



# Transit Future Plan

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO | February 2014

Executive Summary



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Transit has tremendous potential to contribute to a more economically vibrant, livable and sustainable community. The need to realize this potential in the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is increasingly important due to factors such as climate change, population growth and an aging demographic. Projected future growth in the RDN will place increasing pressure on the existing transportation system.

To address the factors noted above, the RDN has developed a Regional Growth Strategy which establishes a policy framework and guidelines to move towards sustainable development. This Transit Future Plan is informed by and complements the Regional Growth Strategy and supporting local Official Community Plans.

The Transit Future Plan has also been informed by the BC Provincial Transit Plan and the BC Transit 2030 Strategic Plan. The Transit Future Plan was developed through a participatory planning process involving a stakeholder advisory group and broad community consultation. The Transit Future Plan envisions the RDN transit network 25-years from now and describes the services, infrastructure and investments that are needed to achieve that vision.



## Public Consultation

Development of the Transit Future Plan included consultation with the public and local government. BC Transit and the RDN completed public consultation initiatives including the formation of a stakeholder advisory group, two phases of public consultation with BC Transit's mobile open house--the Transit Future Bus--online and print surveys and project updates on the Transit Future Project website. These initiatives were completed to raise awareness of the plan, receive input on determining priorities for implementation and to ensure that the delivery of the plan will meet the diverse needs of the people within the RDN.

## Vision and Goals

### Vision Statement

*“The Regional District of Nanaimo Transit System supports the region’s high quality of urban and rural life by connecting the region’s rural village centres, neighbourhoods and urban areas with high quality transit services that will encourage more people to choose transit as their preferred choice of travel. Integration with other modes of transportation affords people of all abilities a basic level of mobility throughout the region. Transit service is tailored to the needs of the region’s population to be safe, convenient, cost-effective and environmentally responsible.”*

### Goals

1. **The Transit System connects** the region’s urban and rural communities with their downtowns and neighborhood centres with transit services that offer an attractive alternative to driving. This is accomplished with routes and schedules that are frequent, direct, safe and convenient.
2. **The Transit System supports** sustainable land use patterns and mobility networks that encourage a reduced automobile dependency and provides access to services and employment.
3. **The Transit System reduces** the region’s impact on the environment by providing residents a transportation choice that will lower their GHG emissions and energy consumption.
4. **The Transit System provides** the majority of the residents in the region access to their communities.
5. **The Transit System is operated** in a fiscally responsible manner providing efficient cost-effective services.

### Ridership Target

The Transit Future Plan sets a transit mode share target of five per cent for all trips by 2039, which will require the RDN’s transit ridership to grow from 2.7 million to 13.5 million trips per year. This target aligns with the Provincial Transit Plan’s transit mode share target for regional centres in British Columbia.



## The Transit Future Plan Network

### Rapid Transit Network (RTN)

The Rapid Transit Network (RTN) moves passengers between major regional destinations along key transportation corridors. Service is very frequent (at least 15 minutes between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.) on weekdays and stops less often than traditional transit services. The RTN uses high capacity buses and may include future investments along the corridor in transit priority measures, right-of-way improvements, premium transit stations, service branding and off-board ticketing.



### Frequent Transit Network (FTN)

The Frequent Transit Network (FTN) provides medium to high density mixed land use corridors with a convenient, reliable and frequent (at least 15 minutes between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.) transit service. The FTN will carry a large share of the transit system's total ridership, justifying frequent service, a high level of transit stop amenities and service branding.



### Local Transit Network (LTN)

The Local Transit Network (LTN) is designed to connect neighbourhoods to local destinations, to the RTN and to the FTN. Frequency and vehicle type are selected based on demand.



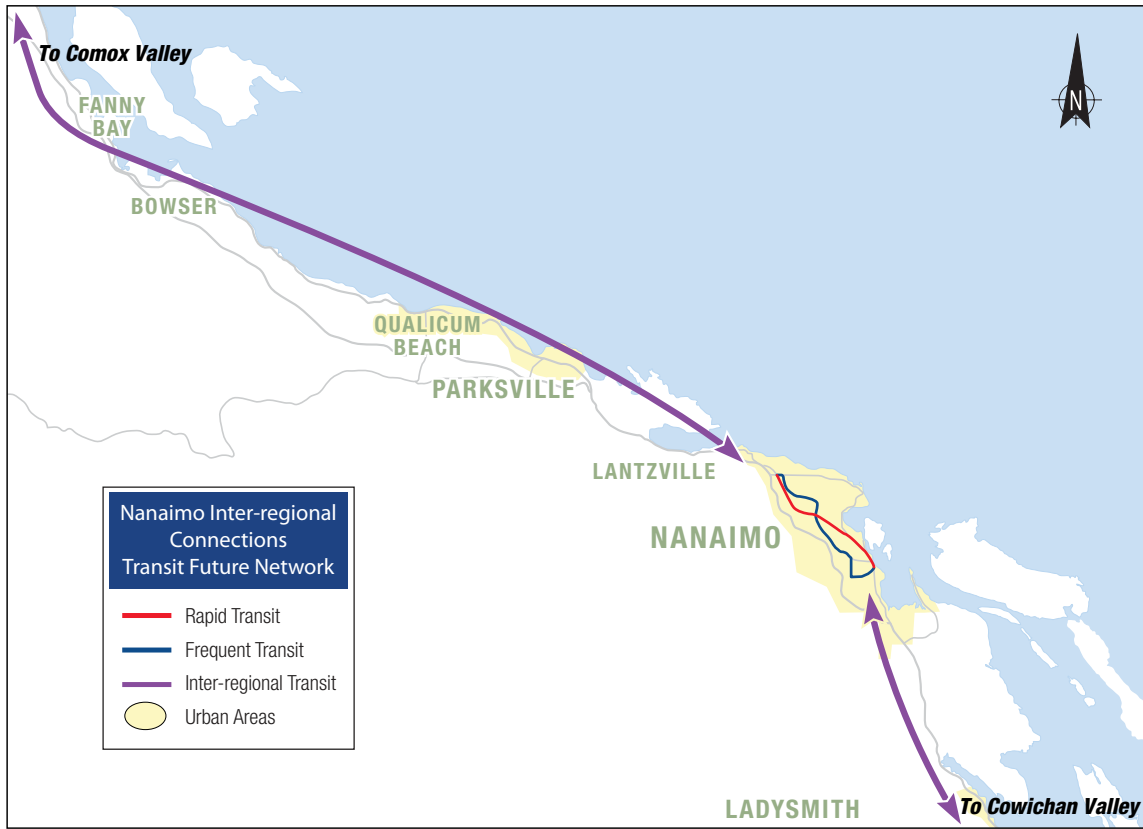
### Targeted Services

Targeted services are a collection of transit services that are more focused on the needs of specific customers. These services include:

- Inter-regional: provide connections between regions outside of the local transit service area
- Custom - handyDART: door-to-door services for customers unable to use the conventional service
- Paratransit: may include transit services that are demand-responsive or operate with flexible routes and schedules in low ridership areas



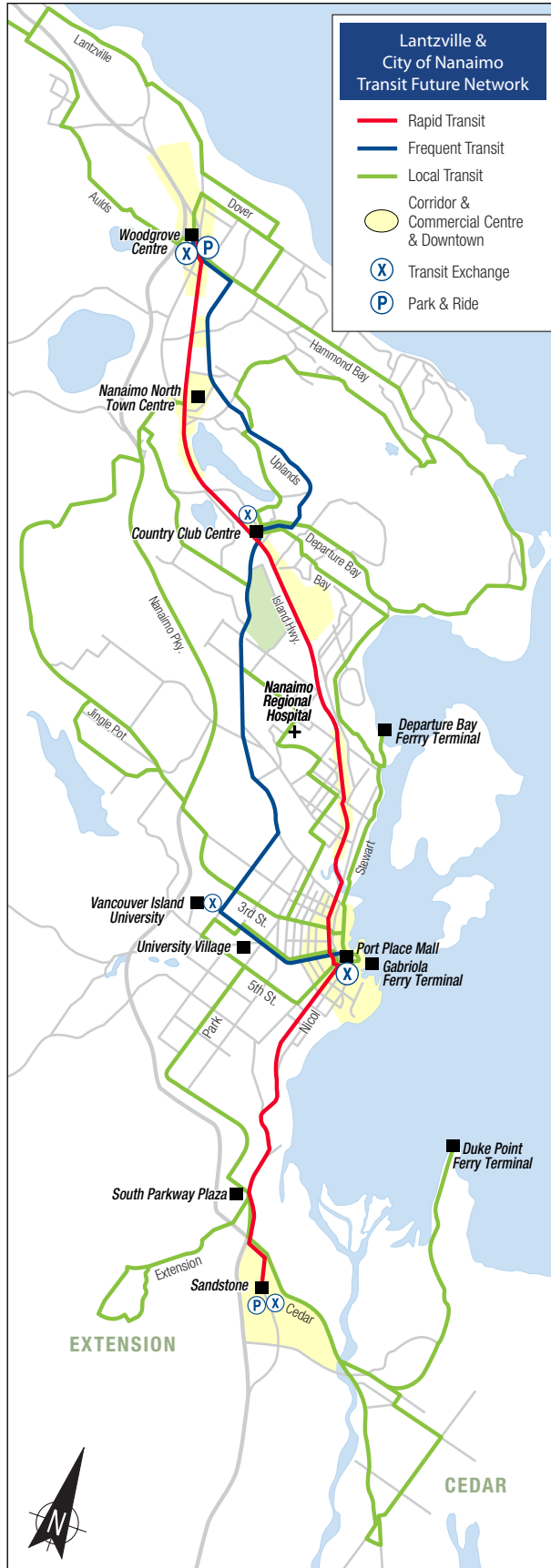
Map 1A



Map 2A

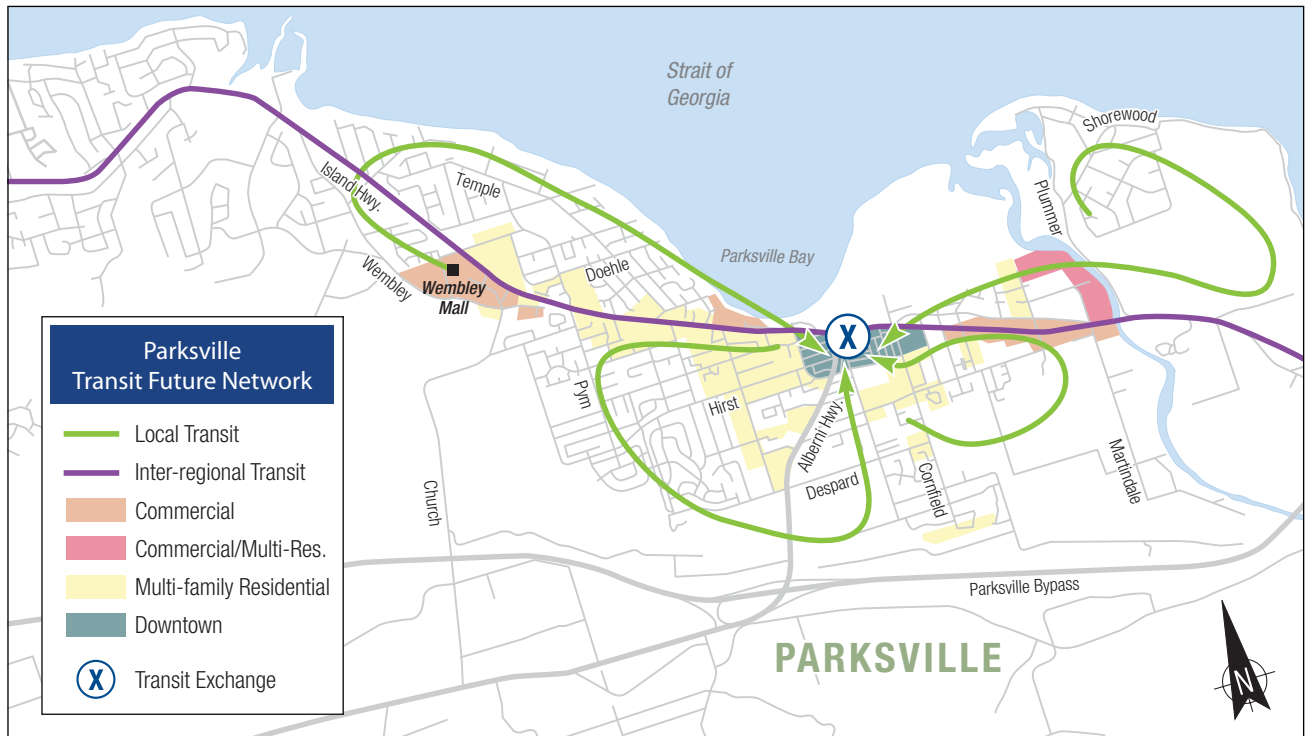


Map 3A



\* Airport to south of map see map 6A

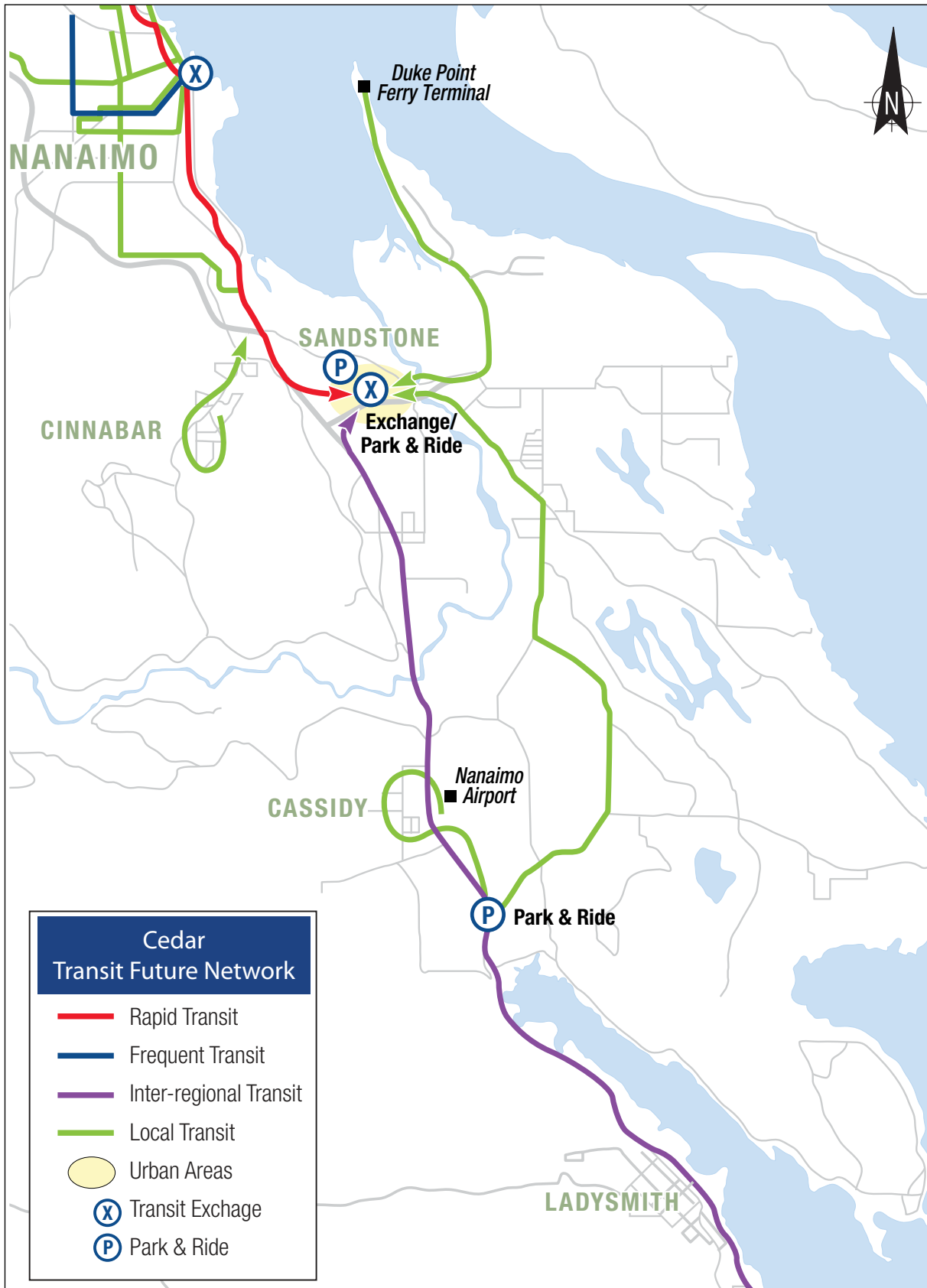
Map 4A



Map 5A



Map 6A





## Implementation Strategy

Establishing the Transit Future Plan network requires prioritizing transit investments and developing an implementation strategy to transform today's network into the future network. The plan forecasts that a fleet of 160 buses and 400,000 service hours will be needed to operate custom transit services by 2039.

Short-term Implementation Priorities (0-5 years)	
Service Improvement	Infrastructure Improvement
<p>Restructure existing routes to establish the Rapid and Frequent Transit corridors by restructuring existing routes and begin to invest in increases to service levels</p> <p>Restructure transit routes to serve the new Downtown Nanaimo Transit Exchange</p> <p>Enhance service on the Local Transit Network</p> <p>Introduce Inter-regional Transit Services to the Cowichan Valley</p> <p>The Regional District of Nanaimo and BC Transit will explore service options to connect Electoral Area 'H' with the Comox Valley Regional District</p>	<p>Plan and construct an expanded Transit Exchange in Downtown Nanaimo</p> <p>Complete a Rapid Transit Corridor Study for the Island Hwy, develop an incremental implementation plan and establish rapid transit stations</p> <p>Invest in technology to monitor ridership and service performance</p> <p>Improve customer information through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An online trip planner or provide transit information on Google Transit</li> <li>• Additional transit information at the stop level</li> <li>• Branding strategies developed for the Rapid and Frequent Transit Network</li> </ul> <p>Continue to improve transit customer facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that transit stops are spaced along a corridor at appropriate intervals</li> <li>• Invest in on-street customer amenities</li> <li>• Improve universal accessibility of transit stops</li> <li>• Improve customer information</li> </ul> <p>Update the Operation Facilities Strategy</p>

Medium-term & Long-term Implementation Priorities	
Service Improvement	Infrastructure Improvement
<p>Continue to increase service levels of the Frequent and Rapid Transit Network to meet ridership demands</p> <p>Enhance service on the Local Transit Network by increasing frequency and span of service and expanding service to support future development</p> <p>Expand Inter-regional service to the Comox Valley</p> <p>Extend the Rapid Transit Network to South Nanaimo</p>	<p>Match service demand to transit vehicle capacity</p> <p>Establish and expand critical transit facilities needed to support the Rapid and Frequent Transit network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded Woodgrove Centre exchange and Park &amp; Ride</li> <li>• Expanded Country Club Mall exchange</li> <li>• Expanded exchanges in Qualicum and Parksville</li> <li>• New Sandstone/South Parkway Plaza exchange and Park &amp; Ride</li> <li>• New/expanded VIU exchange</li> </ul> <p>Establish Park &amp; Ride in rural areas to support the Inter-Regional Transit Network</p> <p>Implement Transit Priority Measures on the Rapid and Frequent Transit Network as required</p> <p>Expand the operational and maintenance facility capacity to accommodate growth of the transit fleet</p> <p>Continue to improve customer information through the use of real-time information and bus stops</p>

### Custom Transit Service and Transit Accessibility

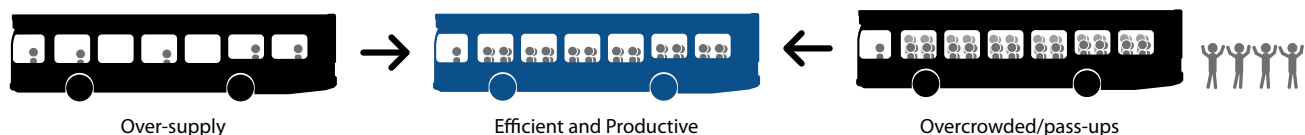
Improvements to accessibility and custom transit services will make the transit system more accessible for people of all ages and abilities. The plan forecasts that a fleet of 30 buses and 60,000 service hours will be needed to operate custom transit services by 2039. Service improvements to enhance accessibility and custom transit include:

- Improve the universal accessibility of the transit system services and infrastructure
- Aligning the hours of operation and service area with the conventional system
- Increase service availability to allow customers to plan medical appointments, shopping and casual trips throughout the entire service day



## Service Design Standards and Route Performance Guidelines

As part of the on-going management of the transit network, service design standards and performance guidelines have been developed as tools to facilitate service planning decisions and measure how well the transit system is progressing towards achieving its goals. Service standards define service levels, the service area and when new service should be introduced to an area. Performance guidelines measure service effectiveness by defining numerical thresholds and targets for the system and its routes and services. These measures are meant to ensure an acceptable level of service quality to the customer, and along with the Transit Future Plan, guide planning decisions and recommendations of BC Transit and RDN staff to the Transit Select Committee.



## Moving Forward

### Funding the Plan

To meet the mode share and ridership targets of the Transit Future Plan, capital and operating investments in the transit system will be required over the next 25 years. Annual operating costs are based on service hours that are projected to increase from the existing 140,894 hours to approximately 460,000 hours. The plan also calls for capital investments that include:

- An expanded transit fleet (total of conventional and custom) from the existing 62 vehicles to 190 vehicles
- New transit exchanges/terminals and Park & Rides
- Improvements to customer amenities at transit stops
- Transit priority such as queue-jumpers bus lanes or bus only lanes on the Island Hwy as required
- An expanded or new operations and maintenance centre

Given the level of transit investment anticipated over the coming decades, the way in which transit will be funded needs to be reviewed. BC Transit and its funding partners will need to work together to achieve stable and predictable funding sources beyond the existing mechanisms.

### Keys to Success

To guide the plan from vision to reality will require an on-going dialogue between the Province, BC Transit and RDN on transportation policy, funding and the connection between land use and transit planning.

The Transit Future Plan builds upon local land use and transportation plans and will be used to communicate the vision and direction for transit in the region. Steps required for the success of the plan include integrating the transit strategy into other municipal projects, supporting travel demand management measures, transit oriented development and transit-friendly land use practices.



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