

TRANSIT *future*

► *Local Area Transit* plan

South Cowichan

2023



Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge with respect that BC Transit carries out its work on the traditional territories of indigenous nations throughout British Columbia.

The Cowichan Valley lies within the treaty and territorial lands of the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Lyackson, Pauquachin, Ditidaht & Pacheedaht people.

We are grateful to live, work, and play on their traditional lands.

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01 Introduction

Completed in 2012, the Cowichan Valley Transit Future Plan provided a vision of the transit network for the Cowichan Valley over the next 25 years. The recent Cowichan Valley Transit Future Action Plan builds upon the Transit Future Plan and identifies priorities for implementation over the next five years. One such priority is redesigning the South Cowichan transit routes (routes 5, 8, and 9) to create a service that is faster, more frequent, and maintains coverage of key service areas. To implement this priority, this South Cowichan Local Area Transit Plan (LATP) was developed.

LATPs provide more detail on specific areas within a community that may require more complex changes to that area.



Create more direct routing



Improve service frequency



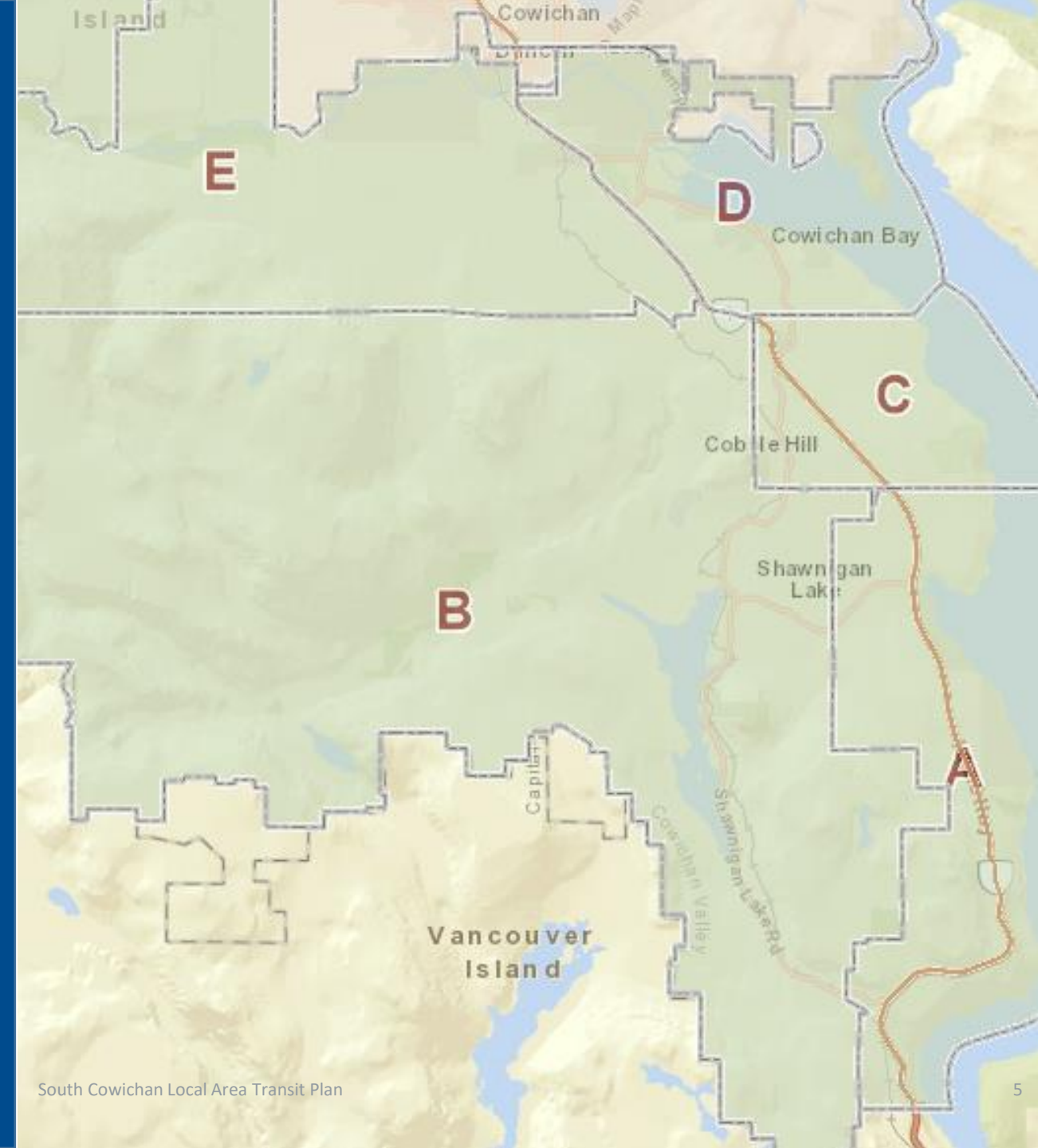
Maintain transit service to key destinations

02 Transit Today

The geographic scope of this plan includes the area of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) generally south of Duncan and north of the Capital Regional District. It includes portions of electoral areas A, B, C, D, and E and the communities of:

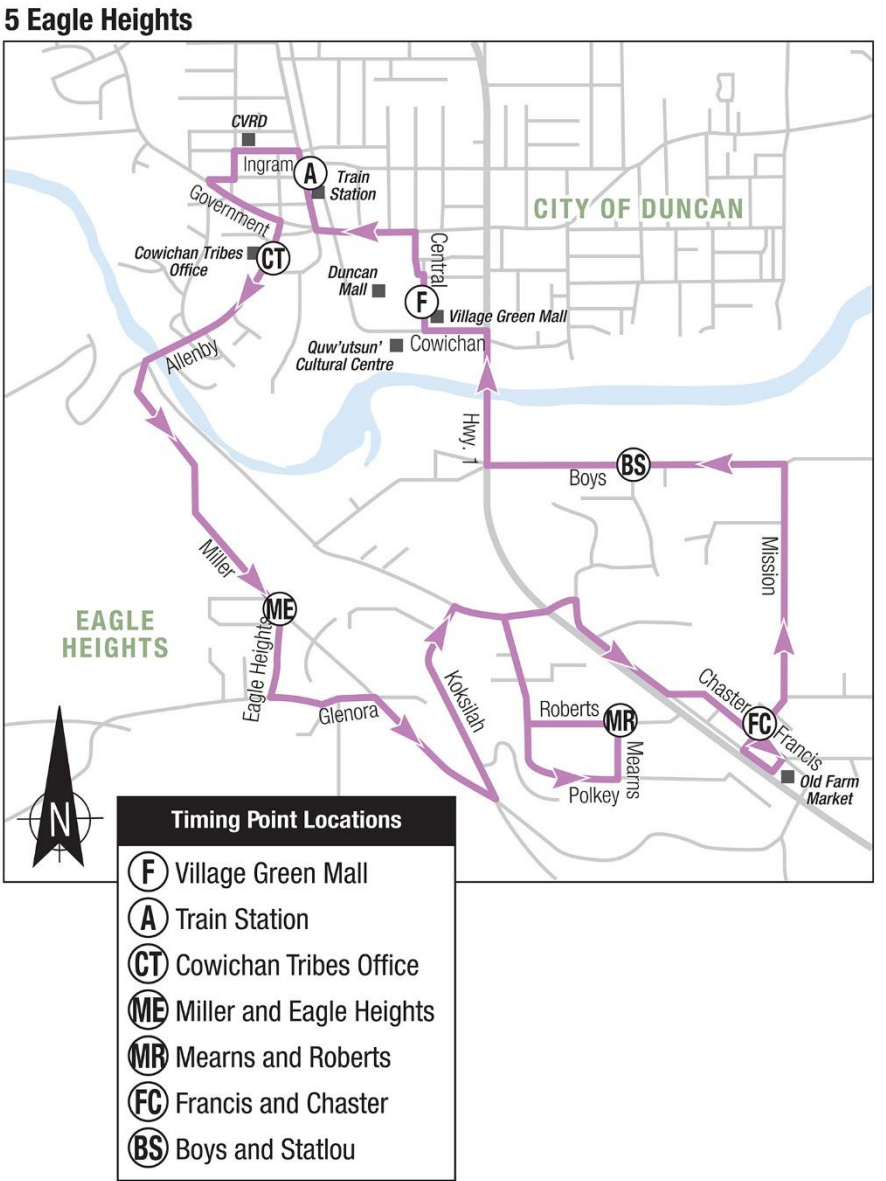
- Arbutus Ridge
- Cobble Hill
- Cowichan Bay
- Koksilah
- Malahat
- Mill Bay
- Shawnigan Lake

This area is currently served by the routes 5 Eagle Heights, 8 Mill Bay via Telegraph Road/Duncan via Shawnigan Lake, and 9 Mill Bay via Shawnigan Lake/Duncan via Telegraph Road. Details of these existing services can be found on the following slides.



5 Eagle Heights

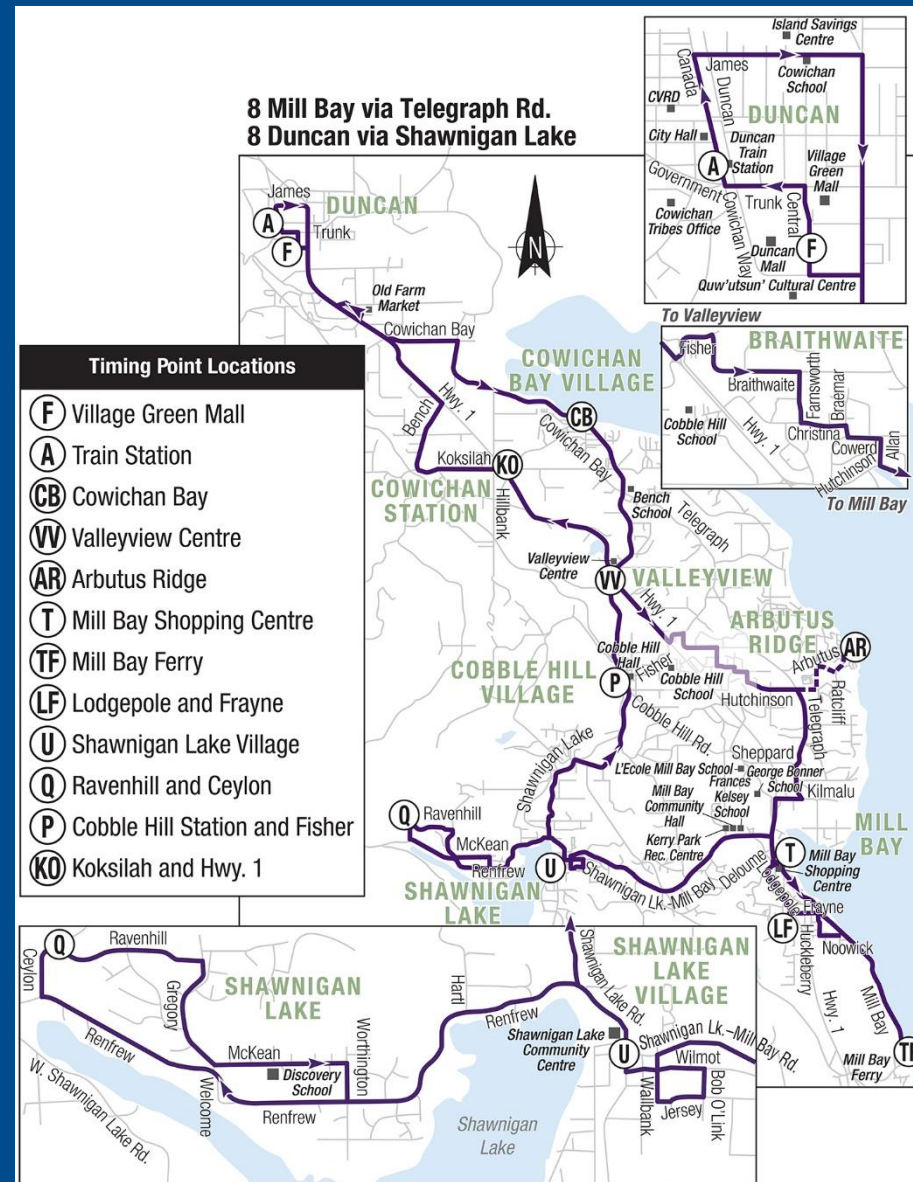
5 Eagles Heights provides local transit service to the Eagle Heights area south of the Cowichan River. All trips start and end at Village Green Mall - the central hub for transit in the Cowichan Valley. This route operates in one direction, moving generally in a counterclockwise direction.



98-167	MON to FRI
Headway (minutes)	Transit service five days a week
8:50 a.m.	6:33 p.m.
First trip departs Village Green Mall	Last trip arrives at Village Green Mall
30	5
Trip duration (minutes)	Rides per service hour (Winter 2022 service period)

8 Mill Bay via Telegraph Road/Duncan via Shawnigan Lake

8 Mill Bay via Telegraph Road/Duncan via Shawnigan Lake provides regional transit service to many communities in the South Cowichan area including: Cowichan Bay, Valley View, Arbutus Ridge, Mill Bay, Malahat Nation Shawnigan Lake, Cobble Hill, and Cowichan Station. This route operates in one direction, moving generally in a clockwise direction.



71-245

Headway (minutes)

MON to
SUN

Transit service seven
days a week

6:33 a.m.

First trip departs Mill Bay
Shopping Centre
(Monday to Friday)

11:59 p.m.

Last trip arrives at
Village Green Mall
(Friday)

119

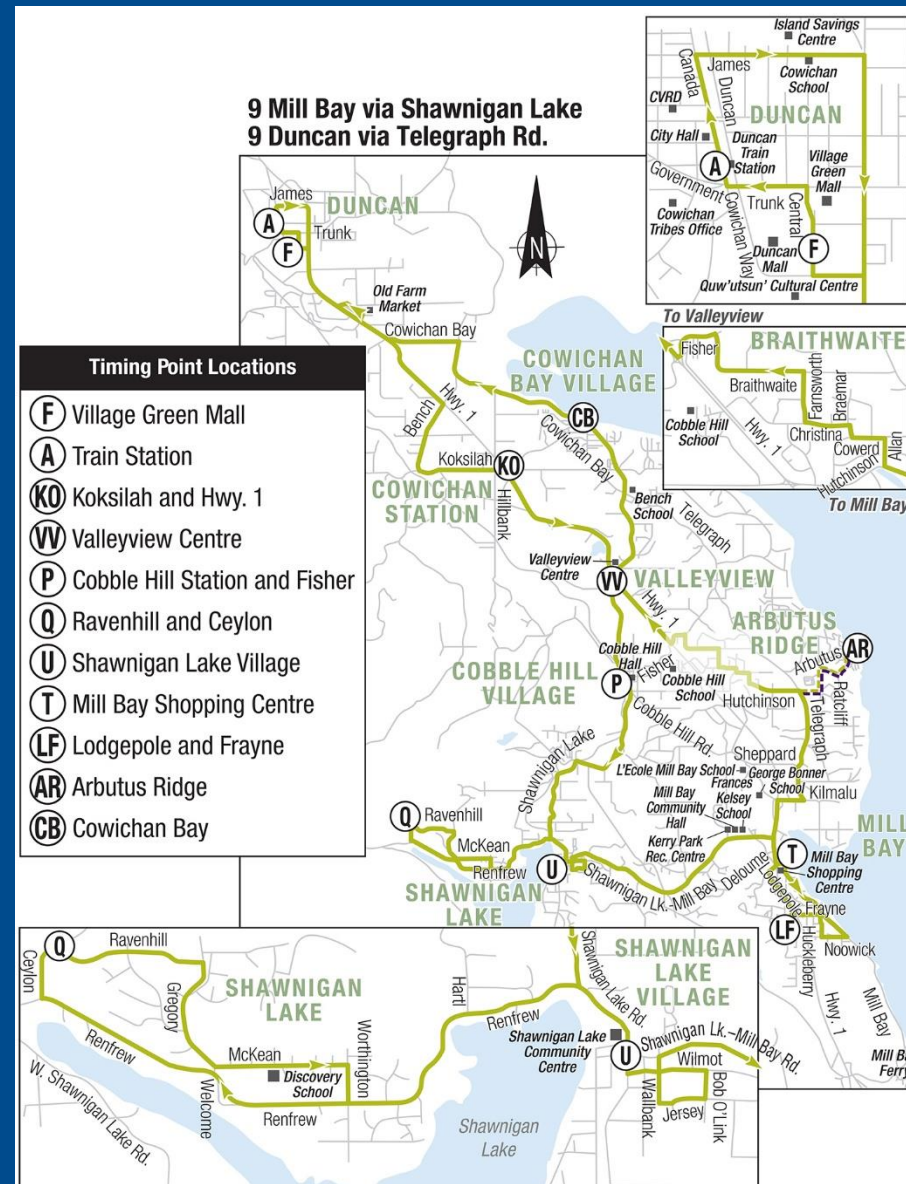
Trip duration
(minutes)

4

Rides per service hour
(Winter 2022 service
period)

9 Mill Bay via Shawnigan Lake/Duncan via Telegraph Road

9 Mill Bay via Shawnigan Lake/Duncan via Telegraph Road provides regional transit service to many communities in the South Cowichan including: Cowichan Bay, Valley View, Arbutus Ridge, Mill Bay, Shawnigan Lake, Cobble Hill, and Cowichan Station. All trips start and end at Village Green Mall, which acts as the central hub for transit service within the Cowichan Valley. This route operates in one direction, moving generally in a counterclockwise direction.



130 -230

Service frequency
(minutes)

MON to
SUN

Transit service seven
days a week

6:35 a.m.

First trip departs
Village Green Mall
(Monday to Friday)

11:32 p.m.

Last trip arrives at
Village Green Mall
(Friday)

111

Trip duration
(minutes)

4

Rides per service hour
(Winter 2022 service
period)

03 Service Standards and Performance Guidelines

Service Standards are the minimum level of service a given route should provide. Performance guidelines are targets set by route type. Corrective action may be warranted if performance is outside +/- 25 per cent of the target. None of the South Cowichan routes currently meet the performance guidelines. The Service Standards and Performance Guidelines were endorsed by the CVRD in 2016 based on industry-wide best practices with input from CVRD Committee members and staff from BC Transit, the CVRD, and the operating company.

Category	Service Day	5 Eagle Heights		8 Mill Bay via Telegraph Road/Duncan via Shawnigan Lake		9 Mill Bay via Shawnigan Lake/Duncan via Telegraph Road	
		Current	Target	Current	Target	Current	Target
Service Span	Monday - Thursday	8:50 a.m. to 6:33 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	6:33 a.m. to 9:49 p.m.	6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	6:35 a.m. to 9:20 p.m.	6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
	Friday	8:50 a.m. to 6:33 p.m.	8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	6:33 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.	6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	6:35 a.m. to 11:32 p.m.	6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
	Saturday	No Service	10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	9:30 a.m. to 4:35 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 6:48 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
	Sunday	No Service	10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	9:59 a.m. to 5:10 p.m.	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	12:34 p.m. to 2:39 p.m.	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Frequency	Weekdays	70 to 168 minutes	120 minutes	71 to 245 minutes	120 minutes	130 to 230 minutes	120 minutes
	Saturday	No Service	120 minutes	78 to 210 minutes	120 minutes	276 minutes	120 minutes
	Sunday	No Service	120 minutes	288 minutes	120 minutes	Only one trip	120 minutes
Rides per Service Hour	N/A	5	10	4	10	4	10

04 Service Design Considerations

Any changes to existing transit service would need to meet the below criteria:

- Travel times should be equal to or less than current travel times between Duncan and the various communities
- Service area should not be significantly reduced; though the level of service may not stay the same in all areas

This table shows the current time it takes to travel to or from Duncan to some key destinations in the South Cowichan area.

Ultimately, the goal is to improve transit service to the South Cowichan communities and to encourage ridership growth. Performance will be measured annually and if the service falls consistently more than 25 per cent above or below the rides per service hour target identified in the performance guidelines, service reallocation may be recommended.

Community	Current Trip Duration (Minutes)	
	To Village Green Mall	From Village Green Mall
Cowichan Bay Village	14	17
Mill Bay Shopping Centre	37	51
Shawnigan Lake Village	43	56
Cobble Hill	24	26
Koksilah Turnaround	14	17

05 How We Engaged

As part of BC Transit’s commitment to public engagement, outreach was carried out to reconfirm the priorities of the Transit Future Action Plan and receive feedback on the proposed changes to the South Cowichan routes. Engagement occurred in two phases:

1 - Stakeholder Workshop: A workshop with key community stakeholders was held on March 29, 2023. The feedback gathered during this workshop was used to inform the proposed transit service options that were presented to the public.

2 - Project Website and Survey: The project website acted as a central hub for information on the project and hosted a public survey to gain feedback from the wider public. The survey was available from July 17th to 31st, 2023.

The detailed results of the public engagement can be found in the engagement summary available [here](#).

BC Transit continues to engage with Cowichan Tribes and Malahat First Nation on their transit needs in the South Cowichan area.



Project Website

Hub for project information and survey
engage.bctransit.com/southcowichan2023



Stakeholder Workshop

Small group stakeholder workshop to identify high level priorities



Digital Advertisements

At [Usedcowichan.ca](https://usedcowichan.ca)



Internal Bus Ads

Cards displayed within buses



Newspaper Ads

Cowichan Valley Citizen, Ladysmith Chronicle, and Chemainus Valley Courier



Bus Stop Ads

Posters at bus stops



Radio Ads

CJSU FM

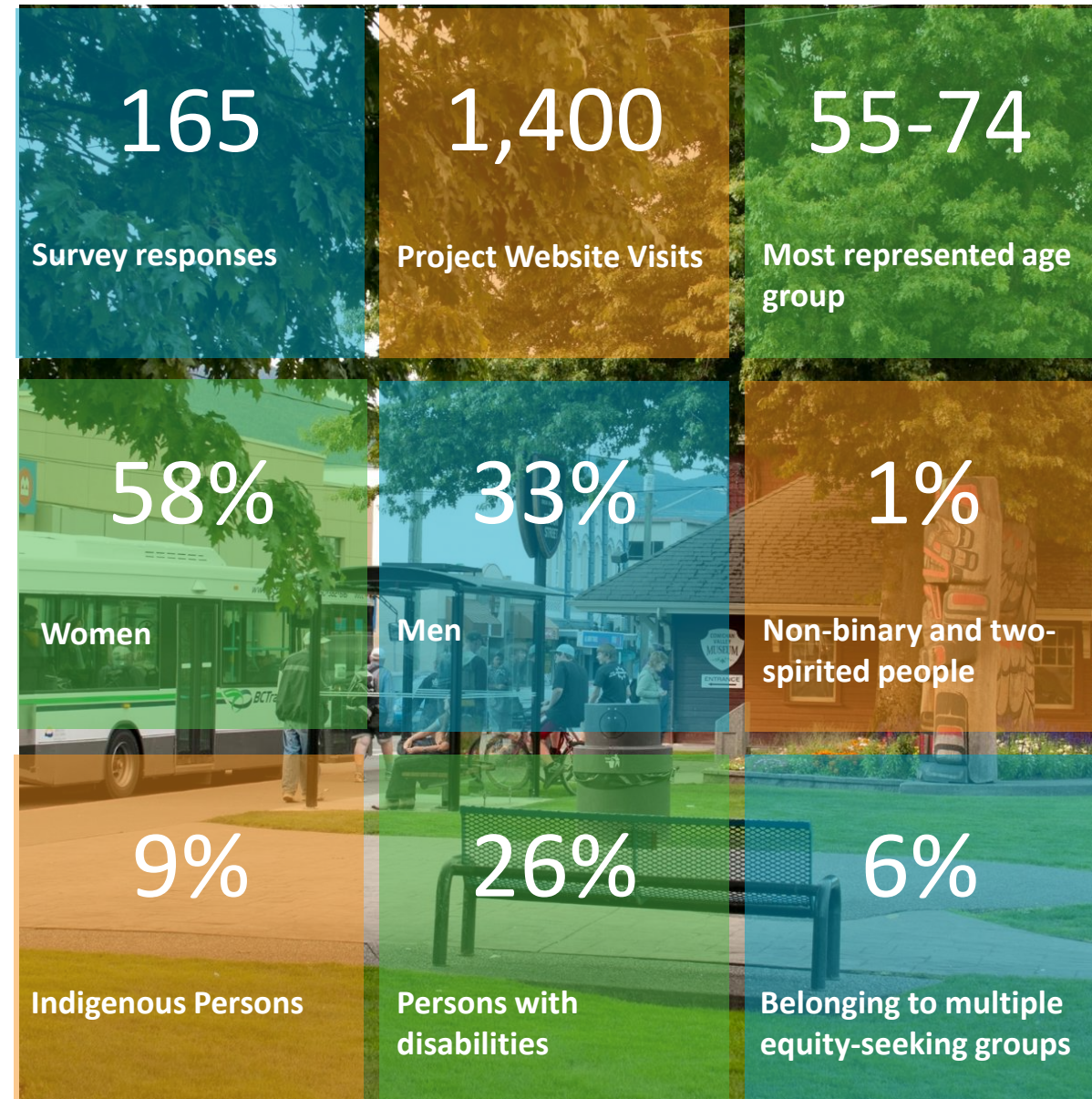


Social Media

Paid advertisements and social media posts

06 Who We Heard From

Information provided on this slide reflects the demographics of those who participated in aspects of the engagement process. While the survey methodology was not sufficient to be statistically representative of the entire South Cowichan population, the number of survey responses and website visits received was positive relative to other recent engagement within BC Transit's regional systems and is provided for context.



07 What We Heard

The survey contained two route proposals per community to serve the communities within the South Cowichan area. Below are the most popular proposals:

- Eagle Heights Option B
- Boys Road Option B
- Cowichan Bay Option A
- Malahat Nation and Mill Bay Option A & B (Tied)
- Cobble Hill and Shawnigan Lake Option B
- South Cowichan Option B

When asked if they had any additional comments or ideas to improve transit service in the South Cowichan area, the most common themes are, in descending order:

1. Adding or expanding transit service to new areas
2. Improving service frequency
3. Improving connectivity to ferries
4. Improving interregional connections
5. Improving weekend service



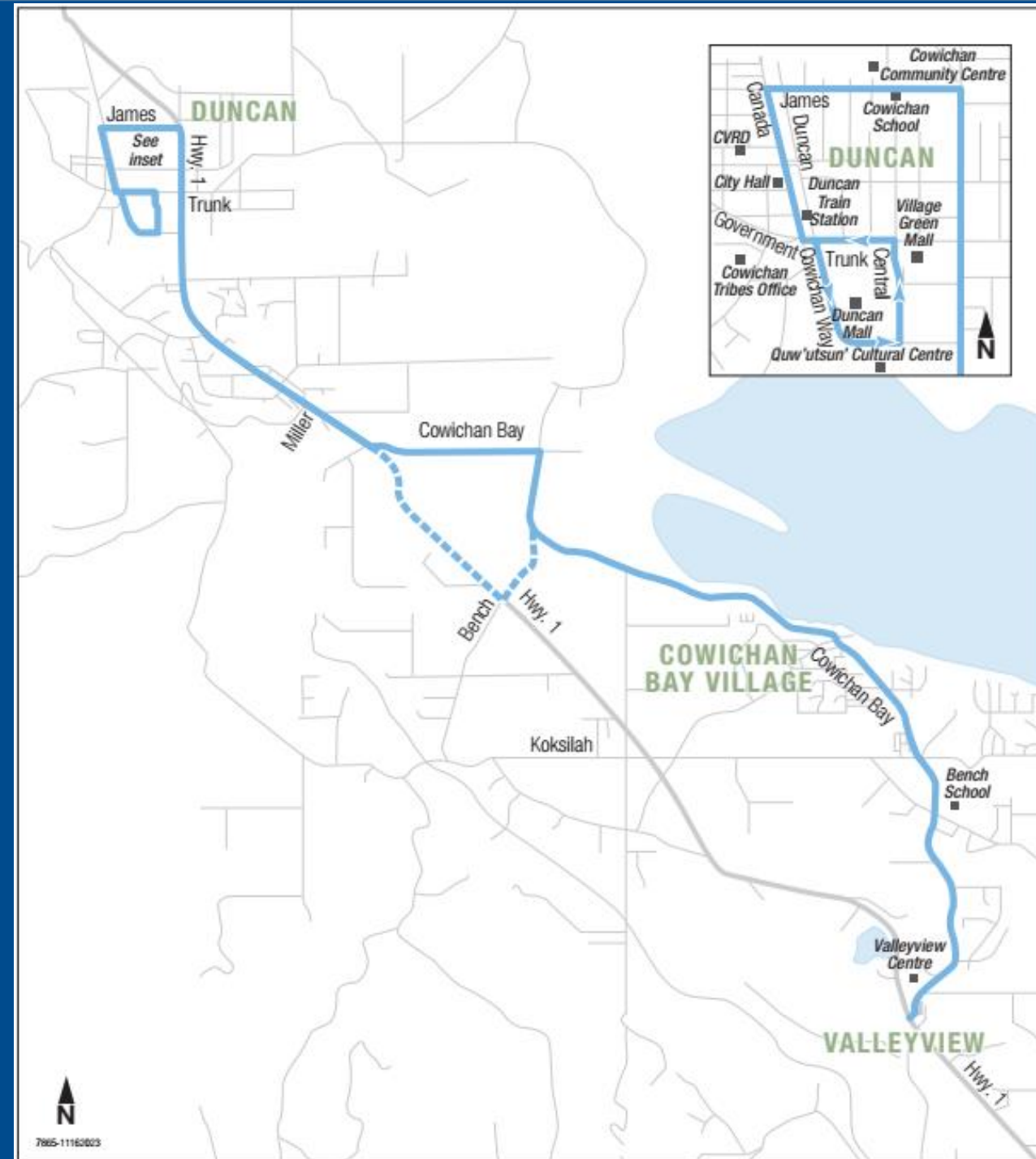
Cowichan Bay

This route provides service between Village Green Mall in Duncan and Valleyview Centre with major destinations including Cowichan Bay Village.

While public engagement indicated slightly more support for the alternative option that would provide additional local service in upper Cowichan Bay, this service option is recommended where it better aligns with the overarching goals of providing a faster, more direct transit service. It is also noted that alternative routing was favoured only by a slim margin of participants (45 per cent of participants versus 42 per cent).

The original proposal also provided service within the Boys Road area. The current proposal now provides direct service to Cowichan Bay Village and Valleyview by using Highway 1 and Cowichan Bay Road. The Boys Road area will continue to be served by the existing route 5 Eagle Heights until phase 3.

This route will be implemented in Phase 1 of the LATP.



Mill Bay and Malahat Nation

This route provides service between Village Green Mall in Duncan and Mill Bay Ferry with major destinations including Valleyview Centre, Kerry Park Recreation Centre, and Mill Bay Shopping Centre. While traveling along Highway 1, there will be limited stops at key locations such as the Koksilah turnaround and Valleyview Centre.

Public engagement indicated an even split between the two presented options (37 per cent for each option). This service design is recommended as it provides the most direct service. Based on additional feedback received from the public, schedule alignment with the Mill Bay Ferry will be a priority.

This route may be extended in the future to better serve the needs of Malahat Nation with minimal impact to customers who use this route.

This route will be implemented in Phase 1 of the LATP.

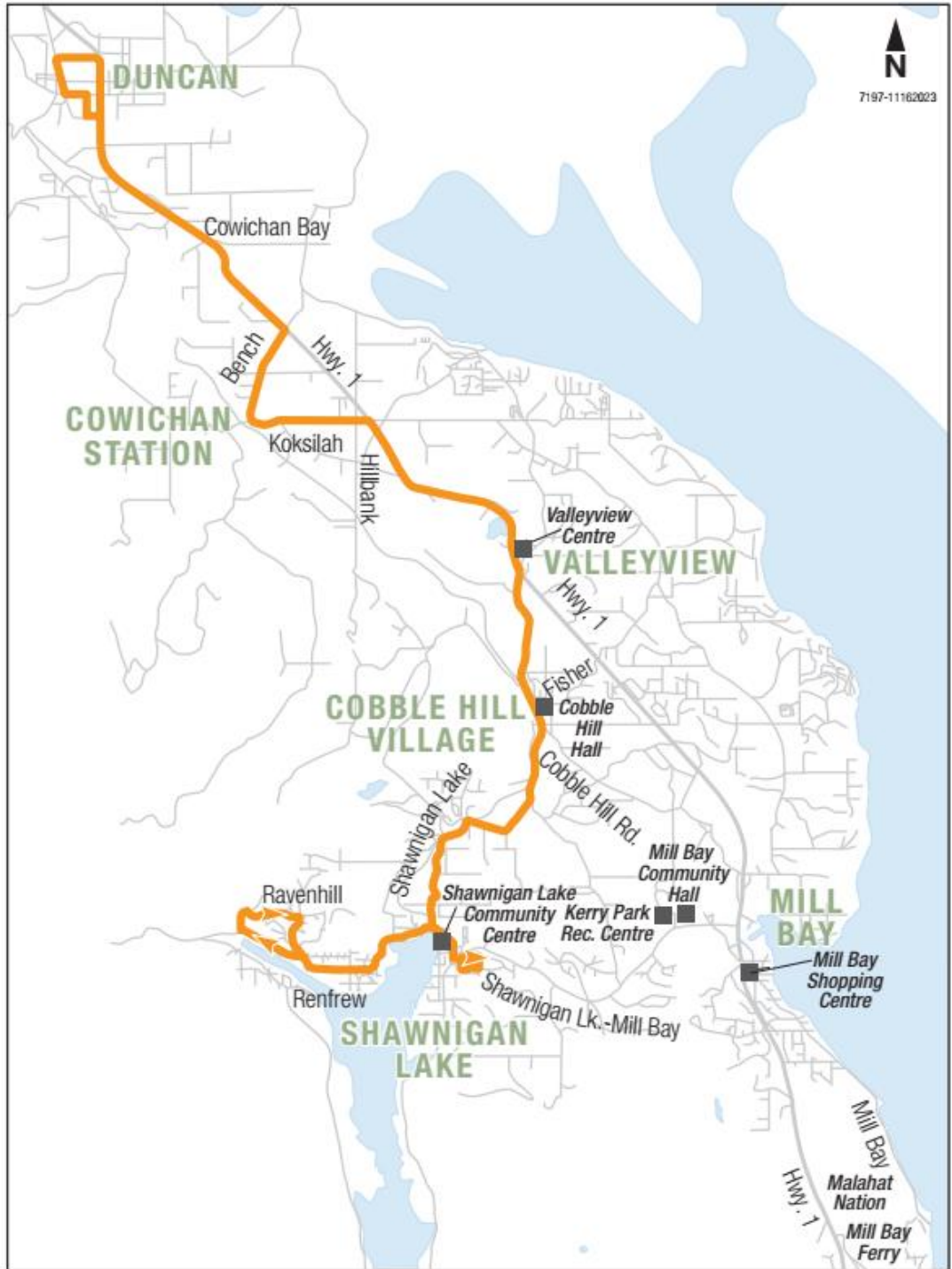


Cobble Hill and Shawnigan Lake

This route provides service between Village Green Mall in Duncan and Shawnigan Lake with major destinations including Cowichan Station, Valleyview Centre, Cobble Hill Village, and Shawnigan Lake Village. While traveling along Highway 1, there will be limited stops at key locations such as the Koksilah turnaround and Valleyview Centre.

Public engagement indicated that this was the preferred service option (42 per cent versus 29 per cent). The other service option removed service to Cowichan Station and service along Bench and Koksilah Roads.

This route will be implemented in Phase 1 of the LATP.

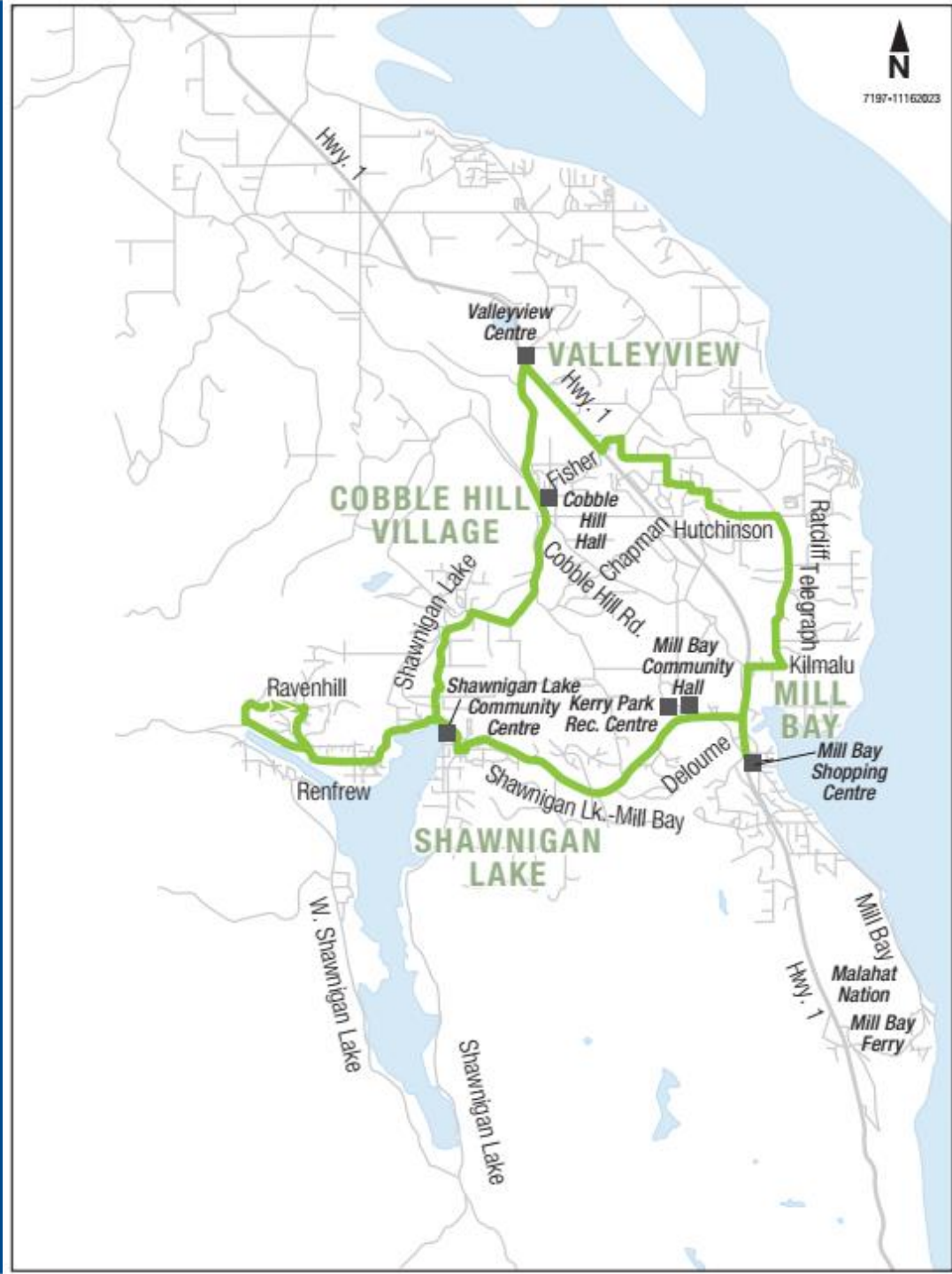


South Cowichan Loop

This route connects Cobble Hill, Shawnigan Lake, Mill Bay, and Valleyview. This route can operate in either a clockwise or counterclockwise fashion or a mix of both. The primary purpose of this route is to provide service coverage in the areas around Shawnigan Lake-Mill Bay Road, Telegraph Road, and Braithwaite Drive not covered by other routes.

Public engagement indicated that this was the preferred service option (50 per cent vs 38 per cent). The other presented option included service on the west and southeast side of Shawnigan Lake, but public feedback indicated that service in these areas was less of a priority.

This route will be implemented in Phase 1 of the LATP.

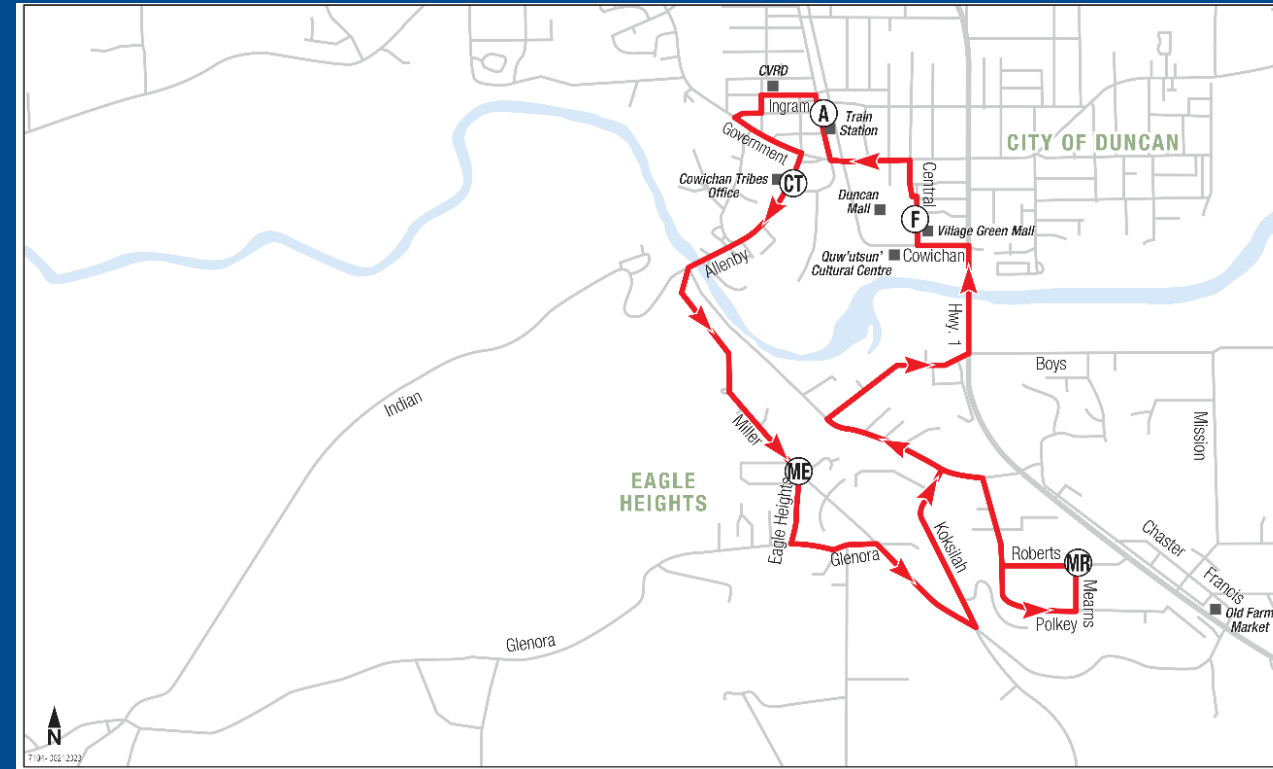


Eagle Heights

Compared to the existing 5 Eagle Heights, this routing reduces the total cycle time by approximately six minutes by removing service to the area east of Highway 1, which will be served by a different route. This change allows for a faster, more direct transit service. Like the existing 5 Eagle Heights, this route will operate only in the counter-clockwise direction.

While public engagement indicated more support for the alternative option that would utilize Glenora and Indian Roads, this plan advocates for an alternative solution; combining this revised Eagle Heights route with new services along Glenora and Tzouhalem Roads

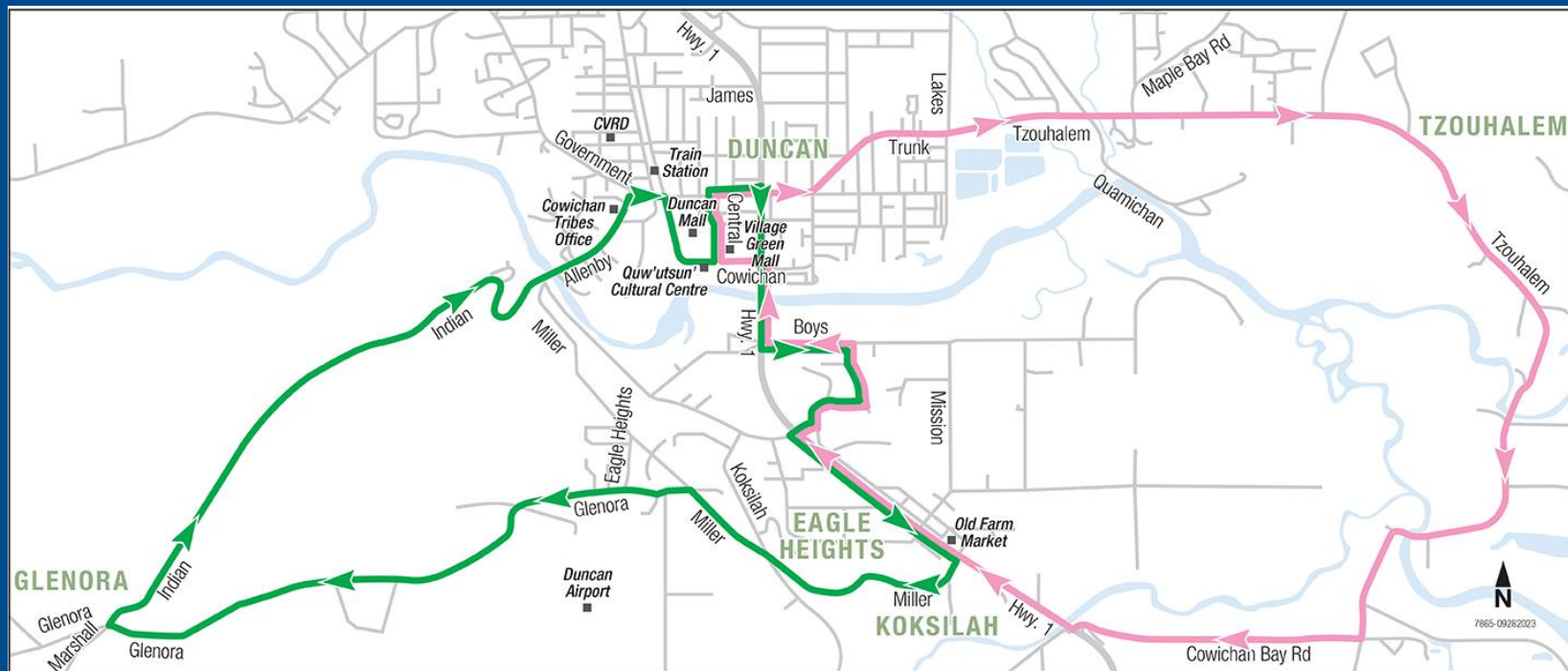
This route will be implemented in Phase 3 of the LATP along with the proposed Glenora and Tzouhalem routes discussed on the next slide.



Glenora and Tzouhalem

These two routes expand the service area. Based on the feedback received through public engagement and some preliminary comments from Cowichan Tribes, these two routes were designed. Both routes serve the primarily rural areas outside of Duncan along Tzouhalem Road, Cowichan Bay Road, Glenora Road, and Indian Road. Additional consultation with Cowichan Tribes will be required prior to implementation.

These routes will be implemented in Phase 3 of the LATP.



09 Phase 1 – Route Changes

Phase 1A - Expansion

Phase 1A contains the changes that can be done in the South Cowichan area with the additional expansion of 1,750 annual hours that was approved by the Cowichan Valley Regional Board for September of 2024. This includes the routing changes and additional service improvements.

Compared to Phase 1B, this represents additional trips on all routes, with the largest improvements occurring on route 5 Eagle Heights and the new South Cowichan Loop route.

Phase 1B – No Expansion

Phase 1B contains the changes that can be done in the South Cowichan area without needing any expansion resources. These changes include the routing changes and some adjustment to service levels. As there are no expansion resources in this scenario, service frequency or span are slightly reduced in the Eagle Heights and Cowichan Bay areas to as a trade off on maintaining coverage throughout the South Cowichan area.

1,750

Annual service hours

1*

Additional Vehicles

10 Phase 2 – Meeting Service Standards

Phase 2 includes improving the South Cowichan routes to meet the service standards. This includes:

- The current 5 Eagle Heights
- The new Cowichan Bay route
- The new Mill Bay/Malahat Nation route
- The new Shawnigan Lake route
- The new South Cowichan loop route

The resources required to implement this phase is dependent on which phase 1 option was implemented. If no expansion resources are available in phase 1, then additional expansion resources are required in phase 2.

Service Day	Service Span	Headways
Monday to Thursday	6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	120 minutes
Friday	6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	120 minutes
Saturday	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	120 minutes
Sunday	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	120 minutes

Resource Requirements if Phase 1A implemented:



Resource Requirements if Phase 1B implemented:



*To be determined during the three-year improvement process

11 Phase 3 - Eagle Heights – Glenora – Tzouhalem Routes

Phase 3 includes the introduction of the new Glenora and Tzouhalem routes as well as introduction of the new Eagle Heights route.

Service Day	Service Span	Headways
Monday to Thursday	6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	120 minutes
Friday	6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	120 minutes
Saturday	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	120 minutes
Sunday	10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	120 minutes

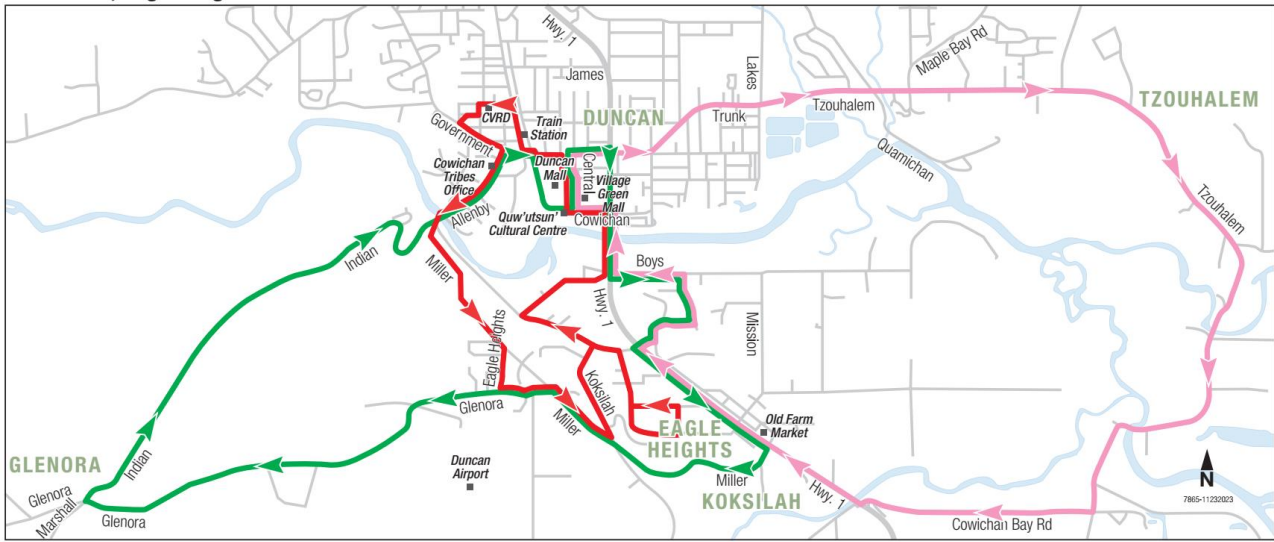
1,500

Annual service hours

1*

Additional Vehicles

Tzouhalem, Eagle Heights and Glenora Routes



*To be determined during the three-year improvement process

12 Implementation

Implementation of Phase One of the South Cowichan Local Area Transit Plan is targeted for Fall 2024, subject to the availability of resources. As with any service change, promotion and communications about the service change would support implementation.

Subsequent service expansion requiring additional service hours or buses will be integrated into the Three-Year Transit Improvement Process (TIP), which is updated on an annual basis and presented to the board for their approval. Performance will be closely monitored after any of the proposed service change.



13 Acknowledgments

Thank you,

This plan was made possible by participation from provincial and local governments, key stakeholders and the public. BC Transit would like to thank staff from:

- Cowichan Valley Regional District
- Transdev
- Cowichan Tribes
- Malahat First Nation
- Vancouver Island Regional Library
- Island Farmhouse Poultry
- Tim Hortons

