

May 25, 2010

SUBJECT

2010/11 Annual Service Plan

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the 2010/11 Annual Service Plan for the Victoria Regional Transit System to the Commission for **APPROVAL**.

BACKGROUND

The Commission at its meeting of March 9, 2010 approved a budget and funding plan to add additional transit services to the 2010/11 base of 901,100 hours. The total budget envelope allows for an expansion of up to 12,000 annual service hours or 9,600 part year hours – to be used within both the conventional and custom transit systems. The proposed expansion totals 11,976 annual hours or 9,725 part year hours. It is proposed that this expansion be implemented in September 2010. This report presents the service priorities recommended for expansion for the Commission’s consideration. The table below summarizes the expansion recommended for this year.

Victoria	2009/10 Base	2009/10 Expansion	2010/11 Base	2010/11 Expansion	2011/12 Base	Variance 2010/11 to 2011/12
Conventional Transit	680,009	693,151	713,885	721,851	722,585	8,971
Community Bus	65,909	70,351	73,022	73,049	73,173	151
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>745,918</i>	<i>763,502</i>	<i>786,907</i>	<i>794,900</i>	<i>795,758</i>	<i>8,852</i>
Custom	114,869	114,965	115,212	116,943	118,335	3,123
TOTAL	860,787	878,467	902,118	911,843	914,094	11,976

DISCUSSION

September Expansion

For the Fall, there are several elements to the service plan.

1. Continuing service associated with the detours created by the McTavish Exchange project.

2. Making improvements to the Frequent Transit Network.
3. Improving service to the HandyDART system
4. Creating a new route in the West Shore to provide additional direct service to the Westshore Town Centre Mall.

McTavish Interchange (6,700 hours)

The McTavish interchange project has resulted in a number of transit service detours requiring additional service hours. There are approximately 6700 hours required from April 1 onward to keep the existing service detours running – a significant part of the total hours available. Some rationalization of hours will be undertaken on the Route #82 to reduce these costs. The interchange is expected to open in March 2011.

Frequent Transit Network (2,000 hours)

The Frequent Transit Network (FTN) aims to provide a network of all-day, every day routes with a 15 minute minimum service, 15 hours a day, 7 days a week. Minor improvements to the FTN are proposed for the #6 Quadra/Esquimalt route in the 6AM to 7AM period as well as in the 10:00PM to Midnight (late evening) period. Given the influence of the #6 as one of the top 2 routes in the system, continued improvement to the service is warranted.

An additional change to the FTN will be the introduction of the #16 Express replacing the #26A service between UVIC and Uptown. Currently the #26 operates from UVic to Uptown and Dockyard. There are full runs as well as a number of short turn #26A services that operate only between UVic and Uptown. This route is another focus of the Master Plan to upgrade towards rapid transit service.

As a first phase, it is proposed that the #26A be turned into the #16 UVic Express via McKenzie as a limited stop service during peak hours. Stops will occur at UVIC, Shelbourne, Blenkinsop, Quadra, and Uptown. BC Transit has identified alternate routing via Mckenze, Quadra, Tattersal, Saanich to Uptown as superior in terms of its linkage with development and potential to increase ridership. A public consultation program will be undertaken with respect to this routing following consideration of the Victoria Transit Master Plan.

HandyDART (3,000 hours)

BC Transit is currently reviewing accessible services throughout the province. The average age in the victoria region continues to increase and along with that are changes to the way HandyDART services are utilized. Increasingly, the system is becoming booked by large users such as Dialysis patients, seniors and disabled daily programs, restricting the ability of customers to access the system on a single request basis. A recent review of the services indicated that upwards of 75% of the service hours are for group and subscription trips, leaving little opportunity for individuals to use the system for social trips. Expansion to the system will open up that opportunity to many users.

It is recommended that the equivalent of a full time bus be added to the system totalling 3,000 annual hours or 1,700 part year hours. This will improve the ability of the system to offer non-subscription trips to the region, especially during peak hours. The last handyDART increase was a 1,000 hour addition in 2007/08.

West Shore Town Centre Mall (0 hours – reallocated from #82)

With the move to the Station Avenue exchange in fall 2009, there was a reduction in service to the Westshore Town Centre Mall due to the realignment of routes. Since that move, there have been considerable requests for improved access to the mall, particularly from the mall management and seniors. A request has been put forward to the District of Langford for a new pullout to be created on Kelly Road in proximity to the mall. It is proposed a new community transit service originating out of the Station Avenue Exchange be added to provide additional connections to the Dunford/Carlow area and directly to the mall via Jacklin Road and Kelly Road. The exact routing and scheduling will be subject to analysis of run times and vehicle utilization but will use streets already served by transit.



Map 2 – General areas of service from Station Avenue

Late Night Service Review

The Commission requested that late night service be offered for a three month trial from January to April 5th 2010 on Friday and Saturday nights. The trial occurred on three routes: #4 UVic, #6 Esquimalt/Royal Oak Exchange and #14 UVic/Vic General with the requirement that the last trip leave downtown Victoria at 1:30 AM.

The trial was evaluated using the following criteria:

- Ridership
- Financial
- Safety & Vandalism

- Operational Sustainability

Ridership

Friday night service between 10 PM and midnight averaged 750 customers during the trial (unchanged from 2008). The later service added 344 customers between midnight and 1:30 AM. On Saturday nights, the trial service added 540 customers to a late evening base of 1130. The Saturday late evening service 10PM to midnight has grown by 141% over the past year. Overall, it is estimated that 11,000 rides were provided between midnight and 1:30 AM on the trial service.

The Victoria Regional Transit System carries an average of 55 rides for every hour of service provided. Average system productivity between 10 PM and midnight (all weekdays included) is approximately 27 passengers per hour. The trial service (midnight to 1:30 AM) does not perform as well as the service between 10 and 12. Of the six route patterns tested, Friday night had only one (Route #4 - UVic/Downtown) travelling from downtown to UVic that was above current late night productivity, while Saturday night had three. Of the four route patterns that had a reasonable productivity rate, three were from downtown to UVic. Service to Esquimalt and return trips to downtown were not well used.

Table 1 – Average late night passengers per hour

Route Name	Direction	Average Passengers/Hr	
		Friday	Saturday
Route 4 to Uvic	Eastbound	38	48
Route 4 Downtown	Westbound	13	10
Route 6 to Esquimalt	Southbound	13	18
Route 6 to Royal Oak	Northbound	17	30
Route 14 to Uvic	Eastbound	22	59
Route 14 to VGH	Westbound	12	20
<i>Average 10-Midnight</i>		31	17
<i>Average Midnight - 1:30</i>		19	32

Financial

The majority of those using the trial service had some form of pre-paid fare (80% on Friday night and 79% on Saturday with at least 41% being non-UPass holders. 20% of the trial ridership was cash paying customers. This fare payment pattern is not significantly different from fare payment at other times of the service day.

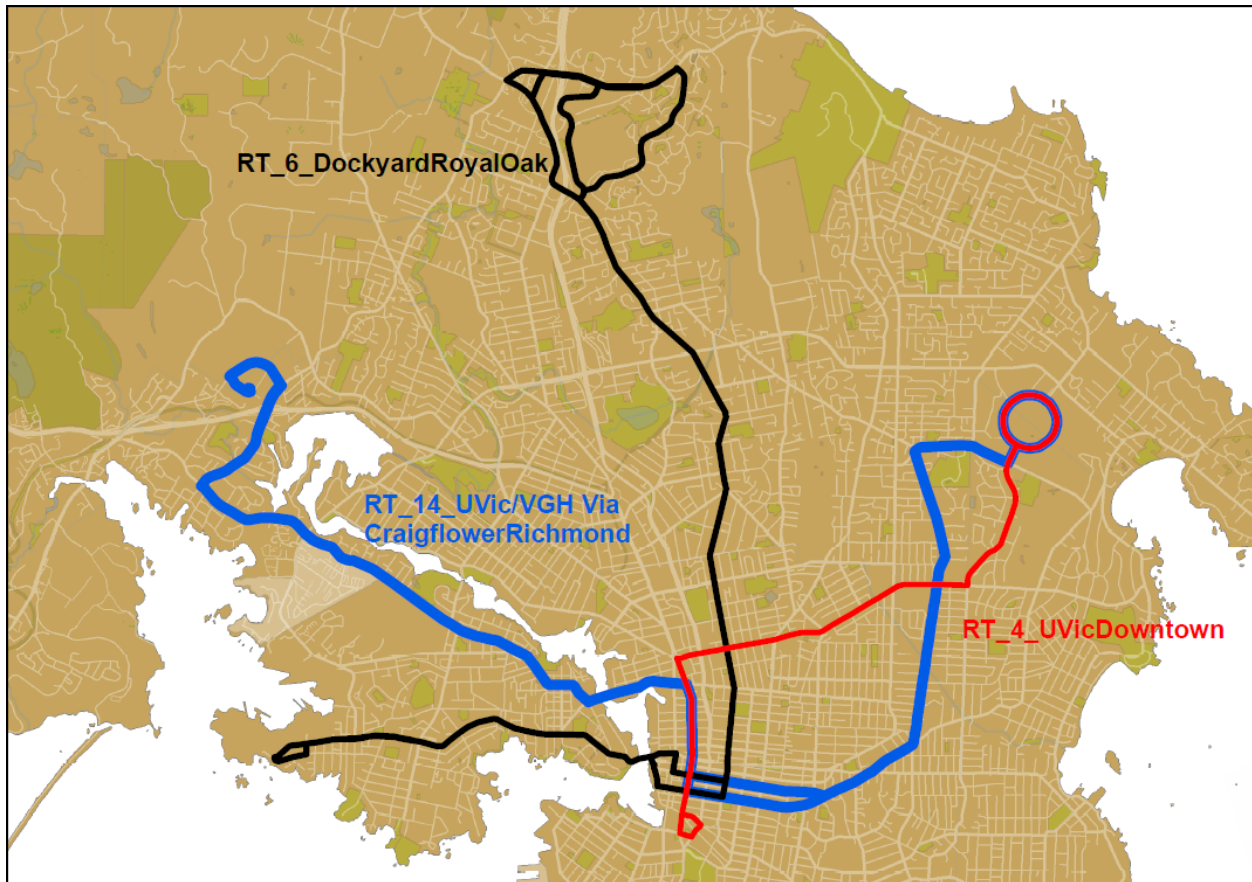
Table –2 System wide late evening daily fare profile

Fare Payment	Friday		Saturday	
	10PM – 12AM	12AM – last bus	10PM – 12AM	12AM – last bus
Cash	20%	20%	22%	21%
Tickets	7%	9%	7%	8%
UPASS UVIC	26%	20%	26%	24%
UPASS CAM	8%	6%	8%	6%
OTHER PASSES	39%	45%	37%	41%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Costs during the trial period were covered with overtime and in some cases temporary shift adjustments. However, the shifts adjustments and voluntary overtime are not sustainable for as a permanent business situation. The extension of the service day to 22 hours from 20 hours would require new late night shifts in a number of areas to ensure that customer service, supervision, servicing and management are all appropriately manned. These additional service support costs make the decision to extend the service day one of considerable financial impact. Extending service for a full year on the three routes (Friday and Saturday night only) is estimated to cost \$558,500 (higher than the October estimate of \$484,400 due to higher estimates for maintenance and operating costs). Extending all services that currently operate until midnight is estimated at to cost \$1.4 Million.

Table 3 - Friday & Saturday Late Night Service Costs

Cost area	Updated Annual Costs e (3 routes 2 days per week)	Original Estimate	Difference
Maintenance	\$297,600	\$248,000	\$49,600
Transit Supervision	\$102,480	\$85,400	\$17,080
Depot & Customer Service	\$13,354	\$0	\$13,354
Service Operating Cost	\$86,400	\$72,000	\$14,400
Additional Operator	\$58,696	\$79,000	(\$20,304)
Total Costs	\$558,530	\$484,400	\$74,130



Map 3 – Trial night services.

Safety & Vandalism

The trial service was similar to the existing late evening services with respect to vandalism and incidents. A total of 14 incidents were reported due to passenger rowdiness with two incidents being classified as minor vandalism (broken glass). Operators reported a significant amount of garbage on the buses. Service change offs were reported to be within normal operating parameters.

Operational Sustainability

There were no reported cancellations of service during the trial period.

Conclusions

The late night service was well received by the public, UVic, and the City of Victoria. As expected, ridership between midnight and 1:30AM was lower than ridership experienced between 10 PM and midnight. Ridership was predominantly in a single direction to UVic from downtown with very low ridership on the return trip. The #14 appears to be the one route that had sustainable ridership, though again in one direction. There is no single market group that used the service.

The overall cost of continuing the service is high due to the costs of extending the service day in all operating, maintenance, service and support functions. The addition of service on three routes for the two evenings has the equivalent cost of approximately 6,000 hours of service. Extension of service to 1:30 AM 6 days a week would have the equivalent cost of 14,000 service hours. As the Commission has established a service plan with constrained expansion for the next three years, extension of the service day is not recommended. It is recommended that priority be given to service improvements addressing customer service issues with existing service or improving service where greater ridership can be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

The Victoria Regional Transit Commission **APPROVE** the 2010/11 Annual Service Plan.

Respectfully,



Manuel Achadinha
President and Chief Executive Officer