

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2025-03-13

From: Theresa Alexander, Planner 1

Subject: BC Transit - North of Fraser Public Engagement

Reviewed by: Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning and Initiatives
David Urban, Deputy Director of Regional Services
Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services/Deputy CAO
Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer

RECOMMENDATION

This report is being brought forward for the Board's information and there is no staff recommendation.

BACKGROUND

The proposed North of Fraser transit route introduces transit service between the District of Kent and City of Mission, benefiting residents along the corridor (District of Kent, Village of Harrison Hot Springs, Electoral Areas G and C, and First Nations communities including Leq'a:mel First Nation, Sq'ewlets (Scowlitz) First Nation, and Sts'ailes).

This project was included in the 2024-2027 Transit Improvement Program Initiatives (TIPs), approved by the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Board in September 2024. It aligns with the Regional Growth Strategy and supports initiatives such as the Active Transportation Network Plan (in-progress) and Official Community Plans.

In November 2024, the FVRD Board directed staff to implement Phase 2 of the North of Fraser feasibility study, which includes detailed costing, infrastructure assessment, the identification of service participants, meetings with municipal Councils, Electoral Area Directors and First Nations Chief and Councils, and public engagement.

Public engagement activities will provide input and feedback from existing and future transit users on travel patterns, proposed routing, bus stop locations, service span, and route connections in Agassiz and Mission. This process will be led by BC Transit and supported by the FVRD and its partners (local governments and First Nations).

DISCUSSION

BC Transit will gather public input through a public survey and three open houses in communities along the proposed route. Engagement activities will be coordinated with FVRD staff, First Nations, and local government partners. The engagement period is scheduled for April 25 – May 16, 2025.

Preliminary Engagement

An initial engagement session was held at Leq'a:mel First Nation on January 16, 2025 at the request of the Nation. The event attracted approximately 50 attendees from Leq'a:mel, **Sq'ewlets**, and Sts'ailes First Nations, as well as residents and Directors from Electoral Areas C and G. Feedback was generally positive, with the focus of the discussions around route frequency, days of service, destinations and public safety concerns.

Upcoming Engagement

Public Survey: BC Transit will host a survey on its engagement website: www.engage.bctransit.com. The survey will open for a three-week duration, from April 25 to May 16, 2025. Printed copies of the survey will be made available at a number of locations, including the City of Mission, the District of Kent and Harrison Hot Springs offices, First Nations band offices, and community centres.

Public Open Houses: BC Transit will host three open houses in communities along the proposed transit route.

- Deroche Community Hall – Monday, May 5, 5:00–8:00 pm
- Harrison Mills Community Hall – Tuesday May 6, 5:00–8:00 pm
- Kent Community Recreation and Cultural Centre – Wednesday, May 7, 5:00–8:00 pm

Promotion of Engagement Opportunities

BC Transit will provide project information and promote the upcoming engagement activities in the following ways:

- BC Transit and FVRD news release
- Project information and survey on BC Transit's engagement website
- Paid newspaper advertisements (Agassiz-Harrison Observer, Mission City Record)
- Interior bus advertisements (Routes 71, 72)
- BC Transit social media posts, shared by FVRD
- Direct emails to partners, stakeholders, and community groups

BC Transit appreciates the continued support of the FVRD Board and Electoral Area Directors and welcomes any assistance in promoting engagement opportunities to maximize public participation.

COST

BC Transit is currently undertaking additional analysis to determine more detailed cost estimates and service design. This information will allow for discussions on service participation and will be used to finalize a North of Fraser service area establishment bylaw and inform transit service agreements with First Nations.

CONCLUSION

BC Transit's public engagement process for Phase 2 of the North of Fraser feasibility study will provide valuable feedback from residents, First Nations, and stakeholders. The results will help inform service planning, routing, and implementation decisions. Staff will continue to work closely with BC Transit and partners to ensure a successful engagement process.