

# **Memorandum of Understanding**

## **Administration of a new Regional Transit System in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor.**

### **Introduction**

Regional and interregional transit were identified as key transit priorities through the BC Transit Sea-to-Sky Transit Future Plan completed in December 2015. Increased options for transit travel in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor are also seen as a cost-effective method to improve safety and increase capacity on Highway 99. BC Transit's Sea-to-Sky Corridor Regional Transit Study was completed and released in October 2017, and since that study, the communities in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor from Pemberton/Mt. Currie through Squamish, have been working with BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to explore the feasibility of a regional transit system spanning from Pemberton/Mt. Currie all the way to Metro Vancouver.

The Sea-to-Sky Corridor Regional Transit Study indicates there is desire and market demand for more transit options along the Sea-to-Sky Corridor for employees starting their commutes in Mt. Currie, Pemberton, Whistler, Black Tusk/Pinecrest, Squamish, Britannia Beach, Furry Creek and Lions Bay and travelling to work sites primarily in Whistler, Squamish and Metro Vancouver. Survey results indicate that people will also use regional transit for shopping, medical, and recreational trips to Metro Vancouver, Squamish, Whistler, and Pemberton/Mt. Currie.

### **Regional Transit Principles**

The signatories of this MOU agree in principle that the administration and funding strategy model for regional transit in the Sea-to-Sky corridor should:

1. Maximize the sustainability of the service
  - a. The funding strategy must be reliable, meaning that the amount of funding available in the first year can reasonably be expected to be continuously provided into the future.
  - b. The administration model must demonstrate local commitment to regional based decision making, as guided by an endorsed regional/interregional transit service plan.
  - c. Each municipality, electoral area, and First Nation that benefits from this service will participate in the administration of the service.
2. Reflect the fair distribution of costs among all benefitting parties
  - a. Each participating municipality, electoral area, and First Nation in which the regional/interregional transit service passes through will contribute to the costs of the service.
3. Support the ability to provide a positive and simple customer experience
  - a. Local transit services need to include, to the best of their ability, seamless connections with regional/interregional transit service.
  - b. The funding strategy needs a cost and revenue sharing arrangement that does not add unnecessary complexity for the transit riders.
4. Provide a viable alternative to travelling by car and contribute to quality of life in the Sea-to-Sky corridor

- a. Improve access to services
- b. Improve affordability
- c. Connect people to family and friends
- d. Support employment and economic development.

### **Level of Service**

The proposed level of service for this regional transit system has been based on the three-year service level recommendations in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor Regional Transit Study (Appendix A - page 24):

- Year 1 (2019/2020) eight vehicles – 15,100 annual service hours
- Year 2 (2020/2021) two additional vehicles – 5,000 additional service hours
- Year 3 (2021/2022) two additional vehicles – 5,000 additional service hours.

It is suggested that the regional transit service start with:

- Six round-trips per day on the Mt. Currie/Pemberton to Whistler route (two more trips than current operations)
- Six round-trips per weekday and four round-trips per weekend day are initially proposed between Whistler, Squamish and Metro Vancouver.

The schedules for these round-trips will need to prioritize employees from Squamish and Pemberton/Mt. Currie going to work in Vancouver and Whistler. It should be noted that as detailed plans are made to implement regional transit, different levels of service or a different distribution of that service may be developed as the regional needs become better understood.

It is anticipated for this program to be successful in reducing traffic congestion additional trip frequency will need to be offered in the five-to-ten year timeframe.

### **Administration**

A key point of any proposed administration model is to keep the regional transit system separate from the existing local transit systems. Keeping the administration and funding of the local and regional systems separate will help to ensure the success of the regional system, and minimize conflicts between regional and municipal priorities.

The regional transit system would include separate branding and different buses that are appropriate for year-round highway travel in the Sea-to-Sky region, but the ability for transit users to transfer from the regional system to one of the local systems must be optimized for rider convenience. Agreements for revenue sharing between the systems must be established prior to the new system being implemented. The funding partners for this regional transit service will need to work closely with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure the infrastructure required to make this program successful is constructed on Highway 99 (bus stops in appropriate locations and queue-jumper lanes where required).

The Parties to this MOU support a Regional Transit Commission model for the Sea-to-Sky Regional Transit System with the following requirements:

1. First Nations will be included in the administration of the Regional Transit System.
2. Funding allocation will be determined through a collaborative approach between members and the Provincial Government.
3. A Regional Transit Management Committee will be made up of senior staff from local government, First Nations, and BC Transit to act as a liaison between the Commission and BC Transit Operations.
4. To facilitate the implementation of regional priorities, at least one member of the BC Transit operational staff for the regional transit system will be based in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor.
5. After the first five-years of operation, the Regional Transit System will be reviewed by the Regional Transit Management Committee to assess the effectiveness of the system.

**Request**

The undersigned request support for a new Sea-to-Sky Regional Transit System including the administration structure described in this MOU.

Success of the regional transit system is contingent on reaching a service funding model between the parties to this agreement and the Province of British Columbia. Regional staff have been collaborating with Provincial and BC Transit staff on the exploration of workable funding models. Based on this administration model and informed by the funding analysis we, the undersigned, would like to accelerate further engagement with senior representatives of the Provincial Government to confirm a funding structure that will be acceptable for all parties.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief or Councillor, Lil'wat Nation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, District of Squamish

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, Village of Pemberton

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief or Councillor, Squamish Nation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, Resort Municipality of Whistler

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District