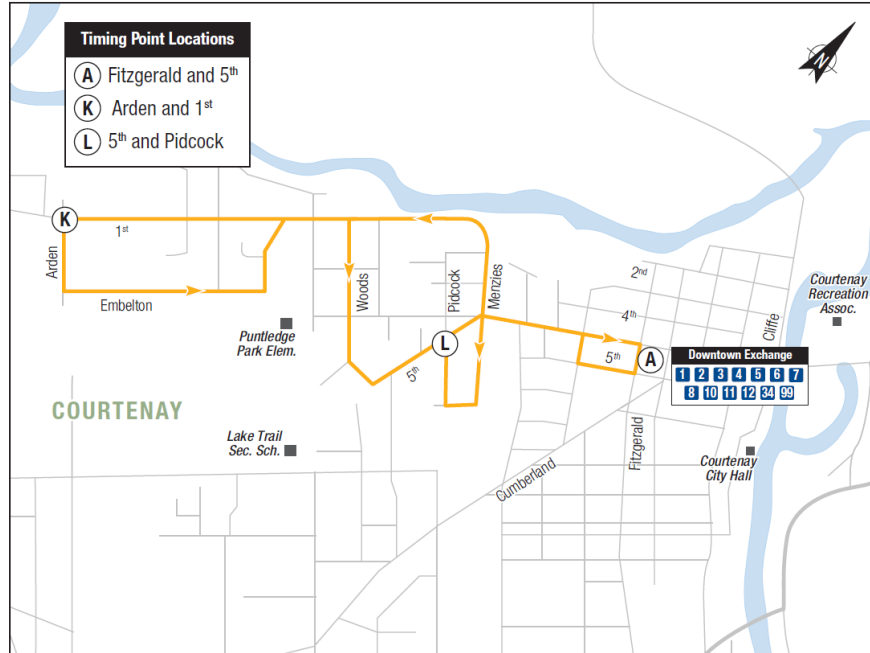
7 Arden, 8 Willemar, and 9 Lake Trail Service Details

Figure 5 identifies the proposed routing for routes 7 Arden, 8 Willemar, and 9 Lake Trail. Overall, this proposal simplifies the service to West Courtenay. This simplification involves improving service consistency for the key route 7 Arden riders, streamlining the route 8 Willemar, and improving the level of transit service to residents living in the Lake Trail area with more daily trips and bi-directional service. The proposed route 9 Lake Trail includes new proposed routing along Cousins Avenue, which would provide direct transit service to a mixed-use area that currently receives no fixed-route service. The proposed route 8 Willemar changes provide service along McPhee, which allows direct transit access to the food bank and other services.

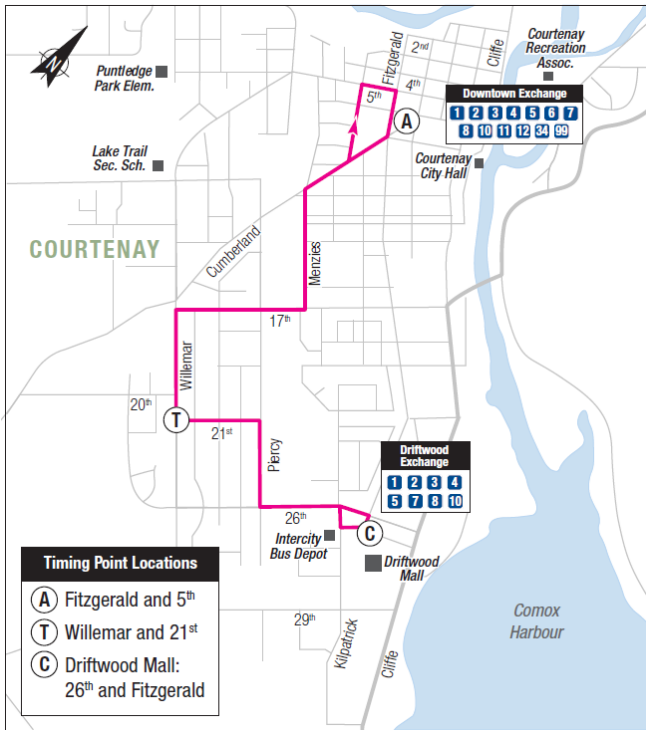
Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 outlines the service details for routes 7 Arden, 8 Willemar, and 9 Lake Trail respectively; these service details include service span, peak and off-peak service frequency, number of daily round trips, and the number of annual service hours required for the proposed weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service levels.

Figure 5 – Proposed Local Routing Restructure for West Courtenay

7 Arden



8 Willemar



9 Lake Trail

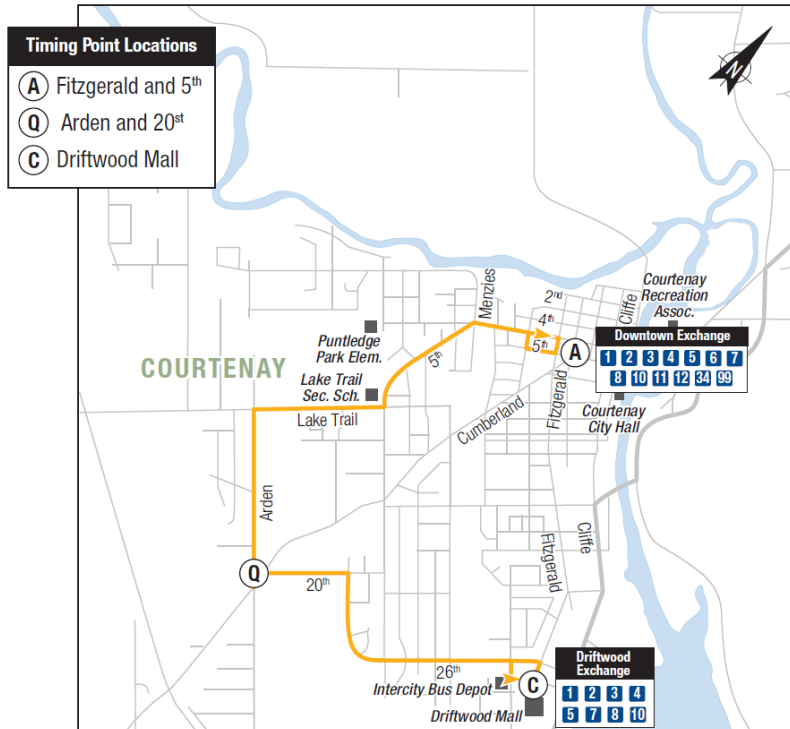


Table 4 – Proposed Route 7 Arden Service Details

Day Type	Span	Peak Frequency	Off Peak Frequency	Daily Round Trips	Annual Hours
Weekday	7am-10pm	60min	60min	15	1040
Saturday	7am-10pm	60min	60min	15	
Sunday	8am-6pm	60min	60min	10	

Table 5 - Proposed Route 8 Willemar Service Details

Day Type	Span	Peak Frequency	Off Peak Frequency	Daily Round Trips	Annual Hours
Weekday	7am-10pm	60min	60min	15	2230
Saturday	7am-10pm	60min	60min	15	
Sunday	7am-8pm	60min	60min	13	

Table 6 - Proposed Route 9 Lake Trail Service Details

Day Type	Span	Peak Frequency	Off Peak Frequency	Daily Round Trips	Annual Hours
Weekday	8am-6pm	120min	120min	5	880
Saturday	8am-6pm	120min	120min	5	
Sunday	9am-5pm	120min	120min	4	

Realignment of existing Local Transit Route 3 Comox

In order to integrate with the Frequent Transit Network, the 3 Comox / Driftwood Mall provides local Comox transit service and a more direct connection to Driftwood Mall. Based on community feedback, this routing proposal includes Beaufort Avenue, providing service to a number of key Comox destinations including the library and city hall.

3 Comox / Driftwood Mall Service Details

Figure 6 identifies the proposed routing for the 3 Comox/Driftwood, and Table 7 outlines the service details including service span, peak and off-peak service frequency, number of daily round trips, and the number of annual service hours required for the proposed weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service levels.

Figure 6 – Route 3 Comox / Driftwood Mall Proposal

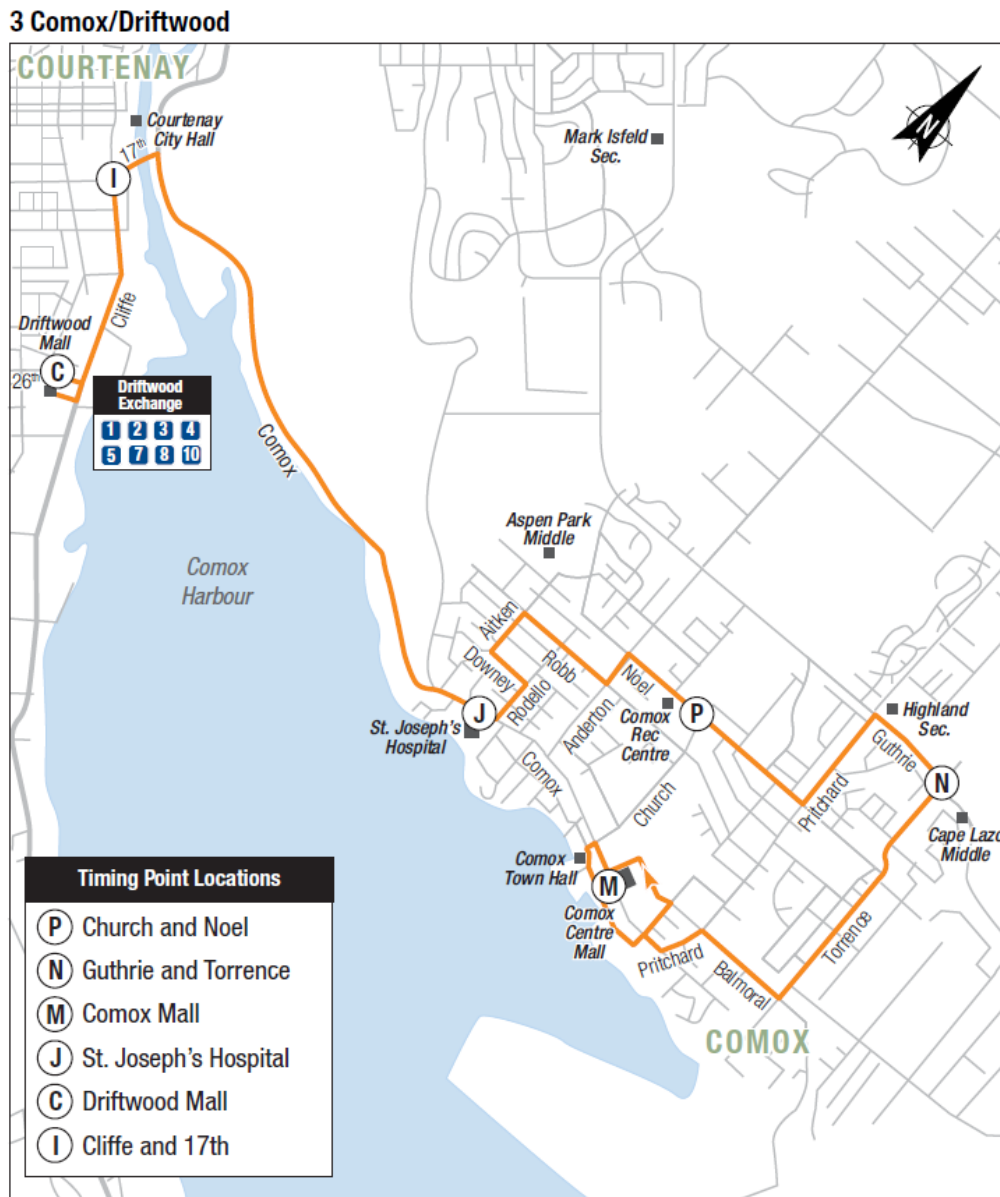


Table 7 - Proposed Route 3 Comox / Driftwood Mall Service Details

	Span	Peak Frequency	Off Peak Frequency	Daily Rd Trips	Annual Hours
Weekday	8am-6pm	60min	60min	10	3,350
Saturday	8am-6pm	60min	60min	10	
Sunday	9am-5pm	120min	120min	4	

North Island Hospital Service

As per the Service Standards identified within the Comox Valley Transit Future Plan, recommendations within the Dantec Report, and according to Transit Planning best practices:

- *BC Transit generally recommends against routing service through busy internal hospital or mall roads due to impacts to on-time performance and operational considerations.*

Consequently, the preferred Service Option (Service Option B1) would provide service directly to the hospital front door by handyDART (for residents with mobility challenges), and conventional service within 100 meters of the hospital front door (with proposed bus stops at Lerwick and Waters) on Routes 6, 12, and 99. Additional service would be available within 250 to 350 meters of the hospital front door from the North Island College Exchange on Routes 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 34, and 99 (see Figure 7, pg.16). New bus stops are recommended for the intersection of Lerwick Road and Waters Place and wayfinding signage at the North Island College Exchange to improve hospital access via conventional transit.

Service Hour Allocation

As identified within the Comox Valley Transit Future Plan, the Frequent Transit Network and the local route improvements identified within this service option will replace the current routes 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 34. The service hours from these routes and the 4000 hour expansion will be used to achieve the service improvements identified within this package. Table 8 provides additional details about the origin and destination of the service hours required to implement Service Option B1.

The service hours for the Frequent Transit Network will come primarily from the 4000 expansion hours and from real current routes 1, 4, and 34. The proposed 3 Comox Local transit service will use the majority of the service hours from the current route 3, and the route 7, 8, and 9 proposals are primarily a reallocation of service hours currently used for those routes, and include improved service levels by leveraging off efficiencies available by integrating with the Frequent Transit Network.

Table 8 –Service Option B1 Service Hours Details

	Service Hour Type	Description	Change in Service Hours (Compared to Status Quo)
Service Hour Origin	Expansion	2018/19 TIPs	+4,000
	Reallocation	Routes 1, 4, 34	+8,350
	Reallocation	Route 3	+4,000
	Reallocation	Current Routes 7 and 8	+3,850
Service Hour Destination	Implementation	Frequent Transit Network (Phase 2)	-12,700
	Implementation	Proposed routes 7, 8, and 9	-4,150
	Implementation	Proposed Comox local route	-3,350
		NET DIFFERENCE	0

3.2 Alternate Service Options

Alternate Service Options with Expansion

3. Service Option B2

- Expansion required (4000 service hours and 2 buses)
- Similar to Service Option B1
 - Different hospital service approach (same approach as Service Option A)
 - Less weekday and Saturday service on Frequent Transit Network
 - No Sunday service on routes 7 Arden and 9 Lake Trail

Service Option B2 vs B1 Summary

Providing front door hospital service requires 650 service hours with an approximate annual local cost of \$50,000⁴. In order to accommodate those 650 service hours, Service Option B2 does not include Sunday service on Routes 7 Arden and 9 Lake Trail⁵, and includes less service on the Frequent Transit Network⁶.

- *For on-time performance and operational reasons, BC Transit does not recommend any service option including routing on internal roads of the hospital.*

Alternate Service Options without Expansion

1. Status Quo

- No expansion required
- Provides regular service to North Island Hospital
 - 100m walk to hospital from proposed bus stops at Lerwick and Waters intersection
 - Same hospital service approach as Service Option B1 (see Figure 7, pg.16)
- No need to cut peak service or change scheduled trip times

2. Service Option A

- No expansion required (service reallocation)
- Provides regular service through North Island Hospital site
 - Alter route 6 and 12 trips to serve the internal hospital roadway
 - 20m walk to hospital
 - Adds six minutes to each route 6 trip and three minutes to each route 12 trip
 - Requires 650 annual service hours
 - Goes against Transit Future Plan and Dantec Report recommendations and Transit Planning best practices
- Without expansion, this requires **cutting peak service and changes to scheduled trip times throughout system**
 - Removal of route 1 Fitzgerald
 - Would negatively impact approximately 100 current transit customers each day on 1 Fitzgerald

⁴ Service into the internal hospital roads provide a 20m walk to the Hospital front door rather than the 100m walk from the proposed bus stops at Lerwick and Waters






⁵ No Sunday service on Routes 7 Arden and 9 Lake Trail; in comparison to Service Option B1 (~300 service hours)

⁶ One fewer trip on the FTN each Weekday and Saturday in comparison to Service Option B1 (~350 service hours)

3.3 Comparing Conventional Service Package Options

Table 9 summarizes the key tradeoffs between each service option included in this Service Discussion Document. BC Transit recommends Service Option B1 given the number of conventional service priorities it addresses, and given its adherence to goals and standards identified within local Official Community Plans, Transportation Plans, and Transit Plans.

Table 9 – Conventional Service Option Tradeoff Summary

Package	Trips From Driftwood to Downtown Courtenay (Weekday)	North Island Hospital Service (Walk Distance)	Service Hour Requirement (Vehicles)	Transit Service Impact	Dantec Report Impact
Status Quo	122	100m	N/A	N/A	N/A
A	106 (-13%)	20m	N/A		
B1	155 (+27%)	100m	4000 (2)		
B2	154 (+26%)	20m	4000 (2)		

North Island Hospital Service Recommendation

In 2012, as part of the planning for the new Comox Valley Hospital, BC Transit, CVRD and Island Health staff met to discuss options for the provision of transit to this location. BC Transit recommended an improved transit exchange central to the Hospital, Aquatic Centre and North Island College facilities. In October 2013 the Comox Valley Accessibility Committee sent a letter to the CVRD board and City of Courtenay council. As a result of this letter Courtenay council passed a motion that Council write to BC Transit to advocate for a bus stop immediately adjacent to the hospital entrance.

- *BC Transit does not recommend routing service through busy internal hospital or mall roads due to impacts to on-time performance and operational considerations.*

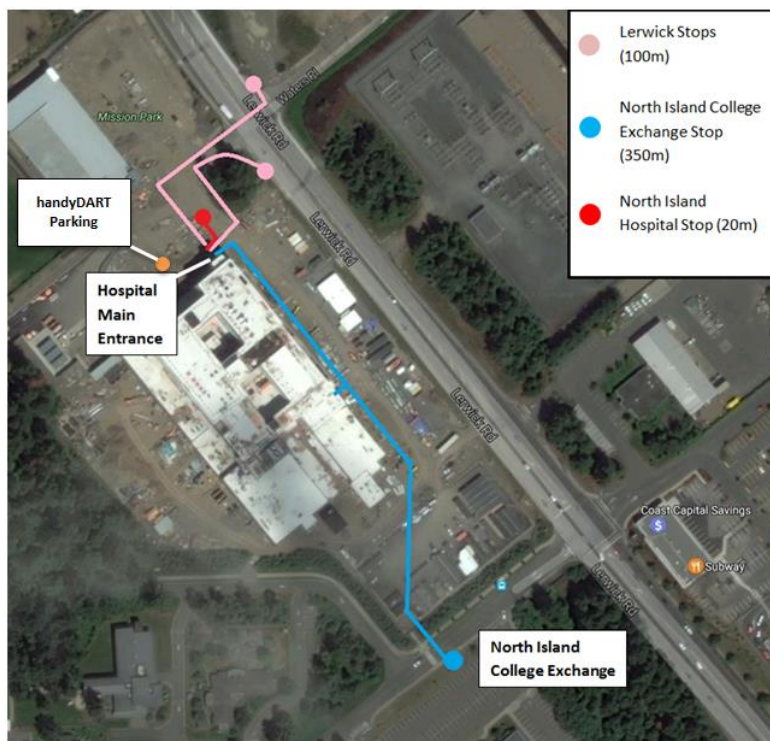
Additionally, both the Dantec Transit Service Analysis Report and the Comox Valley Transit Future Plan recommend against providing conventional service directly into the Hospital, and the 100m walking distance from the proposed bus stops on Lerwick Road fall within the Transit System Standards identified within the Comox Valley Transit Future Plan (with 150m being identified as a desirable walking distance to all major institutional facilities and designated senior's residences).

Without any changes to the current transit network, the North Island Hospital would be served by (Figure 7):

- Direct, front door service via handyDART (for transit users with mobility challenges);
- 100m walking distance from proposed Lerwick Road bus stops on routes 6, 12, and 99; and
- 250m-350m walking distance from North Island College Exchange on routes 3, 4, 6, 11, 12, 34, and 99.

Should the CVRD wish to provide service directly into the Hospital parking lot on routes 6 and 12 against BC Transit recommendation, changes would be required to meet the requirement for 650 annual service hours. These hours are required due to the additional trip time on those routes and could be provided through reallocation (i.e. taking service from elsewhere in the system; Service Option A) or expansion (Service Option B2).

Figure 7 – Transit Accessibility to North Island Hospital



4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Comox Valley Regional District:

- receive this report and for information and to provide comment;
- Approve conventional transit service access to the North Island Hospital with new bus stops on Lerwick Road and wayfinding signage at the North Island College Exchange; and
- Approve local staff to work with BC Transit to implement conventional Service Option B1 for April 2018.



5.0 Next Steps

April 2018 Transit Service Change Timeline

The table below describes a detailed timeline for the April 2018 preferred conventional service option implementation.

Table 10: CVRD Proposed Timeline for Conventional Service Option Planning

Month	Actions & Deliverables
June, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of conventional service options to CVRD Committee of the Whole (CoW)• CVRD Board decision on conventional service option and Expansion MOU
July, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop consultation materials
August, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Consultation
Sept – Oct, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summarize consultation results• Develop Implementation Plan• Draft Implementation Plan MOU
Nov, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of Implementation Plan to CVRD CoW*• Sign Implementation Plan MOU
Dec 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheduling for April 2018 Service Change
Jan – Mar, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rider's Guide reprint and marketing
Feb, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Province finalizes budget and confirms expansion funding• CVRD staff signs Implementation MOU for April 2018 service changes
April, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement service changes

*If required

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Myrna Moore, BC Transit
Corey McPherson, BC Transit
James Wadsworth, BC Transit

Appendices

Appendix A – Three Year Expansion Plan

Expansion Initiatives Agreement

The following outlines expansion initiatives identified for your transit system along with a high level annual costing based on the hourly rates of your system. Please confirm these initiatives are aligned with the expectations of your local government. Upon confirmation of your local government's intent to commit to the expansion and budget, we will proceed with the request to secure funding from the Province on your behalf.

PROPOSED CONVENTIONAL EXPANSION INITIATIVES						
AOA Period	In Service Date	Annual Hours	Vehicle Requirements	Revenue	Total Costs*	Net Municipal Share
2018/19	Mar 2018	4,000	2	\$56,543	\$460,518	\$225,399
		Description	TFP recommendation: Development of the Frequent Transit Network. These proposed service expansions require expansion of the primary downtown Courtenay Exchange and improvements to the North Island College and Driftwood Mall/ Anfield Centre secondary exchanges			
2019/20	Mar 2019	2,000	1	\$22,617	\$239,188	\$123,711
		Description	Transit Future Plan Recommendations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved Structure and Frequency to the route 12 North Valley Connector • Improved Structure and Frequency to the Route 7 Arden • Expansion of services to route 6 Uplands 			

* Vehicle costs do not reflect Standardized Lease Fees

PROPOSED PARATRANSIT EXPANSION INITIATIVES						
AOA Period	In Service Date	Annual Hours	Vehicle Requirements	Revenue	Total Costs*	Net Municipal Share
2017/18	Sept 2017	900	1	\$2,776	\$79,648	\$39,851
		Description	TFP Recommendations (expansion in electoral areas)			

* Vehicle costs do not reflect Standardized Lease Fees

Appendix B – CVRD Board Motions (June 28, 2016)

THAT the Comox Valley Regional District request BC Transit to exchange two of its medium duty buses for light duty buses as described in option two of the fleet optimization report attached as appendix A in the staff report dated May 31, 2016. 209

THAT the HandyDART system within the electoral areas be expanded by 900 hours per year at the estimated annual cost of \$40,000, to be implemented in September 2017. 209

THAT BC Transit be advised the Comox Valley Regional District wishes to review and consider the following reports being completed by BC Transit:

- a) Frequent transit corridor study to be completed by October 2016;*
- b) Fare review to be completed by January 2017; and*
- c) Service discussion document to be completed by January 2017;*

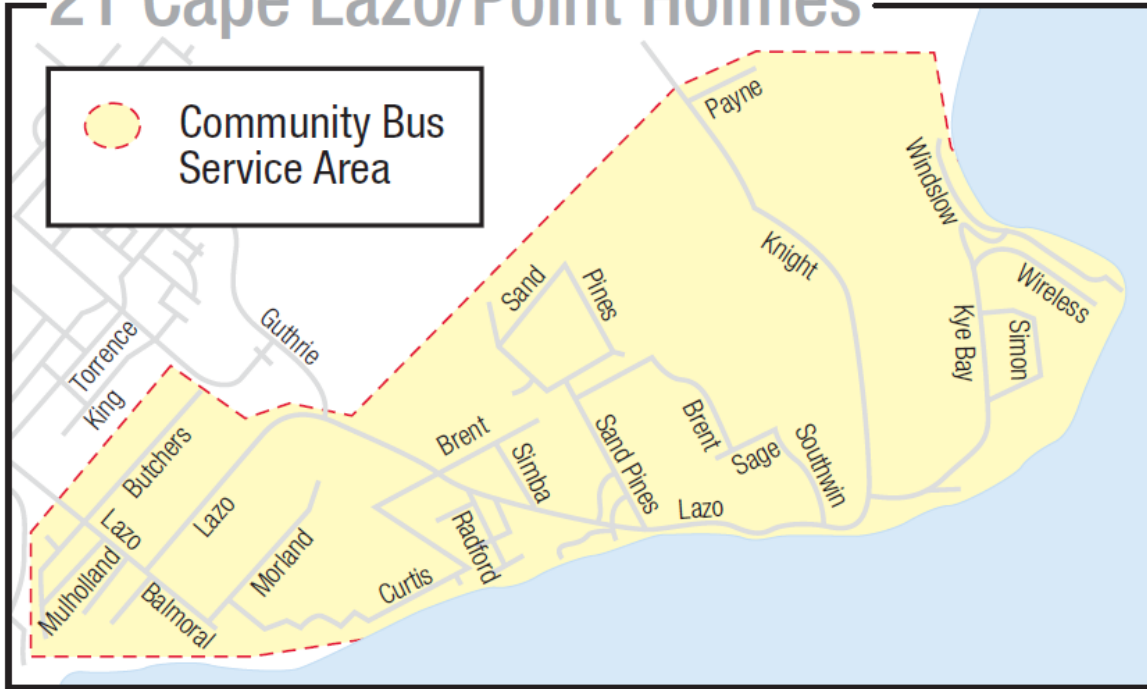
prior to providing a firm commitment to expansion of the conventional transit system as follows:

- 4,000 hours in 2018, and*
- 2,000 hours in 2019;*

AND FURTHER THAT BC Transit be advised that the Comox Valley Regional District wishes to retain the opportunity for cost sharing with the provincial government for expanded service hours in 2018 and 2019;

AND FINALLY THAT the Comox Valley Regional District will confirm with BC Transit the cost share commitment of future expansion hours for 2018 by May 31st, 2017 and for 2019 by May 31st, 2018 in order for BC Transit to secure the appropriate fleet levels to meet the Comox Valley service needs.

21 Cape Lazo/Point Holmes



22 Huband Road/Seal Bay

