

# **CENTRAL KOOTENAY CUSTOM TRANSIT SYSTEM**

## **TRANSIT STRATEGY**

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March 20, 2008

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Public transit is delivered in BC, outside Greater Vancouver, under a partnership between BC Transit, local government and, in most cases, a private sector operating company. The operating authority, assignment of responsibilities between the parties and cost-sharing between BC Transit and local government partners are established under the British Columbia Transit Act and Regulation. The Central Kootenay Transit Service operates in the communities of Nakusp, Slocan, Kaslo, and the Nelson rural area. Arrow and Slocan Lakes Community Services operates custom transit services in Central Kootenay.

This Transit Strategy is developed to support the Central Kootenay's plans for growth and development over the next five years. The Strategy outlines the key objectives for the delivery of transit services within the Central Kootenay area and examines the current and future markets of transit customers. The review of existing transit services, including an assessment of key performance indicators, provides the necessary system level information in which to identify service improvements to occur over the next three to five years. Key support initiatives that are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of transit within the Central Kootenay are also included in the strategy.

# 2. OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the Central Kootenay Transit Strategy is to provide transportation alternatives to key customer markets and increase overall mobility within the community. In this regard, the primary objectives of the Transit Strategy are briefly summarized as follows:

- **Provide service to all major activity centres and key residential areas in Central Kootenay, including nearby rural communities.** In this regard, transit service will focus primarily on the established areas of the community, with services directed toward connecting residential, mixed-use and other key trip generators within the Central Kootenay with emphasis on connection to the Nelson area as well as other inter-community connections. This would also include connecting rural residents to facilities such as the Kootenay Lake District Hospital, and Chahko Mika Mall in Nelson.

- **Focus on the service needs of commuters for school and work.** Existing and new transit services will continue to focus on the primary markets – schools, and employment centres. Particular emphasis will be put on attracting youth to use transit and build ridership in this regard by continuing service to area secondary schools as well as to Selkirk College.
- **Provide services to support mobility for seniors, and persons with disabilities.** Approximately 19.4% of the population in Central Kootenay is 65 or older, with the number of people set to become seniors in the next 5 years being approximately 6.2% of the population. Continued operation of handyDart service will help to serve this population.
- **Integrate transit considerations with land use planning decisions.** The municipal and Regional District Official Community Plans outlines the expectations for growth and development. The Transit Strategy will support the growth patterns of each of the communities in Central Kootenay and should be integrated with future land use decisions ranging from area structure plans through to subdivision applications. This could also be used to influence the relationship between transit and where key land uses are located such as medical facilities and shopping. Community planning exercises could also define the densities required to support better transit service as communities develop. OCP updates are currently being undertaken for Kaslo and Nelson while Nakusp and Silverton have existing OCPs.
- **Define supporting strategies needed to encourage greater transit ridership among key customer markets.** In order to make transit more attractive, supporting strategies that encourage and facilitate access to transit will be examined. These initiatives may range from making transit facilities more accessible through to support programs provided directly to target transit customers.
- **Make efficient use of transit resources using key performance indicators to maximize customer service and community benefits.** Monitoring key performance indicators and making comparisons with similar transit systems will be used to identify guide the development of improvement opportunities with the available transit resources.

### 3. CURRENT & FUTURE MARKETS

The assessment of current and future transit customer markets is a key step in the development of a transit plan. Key factors include population characteristics, the profile of transit riders as well as other key observations about the community.

The Central Kootenay area is expected to have moderate population growth over the next 25 years. Currently, there are approximately 23,100 people in the Central Kootenay service area with this expected to increase to 29,100 by 2031, with much of this in the Nelson area.

The area has approximately 19.4% of its population that is 65 years or older. This is expected to grow as the population ages and more people look to the Central Kootenay area as a place to retire. Conversely, approximately 15% of the population is less than 15 years old. Based on general demographics, it is reasonable to assume that the population of Central Kootenay will continue to grow older though this may be mitigated somewhat with presence of the college and a quality of life that is appealing to younger adults.

### 4. EXISTING SERVICES & PERFORMANCE

BC Transit monitors key performance indicators related to transit systems on a quarterly basis and sets targets annually. These indicators provide BC Transit with the data required to assess how well the system is performing and provides guidance for future investment.

The Central Kootenay transit service is comprised of 16 routes. These routes essentially provide connections between communities as well as local service within communities. Most routes operate 1-2 per day on 1-2 days of the week. These services are provided by 5 distinct transit systems:

- **Nakusp:** local service as well as serving the Edgewood, Silverton, New Denver and the Hot Springs communities.
- **Kootenay Lake West:** 3 trips per day between Nelson and Castlegar to provide linkage to Trail.
- **Slocan:** service from Nelson to Playmor Junction, Passmore, Winlaw and Slocan City.
- **Kaslo:** local community service, service to Balfour and Nelson, as well as service to Trail (via Salmo)
- **Nelson:** local handyDART service

Figure 1 illustrates the routes.

Figure 1 – Central Kootenay Transit System

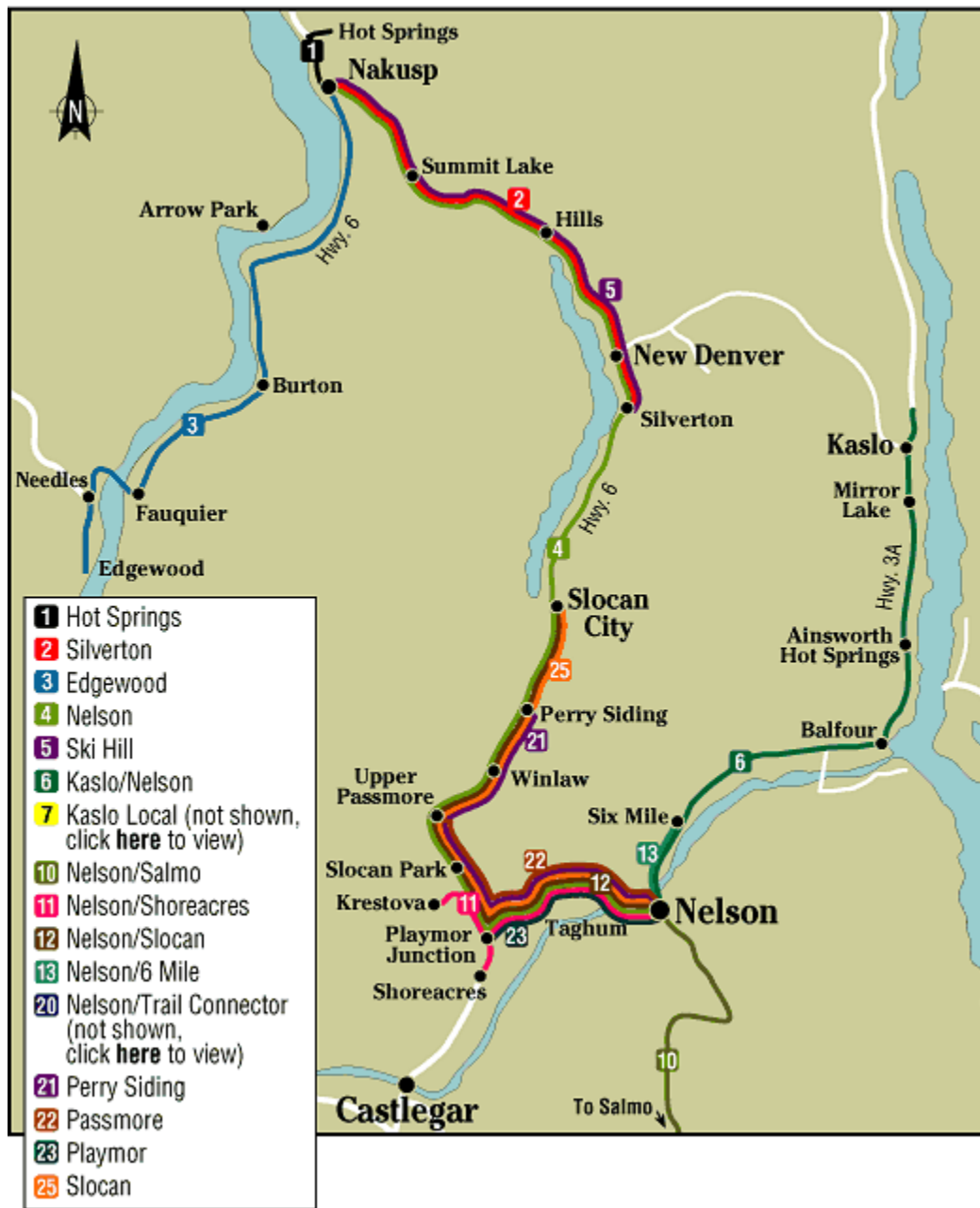


Table 1 summarizes key performance indicators for the five Central Kootenay transit services.

**Table 1 – Key Performance Indicators, 2006/07**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE</b>
<b>Financial Summary (000)</b>	
Total Cost	\$828
Total Revenue	\$172
BC Transit Share	\$280
Net Municipal Share	\$363
<b>Level of Service</b>	
Population Served	46,000
Vehicles in Service	8
Revenue Hours	14,000
<b>Performance Summary</b>	
Annual Passengers	80,000
Passengers/hour service	4.5
Total Cost per Passenger	\$16.45
Cost Recovery	18.2%
Cost per Hour Service	\$58.50

## 5. IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

This section outlines improvements to the Nelson transit system over the next 3 – 5 years. These improvements will evolve with community planning as well as changes in community development. They are also subject to local and provincial budget approvals and are conditional on local and provincial resources.

The main improvements to transit in the area could include:

- The addition of more service between Nelson and Slocan to accommodate the commuter target market.
- Extending service from Balfour to Crawford Bay and Riondel on the east side of Kootenay Lake.
- Providing additional service between Nelson and Castlegar to accommodate commuters.

## 6. SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

In addition to providing transit services directed toward the target customer markets, supporting strategies can be used to encourage and accommodate greater ridership and improve transit service performance. Improvement strategies could include, in general, the following:

- Integration of the various transit services and associated fares in the region.
- Fare strategies that may be directed toward expanding existing target markets
- TDM measures that support the integration of transit with attractive bicycle and pedestrian facilities in terms of creating enhanced access
- On-street facilities at high demand locations to enhance the quality of waiting areas
- Marketing strategies to identify and target key transit markets, including the provision of accessible transit information such as riders' guides, information signage, and the website.

The Cities of Kaslo and Nelson are currently updating their Official Community Plans. There may be an opportunity for there to be guidance and support of transit in these planning initiatives.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

**It is recommended that the Regional District of Central Kootenay and BC Transit approve this transit strategy as a guide for transit planning and delivery in the Central Kootenay.**