

# Report to Council



**Date:** March 14, 2022  
**To:** Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** Mission Transit Network Restructure Study  
**Department:** Integrated Transportation

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives for information, the report from Integrated Transportation, dated March 14, 2022, regarding the Mission Transit Network Restructure Study.

## **Purpose:**

To inform Council of a transit planning exercise that will be undertaken in 2022 to investigate future route structure options and associated infrastructure for the Upper and Lower Mission areas of Kelowna.

## **Background:**

In 2018 the Transit Future Action Plan (TFAP) was endorsed by City Council. That plan provided an update to the 2012 Transit Future Plan recognizing changes in the community and the significant growth in ridership that had occurred<sup>1</sup>. Transit service priorities in the TFAP were separated into short (1—3 year), medium (3-5 year) and longer term (5+ years) horizons.

Many short-term priorities within the TFAP have been implemented<sup>2</sup> however others have been delayed because of the impact that the pandemic has had on the community and transit ridership. Of the few remaining short-term initiatives, Upper and Lower Mission service restructuring is the highest priority. Others include re-alignment of route 11 to serve Rutland Exchange and investing in high-performing existing local transit network routes. Mid to long-term priorities include increased investment in high-performing major transit routes, Rutland area network restructuring and investigating potential new coverage transit services to new areas among others.

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<sup>1</sup> 9% ridership growth – 2012-2018 to 5.24 million annual rides. 5.94 million by 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Completed short term TFAP initiatives – invest in Frequent and Rapid routes, new service to UBCO via John Hindle Dr, introduction of service to Academy Way, and the realignment of most Rutland area routes to the new Rutland Transit Exchange.

**Discussion:**

Ongoing changes to population, land uses, and road networks, primarily in the Upper Mission, have resulted in travel pattern changes as well as broader travel demand impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods. This study will assess these changes and consider options for restructuring public transit routes to improve the convenience of transit for area residents and address under-performing services. The exercise will seek to determine what changes may be feasible without the need for additional service hours or new buses and which changes may be deferred to a later phase of implementation. This is in recognition that service expansion funding is unavailable from the province this year as well as other capacity challenges.

The opening of the new Canyon Falls Middle School in the fall of 2019 resulted in a significant change in travel patterns in the Mission area. Youth from throughout the Upper and Lower Mission attend this school. Students who reside within 4 kilometres of the school do not qualify for school bussing. While the school is served by a nearby existing transit route, #17 Southridge, many students reside out of reach of it. For these students, taking transit to school requires a long two-route journey with connections made at Mission Exchange. This study will investigate options to improve connections for trips made between Upper Mission neighborhoods as well as trips made to and from the new school from throughout the catchment area.

Lower Mission residents who choose transit for their daily commute must transfer to higher-order services at Mission Exchange and in many cases, make a further transfer elsewhere in the system. The associated long travel times make transit a less attractive travel option as compared to driving. Similarly, students at Okanagan Mission Secondary School (OKM) who reside in the northern reaches of the school catchment must make a transfer at the exchange to travel to the school. To make transit a more attractive and viable option for these commuters, this study will investigate options for extending higher-order service south of the exchange to reduce transfers and overall travel time.

The study will identify a preferred network structure for the Mission area and determine any associated implementation phasing that may be required. It will also identify the supporting infrastructure (bus stops) required to support the network changes. A separate but related study that seeks to reduce or eliminate operational challenges and high costs of routing services into Mission Exchange is currently ongoing.

**Approach:**

This exercise will include a review of all Mission area routes including route #5 Gordon (south of KLO Road), #15 Crawford, #16 Kettle Valley and #17 Southridge. Analysis will include a review of ridership data, bus stop data (boardings/alightings) and current area population and employment data. New routing will be compared against current and forecasted land uses, and changes to population demographics and take into consideration new roadway links. This process will be led by BC Transit in collaboration with City of Kelowna staff and include engagement with the public and transit staff.

The study will be hosted on BC Transit's *Bang the Table* website where transit users and residents can interact. An online survey will be administered through the website to capture feedback from the public on which routing option they most support, and the site will allow for general ideas submission. Additionally, an online map will complement the survey to capture location-specific notes and comments.

Timeline:

Date*	Deliverable
February 2022	Development of Terms of Reference
March 2022	Initial analysis of routing options and changes to travel demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of draft routing options and infrastructure improvements</li></ul>
April 2022	Public engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project website kickoff</li><li>• Online survey and mapping (2-3 weeks)</li></ul>
May 2022	Engagement Summary Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modify routing options if required</li></ul>
June 2022	Draft report developed based on local government and public feedback
July 2022	<i>Final draft report to key stakeholders and local government elected officials.</i>
September 2022	Project completion – plan endorsement by City of Kelowna Council and BC Transit’s Senior Leadership Team. Explore opportunities for implementation
January 2023	Potential integration of service option into Winter 2023 Service Change
Ongoing	Integration of information into future Annual Service Plans, and Three-year Service and Financial Strategies and ongoing implementation of recommended projects

\* NOTE: The completion of deliverables within the timelines outlined above may be subject to change.

**Conclusion:**

The Transit Future Action Plan details short, medium, and long-term transit service implementation priorities for communities throughout the Central Okanagan. Of the short-term Kelowna priorities not yet implemented, Mission service restructuring is the highest priority. Changes in travel patterns and land-uses warrant evaluation of the structure of the transit network in the area. A study will be undertaken over 2022 that will identify and evaluate options developed through consultation with transit riders, residents, and other stakeholders. This study will deliver detailed ridership analysis, an engagement summary and implementation priorities that consider short and long-term routing options as well as supporting infrastructure improvements.

**Internal Circulation:**

Communications Advisor  
Strategic Transportation Planning Manager

**External Circulation:**

Senior Transit Planner, BC Transit

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

Financial and budget implications are to be determined through the study process and considered in future transit budgets and subsequent Annual Operating Agreements.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Communications Comments:

Existing Policy:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

**Submitted by:** Mike Kittmer, Transit Service Coordinator

**Approved for inclusion:** Mac Logan, Infrastructure General Manager

Attachment 1: Mission Transit Network Restructure Study Presentation

cc: C. Weaden, Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services  
D. Edstrom, Divisional Director, Partnerships and Investments  
R. Smith, Divisional Director, Planning and Development Services  
G. Davidson, Divisional Director, Financial Services