



- Potential and benefit of interim transit measures; and
- Range of interim transit measures, from coordinated signals to a fully segregated right-of-way.

BC Transit's Director of Corporate and Strategic Planning responded to questions from both Saanich Council and Victoria Council.

In response to questions on the process for and funding of the rapid transit project, BC Transit's representative stated:

- Phase 2 of the rapid transit project includes the development of a detailed business case.
- As developing a business case will require time and funding to accomplish, BC Transit is looking for commitment to the project from the provincial and municipal governments before proceeding.
- If BC Transit is unable to acquire sufficient funding for the rapid transit project, the scope and timeline of the project would need to be reviewed.
- After working with municipal staff, BC Transit will be able to provide both Councils with a recommendation regarding the configuration and interim measures, as well as associated costing.
- The estimated cost for the local share of the rapid transit project is \$250 million. Proceeding with "business as usual" has the same estimated cost, assuming that additional buses and HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lanes are provided to maintain services levels.
- The provincial and regional levels of transit will bear the costs associated with the transit improvements for rapid transit; incremental costs such as enhanced sidewalks or undergrounding utilities would be the responsibility of the municipal governments.
- The Local Funding Task Force intends to submit a report on funding options to the Board of the Capital Regional District by May of this year.
- Depending on the level of engagement identified by the board, the task force plans to submit a technical report to Partnership BC by the fall.
- Partnership BC will assist in the development of the detailed business case for the rapid transit project, which is scheduled to take between 1 to 2 years to complete.

In response to questions on the rapid transit configuration and design, BC Transit's representative stated:

- Responses to the options presented at open houses and to the business community survey were included in the BC Transit evaluation of the 3 configurations. Access to businesses and parking were the main concerns identified.
- Extensive research shows benefits to businesses adjacent to or within walking distance of enhanced transit; she can provide this information to both Councils.
- From a technical perspective, either buses or rail technology could be used with any of the 3 configurations being considered; once the configuration is finalized, additional consideration of the options for implementation will be needed.
- When comparing the configurations, the challenges of implantation for each option will need to be included in the evaluation.
- In order to accommodate the footprint for rapid transit in the Douglas Corridor, approximately 154 parking spaces will need to be removed. The timing and process for this removal still needs to be determined.

- Design decisions will impact where best to locate utilities with regards to the rapid transit corridor. If the utilities are to be located underground, there may be opportunities to include other services and acquire additional funding.
- Only the potential footprint of the Uptown exchange has been considered to aid in land acquisition. All other design decisions remain outstanding.

In response to questions on land use implications with regards to rapid transit, BC Transit's representative stated:

- It is very important to consider the impact of rapid transit on the wide variety of users in the Douglas Corridor.
- Enhancing the streetscape of the corridor will assist in increasing ridership. The pedestrian environment is an important component, as there are fewer stops in a rapid transit system and users will need to walk from the rapid transit corridor to connecting routes.
- Transit is partnering with municipal staff to provide support and guidance in regards to land use in the Douglas Corridor, discussing how best to increase density in this area.
- Municipal staff members have been considering how development on Douglas Corridor will impact the future alignment of the rapid transit system.
- Though BC Transit can provide support and information, discussions regarding rezoning need to be lead by the municipalities.

In response to questions on interim transit measures, BC Transit's representative stated:

- Further study is needed to implement HOV lanes in the Douglas Corridor, especially with regards to the required number of occupants per vehicle.
- BC Transit is close to implementing coordinated signals on Douglas Street and is working with partners to identify other intersections where this technology could be used.
- Queue jumper lanes have been installed on the highway and consideration is being given to extending these lanes.
- BC Transit has gathered extensive data from the buses and now needs to undertake studies to determine the most advantageous times and locations for transit enhancing measures.
- It is possible to consider interim measures for separate sections of the Douglas Corridor. Enhancing those areas of the corridor with the lowest average speed would be particularly advantageous.
- Testing for transit priority signals provides necessary data and only a short time period is required.

In response to questions on the transit future plan and other transit initiatives, BC Transit's representative stated:

- As indicated in the future plan, BC Transit is looking to partner with municipalities for studies on the following corridors: Esquimalt; Fort; Richmond; Shelbourne; McKenzie; and Highway 17.
- The BC Transit Shelter Program installs approximately 150 shelters annually throughout the province; the region has already received 75 of these shelters.
- Municipalities can also purchase the same shelters directly, which is particularly helpful for smaller communities.

- BC Transit reviews route operations regularly, but will also be undertaking a more formal review process in the fall to set service guidelines and evaluate route performance.

Councillor Gerrard stated:

- The development community needs to be considered with regards to rapid transit.
- Land use in this area needs to be tied to the long-term transportation needs of the region. A mix of commercial and residential use, as well as open space, should be incorporated.
- The Douglas Corridor has the potential to provide affordable housing for the local workforce. Staff should consider if pre-zoning would be a useful tool for Council to encourage development of this area.

Councillor Derman stated:

- Though the potential for rapid transit in the Douglas Corridor is exciting, it is important to be mindful of the role of land use in increasing density.
- This is an extraordinary opportunity to create a new community in this area that addresses sustainability, social issues, and quality of life, while enhancing the regional economy and increasing tax revenue.
- He encourages both Councils to work towards a visionary, long-term plan for the Douglas Corridor.

Councillor Murdock stated:

- He supports both Councils working together to achieve a long-term vision for the Douglas Corridor.
- The interim transit measures could help address the existing traffic congestion on the region’s major transportation corridors. Municipal staff should work with BC Transit on implementation of these measures.

Councillor Brownoff stated:

- It is important that staff from both municipalities continue to work together to create a corridor that can be comfortably used by pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.
- She agrees that interim transit measures need to be considered, partially to address the significant number of pass-ups by buses servicing the University of Victoria.
- Both Councils need to ensure that the existing right-of-way on the Douglas Corridor is maintained and enhanced.

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At 5:17 pm, Councillor Coleman entered the meeting and sat in the gallery.

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Councillor Wergeland stated:

- Substantial engagement with the business community is needed for the rapid transit project.
- It will need to be determined if future developments will be permitted to access Douglas Street mid-block.
- Consideration should be given to: ensuring the Douglas Corridor is an inviting space; that excessive additions do not make the corridor feel crowded; and to an alternative to the rapid transit project.

Councillor Wade stated:

- She supports staff working on interim transit measures to make progress quickly. Hopefully this will increase transit ridership, demonstrate the viability of transit, and increase the public's familiarity with the transit system.
- Both Councils should continue to enhance land use planning in the Douglas Corridor, with the goal of creating a complete community.

Councillor Brice stated:

- We need to continue planning for the long-term to take advantage of the exciting opportunities in the Douglas Corridor.
- Interim transit measures will produce quicker results and are not as expensive. Both Councils should work together to develop timelines for implementing these measures.
- Increasing the speed of transit in the Douglas Corridor will make it a more attractive choice.

Councillor Sanders stated:

- She is pleased that there are interim transit measures to be considered.
- She looks forward to the long-term enhancement of the Douglas Corridor.

Mayor Fortin stated:

- Victoria's Downtown Plan and upcoming Official Community Plan will identify the density and land use for the Douglas Corridor within their municipality.
- Though it will be some time until rapid transit can be implemented, there are decisions that need to be made for the project to proceed which will impact long-term planning for both municipalities.
- For the interim transit measures to be successful, both municipalities will need to work together to enhance shared transportation corridors.

Councillor Madoff stated:

- At today's presentation she had been hoping to see a true integration of land use and transit planning; land use planning should begin with the private property line and proceed to the centre of the road.
- The pedestrian environment in the Douglas Corridor needs to interface well with rapid transit, including the sections of the corridor that will not be redeveloped.
- The Douglas Corridor is a historic opportunity for Council and staff from both municipalities to work together to enhance the land use and transportation in this area.

Councillor Thornton-Joe stated:

- She supports the previous comments and appreciates the opportunity for the joint Council meeting.

Councillor Young stated:

- The region needs to plan for improving transit service now, providing rapid transit in the long-term, and transitioning from current to future transit service.
- Though there will be some objections to the rapid transit project, it is important for both Councils to remain focused the long-term goals for the

Douglas Corridor.

- Development along the Douglas Corridor will begin to reflect the decisions made with regards to rapid transit; the sooner those decisions are made, the more time will be provided for users to adjust.

Councillor Alto stated:

- Work should proceed on the interim transit measures.
- Land-use planning and long-term transit planning are interconnected processes and both need to be considered when evaluating development applications.
- The Victoria terminus of the rapid transit system will likely be located near the Royal British Columbia Museum; there is an opportunity to anticipate a relationship between these facilities.

Councillor Gudgeon stated:

- We need to encourage transit use now and engage the public in the discussion on improving transit in the region.

Councillor Isitt stated:

- He strongly supports implementing interim transit measures. Both Councils should separately consider a recommendation for transit to implement HOV lanes on Douglas Street.
- He hopes that rail transit can be achieved sooner rather than later, perhaps through contributions from developers to a public infrastructure and amenity fund.
- In his discussion paper, he calls for consideration at a joint Council meeting of the concept of a Midtown Master Plan to provide long-term planning that addresses more than just transportation. This area is the natural site for densification in the region and could provide affordable housing, an enlarged tax base and additional employment.

Closing remarks

**CLOSING REMARKS**

Mayor Leonard stated:

- Today's discussion has shown that, in addition to the recommendation on rapid transit in the Douglas Corridor, work plans from staff on interim transit measures would be well received by both Councils.

Adjournment

On a motion from Councillor Thornton-Joe, the Victoria Council meeting adjourned at 5:47 pm.

On a motion from Councillor Brownoff, the Saanich Council meeting adjourned at 5:48 pm.

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MAYOR

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate

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MUNICIPAL CLERK