

MINUTES
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2 and via MS Teams
770 Vernon Avenue
February 27, 2025 at 5:30 PM

ROLL CALL

In Attendance: Councillor Zac de Vries (Chair), Trevor Barry, Rachel Corder, Janine Konkol, James Coates, Colin Stepney, Kelsea McLaughlin (5:36 p.m.), Dominick Ali

Regrets: None

Staff: Kathleen Gallagher, Senior Transportation Planner; Jason Hodgins, Manager of Infrastructure Design and Construction; Angela Hawkshaw, Committee Clerk

Guests: Chelsea Mossey, Senior Manager, Government Relations, BC Transit; Levi Megenbir, Senior Transit Planner Work Lead, BC Transit

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by T. Barry and Seconded by R. Corder: “That the Minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting held November 28, 2024 be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Ali, Barry, Corder, Konkol, de Vries, Coates, Stepney, McLaughlin

OPPOSED: None

MOVED by J. Konkol and Seconded by C. Stepney: “That the Minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting held January 23, 2025 be adopted as circulated.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Ali, Barry, Corder, Konkol, de Vries, Coates, Stepney, McLaughlin

OPPOSED: None

COMMITTEE BUSINESS ITEMS

CHAIRS REMARKS

The Chair welcomed committee members, and the following was noted:

- Council recently provided direction to staff on the Quadra McKenzie Plan (QMP), specifically requesting further revisions to the draft land use framework.
- The focus of these revisions will be on scaling back proposed changes in the Quadra-North area.
- Any modifications to lanes on McKenzie Avenue have been deferred to a future process that will include consultation with BC Transit.
- The revised draft QMP will be presented to Council before proceeding to an additional round of public engagement.

BC TRANSIT VICTORIA FUTURE PLAN

The Senior Manager, Government Relations and Senior Transit Planner Work Lead presented on BC Transit Victoria Future Plan (PowerPoint on file). The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- BC Transit ridership has now surpassed pre-COVID-19 levels.

- The conventional transit system operates over 900,000 service hours annually.
- 80 diesel double-decker buses are being purchased to address immediate transit needs in the Victoria region. Over the next five years, these buses will both replace retiring vehicles and expand the fleet.
- A new Saanich Transit Centre is in the planning phase.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) is making changes to position Uptown as a central transit hub.
- Park-and-ride facilities are distributed across the transit system, with potential for new locations in the Peninsula and Westshore to improve connectivity between suburban areas and the core.
- The Island Highway Transit Priority Project is a major step forward for regional rapid transit.
- Peak demand, particularly after school hours in high-traffic areas, remains a challenge due to limited bus availability. The expansion of BC Transit's double-decker fleet aims to help address this issue.
- All buses are equipped with bike racks.
- Current transit improvements do not rule out the possibility of future light rail, and peak travel data is being analyzed.
- Service expansion in the area north of McKenzie and west of Quadra is being considered as part of the Quadra Corridor Transit Plan, with feasibility discussions underway with MOTT.
- BC Transit recently presented to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission on improving access to Victoria International Airport (YYJ).
- A vehicle replacement program is in place to replace aging buses, separate from fleet expansion initiatives.
- Phase 1 of the Tillicum-McKenzie Corridor Transit Plan is scheduled for 2025–2026.
- BC Transit coordinates with school districts at least once per year. With fewer dedicated school buses, more students rely on public transit, creating ongoing capacity challenges.
- An analysis is underway to determine which routes will permanently operate with double-decker buses.
- Mode share discussions may be more effective when measured in kilometers traveled rather than trip counts.
- BC Transits Annual Service Plan will be completed next year.
- Alternative fare models, such as distance-based pricing or zone-based fares, may be worth exploring.
- Committee members are encouraged to provide feedback to the Victoria Regional Transit Commission.
- Initiatives like a discounted children's pass could help increase ridership among younger passengers.
- BC Transit collects general demographic data on ridership through student passes, though the data is not comprehensive.
- Effective transit planning requires alignment with land use and active transportation strategies.
- While affordability and fares are factors, riders prioritize frequent and reliable service.
- BC Transit offers a Community Travel Training program for individuals interested in learning how to use the bus system. More information is available through BC Transit offices.
- There are ongoing discussions about adding braille signage at bus stops, though no formal plans are in place.

The representatives from BC Transit exited the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

POTENTIAL MOTOR VEHICLE ACT AMENDMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee discussed a memo from Councillor De Vries (Memo on file), and the following was noted:

- Addressing systemic and cultural issues is necessary for effective change to take place for all road users.
- Recommendations 2 and 3, which address speed limits, may lead to confusion. A more practical approach could involve requesting the province to establish default speed limits for urban areas, with signage indicating the speed limit upon entering these zones. However, varying speed limits between municipalities may be impractical for road users.
- Maintaining the current system, where a sign is required whenever a road is not 50 km/h, may have greater tax implications.
- Red arrow traffic signals are not recognized under the *Motor Vehicle Act (MVA)*.
- Eliminating right turns on red lights could impede traffic flow and increase idling. Right turns on red lights might be more suitable for rural settings than urban areas.
- "Elephant feet" markings, which consist of large dotted blocks along crosswalks, indicate that cyclists can ride through the crosswalk. Motorists must yield to cyclists in these marked areas, and further clarity could be provided through updates to the MVA's language.
- Consistency is essential to avoid driver confusion about when to expect cyclists riding through intersections from sidewalks, particularly at intersections without traffic lights.
- Tree overgrowth and shrubbery near areas where local trails cross roads can obstruct visibility and create hazards.
- The District actively works to maintain sightlines at these crossings to improve safety.
- Recommendation 4 in the memo clarifies that cyclists are responsible for riding as close to the right side of the rightmost through lane as possible.
- It is the responsibility of the road user to educate themselves on the MVA and road safety regulations.

MOVED by T. Barry and Seconded by J. Konkel: "That the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend that Council consider the recommendations outlined in the February 20, 2025, memo from Councillor De Vries regarding advocacy for changes to the Motor Vehicle Act (MVA) through letter writing and Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Resolutions."

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Ali, Barry, Corder, Konkel, de Vries, Coates, Stepney, McLaughlin

OPPOSED: None

FUTURE COMMITTEE ITEMS

The committee discussed future committee items, and the following was noted:

- Sight line issues pose a safety risk and could be explored further.
- The District receives service requests related to sight lines. If the issue is on public property, District staff will address it. If it is on private property, the owner is consulted and given an opportunity to resolve the issue.
- Saanich has over 500 km of roadways. While staff work to address sight line concerns as they arise, they cannot proactively catch all issues. Residents are encouraged to report concerns to the Engineering Department.
- Delivery vehicles parking in bike lanes remains an ongoing issue. Upcoming work on off-street parking regulations may include provisions for requiring loading zones in new developments.
- While active transportation is important, the needs of loading zones, commercial vehicles, goods movement, and the business community should also be considered.
- Potential topics for future discussion could include parking demand management strategies on rights-of-way and Saanich-owned property, as well as the electrification of these areas.
- Paid street parking could be explored as a funding source to provide free bus passes for students and seniors.

- Sidewalk improvements and expansion could be explored further.
- Widening and lighting the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trail could enhance year-round active transportation and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. The Capital Regional District (CRD) is actively working on this.
- It may be beneficial to invite the CRD to present to the committee on the topic of widening and lighting the Galloping Goose and Lochside Trail.
- The BC Government is prioritizing infrastructure upgrades and widening of the Galloping Goose Trail.
- The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) includes sidewalk improvements, which are outlined in the plan.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by R. Corder and Seconded by J. Coates: “That the meeting be adjourned at 7:38 p.m.”

RESULT: Carried 8 TO 0

IN FAVOUR: Ali, Barry, Corder, Konkell, de Vries, Coates, Stepney, McLaughlin

OPPOSED: None

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE CLERK