



## CORPORATE REPORT

To: CAO for the Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2019-10-08

From: Melissa Geddert, Planner 1

File No: 8330-02-2811

**Subject: Chilliwack and Region Transit Future Action Plan Public Engagement Report**

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### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board receive the BC Transit Public Engagement Summary which outlines the public engagement process for the Chilliwack and Region Transit Future Action Plan;

**AND THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District share the findings with the Agassiz-Harrison Route 11 and Hope-Agassiz Route 22 partners and participating First Nations for feedback;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District, in partnership with BC Transit, engage with the City of Abbotsford and District of Mission to obtain feedback on future transit goals as they relate to inter-regional connections and regional systems integration to ensure consistency between the respective Future Action Plans.

### STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

Support Environmental Stewardship

### BACKGROUND

The 2012 Transit Future Plan is a road map for transit expansion, identifying a number of short and medium term priorities for the Chilliwack and Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) transit service areas. The Plan outlines the services, infrastructure and investments required to achieve the priorities set out in the Plan. Since its completion, many of these priorities have been successfully implemented within the FVRD coordinated sub-regional transit services. Working with BC Transit and municipal partners, the FVRD has been able to expand and improve service in the Fraser Valley Express (FVX #66) and the Agassiz-Harrison Connector (AG-H #11) and implement the new Hope-Agassiz Connector (H-AG #22).

With many of the short and medium term priorities met, BC Transit is updating the 2012 Plan with the Transit Future Action Plan (TFAP). The TFAP will build on the goals and priorities identified in the 2012 Plan and identify future transit needs for the next 25 years for the Chilliwack and FVRD transit service areas. The development of the TFAP is a collaborative process and includes engagement with stakeholders and the public to ensure service and infrastructure priorities align with public interest. This report provides a brief overview of the public engagement process and feedback received. BC Transit's detailed draft Public Engagement Summary is attached for information.

## DISCUSSION

The TFAP consultation was conducted in two phases. The first phase was an on-street transit rider customer satisfaction survey conducted in the winter of 2018. On-street interviews were conducted at random throughout the Chilliwack and FVRD Transit systems, including the FVX #66. The second phase included four public open houses and an online survey hosted during April of 2019. Open houses were held in locations across the region serviced by Chilliwack and FVRD transit systems. Table 1 illustrates the engagement timeline and responses received.

**Table 1 Public Engagement Overview**

Date	Survey	Response
Dec. 10-12, 2018 & Jan. 10, 2019	Customer Satisfaction Survey (On-street/on-bus)	420
April 1- Apr. 12, 2019	Online Survey	385
	Open House	Attendees
April 1, 2019	Chilliwack Senior Secondary	20
April 1, 2019	Sardis Public Library	15
April 2, 2019	District of Kent Council Chambers	20
April 2, 2019	Hope Recreation Centre	10
Total Participation		870

The public consultation was conducted with the following goals in mind:

- 1) Determine travel patterns, transit use and level of satisfaction with the FVRD and Chilliwack transit system
- 2) Identify transit issues and opportunities
- 3) Use information and data collected from the public consultation process to inform the goals and priorities of the TFAP
- 4) Ensure service and infrastructure priorities of the TFAP align with the public interest.

## Public Open Houses and Survey Results

BC Transit facilitated the engagement with the support of City of Chilliwack and FVRD Staff. The engagement process was a success, with 805 survey responses received and 60 people attending the open houses. Although attendance for each open house was relatively low, the feedback provided was very meaningful. The discussion surrounding FVRD coordinated transit service emphasized the importance of providing transit service to rural and remote communities and how access to transit opens opportunities for social and economic inclusion.

The survey results and open house feedback indicate an expressed desire to see service expand on all FVRD coordinated routes. Expanding service to Metro Vancouver Sky Train and increasing service during peak travel times and later into the evening was a high priority identified for FVX Route #66. Increased weekend and evening service was a priority identified for AG-H #11, and increased midday trip frequency was a priority identified for H-AG #22. Year-round service to Cultus Lake was a priority identified for Route #6.

BC Transit and the FVRD are undertaking a feasibility study to determine the potential for transit service expansion to the north side of the Fraser River between the District of Kent and District of Mission. During the engagement staff solicited feedback from the public in existing FVRD transit service areas on how they would envision this service. Survey and open house responses showed support for this type of service and respondents specified a desire for connection to the West Coast Express, particularly for peak morning and afternoon commute times. Phase two of the feasibility study will involve thorough engagement with the communities north of the Fraser between and including the District of Kent, District of Mission, Harrison Hot Springs, and First Nations along the corridor.

The engagement also provided opportunities for the public to offer general feedback on the region's transit systems. Key themes emerging from the open-ended feedback included:

- 1) Improved reliable connections to Metro Vancouver, either as rapid or frequent transit
- 2) Advanced fair technology and better fair integration between the various transit systems in the FVRD
- 3) Improved FVX frequency overall, particularly during peak time and later evening
- 4) Real-time information to know when the bus is arriving

The FVRD and BC Transit were also invited to participate in the Harrison Hot Springs community open house. Although this event was outside the formal engagement process, input was taken into consideration and will be incorporated into the priorities of the Transit Future Action Plan.

## Next Steps

BC Transit staff has collected and summarized the public engagement responses. The next step for the project is for FVRD staff to share the draft Public Engagement Summary with the District of Hope, District of Kent, Village of Harrison Hot Springs and participating First Nations for their information and additional input. Furthermore, BC Transit and FVRD staff will consult with the City of Abbotsford and District of Mission on future priorities for inter-regional connections and transit service integration to

ensure consistency between the respective Future Action Plans. The drafting of the Abbotsford-Mission Transit Future Action Plan is underway and will outline the future goals and priorities for the Central Fraser Valley transit system. The Abbotsford-Mission plan mentions ongoing improvement to regional and inter-regional transit services and determines that more detailed service priorities will be included in the Chilliwack and Region TFAP. With the exception of routes 21 Aldergrove/Abbotsford and 31 Abbotsford/Mission, inter-regional service in the Central Fraser Valley is provided either by the FVRD or TransLink. Since the FVRD's services are incorporated into the Chilliwack Transit Future Plan, inter-regional service improvement priorities associated with FVX #66 and potential north of Fraser service between District of Kent and District of Mission will be included in the Chilliwack and Region TFAP.

## **COST**

There are no costs associated with this report. Any future cost associated with the proposed Transit Future Action Plan priorities and potential transit expansion options will be subject to local government approval.

## **CONCLUSION**

The engagement for the Chilliwack and Region Transit Future Action Plan has been a collaborative process between BC Transit, the FVRD and municipal partners. The responses from the public engagement have been collected and analyzed, and a thorough summary of this information is attached. Findings of the public engagement in relation to AG-H #11 and H-AG #22 will be shared with municipal and First Nations partners for comment. Once all the feedback is received, BC Transit will incorporate the public, local government and First Nation feedback related to regional connections into the priorities of the Chilliwack and Region TFAP. Staff will bring forward to the Regional and Corporate Services Committee the draft future transit priorities and Chilliwack and Region TFAP once they have been prepared by BC Transit.

BC Transit and FVRD will also consult with the City of Abbotsford and District of Mission on future priorities for inter-regional connections and transit service integration to ensure consistency between the respective Future Action Plans.

## **COMMENTS BY:**

**Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning:** Reviewed and Supported

**Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services:** Reviewed and Supported

**Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services:** Reviewed and Supported.

**Jennifer Kinneman, Acting Chief Administrative Officer:** Reviewed and supported.

