

City of Chilliwack
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2022, 3:30 pm
Held Electronically / Dogwood Room

- Council Members:** Councillor Jeff Shields, Chair
Councillor Jason Lum, Vice Chair
- TAC Members:** Rob Ringma, Senior Manager, Government Relations, BC Transit
Bryden Nelmes, Community Member
Chelsea Cromarty, Community Member
Wayne Williams, SD33, Manager of Transportation
Jim Ryan, Community Member
Willow Reichelt, Vice-Chair, Board of Education, Chilliwack School District #33
- City Staff Members:** Kara Jefford, Manager of Transportation and Drainage
Andrew Pipke, Senior Engineering Technologist
Samantha Piper, Public Safety Specialist
Trish Alsip, Recording Secretary
- Regrets:** Stephen Head, Community Member
Marlon Hall, Chamber of Commerce
David Hill, Road Safety Engineer, ICBC (Ex-Officio)
Neal Moulton, Area Manager, Fraser Valley South, Ministry of Transportation
Corporal Mike Pfeifer, RCMP, Traffic Section
Tanis Hatch, ICBC

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councillor Jeff Shields was Chair and called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm and provided territorial acknowledgement.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved /) That the Transportation Advisory Committee Agenda for Thursday, May 26,
Seconded (2022 be adopted as circulated.

Carried Unanimously

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved /) That the Minutes of the Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting held
Seconded (Thursday, March 17, 2022 be adopted as circulated.

Carried Unanimously

4. DELEGATION / PRESENTATION

5. OLD BUSINESS / ACTION ITEMS

1. Active Transportation Plan – Review & Discussion

Andrew Pipke, Senior Engineering Technologist, provided an update with respect to the Active Transportation Plan. The final draft is proposed to be brought forth to Council for consideration and adoption in June 2022.

A brief summary was provided of the Phase 2a Survey and results, Phase 2b Consultation, project prioritization and next steps.

Since the last Transportation Advisory Committee meeting on March 17, 2022, a revised prioritization map has been completed. The previous prioritization map included five categories; however, this has now been revised to include three categories: high, medium and low priorities.

Staff conducted a six-question public survey with staff having attended 10 pop-up events and locations around town. The survey was posted on Engagechilliwack.com with over 350 participations and over 150 surveys completed. Staff has reached out to community groups such as the Spinal Cord Injury Association, Chilliwack People First and Chilliwack Society for Community Living for their feedback.

Through Phase 2a of the consultation process, staff attended events with various community groups and further reached out to individuals within these organizations. Staff is scheduled to meet with Tzeachten and Skowkale First Nations staff next week for feedback with respect to their priorities within the Chilliwack Active Transportation Plan.

With respect to accessibility, staff are performing a curb ramp audit and will continue to look forward to feedback from community organizations with respect to accessibility improvements and recommendations.

A brief synopsis was provided of the draft project priorities and considerations within the 10-Year Plan.

Next Steps:

- Indigenous and Community Organization Consultation - late May and into June 2022
- Council Review and Adoption in June 2022
- Building partnerships with the community – ongoing

Discussion/Questions:

Vice-Chair Lum raised a query regarding smaller, more remote communities, and whether consideration will be given to ensuring walkable routes are proposed to get to destinations such as the corner grocery store, etc. Improved walkable commercial areas will provide more opportunities for people to make decisions on how they want to get to their local destination ie: walking or riding a bike, rather than driving a vehicle, and perhaps this will spur more local development in some of the outlying areas.

The Planning Department and the Engineering Department have been working collaboratively with respect to the Yarrow Neighbourhood Plan and the Active Transportation Plan. Other rural areas such as Greendale and Rosedale have been identified as higher priority rural areas with a focus on the core commercial area within each of these communities.

5. OLD BUSINESS / ACTION ITEMS (continued)

Willow Reichelt, Vice-Chair, Board of Education, Chilliwack School District #33, enquired with respect to sidewalks in the Marble Hill area; staff noted new development in the Marble Hill include sidewalks along the frontage for the most part; however, sidewalk can be disjointed due to areas which are not developed, resulting in a lack of connectivity.

Chelsea Cromarty, Community Member, raised an enquiry with respect to whether consideration would be given to a designated pedestrian-only street in the downtown core, like Granville Street in Vancouver. Staff took note of the suggestion, language around pedestrian-only streets in the downtown will be considered; however, staff suggested consideration of short increments of vehicle traffic closures, such as a weekend and/or key periods, to provide opportunity for feedback from local businesses with respect to how a decrease in business traffic would affect their respective businesses. Staff noted future discussions with the Business Improvement Association would be required.

Jim Ryan, Community Member, supports the suggestion of a pedestrian-only street, further noting this would promote an increased community feel in the downtown area.

Vice-Chair Lum referred back to when Mill Street was changed to a one-way street and noted previous discussions took place at the time with local merchants with respect to concerns regarding how a one-way street would impact their businesses. Vice-Chair Lum provided positive comment on the first phases of new development in District 1881 which includes pedestrian-only corridors providing good connectivity. He noted there are future pedestrian-only corridors proposed for the remainder of the development similar to Woolley Dog Alley.

Mr. Ryan provided comment with respect to accessibility and queried whether the City of Chilliwack would consider a simple way for individuals who have accessibility challenges to report accessibility issues, such as a specific City of Chilliwack email. Staff noted consideration will be given for a specific email address for this purpose; the City of Chilliwack has an app whereby any issue (ie: sidewalks or street sweeping) can be reported, including safety issues.

Wayne Williams, SD33, Manager of Transportation, provided comment with respect to the safety of students who walk to school along Chilliwack River Road and Knight Road and will continue to advocate for more sidewalks.

Mr. Nelmes provided positive comment with respect to the implementation of a sidewalk on Yale Road between Parr Road and Kerr Road and, pedestrian improvements in the Fairfield Island area from Williams Street northbound towards Fairfield Park. Mr. Nelmes suggested way-finding signage be implemented along the Valley Rail Trail for pedestrians who walk and cycle.

Vice-Chair Lum enquired as to whether the Active Transportation Plan will address and prioritize pedestrian safety at high-volume traffic locations; staff noted the Plan has been updated to include the newest standards with respect to determining where Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's) and signage are required.

A request was made to circulate the final draft of the Active Transportation Plan once today's feedback has been incorporated.

5. OLD BUSINESS / ACTION ITEMS (continued)

The Committee had a general discussion and the following endorsement was made:

Moved /) That the Transportation Advisory Committee is in support of the final draft of the
Seconded (Transportation Action Plan as presented and discussed today; and further, endorses
the Transportation Action Plan.

Carried Unanimously

2. BC Transit Updates

Rob Ringma, Senior Manager, Government Relations, BC Transit, provided the following update:

Next Ride – Smart Bus Technology

Next Ride and Smart Ride technology has been successfully implemented across the Fraser Valley with the exception of two buses that travel to the Agassiz/Harrison/Kent region; these two buses have been fleet-swapped out as the buses were in the process of being decommissioned. The new replacement buses will have the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) technology installed by mid-June. Otherwise, all other BC Transit buses in Chilliwack have the AVL technology installed, the Next Ride announcements, and video terminals inside the buses.

Electric Fare Program

BC Transit has announced that the Electric Fare Program, Umo, is set to be launched across British Columbia in late 2022. The Electric Fare Program will provide a more accessible and convenient way for passengers to pay for travel such as through a mobile app, debit card, credit card, mobile wallet, reloadable smart card or Apple watch. Riders will be able to easily purchase their desired fare product with their mobile device, through a new web portal or at a retailer and board the bus by simply scanning their mobile device or tapping their card. Cash will continue to be accepted for those riders who prefer to use it. The Electric Fare Program will reduce the number of transfers between different systems.

Chair Shields enquired as to whether travelers will still be able to purchase monthly passes on a mobile app or reloadable smart card; Mr. Ringma noted various fare options will still be available such as monthly passes at a discounted rate.

Labour Challenges

BC Transit has been experiencing some ongoing labour challenges, not only in Chilliwack and the Central Fraser Valley, but all across the Province. Labour challenges have hit many sectors; however, the transportation sector has been hit hard. The pandemic has had a huge impact on transportation operators who work directly with the public. There has been a large employment shift where people are finding employment where they can work from home. The Provincial Vaccination mandate has also had an effect on operator levels. The expansion of the Fraser Valley Express (FVX) in late March 2022 reflected a slight decrease in ridership. BC Transit is working to address concerns with respect to schedule issues.

BC Transit has been working with First Canada to conduct hiring fairs with respect to recruitment and training. Combined with attrition rates, service is expected to be back to reasonable levels by the end of August to early September.

5. OLD BUSINESS / ACTION ITEMS (continued)

Handy Dart

A query was brought forth to BC Transit as to whether there would be consideration for expanding Handy Dart service hours in Chilliwack. A brief outline was provided with respect to Handy Dart service in Chilliwack compared with other communities based on similar populations, and where they may be opportunity for improvements in service. It was noted that there is a gap in Handy Dart service on Sundays and early evening weekday compared with other communities and there may be consideration to extend weekday service. The service has been affected by the labour shortage; and as a result, BC Transit has supplemented the Handy Dart service with taxi service when Handy Dart is not available. Taxi companies are also impacted by the labour shortage and are not necessarily ideal for mobility and accessibility concerns.

Chilliwack Mall / Cottonwood Mall

An update was provided with respect to bus stop location changes at Chilliwack Mall and Cottonwood Mall due to the current renovations. BC Transit is proposing a service change by September 2022 to have all buses circulate through Cottonwood Mall first, then travel across the street at the signalized intersection, accessing the Chilliwack Mall bus stop. There will be no additional cost; however; due to some minor timing changes, an updated Rider’s Guide will be required.

Discussion/Questions:

Kara Jefford, Manager of Transportation and Drainage, noted discussions have taken place previously with respect to meeting equitable service hours through the Transit Future Plan (TFP) regarding extending service hours to match the conventional system with the custom system; Mr. Ringma noted BC Transit undertook a custom system report for every system just prior to the pandemic and, BC Transit is planning to update the report.

Vice-Chair Lum queried whether any changes to the custom system would be considered by BC Transit regardless of the Province’s freeze on BC Transit’s budget. Mr. Ringma noted that although there is no opportunity for transit expansions in the current fiscal year; BC Transit will bring forth revised transit improvement options for Council’s consideration for 2023. A service plan with respect to service expansions would be required to be submitted to the Province by October 2022 for implementation by April 1, 2023.

Vice-Chair Lum enquired as to whether it would be of benefit for the Committee to provide support with respect to expansion of Handy Dart service; the Committee agreed and made the following recommendation:

- Moved /) That the Transportation Advisory Committee recommend Council to direct
- Seconded (staff to work with BC Transit regarding custom transit options with respect to implementing Handy Dart service on Sundays; and further, that Handy Dart service be extended to 6:30 pm on weeknights.

Carried Unanimously

6. NEW BUSINESS / DISCUSSION

7. OTHER

8. INFORMATION / CORRESPONDENCE

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, September 22, 2022 at 3:30 pm in the Dogwood Room.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Councillor Jeff Shields, Chair