



**Preliminary Feasibility Study:  
Kitimat – Terrace Corridor  
Regional Transit  
October 2003**

**District of Kitimat**



**Kitimat – Terrace Corridor Regional Transit  
Preliminary Feasibility Study  
Prepared at the Request of the District of Kitimat**

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# **Kitimat – Terrace Corridor Regional Transit Preliminary Feasibility Study**

**Prepared at the Request of the District of Kitimat**

## **1.0 Introduction**

At the request of the District of Kitimat, this report provides a preliminary look at the provision of public transit along the Kitimat – Terrace Corridor. It outlines transit markets that would likely be served by a regional route, lists organizations currently providing service along the corridor, and provides broad cost and ridership estimates.

If an option or options proves acceptable to the District, this preliminary report would form the starting point for a full scale feasibility study that would explore the issue in more detail from the perspective of other potential participating communities. The City of Terrace and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine have both expressed support for a feasibility study, although without any commitment to share costs for a resulting transit system.

## **2.0 Background**

The issue of intercity service between Kitimat and Terrace arose from public correspondence to Kitimat Council in late fall of 2002. The correspondence requested service between the two communities for a number of reasons, among them:

- Transportation to Terrace for patients in wheelchairs to see medical specialists
- Wheelchair accessible service to the Terrace-Kitimat Airport
- Trips to Terrace for the able-bodied and economically disadvantaged for shopping and services.

In response to this correspondence, Kitimat Council passed a motion asking BC Transit to conduct a feasibility study to identify options and costs for transportation between Kitimat and Terrace. Kitimat Council also requested that other communities that would be affected by the new service—the City of Terrace and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine—be asked to join the feasibility study process.

The feasibility study was delayed due to provincial circumstances while issues were settled regarding funding and governance of BC municipal transit systems. While provincial funding for new transit service still remains unlikely for at least the next year, new flexible funding options give communities the ability to fund 100% of new transit service.

For the remainder of this report, the “Kitimat - Terrace Corridor” will refer to the area stretching from Kitimat to Terrace, including the Airport and other destinations within it.

### 3.0 Existing Transportation Providers

The following organizations currently either operate service or have the license to operate service along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor (listed in alphabetical order):

- **Farwest Buslines Ltd.**
  - **Based:** in Kitimat
  - **Provides:** Scheduled bus service between Kitimat and the Airport
    - Three round trips in summer, two in winter, coordinated with Air Canada Jazz flights.
    - Approximately 10 years ago Farwest also used to operate scheduled service between Terrace and the Airport. Timing of the trips meant that—with a transfer wait time of 20 minutes at the Airport—passengers could travel from Kitimat to Terrace by bus. This service was discontinued because it was deemed to be unprofitable.
  - **Vehicle Used:** Non-accessible highway motor coach
  - **Passenger Cost:** \$10 each way
  
- **Haisla Taxi**
  - **Based in:** Kitimat
  - **Provides:** Taxi service within Kitimat and its surrounding areas to Terrace and the airport. Haisla can drop off Kitimat-based passengers at the Airport but can only pick up passengers there by prior arrangement.
  - **Vehicle Used:** A number of cars, including two 7 passenger vans; none of the vehicles are currently wheelchair accessible.
  - **Passenger Cost:** A metered rate of approximately \$20 between Kitimat and Kitimaat Village and a rate of \$64 from Kitimat to the Airport and \$71 from Kitimat to Terrace.
  
- **Kalum Cabs**
  - **Based in:** Terrace
  - **Provides:** Taxi service from Terrace and its surrounding areas to the Airport and Kitimat. Kalum is licensed to pick up passengers at the Airport for drop off in either Kitimat or Terrace.
  - **Vehicle Used:** A number of cars, including one 11 passenger van; none of the vehicles are currently wheelchair accessible.
  - **Passenger Cost:** A metered rate of approximately \$15 from Terrace to the Airport, \$84 from the Airport to Kitimat and \$10 from Terrace to Kitsumkalum
  
- **Kitimat Custom (TaxiDART) Transit System**
  - **Based in:** Kitimat (Operated by Snow Country Taxi Dart Ltd.)
  - **Provides:** A limited amount of accessible service between Kitimat and the Airport on request to people using a wheelchair or scooter.
    - This service is classified as a “special group trip” in which passengers essentially charter the bus during times when a bus and driver are available. Trips of this nature must be on an infrequent basis. The trip must not disrupt the regular transit service.
    - The regulations surrounding the TaxiDART system also allow the operation of infrequent special group trips between Kitimat and Terrace.

However, such trips are for the most part unfeasible since the first priority for the one working vehicle is to serve the needs of Kitimat's disabled community in town and since passengers would also need to pay the driver to wait in Terrace while they completed their errand/appointment.

- Maintenance concerns on the existing TaxiDART vehicle may make it hard for TaxiDART to serve the airport on a more regular basis.
- **Vehicle Used:** 8 passenger van with wheelchair lift
- **Passenger Cost:** Passengers cover the full cost of service, approximately \$65 for a one-way trip to the airport.
  
- **Terrace Paratransit System:**
  - **Based in:** Terrace (operated by Coastal Bus Lines Ltd.)
  - **Provides:** A limited amount of accessible service between Terrace and the Airport on request to people using a wheelchair or scooter.
    - Requests for this service are extremely rare.
    - This service is classified as a "special group trip" in which passengers essentially charter the bus during times when a bus and driver are available. A two-hour minimum call-out requirement must be met and trips of this nature must be on an infrequent basis. The trip must not disrupt the regular transit service.
  - **Vehicle Used:** 20 passenger minibus with wheelchair lift
  - **Passenger Cost:** Passengers cover the full cost of service, approximately \$60 to meet the two-hour call out minimum.

Valley Taxi (Kitimat), Kitimat Limousine Service (Kitimat), and Sleeping Beauty Limousine (Terrace) are the other transportation providers in the area but do not regularly operate along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor between communities.

### **3.1 Existing Transportation Providers: Conclusions**

- A number of organizations already provide service along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor.
- Most of the present service is non-accessible.
- The cost of the existing services between Kitimat and Terrace are probably too high for many passengers to use on a regular basis.

## 4.0 Other Considerations

Several other factors must be taken into consideration when evaluating the feasibility of service along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor. These factors range from the distribution of health services, to airport location, to nearby First Nations Communities, as follows.

### 4.1 Other Considerations: Distribution of Health Services

A major transportation factor in the area is the split of some health services between the Kitimat Health Centre and Mills Memorial Hospital in Terrace. The following table describes which procedures or areas of medicine are mainly performed at one hospital or the other.

#### Kitimat Health Centre Services

- Bone Densitometry Services
- Orthopedics

#### Mills Memorial Hospital (Terrace) Services

- BC Cancer Agency outreach clinics
- Gynecology
- Higher risk surgeries
- Kidney Dialysis
- Nuclear Medicine (such as bone scans)
- Obstetrics
- Ophthalmology
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatric Inpatient Unit
- Radiology / CT Scanner
- Psychiatry
- Urology

Some of the areas of medicine listed under Mills Memorial Hospital, such as urology, are available at Kitimat on a limited visiting basis. Other services, such as kidney dialysis, are only available in Terrace.

It is usually a bit easier for patients without access to transportation to arrange a ride with friends and family for appointments that are of a one-time nature. Arranging a ride may be somewhat harder for appointments that occur on a regular basis, such as kidney dialysis which usually occurs three times per week. At present there is one patient who travels from Kitimat to Terrace for dialysis treatment. Mills Memorial Hospital currently schedules dialysis appointments from roughly 7:30am to 12:30pm and 1:00pm to 6:00pm Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

### 4.2 Other Considerations: Service to Airport

By car, Northwest Regional Airport (Terrace-Kitimat) is located about 15 minutes from Terrace city centre and 30 minutes from Kitimat city centre. Hawkair and Air Canada Jazz provide regularly scheduled passenger flights to the airport.

Airports tend to be very difficult places to serve by public transit for the following reasons:

- They are usually located away from the city centres, meaning that it costs more in driver's wages and fuel to serve them;
- Flight schedules can change quickly with little prior notice; transit trips to the airport can't change as easily because they are usually integrated with trips to other destinations.
- The number of passengers carried tends to vary by day and season and is often low;

Based on experience in other communities, it is not recommended that any scheduled public transit service be provided to Terrace-Kitimat Airport in and of itself. Instead, any scheduled service that might be provided should be a by-product of service between Kitimat and Terrace.

However, it does seem that there is a market for on-demand service to the airport for people with disabilities. While a spokesperson for Hawkair could not provide statistics on the number of people with disabilities using their flights, she said that it was quite high due to the number of people travelling to Vancouver hospitals for medical procedures.

#### **4.3 Other Considerations: Linkages to Other Ground Transportation**

Both Greyhound Lines Canada and Via Rail serve Terrace on routes stretching from Prince George to Prince Rupert. The Via Rail service varies according to day; Greyhound operates two trips per day. Taxis are currently the only form of connecting service for travellers between Kitimat and either the Terrace Intercity Bus Terminal or Via Rail Station.

It is expected that there would only be a limited amount of ridership from Kitimat travellers connecting with rail or intercity bus service. As with the Airport service, this small potential transit market should be considered as a by-product of other Kitimat-Terrace service, not as an end in itself.

#### **4.4 Other Considerations: Other Major Kitimat – Terrace Corridor Destinations**

Among destinations and neighbourhoods located along the Kitimat – Terrace Corridor, the Cable Car subdivision and Lakelse Lake are the most prominent after Northwest Regional Airport.

Part of the District of Kitimat, the Cable Car subdivision is located approximately 7 kilometres north of Kitimat City Centre along Highway 37. The primarily residential neighbourhood is home to about 500 residents living in roughly 180 homes. Most residents either work or go to school in Kitimat. People with a disability living in Cable Car currently have access to the Kitimat TaxiDART system. The conventional transit system does not serve the area and only very limited ridership potential is forecast for the neighbourhood.

Lakelse Lake is located approximately 20 – 30 kilometres south of Terrace along Highway 37. Situated within the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, the area is home to the Lakelse Lake Provincial Park, several private resorts / campgrounds, and a number of very low density residences. Mt. Layton Hot Springs are also nearby. Mainly during the summer there may be a very small amount of ridership potential to this area, especially from Terrace or Kitimat area youth.

Because of the low expected ridership it is not recommended that any scheduled transit be implemented directly to these areas. However, if transit is provided along the Kitimat – Terrace Corridor, it is recommended that either bus stops be placed near to these areas on Highway 37 or that these areas receive service by passenger request. “By request” service means that a passenger could request the bus to deviate into the area to be picked up or dropped off at a specific location.

#### **4.5 Other Considerations: First Nations Communities**

In the past year and a half the First Nations Communities of Kitamaat Village (approximately 15 minutes from Kitimat city centre) and Kitsumkalum (approximately 10 minutes from Terrace city centre) have requested the provision of transit services to those areas. Both First Nations communities were advised that their requests could not be met at that point due to the provincial funding situation.

At the time of the 2001 Statistics Canada Census, there were 515 people residing in Kitamaat Village and 265 in Kitsumkalum. Transit markets for these communities would include people commuting to work or college, people travelling to medical appointments, shopping and recreation destinations and people with disabilities.

These communities could be served by extension of their closest conventional transit systems (either Kitimat or Terrace Regional). However, some types of service along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor could also include these communities. In effect, rather than stretching from Kitimat to Terrace, service could stretch from Kitamaat Village to Kitimat to Terrace to Kitsumkalum. Service could be extended to these communities if they were willing to become cost-sharing partners. By increasing the number of cost-sharing participants, costs for the shared items (vehicle lease, insurance) could be reduced for all.

#### **4.6 Other Considerations: Conclusions**

- The split of services between Kitimat Health Centre and Mills Memorial Hospital creates a transportation need along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor. The Northern Health Authority currently has no plans to fill this need.
- There seems to be a need for on-demand accessible service to the airport; implementation of scheduled service to the airport, or Terrace intercity bus and rail stations in and of themselves is not recommended.
- The Cable Car subdivision and Lakelse Lake may provide a limited amount of ridership but not enough to warrant regularly scheduled services into the areas themselves.
- First Nations Communities in the area have also expressed a desire for transit and their interest in becoming transit cost-sharing partners should be explored.

## 5.0 Potential Markets

To try to gauge the potential ridership for a regional service between Kitimat and Terrace, it is useful to look at ridership in terms of passenger groups. The following describes passenger groups, their general service expectations and the likelihood that they will use transit to travel along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor.

### 5.1 Potential Markets: People with a Disability

#### People with a Disability: Outlook

People with disabilities fit into all passenger categories. They include students who need transportation to school, younger adults and adults who may need transportation to jobs or day program activities, and seniors.

Of the 150 registered TaxiDART users, approximately 27% have a developmental disability. Of the other users, approximately 33% are ambulatory (in some cases uses a cane, crutches or walker) and 40% use a wheelchair or scooter. Actual TaxiDART information from April 2003 shows that 51 individuals made at least one trip that month. 16 of those passengers used a wheelchair or scooter.

People with a disability make up approximately 4% of ridership on the Kitimat Conventional Transit System.

#### People with a Disability: General Service Expectations

In transportation terms, people with disabilities can be found in two general categories:

- **Commuters:** Mainly student and adult passengers, commuting people with disabilities rely on transit for non-discretionary trips to work, school or adult day care programs on a regular, predictable basis. Commuters have much less flexible schedules and it is therefore harder for door-to-door style accessible service to meet their needs since only a limited number of daily trips can be scheduled in peak commuting times.
- **Discretionary Trip Makers:** Mainly adults and seniors, these passengers have schedules that are less regular than those of commuters. These passengers tend to use transit to go to medical, dental and therapy appointments, perform shopping and personal errands and attend social and recreational functions. Transportation needs, then, are somewhat more flexible and often vary from day to day and from week to week.

#### People with a Disability: Potential Market for Regional Transit Service

In general, the potential People with a Disability market for Regional Service is **low** (based on population) **to medium** (based on potential usage).

- Midday medical / dental appointments and shopping trips would be the prime reasons for transportation to Terrace.
- There may be a small market for wheelchair accessible service to the airport.
- Most of the current service providers along the corridor do not have vehicles which can accommodate people using wheelchairs or scooters. Only the Terrace and Kitimat handyDART / TaxiDART systems have wheelchair accessible vehicles but it

is not currently feasible for either system to make the journey between Terrace and Kitimat.

## 5.2 Potential Markets: Seniors

### Seniors: Outlook

People aged 65 and older make up approximately 8% of Kitimat's population, much less than the provincial average of 14%. Seniors age 75 or over—who tend to take transit more than their younger counterparts—make up 2% of the area's total population.

Seniors tend to use transit to perform shopping and personal errands, go to medical and dental appointments and attend social and recreational functions. Trips, then, are of a discretionary nature and often fluctuate from day to day and week to week. Younger seniors who normally drive may be convinced by winter road conditions to take transit instead.

Seniors make up approximately 6% of ridership on the Kitimat Conventional Transit System. About 70% of Kitimat's 150 registered TaxiDART users are seniors.

### Seniors: General Service Expectations

In general, seniors request consistent midday service that adequately serves shopping, social, recreational and medical / dental facilities. Services that offer some personal attention and a chance to socialize as part of the trip tend to be better used.

### Seniors: Potential Market for Regional Transit Service

In general, the potential senior market for Regional Service is **low** (based on population) to **medium** (based on potential usage).

- While many seniors drive, the length of the drive from Kitimat to Terrace may make transit look appealing, especially in bad weather.
- Midday shopping trips and medical / dental appointments would be the prime reasons for transportation to Terrace.
- Since Kitimat Hospital specializes in orthopedics and performs bone density scans, there may also be a market for seniors travelling from Terrace to Kitimat.

## 5.3 Potential Markets: School Students / Youth

### School Students / Youth: Outlook

The Kitimat area population is relatively young, with approximately one-quarter of residents between the school ages of 5 and 19, a proportion 5% higher than the provincial average. Of these, youth aged 15 to 19 make up 9% of the total area population. Youth tend to be a captive transit market with limited transportation alternatives. Cycling and various pedestrian activities (walking, skateboarding, etc.) represent the main means of autonomous transportation.

Student passengers make up approximately 57% of riders on the Kitimat Conventional Transit System.

### School Students / Youth: General Service Expectations

- In general, the primary reason why youth take transit is to commute to and from school.
- When not in school, the youth market group tends to use transit to go to part-time work or volunteer jobs, shopping and social and recreational activities.
- In general, school students and youth have their needs best met by a transit system which offers direct trips between residential areas and schools, which aligns with school start and end times, and which offers access to recreation and shopping facilities in the late afternoons and on Saturdays.

### School Students / Youth: Potential Market for Regional Transit Service

In general, the potential youth market for Regional Service is **low**.

- Within Kitimat, the Kitimat Transit System already has the ability to transport students to school. Outside the District, school busing takes care of this need. Therefore, unless school district busing policies change, there is little or no school student ridership potential along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor.
  - A limited number of students commute to schools in Terrace, however this is not a substantial market.
  - After-school sports competitions in Terrace may also form a small market, but these trips tend to be taken care of by shared rides organized by parents and students.
- Youth already have access to recreation and some shopping and entertainment within Kitimat and the Kitimat Transit System serves these destinations in the evenings and on weekends.
  - Access to other shopping opportunities is one area where there might be a small youth market for transportation to Terrace. However, except during Christmas, Spring Break and summer vacations, the main times for youth shopping and recreation trips (late weekday afternoons and on Saturdays) do not match well with the main times for adult and senior shopping and medical trips (weekday middays).

## **5.4 Potential Markets: Younger Adults and College Students**

### Younger Adults and College Students: Outlook

Approximately 5% of Kitimat's population consists of adults between the ages of 20 and 24, slightly less than the provincial average. This group of younger adults may be working or looking for work, may have started families, and may be attending a post-secondary or technical institution ("college" should be taken as referring to both).

Many younger adults may have lower incomes since they are often at the start of their careers, working in the lower-paid service industry or attending post-secondary schools. They therefore may not be able to afford a private automobile and may rely on family and friends for transportation.

Unlike youth, captive young adult riders have a greater tendency to take midday trips to perform personal errands or shop.

### Younger Adults and College Students: General Service Expectations

Service needs for college students are nearly identical to those of school students. Transit schedules need to correspond to the majority of class start and end times and transit must pass close to learning facilities. However, midday service to these facilities is also necessary since not all college students attend school full-time and not all courses have the same class schedules.

Younger adults have similar needs to commuters in general, but they may also work part-time or in jobs without standard hours or shifts. This lack of regularity makes midday service more important. For reasons of better health and less insurance coverage, this passenger group tends to make fewer medical/dental related trips.

### Younger Adults and College Students: Potential Market for Regional Transit Service

In general, the potential younger adult and youth market for Regional Service is **low to medium** depending on the type of service offered.

- According to staff at Northwest Community College, 48 students at the Terrace campus are currently registered as living in Kitimat. A portion of these students may already live in residence at the Terrace campus but the rest likely commute.
  - Start and end times for college courses vary, but most run from 8:30am to 3:30pm, with some starting as early as 8:00am and running until 4:00pm, Monday to Friday. There are also a number of evening classes but these are much harder to serve by transit.
- There may be a limited market for shopping, personal errand and medical/dental trips to Terrace for lower income younger adults. Appointments with Employment Insurance, Human Resources Development Canada and probation officers are some of the services that would also mean a trip to Terrace from Kitimat.

## **5.5 Potential Markets: Adults**

### Adults: Outlook

People between the ages of 25 and 64 make up approximately 56% of Kitimat's population, marginally higher than the provincial average. In general, members of this group are more likely to be financially stable and most likely to own a private automobile. Transit passengers in this group are normally split into two:

- **Captive adult riders** are those who do not own or have regular access to a private vehicle. These passengers have similar transit needs to working young adults and may use transit to travel to full or part time work or volunteer activities. They may also use it for shopping and medical and dental appointments.
- **Choice adult riders** are those who have access to a private automobile but choose to take transit for economic, environmental, social or health reasons. Members of this group tend to be regular full-time commuters, commonly have higher incomes and usually expect service levels that closely parallel the convenience and travel times offered by an automobile.

Adult riders, including younger adults and college students, currently make up approximately 34% of passengers on the Kitimat Conventional Transit System.

### Adults: General Service Expectations

The commuters of this group expect direct service between neighbourhoods and their place of employment timed to meet common work start and end times.

Adults who have less rigid schedules require service similar to that of younger adult riders.

### Adults: Potential Market for Regional Transit Service

In general, the potential adult market for Regional Service is **very low**.

- This group is the most likely to own automobiles.
- A commuter service would seem to make sense for people employed in Kitimat (Alcan, Eurocan, etc.) and living in Terrace but similar services have been tried before with mixed results. The current shift structuring at Alcan especially makes it hard to organize mass transit to the region's largest employer.
- Like younger adults, there may be a limited market for shopping, personal errand and medical/dental trips to Terrace for lower income adults. Like younger adults, appointments with Employment Insurance, Human Resources Development Canada and probation officers are some of the services that would also mean a trip to Terrace from Kitimat.

### **5.6 Potential Markets: Conclusions**

- People with a disability, seniors and younger adults represent the best possible markets for service along the Kitimat - Terrace Corridor if it is provided on a limited basis.
- College students could represent an excellent market but service would need to operate five days per week and fit class schedules.
- The potential for adult and youth ridership is limited.
- Overall the potential market for service in any configuration is low.

## 6.0 General Service Concepts

The following outlines general types of transit service design concepts. These concepts represent the “box of tools” that will be used when forming the options presented in section 7.0 Service Options.

### **Taxi Supplement**

In essence, the existing Kitimat TaxiDART system is a Taxi Supplement system. Under Taxi Supplement, trips are dispatched to a private vehicle owner (normally a taxi operator), the passenger pays a fare which covers a portion of the taxi trip costs, and the remainder of taxi trip costs is then paid by the local transit funding partners.

In many cases, Taxi Supplement is used to augment a regular handyDART transit system for people with disabilities. In those systems a handyDART van or vans will transport most passengers. Taxi Supplement will be used to transport passengers from time to time when the handyDART van is already booked or otherwise unavailable. Since Taxi Supplement in this case is not of a regular nature, the cost of each ride is usually based on the taxi’s metered amount less any collected passenger fares.

In a case like that of the Kitimat TaxiDART system--where Taxi Supplement provides the entirety of service and is therefore of a very regular nature--a flat rate for transporting passengers has been negotiated. It would be expected that a similar flat rate could be negotiated between definable points like Kitimat and the Northwest Regional Airport.

The best aspect of Taxi Supplement is that funding partners are not directly responsible for funding vehicle leases, insurance, and maintenance. It can also save a transit system money since funding partners do not have to pay for any “down time” on the part of the driver. Paying for two trips in a day is normally much more efficient than paying a driver for eight hours of work to carry those same two passengers.

On the other hand, Taxi Supplement programs are much harder to monitor and control. Since taxi operators are often paid by the passenger or trip, there is usually very little incentive on their part to economize by sharing rides between passengers. The funding partners may have less control over the physical condition of vehicles used. Also, at some point enough trips are carried that it is actually more feasible to pay a driver for a number of hours of work.

The term “Taxi Supplement” is used in the following Service Options section since it is a general description. The Taxi Supplement services proposed in the options below may be provided by the existing Kitimat TaxiDART operator or may be provided by any other area transportation or taxi company that owns or acquires an accessible vehicle.

### **Paratransit**

In the following section the term “paratransit” is used to delineate service that is different from Taxi Supplement. Paratransit costs are based on an hourly basis rather than on a per trip or per passenger basis like they are in Taxi Supplement. Multiple passengers may be booked on the same trip. Paratransit may provide a mixture of door-to-door service and fixed-route service to bus stops. In most cases, funding partners would be directly responsible for vehicle lease, insurance and maintenance costs.

Paratransit service can be divided into two types:

- **On-Demand Paratransit** operates only when passengers request service. The paratransit operating company is only paid for those hours that are actually used. A maximum number of hours to be used in a year is established and dispatchers work to group similar trips together.
- **Scheduled Paratransit** operates on a fixed schedule with trips occurring at a predictable time each day. The trips operate regardless of the number of passengers on them. Time may be built into the schedule to allow for door-to-door service. For instance, scheduled paratransit between Kitimat and Terrace would have extra time at the beginning and end of each trip to pick up and drop off door-to-door passengers with a disability in the two communities. Likewise, a small amount of time could be added to the schedule between Kitimat and Terrace to allow for occasional requests for service to Cable Car or Lakelse Lake.

## 7.0 Service Options

The following service options address different aspects of the potential markets listed above. They take into account the identified special considerations and existing transportation providers. The service description for each option outlines expected ridership, revenue, costs and vehicle requirements.

**It should be emphasized that all costs presented here are local costs. BC Transit is not in a position to cost-share any new service at this time. In fact, due to flat provincial funding, in 2004/05 local communities may either have to reduce service or increase their local share of funding to retain transit services that would otherwise be cut.**

### Service Option 1: On Demand Taxi Supplement Service to Airport

Description: In essence, the municipality would subsidize the cost of a taxi operator or other transportation company providing accessible travel to the Terrace-Kitimat Airport.

- Charged by trip rather than by passenger, and with a suggested limit of two trips per day and eight trips per week, there would be an incentive for the operating company to group passenger travel together.

Serves: People with mobility disabilities, especially those using wheelchairs or scooters.

Suggested Fare: \$15 each way per person (\$5 more than the current airport shuttle service operated by Farwest).

#### Summary Information for Option 1, On Demand Taxi Supplement Service to Airport

Estimated Annual Service Hours: n/a	Estimated Annual Revenue: \$7,500
Estimated Annual Ridership: 500	Estimated Total Annual Cost: \$31,200
Additional Vehicles Required: none	Net Municipal Share of Costs: \$23,700

Taxi Supplement Costs included in Total Annual Costs: \$31,200

### Service Option 2: On-Demand Paratransit Service to Airport & Terrace

Description: This option provides on-demand service for people with disabilities between Kitimat, the Airport and Terrace medical / dental destinations in an eight passenger lift-equipped van.

- The vehicle is in addition to the existing conventional and TaxiDART vehicles. The costs below are based on the scenario where the van is purchased by the funding partners; costs would likely be slightly lower if the vehicle was purchased and maintained by the taxi or transportation company operating the service.
- This service is based on an hourly rate since trips to Terrace would likely mean that the driver would have to wait until passengers completed their appointments before returning to Kitimat. It is unlikely that a reliable Taxi Supplement rate could be negotiated due to this wait time.
- Therefore, the operating company would charge costs on an hourly basis with limits to the number of hours available to encourage grouping of passengers and trips.

Serves: People with disabilities

Suggested Fare: \$15 each way to the Airport, \$20 each way to Terrace.

**Summary Information for Option 2, On-Demand Paratransit Service to Terrace & Airport**

Estimated Annual Service Hours: 1,560

Estimated Annual Revenue: \$14,000

Estimated Annual Ridership: 800

Estimated Total Annual Cost: \$91,600

Additional Vehicles Required: one (\$12,000/an.) Net Municipal Share of Costs: \$77,600

Taxi Supplement Costs included in Total Annual Costs: \$0

**Service Option 3: Limited Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace plus On-Demand Taxi Supplement to Airport**

Description: This option provides scheduled service **three days per week** between Kitimat and Terrace in an eight passenger lift-equipped van plus a limited amount of on-demand Taxi Supplement service to the Airport.

- Scheduled paratransit service would operate three trips per day, three days per week on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. These three trips would give people the option of spending the morning, afternoon or full day in Terrace at medical appointments or shopping.
- Door-to-door pickup and drop off in Kitimat, Terrace and along the route would be arranged by booking ahead.
- Drop off and pick up service to the Airport would be provided on the scheduled trips at passenger request.
- The schedule would mean that the van would be available for use in Terrace three days per week between 9:00am and 11:00am. This could augment Terrace paratransit service during those busy times if the City of Terrace and Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine were willing to cost-share it. Similarly, the van would be available for use on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- On demand Taxi Supplement service to the Airport for people with disabilities would be available for those times and days not met by the scheduled service.

Serves: Seniors, people with disabilities, lower income younger adults and some adults. The on-demand Airport service would only be available to people with disabilities.

Suggested Fare: \$5 each way per person for paratransit service, \$15 each way for the separate on demand Airport service. Discounted books of 10 tickets would also be offered.

**Summary Information for Option 3, Limited Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace plus Taxi Supplement Service to Airport**

Estimated Annual Service Hours: 1,425\*

Estimated Annual Revenue: \$7,800

Estimated Annual Ridership: 1,020

Estimated Total Annual Cost: \$100,300\*

Additional Vehicles Required: one (\$12,000/an.) Net Municipal Share of Costs: \$92,500\*

Taxi Supplement Costs included in Total Annual Costs: \$15,600

\* If the City of Terrace elects to cost share the two additional hours of handyDART service available three days per week, Kitimat's share reduces as follows: service hours go down to 1,125, total annual costs reduce to \$82,500 and Kitimat's net Municipal share of costs reduces to \$74,700.

**Service Option 4: Daily Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace plus On-Demand Taxi Supplement Service to Airport**

Description: This option provides daily weekday scheduled service between Kitimat and Terrace in a 20 passenger lift-equipped Polar III minibus plus a limited amount of on-demand Taxi Supplement service to the Airport.

- Scheduled paratransit service would operate three trips per day Monday to Friday and would be geared to college start and end times. Besides meeting college schedules, these three trips would give people the option of spending the morning, afternoon or full day in Terrace at medical appointments or shopping.
- Door-to-door pickup and drop off in Kitimat, Terrace and along the route would be arranged by booking ahead.
- Drop off and pick up service at the Airport on the scheduled trips would be provided at passenger request.
- The schedule would mean that the minibus would be available for use in Terrace daily between 9:00am and 11:00am. This could augment Terrace paratransit service during those busy times if the City of Terrace and Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine were willing to pay for it.
- On-demand Taxi Supplement service to the Airport for people with disabilities would be available for those times and days not met by the scheduled service.

Serves: College students, seniors, people with disabilities, lower income younger adults and adults. The on-demand Airport service would only be available to people with disabilities.

Suggested Fare: \$5 each way per person for paratransit service, \$15 each way for the separate on-demand Airport service. Discounted books of 10 tickets and monthly passes would also be offered.

**Summary Information for Option 4, Daily Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace plus On-Demand Taxi Supplement Service to Airport**

Estimated Annual Service Hours: 2,500*	Estimated Annual Revenue: \$17,400
Estimated Annual Ridership: 3,750	Estimated Total Annual Cost: \$162,100*
Additional Vehicles Required: one (\$19,000/an.)	Net Municipal Share of Costs: \$144,700*

Taxi Supplement Costs included in Total Annual Costs: \$15,600

\* If the City of Terrace elects to cost share the two additional hours of handyDART service available five days per week, Kitimat's share reduces as follows: service hours go down to 2,000, total annual costs reduce to \$132,600 and Kitimat's net Municipal share of costs reduces to \$115,200.

**Service Option 5: Daily Scheduled Paratransit between Kitimat and Kitamaat Village, and Kitsumkalum and Terrace plus Daily Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace and On-Demand Taxi Supplement to Airport**

Description: This option is identical to Option 4 except that it also adds three trips per day between Kitimat and Kitamaat Village and between Terrace and Kitsumkalum.

- This paratransit service would connect with other buses at the main Terrace and Kitimat exchanges and would also connect with the Regional service.
- This option does not give Terrace Regional Paratransit the opportunity to use the minibus on weekday mornings since the time goes to First Nations Communities instead.

Serves: College students, seniors, people with disabilities, lower income younger adults and adults. The on-demand Airport service would only be available to people with disabilities.

Suggested Fare: \$5 each way per person for regional paratransit service, \$15 each way for on-demand Airport service, \$2.00 each way for service between First Nations communities and their closest urban centre. Discounted books of 10 tickets and monthly passes would also be offered.

**Summary Information for Option 5, Daily Scheduled Paratransit Service to First Nations Communities plus options proposed in Option 4.**

Estimated Annual Service Hours: 2,750**	Estimated Annual Revenue: \$23,400**
Estimated Annual Ridership: 7,750**	Estimated Total (All Partners) Annual Cost: \$174,900**
Additional Vehicles Required: one (\$19,000/an.)	Net Municipal (All Partners) Share of Costs: \$82,420**

Taxi Supplement Costs included in Total Annual Costs: \$15,600

\*\*These costs and ridership projections are for all partners. Assuming the financial participation of Kitamaat and Kitsumkalum First Nations, Kitimat's share would be as follows: service hours would be 2,000, total annual costs would be \$131,400 and Kitimat's net Municipal share of costs reduces to \$112,000.

Under this scenario, annual net cost to Kitamaat Village and Kitsumkalum would be approximately \$19,300 each. Revenue is based on 2,000 trips per year from each community and the cost sharing of revenue between the transit partners.

## 7.1 Service Plan Options Summary

The following table summarizes the service options presented above. All figures are annual. Possible cost sharing options between the City of Terrace, Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, Kitamaat Village and Kitsumkalum are also presented.

**It must be stated again that this report is a preliminary one produced at the request of the District of Kitimat.** Other area municipalities have not yet had an opportunity to participate in a full-scale feasibility process, provide input on service options, or comment on the preliminary cost-sharing estimates presented here.

### Service Option Summary

	Option 1: On Demand Taxi Supplement to Airport	Option 2: On Demand Paratransit to Terrace & Airport	Option 3: <u>Limited</u> Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace + Taxi Supplement to Airport	Option 4: <u>Daily</u> Scheduled Paratransit to Terrace + Taxi Supplement to Airport	Option 5: Service to First Nations Communities + Daily Paratransit to Terrace + Taxi Supplement to Airport
<b>Total Cost</b>	\$31,200	\$91,600	\$100,300	\$162,100	\$174,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$7,500	\$14,000	\$7,800	\$17,400	\$23,400
<b>Net Kitimat Municipal Share</b>	\$23,700	\$77,600	\$92,500	\$144,700	\$131,400
<b>Total Passengers</b>	500	800	1,020	3,750	7,750
<b>Total Service Hours</b>	832	1560	1,840	2,500	2,750
<b>Rides per hour</b>	0.6	0.5	0.6	1.5	2.8
<b>Potential Cost Sharing if other Communities Participate</b>					
<b>Net Kitimat Municipal Share</b>	\$23,700	\$77,600	\$74,700	\$115,200	\$131,400
<b>City of Terrace / RDKS</b>	\$0	\$0	\$17,800*	\$29,500*	\$0**
<b>Net Kitamaat Village Share</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19,300
<b>Net Kitsumkalum Share</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$19,300

\* Costs shown for City of Terrace / Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine include a portion of vehicle lease costs and two hours per day of handyDART service within the Terrace / Thornhill area. Option 3 is based on two hours per day, three days per week. Option 4 is based on two hours per day, five days per week. Up to two more hours of handyDART time would also be available per day at additional cost. Possible Regional District cost-sharing of service along the Kitimat-Terrace Corridor has not been taken into account here.

\*\* There is no City of Terrace / Regional District cost sharing allocated in Option 5 because the First Nations Service precludes the ability for the Terrace handyDART system to use it as in Options 3 and 4.

## 7.2 Service Option Conclusions

There are many challenges associated with the service options analyzed. Ridership is expected to be low, there is no likelihood of Provincial cost sharing in the foreseeable future and bringing the other benefiting parties on as partners (Regional District, City of Terrace, Kitimaat Village, Kitsumkalum Village) would require time to coordinate without a certain outcome.

Funding for Transit is typically done on an assessment based on hours of service; since the District would be receiving the largest portion of service for its citizens, it would also likely pay the largest share.

The District of Kitimat could proceed with any of these options immediately if it was willing to pay 100% of the cost. The expanded service would become part of an Annual Operating Agreement (AOA) with BC Transit. The District would pay 100% of the costs through provincial flexible funding arrangements. Having the service as part of an AOA is advised for reasons relating to liability and Motor Carrier Commission license.

A major driving force for the implementation of this service is the split in provincial services between Kitimat and Terrace, especially for medical services. The ability of the Northern Health Authority to participate in kind, if not in funding, needs to be assessed. Ridership estimates presented for options serving Terrace would increase significantly if the Northern Health Authority was working fully in tandem with a regional transportation service, such as when scheduling appointments and advising patients. The Workers Compensation Board of BC is potentially another provincial body that stands to directly save money by working with a regional transportation service for medical assessment appointments.

Finally, there has been some question as to whether regional service could be funded by reducing a portion of Kitimat's conventional transit system. I believe that it was proposed that the service could be funded by cutting service on the 5 Industrial route. I would strongly not recommend this action for the following reasons:

- Ridership on the 5 Industrial route represents 6.2% of ridership on the entire system.
- Because 5 Industrial passengers are almost all adults travelling two zones, each 5 Industrial passenger generates much more revenue for the system than other passengers on other routes. The average adult rider pays \$0.23 more per ride than the system average.
- The productivity (rides per hour, cost per ride) of the existing 5 Industrial route is higher than what could be expected on the regional service.
- Most of all, such a change would lose a large amount of good will in the transit system. People who currently use transit to get to Alcan and other industrial employers are choice transit riders: they are the hardest to attract and the hardest to get back if service is taken away. They also tend to be a very vocal group.

The Kitimat Transit System is an established system of integrated routes with a loyal ridership. New service should add to this healthy base, not erode it.

## **8.0 Recommendation**

Given the low demand and lack of BC Transit cost sharing, there is no option that can be recommended based on current cost and service considerations. Any option can, however, be implemented if Council is prepared to pay the full cost.

The District should consider assessing the level of interest in the service and funding options among the Regional District, City of Terrace, Kitimaat Village and Kitsumkalum Village. The Regional District offers a forum for such discussions as all the parties are members. It is also strongly suggested that the possible participation—in funding or in kind—of the Northern Health Authority be assessed.

If warranted, discussions should be held with the Provincial Government regarding Provincial cost sharing.

BC Transit  
October 2003