



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE AGENDA

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2017

1:00 P.M.

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Boardroom

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>AGENDA – September 7, 2017</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
2-7	Regional Transit Committee Meeting Minutes – April 20, 2017	Receive
	<u>DELEGATION</u>	
	<u>BC Transit – (Via Teleconference)</u> Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager RE: Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit Update	
	<u>REPORT</u>	
8-9	Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Transit Coordinator – July 2017 Ridership Breakdown	Receive
	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u>	
10-12	Greyhound Canada Applies to Stop Serving Northern B.C., Including 'Highway of Tears'	Receive
	<u>SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA</u>	
	<u>NEW BUSINESS</u>	
	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING**
(Committee Of The Whole)**Thursday, April 20, 2017**

PRESENT: Acting Chair Bill Miller

Directors Taylor Bachrach – via-teleconference – 11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Eileen Benedict
Shane Brien
Mark Fisher
Tom Greenaway
Dwayne Lindstrom
Thomas Liversidge
Rob MacDougall
Bill Miller
Rob Newell
Mark Parker
Jerry Petersen
Darcy Repen
Luke Strimbold
Gerry Thiessen

Staff Melany de Weerd, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Manager of Administrative Services
Laura O'Meara, Senior Financial Assistant – left at 11:58 a.m.,
returned at 12:07 p.m.
Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Transit Service Coordinator
Wendy Wainwright, Executive Assistant

Others Chris Beach, Mayor, Village of Burns Lake – left at 12:16 p.m.
Matthew Boyd, Manager, Planning, BC Transit
Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager, BC Transit
Norm Hildebrandt, Audit Partner, Price Waterhouse Cooper
Anne Marie Sam, BC New Democratic Party Candidate Nechako
Lakes– arrived at 12:10 p.m.
Sheryl Worthing, CAO, Village of Burns Lake – left at 12:00 p.m.

ViaTele- Deborah Bowman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Transportation
Conference Policy and Programs, Ministry of Transportation and
Infrastructure
Silas Brownsey, Executive Director, Transit & Crown Agency
Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Tom Clement, Chief Administrative Officer, District of
Vanderhoof
Zoe Dhillon, Special Projects Coordinator, District of Vanderhoof
Linda Harmon, Transit Crown Agency Programs, Ministry of
Transportation and Infrastructure
Tiina Schaeffer, Manager of Sustainable Community
Development and Transit, City of Prince George
Kathleen Soltis, City Manager, City of Prince George

Media Flavio Nienow, Lakes District News – left at 12:19 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER Acting Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

AGENDA

Moved by Director Petersen
 Seconded by Director MacDougall

RTC. 2017-2-1

"That the Regional Transit Committee Agenda for April 20, 2017 be adopted."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Regional Transit Committee Meeting Minutes -January 26, 2017

Moved by Director Illes
 Seconded by Director Benedict

RTC.2017-2-2

"That the Minutes of the Regional Transit Committee Meeting of January 26, 2017 be received."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION ITEMS

BC TRANSIT – Chris Fudge Senior Regional Transit Manager, and Matthew Boyd, Manager, Planning RE: Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit Service Implementation Plan

Acting Chair Miller welcomed Chris Fudge, Senior Regional Transit Manager and Matthew Boyd, Manager, Planning, BC Transit.

Messrs. Fudge and Boyd provided a PowerPoint Presentation.

Update

- Smithers-Moricetown service implementation (late January);
- Transit Service Agreement signed between RDBN and BC Transit (early March);
- Direct award for service provision to Pacific Western Transportation (PWT) (mid-March);
- Community Transportation Grant Program (late March).

Where are we now?

- **Completed:**
 - Service area segment meetings;
 - Revise options, engage further partners;
 - Detailed scheduling;
 - Revise route maps;
 - Confirm stop locations;
 - Assess vehicles;
 - Finalize governance & agreement strategy;
 - Begin procurement process;
 - Conduct further engagement;
 - Finalize operating details;
 - Finalize schedules, routes;
 - Confirm service hours;
 - Build infrastructure;
 - Order signage;
 - Prepare vehicles;

DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONT'D)

BC TRANSIT – Chris Fudge Senior Regional Transit Manager, and Matthew Boyd, Manager, Planning RE: Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit Service Implementation Plan (Cont'd)

- **We are here**
 - Finalize Implementation Plan and Agreements;
 - Create marketing materials;
 - Coordinate with other providers;
 - Ramp up operating centres;
 - Deliver & prepare vehicles;
 - Train new staff;
 - Install signage, wayfinding;
 - Implement Service.

Burns Lake to Prince George

Service:

- Route 161;
- One round trip per day;
- 3 days per week (Tue., Thru. Sat.);
- 4 hour window in Prince George;
- No service on stat holidays.

Communities served:

- Wet'suwet'en;
- Decker Lake;
- Burns Lake*;
- Tintagel;
- Endako;
- Stellaquo;
- Fraser Lake;
- Nautley;
- Fort Fraser;
- Vanderhooff*;
- Beaverly;
- Prince George*.

(*denotes local routing).

Burns Lake to Smithers

Service:

- Route 162;
- One round trip per day;
- 3 days per week (Mon. Wed. Fri)
- 5 hour window in Smithers;
- No service on stat holidays.

Communities served:

- Wet'suwet'en;
- Burns Lake;
- Decker Lake;
- Broman/Duncan Lake;
- Topley;
- Houston*
- Telkwa
- Smithers*;
- Additional midday round trip between Houston and Smithers.

(*denotes local routing).

DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONT'D)

BC TRANSIT – Chris Fudge Senior Regional Transit Manager, and Matthew Boyd, Manager, Planning RE: Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit Service Implementation Plan (Cont'd)

Infrastructure

- New transit shelters and bus stop signage being installed.

Special Consideration and Contingency Strategies

- Vehicle breakdowns;
- Service overloads;
- Cell reception?
- Inclement weather;
- Washroom access;
- Bicycle racks;
- Luggage and parcel storage;
- Flagging the bus:
 - Recommend using designated bus stops;
 - Safety concerns.

Fare Structure

- Single \$5.00 cash fare – one way;
- Sheet of 10 TICKETS: \$45;
- Children five and under travel free if with paying guardian;
- BC Bus Pass
 - Universal bus pass for low income seniors, people with a disability;
- Transfer policies;
- Vendors.

Marketing/Communication Action Plan

- Riders Guide;
- Web-site;
- Interior Bus Cards-Prince George & Smithers;
- Print advertising;
- Radio advertising;
- Social media (Facebook/Twitter)
- Promotional items;
- Additional material?

Riders Guide*

- Still in development.

Website

- In development;
- Mobile version:
 - Trip alerts;
 - Subscribe to those alerts;
- Report a concern:
 - Provide suggestions, complaints, and comments.

Regional Transit System

- BC Transit staff provide operational support to operating partners and focus on enhancing stakeholder relations;
- Annual partner communications calendar;
- Quarterly Performance Report to BC Transit senior leadership;
- Annual Performance Summary;
- The Hub – Partner Site;
- Marketing & Communication.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (CONT'D)

BC TRANSIT – Chris Fudge Senior Regional Transit Manager, and Matthew Boyd, Manager, Planning RE: Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit Service Implementation Plan (Cont'd)

Vehicles

Ford Polar

- Passenger Capacity – 20;
- Wheelchair positions – 4 or 6;
- Length – 7.46m;
- Width 2.44m;
- GVW – 6,373-6,577kg.

Aero Elite 320

"International"

- Passenger Capacity – 30;
- Wheelchair positions – 4 or 6;
- Length – 9.83m;
- Width – 2.4m;
- GVW – 10,659kg.

Post Implementation

- Service will be monitored closely by BC Transit and the local partners to ensure the schedules and route alignments are meeting the customer needs;
- Include ridership analysis, on-time performance analysis, operator feedback and customer feedback;
- If required, adjustments will be made to the service within a reasonable timeframe;
- Full thorough service review after three years.

Discussion took place in regard to ensuring the transit service provider is fully engaged with the local communities and the region. BC Transit will forward the request to PWT, the service provider for the Regional Transit, to ensure full engagement.

Director Fisher voiced concerns in regard to the recommendation from BC Transit to use designated bus stops and discouraging flagging the bus. Discussion took place to the safety concerns in regard to flagging the bus and finding a balance in regard to creating and developing safe stop locations. Mr. Boyd spoke of ensuring dialogue continues in regard to flagging the bus and bus stops along the Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit route. Director Fisher and Newell emphasized the need to provide service to the rural residents of the region. Deborah Bowman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Transportation Policy and Programs, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) commented that the maintenance, snow removal and safety considerations are a main consideration of MoTI and its regional highways departments. The safety action funding of \$1.5M of the five point Highway 16 Action Plan was to specifically support the safety of bus stops in providing transit shelters with wifi access for the Regional Transit Service and the Community Vehicle Programs. Ms. Bowman noted that the MoTI will be working with BC Transit and the organizations that were granted the Community Vehicle Programs to develop the links between the Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit and the Community Vehicle Programs.

Chair Miller thanked Messrs. Fudge and Boyd for attending the meeting.

REPORT

**Implementation Memorandum
of Understanding**

Moved by Director MacDougall
Seconded by Director Lindstrom

RTC.2017-2-3

"That the Regional Transit Committee recommend that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors that it approve and execute the Implementation Memorandum of Understanding between BC Transit and the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako."

Opposed: Director Fisher CARRIED

(All/Directors/Majority)

Director Fisher voiced concerns in regard to bus stop locations and the need to find solutions and for constant communication. Director MacDougall mentioned that the Regional Transit System is a work in progress and may need adjustments as it develops.

**Regional Transit Service
Coordinator & Correspondence**

Moved by Director Illes
Seconded by Director Petersen

RTC.2017-2-4

"That the Regional Transit Committee receive the following:

Report

Chief Administrative Officer's April 11, 2017 memo titled "Regional Transit Service Coordinator";

CORRESPONDENCE

-from the Village of Telkwa RE: Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para – Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016";
-from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure RE: Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan Enables \$2 Million for Community Grants";
-from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure RE: Highway 16 Transportation Action Plan Enables Enhance Transit Service in Kitimat-Stikine";
-from BC Transit RE: #ExploreBCbyBus-Spring Province-wide Campaign."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Newell
Seconded by Director Repen

RTC.2017-2-5

"That the meeting be adjourned at 12:22 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO****Memorandum**

TO: Chair Bachrach and Regional Transit Committee
FROM: Deneve Vanderwolf, Regional Transit Coordinator
SUBJECT: July 2017 Ridership Breakdown
DATE: August 24, 2017

The first full month of service for the Bulkley-Nechako Regional Transit System was met with enthusiasm and positive feedback. The transit service has gained in popularity quickly with ridership numbers steadily increasing throughout the month of July.

The attached table organizes July ridership by Municipality and Electoral Area / First Nation. Passenger counts include riders boarding the bus at stops located within their respected areas, numbers may include more than one bus stop.

I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Recommendation

Receive.

Ridership from July 1-31, 2017*

Route 161 Burns Lake -Prince George	Passengers
Electoral Area "B" Burns Lake Rural Wet'suwet'en First Nation	10
Burns Lake Lake Babine Nation	71
Electoral Area "D" Fraser Lake Rural Stellat'en First Nation Nadleh Whut'en	12
Fraser Lake	18
Vanderhoof	49
Prince George	101
Total Passengers	261
Average per day	20

Route 162 Burns Lake - Smithers	Passengers	
Electoral Area "B" Burns Lake Rural Wet'suwet'en First Nation	0	
Burns Lake	22	
		Midday Run Departs Smithers 11:30 am Departs Houston at 1:00 pm
Electoral Area "G" Houston Rural	0	
Houston	71	18
Electoral Area "A" Smithers Rural	1	0
Telkwa	5	0
Smithers	54	21
Total Passengers	153	39
Average passengers per day	12	3

*Numbers are preliminary and may be subject to change

Greyhound Canada applies to stop serving northern B.C., including 'Highway of Tears'

Transportation company blames public transit and increased urbanization for proposed change

By Andrew Kurjata, [CBC News](#) Posted: Aug 30, 2017 8:48 AM PT Last Updated: Aug 30, 2017 10:16 AM PT

Greyhound Canada has filed an application to end all its bus runs in northern British Columbia, including on the so-called Highway of Tears, as well as between Victoria and Nanaimo.

In an application filed with the B.C. Passenger Transportation Board Aug. 10, the company blames ride-sharing companies, expanded public transit options and a decline in the number of people living in rural locations for a drop in ridership.

The runs Greyhound wants to cease operation are:

- Victoria to Nanaimo.
- Prince George to Prince Rupert.
- Prince George to Valemount.
- Prince George to Dawson Creek.
- Dawson Creek to Whitehorse.

"Despite a long-standing series of corrective measures and discussions with regulatory officials, the reality is that we can no longer operate the unsustainable routes, and we are proposing changes that will make other B.C. routes more viable," Stuart Kendrick, senior vice-president of Greyhound Canada, said in a release.

- [Explore B.C.'s notorious Highway of Tears in new virtual reality documentary](#)

Should the application be approved, the entire northern half of British Columbia would no longer have Greyhound service, including the Highway of Tears, which extends from Prince George to Prince Rupert.

That stretch of road has gained notoriety due to the number of women and girls, primarily Indigenous, who have gone missing or been murdered since 1970.

Public transit is 'subsidized' competition: company

Earlier this year, the provincial government began [fulfilling a longstanding request from activists and families of the victims to provide public transit options](#) in order to make travel along the Highway 16 more affordable.

However, the new service came with a warning from Greyhound that it could lead to them decreasing their runs along the same route.

- [Greyhound Canada may cut service to Highway of Tears](#)

In their release, Greyhound says provincial public transit is tax free, allowing rides to be "subsidized" at rates 75 to 80 per cent lower than their own ticket prices.



Christopher Beach
about 2 months ago

Took the First Ride on our New BC Transit Bus with Pius Charlie!



54 Comment 2

Kendrick said he would have preferred the province to work with Greyhound to improve service prior to launching the transit lines.

"The issue is really an unfair playing field," he said. "Greyhound doesn't get any subsidy to operate. We run strictly off the fare box.

"Before you spend these type of dollars, have a conversation with the private sector."

Smithers Mayor Taylor Bachrach, whose community is along Highway 16, said the new public transit options are completely different from Greyhound's offerings.

"These transit buses are not intended to provide service between, say, Prince Rupert and Prince George," he said. "They're really focused on much smaller segments, getting people into the regional service centers like Smithers or Vanderhoof.

"That need still exists for an inter-city carrier that takes passengers those longer distances.... Greyhound's been a lifelink for northern B.C. for a long time, and losing the last bit of that service would be a real loss for our region."

"Illegal operators" eating into business: vice-president

Greyhound said that since 2010, there has been a more than 50 per cent drop in ridership along the routes it hopes to end, and ending those runs would allow it to refocus on serving other parts of the province.

It also says ride-sharing companies have cut into demands for service. While apps such as Uber and Lyft do not yet operate in the province, online boards, which allow strangers to carpool, do.

"They're sort of illegal operators," Kendrick said. "They aren't following the regulatory structure that we have to follow."

Kendrick said concerns about ride sharing and public transit have been a longstanding feature of Greyhound's conversations with the province, and that a meeting with the new NDP government is scheduled.

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"There's always an opportunity," he said when asked whether changes to the regulatory fees Greyhound faces could result in the routes continuing. However, he added he didn't think the company could make money in northern B.C. without government assistance.

"We don't think any carrier in the private sector could operate these corridors without some sort of assistance," he said.

"We didn't do this overnight.. it's at the point now where it's no longer sustainable."

The company needs approval from the transportation board in order to end its runs. No changes are likely to come into effect until 2018.

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