

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE
(Committee of the Whole)

Thursday, October 22, 2016

PRESENT: Chair Bill Miller

Directors Taylor Bachrach
Eileen Benedict
Shane Brienen
Mark Fisher
Tom Greenaway
John Illes
Dwayne Lindstrom
Thomas Liversidge
Rob MacDougall
Rob Newell
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Darcy Repen
Gerry Thiessen

Staff Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
Roxanne Shepherd, Chief Financial Officer
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Others Zoe Dhillon, Special Projects Coordinator, District of Vanderhoof – via
Teleconference – 1:45 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.
Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit – via
teleconference
Linda Harmon, Transit Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of
Transportation and Infrastructure – via Teleconference
Ian Wells, General Manager, Planning and Development, City of Prince
George – via Teleconference
Tania Wegwitz, MCIP, RPP, Manager of Planning, BC Transit – via
Teleconference

Media: Flavio Nienow, LD News

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA &
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

Moved by Director Petersen
Seconded by Director MacDougall

RTC.2016-2-1

“That the agenda of the October 22, 2016 Regional Transit Committee Meeting be approved; and further, that the Supplementary Agenda be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Regional Transit Committee Minutes – October 6, 2016

Moved by Director Illes
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RTC.2016-2-2

“That the Regional Transit Committee minutes of October 6, 2016 be received.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Reports

Moved by Director Illes
Seconded by Director MacDougall

RTC.2016-2-3

“That the Regional Transit Committee receive the following reports:
-BC Transit - Public Consultation Report.”
-BC Transit - Highway 16 Engagement Report.”
-BC Transit - DRAFT Detailed Route and Stop Locations.”

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

CORRESPONDENCE:

-William Konkin Elementary School Parent Advisory Council RE:
Highway 16 Action Plan Proposed Route – Burns Lake.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion took place regarding the BC Transit’s Draft Detailed Route and Stop Locations. The Regional Transit Committee requested BC Transit to consider the following in further development of its draft Detailed Route and Stop Locations:

1. Burns Lake:
 - a. Remove the stop located at William Konkin Elementary School (WKE) in Burns Lake:
 - i. The current WKE parking lot congestion is a concern;
 - b. Stop Location in Burns Lake on Highway 16 between the RV Parking lot and Process 4 Gallery:
 - i. Consider relocating the stop to Gilgan Avenue to provide a stop location with a transit shelter for both BC Transit and Via Rail;
2. Smithers:
 - a. Bus routing to include a stop at the Bulkley Valley District Hospital;
3. Houston:
 - a. Consider including a bus stop at Buckflats Road and Highway 16;
4. Telkwa:
 - a. Consider including bus stops at:
 - i. Tyhee Lake Road and Highway 16;
 - ii. Seniors Development Complex.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

The need for further community consultation in regard to the route and stop locations was discussed. Chair Miller spoke to services being shared such as Via Rail and BC Transit to have a sustainable service for the region for the future. He also mentioned the need for the plan to be fluid to allow for the development of the best long term plan.

Tanya Wegwitz, Manager of Planning, BC Transit stated that BC Transit would be willing to meet with communities in order to have further discussions in regard to bus routing and stops or any other topics that may need further discussion or clarification. She mentioned that BC Transit was the lead agency in regard to public consultation and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) completed local government consultation. BC Transit and MoTI reviewed the information obtained to develop and provide a "draft" Detailed Route and Stop Locations document.

Ms. Wegwitz provided a brief summary in regard to the decisions made regarding the route and stop locations. She indicated that a walking distance of 400 metres in urban areas is the walking limit utilized to assist in determining stops. In developing the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit system the intent is to have a transit system that will flourish and evolve over time to be a long term service.

The following considerations were discussed:

Burns Lake:

- Potential to be a starting point for a hub;
- Feasibility study identified locations and logical locations for stops;
- Burns Lake being located on a hill – on some level a bus loop through the upper avenues may provide an opportunity for residents to be transported up and down the hill;
- A stop location at the Lakes District Hospital and Health Centre allows a warm place for a drop off/pickup location;
- There is a possibility to move the stop away from WKE school considering one of the pickup times is 8:30 a.m. three days a week and may add to the congestion at the school;
- BC Transit and MoTI has explored the option to have the Burns Lake stop between the RV parking lot and Process 4 Gallery moved to try and include Via Rail but at the time the location did not appear to be the best solution – could potentially be revisited;

Smithers:

- It is possible to identify the Bulkley Valley District Hospital as a stop location;
- It may also be possible to include additional door to door drop off and pickup locations;

Houston:

- Buckflats Road and Highway 16 was not initially included due to the lack of a safe on and off location on Highway 16 for the bus – Ms. Wegwitz has made note of the ask and while BC Transit Staff are completing a detailed assessment of the stops they will review the possibility;

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Telkwa

- Tyhee Lake and Highway 16 and the Seniors Development were reviewed as possible locations and could potentially be included in the expansion of the Smithers Transit System.

Concerns were discussed in regard to the ability to protect riders on longer distance trips from losing their spot on the bus to riders that are using the bus for a short distance. For example: a rider takes the bus from Burns Lake to Prince George and when they board for the return home to Burns Lake their seat has been filled by a rider that will be getting off in the College Heights area of Prince George. BC Transit has considered the possibility of this occurring and the \$5 ridership fee may help to mitigate the issue. The busses will not have standing options. Discussion took place in regard to using destination signage on the busses that will have a different style than the intra-city busses to identify the long distance busses.

Moving Forward:

- As discussed by MoTI/BC Transit/RDBN a Regional Transit Coordinator will be hired to provide:
 - o Interface with First Nations;
 - o Collect feedback;
 - o Follow-up;
 - o Finalize dialogue;
 - o Funding model;
 - o Feedback to BC Transit/MoTI to move forward.
- Next MOU: Implementation MOU between BC Transit and Regional Transit Members:
 - o Implementation MOU will provide the exact details of the service;
 - Schedules;
 - Fares;
 - Etc.
- Service Option document will be provided to partners;
- Which will lead to the signing of the Implementation MOU.

Ms. Wegwitz also mentioned that BC Transit is willing to meet with District of Vanderhoof if they so choose.

The next Regional Transit Committee meeting will be held November 3, 2016.

Discussion took place in regard to bringing forward cost information to municipal councils and First Nations. Chair Miller mentioned that the RDBN Board of Directors approved Chair Miller and Director Bachrach to meet with First Nations partners in the region to provide an update and an opportunity to discuss and join the Regional Transit Committee and the Highway 16 Inter-Community Transit System. Chair Miller also noted that staff are currently developing possible funding formula options for discussion that will be available for the November 3rd Regional Transit Committee meeting for municipal councils participating.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Discussion took place regarding each partner's contribution to the service will depend on number of partners participating. Including the best and worst case funding models scenarios was discussed along with potential funding options in three years depending on the commitment from the province. Linda Harmon, Transit Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure noted that the province cannot make a commitment beyond the three year timeframe outlined. Deborah Bowman, Assistant Deputy Minister, MoTI has clearly outlined that this service is not a pilot project but a long term project. There may be opportunities in the future depending on ridership but there are no commitments beyond the three years.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Bachrach
Seconded by Director Repen

RTC.2016-2-4

"That the meeting be adjourned at 1:55 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Bill Miller, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant