

Date December 20, 2019
Author Shannon Moskal, Corporate Officer
Subject Columbia Valley Transit Future Service Plan

REQUEST

To receive the Columbia Valley Transit Future Service Plan and decide whether to proceed with a future expansion initiative.

OPTIONS

1. THAT the Columbia Valley Transit Future Service Plan be referred to the Columbia Valley Transit Advisory Commission for comment.
2. THAT BC Transit be requested to include in their Transit Improvement Process an expansion of the Columbia Valley Transit System in 2021 to provide weekend service as described in the 2019 Columbia Valley Transit Service Plan.
3. THAT BC Transit be requested to include in their Transit Improvement Process an expansion of the Columbia Valley Transit System in _____ to provide _____ as described in the 2019 Columbia Valley Transit Service Plan.
4. THAT BC Transit be requested to include in their Transit Improvement Process an expansion of the Columbia Valley Transit System in 2022 instead of 2021;
and further; that options for expansion be discussed further following award of the 2021 operating contract.
5. THAT an expansion of the Columbia Valley Transit System not be pursued at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

Attached is the Columbia Valley Transit Future Service Plan prepared by BC Transit. The Plan identifies the following 4 proposals for transit service improvements:

Proposed Service Improvement	Estimated Service Hours	Expansion Buses Required	Estimated RDEK Share of Costs*	Estimated Tax Increase*
1. Edgewater and Radium Commuter Service	2,300	2	\$153,000	110%
2. Invermere Local Service	1,400	2	\$110,000	80%
3. Edgewater and Radium Commuter and Invermere Local Service	3,800	2	\$215,000	156%
4. Weekend Service	1,400	2	\$110,000	80%

* These are high-level estimates and are subject to change. The 2019 requisition for the Service was \$138,000.

BC Transit has recommended that weekend service (#4) be prioritized for any future expansion initiatives.

In order to proceed with one of the proposed service improvements, a decision to do so is required. BC Transit would then integrate the request into their 3-year Transit Improvement Process, which is in the process of being updated for 2020 (to be finalized in Jan/Feb 2020). The RDEK currently has an Expansion Memorandum of Understanding with BC Transit which identifies a potential service improvement in 2021. This MOU would be updated to reflect the request. The earliest that a service improvement could be rolled out is 2021 (in the fall), subject to Provincial funding approval.

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Financial

Estimated costs for the proposed service improvement would need to be included in the Financial Plan.

Additional Comments from BC Transit

The following additional information has been provided by Chelsea Mossey, Manager, Government Relations, BC Transit:

Expansion in the Columbia Valley Transit System is tentatively planned for the 2021/22 fiscal year (September 2021 implementation). A Transit Future Service Plan, which includes results from public engagement, was completed in December 2019 and will be presented to the Committee in January 2020. It is important to note that BC Transit plans to compete the Columbia Valley Transit System in the 2020 calendar year, with the new contract commencing April 1, 2021. This contracting strategy received support from the RDEK Board in spring 2019. Based on local government feedback, BC Transit plans to stipulate in the RFP that service must be provided from Invermere. The Columbia Valley Transit System currently operates from Golden with significant deadhead time to the Invermere/Radium area to perform revenue service, and all resource projections in the Transit Future Service Plan are based on service from Golden. Public engagement results revealed a strong preference for the introduction of weekend service. This option, with current operations, requires 1400 service hours as well as 2 buses. One of these buses is required to support the expansion, while the other needed as a spare bus for the transit system, as there is currently no spare, which results in missed service when a bus is down.

We are currently in the early stages of planning for 2021/22 expansions, and local government approval for expansions which include a bus is required by the end of June, 2020. All decisions surrounding service levels, including the timeline for expansions, are the responsibility of the RDEK Board. If the Directors choose to defer some or all expansion to the 2022/23 fiscal year, so they can make expansion decisions after the conclusion of the RFP process, I would be happy to come back next year and discuss expansion again at that time.

Attachment