

Report to Council



Date: July 10, 2023
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Mission and Rutland Transit Network Plans
Department: Integrated Transportation

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Integrated Transportation, dated July 10, 2023 regarding the Mission and Rutland Transit Network Plans.

Purpose:

To present Council with the final Mission Network Restructure Plan and Rutland Local Area Transit Plan.

Background:

Transit restructuring plans, often referred to as local area transit plans, are undertaken to seek opportunities to evolve transit services to better align them with changing land use and ridership potential within specific geographic areas of the city.

On March 14, 2022, staff informed Council of a study being undertaken to assess network structure options for the Mission area and, through public consultation, select a preferred option. Changes to the structure of select transit routes¹ in the Mission were explored with the aim to improve connectivity between Upper Mission neighborhoods, enhance convenience of trips to and from area secondary schools and to reduce the number of transfers for trips to and from the Lower Mission.

On June 13, 2022, staff returned to inform Council of a second transit planning initiative being undertaken to assess transit services in and around the Rutland community. The exercise investigated opportunities to evolve transit service throughout Rutland and periphery areas in response to changes in land use, density, and travel patterns. As the population grows and land use changes unfold within Rutland, the area is expected to contribute significantly to ridership growth.

¹As a top candidate for testing Digital on Demand (DoD) transit service, the Crawford neighborhood was excluded from the restructuring study. The area has since been selected for BC Transit’s first DoD service trial. DoD uses technology to dynamically dispatch a vehicle to locations in the area dictated by customers. Implementation is planned for mid-2024.

Previous Council Resolutions

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

Resolution	Date
THAT Council receives for information, the report from Integrated Transportation, dated June 13, 2022, regarding the Rutland Local Area Transit Planning Study.	June 13, 2022.

Discussion:

Mission Network Restructure

Three network structure options for the Mission area were presented to the public via online engagement undertaken between May 24 and June 29, 2022. Considering public input collected from 146 survey respondents, 184 comments and 24 pins added to an area map and the outcomes of an operational assessment, a preferred network structure was selected. For further engagement details, view the [engagement summary](#).

Changes to the transit network in the Mission area include:

- Extension of route 5 Gordon south of its current terminus at Mission Rec exchange into the Lower Mission.
- Amalgamation of routes 16 Kettle Valley and 17 Southridge to service much of the Upper Mission linking the Kettle Valley and Southridge areas.

The new network structure extends route 5 Gordon south providing coverage to areas of the Lower Mission served by routes 16 and 17 today. This better accommodates trips to destinations served by route 5 such as Okanagan College, Kelowna Secondary and KLO Middle Schools, Capri Centre, downtown Kelowna, and points between by eliminating the need for a transfer at Mission Exchange.

A new route serving the Upper Mission links the Kettle Valley and Southridge neighborhoods connecting residents to the existing and future commercial hubs within each area while also introducing service to residences between them. The new route significantly improves convenience for students residing in Kettle Valley by eliminating the need to travel to Mission Rec exchange and transfer to access Okanagan Mission Secondary and Canyon Falls Middle Schools.

Mission Restructuring Implementation

Restructuring of Mission area transit routes will be undertaken as a single expansion package which is projected to require 3,500 new annual service hours and 1 additional bus. The changes are proposed to take effect as soon as is feasible pending the completion of capacity growth². Online view of the [Mission Network Restructure Plan](#).

² The Hardy St. expansion planning process, underway now, will determine the timeline in which additional buses can be added to the Kelowna Regional Transit system to facilitate service expansions.

Rutland Local Area Transit Plan (LATP)

Network structuring within Rutland builds upon a key transit initiative detailed within Kelowna's Transportation Master Plan which proposed enhanced transit services and infrastructure along Highway 33 and Rutland Road North. Proposed supporting route changes align services throughout Rutland to ridership demand considering existing and future land use and population. The plan also details changes to the structure of route 4 Pandosy-UBCO Express.

Online public engagement was undertaken between mid-November and mid-December 2022 which culminated in 517 survey responses, 854 comments and 36 pins added to proposed network maps. For more details, view the [engagement summary](#).

Changes to the transit network within Rutland include:

- Phased introduction of a new 98 Rutland-UBCO Express route connecting downtown Kelowna and Rutland (and onwards to UBCO).
- Splitting of route 4 to better balance service levels and ridership demand in areas served today:
 - Introduction of a new local route: 84 Academy Way serving the University Heights area south of UBCO with connections to the Sexsmith Rd/Highway 97 (Reid's Corner) area.
 - Retaining the southern segment of route 4 operating between the Pandosy area and Orchard Park via KLO³ and Benvoulin roads.
- Introduction of a new bi-directional service on Leathead Rd. via restructuring of route 10 North Rutland.
- Streamlining a portion of route 11 Rutland to serve Rutland Exchange and improve transit access within the Rutland Urban Centre.
- Restructuring of portions of route 14 Black Mountain and extension of the route to serve lower-density areas of North Rutland.
- Long-term changes to route 8 University that may be considered in the future:
 - Realignment of a short segment of the route via Highway 97 in the Banks Rd. area to better facilitate connections to route 97 at Banks Rd. Station.
 - Potential restructuring within North Rutland moving the route onto the planned Hollywood Rd. extension to enhance the frequent transit network grid.

Rutland LATP Implementation

The Rutland LATP is planned to be implemented in stages beginning with the launch of the 98 Express at an introductory level of service and the launch of the new 84 Academy Way route. Thereafter, as service levels are increased on the 98, restructuring of segments of routes 10, 11 and 14 serving Rutland are proposed. Collectively, these priority enhancements require an estimated 16,000 additional annual service hours and are proposed to be implemented incrementally pending budget approval and the completion of necessary capacity expansion.

Other future improvements detailed in the plan including expansion to the span and frequency of services on various routes will be implemented as resources permit. Routing changes to the 8 University outlined in the plan will be contemplated further in the future and will consider changes to ridership patterns

³ Increasing residential housing stock is being developed along KLO Rd. corridor between Gordon Dr. and Benvoulin Rd. This segment of route 4 also provides an express option between Pandosy and Okanagan College to support route 8 which is under significant ridership pressure.

resulting from the earlier network changes and the timing of proposed area road network changes (e.g., the planned Hollywood Rd extension). View the [Rutland Local Area Transit Plan](#).

Proposed implementation summary – Mission and Rutland plans

Improvement	Implementation Period	Est. New Annual Hrs.*	New buses required
Mission restructure	Fall 2025	3,500	1
98 Rutland Express launch	Fall 2025	3,200	0
84 Academy Way introduction	Fall 2025	0	0
Rutland near-term changes (10, 11, 14)	Fall 2026	1,600	0
98 Express Full Implementation	Fall 2027	9,200	TBD
On-time performance 16 Upper Mission	Fall 2027	250	0
Off-peak improvements- routes 10, 11	Fall 2027 (or earlier)	2,000	0

*Timing of select packages dependent Hardy Operations Centre refurbishments along with budget approvals. Budget estimates will be included in the 2024/25 Transit Improvement Program (TIP) which comes forward to Council later this year.

Conclusion:

Local area transit network restructuring plans such as those undertaken for the Mission and Rutland areas are key to realizing the City’s objectives of increasing the quality and convenience of public transit. They are developed to respond to changes in the community. By improving transit connections and increasing service levels to key destinations such as urban and village centres, schools and employment hubs, transit becomes a more attractive and effective travel option. The desired outcome is a city where public transit is a viable travel option and one that is utilized more frequently.

These two transit plans respond to recent land use changes and plan for future land uses intensification, preparing Kelowna for the future. Collectively the plans will significantly increase available transit services helping to meet demand which today is exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Implementation of each plan is reliant on Provincial and City budgetary approval and completion of a recently initiated capacity expansion project for the Hardy St. transit operations centre. Associated infrastructure enhancements required to support network changes will be integrated into transit capital programs and will be delivered incrementally.

Internal Circulation:

Financial Services
Corporate Strategic Services

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

TMP goals: Improve travel choices, promote inclusive transportation, support livable communities, enhance urban centres, foster a growing economy, protect the environment.

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Mission Network restructuring requires an additional 3,500 annual service hours and 1 bus with associated lease fees each anticipated to be included in the 2025/26 Annual Operating Agreement (AOA).

Rutland area restructuring initiatives will collectively require an estimated 16,000 additional annual service hours which will be delivered incrementally with 3,200 hours included in the 2025/26 AOA, 1,600 in 2026/27 and 11,200 in 2027/28. The timing of implementation of service enhancements requiring additional buses is dependent Hardy Ops Centre refurbishments & local and provincial budget approvals. Service expansions stemming from these plans are being integrated into the Transit Improvement Program 3-year budgets and will be brought forward this summer for Council's consideration.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Authority
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
External Agency/Public Comments
Communications Comments

Submitted by: Mike Kittmer, Transit Service Coordinator

Approved for inclusion: Malcolm Logan, Infrastructure General Manager

Attachment(s): Mission and Rutland Transit Network Plans Presentation

cc: Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services
Divisional Director, Financial Services
Divisional Director, Partnerships, and Investments
Divisional Director, Planning and Development Services