



Making a difference...together

SALT SPRING ISLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
Notice of Meeting on **Monday, January 23, 2017 at 4:30 PM**
Portlock Park Meeting Room, 145 Vesuvius Bay, Salt Spring Island, BC

Wayne McIntyre
Ross Simpson

Nigel Denyer
Seth Wright

Robin Williams
Rod Martens

Bill Cote (r)
Shellie Barrett

(r) Regrets

AGENDA

1. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**
2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Adoption of Minutes of November 28, 2016**
4. **Delegation/Presentation**
 - 4.1
5. **Director, Chair and Commissioner Reports**
6. **Outstanding Business**
 - 6.1 **BC Transit – Fare Structure Review** Draft report was replaced with final version of report
 - 6.2 **North Ganges Transportation Management Plan-Verbal Update**
7. **New Business**
 - 7.1 **Transit Advertising**
 - 7.2 **Salt Spring Island Support for establishment of a CRD Transportation Service**
 - 7.3
8. **Next Meeting: February 27, 2017 at 4:30 pm – Portlock Park Meeting Room**
9. **Adjournment**

To ensure quorum, advise Tracey Shaver 250 537 4448 if you cannot attend.



Making a difference...together

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission
Held November 28, 2016, Portlock Park Meeting Room, 145 Vesuvius Bay Road
Salt Spring Island, BC**

DRAFT

Present: **CRD Director:** Wayne McIntyre
Commission Members: Robin Williams (chair), Ross Simpson, Scott Simmons, Rod Martens, Nigel Denyer, Seth Wright, Gregg Dow (4:35)
Staff: Keith Wahlstrom, Manager Engineering, Salt Spring Electoral Area; Tracey Shaver, Recording Secretary.
Absent: Karla Campbell

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda

Chair Williams requested that a delegation from Partners Creating Pathways be added to the agenda under item 3.1.

MOVED by Commissioner Simpson, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Martens,
That the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission agenda of November 28, 2016 be approved with the following amendment: the addition of Item 3.1 Partners Creating Pathways.

CARRIED

2. Adoption of Minutes

2.1 Minutes of October 24, 2016

MOVED by Director McIntyre, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Simpson,
That the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission minutes of October 24, 2016 be approved.

CARRIED

3. Presentations/Delegations

3.1 Partners Creating Pathways (PCP)

Several representatives of PCP provided information on past, current and future projects. PCP will be developing a five year plan for new projects.

- The Ganges Pathway Network will be completed with the Atkins Road section.
- This pedestrian pathway network which provides safe off road access into the Ganges village has been completed with very little tax burden by using in kind labour, grants and fundraising.
- PCP has negotiated with MoTi to provide a cross walk at the intersection of Rainbow and Atkins to link the area pathways. They are also negotiating a 3 way stop at this intersection
- MoTi will coordinate with PCP during on island asphalt work for any extra material that can be used on the pathways and on areas around downtown Ganges which have been identified as challenging for wheelchairs and scooters

4. Reports-Chair and Director

4.1 Director Report

Director McIntyre briefly reported on the following:

- Incorporation Study- all information sessions have been completed and on November 21, 2016 the Committee voted to send a letter to Minister Fastbender to request a referendum for incorporation. The Incorporation Committee is no longer in place so all questions regarding incorporation will now be answered by the three elected officials. Should the Ministry agree to hold a referendum, Consideration is being made to hold public debates with a moderator and the consultant in place as support.
- Director McIntyre has provided a letter to the CRD Transportation Select Committee which outlines the position of Salt Spring Island in relation to regional planning of a transportation “translink style” system.
- CRD Staff provided a solid waste management presentation and gathered local input and ideas.
- The SSI Community Economic Development Commission will be holding a meet and greet session to launch the rural accelerator project on November 29, 2016.

4.2 Chair Report

Chair Williams briefly reported on a meeting held with MoTi regarding parking around the Fulford village.

5. Outstanding Business

5.1 BC Transit- Fare Structure Review

At the October 24, 2016 Transportation Commission meeting, BC Transit staff presented a draft fare structure for review and consideration. Commissioners have been asking for additional information on the impacts of several different scenarios than those originally presented in October. The Transportation Commissioners discussed general opinions and merits of potential changes to local bus fare structures.

- Family Monthly pass
- Day pass with no transfers needed
- Further discount to Senior Monthly Pass
- Saturday only round trip fare from Fulford to visitors centre

Chair Williams has requested that the Salt Spring residents be given an opportunity to consider and contribute ideas to the fare structure. This item will be brought forward to the January 23, 2017 Transportation meeting to reach consensus on a fare structure to be implemented with the summer schedules in May 2017.

5.2 Ganges Accessibility Improvements for Pedestrians and Mobility Vehicles

Commissioner Denyer reviewed some of the improvements already made on the identified issues and the plans in place to deal with those that are not easily fixed.

5.3 Progress Report on Transportation Management Plan

Engineering Manager, Keith Wahlstrom provided additional progress information on the section of pathway from the front of the SD64 office on Rainbow Road to the corner of Kanaka Rd. Survey work has been completed, designs have been agreed upon with the School District, arrangements for a License of Occupation are being made and work is planned to begin in the spring.

6. New Business

6.1 Service Plan 2016-2019

The service review plan for all of the CRD services by the local Electoral Area administration office was provided for information and planning purposes.

6.2 Ganges Harbour Walk Project

The project charter and terms of reference were provided to the Commission for information purposes. Appointment of a steering committee will be considered by the CRD Board in December and the Parks and Recreation Commission will lead the project and funding responsibilities.

6.3 Commissioner Terms

Four commissioner terms are expiring at the end of 2016 (Williams, Dow, Simmons and Martens) Advertisements have been placed in the community to seek volunteers for all of the CRD Commissions. Transportation Commissioners who wish to be reappointed for another term are asked to submit their request in writing to the Administration office.

6.4 MoTi Subdivision referral- 114 Cranberry Road

Commissioner Wright leaves the meeting at 6:10 pm due to conflict of interest (Islands Trust planner for this project) and does not return.

General discussion was held to determine a consensus to provide recommendations on specific local conditions to Ministry of Transportation for consideration when reviewing this subdivision application.

MOVED by Commissioner Simmons, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Denyer,
That the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission recommends the Ministry of Transportation approve the proposed Subdivision at 114 Cranberry Road subject to the following conditions:

- 1) That the Transportation Commission supports the request made by the Salt Spring Island Parks and Recreation Commission which requires the developer to build a passage for pedestrian connectivity from Devine Road to Cranberry Road
- 2) That no vehicular access be allowed from Fulford-Ganges Road to proposed lots 2, 3, and 4; Further the developer provide a revised subdivision plan showing vehicular access to all propose lots within the strata property which originates from Lee Ann Road.
- 3) That a drainage study be conducted to mitigate the potential impacts on the road networks below the proposed subdivision.

- 4) That the developer be required to improve the Fulford-Ganges Road shoulder adjacent to the property line to a 1.2 m/lane which is the standard identified in the agreement between Islands Trust and the Ministry of Transportation dated October 20, 1992.

CARRIED

7. Next Meeting:

A meeting schedule for 2017 was presented and accepted. The Transportation Commission will meet on the 4th Monday of each month excluding July, August and December at the Portlock Park Meeting Room beginning at 4:30 pm. Specific dates are Jan 23, Feb 27, Mar 27, Apr 24, May 29 (the 5th Monday due to Holiday), Sep 25, Oct 23, and Nov 27 of 2017.

8. Adjournment

MOVED by Commissioner Simmons, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Martens,
That the meeting be adjourned at 6:12 pm.

CHAIR

SENIOR MANAGER

Fare Structure Review

Salt Spring Island



BC TRANSIT GLOSSARY

Adult fare – A regular fare must be paid by all passengers who do not qualify for a discount or cannot prove eligibility.

Average fare – Total revenue from fare sources divided by total ridership (including BC Bus Pass).

Cash fare – a cash fare allows one person to use transit. No change is given on the bus and so exact change must be used.

Child – A person who is under five years of age. Children may ride the bus for free.

Conventional transit – Serves the general population in urban settings using mid-sized, large or double-deck buses. The buses are accessible and low-floor and run on fixed routes and fixed schedules.

Cost recovery – Reflects annual total revenue divided by operating expenses. This ratio indicates the proportion of operating costs recovered from total revenue. A strong cost recovery is desirable, as it reduces the subsidy from the taxpayer. This factor, however, is a municipal policy decision.

Day Pass – A Day Pass offers a discount for unlimited travel throughout the day.

Discount fare – Discounts on cash fares and pre-paid products are applicable to seniors (aged 65+) and students (K-12) upon proof of eligibility.

Monthly Pass – for users taking transit regularly throughout the month, a Monthly Pass offers a discount for unlimited travel.

Performance measures – Statistical ratios combining system outputs and transit service area statistics to benchmark performance within the industry and operational trends over time.

Ticket – Each ticket allows one person to use transit. When purchasing a package of ten tickets, a user will receive a discount. Using tickets also has the advantage of not requiring exact change to be carried on the bus.

Total revenue – Includes passenger and advertising revenue; excludes property tax and fuel tax revenue.

Transfer – When a user pays their fare using cash or using tickets, and requires more than one bus to complete their trip, they may request a transfer from the operator. Transfers are free, and they are good for one-way travel, valid for the first connecting bus at transfer points only.

1.0 OVERVIEW

BC Transit has prepared this report for the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission and the Capital Regional District to examine the current Salt Spring Island fare structure. The report discusses historic revenue and ridership trends, and compares Salt Spring Island's fare structure to its peer transit systems and to BC Transit's recommended fare guidelines. It concludes with two proposals for new a new fare structure on Salt Spring Island. Both of these proposals reflect BC Transit's fare strategy, which is to create a simple, easily understandable fare structure that will increase ridership and fare revenue, is more cost-effective to administer, and is compatible with future fare collection technology.

2.0 CURRENT FARES

The following table outlines the current fare structure on Salt Spring Island. This fare structure was implemented in July 2012.

Table 1: Current Fare Structure

Fare Product	Audience	Current Fare
Cash	All	\$2.25
Tickets (10)	All	\$20.25
Day Pass	All	\$5.00
Monthly Pass	Adult	\$50.00
	Senior	\$40.00

3.0 KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The table below outlines some key performance statistics for the Salt Spring Island Transit System as at 2015/16.

Table 2: Key Performance Measures

Measure	Performance
Ridership Growth (5-year annual compound rate)	11%
Revenue Growth (5-year annual compound rate)	15%
Total Ridership	106,887
Total Revenue	\$196,134
Total Revenue from Fare Sources*	\$174,643
Total Fare Revenue from Pre-paid Sources	22%
Average Fare	\$1.83
Total Cost Recovery	40%
Date of Last Fare Adjustment	July 1, 2012

*Excludes advertising, BC Bus Pass, and miscellaneous revenue. This represents revenue that can be affected by a fare change.

Annual ridership on Salt Spring Island peaked in 2014/15 at 113,000 trips. Despite falling slightly in 2015/16, overall ridership is 68 per cent higher than five years ago. Overall revenue has increased at an average rate of 15 per cent per annum over the same period.

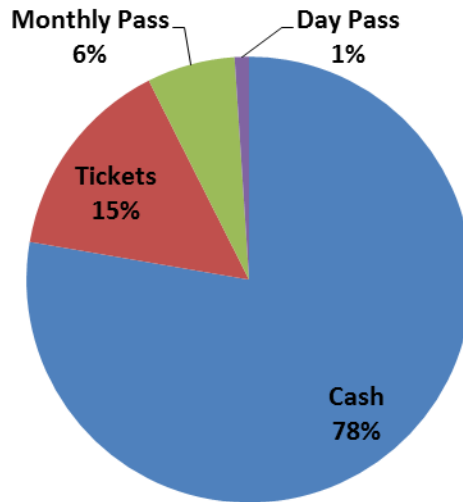
Looking slightly deeper, cash has been the primary driver of this fare revenue increase, with 70 per cent of the growth coming from cash fares. All fare types have seen an increase over the past five years, however tickets and monthly passes have seen revenue plateau.

These revenue increases have not kept pace with the increase in expenses and so cost recovery is in decline, currently sitting at 40 per cent, from a high point of 45 per cent in 2012/13.

4.0 FARE REVENUE COMPOSITION

The chart below indicates how revenue from conventional fares is divided by fare type:

Figure 1: Revenue by Fare Type 2015/16



The analysis of revenue composition can be considered from two perspectives. On one hand, having a higher percentage of revenue from cash means that more often a full fare is paid (with no discounts for pre-payment), and so revenue and average fare are theoretically maximized.

On the other hand, pre-paid fares offer greater stability, predictability and security of revenue as well as promoting more frequent ridership from existing transit customers. In addition, increased use of pre-paid products (especially passes since they don't require transfers) can improve operational efficiency (increasing on-time performance) and may help reduce the likelihood of on-board fare disputes. Generally, BC Transit recommends the promotion of prepaid products.

At 78 per cent, the proportion of revenue from cash on Salt Spring Island can be considered high in comparison to similar sized systems within BC Transit. This is discussed further in section 5.1.

5.0 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This report now outlines how the Salt Spring Island Transit System's performance indicators compare to those of its peer transit systems and how its fares compare to general fare guidelines recommended by BC Transit.

5.1 Comparison to Peer Systems

As seen in Table 3 below, both cash and tickets are priced higher than in comparable systems. Conversely, the adult monthly pass is priced below peer systems.

The Salt Spring Island Transit System has a higher average fare than comparable systems. This is a consequence of a comparatively higher cash and ticket fare, and having a high proportion of fare revenue from cash. Yielding higher revenue per rider is desirable, and so this should be seen as a positive.

The proportion of fare revenue from pre-paid sources in Salt Spring Island is half that of comparable systems. Further, the proportion of pre-paid revenue is staying steady, moving between 22 per cent and 23 per cent in the last five years. This would indicate that revenue stability is lower than in peer systems due to a smaller proportion of customers pre-paying their fare.

The Salt Spring Island Transit System measures higher than its peers for cost recovery, which is generally seen as a positive, although it should be noted that cost recovery is a policy decision. Therefore it may or may not be appropriate to compare performance across transit systems. However, local governments commonly prefer to have a higher cost recovery and less reliance on local property taxes.

Table 3: Comparison to Peer Systems

	Salt Spring Island Transit System	Average of Regional Systems*	Variance	Average of Similarly Sized Systems**	Variance
Adult Cash Fare	\$2.25	\$2.08	+\$0.17	\$2.00	+\$0.25
Adult Ticket Price	\$2.03	\$1.81	+\$0.22	\$1.80	+\$0.23
Adult Monthly Pass Price	\$50.00	\$55.00	-\$5.00	\$48.25	-\$1.75
Average Fare	\$1.83	\$1.40	+\$0.43	\$1.18	+\$0.65
Proportion of Fare Revenue from Pre-paid Sources	22%	44%	-22%	48%	-26%
Cost Recovery	40%	25%	+15%	21%	+19%

*Average of six transit systems: Campbell River, Port Alberni, Comox Valley, Cowichan Valley, Sunshine Coast and Mt. Waddington

**Average of four similar systems referenced in 2014/15 Transit Service Review: Sunshine Coast, Quesnel, Aggasiz-Harrison and William Lake

5.2 Comparison to BC Transit Fare Guidelines

The table below compares Salt Spring Island Transit System’s current transit fare structure to BC Transit’s recommended fare guidelines. The adult cash fare is the base from which other fares are calculated.

Table 4: Comparison to BC Transit Fare Guidelines

Fare Product	Audience	BC Transit Fare Guideline	Salt Spring Island Fare Structure
Cash	All	Base Fare	Base Fare
Tickets	All	9 times Base Fare	9 times Base Fare
Day Pass	All	2 times Base Fare	2.2 times Base Fare
Monthly Pass	Adult	20 – 30 times Base Fare	22.2 times Base Fare
	Discount	Adult Monthly Pass less 15%	Adult Monthly Pass less 20%

*BC Transit no longer recommends discounting cash fares, tickets and day passes

Table 4 shows that for the most part, the Salt Spring Island fare structure is in line with the BC Transit fare guidelines. Indeed it is one of only three systems which are currently in line with the fare structure recommendations.

For reference, the removal of age-based discounts is becoming more popular across Canada and has several benefits:

- It offers simplicity in the fare structure, making it easier for customers to understand and use, and simpler for vendors to promote and sell.
- It reduces the reliance on operators to enforce age-based fares, potentially reducing conflict.
- It provides incentive for riders to switch to monthly passes, thus encouraging more consistent ridership while reducing fare collection costs.
- It creates a simpler fare structure which is more easily understood by customers and is more compatible with future fare collection technology.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis indicates that:

- The fare structure is in line with BC Transit’s fare guidelines.
- Revenue has been increasing in each of the past five years, but is currently five per cent below 2015/16.
- Ridership had been increasing each year until 2015/16, when it saw a six per cent decline versus 2014/15. Ridership is also down this year, at ten per cent below the same period last year.
- Cash and ticket fares are higher than comparable systems, and consequently so is the average fare.

7.0 PROPOSED FARE STRUCTURES AND PRODUCTS

7.1 Proposed Fare Structures

Given that the current fare structure on Salt Spring Island conforms to BC Transit guidelines and that there is no evidence of any operational issues with the current system, the following fare structures were developed simply to provide pricing alternatives for the Salt Spring Island Transit System. Both options retain the current fare structure, which maximises customer understanding and operational efficiency, minimizes conflict and is compatible with future fare collection technology.

Table 5: Proposed Fare Structures

Fare Product	Audience	Current Fare	Option 1	Option 2
Cash	All	\$2.25	\$2.00	\$2.50
Tickets (10)	All	\$20.25	\$18.00	\$22.50
Day Pass	All	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
Monthly Pass	Adult	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
	Senior	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00

Option 1

- This option is projected to decrease revenue by an estimated \$12,000 annually, while increasing ridership by three per cent.
- This option retains the existing structure, but seeks to increase ridership through a reduction of the cash and ticket fares.

- Advantages of this fare structure revolve primarily around the anticipated increases in ridership. It will also more closely align Salt Spring Island's fares with comparable systems.
- A disadvantage is that revenue is projected to decrease, which would increase the burden on the local share of funding for the system.

Option 2

- This option is projected to increase revenue by an estimated \$13,000 annually, while decreasing ridership by three per cent.
- This option retains the existing structure, but seeks to increase revenue through an increase in cash and ticket fares. Monthly passes and day passes will remain the same, in order to incentivize customers to move towards monthly passes.
- Advantages of this fare structure revolve primarily around the anticipated increase in fare revenue.
- Conversely, it increases the variance in cash and ticket fares in comparison to peer systems.

These options are both in addition to the option of keeping fares the same.

Transfers

Other BC Transit systems are exploring the possibility of removing paper transfers, which are issued upon request when boarding using a cash or ticket fare. The Victoria Regional Transit System discontinued transfers on April 1, 2016. The primary reason for removing paper transfers is that they are the most common reason for operator and passenger conflict on several BC Transit systems. That said, BC Transit is not aware of similar trends on the Salt Spring Island Transit System, and given the degree of operational change required to implement an alternative approach, no change is recommended at this time.

Family Travel Program

Many BC Transit systems offer the Family Travel program, whereby an adult customer can bring up to four children (12 years and under) on board for free. The program is available to parents and guardians who are 19 years and over with a pass (monthly, DayPASS, ProPASS, U-PASS or BC Bus Pass), but does not apply to cash fares and tickets. Offering the Family Travel Program on Salt Spring Island may be worthy of discussion.

Recommended Fare Products

It is recommended that the Salt Spring Island Transit System review its fare products. Reviewing fare products ensures that the correct fare products are used in the event of any fare changes, as well as increasing efficiencies and economies of scale for BC Transit. The current and recommended fare products are outlined in Appendix A.









8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission and Capital Regional District:

1. Receive this report as information
2. Approve one of the proposed fare structures or retain the existing structure
3. Direct staff to work with BC Transit to implement the fare change, if applicable

Please note that fare changes should be scheduled for the 1st of a given month. BC Transit requires at least eight weeks' notice after Council approval to implement a fare change.

APPENDIX A: REVISED FARE PRODUCTS

Fare Product	Audience	Fare Products – Current	Fare Products – Recommended
Day Pass	All		
Tickets (10)	All		
Monthly Pass	Adult		
	Discount		

BC TRANSIT GLOSSARY

Adult fare – A regular fare must be paid by all passengers who do not qualify for a discount or cannot prove eligibility.

Average fare – Total revenue from fare sources divided by total ridership (including BC Bus Pass).

Cash fare – a cash fare allows one person to use transit. No change is given on the bus and so exact change must be used.

Child – A person who is under five years of age. Children may ride the bus for free.

Conventional transit – Serves the general population in urban settings using mid-sized, large or double-deck buses. The buses are accessible and low-floor and run on fixed routes and fixed schedules.

Cost recovery – Reflects annual total revenue divided by operating expenses. This ratio indicates the proportion of operating costs recovered from total revenue. A strong cost recovery is desirable, as it reduces the subsidy from the taxpayer. This factor, however, is a municipal policy decision.

Day Pass – A Day Pass offers a discount for unlimited travel throughout the day.

Discount fare – Discounts on cash fares and pre-paid products are applicable to seniors (aged 65+) and students (K-12) upon proof of eligibility.

Monthly Pass – for users taking transit regularly throughout the month, a Monthly Pass offers a discount for unlimited travel.

Performance measures – Statistical ratios combining system outputs and transit service area statistics to benchmark performance within the industry and operational trends over time.

Ticket – Each ticket allows one person to use transit. When purchasing a package of ten tickets, a user will receive a discount. Using tickets also has the advantage of not requiring exact change to be carried on the bus.

Total revenue – Includes passenger and advertising revenue; excludes property tax and fuel tax revenue.

Transfer – When a user pays their fare using cash or using tickets, and requires more than one bus to complete their trip, they may request a transfer from the operator. Transfers are free, and they are good for one-way travel, valid for the first connecting bus at transfer points only.

1.0 OVERVIEW

BC Transit has prepared this report for the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission and the Capital Regional District to examine the current Salt Spring Island fare structure. The report discusses historic revenue and ridership trends, and compares Salt Spring Island's fare structure to its peer transit systems and to BC Transit's recommended fare guidelines. It concludes with two proposals for new a new fare structure on Salt Spring Island. Both of these proposals reflect BC Transit's fare strategy, which is to create a simple, easily understandable fare structure that will increase ridership and fare revenue, is more cost-effective to administer, and is compatible with future fare collection technology.

2.0 CURRENT FARES

The following table outlines the current fare structure on Salt Spring Island. This fare structure was implemented in July 2012.

Table 1: Current Fare Structure

Fare Product	Audience	Current Fare
Cash	All	\$2.25
Tickets (10)	All	\$20.25
Day Pass	All	\$5.00
Monthly Pass	Adult	\$50.00
	Senior	\$40.00

3.0 KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The table below outlines some key performance statistics for the Salt Spring Island Transit System as at 2015/16.

Table 2: Key Performance Measures

Measure	Performance
Ridership Growth (5-year annual compound rate)	11%
Revenue Growth (5-year annual compound rate)	15%
Total Ridership	106,887
Total Revenue	\$196,134
Total Revenue from Fare Sources*	\$174,643
Total Fare Revenue from Pre-paid Sources	22%
Average Fare	\$1.83
Total Cost Recovery	40%
Date of Last Fare Adjustment	July 1, 2012

*Excludes advertising, BC Bus Pass, and miscellaneous revenue. This represents revenue that can be affected by a fare change.

Annual ridership on Salt Spring Island peaked in 2014/15 at 113,000 trips. Despite falling slightly in 2015/16, overall ridership is 68 per cent higher than five years ago. Overall revenue has increased at an average rate of 15 per cent per annum over the same period.

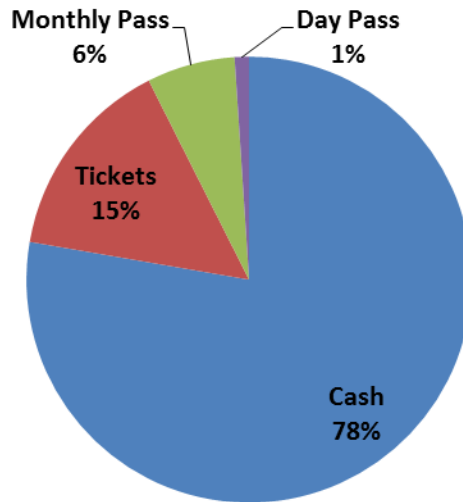
Looking slightly deeper, cash has been the primary driver of this fare revenue increase, with 70 per cent of the growth coming from cash fares. All fare types have seen an increase over the past five years, however tickets and monthly passes have seen revenue plateau.

These revenue increases have not kept pace with the increase in expenses and so cost recovery is in decline, currently sitting at 40 per cent, from a high point of 45 per cent in 2012/13.

4.0 FARE REVENUE COMPOSITION

The chart below indicates how revenue from conventional fares is divided by fare type:

Figure 1: Revenue by Fare Type 2015/16



The analysis of revenue composition can be considered from two perspectives. On one hand, having a higher percentage of revenue from cash means that more often a full fare is paid (with no discounts for pre-payment), and so revenue and average fare are theoretically maximized.

On the other hand, pre-paid fares offer greater stability, predictability and security of revenue as well as promoting more frequent ridership from existing transit customers. In addition, increased use of pre-paid products (especially passes since they don't require transfers) can improve operational efficiency (increasing on-time performance) and may help reduce the likelihood of on-board fare disputes. Generally, BC Transit recommends the promotion of prepaid products.

At 78 per cent, the proportion of revenue from cash on Salt Spring Island can be considered high in comparison to similar sized systems within BC Transit. This is discussed further in section 5.1.

5.0 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This report now outlines how the Salt Spring Island Transit System's performance indicators compare to those of its peer transit systems and how its fares compare to general fare guidelines recommended by BC Transit.

5.1 Comparison to Peer Systems

As seen in Table 3 below, both cash and tickets are priced higher than in comparable systems. Conversely, the adult monthly pass is priced below peer systems.

The Salt Spring Island Transit System has a higher average fare than comparable systems. This is a consequence of a comparatively higher cash and ticket fare, and having a high proportion of fare revenue from cash. Yielding higher revenue per rider is desirable, and so this should be seen as a positive.

The proportion of fare revenue from pre-paid sources in Salt Spring Island is half that of comparable systems. Further, the proportion of pre-paid revenue is staying steady, moving between 22 per cent and 23 per cent in the last five years. This would indicate that revenue stability is lower than in peer systems due to a smaller proportion of customers pre-paying their fare.

The Salt Spring Island Transit System measures higher than its peers for cost recovery, which is generally seen as a positive, although it should be noted that cost recovery is a policy decision. Therefore it may or may not be appropriate to compare performance across transit systems. However, local governments commonly prefer to have a higher cost recovery and less reliance on local property taxes.

Table 3: Comparison to Peer Systems

	Salt Spring Island Transit System	Average of Regional Systems*	Variance	Average of Similarly Sized Systems**	Variance
Adult Cash Fare	\$2.25	\$2.08	+\$0.17	\$2.00	+\$0.25
Adult Ticket Price	\$2.03	\$1.81	+\$0.22	\$1.80	+\$0.23
Adult Monthly Pass Price	\$50.00	\$55.00	-\$5.00	\$48.25	-\$1.75
Average Fare	\$1.83	\$1.40	+\$0.43	\$1.18	+\$0.65
Proportion of Fare Revenue from Pre-paid Sources	22%	44%	-22%	48%	-26%
Cost Recovery	40%	25%	+15%	21%	+19%

*Average of six transit systems: Campbell River, Port Alberni, Comox Valley, Cowichan Valley, Sunshine Coast and Mt. Waddington

**Average of four similar systems referenced in 2014/15 Transit Service Review: Sunshine Coast, Quesnel, Aggasiz-Harrison and William Lake

5.2 Comparison to BC Transit Fare Guidelines

The table below compares Salt Spring Island Transit System’s current transit fare structure to BC Transit’s recommended fare guidelines. The adult cash fare is the base from which other fares are calculated.

Table 4: Comparison to BC Transit Fare Guidelines

Fare Product	Audience	BC Transit Fare Guideline	Salt Spring Island Fare Structure
Cash	All	Base Fare	Base Fare
Tickets	All	9 times Base Fare	9 times Base Fare
Day Pass	All	2 times Base Fare	2.2 times Base Fare
Monthly Pass	Adult	20 – 30 times Base Fare	22.2 times Base Fare
	Discount	Adult Monthly Pass less 15%	Adult Monthly Pass less 20%

*BC Transit no longer recommends discounting cash fares, tickets and day passes

Table 4 shows that for the most part, the Salt Spring Island fare structure is in line with the BC Transit fare guidelines. Indeed it is one of only three systems which are currently in line with the fare structure recommendations.

For reference, the removal of age-based discounts is becoming more popular across Canada and has several benefits:

- It offers simplicity in the fare structure, making it easier for customers to understand and use, and simpler for vendors to promote and sell.
- It reduces the reliance on operators to enforce age-based fares, potentially reducing conflict.
- It provides incentive for riders to switch to monthly passes, thus encouraging more consistent ridership while reducing fare collection costs.
- It creates a simpler fare structure which is more easily understood by customers and is more compatible with future fare collection technology.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis indicates that:

- The fare structure is in line with BC Transit’s fare guidelines.
- Revenue has been increasing in each of the past five years, but is currently five per cent below 2015/16.
- Ridership had been increasing each year until 2015/16, when it saw a six per cent decline versus 2014/15. Ridership is also down this year, at ten per cent below the same period last year.
- Cash and ticket fares are higher than comparable systems, and consequently so is the average fare.

7.0 PROPOSED FARE STRUCTURES AND PRODUCTS

7.1 Proposed Fare Structures

Given that the current fare structure on Salt Spring Island conforms to BC Transit guidelines and that there is no evidence of any operational issues with the current system, the following fare structures were developed simply to provide pricing alternatives for the Salt Spring Island Transit System. Both options retain the current fare structure, which maximises customer understanding and operational efficiency, minimizes conflict and is compatible with future fare collection technology.

Table 5: Proposed Fare Structures

Fare Product	Audience	Current Fare	Option 1	Option 2
Cash	All	\$2.25	\$2.00	\$2.50
Tickets (10)	All	\$20.25	\$18.00	\$22.50
Day Pass	All	\$5.00	\$5.00	\$5.00
Monthly Pass	Adult	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00
	Senior	\$40.00	\$40.00	\$40.00

Option 1

- This option is projected to decrease revenue by an estimated \$12,000 annually, while increasing ridership by three per cent.
- This option retains the existing structure, but seeks to increase ridership through a reduction of the cash and ticket fares.

- Advantages of this fare structure revolve primarily around the anticipated increases in ridership. It will also more closely align Salt Spring Island's fares with comparable systems.
- A disadvantage is that revenue is projected to decrease, which would increase the burden on the local share of funding for the system.

Option 2

- This option is projected to increase revenue by an estimated \$13,000 annually, while decreasing ridership by three per cent.
- This option retains the existing structure, but seeks to increase revenue through an increase in cash and ticket fares. Monthly passes and day passes will remain the same, in order to incentivize customers to move towards monthly passes.
- Advantages of this fare structure revolve primarily around the anticipated increase in fare revenue.
- Conversely, it increases the variance in cash and ticket fares in comparison to peer systems.

These options are both in addition to the option of keeping fares the same.

Transfers

Other BC Transit systems are exploring the possibility of removing paper transfers, which are issued upon request when boarding using a cash or ticket fare. The Victoria Regional Transit System discontinued transfers on April 1, 2016. The primary reason for removing paper transfers is that they are the most common reason for operator and passenger conflict on several BC Transit systems. That said, BC Transit is not aware of similar trends on the Salt Spring Island Transit System, and given the degree of operational change required to implement an alternative approach, no change is recommended at this time.

Family Travel Program

Many BC Transit systems offer the Family Travel program, whereby an adult customer can bring up to four children (12 years and under) on board for free. The program is available to parents and guardians who are 19 years and over with a pass (monthly, DayPASS, ProPASS, U-PASS or BC Bus Pass), but does not apply to cash fares and tickets. Offering the Family Travel Program on Salt Spring Island may be worthy of discussion.

Recommended Fare Products

It is recommended that the Salt Spring Island Transit System review its fare products. Reviewing fare products ensures that the correct fare products are used in the event of any fare changes, as well as increasing efficiencies and economies of scale for BC Transit. The current and recommended fare products are outlined in Appendix A.







8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission and Capital Regional District:

1. Receive this report as information
2. Approve one of the proposed fare structures or retain the existing structure
3. Direct staff to work with BC Transit to implement the fare change, if applicable

Please note that fare changes should be scheduled for the 1st of a given month. BC Transit requires at least eight weeks' notice after Council approval to implement a fare change.

APPENDIX A: REVISED FARE PRODUCTS

Fare Product	Audience	Fare Products – Current	Fare Products – Recommended
Day Pass	All		
Tickets (10)	All		
Monthly Pass	Adult		
	Discount	