

# **NELSON CONVENTIONAL AND CUSTOM TRANSIT SYSTEM**

## **TRANSIT STRATEGY**

---

March 20, 2008

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2.	OBJECTIVES.....	1
3.	CURRENT & FUTURE MARKETS.....	3
4.	EXISTING SERVICES & PERFORMANCE .....	3
5.	IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES .....	6
6.	SUPPORTING STRATEGIES .....	7
7.	RECOMMENDATION .....	7

# 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 City of Nelson operates conventional transit service whilst Arrow and Slocan Lakes Community Services operate rural transit and handyDart service.

This Transit Strategy is developed to support the City of Nelson'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 Nelson 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 City of Nelson are also included in the strategy.

# 2. OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the City of Nelson 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 Nelson, 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 Nelson. This would also include facilities such as the Kootenay Lake District Hospital, Mountain Lakes Senior Community, and Chahko Mika Mall.

- **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. Currently, there are a significant number of commuters from Balfour and Slocan that go to high school or college in Nelson.
- **Provide services to support mobility for seniors, and persons with disabilities.** Approximately 13.5% of the population in Nelson is 65 or older, with the number of people set to become seniors in the next 5 years being approximately 5.4% of the population. Continued operation of handyDart service will help to serve this population.
- **Integrate transit considerations with land use planning decisions.** The City's recently updated Official Community Plan outlines the expectations for growth and development. The Transit Strategy will support the growth patterns of the community 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.
- **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 Nelson area is expected to have moderate population growth over the next 25 years. Currently, there are approximately 13,800 people in the Nelson service area with this expected to increase to 17,300 by 2031.

The area has approximately 13.5% of its population that is 65 years or older. This is expected to grow as the population ages and more people look to the Nelson 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 Nelson 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.

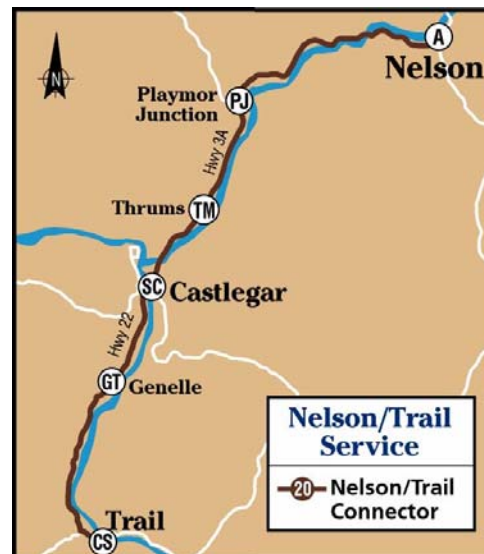
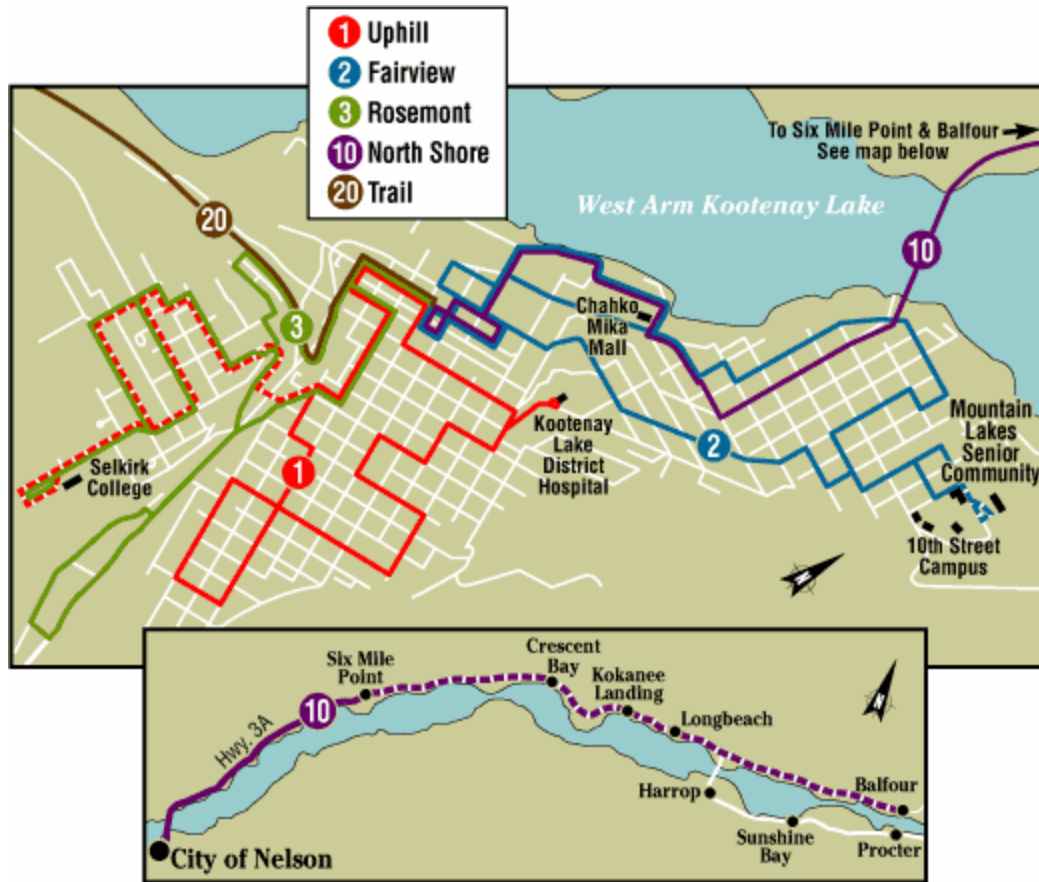
The Nelson conventional transit service is comprised of five routes. Three routes serve the urban area of Nelson while the other two routes service rural areas to the north and provide connection to Trail via Castlegar. Table 1 summarizes the route frequencies for each route.

**Table 1 – Route Frequencies**

Route	Service Day	AM Peak (min)	Midday (min)	PM Peak (min)	Evening (min)
1 - Uphill	7:20 – 21:10	30	30	30	60-90
2 - Fairview	6:29 – 20:40	40-60	30	30	30-90
3 - Rosemont	7:20 – 21:10	30-40	30	30	30
10 – North Shore	6:30 – 18:15	95	120	60	1 trip only
20 – Nelson - Castlegar	6:45 – 14:54	1 trip only	1 trip only	1 trip only	-

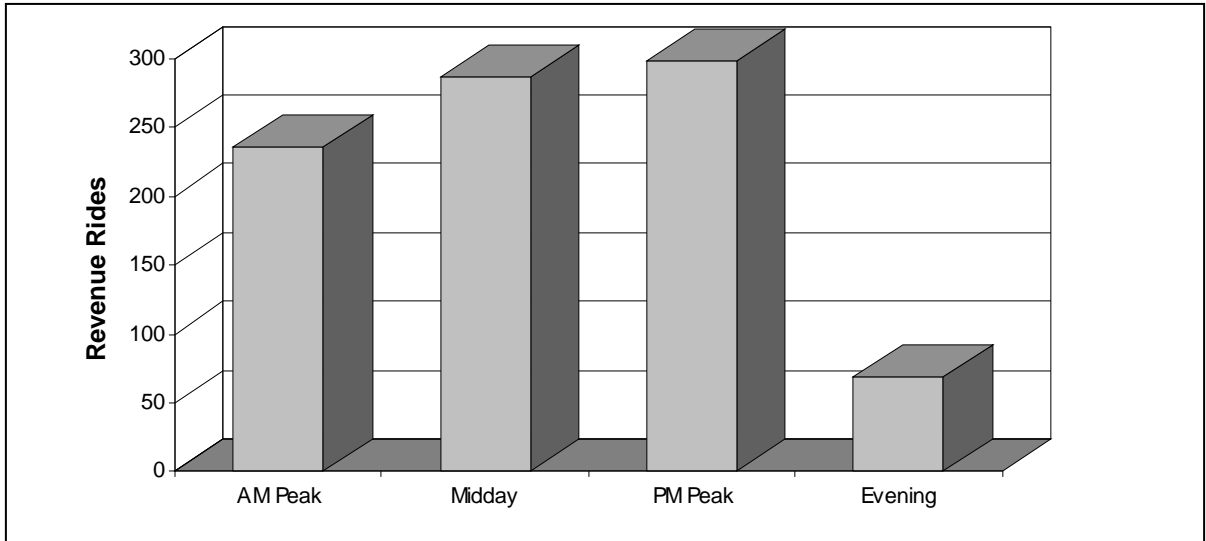
Figure 1 illustrates the routes.

Figure 1 – Nelson Transit System



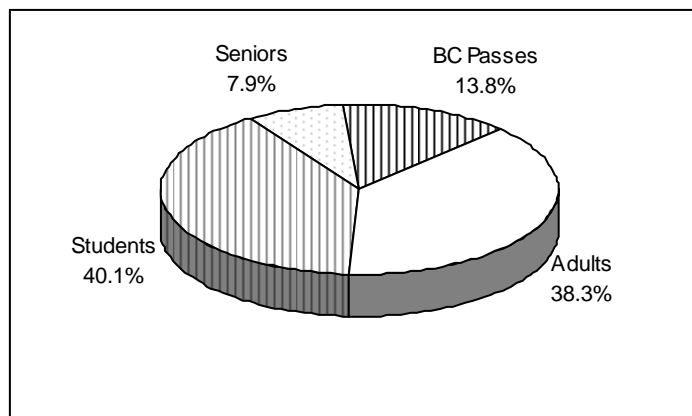
Based on two week counts in October 2007, the Nelson transit system handles approximately 890 revenue passengers per day. Ridership is strong throughout the day but reaches its peak in the afternoon. Figure 2 summarizes this information.

**Figure 2 – Weekday Ridership**



Students comprise the largest passenger group though the adult ridership group is also significant. Figure 3 summarizes the weekday revenue ridership by passenger group.

**Figure 3 – Weekday Revenue Ridership by Passenger Group**



Relative to other similar systems, Nelson has one of the lowest cost per hour of service, and one of the lowest costs per passenger. In 2006/07, the system handled almost 246,000 passengers and had a total cost of \$1.1 million. Table 2 summarizes key performance indicators for Nelson.

**Table 2 – Key Performance Indicators, 2006/07**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE</b>
<b>Financial Summary (000)</b>	
Total Cost	\$1,112.3
Total Revenue	\$286.2
BC Transit Share	\$477.8
Net Municipal Share	\$329.9
<b>Level of Service</b>	
Population Served	13,700
Vehicles in Service	4
Revenue Hours	11,686
<b>Performance Summary</b>	
Annual Passengers	246,044
Passengers/hour service	21.1
Total Cost per Passenger	\$4.52
Cost Recovery	25.7%
Cost per Hour Service	\$87.57

## **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 following two major improvements have been identified:

- The construction of a new downtown station/exchange in Nelson due to capacity and facility limitations that are currently being experienced.
- The provision of additional service on the regional route between Nelson and Trail. At a minimum, an additional trip in the late afternoon has been identified.

Taxi Saver programs could also be implemented to support handyDART service.

## 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 City of Nelson has updated its Official Community Plan in draft form. One of the recommendations of the draft OCP is for the City to complete a comprehensive transportation plan. Presumably this would also provide in-depth analysis of transit service in the community as well as other supporting strategies.

In addition, new bus shelters and signage could be installed to improve transit service.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

**It is recommended that the City of Nelson and BC Transit approve this transit strategy as a guide for transit planning and delivery in Nelson.**