

Transit-Ferry Service Integration

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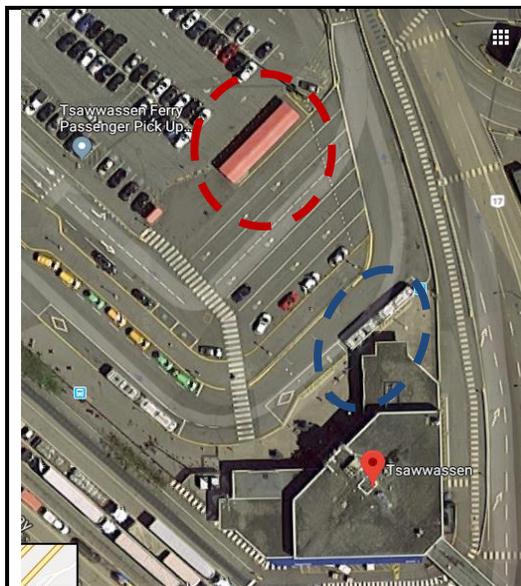
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Why

Many passengers use a combination of BC Transit and BC Ferries services when travelling between Vancouver Island and the Mainland. The service is currently uncoordinated, making it confusing, inconvenient and uncomfortable. A little coordination could provide large benefits.

Public transit travel between Victoria and Vancouver requires three connections: 1) BC Transit bus to Swartz Bay Terminal; 2) BC Ferries ride to Tsawwassen Terminal; 3) TransLink bus to the Bridgeport station; 4) Skytrain to Vancouver. There is no integrated user guidance – no brochure or website that tells users how much the trip will cost, where to purchase tickets, or where to wait for buses – and the process is slow and uncomfortable.

To appreciate this, look at the two photos below of the Tsawwassen ferry terminal. The left image shows the loading area from above: the red circle indicates the sheltered waiting area for car passengers, which is typically used by a few dozen passengers an hour. The blue circle shows the bus passenger waiting area, which has no shelter so passengers must wait, typically 5-15 minutes in rain or sun, although there are typically several hundred per hour. This is just one of many examples of the uncomfortable facilities and inferior services currently provided to public transport passengers.



The Tsawwassen ferry terminal offers shelters for car passengers but not bus passengers, despite their much larger numbers.

This is unfair and inefficient. It is unfair because the government currently spends far less per trip to accommodate people who don't drive than they do on motorists, and it is inefficient because, by encouraging automobile travel it increases traffic congestion, road and parking facility costs, chauffeuring burdens, traffic crashes and pollution emissions. Everybody benefits, including motorists, from more coordinated public transport connections between Victoria and the Lower Mainland.

How

- On websites, brochures and signs provide guidance on how to travel by public transportation between Vancouver Island and the mainland, including instructions on how to pay for and use public transit, where to obtain route and schedule information, where to purchase tickets and wait at ferry terminals, and how to carry baggage.
- Offer integrated fare payment options, such as a single bus-ferry-bus-Skytrain tickets, and payment cards that operate on all systems (BC Transit, BC Ferries and TransLink).
- Improve ferry terminal bus waiting conditions with attractive shelters, real-time bus departure signs, prepaid fare payment (so drivers are no longer required to check each passengers' tickets) to allow quick, all-door boarding, which will increase travel speeds.
- Optimize bus service between ferry terminals and SkyTrain stations to maximize efficiency and minimize delays. The BC Ministry to Transportation's standard travel time values, which are currently used to justify highway improvements, can be applied to evaluate the benefits of bus passenger travel time savings from more direct and frequent service.
- Improve bus and Skytrain stations to include user information and amenities such as magazine and drink venders, and washrooms. The high-volume Bridgeport station is particularly unpleasant and should be improved to create an attractive space for tourists and commuters.

Expected Benefits

This can significantly improve passenger convenience and comfort. By making public transit travel more attractive, this should shift some car trips to public transit, reducing congestion, accidents and pollution, and increasing affordability. It can help make the region more attractive to tourists and businesses, supporting economic development. They are consistent with priorities in the BC Ferries, [BC Transit](#) and [Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure's Mandate Letters](#), including taking action on climate change; funding transit improvements; ensuring that our public service and public sector institutions are representative and inclusive of all our diverse society (*which should include people who cannot, should not or prefer not to drive*); ensuring that public transit remains an affordable and sustainable service; and ensuring that public transit continues to be part of the solution to reducing congestion in Southern Vancouver Island.