

**Victoria Regional
Transit Commission**

**Councillor Susan Brice –
Chair**
District of Saanich

Mayor Richard Atwell
District of Saanich

Mayor Alice Finall
District of North Saanich

Mayor Lisa Helps
City of Victoria

Mayor Barb Desjardins
Township of Esquimalt

Mayor Carol Hamilton
City of Colwood

Mayor Maja Tait
District of Sooke

Councillor Marianne Alto
City of Victoria

November 17, 2016

Mayor & Councilors
City of Victoria
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Re: Improving transit service by improving transit travel times

Public transit is a key component of the region's transportation network. Reliable, consistent and frequent service attracts riders and contributes to the economic, social and environmental fabric of communities. Public transit supports the City of Victoria's desire to create economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and livable communities by connecting people at a local and regional scale.

Each day, the Victoria Regional Transit System accommodates between 80,000 and 100,000 rides and moves thousands of transit customers along corridors in Victoria such as Douglas, Quadra, Hillside/Lansdowne, Shelbourne, Gorge, Fort, Yates, Pandora and Johnson. Ridership continues to grow at a rate of one per cent per annum, adding 800 to 1,000 new transit rides to the system per day.

Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly more challenging to accommodate existing and new transit riders. Across the region, traffic congestion, higher transit ridership, lane reductions and changes to speed limits are resulting in slower travel times and decreased on-time performance. These factors ultimately impact the overall quantity and quality of transit services that can be offered.

A key focus this fiscal year was reviewing and rescheduling routes to better reflect increased travel times and improve on-time performance and reliability. Given the fixed level of resources available, these schedule improvements were achieved through a reduction in service frequency of approximately two per cent across the region. Additional run time adjustments on remaining routes are anticipated next year and will likely result in further service reductions of a similar level.

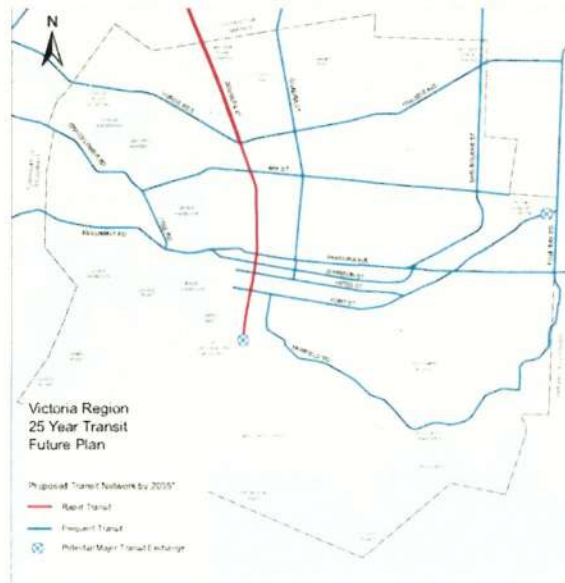
Under these conditions, the Transit Commission's ability to meet existing public demands for service, strategically develop the transit system to achieve the ridership goals identified in the Victoria Region Transit Future Plan, and support local government transit related objectives are challenged. Accordingly, the Transit Commission is seeking local government commitment to work with BC Transit to address these factors.

Research indicates that overall street design is the largest contributor to transit delays and resolution requires a coordinated approach by transit and road authorities. The Transit Commission requests that local governments provide direction to their municipal staff to work with BC Transit on developing cohesive plans to improve transit travel times along arterial corridors outlined as Frequent and Rapid Transit Corridors in the Transit Future Plan.

BC Transit staff are available to work with City staff to identify measures to improve transit as part of a multimodal approach to corridor planning and improvements. Included in this review would be an assessment of the value of transit priority measures such as improvements to road geometry, SmartBus technologies, transit signal priority and signal timing. Consideration should also be given to improving transit stops to enhance the passenger realm and transit operations.

This type of collaboration is already occurring in some instances. The City of Victoria, the Ministry of Transportation and the Transit Commission are taking steps on Douglas and Highway 1 through investments in bus lanes and transit signal priority that are starting to yield the benefits of improved on-time performance and travel time savings for passengers. This is extremely advantageous to the region given that up to 38 per cent of people travelling on the Douglas corridor in peak times are doing so on transit.

Victoria Official Community Plan Transit Network



There are several other corridors with very high levels of transit ridership, including Fort Street, Gorge Road, Quadra and Bay Street, that could benefit from a multi-modal design approach to address travel delays. BC Transit staff are extremely willing to collaborate with city staff on progressing design ideas for these corridors.

The Transit Commission seeks your ongoing support to ensure public transit remains a viable and attractive transportation choice for residents of Victoria and the region as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Susan Brice'.

Susan Brice, Chair
Victoria Regional Transit Commission

cc: Commission Members