



## INITIATIVE: TRANSPORTATION IN COLUMBIA VALLEY

### OBJECTIVE:

- 1) TO EXPLORE A NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS MODEL WITH BC TRANSIT THAT ENHANCES PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE LEVELS IN COLUMBIA VALLEY
- 2) TO SOLIDIFY A COLUMBIA VALLEY TRAILS SYSTEM AS AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR CONNECTING VALLEY COMMUNITIES FOR WORK AND RECREATION

### ACTION REQUESTED:

**1) Endorsement from each Columbia Valley community Council to have CVCED advocate to BC Transit for development and implementation of a BC pilot public-private sector public transit business model that enhances service levels and service satisfaction while offering better economics.**

- Develop business modelling scenarios and recommended best business model scenario based on:
  - 1) Develop a public-private sector partnership model that provides a win-win for local service that enables economy, education, culture, and recreation opportunities for valley residents while also maximizes ROI for BC Transit dollars with good use rates;
  - 2) Explore infrastructure options (e.g. 10 passenger buses for off-peak hours/new service levels to complement two existing 24-passenger buses);
  - 3) Explore revenue options like advertising on buses;
  - 4) Explore potential to steer existing private sector investments into enhanced singular service that incorporates existing private sector shuttle scheduling;
  - 5) Explore service mix options and impact on potential ridership and cost modelling, including enhanced weekly scheduled service, and/or addition of scheduled evening and weekend service, and/or shift to a more purely on-demand model using app-based booking/vehicle tracking (an example is the newly-established Town of Okotoks (AB) 100% demand/app-based public transit model (<https://www.okotokstransit.ca/>). Note: current Columbia Valley service includes a phone-based on-request first come-first serve service in Invermere and Radium;
  - 6) Explore stop location options more immediately accessible to major employment, recreation, education, and culture nodes and timing of work/school patterns vs current on-highway locations;
  - 7) Explore potential for bike-storage enabled buses to connect to active transportation network;
  - 8) Better demarcate stops;
  - 9) Develop a pricing model that promotes use and revenue;
  - 10) Enhance marketing, including a more user-friendly website, and use of an app.

### Background

Service is currently provided by RDEK. The service has a budget of \$425K, with contribution of \$168K from BC Transit, \$120K from Interior Health, and \$137K from RDEK. Ridership revenue is \$13K. Net cost of service \$45/resident.



Existing service is a 2x/day Highway 93/95 route (Canal Flats-Invermere-Radium) using to 24-passenger buses.

The Columbia Valley Transit Review and Needs Assessment Study completed by the Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce in 2019 establishes an initial perspective on service limitations and a framework for exploration of new business modeling.

Existing service limitations impedes the ability of residents to access affordable housing options, education, shopping, recreation, and employment. Further, several employers provide shuttle service to address some of the needs of their own workforce.

The private sector (e.g. Copper Point Resort shuttle at \$100K/year, Panorama-Invermere shuttle) provides shuttle service to address some of the needs of their own workforce at significant investment, acknowledging current public transportation service deficiency, and raising the question of whether more singular service could be more cost efficient.

Existing service levels hinder further development of the tourism industry, where a younger/summer student workforce and wages are lower than many other sectors benefits from public transportation. Tourism is the largest industry sector and employer and second largest export sector in Columbia Valley. The industry can't grow if services can't support workforce needs.

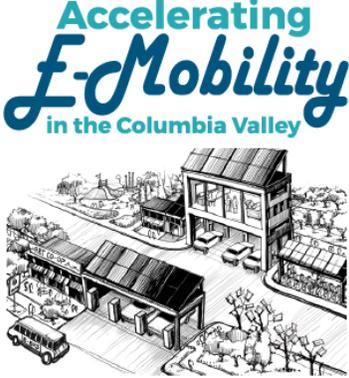
There is help. Community Energy Association (CEA), and their Accelerate Kootenays (AK) program, continues to apply to NRCan for more funding for public EV charging infrastructure. And CEA is in discussions with BC Transit regarding a potential Kootenay location for one of the 10 new EV buses. On February 3 and 17, 2021, CEA is hosting a follow up to their 2019 East Kootenay E-Mobility Visioning Workshop, called, "Accelerating E-Mobility in the Columbia Valley" (poster below).

**2) Each Columbia Valley community Council to: a) adopt a valley vision of an active transportation (trail) network with a paved, multi-use central "spine" Legacy Trail that connects Radium-Invermere-Canal Flats as a central and distinguishing core of the Valley trail system; b) prioritize grant funding, and fundraising-based completion of the full length of the Legacy Trail.**

- The path would serve as a functional and affordable transportation connector for residents.
- Completion of the path would establish the Legacy Trail as the longest urban corridor path in BC, enhancing a family-friendly tourism attraction/destination.
- Winter snow clearing would support all-season use of the path as a transportation connector.
- Promotion of e-bike use would support use of the path as a transportation connector.
- Bike rack incorporation into BC Transit service would better integrate paths and trails to extended connectivity.
- Fast tracking construction requires completion of the funded link to Radium, and land agreements/funding for the Canal Flats extension.
- A broader vision would see active adventure trail "spokes" connecting into the Legacy Trail in specific locations to establish an interconnected network of Valley trails. Given climate, 3-hour access to a large urban market, terrain variability/interest, and a distinguishing Legacy

Trail at the core, the Columbia Valley has potential to have its trail network become a core tourism product.

- This vision and these actions don't preclude refinement within the RAMP framework, but acknowledges that the RAMP process will take some time to complete and a construction of a core Legacy Trail would not be in dispute.



**Accelerating E-Mobility**  
in the Columbia Valley

**1<sup>st</sup> session**  
**February 3, 2021**

**2<sup>nd</sup> session**  
**February 17, 2021**

**Both sessions:**  
**1:00-4:00pm MST**  
**Dynamic Online Workshop**

Funded by:  
 **BC Hydro**  
Power smart

Facilitated by:  
 **Community Energy Association**

You're Invited

What could a *hub* for electric mobility look like in the Columbia Valley and how would it enable low carbon transportation and recreation?

CEA invites you to join stakeholders from the region - representing local government, environmental organizations, technology, business/commerce and tourism - to dream, design and develop a conceptualization of an e-mobility hub that serves the communities of the Columbia Valley.

**The Workshop:**

- 20 Intelligent, innovative folks from the Valley - that's you!
- Two, 3 hour sessions using engaging online facilitation
- Discussion of where e-mobility hubs could be located & what elements would drive social and economic prosperity

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Background

- This workshop builds on findings from the fall 2019 East Kootenay E-Mobility Ecosystem Visioning Session where participants, including representatives from the Columbia Valley, envisioned what a fully integrated, electrified mobility network would look like in the region. The outcome of that session was the identification of 7 prototype projects that would be further developed to be ready when funding and partnership opportunities arose. One of the key prototypes that was identified was centralized infrastructure that supported a variety of e-mobility options = "hubs". Through 2020 CEA has secured funding and conducted research and we are now excited to get specific and detailed about what a hub designed for the Columbia Valley could look like.
- Our ultimate goal is to design one or more hubs in the region and pursue funding opportunities to bring the concepts to reality. We anticipate a phased implementation given funding requirements.

