

# Report to Council



**Date:** January 27, 2020

**To:** Council

**From:** City Manager

**Subject:** Seasonal Transit Service Changes and Transit Operations Facility Capacity

**Department:** Integrated Transportation

---

## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receive for information the report from the Integrated Transportation Department, dated January 27, 2020, with respect to Seasonal Transit Service Changes and Transit Operations Facility Capacity;

AND THAT Council receive the summary of the Spring/Summer 2020 transit service changes and status update regarding efforts to free-up capacity at the current transit operations facility;

## **Purpose:**

To inform Council of the seasonal adjustments to transit service levels and to update Council on efforts to free up space at the current operations facility to allow for expansion of Conventional Transit services to proceed.

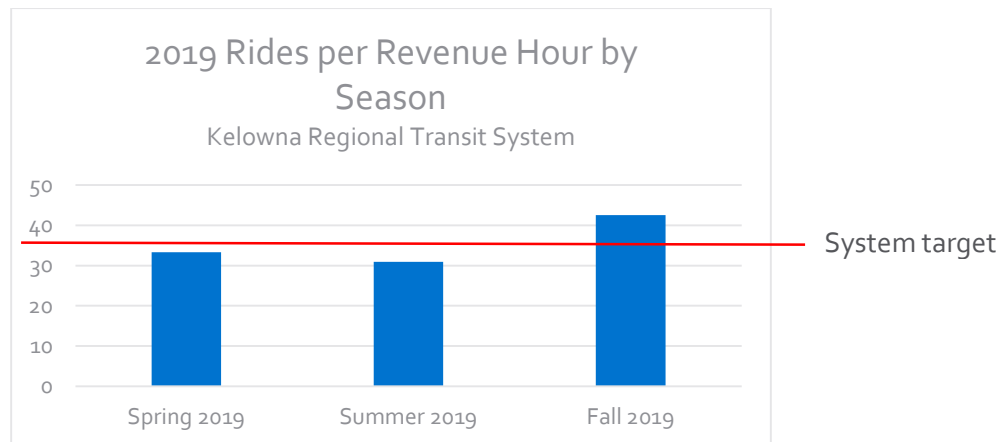
## **Background:**

Transit ridership in the City of Kelowna continues to trend upward and in recent years has grown exponentially. Between 2017 and early 2019, 15% more trips were taken on transit with the bulk of ridership growth occurring in the Fall/Winter period on Core transit routes. Each Spring and Summer service levels on various routes are reduced in order to improve system productivity in these periods and ensure enough service hours are provided to meet demand in the busier Fall/Winter period. Given transit expansion limitations resulting from constraints at the current transit maintenance and operations facility, service optimization is crucial in ensuring resources are applied where and when they are needed most. Progress has been made on identifying an interim secondary operations site to house the Paratransit fleet and unlock capacity for future Conventional Transit expansion at the current transit facility.

## **Discussion:**

The availability of reliable, regular performance data has enabled BC Transit and City staff to look beyond traditional seasonal service adjustments focused on changes in post-secondary travel demand

to identify further opportunities to improve productivity throughout the system. System and route-level performance targets outlined within the Transit Service Guidelines are considerations in the development of service change proposals. A key transit system performance metric is the number of passenger rides per revenue hour<sup>1</sup>. This metric is important because it standardizes ridership performance between routes or seasons according to the amount of service provided. Current data shows that the ridership productivity of the transit system per revenue hour for the Fall/Winter 2019 period was nearly 38% higher than the Summer 2019 period and nearly 30% higher than the Spring 2019 period. This represents an additional 9,500 daily boarding throughout the system in the Fall/Winter period as compared to Summer and an additional 7,600 boardings as compared to Spring.



In mid-Spring (April 26<sup>th</sup>) and early Summer (June 28<sup>th</sup>) of this year, changes will be made to select Core and Coverage bus routes where demand falls below minimum ridership targets. A portion of recovered resources will be applied to increase Sunday service frequency on route 10 in response to strong ridership.

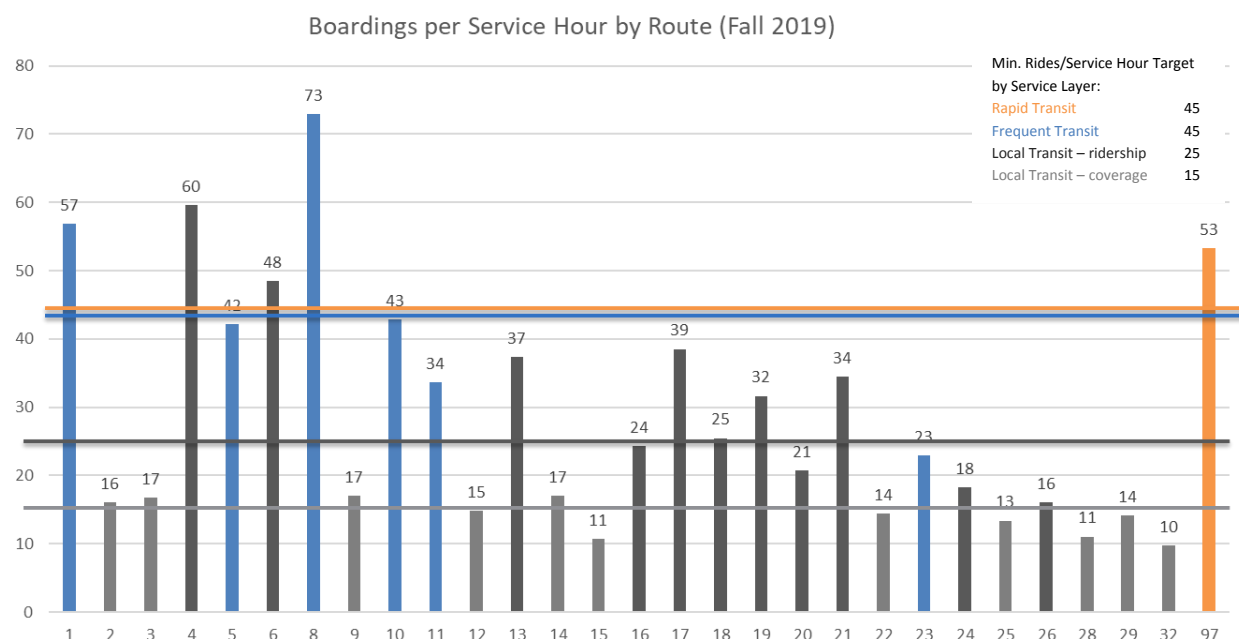
Service changes include:

- Regular Spring seasonal discontinuation of select trips on routes serving Okanagan College and UBCO and seasonal discontinuation of routes #13 Quail Ridge and #4 Pandosy-UBCO.
- Route #6 Glenmore-UBCO summer schedule – 10 trips/day.
- Regular Summer-period seasonal discontinuation of select trips on various routes where demand is primarily driven by post-secondary student travel.
- Discontinuation of select underperforming individual trips on various Core and Coverage bus routes including #1 Lakeshore, #3 Dilworth, #4 Pandosy-UBCO Express, #12 McColloch, #15 Crawford, #97 Okanagan.
- General reduction of headways (service frequency) in select periods of the day or changes to service span on routes experiencing lower overall productivity in comparison to performance guidelines – #3 Dilworth, #5 Gordon, #6 Glenmore-UBCO, #11 Rutland, #12 McColloch, #15 Crawford.
- Introduction of 45-minute service frequency on Sundays on route #10 North Rutland in response to performance (62 rides/service hour) - currently hourly service.

---

<sup>1</sup> Revenue hours is a metric that describes the hours buses are in service and accessible to the public. It excludes operating hours accumulated by buses travelling out of service to and from facilities.

In addition to seasonal service reductions, BC Transit is exploring opportunities to slightly reduce peak-period bus demand through scheduling efficiencies on various major routes. This is anticipated to free-up approximately 3 buses to support service expansion on route 8 during peak periods this coming Fall. These resources will be combined with the approved 950 hours of off-peak expansion for September.



### Transit Maintenance and Operations Facility capacity:

With the current Hardy Street transit facility at capacity, staff have been working to identify interim solutions until the new operations and maintenance facility is available. To this end City staff have identified a City owned property located at 759 Crowley Avenue that has potential to be utilized as a maintenance facility for the Paratransit, or handyDART fleet. This former City Yard site has been leased for several years but will be available this October. Use of this facility for Paratransit operations would free up significant bus storage space and garage capacity, allowing for planned service expansions to occur over the next several years. Currently BC Transit has engaged their staff and a consultant to identify functional needs, suitability of the Crowley Avenue facility, and any improvements required. A follow up report with full cost impact is planned to be brought to Council this summer. Dependent upon available budget, and the level of improvement required, the facility could be brought into use early to mid-2021 allowing for fall 2021 service expansions to occur as previously planned.

### Conclusion:

The Spring and Summer 2020 service adjustments will bring route and system level productivity in these periods into better alignment with targets. Recovered resources will bolster the approved 950-hour off peak expansion and will be applied to routes experiencing significant demand pressures in the busier Fall and Winter period. While it is too soon to cite the total resources that are expected to be available for the Fall, this will become clearer as the Spring/Summer service delivery process unfolds and the detailed scheduling process begins for the Fall service change.

A potential interim secondary operations site is being assessed to determine its suitability as a Paratransit maintenance and bus storage facility. If deemed suitable, the site could be expected to be operational in early to mid-2021 allowing for a significant Conventional Transit service expansion in the Fall of 2021.

**Internal Circulation:**

Infrastructure

Community Communications

Financial Services

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

Development and operational costs associated with the interim Paratransit operations site are yet unknown. These considerations are being explored through the site assessment process.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

Submitted by:

M. Kittmer, Transit Service Coordinator

Approved for inclusion:



A. Newcombe, Divisional Director, Infrastructure

Attachment 1 - Seasonal Transit Service Changes and Transit Operations Facility Capacity Presentation

cc: Alan Newcombe, Divisional Director, Infrastructure  
Rafael Villarreal, Integrated Transportation Department Manager  
Genelle Davidson, Divisional Director, Financial Services  
Carla Weaden, Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services  
Jerry Dombowsky, Transit and Programs Manager  
Kelly Isaak, Infrastructure Administration Manager  
Stephanie Trenholm, Communications Advisor