

**REPORT TO SALT SPRING ISLAND LOCAL COMMUNITY COMMISSION
MEETING OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2025**

SUBJECT SSI Community Transit Service Update

ISSUE SUMMARY

To update the Salt Spring Island (SSI) Local Community Commission (LCC) on the status of the increase to the maximum allowable requisition as well as recent budget and service expansion implications related to the 1.238A SSI Community Transit Service.

BACKGROUND

The SSI Community Transit and Transportation Service Establishment was adopted through Bylaw No. 3438 in 2007. The bylaw established two separate services on SSI:

- (1) Community Transit Service ("Transit") provides a public transit system on SSI delivered by BC Transit; and
- (2) Transportation Service ("Transportation") carries out transportation studies, provides for the construction, installation, maintenance and regulation of sidewalks and bicycle paths, parking facilities, pedestrian and safety and traffic calming facilities and implements transportation demand management programs.

In 2024 the SSI LCC progressed discussions with BC Transit to evaluate options for expanding transit service. Several options were considered, and it was determined that efforts should be focused on increasing the frequency of service on Route 2 Fulford Ferry to Ganges to be implemented in 2026.

BC Transit could not support the expansion of service hours within the desired time frame and had responded with a one-year postponement. To support future expansion and maintain the existing service level an increase in the Community Transit service maximum levy was required.

On July 17, 2025 the following motion was passed

That the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission recommends to the Capital Regional District Board

1. That Bylaw No. 4647, "SSI Community Transit and Transportation Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2007, Amendment Bylaw No. 4, 2025", be introduced and read a first, second, and third time;
2. That Bylaw No. 4647 be referred to the Inspector of Municipalities for approval;
3. That staff be directed to proceed with Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Director consent.

The motion was referred to the CRD Board on September 10, 2025, where the recommended motion was amended to only allow for a 25% increase.

1. That Bylaw No. 4647, “SSI Community Transit and Transportation Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1, 2007, Amendment Bylaw No. 4, 2025”, be introduced and read a first *and second time*;
2. *That Bylaw No. 4647 be amended so that the maximum requisition is no greater than a 25% increase; and*
3. *That amended Bylaw No. 4647 be brought back to the Capital Regional District Board for third reading.*

BC Transit has again indicated that they will not be able to support the expansion of service hours for 2027 but have indicated that a signed expansion agreement is still required to place us in the queue. Staff are unable to sign an service expansion agreement without the max levy increase approved.

In addition, BC Transit has provided staff with updated budget projections for 2026-2028 showing significant increases in operating costs and declining revenues. While the assumption is that revenues have declined due to the Ganges Hill construction conservative estimates should still be made for 2026 as construction continues on the Blackburn bridge and lost riders may continue to utilize alternative forms of transportation.

IMPLICATIONS

Service Delivery Implications

Transit service expansion investments are important components to sustaining and growing a successful community transit system. The current system experiences capacity issues and users are often passed by during peak times. The LCC has put forward a request to expand the existing service requiring an increase to the maximum requisition before the request can be formalized. Regardless of when the service expansion takes place, an increase to the maximum requisition is required in 2026 to maintain the current service levels.

Financial Implications

Operating costs are projected to go up by \$99,686 or 10% in 2026/2027 resulting in an increase of \$55,162 to be funded locally. In addition, revenue is projected to drop by \$37,678 or 17.3% resulting in increased costs totaling \$92,840 to be funded locally.

The 2026 provisional budget did not include BC Transits recent estimates and will need to be revised for final budget. The provisional budget was presented with the maximum allowable requisition under the current bylaw increasing from \$454,571 in 2025 to \$506,500 in 2026. To support increased projected costs and reduced revenues the maximum requisition will need to be increased, transfers to reserves reduced, operating reserve funding increased or a combination of these.

CONCLUSION

The SSI LCC has progressed discussions with BC Transit to evaluate options for expanding transit service. BC Transit has indicated that the expansion would no longer be feasible for 2027. To support the existing service level and future expansion an increase in the maximum requisition is required. The Electoral Area Director has indicated support for a 25% increase to the maximum requisition in 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation, this report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Dan Ovington, BBA Senior Manager, Salt Spring Island Administration
Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, MBA, P.G.Dip.Eng, BSc, General Manager, Electoral Area Services