
TO: Transit Select Committee **MEETING:** July 11, 2019

FROM: Erica Beauchamp
Superintendent, Transit Planning and
Scheduling **FILE:** 8500 03 CTE

Subject: January 2020 Service Expansion

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion for January 2020 be approved.
2. That the 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansion for January 2020 be approved.

SUMMARY

A 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion and a 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansion in January 2020 will enable ridership growth and continued transit improvements, taking a step towards the mode share target of 5% by 2039. Recommended expansion initiatives for January 2020 include:

- Route adjustment to Route 7, to downtown with no routing to Cedar;
- Creation of Route 8 from Cedar to VIU;
- Creation of Route 78 to Cassidy/Nanaimo Airport;
- Extension of Route 11 Lantzville to include Westwind Dr;
- Restructuring of Route 30 (Phase 1)

The net Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) cost of the 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion is \$470,450 and requires two additional CNG buses to be leased from BC Transit. The cost for the 1,700 hour custom transit expansion is \$67,900 and requires the lease of one additional handyDART light duty vehicle from BC Transit. These are the net costs to the RDN given the cost-sharing model with BC Transit where RDN pays 53.31% of conventional transit and 33.31% of custom transit. The costs for both transit expansions are included in the RDN Financial Plans.

BACKGROUND

One of RDN Transit's goals, identified within the Board endorsed Transit Future Plan (2014), is to enhance the current transit system to better connect the region's urban and rural communities with their downtowns and neighbourhood centres, thus offering an attractive alternative to driving and increasing the environmental sustainability of the region and its municipal partners. The Transit Future Plan also sets a transit mode share target of 5% for all trips by 2039, requiring the RDN Transit system to grow from 2.7 million to 13.5 million trips per year. Such a goal is achievable through regular, annual expansions to the transit system. Each expansion helps to accomplish goals outlined in the Transit Expansion Priorities List (Attachment 1), including enhanced transit frequency, increased span of service, route restructures and establishing of routes to other transportation hubs.

The proposed 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion and the 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansion for January 2020 will increase ridership and provide better transit service. In the 2019/2020 Annual Operating Agreement with BC Transit, the RDN transit system operated 128,005 service hours, with a fleet of 52 conventional Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. In this operational period, there were 3,387,000 passenger trips, representing a mode share of approximately 2%.

Conventional Transit Expansion

Recommendations for the January 2020, 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion involves three main initiatives, the first of which is the board approved allocation of 510 hours towards Sunday/Holiday-level service during the current three non-operational days (Christmas Eve, New Years Day and Good Friday). The remaining 5,390 hours are recommended to be implemented across several transit priorities, with hour allocation breakdowns in Table 1.

Table 1. 5,900 hr Expansion allocation breakdown

Affected Service	Suggested Modification	Hours Required
Holiday	added 3 days of service	510
Route 7	separate into 2 routes	-1300
Route 8	creation of new route	6180
Route 11	extension to Westwind	110
Route 30	route adjustment	-700
Route 78	creation of new route	1100
Total		5900

Route 11 Lantzville is proposed to be extended in the Eastwind/Northwind area to continue on Southwind to Westwind to Northwind (Attachment 2), using 110 hours. Extension of the route provides transit to approximately 300 residents and provides better transit to the community.

The remaining 5,280 hours for the January 2020 expansion includes the implementation of some priorities from the South Nanaimo Local Area Transit Plan (SNLATP). Separating Route 7 (Cinnabar/Cedar) into two routes: Route 7 Cinnabar to Downtown (Attachment 3) and Route 8 Cedar to VIU (Attachment 4). This was widely supported during public engagement and provides more efficient transit service to residents of Cinnabar, decreasing ride times by up to 40 minutes on the runs that currently travel through Cedar before going downtown.

Creation of Route 8 from Cedar to VIU includes the addition of several trips, providing better service to the Cedar community and introduces transit service to Tenth St, a previously unserved corridor. Transit service along Tenth St. was a common request during public engagement for the SNLATP. Hours required for this route implementation are partially offset by hours from the Cedar portion of the Route 7.

During public consultation, some feedback centered around the need for service to the South Wellington, Cassidy and Nanaimo Airport areas. Creation of Route 78 Cassidy/Airport is the recommended solution for transit service to this currently unserved area. Proposed frequency for Route 78 is 3 days per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), every two hours from 8:00am to 6:00pm. Route 78 (Attachment 5) travels from Downtown Nanaimo to South Parkway Plaza to Cassidy & Nanaimo Airport, with a stop in South Wellington.

The final recommended priority for the January 2020 expansion is a restructuring of Route 30 (Attachment 6) for routing efficiency, streamlining service from under utilized route segments. Analysis of ridership data in the current Northfield Rd/Dorman Rd segment yields less than one ride per day. In the Boundary Rd area, streamlining the route creates efficiencies and is less convoluted for riders. The suggested streamlining off Rosstown Rd. remains a possibility to coincide with the construction of the Boxwood Connector and closing of Rosstown Rd at Bowen Rd.

Custom Transit Expansion

A 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansion within the City of Nanaimo, aids to decrease the wait list for subscription trips and to lower unmet trips. A subscription trip means a regularly scheduled trip on one or more days per week at the same time each day, for which a client does not need to continuously call in to book them and an unmet trip is when a client attempts to book at their desired day/time and is unable to secure a custom transit seat for their specified request. This expansion, coupled with the upcoming Custom Transit cancellation policy, will serve together to decrease the number of unmet custom transit trips and shorten the subscription trip waitlist, a backlog of clients needing/wishing to be on a subscription to eliminate the need to continually book needed trips. This expansion makes custom transit more available to those members of the public that truly require these custom services.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion for January 2020 be approved.
2. That the 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansion for January 2020 be approved and implemented within the City of Nanaimo.
3. That alternate direction be provided.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The net RDN cost of the 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion is \$470,450 and requires two additional CNG buses to be leased from BC Transit. The cost for the 1,700 hour custom transit expansion is \$67,900 and requires the lease of one additional handyDART light duty vehicle from BC Transit. These are the net costs to the RDN given the cost-sharing model with BC Transit where RDN pays 53.31% of conventional transit and 33.31% of custom transit. The costs for both transit expansions are included in the RDN financial plans.

Transit expansion costs would be allocated among the areas receiving expansion services in accordance with the "Southern Community Transit Service Area Conversion Bylaw No. 1230, 2001". The distribution of costs among those areas receiving improved/expanded transit services is allocated as follows:

Table 2. Estimated cost breakdown for conventional and custom transit expansions for January 2020

	Estimated net cost of 5,900 hour conventional expansion	Conventional Estimated cost per \$100k	Estimated net cost of 1,700 hour custom expansion	Custom Estimated cost per \$100k
Nanaimo	\$401,216.07	\$1.60	\$57,836.26	\$0.20
Lantzville	\$10,517.47	\$3.30	\$1,516.12	\$0.50
Electoral Area 'A'	\$58,717.00	\$0.80	\$8,464.20	\$0.10
Electoral Area 'C'**	\$536.00	\$0	\$77.37	\$0.00
Total	\$470,450.53		67,893.94	

**Estimated Cost for Area C in conventional expansion are due to allocation bylaw and overall combined split

NOTES: Costs are estimated based on current budgeted cost; Inflation is estimated at 2%; Allocation to Electoral Areas/ Municipalities will remain at the same %

The 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion and the 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansion are both included in the financial plan. At this time, if the 5,900 hour annual conventional transit expansion and the 1,700 hour annual custom transit expansions are not approved, BC Transit will offer the hours to another community.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Transportation and Transit - Work with BC Transit to expand transit service (e.g. transit hours) to connect important community hubs.



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June 18, 2019

Reviewed by:

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- D. Pearce, Director, Transportation and Emergency Services
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

1. Transit Expansion Priorities Matrix
2. Map of Route 11 Lantzville Extension
3. Map of Route 7 Cinnabar to Downtown changes
4. Map of Route 8 Cedar to VIU
5. Map of Route 78 Cassidy/Airport
6. Map of Route 30 NRGH restructure (Phase I)