

STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: October 29, 2019

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: IAN WELLS, GENERAL MANAGER, PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: Prince George Transit Service Annual Operating Agreement 2019/2020 Amendment #1

ATTACHMENT(S): Prince George Transit Service Annual Operating Agreement 2019/2020 Amendment #1

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council GRANTS first three readings to “Prince George Transit Service Annual Operating Agreement 2019/2020 Amendment #1 Authorization Bylaw No. 9092, 2019”.

PURPOSE

This purpose of this report is to provide amendment information on the Conventional, Community, and Custom Transit Service(s) Annual Operating Agreement (AOA) effective September 1, 2019 for the 2019-2020 BC Transit fiscal years. It details an amendment to the existing 2019/2020 AOA required from the September 1st 2019 Fare Updates and September 3rd 2019 Service updates.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This program supports Council's focus areas to:

- *Make Prince George accessible and enjoyable for everyone, regardless of their age or ability;*
- *Monitor and work to decrease greenhouse gas emissions from City operations and from the community as a whole;*
- *Enhance and integrate various transportation options, including transit, cycle routes, sidewalks and trails; and to,*
- *Prioritize infrastructure re-investment and renewal to ensure the delivery of critical recreation, emergency, transportation and utility services.*

BACKGROUND:

Service and Fare Updates

Council approved fare and service updates to the Prince George Transit system that were implemented on September 1st and September 3rd 2019 respectively. The enclosed 2019/20 AOA Amendment #1 for Council approval reflects this update.

Mayor and Council authorized a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on July 26, 2016 for expansion of the community bus service by 1,050 hours. Based on the greatest needs and demands, the allocation of

hours went to both the community bus service and conventional bus service. The following service improvements took place September 3, 2019:

- extended service for route 91 Spruceland/Hart until 8:00pm on weekdays and Saturdays;
- extended service for route 46 Queensway until 7:30pm on Sundays; and,
- route 46 now uses a conventional-sized bus to accommodate more passengers (previously smaller community bus).

The service hours and associated operating costs require an amendment to the AOA Schedule C as enclosed.

On March 25th 2019, Council approved fare changes effective September 1, 2019. The fare changes require an amendment to the AOA Schedule A as enclosed.

During this time the Prince George Transit system introduced an increase to the Family Travel program (from 2 children to 4 to ride free on weekends with paying adult), and re-instated two morning timing points on the #55: Victoria to run year-round.

The information regarding these updates was shared in the lead up to, and during, the implementation. The methods included: pop-up open houses at various transit exchanges on different days (approx. 700 riders reached); notices on buses and exchanges; drivers' training and communication; transit outlet training workshop and communication materials; social media posts and alerts to riders; letters, emails and phone calls with stakeholders (including School District No. 57 School Board and District Student Advisory Committee, PG Council of Seniors, and social agencies that purchase or receive transit fare product donations from the City). Post-secondary institutions and their student societies were also advised of the updates and notified of the UPASS fare update in August 2020 (due to agreement timelines) to align with recent fare updates.

This engagement provided the opportunity to discuss next steps for improvement including the upcoming hours in coming years approved by Council to inform upcoming September 2020 Conventional service hours review and Transit Future Action Plan review to take place this Winter 2019 and into 2020.

Annual Operating Agreement Framework

The City of Prince George and British Columbia Transit work in partnership to employ a shared services model in the provision and cost sharing of Transit Services. The Prince George Transit System is comprised of three components: Conventional, Community and Custom Transit. The Provincial Government provides BC Transit's share of transit system funding. The three systems of the Prince George Transit System are comprised of the following:

Conventional Transit System

The Conventional System provides fully accessible, regularly scheduled, fixed route transit service throughout the City. It is operated by Prince George Transit Ltd and the funding is shared 53.3% to 46.7% by the municipal and provincial governments respectively.

Community Bus

The Community Bus is a fully accessible, fixed route service that can provide limited door-to-door service for passengers with mobility limitations. It is operated by the Carefree Society and the funding is shared 53.3% to 46.7% by the municipal and provincial governments respectively.

Custom Transit System

The Custom System, also known as HandyDART, provides shared door-to-door service for people with permanent or temporary disabilities that prevent them from using fixed-route transit without assistance. It is also operated by the Carefree Society and the funding is shared 33.3% to 66.7% by the municipal and provincial governments respectively.

The Annual Operating Agreement (AOA) outlines the terms and regulations under which transit service(s) are administered and provided within the City. It comes forward before Council, seeking ratification of the budgetary obligations put before the municipality for transit service(s).

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Proposed Bylaw No. 9092, 2019 includes the Amendment #1 AOA for transit services from September 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, reflecting the provincial government's fiscal year. This AOA provides for the operation of the municipal Conventional, Community, and Custom transit system and includes costs associated with existing transit services inclusive of changes implemented this past September. Schedule C of this AOA outlines the revenue and cost details for all three components of the Prince George transit system.

Variations from Amendment 19/20 AOA to 19/20 AOA

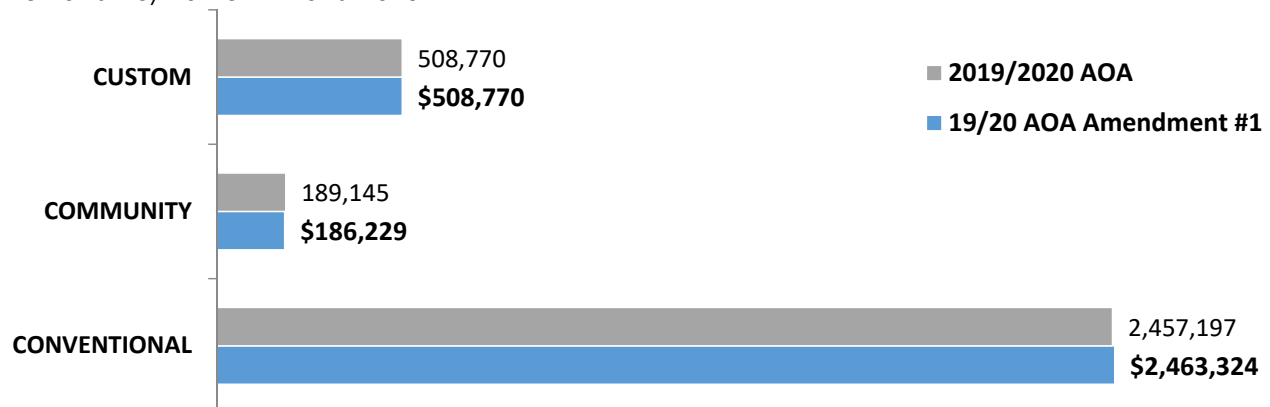
Schedule A: Tariff and Fares

- Updated to reflect Council approved fare updates implemented September 1st 2019.

Schedule C: Budget

- Updated to reflect service updates implemented September 3rd 2019
- Overall total system increase of \$3,211 (0.1% increase to AOA) for Conventional and Community bus, as no change occurred to Custom.
 - Route 46 move to bigger bus and extended hours on Sunday - Increase in Conventional Revenue and Operating costs, Community bus costs decrease due to Route 46 changing to Conventional bus.
 - Route 91 Spruceland/Hart extended service on weekdays and Saturdays

The following graph represents the differences in the net municipal contribution between the 2019/2020 AOA and 19/20 AOA Amendment #1.



Conventional Transit System:

The 2019/2020 AOA Amendment #1 increases the net municipal share of Conventional bus operation costs by \$6,127 or 0.2% over the existing 2019/2020 AOA. The following table compares costs and revenue from the 2019/2020 amended AOA budget for the implementation of additional service hours and fare update, with the current 2019/2020 budget for conventional transit.

CONVENTIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEM	19/20 AOA	19/20 AOA Amendment #1
Total Revenues	2, 150, 197	2,161,052
Total Costs (including Municipality share of Lease Fees)	8, 566, 298	8,598,152
Net Municipal Share	2, 457, 197	2,463,324

Community Bus:

The 2019/2020 AOA Amendment #1 decreases the net municipal share of Community bus operation costs by \$2,916 or -1.5% over the existing 2019/2020 AOA. The following table compares costs and revenue from the 2019/2020 amended AOA budget for the implementation of additional service hours and fare update, with the current 2019/2020 budget for the community bus.

COMMUNITY TRANSIT SYSTEM	19/20 AOA	19/20 AOA Amendment #1
Total Revenues	12, 982	12,982
Total Costs (including Municipality share of Lease Fees)	386, 173	380,704
Net Municipal Share	189, 145	186,229

Custom Transit System:

The 2019/2020 AOA Amendment #1 has no change to the net municipal share of operation costs for Custom service over the existing 2019/2020 AOA. The following table compares costs and revenue from the 2019/2020 amended AOA budget for the implementation of additional service hours and fare update, with the current 2019/2020 budget for custom transit.

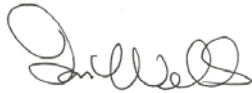
CUSTOM TRANSIT SYSTEM	19/20 AOA	19/20 AOA Amendment #1
Total Revenues	82,700	82,700
Total Costs (including Municipality share of Lease Fees)	1,593,851	1,593,851
Net Municipal Share	508,770	508,770

SUMMARY

The municipal share of the combined transit operations budget in AOA 19/20 Amendment #1 (September 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020), is projected to increase from existing 19/20 AOA levels by approximately \$3,211 from the service and fare updates implemented this past September.

Staff recommends that Council grant first three readings to “Transit Service Annual Operating Agreement 2019/2020 Amendment #1 Authorization Bylaw No. 9092, 2019”.

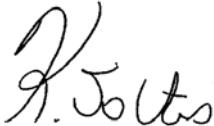
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



Ian Wells, General Manager, Planning and Development

PREPARED BY: Tiina Schaeffer, Manager of Sustainable Community Development

APPROVED:



Kathleen Soltis, City Manager
Meeting Date: November 18, 2019