



C·V·R·D

TRANSIT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2009

3:00 p.m. / Board Room
175 Ingram Street

AGENDA

	Pages
1. <u>APPROVAL OF AGENDA:</u>	1 - 2
2. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES:</u>	
2M1 Regular Meeting of Transit Committee held July 8, 2009	3 - 6
3. <u>BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES:</u>	
4. <u>2010 BUDGET:</u>	
4SR1 Staff Report from Corporate Secretary Re: 2010 Budget – Items for Consideration <i>Function 106—Conventional Transit (Commuter)</i> <i>Function 107—Conventional Transit</i>	7 - 22
4SR2 Staff Report from Corporate Secretary Re: Bus Shelter Update	23 - 24
5. <u>REPORTS:</u>	
5R1 Bill Young, First Canada Re: Transit Report dated November 18, 2009	25
5R2 Georg Stratemeyer, Executive Director, Volunteer Cowichan Re: handyDART Operational Report	26 - 30
6. <u>CORRESPONDENCE:</u>	
6C1 Gina Talbot Re: Transfers between Routes	31

7. **CLOSED SESSION:**

Motion that the meeting be closed to the public in accordance with the *Community Charter*, Part 4, Division 3, Section 90, Subsections as noted in accordance with each agenda item.

7CSM1	Adoption of Minutes of Closed Session Portion of Meeting of Transit Committee held November 26, 2008	32 - 33
7CSC1	Section 21, FOI POP Act {Sub (1) (j)}	34 - 40
7CSC2	Section 21, FOI POP Act {Sub (1) (j)}	41 - 45

8. **ADJOURNMENT:**

DISTRIBUTION:

Transit Committee

Director G. Seymour, Chair
Director G. Giles, Vice-Chair
Director K. Cossey
Director L. Duncan
Director B. Harrison

Director L. Iannidinaro
Director P. Kent
Director K. Kuhn
Director T. McGonigle
Director I. Morrison

Cowichan Valley Regional District

Warren Jones, Administrator
Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary
Mark Kueber, General Manager, Corporate Services
Brian Dennison, General Manager, Engineering and Environment
Jim Wakeham, Manager, Facility Management, Fleet and Transit

Transit Representatives

Myrna Moore, Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit
Bill Young, FirstCanada ULC
Georg Stratemeyer, Volunteer Cowichan

Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Transit Committee held in the Board Room, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC on Wednesday, July 8, 2009, at 3:34 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairperson G. Seymour
Directors L. Duncan, B. Harrison, G. Giles,
L. Iannidinardo, P. Kent, K. Kuhn, and I. Morrison

ABSENT: Directors K. Cossey and T. McGonigle

ALSO

PRESENT: Warren Jones, Administrator
Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary
Brian Dennison, General Manager, Engineering and
Environment
Jim Wakeham, Manager, Facility Management, Fleet
and Transit
Myrna Moore, BC Transit
Roxanne Lypka, BC Transit
Peter Murray, BC Transit
Bill Young, FirstCanada ULC
Bob Allen, FirstCanada ULC
Georg Stratemeyer, Volunteer Cowichan
Dominique Beesley, Recording Secretary

**APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be amended with the addition of New Business Item:

*7NB1 – Service Expansion in Area E – Cowichan Station/
Sahtlam/Glenora;*

and that the agenda, as amended, be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

**ADOPTION OF
MINUTES
2M1**

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the Regular meeting of Transit Committee held May 13, 2009 be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

CONVENTIONAL SERVICE

Correspondence

4C1

Email from Kim Citton, Project Supervisor, Canada World Youth, dated June 25, 2009, re: Canada World Youth Mozambique Exchange Program – Bus Passes, was considered.

It was moved and seconded that it be recommended to the Board that the CVRD provide twenty bus passes to the Canada World Youth team members visiting our community from September, 2009 to November, 2009.

MOTION CARRIED

4C2

Letter from Mark O. Ruttan, Director of Administration and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Municipality of North Cowichan dated June 19, 2009, re: Class Rides Free Program, was considered.

The Corporate Secretary explained that the Class Rides Free Program is structured for use by public and private schools within the Cowichan Valley and is set to begin this September. Youth registered in recreation activities or programs is a different market and specific regulations would need to be considered by staff, he said.

It was moved and seconded that staff examine the feasibility of creating a program for youth registered in recreation activities or programs within the Cowichan Valley to be eligible for free transportation on the Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System.

MOTION CARRIED

Reports

4R1

Report from Myrna Moore, Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit, re: Cowichan Valley Transit System Proposed Schedules was received as information.

4R2

Transit Report from Bill Young, First Canada, dated June 16, 2009, was received as information.

In response to questions, the Corporate Secretary suggested having a transit workshop prior to the September meeting. The Committee agreed by consensus to have a workshop on the afternoon of September 9, 2009.

4R3

Staff Report from the Manager, Island Savings Centre dated June 1, 2009, re: Olympic Torch Relay Celebrations Request, was considered.

It was moved and seconded that it be recommended to the Board that cash fares on the Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System be reduced to zero (no charge) on Saturday, October 31, 2009 for the Olympic Torch Relay celebrations happening region-wide.

MOTION CARRIED

COWICHAN VALLEY COMMUTER SERVICE**Reports****5R1**

Report from Peter Murray, Senior Transportation Planner, BC Transit dated June 30, 2009, re: Cowichan Valley Commuter Transit Service Review, was considered.

Responding to a question from Director Duncan regarding the absence of Koksilah Road and the Trans Canada Highway from the table on Page 19 of the Review, Peter Murray, Senior Transportation Planner, BC Transit, said that the commuter bus would stop at Koksilah Road.

It was moved and seconded that the BC Transit implement the proposed routing changes as outlined in the Cowichan Valley Commuter Transit Service Review, Phase I, with ‘Koksilah Road and Trans Canada Highway’ to be listed in the table on Page 19 of the Review.

MOTION CARRIED**HANDYDART SERVICE****Correspondence****6C1**

Letter from Cairine MacDonald, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Housing and Social Development dated May 22, 2009, re: Eligibility of handyDART for the BC Bus Pass Program, was received as information.

6C2

Email from Michelle S. Sierra dated June 11, 2009, re: request for two additional buses, was considered.

It was moved and seconded BC Transit prepare a report to the Transit Committee regarding the feasibility of providing additional service to the handyDART system including the cost for one and for two additional buses.

MOTION CARRIED**Reports****6R1**

Report from Georg Stratemeyer, Executive Director, Volunteer Cowichan, re: BC Transit Custom / Paratransit Monthly Statistical Summary, was received as information.

6R2

Report from Georg Stratemeyer, Executive Director, Volunteer Cowichan, re: handyDART Operational Report, was received as information.

NEW BUSINESS

7NB1

**Service Expansion in Area E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/
Glenora**

Director Duncan inquired about the status of Route No. 5 – Eagle Heights Cowichan Commons and the community bus for Cowichan Station.

Myrna Moore, Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit, responded noting that the 2009/2010 budget has not officially been announced nor has the expansion list been provided by the Province possibly due, in part, to the current economic conditions.

ADJOURNMENT
4:45 p.m.

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Chairperson

Recording Secretary

Dated: _____

**STAFF REPORT****TRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING
OF DECEMBER 9, 2009**

DATE: November 29, 2009
FROM: J.E. Barry, Corporate Secretary
SUBJECT: 2010 Budget – Items for Consideration

Recommendation:

For discussion.

Purpose:

To consider various items during 2010 budget discussions.

Background:

In 2005, the CVRD Board of Directors adopted a five year Cowichan Valley Transit Business Plan. Since that time, the Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System has undertaken numerous enhancements to the system including new service to Crofton, Chemainus, Victoria and the Cowichan Commons and the introduction of Sunday/Holiday service. In addition, HandyDART expanded from serving just Duncan and North Cowichan to all of Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, F, I and the Town of Lake Cowichan.

Projects identified in the Business Plan for implementation between 2006-2010 but not yet implemented were:

- Improved Frequency on Route #2 Mt. Prevost and Route #3 Quamichan;
- Improved Frequency to Lake Cowichan;
- Ladysmith Service;
- Introduction of Taxi Supplement.

2010 Budget – Conventional Service

The Transit Committee added the following two new items to the Business Plan in 2008 and approved their implementation in September 2009 (subject to funding by BC Transit):

- Cowichan Commons Shoppers Express, Service Introduction to Eagle Heights (Area E);
- Community Bus Expansion to Growth Regions south of Duncan.

Although Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora officially became a transit funding partner as of September 2008, provincial funding through BC Transit unfortunately was not approved for the 2009/2010 BC Transit fiscal year.

It is estimated that Eagle Heights service will generate additional ridership of 66,000 riders. The net CVRD cost of this service is estimated at \$64,625. If implemented in September 2010, the prorated net CVRD cost would be \$21,500.

It is estimated that Community Bus Service serving Cowichan Station and rural areas south of the Cowichan River will generate additional ridership of 20,000 riders. The net CVRD cost of this service is estimated at \$60,000. If implemented in September 2010, the prorated net CVRD cost would be \$19,975.

Since property owners in Electoral Area E began paying taxes for transit service in 2009, the priority for conventional service remains high with the implementation of service to Eagle Heights and Cowichan Station. The costs for these services is not included in the core budget, due to the uncertainty of Provincial funding not being known until spring 2010. The service is being shown as an additional item to consider. No other conventional service expansions are being recommended for 2010.

It is recommended that the Transit Committee approve the Eagle Heights and Cowichan Station Services effective September 2010, subject to funding from BC Transit.

2010 Budget - HandyDART Service

Attached to this report is correspondence from BC Transit regarding our Custom Transit Service (HandyDART). This correspondence provides an overview of the existing HandyDART service and provides options to deal with unmet demand and to increase the ridership and productivity of the service.

BC Transit is recommending that one additional vehicle be added in 2010/11 which would go a long way to bringing the Cowichan HandyDART service up to the level needed to accommodate the immediate demand for service from groups and individuals.

It is estimated that this service will generate additional ridership of 5,000 riders. The net CVRD cost of this service is estimated at \$50,000. If implemented in July 2010, the prorated net CVRD cost would be \$25,000.

It is recommended that the Transit Committee proceed with the addition of one bus to increase the level of HandyDART service for seniors and persons with disabilities, effective July 2010; subject to funding from BC Transit.

2010 Budget – Fare Options for the Local and Commuter services

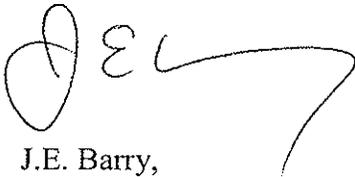
Also attached to this report is correspondence from BC Transit regarding Fare Options for the Cowichan Valley Transit System and Cowichan Valley Commuter. This correspondence outlines proposed fare changes for the conventional, handyDART and commuter systems and provides an estimate of the impact on ridership and revenue.

The Transit Committee should consider increasing fares on one, two or all of these systems as part of the 2010 budget discussions.

2010 Budget – Bus Shelter Maintenance

Also on this agenda is a staff report providing an update on the Bus Shelter program. It is important to note that once the bus shelters are installed throughout the Cowichan Valley, that there will be costs associated with maintaining the shelters. In other systems, trash and graffiti commonly have to be cleaned up as well as repairs owing to vandalism. It is important for the Transit Committee to consider approving \$45,000 to maintain the bus shelters. This item is included as an additional item for consideration.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.E. Barry', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

J.E. Barry,
Corporate Secretary



November 18, 2009
File:cow.1

Jim Wakeham
Manager, Facility, Fleet and Transit Management
Cowichan Valley Regional District
175 Ingram Street
Duncan, BC V9L 1N8

Dear Mr. Wakeham:

Subject: Custom Transit Service

The following letter report provides an overview of the existing custom (handyDART door-to-door) transit service and provides options to deal with unmet demand and to increase the ridership and productivity of the service.

Background

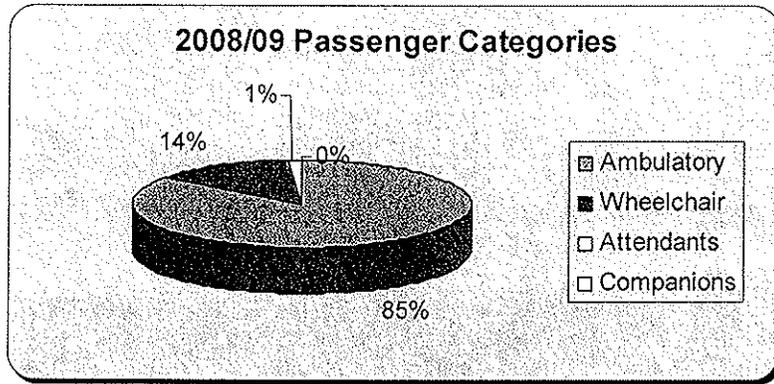
Custom transit, also known as handyDART, is a demand-responsive service that allows users to phone an operator and book trips in advance. Routing and schedules are flexible depending on the trips that have been booked. Service is usually door-to-door, but the dispatcher usually attempts to build shared-ride trips and sometimes there are common pick-up or drop-off points. Eligibility for this type of custom transit service can vary depending on service alternatives that are available in the community. When demand responsive transit is the only type of transit available in a community, it is usually available to anyone who requires the service. When there is fixed route transit service available, eligibility for demand-responsive service is often limited to those who are unable to use the fixed-route service due to a physical or developmental disability. In some communities, all seniors are eligible for demand-responsive service regardless of their level of mobility. When there are eligibility requirements, users must register with the system.

Profile of Existing Service

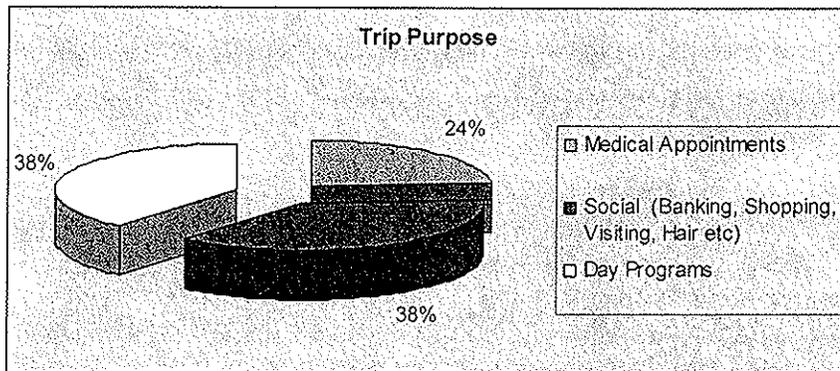
The Cowichan Valley Custom Transit System operates with 2 minibuses in peak service within three municipalities (City of Duncan, District of North Cowichan and the Town of Lake Cowichan) and seven Electoral Areas. The only unserved areas are the Town of Ladysmith; Electoral Area G – Saltair/Gulf Islands; and Electoral Area H – North Oyster/Diamond. As well, a fully accessible low floor conventional transit fleet provides an alternative for many people with disabilities.

The service operates Monday to Friday from 7am to 5pm and Saturday from 9am to 4pm. Passenger fares are \$2.00. There are two types of service:

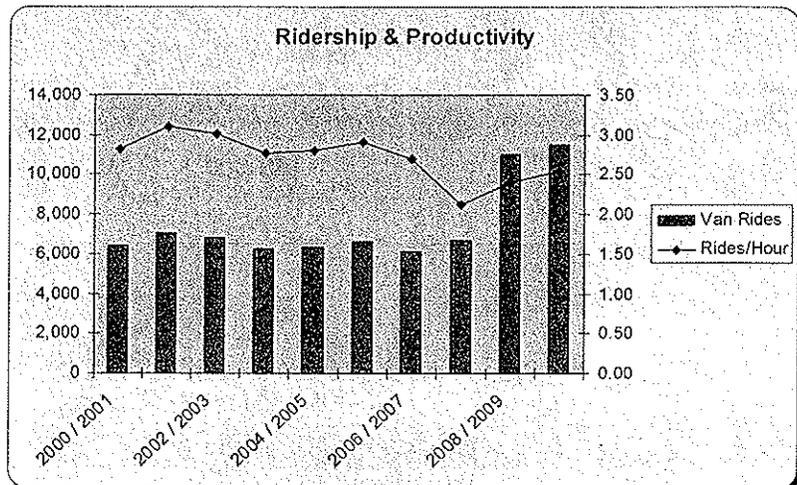
- Regular subscription trips once a week or more often.
- One-time trips for purposes such as medical appointments, shopping, social visits or recreational activities.



In 2008/09 the service provided a total of 10,982 rides to 462 active registered handyDART users. There were also rides for attendants (140). The average age of the passengers is 77 years. The breakdown of passenger categories is displayed in the accompanying chart. Wheelchair passengers make up 14% of passengers which is below the provincial average of 20%. Trip purposes are indicated below. Just over 60% of the service is for non-discretionary trips such as medical and programs. This is a fairly healthy mix relative to other similar services.

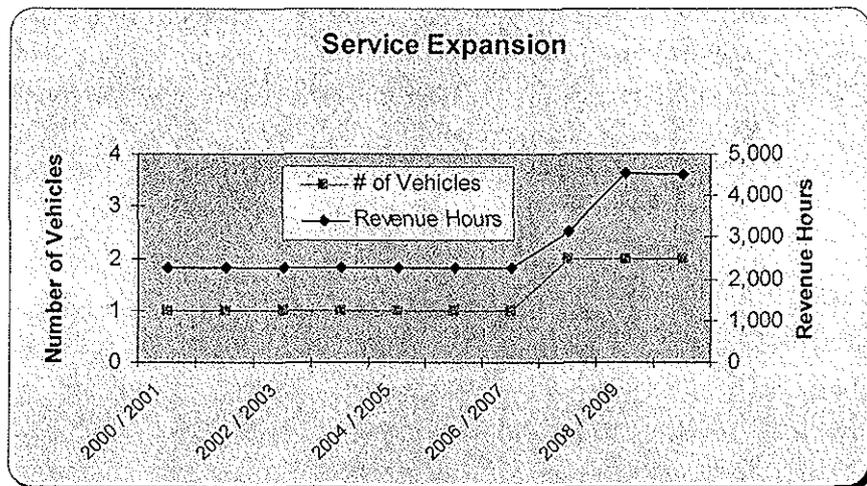


As indicated in the accompanying chart, ridership had been fairly flat until January 2008 when the service was expanded. Rides have increased from 6,700 in 2007/08 to 11,000 in 2008/09. The productivity of the service has fallen from a high of 3.1 rides per hour in the second half of 2001/02 to 2.1 in the first half of 2007/08



and a forecast 2.5 in 2009/10. Rides per hour was just over 2.6 in the first quarter of this year indicating that the service expansion is being well used.

For the most part, increased ridership is related to service expansions. In January 08 there were about 2,000 hours and one vehicle added to the service. This resulted in almost doubling rides.



The following table provides a comparison to other similar systems. Based on the recent improvement in productivity, the Cowichan system is performing at a reasonable level in relation to other similar services.

2008/09 CUSTOM/PARATRANSIT INFORMATION & PERFORMANCE SUMMARY
Year End Actuals

	Municipal Population	# of Vehicles	Annual Rev	Revenue Hrs	Passengers	Taxi Passengers	Total Cost (\$)	Taxi Saver Costs (\$)	Taxi Recoveries (\$)	Taxi Supplement Costs (\$)	Taxi Costs (\$)	BC Transit Share (\$)	Net Local Share (\$)	Cost Recovery	Rides/ Hour	Cost/ Ride	Hours/ Capita
Kamloops *	85,000	13	24,548	107,130	13,799	1,607,077	66,371	-39,560	78,341	105,152	909,624	472,280	12.3%	3.80	\$15.00	0.29	
Nanaimo Regional	134,300	12	20,839	65,933	4,006	1,308,914	14,221	-8,148	36,272	42,346	730,004	357,747	15.2%	2.97	\$19.85	0.16	
Chilliwack	73,100	5	8,428	45,218	12,193	623,235	80,695	-43,039	39,580	77,235	376,143	182,883	8.6%	3.92	\$13.78	0.12	
Vernon Regional	47,300	7	12,245	69,723	8,616	819,494	58,468	-35,671	13,587	36,384	506,464	207,129	11.2%	4.99	\$11.75	0.26	
Cootan Valley *	59,800	7	10,353	34,574	2,921	674,280	25,838	-16,826	11,247	20,259	391,750	215,721	8.2%	3.06	\$19.50	0.17	
Cowichan Valley	63,700	2	4,566	10,982	0	279,850	0	0	0	0	163,046	91,135	7.5%	2.41	\$25.48	0.07	
Nelson & Area	43,600	4	8,130	33,719	236	550,031	0	0	2,078	2,078	75,000	43,664	9.0%	0.68	\$3.94	0.19	
Average	72,400	7	12,730	52,468	6,962	837,555	40,932	-23,874	30,184	47,242	450,290	224,365	10.3%	3	15.62	0.18	

* Custom/paratransit portion only of systems that include a conventional portion.
 1 In service vehicles, does not include spares
 2 Includes Taxi Passengers
 3 Non-Taxi & Health Connections Passengers only
 4 Combined total of custom/para services in Regional District of Central

Source: BC Transit Year End as of March 31, 2009

The Cowichan Valley is unique in terms of service area and population. The total population is similar to several other systems; however the size of the service area makes it the lowest in terms of population density. The only other system that provides a reasonable comparison is the bundling together of several small systems in the Kootenays. The level of service in the Cowichan Valley is well below that of others based solely on population. **Hours per capita are barely half that of Chilliwack and one quarter of Vernon.**

Existing Status of Demand and Supply

A few observations on the service:

- Program related travel dominates the service. 75% of all trips are for senior care facilities and day programs. A few of the programs are Waldon House (day program for seniors), Providence Farm (therapeutic gardening, riding) and Cowichan Secondary. This factor severely limits the ability of the operator to accommodate individual requests for travel. See note above, we are checking June to confirm the number
- School District #79 trips are provided once per week to transport students with disabilities to non-school related programs. This service consumes about two hours per week.
- Geography has a major influence on the productivity of the service. Many trips are for individuals that live in outlying areas. The operator has dedicated times for trips to outlying areas in an effort to provide equity in service provision, as indicated in the accompanying chart. Service is provided in Duncan and North Cowichan at all other times and in between the regional trips.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MAPLE BAY	CHEMAINUS CROFTON ARBUTUS RIDGE MAPLE BAY	MALAHAT MILL BAY COBBLE HILL SHAWNIGAN LAKE COWICHAN BAY MAPLE BAY	MALAHAT MILL BAY COBBLE HILL SHAWNIGAN LAKE COWICHAN BAY MAPLE BAY	LAKE COWICHAN YOUNBOU HONEYMOON BAY CHEMAINUS CROFTON MAPLE BAY	Open to any outlying areas as time permits

2008/09		
	Rides	%
Duncan	4,722	43.0%
N Cowichan	5,288	48.1%
Area A	273	2.5%
Area B	160	1.5%
Area C	289	2.6%
Area D	91	0.8%
Area E	128	1.2%
Area F	32	0.3%
Lake Cowichan and Area I	0	0.0%
Total	10,983	100.0%

Note: There are occasional trips to Lake Cowichan and Area I but zero trips originating in those areas.

- The high cost per ride and low productivity are the result of spreading too little service over a very large area. Productivity could be increased with a greater focus of service on Duncan and North Cowichan or an expansion of service in the core service area.

- Taxis are not used as backup or to supplement the service. There are seven licensees operating 32 vehicles in the Cowichan area. At least two companies operate accessible vehicles.
- Unmet trips – An average 15-20 unmet trips are reported each month with a high of 50 in June.
- The operator reports that the 2008 service expansion was filled with the unmet demand almost immediately and that they are now at the point of capacity once again.
- Service hours per capita are well below other similar custom/para communities by a factor of two to four.

Following are a number of strategies to deal with this situation and the anticipated growth in demand over the next two years.

Strategies and Recommendation

The strategies discussed below focus on the immediate issue of balancing the supply of service with the demand.

Meet with user groups – This is the first thing that should be done to get a better sense of how to manage the demand. As well, it can provide a picture of potential growth in demand due to changes in the social and health sectors. The operator has already begun this process and has achieved some success with Waldon House.

Revenue Hours – Right now there are two full time shifts operating; from 7am to 3pm and 9am to 5 pm. In effect, for four hours per day there is only one vehicle in service. A review of the detailed schedules indicates that there are very few gaps where the vehicle is idle. The relatively low productivity of the service is a result of geography and individual trip request rather than low demand or poor scheduling practices.

Based on the population, interviews with major users, discussions with the operator and comparisons to other communities, additional handyDART service is warranted. It is suggested that, in terms of priority, one additional vehicle be added in 2010/11 which would go a long way to bringing the Cowichan service up to the level needed to accommodate the immediate demand for service from groups and individuals. Another vehicle could be added 12 to 18 months later. This would bring the system up to four in-service vehicles and 0.15 hours per capita and in line with other similar systems.

Summary Information for Additional Revenue Hours	
<i>Annual Impact:</i>	
Additional Service Hours: 2,000	Additional Operating Cost: \$120,000
Additional Vehicle Required: 1	Additional Revenue: \$10,000
Additional Ridership: 5,000	Net Local Share: \$38,000*
*plus \$12,000 local share of debt service for vehicle	

Taxi Supplement & Taxi Saver - While the handyDART staff tries to accommodate as many passenger trips as they can each day, there are times when this is not always

possible to meet passenger needs. Passengers sometimes request trips when the handyDART vehicles are already booked in service. Other riders may wish to travel outside of the regular handyDART hours of operation. During those times when handyDART is unable to meet passenger needs, taxi companies can play a valuable role in augmenting services to people with disabilities. BC Transit's Taxi Supplement and Taxi Saver Programs are two ways for taxi companies to help provide this type of transportation.

While both Taxi Supplement and Taxi Saver programs involve the use of taxis and a partnership between the handyDART Operator, the Municipality, BC Transit and participating local taxi companies, the two programs are quite different in terms of how they are administered. Each program will be described separately.

Taxi Supplement is a program that operates in conjunction with handyDART and allows some door-to-door trips to be dispatched to taxis when the vehicles are fully booked for a particular time slot. Taxi supplement is a good way to increase capacity and provides additional travel options for passengers. The cost per trip is generally lower than that for a handyDART trip. A budget of \$12,000 is suggested and would accommodate approximately 1,000 one-way trips.

Summary Information for Taxi Supplement

Annual Impact:

Additional Operating Cost: \$12,000

Additional Ridership: 1,000

Net Local Share: \$3,500

Taxi Saver is a program that allows eligible clients to buy taxi coupons or scrip at a discount for use on local taxis. The scrip is subsidized at a rate of 50%. Thus a book of coupons with a face value of \$80 is sold to eligible clients for \$40. Once the individual has a book of coupons, they contact the taxi service directly to book their ride. This program provides an affordable option for occasional, spontaneous travel and during times when handyDART does not operate. However, one of the common complaints is that despite a 50% subsidy, not all registered handyDART users can afford this service. Also, due to the program universality, it also provides an income subsidy to many people who do not require it. A budget of \$30,000 (net \$15,000) would accommodate up to 2,800 rides annually.

Summary Information for Taxi Saver

Annual Impact:

Additional Operating Cost: \$15,000 (net)

Additional Ridership: 2,800

Net Local Share: \$5,000

Travel Training – This is a program that provides handyDART clients, seniors and others in the community with the skills required to use the accessible conventional bus service independently including how to:

- plan a route
- identify and access the most convenient and safest bus stops and bus routes
- identify landmarks
- utilize personal safety strategies
- enter and exit the bus and transfer safely
- take charge if they become lost
- ensure they are seated safely in priority seating
- secure a mobility aid.

This program can be delivered by the operator or an outside agency. Both Victoria and Kelowna use outside agencies whose sole purpose is to deliver this service. This program can begin at a very modest level with a budget of \$5,000.

Summary Information for Travel Training

Annual Impact:

Additional Operating Cost: \$5,000

Net Local Share: \$1,700

handyDART Eligibility - A review of the existing client base applications suggests that the operator is doing a good job in screening potential users, although they have not been using proper Eligibility Verification Forms. This does not mean that there is no opportunity to transfer handyDART customers to the conventional system. Travel Training allows the operator to suggest that clients who are capable use the regular bus system for all or some of their travel.

handyPASS – This is a pass that is provided to registered handyDART users and allows for the purchase and use of Taxi Saver coupons. As well, pass holders can travel on the conventional bus at the concession fare and travel with an attendant at no extra cost. This provides a very low cost incentive to handyDART users to use the conventional bus for some or all of their travel needs. There is no cost to implementing this feature.

Scheduling Software – For scheduling purposes, the dispatcher currently uses the Microsoft Outlook Calendar function. An enhanced scheduling software package to help with client registration, trip booking and scheduling, trip dispatch and reporting would serve as a critical component to increase ridership.

Other Measures - Other measures that may help to improve productivity include: 1) grouping of trips from remote areas (already in place); 2) designated times for shopping trips; 3) travel time standards, especially for longer trips; 4) 'will call's for medical trips where return times are uncertain; and 5) negotiating trip times(already in place). These

strategies are employed in other systems to reduce mileage and increase the rides per hour. The operator is reviewing all of these measures.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Based on the population, interviews with major users, discussions with the operator and comparisons to other communities, additional handyDART service is warranted.

It is suggested that, in terms of priority, one additional vehicle be added in 2010/11 which would go a long way to bringing the Cowichan custom transit service up to the level needed to accommodate the immediate demand for service from groups and individuals. Another vehicle could be added 12 to 18 months later. This would bring the system up to four in-service vehicles and 0.15 hours per capita and in line with other similar systems. In the longer term, taxi supplement/saver programs could be considered to augment the level of handyDART service.

It is recommended that the CVRD approve the strategies described in the report, subject to the availability of local and provincial funding.

Summary Information for handyDART		
<i>Annual Impact:</i>	<i>Local Cost</i>	<i>Rides</i>
Revenue Hours	\$50,000	5,000
Taxi Supplement	\$3,500	1,000
Taxi Saver	\$5,000	2,800
Travel Training	\$1,700	
handyPASS	\$0	

If you have any questions please call.

Yours truly,



Myrna Moore
Regional Transit Manager, Vancouver Island Coastal
BC Transit

Copy: Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary, CVRD

November 18, 2009
File: COW.1

Jim Wakeham
Manager, Facility, Fleet, and Transit Management
Cowichan Valley Regional District
175 Ingram Street
Duncan, BC V9L 1N8

Dear Jim:

SUBJECT: Fare options for the Cowichan Valley Transit System and Cowichan Valley Commuter

This report outlines proposed fare changes for the Cowichan Valley Transit System and the Cowichan Valley Commuter, and provides an estimate of the impact on ridership and revenue.

Conventional Transit Fares

In 2008/09, prepaid fares accounted for about 60% of ridership in the Cowichan Valley, which is lower than most comparable transit systems such as Comox Valley (68%) or Campbell River (74%). Monthly passes and other prepaid fares are encouraged, not only because they are more convenient for passengers, but because prepaid fares encourage greater and more regular transit use.

The table below outlines the current fares for the Cowichan Valley Transit System. The adult cash fare of \$1.75 is close to the average for other similar transit systems across B.C., while the adult monthly pass price of \$43 is slightly below the average. However, the average fare (or average revenue per passenger) in the Cowichan Valley was \$1.20, which is higher than the average of \$1.05. This is in part because fewer Cowichan Valley passengers are using more heavily discounted monthly passes. Cost recovery (revenue as a percent of total costs) in the Cowichan Valley was 20.8% in 2008/09 compared with an average of 26% for other similar sized communities. Transit fares in the Cowichan Valley were last increased in March 2008.

Proposed Fare Changes

	Current	Option 1	Option 2
<i>Cash fares</i>			
Adult	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.00
Senior	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00
Student	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00
Children under 5	free	free	free
<i>Tickets (book of 10)</i>			
Adult	\$14.00	\$16.00	\$16.00
Senior/student	\$11.50	\$13.50	\$13.50
<i>Monthly passes</i>			
Adult	\$43.00	\$48.00	\$48.00
Senior	\$32.50	\$36.00	\$36.00
Student	\$32.50	\$36.00	\$36.00
College student	\$32.50	\$36.00	\$36.00
College semester	\$100.00	\$112.00	\$112.00

The table outlines two proposed fare change options. In Option 1, all cash fares would increase by \$0.25, resulting in a 14-17% fare increase. Ticket prices would increase proportionately. Monthly pass prices would increase 11-12%.

This lower increase for monthly passes would help to offset the impact of higher cash and ticket prices, and it would help to encourage more passengers to use passes.

Option 2 is very similar to Option 1, but it proposes increasing all cash fares to \$2.00, eliminating the current difference between adult and student/senior cash fares. Since there would still be a discount for student/senior ticket and pass pricing, this will create further incentive for these markets to switch to monthly passes. A similar proposal for a flat cash fare has recently been made for the Victoria Regional Transit System.

Transit ridership is sensitive to fares, so some impact on ridership can be expected when fares are increased. Based on the experience measured in many communities, the general rule of thumb is that for every 10% increase in the average fare, transit ridership will decrease by about 3%, all else being equal. This doesn't necessarily mean that ridership will actually decrease; it just means that ridership would be lower than it otherwise might be if fares were not increased. The proposed fare changes are forecast to have the following impacts on revenue and ridership:

Option 1: Under this option, annual revenue is forecast to increase by \$25,000 or about 6%. The higher fares will be partly offset by lower ridership, with a projected fare impact of 11,000 fewer annual rides, or about 3%. Since cash and ticket fares increase by a greater percentage than monthly passes, a slight (5%) shift from cash and tickets to monthly pass use is forecast.

Option 2: Under this option, annual revenue is forecast to increase by \$31,000 or nearly 8%. Because of the higher cash fare increase for seniors and students, there will be an even greater impact on ridership among these groups with an overall ridership impact of 13,000 fewer annual rides or nearly 4%. The shift from cash fares to monthly passes for seniors and students will be greater than under Option 1 (10%).

Custom Transit (handyDART) Fares

Currently, the handyDART fare is \$2.00 for cash or tickets (there are no monthly passes). It is proposed that handyDART fares be increased to \$2.25, in line with the \$0.25 increase in conventional cash fares. The higher fare for handyDART relative to conventional transit service reflects the premium level of service (door-to-door) and the higher cost of providing this service on a per trip basis.

Cowichan Valley Commuter Fares

The Cowichan Valley Commuter service has been in operation since October 2008. When the service was introduced, a two zone fare structure was established. Zone 1 is south of Koksilah Road, and includes Mill Bay, Shawnigan Lake, and Cobble Hill. Zone 2 is north of Koksilah Road and includes Duncan and Cowichan Station. Currently, about 70% of passengers board in Zone 1 while the remaining 30% board in Zone 2.

Unless there is a very clear physical separation or barrier, zone boundaries can be difficult to define and they often appear arbitrary to transit users. A significant number of Cowichan Valley Commuter passengers drive to their stops and use park and ride facilities. As a result, the zone boundaries tend to encourage people who live in the Zone 2 area to drive to a park and ride facility in the Zone 1 area.

There have been some requests from the public for a reduced rate for students and seniors on the Cowichan Valley Commuter service, similar to the fare structure for the local service. However, this is a limited service (operating only in one direction during peak periods on weekdays) that is targeted for the adult work commuter market. The service is expensive to provide and there is limited capacity available. In addition, the existing and proposed fare structures already provide a substantial discount for regular commuters who purchase a monthly pass, and the fares are significantly lower than alternative services between the Cowichan Valley and Victoria. As a result, introduction of a reduced fare for students and seniors is not recommended for the Cowichan Valley Commuter.

It is proposed to replace the current multi-zone fare structure with a single zone. This would address the issues described above, and it would also simplify the fare structure for passengers and operators. The table to the right outlines the proposed fares. The new single zone fares would be priced between the current Zone 1 and Zone 2 fares. This means that for 70% of passengers who currently board in Zone 1, fares would increase. The remaining 30% of passengers would see a fare decrease.

Proposed Fare Changes

	Current	Proposed
<i>Cash fares</i>		
Zone 1	\$6.00	\$7.00
Zone 2	\$8.00	
<i>Tickets (book of 10)</i>		
Zone 1	\$54.00	\$63.00
Zone 2	\$72.00	
<i>Monthly passes</i>		
Zone 1	\$150	\$165
Zone 2	\$200	
Zone 1 S. Island Pass	\$185	\$200
Zone 2 S. Island Pass	\$235	

The impact on ridership is forecast to be minimal, since demand for this service is relatively inelastic with respect to price due to limited alternatives, and because any decrease in ridership from Zone 1 would likely be offset by increased ridership from Zone 2. It is projected that the proposed fares will result in a slight increase in the overall annual fare revenue (roughly \$5,000 or 2%) which is shared between the CVRD and the Victoria Regional Transit Commission.

Please call me if you have any questions about this material.

Yours truly,



Peter Murray
 Senior Transportation Planner
 BC Transit

CVRD 2010 Requisition Review

Transit (107)

Description	2008	2009	2009	Proposed	\$ Increase	% Increase
	<u>Tax Requisition</u>	<u>Tax Requisition</u>	<u>% Increase (Decrease)</u>	<u>2010 Tax Requisition</u>	<u>(Decrease)</u>	<u>(Decrease)</u>
A) Core Budget	\$1,021,687	\$1,021,687	0.0%	\$1,024,222	\$2,535	0.2%
Main Reasons for 2010 increase:						
					\$18,146	1.8%
					\$30,278	3.0%
					-\$6,989	-0.7%
					-\$38,900	-3.8%
				Subtotal	\$2,535	0.2%

Plus Supplemental Items

		Anticipated Funding Method			\$	\$	%
		<u>Reserves</u>	<u>S.T. borrow</u>	<u>Operating</u>			
B) Recommended by Corporate Leadership Team	1) 20% of 2009 surplus to Operating Reserve				\$22,400	\$22,400	2.2%
Total tax requisition increase recommended by CLT					\$24,935	\$24,935	2.4%

22

		Anticipated Funding Method			\$	\$	%
		<u>Reserves</u>	<u>S.T. borrow</u>	<u>Operating</u>			
C) Additional items to be discussed	1) Inc. in operating cost (re spare bus)				\$16,000	\$16,000	1.6%
	2) Bus shelter maintenance (partial year)				\$45,000	\$45,000	4.4%
	3) Add HandyDART bus (partial year)	\$25,000			n/a	n/a	
	4) Increase in service to Cow. Station	\$19,975			n/a	n/a	
	5) Inc. in service Area E (Eagle Hghts)	\$21,500			n/a	n/a	
		<u>\$66,475</u>			Subtotal	\$61,000	6.0%
Total tax increase including all supplemental items					\$85,935	\$85,935	8.4%

Notes:

- 1) The reserve account has a current balance of \$91,419.



STAFF REPORT

**TRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING
OF DECEMBER 9, 2009**

DATE: November 28, 2009
FROM: J.E. Barry, Corporate Secretary
SUBJECT: Bus Shelter Update

Recommendation:

That it be recommended to the Board that the change in scope to the revised Public Transit Agreement and Public Transit Infrastructure Program Funding Agreement be approved; and that the Board Chair and Corporate Secretary be authorized to sign the revised agreement.

Purpose:

To approve the change in scope to the revised Public Transit Agreement and Public Transit Infrastructure Program Funding Agreement.

Background:

The CVRD has previously received \$335,982 under the Public Transit Agreement and Public Transit Infrastructure Program Funding Agreement from the Federal and Provincial Governments. The scope of the projects approved under these agreements were:

- BusLine Automated Answering Service
- TMS Scheduling Software
- Bus Shelters

The Transit Committee discussed bus shelters at three meetings in 2008. However, the implementation of the projects listed above has been delayed for a number of reasons. These reasons include a change in our transit operating company in 2008; difficulty in obtaining consensus on a standard bus shelter design between three municipalities and seven electoral areas; the 2008 Local Government Elections and referendums; changes in Elected Officials due to the November 2008 election resulting in different opinions on bus shelter designs; limited staff resources due to Regional District staff reorganization in 2008/09; the expedited implementation of the Cowichan Valley Commuter service in the fall of 2008; and the logistical complexity of obtaining approvals for installation and placement of bus shelters in both municipal and provincial jurisdictions.

With the change in having the Transit Service function becoming part of the Engineering and Environmental Services Department and with the creation of a dedicated Transit Manager position, staff have been able to review the operating company changes (re: effect on the BusLine Automated Answering Service and TMS Scheduling Software components); and the logistical complexities involved with this project.

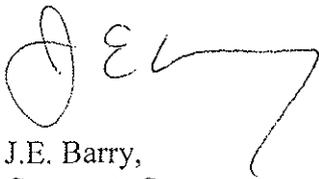
Upon further review of the agreement, a few items were in need of change. Consequently, staff have applied for, and received preliminary approval for an extension to the agreement to March 31, 2011. As well, staff have requested a change to the scope of the project by deleting the BusLine Automated Answering Service and the TMS Scheduling Software components. The funds previously allocated to these two components have been moved to the Bus Shelter component. This will increase the number of bus shelters from approximately 30 to 32 shelters. This increase in bus shelters will directly serve transit riders better than the previous two "behind the scenes" components. In addition, the reference to aluminum/metal structures was also removed to allow some flexibility if desired.

In September 2008, the Committee passed a resolution that the dollar amount for bus shelters be allocated directly to CVRD member municipalities based on the local funding partnership percentages for the transit function. For example, since North Cowichan pays approximately 32% of the cost of the transit function, the municipality would receive approximately 32% of the 32 bus shelters (i.e. 10 shelters). The Committee's plan was that North Cowichan would receive a cheque from the CVRD for approximately \$107,000 for the sole purpose of purchasing and installing bus shelters in their area of whatever design they wished. However, while reviewing the details of the agreement, it was discovered that transferring the equivalent dollar value to the municipalities was not permitted by the agreement. In other words, the grant money was provided to the CVRD and the CVRD must proceed with the expenditure of the funds directly.

Next Steps

Staff will work with BC Transit and the operating company to determine the best suited locations for the shelters based on actual ridership use. Discussions with the municipalities will take place regarding obtaining property easements, installation and maintenance options. Discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will take place regarding similar issues and obtaining permits for the electoral areas. Staff will work with BC Transit to determine the best design options that are supported by BC Transit as they are currently embarking on a province wide project to standardize bus shelters.

Submitted by,



J.E. Barry,
Corporate Secretary

Cowichan Valley Regional Transit

3 – 5280 Polkey Rd.
Duncan, B.C. V9L 6W3

November 18, 2009

Transit Report

Effective September 8, 2009 the Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System underwent significant service changes.

Changes included reconfiguring routes 2 & 3. The # 2 route does the opposite route back to the city center.

The # 3 now goes to the Commons Mall and back down Canada, left on James St.

This change allows more service to the High School, Pool and Rec Center, Library as well as the businesses along the James St. corridor.

We have received many compliments on this change as now passengers no longer need to go downtown and transfer to a # 3 to get to the hospital area.

Ridership

The passenger counts done on a daily basis are no longer done.

The counts were not reliable. A specified sampling is far more effective and accurate.

Commuter Service

Route changes to both runs were very well accepted by our passengers.

The # 66 starts at London Drugs and follows a more direct route to downtown Victoria.

The # 99 travels through the Beach estates to Mill Bay (Frayne Center) no longer servicing the west side of Shawnigan Lake.

The runs are more efficient and timely. We have received many compliments on the route changes.

Yours truly

Bill Young

Manager

Cowichan Valley Regional Transit

handyDART Operational Report

CVRD Transit Committee
Meeting, November 26th, 2009

Prepared by
Georg Stratemeyer
Executive Director
Volunteer Cowichan
1 Kenneth Place, Duncan BC
www.volunteercowichan.bc.ca

Original: <i>File</i>	Copies to:
Board:	
Committee(s) <i>Transit 11/25</i>	
Directed by:	Date:
File # <i>8550-01</i>	

Equipment

Our two buses are well maintained and in good working condition. We had the need to temporarily borrow a bus from Nanaimo in order to keep the system going. The associated costs and administrative tasks necessary to make this possible make this an option that we would prefer not to use.

Passenger Counts

We are continuing to average 1,000 trips per month or approx. 2.7 trips per hour with the City of Duncan and North Cowichan making up the majority of trips. Rural areas are generally under-represented with the exception of Area E.

From our perspective we have reached capacity unless we can find ways to improve efficiency. According to the projected ticket sales of 2.5 trips per hour, we have been able to manage a slight increase.

Reasons for not being able to further increase efficiency are related to the geography of the area we serve and the low population density for most of the region. We are continuously looking for ways to improve capacity within the range of our budget.

2

Unmet Trips

We continue to turn away on average 30 trip requests per month. These are new clients to the system and existing clients wanting to book additional trips. We make every effort to negotiate with the client and their service provider pick up times are convenient for them and allow us to accommodate the request.

Trip Data

About 75 % of our trips are repeat trips, clients booked for regular appointments, 25% are single trips, clients need the bus for one occasion only. While we will provide trips for recreational purposes, we follow a priority system to accommodate medical, work and school related trips first.

We are tracking unmet trips with more detailed information for future planning purposes. Data shows that

66% of requests were for medical and work related trips

85% of requests are for single use

61% of requests are from Duncan, 37% are from North Cowichan

The picture that emerges is that handyDART is used by a smaller number of existing clients regularly, rather than a large number of clients occasionally. We think this is because we strive to be reliable and will not cancel a booked repeat trip to accommodate a single trip request. This would explain the high percentage of single use requests that go unmet.

98% of unmet trips are from Duncan and North Cowichan. We are strive to accommodate rural clients to work towards are more balanced distribution of rides across the CVRD.

Short Term Objectives

Policies

We are reviewing our operating policies to improve the way we deliver our service.

Dispatching Software

We are continuing to search for dispatching software that would allow us to track client booking requests and client data more efficiently.

3

Tracking Devices for Buses

We are researching the possibility of tracking via GPS the location of our buses. The intent is to develop data that will allow us, when compared with trip booking information, to optimize scheduling.

Cowichan Valley handyDART – System Overview

Operating Principles

The operating philosophy is to improve the quality of life of clients by offering assisted transportation.

The primary objective is to provide fair and equal access to handyDART in all participating electoral areas and municipalities.

Client Group

handyDART is a shared transportation service for people with physical or mental disabilities that create mobility issues. Clients require assistance to board the bus, some are in wheelchairs and some require escorts. The largest client group is seniors, followed by people receiving medical treatment that prevents them from operating a vehicle safely, for example people undergoing dialysis or receiving chemotherapy, followed by clients living with a mental disability. Trip purposes can be grouped into medical appointments and rehabilitation services, work and school related trips and trips relating to social/emotional well being of our clients.

Scheduling

Based on our current client demand the following weighted schedule is emerging:

Mondays – Maple Bay

Tuesdays – Crofton/Chemainus/Arbutus Ridge

Wednesdays – South End

Thursday – South End

Fridays – Crofton/Chemainus/Lake Cowichan

Saturdays – flexible

As we add new clients, trips will be planned around those destinations.

We have started with providing transportation to and from Duncan as a central location. The next step will be to offer service within outlying areas such as Lake Cowichan, Mill Bay and Chemainus. As we are introducing the service we are learning where clients are located, how to most effectively offer our service and how to fill our capacity without creating unrealistic expectations.

Booking a trip:

- a. Client has to contact the office to register as a client
- b. Client has to contact the office at least 24 hours prior to desired pick up time to book a trip
- c. Clients will be picked up during a pick up window of 15 minutes prior to and following the arranged time.

Operating Hours

Service: Mo-Fr, 7 am to 5 pm
Sa, 9 am to 4 pm

Dispatching: Mo-Fr, 8:30am – 4:30pm

Ticket Price:

\$2 per trip (We accept tickets distributed through the Cowichan United Way to Member Agencies)

Contact Information

Telephone: 250-748-1230

Email: pt@volunteerowichan.bc.ca

Equipment

two 2007 Ford Polar Buses (diesel) with a seating capacity of 20 or 16 plus 2 wheelchairs or 8 plus 4 wheelchairs.

**Cowichan Valley Paratransit
2009 Ridership Data**

Summary		
Population 65+		13675
	Ridership	
	% of Pop	
Jan		1001
Feb		962
Mar		1144
Apr		952
May		956
Jun		1051
Jul		1049
Aug		1062
Sep		1032
Oct		1000
Nov		
Dec		
Total		10209

City of Duncan		
Population 65+		1430
	% of total 65+ pop.	10.5%
	Ridership	
Jan		450
Feb		380
Mar		465
Apr		376
May		409
Jun		456
Jul		422
Aug		405
Sep		395
Oct		413
Nov		
Dec		
Total		4171

District of North Cowichan		
Population 65+		4920
	% of total 65+ pop.	36.0%
	Ridership	
Jan		468
Feb		495
Mar		558
Apr		468
May		461
Jun		492
Jul		539
Aug		535
Sep		556
Oct		524
Nov		
Dec		0
Total		5096

Town of Lake Cowichan		
Population 65+		480
	% of total 65+ pop.	3.5%
	Ridership	
Jan		0
Feb		0
Mar		0
Apr		0
May		0
Jun		0
Jul		0
Aug		0
Sep		0
Oct		0
Nov		0
Dec		0
Total		0

Area A Mill Bay/Malahat		
Population 65+		770
	% of total 65+ pop.	5.6%
	Ridership	
Jan		27
Feb		24
Mar		26
Apr		41
May		26
Jun		26
Jul		38
Aug		31
Sep		29
Oct		17
Nov		
Dec		
Total		285

Area B Shawnigan Lake		
Population 65+		735
	% of total 65+ pop.	5.4%
	Ridership	
Jan		6
Feb		9
Mar		17
Apr		18
May		14
Jun		13
Jul		17
Aug		10
Sep		10
Oct		7
Nov		
Dec		
Total		121

Area C Cobble Hill		
Population 65+		1265
	% of total 65+ pop.	9.3%
	Ridership	
Jan		21
Feb		20
Mar		34
Apr		20
May		35
Jun		45
Jul		21
Aug		23
Sep		29
Oct		23
Nov		
Dec		
Total		271

Area D Cowichan Bay		
Population 65+		495
	% of total 65+ pop.	3.6%
	Ridership	
Jan		2
Feb		7
Mar		13
Apr		7
May		5
Jun		14
Jul		6
Aug		9
Sep		5
Oct		12
Nov		
Dec		
Total		80

Area E Glenora/Sahtlam/Cow Station		
Population 65+		210
	% of total 65+ pop.	1.5%
	Ridership	
Jan		23
Feb		23
Mar		29
Apr		22
May		6
Jun		5
Jul		6
Aug		13
Sep		8
Oct		4
Nov		
Dec		
Total		139

Area F Cowichan Lake/SkutsFalls		
Population 65+		230
	% of total 65+ pop.	1.7%
	Ridership	
Jan		4
Feb		4
Mar		2
Apr		0
May		0
Jun		
Jul		
Aug		
Sep		
Oct		
Nov		
Dec		
Total		10

Area I Youbou/Meade Creek		
Population 65+		210
	% of total 65+ pop.	1.5%
	Ridership	
Jan		
Feb		
Mar		
Apr		
May		
Jun		
Jul		
Aug		
Sep		
Oct		
Nov		
Dec		
Total		0

Unmet Trips		
Percent of Total		2.9%
	Unmet Trips	
Jan		41
Feb		17
Mar		34
Apr		23
May		18
Jun		40
Jul		32
Aug		34
Sep		23
Oct		30
Nov		
Dec		
Total		292

Ridership Data is tracked by address of client

Population Information taken from 2006 Census, age group 65+ most likely the client group for Paratransit, the information is given as an approximation of need in each area

J.E Barry
 Corporate Secretary, CVRD Transit Committee
 175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC V9L 1N1

Gina Talbot
 1030 Lomas Rd
 Duncan BC V9L 2N1

Greetings Transit Committee,

I have been Transit user since it started in the Cowichan Valley and am grateful that we have this service here. The routes I most commonly use(d) are #3 Quamichan - Marchmont to downtown, Marchmont to Cowichan Bay and #4 Maple Bay to Campbell St.

The last year or so has been the most difficult years to use transit and I have had to decrease my use of the transit system. I go out less, take more taxi's and ask others for rides more often now, and only use public transit as a last resort.

The reason for this is that there is a problem with busses being on time for transfers. I can no longer make appointments downtown and be sure of being able to get to them as there's a good chance I will not make the transfer from the mall to downtown. Most of the time when I want to transfer, I have had to ask the bus driver to call ahead and have the bus wait for me. Some drivers wait for me to convince them of the "urgency" of me making such a transfer. It is really none of their business and is not their place to judge whether my appointment is important enough for them to make the effort to get there in time.

I have noticed a pattern in that usually when they are late it is because their next route does not start right away. This has been common since the service started. For example if the bus is supposed to get to the mall by 3pm, and their next route does not start until 3:10 the drivers goal is to get to the mall at 3:10 and not the scheduled time of 3. The last time this happened the next bus downtown was 30 minutes later. This was a day that it was too painful to walk and I had time constraints as well. I had to call a taxi to take me downtown. I have many medical appointments downtown and would like to participate in more volunteer and part-time work, but the stress of not knowing if I can get to appointments or meetings on time has deterred me.

The new schedule has also impacted my usage. My ability to get home via the bus has been greatly reduced as the #3 is no longer an option due to the extended time it takes on its new route up to the Commons. It is painful and exhausting to sit on a bus for 45 minutes. The Maple Bay route, now my only option for getting home, has too many gaps of 2 and 3 hours between routes.

One positive aspect about the new schedule is that I can get home on the #3 from the Cowichan Center/Library – this could open many doors for me and I thank you for that. If I could be sure I could transfer from the #3 to one of the busses going down James St. on the way to the Centre, I would start utilizing this option.

Regards,

Gina Talbot