

Meeting notes of the Comox Valley Transit Management Advisory Committee held on June 20, 2019 in the Comox Valley Regional District Boardroom located at 550B Comox Road, Courtenay, BC commencing at 10:20 am.

PRESENT:

A. McMullen, Transportation Planner	BC Transit
S. Russwurm, Deputy Corporate Administrator	Town of Comox
C. Miller, Engineering Technologist	City of Courtenay
R. Crisfield, Manager of Operations	Village of Cumberland
D. Richards, General Manager	Watson & Ash
M. Zbarsky, Manager of Transit and Sustainability	CVRD
S. Speed, Branch Assistant – Executive Management Branch	CVRD

Management Report

The committee reviewed the management report.

GENERAL

ITEMS

BC Transit Corporate Update

Staff from the CVRD and Watson and Ash attended a BC Transit (BCT) workshop and gave a summary of the sessions including update on electric buses which are expected to start rolling out in the next several years.

CVRD staff gave an update on the exchange analysis and explained that obtaining the detailed planning and design information would need to be achieved through an infrastructure exploration agreement with BC Transit which would involve retaining a consultant. The budget next year should include CVRD share of these costs.

2019 handyDART Expansion

The CVRD Board approved that the 1,500 expansion hours for handyDART will be used toward weekend handyDART service. Communications will go out to the public prior to the September launch.

2020 Expansion Planning

2,000 expansion hours approved by the CVRD Board for conventional transit routing and scheduling improvements for September 2020.

The committee discussed the traffic congestion related delay issues with the #1 route. The committee heard that it would take approximately 800 expansion hours to address the delay issues. BCT staff will provide a brief report to the committee recommending strategies to deal with scheduling time on this route at the next committee meeting including any infrastructure improvements that could assist transit trip times (e.g. signal prioritization/que jumper lanes).

The committee discussed the community bus #21/22 improvements that were approved by the board for April 2020 implementation and understood that the bus will follow a route but travel off route to pick up people with mobility issues. A brief report will be brought to the next TMAC meeting that will show high level information and explain the schedule.

Transit Future Action Plan

The updates for the Transit Future Plans are being branded as Transit Future Action Plans. This is tentatively being targeted to kick off late 2019/early 2020 and may be integrated with the public consultation for the 2020 conventional transit expansions. The committee discussed the desire of the CVRD Board to move aggressively to increase transit ridership and mode share and the possible need to update the plan to reflect this. BCT staff were requested to provide a brief report to the next committee meeting on strategies to increase ridership/mode share, to include service increases, infrastructure upgrades, other programs (e.g. parking restrictions) and associated costs or reallocation strategies.

Fare Review

CVRD staff explained the last fare review was completed in 2017 and although usually it's completed every three years, it's being pushed forward slightly due to new fare payment technology coming soon.

New fare ideas were discussed including the concept of free fares for all and for certain groups. BCT staff explained that corporately, they are starting to look at free fares for youth but more consulting needs to be done.

Upcoming Infrastructure Impacts

The committee discussed concerns regarding the impact on transit if the 5th Street Bridge is going to be rehabilitated. City of Courtenay staff will report back to the committee with any updates.

Bus Stop Signage

The committee discussed signage standards and BCT staff confirmed the draft standards in the design document are the current standard. BCT staff were asked to provide information at the next committee meeting regarding an update to the standards. The accessible stop designation was discussed and it was confirmed that this was not currently in use in the Comox Valley and that a survey of stops would need to be undertaken to determine which ones met the accessibility criteria before any signage updates could be considered. BC Transit to confirm policies around picking up mobility devices at non-accessible bus stops.

Stakeholder Service/Project Updates

City of Courtenay:

- Laketrail being repaved to Arden
- Lerwick will be down to one lane alternating traffic for one week
- Fitzgerald, 5th to Driftwood mall will be painted for bikes
- Back Rd to 6th, up Hobson to Valley View roadworks

Village of Cumberland:

- Roadwork on Egremont – staff will send a notice when it commences

NEW BUSINESS

BCT staff explained they are reviewing traffic congestion/pinch points and will advise where to focus attention before the expansion launches.

The CVRD has had a minor restructure and Mike Zbarsky is now in Planning and Development services Branch with a new title of Manager of Transit and Facilities. This position reports to Scott Smith, General Manager of Planning and Development Services.

Next Meeting

The next transit management advisory committee meeting is scheduled for August 22, 2019 commencing at 10:00 a.m. in the CVRD boardroom, 550B Comox Road, Courtenay.

The meeting terminated at 12:25 pm.

Recorded By:

S. Speed

S. Speed
Branch Assistant – Executive
Management Branch

Confirmed:

M. Zbarsky

M. Zbarsky
Manager of Transit and Sustainability