

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** May 6, 2024
From: Ellen Croy, Manager of Transportation
Subject: **Annual Transit Agreements and 2024 Transit Initiatives**

Recommendation(s)

This report is provided for information. No staff recommendation accompanies this report and Council action is not required.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of:

- The typical transit related agreements executed each year, including which are brought forward to Council for their consideration, and which are delegated to staff.
- The planned transit related initiatives in 2024.

Background

The City of Mission is one of 59 local governments that work in partnership with BC Transit to provide transit service in BC. The partnership between the City of Mission and BC Transit is formalized through the Transit Service Agreement (TSA), last established in 2017, and the Annual Operating Agreement (AOA), which is renewed annually. These two agreements (TSA and AOA) are designed to be read together as a single integrated document. They delineate the transit service areas, specifications, budget, payment schedule, and transit fares.

Alongside the AOA, the City receives other annual transit-related updates from BC Transit that may require Council consideration, including the Annual Performance Summary (APS), Transit Improvement Program (TIP), and Three Year Budget (3YB). Each of these documents have different definitions, submission timelines, and requirements for Council consideration (Attachment A).

The City of Mission is part of the Central Fraser Valley (CFV) Regional Transit System, which includes the City of Abbotsford, the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD), BC Transit and the local transit operator (Transdev Canada). The CFV Regional Transit System partners continually work on joint initiatives, including updates to the Transit Future Action Plan, fare reviews, and implementing new technologies.

The transit system was previously managed within the City's Development Services Department, but after filling the new Manager of Transportation position, the transit system is now managed within the Engineering and Public Works Department.

Discussion and Analysis

Transit Related Agreements Requiring Council's Consideration

- Overarching Agreements. The TSA is the overarching master agreement between the City and BC Transit, which has no expiry date and will only be altered and re-signed when major

changes to the transit service occur or a new service operator is contracted. The current TSA was signed in 2017.

- Annual Agreements for Council's Consideration. The TIP communicates the expansion initiatives for the next three years, and requires Council's approval for the next year's expansion funding before BC Transit can request the required Provincial funding. The APS is not an agreement, but is an information update from BC Transit to Council on transit service performance. Staff will continue to provide the APS and TIP to Council annually for their review and consideration.
- Annual Agreements for Council's Consideration if required. Historically, staff have brought forward the AOA for Council's consideration each year, but as per the Delegation of Authority Bylaw 6260-2023, the Director of Finance has the authority to approve the AOA if the costs are already approved within the Financial Plan. Moving forward, Staff will only bring forward the AOA for Council's review and approval if the service levels are different than described in the TIP or the AOA costs exceed the approved budget within the Financial Plan. Staff will use the budget estimates provided in the 3YB when preparing the City's five year financial plan for Council's consideration.

2024 Transit Initiatives

There are several 2024 transit planning and operational initiatives completed or underway:

- Umo (electronic fare collection system). The Umo program launched in the CFV Regional Transit System in late January 2024. Umo improves the transit experience by allowing riders to pick the best payment option for their lifestyle and travel habits. Riders have the choice between using the Umo Mobility app or a reloadable Umo card as their payment method. Hardcopy transit tickets (e.g. monthly passes and day passes) will continue to be sold until they are phased out and fully replaced by Umo. Cash fare paid on the bus will always be an option for transit riders.
- Transit Future Action Plan (TFAP) Update. The last TFAP was completed in 2018 and provides a vision for the CFV Regional Transit System network including goals, the future transit layout, and implementation priorities for service, infrastructure and investments. Six years after adoption, the TFAP is undergoing an update in 2024, which will reaffirm and reprioritize transit service and infrastructure over the next one to 5+ years. The 2024 TFAP update includes project working group meetings between the CFV Regional Transit System partners and two phases of public engagement: Phase 1 in the spring with key stakeholders and Phase 2 in the summer/fall 2024 with the general public. The updated TFAP will be brought forward to Council for adoption by December 2024.
- Fare Policy Review. All transit systems in the Fraser Valley (CFV, Chilliwack, and Agassiz-Harrison) are undertaking a fare policy review in 2024. Results will be brought forward to Council for their consideration in 2025. Transit fares in the Central Fraser Valley were last adjusted in 2013, and have therefore not kept up with inflation and rising costs to provide transit service. Revising the fare structure in 2025 will also be an opportunity to implement consistent fares across transit systems in the Fraser Valley.
- September 2024 Transit Expansions. In February 2024, the Province approved funding for transit expansions to start in September 2024:
 - 1,300 conventional transit service hours to be distributed across Mission's transit routes for improved on-time performance, frequency and service reliability.

- 450 conventional transit service hours to improve Sunday service on routes 31, 32, 33, and 34.
- 1,900 custom transit service hours for Sunday and holiday service.
- January 2025 Transit Expansion. The Province also approved funding for 600 conventional transit service hours to the Silver Creek Industrial Park area starting in January 2025. BC Transit will complete public engagement in the spring/summer of 2024 to determine the best service options for this area to help inform where and when the new service should operate.
- 2024 Capital Projects. In addition to the 2024 transit planning and operational initiatives, the City continues to work on transit related capital projects:
 - Design underway for a new 1st Avenue bus stop, west of Welton Street.
 - Design underway for improving the 2nd Avenue bus exchange, including a new midblock crosswalk.
 - New transit shelter and benches installed through the advertising agreement with Pattison.
 - Design and construction of any required new bus stop locations for new transit service to the Silver Creek Industrial Park.
- Council Input. A Transit Workshop (Special Council Meeting) is planned for the late summer/fall of 2024 to provide:
 - a high level overview of all things transit, and
 - the opportunity for Council to offer input on the TFAP Update.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communication

	Completed	To be Completed
Internal	The report has been reviewed with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finance ● Development Services 	Various staff will be continually updated as needed regarding new initiatives impacting their operations.
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff have been liaising with BC Transit, FVRD, the City of Abbotsford, and the City of Chilliwack on the 2024 transit initiatives. ● Umo implementation included various public communications and in-person engagement sessions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff and BC Transit will conduct public engagement for the new 2024 TFAP. ● BC Transit will conduct public engagement for the Silver Creek Industrial Park transit expansion. ● BC Transit will update the transit rider guides and any other information required to communicate transit expansions.

Summary and Conclusion

Staff will continue to bring the APS and TIP to Council for their consideration each year as outlined in Attachment A. Staff will only bring forward the AOA and 3YB to Council if the updated budgets impact the Financial Plan.

Several transit initiatives are underway in 2024 that align with the City's 2024 Financial Plan and BC Transit's Strategic Plan.

Report Prepared by: Ellen Croy, Manager of Transportation

Reviewed by: Tracy Kyle, Director of Engineering and Public Works

Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment(s)

Attachment A: Annual BC Transit Documents