



March 15, 2024

Jim Wakeham
Senior Manager, Facilities & Transit Division
Cowichan Valley Regional District
175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC V9L 1N8

Dear Jim Wakeham,

Following the recent communication to local governments on February 23 regarding BC Transit's 2024-25 Budget and Service Plan, we would like to provide you with an update on the outcome of our expansion prioritization process to confirm expansion initiatives that will be moving forward for implementation. As outlined in that communication, BC Transit is receiving a \$162.6M operating grant for 2024-25 that will enable BC Transit and many of our local government partners to expand service levels to meet increased demand.

Every year, BC Transit's expansion prioritization process is used to rank all expansion requests across the province according to strategic priorities including ridership productivity, critical fixes (such as chronic pass-ups and capacity issues), alignment with existing land uses and GHG mitigation, and functional capacity. In addition to the evaluation ranking, other factors must be considered including capacity of the operational facility, planned critical infrastructure, and vehicle availability. Local governments across the Province have requested an unprecedented level expansion for 2024/25, and this has exceeded the availability of matching funding and resources. Therefore, the results of our expansion evaluation have been applied to our list of expansion requests to determine where available Provincial expansion funding will be allocated.

The following expansion initiative(s) have been approved for implementation:

NANAIMO – COWICHAN EXPRESS (NCX)	Introduction of additional trips on the Nanaimo – Cowichan Express (NCX) in the evenings (Fridays and Saturdays).	500 annual service hours	No expansion vehicles
COWICHAN CUSTOM	Introduce basic Sunday service and extend weekday hours.	1,400 annual service hours	1 expansion vehicle

The following expansion initiative(s) have not been approved for implementation and can be put forward for consideration in the next annual transit expansion cycle.

COWICHAN CONVENTIONAL	Implement priorities from South Cowichan Local Area Transit Plan including service improvements to Eagle Heights. Introduce 7x Cowichan Lake trips on Saturday, Add an additional trip on the 6 Crofton-Chemainus	2,700 annual service hours	2 expansion vehicles
----------------------------------	---	--	--------------------------------

In the coming months, BC Transit will work with your local government to prepare for the implementation of expanded transit service to your system. This will include regular engagement with staff to ensure that the expanded service is consistent with the expectations of our local government partner. More precise details regarding the changes to service will be finalized confirmed through a transit service implementation plan that will also confirm the service implementation timeline.

As we go forward, we are continuing to monitor ridership growth and the associated demand for service expansions and working closely with the Province to establish future funding needs. In the meantime, we remain committed to making transit your best transportation solution and we greatly appreciate the support that you have shown these past few years that has allowed us to rebuild ridership to pre-pandemic levels.

Regards,



Seth Wright
Senior Manager, Government Relations