

Island Coastal Inter-Community Transportation Study

MNP



What We Heard Report

A Summary of Engagements Across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast and Coastal B.C. Communities

July 2023



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Acknowledgement

To create this report, engagement sessions were conducted across coastal British Columbia; it is acknowledged with respect and gratitude that engagements took place within the traditional territories of the *Kwakwaka'wakw*, *Nuučaan̓u*, *Eyáa7juu*them, *Ligwilda'xw*, *Pəntl'áč*, *She shashishalhem*, *Hul'q'umi'num'*, *diitiidʔaatx*, *SENCOFEN*, *Skwxwú7mesh*, *Lekwungen*, and *T'Sou-ke* speaking peoples.



Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to reflect what was heard from approximately 1,200 participants about the challenges, gaps, and opportunities for passenger transportation between communities on Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and parts of Coastal B.C.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In June 2023, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (the Trust) and the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA), with funding provided by the Province, undertook strategic engagements on Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and parts of coastal B.C. The engagement process, including in-person and online engagement sessions and a public survey, was designed to seek input from local governments, First Nation governments, Indigenous organizations, community groups, transportation providers, and local research organizations on the challenges, gaps, and opportunities for passenger transportation within the study's geographic boundaries.

Fifteen engagement sessions were held, eight of which were in-person community engagement sessions. Ninety-nine industry and community organizations, along with First Nations, Indigenous organizations, local governments, community groups, transportation providers, and research organizations took part in an engagement session (over 900 organizations or representatives were invited), and 1,452 members of the public took the online survey.

In addition to the targeted and public engagement, past transportation studies were reviewed and analyzed to inform this study. An inventory of current inter-community service providers with scheduled services was also created to identify current service offerings (e.g., pricing and scheduling) as well as gaps in passenger transportation within the study's geographic boundaries.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

"I don't think until today, there has been interest in connecting communities in a multi-modal way. This meeting today is a great start to the conversation of bringing us together as an island."

PROJECT CONTEXT

At the time of this project, Highway 4 on Vancouver Island was closed due to the wildfires on the Cameron Lake Bluffs. This closure was top-of-mind for many participants, especially for residents of communities without a secondary route into town and reminded some of the Malahat Highway closure due to the atmospheric river in November 2021.

Key issues facing British Columbians such as access to medical professionals, pronounced challenges in the housing sector, and labor market challenges associated with COVID-19 also underpinned most of the conversations, as participants stressed that these often necessitate inter-community transportation and are compounding issues that impact communities' transportation needs.

KEY FINDINGS

Throughout the study, participants highlighted common challenges and gaps with inter-community transportation services, as well as current and future stressors on transportation:

CHALLENGES	GAPS AND LACK OF SERVICE	CURRENT AND FUTURE STRESSORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Convenient, Frequent and Reliable Transportation Options • High Cost • Low Connectivity Between Modes of Transportation • Insufficient Infrastructure and Safety Measures • Low Accessibility • Lack of Environmentally Sustainable Transportation Options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinning of Regional Bus Operations • Lack of a Unified Central Corridor Service • Minimally Served Airports • Lack of Taxis and Ride Hailing • Difficulty for K-12 Students to Access Extracurricular Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change and Emergencies • Regulatory, Liability and Insurance Challenges • Changes in Community Composition • Labour Market and Increasing Cost of Housing

The key findings and conclusions of the study are presented below. Importantly, these findings are largely in alignment with the past transportation studies that were researched as part of this study; these similarities are highlighted in call-out boxes throughout this report.



KEY FINDING #1: GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Participants spoke about the need for transformative change in the way transportation is governed in B.C. They highlighted the importance of collaboration between multiple layers of government and First Nations, as well as the non-profit and for-profit sectors. One of the most frequent proposals heard was the creation of an inter-regional transportation authority with the mandate to bring together various transportation modes, to promote collaboration, and fulfil a common vision of a fully integrated passenger transportation network.

Another common suggestion was for a new governance model for BC Transit whereby one branch would be responsible for inter-community transportation and the other for intra-community transportation. As well, as a common IT solution could help simplify and streamline the user experience when using transportation in B.C.

Participants also supported transportation solutions that will reduce society's reliance on personal vehicles and stressed that, to maximize ridership, these solutions need to be convenient, frequent, and reliable.



KEY FINDING #2: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the study, especially in rural and remote communities, participants spoke about the importance of community-based partnerships and solutions. They said the Provincial government should play a stronger role in facilitating and coordinating transportation options other than personal vehicles between communities, in collaboration with community partners.

The Province should help pull together various levels of government, including First Nations, to enable grass-roots and community-grown transportation opportunities to thrive by, for example, removing regulatory and jurisdictional barriers. Participants want all parties to work collaboratively, in partnership with the private sector, towards a shared vision of transportation for B.C. set and led by the Province.



KEY FINDING #3: GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Throughout the study it was frequently heard that inter-community transportation requires financial support from government and that the private sector cannot fill this gap on its own. Participants stated that government should provide subsidies to local service providers (both private and non-profit) that fill a gap in communities' transportation needs.

That said, many participants equally supported expanding the frequency, geographic scope, and hours of service of public transportation services, such as BC Transit.



KEY FINDING #4: ACTIVE AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Inter-community passenger transportation via active and alternative transportation corridors was endorsed in all engagement sessions. Participants supported expanding and improving the safety of active and alternative transportation corridors and more planning related to bicycles.

Participants spoke of the importance of improving connectivity between existing transportation modes, such as connecting ferry terminals to active transportation corridors so that being a walk-on (or bike-on) ferry passenger is more feasible. Additionally, establishing more transportation hubs that connect different transportation modes (such as including bus terminals and Park n' Ride lots) would improve connectivity and decrease reliance on personal vehicles.

INNOVATIONS AND PROPOSALS

Throughout the engagement sessions, participants shared ideas for how to address identified challenges, as well as build on existing strengths. Participants reflected on what they had experienced in other countries as well as considered the needs, opportunities, and challenges of their respective communities.

IDEA #1: INTER-REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION BODY

One of the most frequent proposals heard across the sessions was the creation of an inter-regional transportation body (e.g., a transportation authority) with the mandate to bring together various transportation modes, to promote collaboration, and fulfil a common vision of a fully integrated passenger transportation network.



IDEA #2: INFORMATION SHARING

Participants frequently indicated a lack of knowledge about what services and programs currently exist for inter-community transportation. They stressed a desire for a central and easily accessible repository of information where providers, schedules, routes, and fares were all clearly displayed.



IDEA #3: COMBINING PASSENGER AND CARGO

Some participants spoke about the possibility of combining passenger and cargo transportation as a way to increase the affordability and availability of passenger transportation services. In Campbell River, for example, one participant spoke about the opportunity of working with transportation partners in Port Hardy to see if they can share cargo space. It was acknowledged that current regulatory structures, insurance, and licensing frameworks may need to be altered to accommodate these changes.



IDEA #4: COMBINING RIDE-HAIL AND CAR SHARE PROGRAMS

Participants within several communities spoke highly of the potential of car sharing programs. However, barriers were noted such as: high start-up costs, fluctuations in demand (for both seasonal residents and tourists), storage, vehicular maintenance, software maintenance, membership, and fee structure etc. Some participants suggested the possibility of combining ride hailing and car sharing which would help supplement communities' transportation needs and address some of the barriers mentioned above.



IDEA #5: LOCALLY OR REGIONALLY COORDINATED MODEL (FRAMEWORK)

Some participants spoke of the potential for a locally or regionally coordinated model or framework that would bring together various actors such as First Nations, local governments, non-profits, and the private sector. At the West Coast session, for example, participants spoke of a local large employer that provides their own shuttle service to transport employees to and from work. While not in use, it was suggested these vehicles could potentially be used throughout the day by the community or designated groups.



Project Overview

Island Coastal Inter-Community Transportation Study

OVERVIEW

This study served to explore the state of passenger transportation connections between communities, especially in rural and remote areas as well as islands, that are either not currently served or are underserved by buses, ferries, water taxis, float planes, community shuttles, or other modes of transportation. Connections between various means of transportation was also included in the study.

The insights gained from the study are intended to provide the provincial government, other levels of government and interested parties, with information to help inform future policy and investment decisions in the region. In particular, the study offers an understanding of what exists today when it comes to community-to-community transportation, challenges and barriers transportation providers and users face, and the opportunities that can be pursued to better connect communities.

The study will also inform a micro-granting program delivered by the Trust to fund applications in support of regional transportation planning, delivery of regional transportation services, or adding capacity to regional passenger transportation.

The geographic boundaries of this study coincide with the Trust's service area, described as Vancouver Island (excluding the Greater Victoria area), the southern Great Bear Rainforest, the Sunshine Coast, and islands along with inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 The Trust's Service Area

ISLAND COASTAL ECONOMIC TRUST

The Island Coastal Economic Trust (the Trust) works to build a sustainable and resilient coastal economy in reciprocal relationships with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts across Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast, and island and inlets from the Salish Sea to Cape Caution. Serving over half a million residents, the Trust partners with communities in the development and financing of their economic infrastructure and diversification efforts through a unique structure that is led by, and accountable to, communities.

VANCOUVER ISLAND ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

The Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) is a registered non-government, non-profit society spearheading regional economic development for the entire Vancouver Island and rural islands region. The society is funded by membership, sponsorships, and gate receipts from events.

Engagement Process

METHODS

The information in this report was collected through an online survey, in-person engagement sessions, and online engagement sessions.

An online survey was made available for the public over three weeks in June. To help ensure awareness along with participation, the survey was advertised on local radio and print ads throughout the study's geographic region with a cash incentive to respond.

In-person engagement sessions were also organized by invitation. These meetings were three hours in duration and took place throughout June in the following locations: Sechelt, Powell River, Duncan, Port Hardy, Campbell River, Parksville, Port Alberni, and Tofino. For invitees who could not attend the in-person meetings, online meetings for the South Coast, Mid-Coast and North Coast were offered.

Online engagement sessions were also held for: communities on Gulf and rural islands, First Nations and Indigenous organizations, transportation service providers, and community-based transportation services to discuss challenges and opportunities specific to those operators.

Notes were taken throughout the engagement sessions, themed and analyzed, and summarized in concert with the public survey findings to inform this final report.

Transportation studies already conducted within the geographic boundaries of this study, and completed within approximately the past 10 years, were reviewed prior to drafting the survey or conducting the in-person and online engagement sessions. The past studies, summarized in Appendix C, informed the survey and engagement session discussion questions for this study.

PARTICIPANTS

The study sought the perspectives of the public, First Nations, Indigenous organizations, community groups, local governments, research organizations, and inter-community transportation providers within the geographic boundaries of interest. Over 900 organizations or representatives were invited to participate in the study and 94 attended an engagement session. With the survey, 1,452 responses were received of which 1,096 were considered completed and valid submissions.

TIMELINE

Participant outreach started in early June, and all engagement sessions (in-person and online) concluded by June 30. The online survey was available from June 6 to June 30, inclusive.

How This Report Is Organized

Participant feedback collected during the engagement sessions was summarized and themed into this report. It is important to note that throughout the report, comments are attributed to the city in which the engagement session took place yet reflects the views of the wider area, as follows:

For example, in the report, comments attributed to the “Port Hardy engagement session” generally reflect the views of the participants who attended from Port Hardy, Port Alice, Quatsino First Nation, ‘Namgis First Nation and other areas of North Vancouver Island, the south-Central Coast, and the Broughton Archipelago. This has been done to simplify the report.

Transportation operators and service providers were invited to, and attended, in-person engagement sessions plus had a dedicated session to discuss challenges and opportunities from their perspective. Their feedback and perspectives are included throughout the report.

MEETING LOCATION	SESSION PARTICIPATION CATCHMENT REGIONS
Sechelt	Sunshine Coast
Powell River	qathet and Desolation Sound
Duncan	Cowichan Valley and Juan de Fuca
Port Hardy	North Vancouver Island, south Central Coast, and the Broughton Archipelago
Campbell River	Strathcona Region and Discovery Islands
Parksville	Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum Beach, and Comox Valley
Port Alberni	Pacific Rim and Alberni Valley
Tofino	West Coast and Clayoquot Sound



What We Heard: Key Themes

Challenges with Transportation Services

LACK OF CONVENIENT, FREQUENT AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Participants in all regions highlighted challenges related to convenience, frequency, and reliability of existing transportation options as a key barrier to regularly using these services. While they acknowledged the argument frequently made that existing services have low ridership or are not being used, they also raised that these three foundational elements must be in place for ridership to increase. For demand to increase, transportation options must be convenient, frequent, and reliable.

Survey respondents indicated the following reasons for traveling to other communities:

Shopping	24%	Medical Appointments	14%
Recreation/Leisure	17%	School	10%
Social/Friends/Family	17%	Other	3%
Work	15%		

- Participants shared that, currently, the public transit system is built around “the 9 to 5 schedule”. For those whose shifts start early or end late, public transit is often not a viable means of transportation for them because the schedule is not convenient. In Parksville, one participant said that “we cannot get employees to come here from Nanaimo because busses stop at 7pm”. Not considering the hours of operation of major employers in the region can, as a result, significantly hamper ridership. This limited schedule can also have far-ranging consequences on employment and education opportunities.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“With limited schedules and the added time public transportation takes, it’s not really something that is a viable option for most people if they don’t have a flexible timeline, work after hours or on the weekend”.

- In Port Alberni, one member of a local First Nation said that more reliable forms of transportation would help their nation increase their own source revenues. The expansion of their main sources of revenue, forestry and tourism, is limited by the current transportation system.
- Participants widely agreed on the importance of reliable modes of transportation. To increase buy in and ridership, the available means of transportation need to be reliable in adverse weather conditions and during peak busy seasons. Some participants shared their perception that, over the past 18 months or so, BC Ferries has cancelled sailings more frequently. The related reasons as noted by those consulted were insufficient staffing, inclement weather, mechanical breakdowns, and protests; regardless of the reason, participants said that reliable, dependable transportation is vital to an economically robust region and B.C. residents.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“With limited schedules and the added time public transportation takes, it’s not really something that is a viable option for most people if they don’t have a flexible timeline, work after hours or on the weekend”.

- Water taxis, though used regularly in rural and remote communities, are vulnerable to adverse weather, not accessible, and vulnerable to disruption. One participant in the Gulf and Rural Islands session said that businesses often struggle to be self-sustaining on the smaller islands due to seasonal volatility.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case, released in 2022, proposes restoring the rail service. The case is rooted in the need to address the gap in a reliable transportation link between Island communities. The economic, environmental, and social benefits of a reliable connection service is what underpins the research and business case for the restoration of the rail service.

HIGH COST

Costs of transportation was noted as one of the main barriers and grievances among those consulted. Inter-community transportation is often too expensive for people to make regular trips for groceries, goods, social activities, leisure, friends, and family. Many people travel outside of their community for medical appointments, court dates, government services, and other appointments that cannot be missed or done remotely. Taxis are often the only means of connecting people from their residence to a bus stop or transportation hub, and fares are often very expensive, especially for those in rural and remote communities.

- Participants from all engagement sessions shared that many of the inter-community transportation options are costly. Water taxis, private bus lines and taxis – modes of transportation that people in rural and remote communities may rely on to access other communities – are often too expensive for people to use outside of an emergency or other pressing situation. For individuals who are dependent on public buses, they may have to spend the night in the destination community due to the limited schedule. These factors prohibit, or hinder, regular usage of many inter-community transportation options. Transportation providers, in turn, acknowledged that fares are often a barrier to use; however, even at current fare levels, many providers are barely able to cover their operating costs.
- Participants shared that especially in remote communities, the lack of grocery stores and/or the high cost of groceries necessitates travel to larger communities for goods. One service provider in Campbell River said Port McNeil and Port Hardy residents regularly travel south for groceries; the service provider frequently stops at Canadian Tire, Walmart, and Save-on-Foods.



Figure 2 Water Taxi in Clayoquot Sound

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“One-fifth of my salary every week goes to transportation.”

- Participants cited the cost of taking the ferry as a barrier for many people wanting to travel between communities, especially for families. The cost of taking a vehicle, as well as walk-on ticket costs, were noted as prohibitively high. Some online ticket purchases require a credit card, whereas debit cards can only be used in-person at ticket kiosks at the terminal. In Gulf and Rural island communities, for example, residents are often forced to drive onto the ferry as there are few alternative ways to get to the terminals.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The B.C. Coastal Ferries Consultation and Engagement of 2012 found that the affordability of fares was a top concern for ferry users. Participants contributed concerns that the ferry is an essential service for Island communities, and that while the affordability is a major concern for travel, the participants reported that basic levels of ferry service is a top consideration for BC ferries to consider when making any adjustments. The Age-Friendly Transportation Planning Study for the Village of Tahsis found that the trip participants take is costly enough to deter them from meeting basic needs. The study found that on average, the cost of a transit trip to access necessary services can cost \$177.00, on top of the expense for the goods or service motivating the travel.

LOW CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

The issue of connectivity – passenger’s ability to seamlessly connect to different modes of transportation – was raised in all engagement sessions. Participants pointed to insufficient connectivity between different means of passenger transportation as a key reason for low ridership. This issue was especially heard in communities that rely on ferries to move between communities, as many participants felt that ferry schedules have been increasingly disrupted due to staffing issues, mechanical breakdowns, and weather.

- For those who rely on stringing multiple means of transportation together to reach their destination, the domino effect of one late mode often deters travel in the first place or necessitates traveling by private vehicle. This was emphasized by participants on the Sunshine Coast, as one delayed bus may result in missing the ferry, which could cause a multi-hour delay. Conversely, a delay in the ferry may result in an empty bus departing from the terminal, leaving foot passengers stranded until the next available bus.
- The lack of access to airports was flagged in many engagement sessions as a significant gap. Participants in Duncan, for example, discussed the connectivity issues when traveling to the Victoria International Airport in North Saanich. To take the public bus is a lengthy and complicated proposition; as a result, it is underutilized. Using the Mill Bay ferry means a lengthy walk to get to the bus on the Brentwood Bay side. Similar issues related to connectivity were raised for float plane, water taxi and ferry terminals.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“If you aren’t young, physically fit, or don’t have money, connections are almost impossible.”

- In Sechelt, participants discussed the difficulty of traveling from the Sunshine Coast to the Island. For example, to travel from Sechelt to Comox, or Powell River to Vancouver, passengers may require four tickets from three different companies. The lack of integration and connectivity is expensive, time-consuming, and confusing for riders.

- When BC Transit partners with local governments to provide a service within that community and area, it helps fill intra-community transportation needs. However, these routes do not take into consideration the needs of passengers traveling between communities. As a result, passengers are left to make their own connections (e.g., walking, taxi, ride hail) which can be prohibitive for many riders.
- Participants on Vancouver Island spoke about the shortcomings of inter-community public bus routes. In Duncan, there is a public bus service to Victoria and Nanaimo. These services are not a “milk run”, meaning they travel directly to the destination with a limited number of stops along the direct route. While this is hailed by some as creating an efficient route, it can leave out smaller communities that are nearby.
- Participants in the Gulf and Rural Island session emphasized that there are multiple conceptions of what a “community” is. While each island is often referred to as a community, in fact there are often distinct communities within each island. This is important because residents have a need to both communities within their island as well as communities on other islands and the mainland.



PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The theme of connectivity did not emerge as an explicitly named concern in the studies observed. That said, all existing studies referenced provide examples of challenges and opportunities that relate to the issue of connectivity. The Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case, Southern Gulf Island Transportation Integration Plan, Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy, and Age-Friendly Transportation Planning Study in the Village of Tahsis B.C. referenced the need for integrated modes of transportation and a connected transit system.

INSUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY MEASURES

Participants’ comments related to safety fell into two groups: infrastructure and personal safety. On the former, most comments related to road conditions, lack of cell connectivity, and unsafe active transportation corridors. On the latter, participants spoke about being stranded and being forced to make unsafe choices to return home.

- Participants spoke to how many roads into small and rural communities are unpaved, in poor condition, impassible in winter months, and can be steep and slanted. Other shared experiences included visibility challenges related to dust in dry months and that many rental car companies, including some car sharing and car co-ops, prohibit the use of vehicles on unpaved roads. Adding to these challenges is the fact that some gravel roads into communities require a truck year-round.

- There are long stretches of Highway 19 on Vancouver Island that lack cell phone connectivity; from Campbell River to Woss, most of the highway does not have reception. Participants from Port Hardy and Port Alice, for example, shared stories of dangerous incidents where a vehicle broke down and the driver had to walk along the road for assistance. This is especially dangerous for tourists who may not be familiar with the area or local wildlife.
- Lack of cell phone connectivity also limits the use of App-based car sharing and co-op services. One participant shared a story of a tourist renting an Evo Car on Vancouver Island and driving it to a Gulf Island. However, once on the Gulf Island, the tourist did not have adequate cell coverage to open the car with the App. They were ultimately unable to move the car and were forced to leave it on the Gulf Island. In Tofino, a service provider said they rely on cash because point-of-sale machines run on cellular service, which is not available on all parts of the West Coast.
- In Port Hardy, a participant spoke about the current state of disrepair of the main dock in Quatsino. This dock is condemned yet is the only access point for Quatsino Sound.
- Many participants commented on the lack of safe cycling lanes, sidewalks, bus stops, and active transportation corridors. Active transportation was described as a viable way for people to move between communities, but that physically protected shoulders, paved shoulders, signage, and illuminated paths are needed for them to be safe. Many participants expressed that bus stops should have shelters, with seating, and be illuminated so that bus drivers can see passengers waiting for pick up, as well as to make passengers feel safe.
- Participants from some of the Gulf Islands made reference to Car Stops, a sanctioned hitchhiking program. The program, which started on Pender Island, has since expanded to Mayne and Saturna Islands. Car Stops has hitchhiking signs at designated pullouts. It has been successful on the Islands for locals and tourists. Participants described feeling safe using this system, though acknowledged it is not without risks and is not the best option for all users. Participants in many communities talked about the rise of social media sites (such as community Facebook pages) to coordinate transportation. While these sites work for some, others feel unsafe relying on these forums. Residents of Zeballos, for example, often use a community Facebook page to ask for and offer rides, or to pick up goods.



PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The issue of safety was raised in approximately half of the previous transportation studies observed. In the Age-Friendly Transportation Planning Study for the Village of Tahsis (2020), the study observed the lack of cell service and poor infrastructure contribute to serious safety concerns. The Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan (2022) states that the lack of safety on the road for cyclists and active transportation users is a major barrier to increasing active transit use.

LOW ACCESSIBILITY

Participants widely agreed that the need for accessible means of transportation, especially for services to help people attend medical appointments and procedures, outstrips availability. In more remote regions, existing services need to be booked far in advance and are vulnerable to cancellation on short notice in adverse weather conditions. Ferry terminals are often difficult to use for passengers with mobility challenges, due to navigating steep ramps or accessing elevators.

- Many existing transportation options that participants identified, such as taxis and ride hail either do not have, or have limited, vehicles that can accommodate accessibility needs. Similarly, ferries, water taxis, and float planes are either difficult, or impossible, to access for those with mobility challenges. Communities without access to easy-to-use transportation rely on private or volunteer providers. This, in turn, often means that those with mobility limitations either rely on more expensive means of transportation (e.g., taxi) or cannot travel outside of their community altogether.

ONE PARTICIPANT REPRESENTING A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION SAID

“People have contacted me from Florida trying to get their family members to the hospital or to appointments.”

- Participants agreed that programs that help residents access medical appointments are very helpful and relied-upon services. HandyDART was praised throughout the engagement sessions as a service that was addressing a substantial need. However, some participants noted that this service can be difficult to reserve, availability books up quickly, and it may be unavailable in regions that are not serviced by BC Transit. Additionally, the buses often cannot travel on roads or driveways that are steep or unpaved, leaving some residents without a way to access the service. HandyDART does not currently operate on statutory holidays in some jurisdictions.
- Participants highlighted the barriers faced by those with mobility limitations in using public transportation, such as bus stops that do not have a bench or place to sit down. Similarly, participants described accessibility issues on BC Ferries. Some examples were that wheelchairs can be reserved with BC Ferries in advance, but they are not always available; ramps used to board or de-board the ferry can be prohibitively steep for those using a walker or wheelchair; and elevators on lower decks are not always accessible.
- Additionally, a participant in Powell River emphasized that all forms of public transit can be prohibitively difficult for those with cognitive impairment to use. Accessing online schedules, interpreting schedules and routes, purchasing tickets, adapting to changes in schedules, and managing transfers can be significant challenges.



Figure 3 Community Engagement Session

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Accessibility emerged as a consistent theme throughout the previous research studies referenced for this report. The Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case names that the rail would resolve mobility and access challenges for disadvantaged members of communities. The Micro-Transit in Micro-Communities: Community Bus Feasibility Study for Quadra Island found that there is an increased concern surrounding seniors and elderly folks remaining in their homes and not accessing medical services due to the lack of transportation options. The Age-Friendly Transportation Planning Study for the Village of Tahsis explored the transit barriers faced by older adults and seniors in meeting their needs.

LACK OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

While some participants commented on the importance of environmentally sustainable means of transportation, factors such as reliability, affordability, frequency, and connectivity were discussed more frequently and were seen as vital to improving inter-community transportation.

- While environmental sustainability and reduction of carbon emissions was often a topic of discussion, most participants did not flag this to the same degree as themes such as reliability, affordability, frequency, and connectivity.
- While participants from the west coast of Vancouver Island agreed that efforts to have electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the community is important, a more vital goal was seen to be reducing the number of cars on their roads and within the parks. Currently, cars were noted as congesting roadways and creating demand for parking that regularly exceeds supply, especially in busy summer months. As an alternative, success has been found in e-bike rentals, community shuttles and expanding active transportation corridors.
- In the Duncan, Tofino, the Gulf and Rural islands, the Sunshine Coast engagement sessions, participants emphasized the importance of dedicated active transportation corridors as a means of reducing vehicular traffic and promoting a healthy lifestyle. One participating organization spoke about active transportation corridors they have created in partnership with communities in Duncan, Parksville, Comox, and parts of Port Alberni.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Environmentally sustainable transportation was a major theme in all studies researched and referenced in this report. Almost all of the studies refer to sustainability as a motivator or core incentive to pursuing innovations in transportation. The B.C. Coastal Ferries Consultation and Engagement reported that the BC Ferry Commissioner recommended that the future vision for BC ferries should be based on a long-term demand forecast and maintaining sustainability as a core pillar of the vision. The vision is stated to include the use of innovative fuel alternatives and connection with other transportation modes as a means to achieving greater sustainability. Similarly, the Cortes Island Transportation Demand Study was performed with the intention to reduce the Island's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. The Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan identifies barriers, challenges, and opportunities to developing active transportation routing and infrastructure throughout the SGI. The Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case names the promotion of environmental sustainability as a core piece of the business case.

Gaps and Lack of Service

THINNING OF REGIONAL BUS OPERATIONS

Regional bus operators terminating or limiting services was particularly detrimental in small and rural communities. These services not only helped people access goods and services in larger urban centres, but also helped them feel more connected and independent. Importantly, participants said that while these services are greatly missed, many believe the private market would have provided these services if they were financially feasible and that the Province should offset their operating costs so that services can continue.

- Greyhound Bus terminating services was detrimental to many small communities and for those without a personal vehicle. Other companies attempted to fill the void, including The Sunshine Coast Connector, Wilson's Transportation, and the Island Link; however, operating these services profitably has been extremely challenging. This has resulted in diminished routes, seasonal service, and uncertainty over the future.

ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE SECHLT SESSION SAID

"When Greyhound disappeared, nothing replaced it. As someone who doesn't drive, if I want to go to Powell River now, I can't. I used to be able to hop on the Greyhound."

CHALLENGES FACED BY REGIONAL OPERATORS

In the Transportation Service Providers online session, for-profit and not-for-profit operators identified some of the key challenges they face when providing service. The top challenges noted were as follows:

- **Recruiting and Retaining Labour or Volunteers**

Recruiting skilled labour is one of the main challenges faced by operators, especially in smaller communities. Retaining labour throughout the year is another key challenge, due to seasonal volatility. Non-profit operators also spoke of waning volunteer numbers, especially among young people. Wheels for Wellness, for example, has 33 volunteer drivers, all of whom are over 70 years of age.

AS ONE PARTICIPANT SAID

"It costs \$120,000 to obtain your Commercial Pilots License in this province. B.C.'s Student Air program covers about \$5,000 of this, which barely makes a dent. Alberta addressed this problem and significantly decreased the cost for obtaining the licence, yet the B.C. government claims it cannot do the same. We don't understand it."

- **Regulatory and Legislative Barriers**

Air transportation providers pointed to changes to the Canadian Aviation Regulations that came into effect in December 2020 that have been difficult to adopt. Under the new rules, flight crews can work for a maximum of 1,000 hours per 365 consecutive days, down from 1,200 hours under the previous regulations. Workers can also work for a maximum of 300 hours in any 90 consecutive days and 112 hours in any 28 consecutive days. These new federal regulations restrict the pool of pilots they can draw from and has added significant pressure to their operating budget. Another barrier raised by air transportation providers is the cost of obtaining a pilot license.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Regulatory and Legislative barriers emerged as an issue in the Southern Gulf Island Transportation Integration Plan. The study states that in focusing on the development of transportation service options and costing models, there is a real complexity to the jurisdiction. The unincorporated nature of the electoral area within the CRD means there are shared accountabilities for transportation and it creates a barrier in developing service options that integrate communities.

- **Seasonal Volatility**

Many transportation service providers struggle to operate and retain staff year-round when demand surges in the busy summer months and falls off in the winter months. Winter slumps are caused by decreased tourism numbers and the unreliability of air and water transportation during the stormy season.

- **Capital Costs and Operating Costs**

Prices of goods and services has increased substantially since COVID-19; maintaining vehicles, boats and planes, as well as fuelling and insuring them, is more expensive than ever before.

- **Insufficient Demand During the Off-Season**

Resident populations in smaller and rural communities are insufficient to sustain many transportation operators year-round, who rely on high tourism numbers in summer months. Many transportation services, such as water taxis and planes, are prohibitively expensive for resident to rely on regularly.

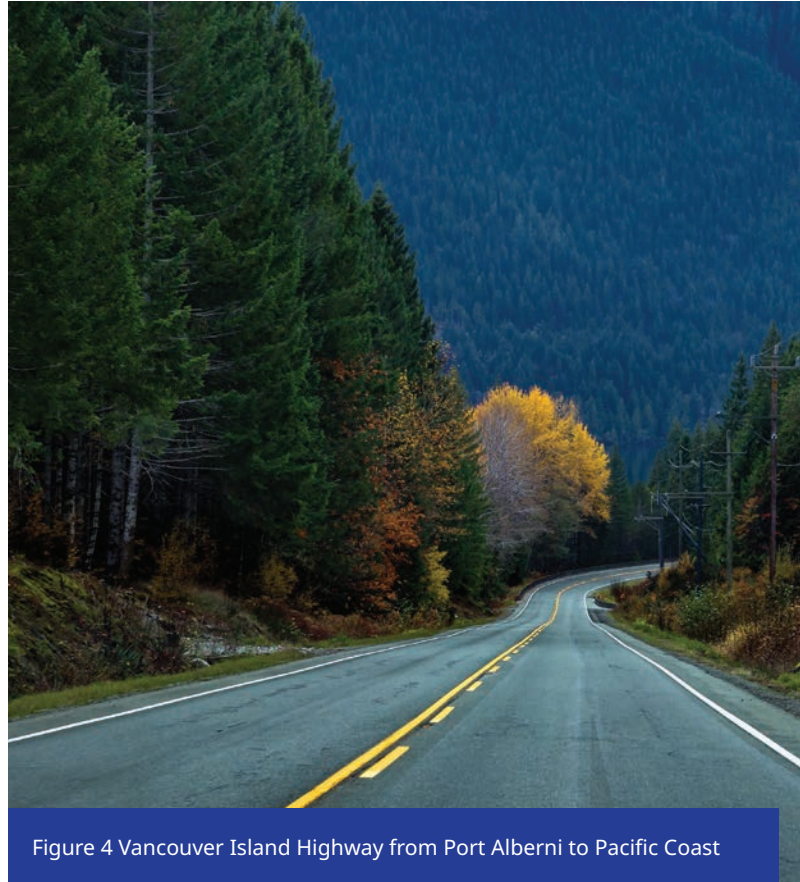


Figure 4 Vancouver Island Highway from Port Alberni to Pacific Coast

ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE TOFINO SESSION SAID

“Government subsidies are needed to fill inter- and intra-community transportation gaps; the private market would have provided these services if they were financially feasible.”

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The “Micro-Transit in Micro-Communities” Study on Quadra Island mentions that service providers adjust their schedule around peak seasons to accommodate for increased traffic.

LACK OF A UNIFIED CENTRAL CORRIDOR SERVICE

Throughout the engagement sessions, participants discussed the desire for a central corridor on Vancouver Island: a coordinated, scheduled passenger transportation service to help people travel between communities on the Island. Many discussed the potential of rail, especially to avoid the 'Malahat Highway bottleneck', to provide a secondary route between Duncan and Victoria in case of emergency, to decrease reliance on personal vehicles, and to help tourists access the mid-Island region.

- The idea of passenger travel by rail was widely supported throughout engagement sessions as a more cost-effective, reliable, safe, and environmentally friendly vision for the future. With rail serving as a central spine running North-South on Vancouver Island, and East-West from Nanaimo to Port Alberni, participants suggested that buses and other transportation modes could run along the rail line to connect communities. Rail would serve locals and tourists alike, helping to open up communities on the Island to economic, employment and educational opportunities.

ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE DUNCAN SESSION SAID

"We need a spine for the Island to be able to get people up and down; if you let infrastructure fail, you can't expect people to be mobile... it's worth looking at the true costs of the different ways we prioritize our mobility funding."

- Participants in Duncan expressed their concern for the south Island's reliance on a single highway and that it poses a security problem for those living south of the Malahat. A rail line for passengers and cargo would help ease the burden on the Malahat and create a secondary route in case of emergency or highway closure. Participants in Port Alberni were also supportive of revitalizing the rail corridor for passenger transportation and cargo to serve as a secondary route into their community and beyond.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The lack of a proper corridor service is named in the Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case and the Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy. In both cases, the recommendations address the need for a consistent, rapid line that services high demand touchpoints in the Vancouver Island region.

The Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case is referencing the development of a rail corridor, and the Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy presents a network strategy to address the need for connecting key destinations and population centres on key corridors.

MINIMALLY SERVED AIRPORTS

Several participants spoke about their concerns related to under-funded airports, and the potential for increasing inter-community passenger transportation via the aviation industry if infrastructure were improved.

- Airports in smaller communities are user funded, and participants stressed that many are financially vulnerable. Furthermore, operators shared that many of the smaller regional airports require significant upgrades yet mechanisms to fund those upgrades are under-financed and lack certainty. One participant in the aviation sector said that while the Island Coastal Economic Trust has supported airport infrastructure on the Island, the financial commitment has not been to the same level as the funding provided by the Northern Development Initiative Trust for airports in northern B.C.

- Participants expressed appreciation of the airlines that continue to serve their communities, such as Pacific Coastal, Harbour Air, Fly Coastal Air, Sunshine Coast Air, and Central Mountain Air. However, participants also raised concern about the relatively few flights per day, that service is inconsistent, and that destinations are limited, primarily flying to and from Vancouver. They also added that the number of communities served by regularly scheduled flights was small compared to the number of communities on Vancouver Island.
- In Tofino, participants spoke about the limitations of their airport. Planes that fly into the area rely on Visual Flight Rules (VFR), which means the aircraft is intended to operate in visual meteorological conditions; clouds, heavy precipitation, low visibility, and otherwise adverse weather conditions should be avoided under VFR. If these conditions are present, which is often the case on the West Coast, the aircraft must return to its point of departure. Currently, pilots need 200-feet of visibility to land; if a specialty beacon was added to the runway, this distance could be reduced by half. Enabling more flights into the area would help maintain a steady number of tourists into the area year-round and put less pressure on roadways



PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

The Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast Region Air Transportation Outlook Final Report references the major challenges associated with operating an airline due to the high cost of running the business. Airports have turned to privatization but maintaining infrastructure in economic downturns is challenging without government support.

LACK OF TAXIS AND RIDE HAILING

Several participants shared that they rely on taxis to help them get from their residence to a transportation hub in order to travel to other communities. However, many in small communities said that it can be difficult to secure a taxi, especially on short notice. Others also mentioned that the taxi company in their area has a limited number of vehicles that are capable of accommodating passengers with wheelchairs or walkers.

- Throughout the community engagement sessions, participants indicated there's a high demand for taxi services. However, the supply of taxis is regularly outstripped by demand especially during peak and shoulder seasons. A taxi operator who attended an engagement session explained the difficulties in hiring qualified, safe, and reliable drivers — particularly outside of the tourism season.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

While this did not emerge as a consistent theme or finding amongst the studies referenced in this report, it was mentioned as an example of a lack of service across a few of the studies.

DIFFICULTY FOR K-12 STUDENTS TO ACCESS EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Participants said that school busses generally meet the needs of students attending classes and returning home at the end of the school day. The main gap they identified was limited bus services for students involved in extracurricular activities that extend beyond the typical 9am to 3pm academic school day.

- In most of the communities, participants described a school bus system that is scheduled around the academic day (generally 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM). The transportation gap for school-aged kids that participants identified were reliable and safe means of transportation to accommodate students' extracurricular activities. Students who live a considerable distance from school, in communities that have infrequent or often late public transportation, rely on private vehicles to get home after extracurriculars or decided to not pursue them altogether.
- One participant in Tofino voiced concerns over the limited school bus operating hours and lack of other options for kids traveling to or from the west coast's high school in Ucluelet. One participant recalled hearing about young kids missing the school bus and deciding to hitchhike to make it to school on time as there was no alternative.
- Families based in rural and remote island communities, or on the Sunshine Coast, cannot always afford ferry fees when their children have tournaments or training in another community. Participants stressed that these fees may be a barrier for some kids to pursue extracurricular activities.

Current and Future Stressors on Transportation

CLIMATE CHANGE AND EMERGENCIES

Participants in all engagement sessions raised concerns related to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on transportation infrastructure and networks; wildfires, flooding and sea level rise were all highlighted as examples. Participants in "one-road in" communities also spoke about their feelings of vulnerability, especially when a secondary route was not available or usable.

- Participants in Duncan described feelings of being cut off and vulnerable when the Malahat was impassable due to the road washout in November 2021. Participants in communities that are only accessible by one road (such as Port Hardy, Port Alice, the West Coast) also spoke of feelings of vulnerability in case of wildfires, floods, and extreme weather events. Secondary routes that can be used in case of emergency, to help people and goods move in and out, is vital to the well-being of residents and businesses.

ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE SECHLT SESSION SAID

"We have a highway that floods during King Tides; ferry terminals were not designed to accommodate climate change – the ramps don't work at extreme tides; having one main roadway in and out of town is a huge safety concern."

- Participants routinely spoke of the need for more robust emergency planning that take transportation needs into consideration. One participant in Port Alberni spoke about the current proposal to decommission a forestry road at the far end of Sprout Lake, which could and has been used as an emergency route in the past. This would eliminate access to this area and create a dangerous situation in case of wildfire.

ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE POWELL RIVER SESSION SAID

"If there was ever a fire here, there is no way to get out. There needs to be emergency planning. It is unnerving to feel trapped in your own community."

- The full lifecycle cost of road closures was discussed at length, particularly on the West Coast. Participants shared grave concerns that road closures not only hurt businesses in the short term but can have long lasting impacts if the closure creates reputational harm to the area. In Tofino and Port Alberni, for example, business owners spoke about the negative long-term public relations messaging that will result from the recent Highway 4 closures. This closure highlighted how vulnerable the West Coast communities are to extreme weather events, potentially warding off tourists from visiting the region entirely.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“Unless there is an emergency detour, our road is never graded.”

REGULATORY, LIABILITY AND INSURANCE CHALLENGES

While participants spoke of the necessity of having regulations for the provision of safe transportation (for personal safety and safe vehicles), they expressed frustration when regulations create barriers to offering service, cannot accommodate unique circumstances, are difficult to locate on government and regulator websites, and are complicated to interpret. Participants also talked about how liability considerations, securing insurance, and licensing requirements are often barriers to community, volunteer, or non-profit transportation solutions.

- Driver and operator training and testing were cited as barriers to providing various types of transportation services (e.g., taxi, ride-hailing, community shuttle, bus, water taxi etc.). Participants highlighted a lack of training availability, difficulties in scheduling and the costs associated with training and testing as the main limitations. For example, a ride-hail operator explained that drivers are required to have a Class 4 Licence yet not all communities have (or have easy access to) training and testing facilities.
- In absence of formal community-to-community transportation services, participants noted that ad hoc online groups have proliferated to link passengers and drivers (e.g., Community Facebook groups). While some local governments support these initiatives, they expressed concern that endorsing them may result in the community being held liable in case of accident or incident.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“We need to focus on breaking down systemic barriers to sharing transportation equipment.”

- In most community sessions, participants expressed interest in the potential for car co-ops and similar car sharing programs. However, they also said that the liability and insurance requirements can impede start-ups and non-profits from easily establishing these types of transportation services. For example, one participant representing a car co-op said that while they can get fleet rates of insurance from ICBC, there are conditions: only co-op members can drive the cars and they can only drive on roads that are maintained by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.
- Challenges were noted for operators whose transportation services span multiple local governments and regional districts. For example, participants expressed challenges related to the inability to share transit stops in different jurisdictions, the necessity for providers to have individual agreements with each local government included in their service routing, and parking limitations (such as requiring individual parking permits).
- Operators also spoke about the inconsistent application of regulatory requirements to all inter-community bus services.

CHANGES IN COMMUNITY COMPOSITION

There were two main themes related to community composition raised throughout the engagement sessions: ageing populations and population growth. Most communities said that their populations are ageing yet transportation supports are not in place to help seniors travel safely or age at home. Some communities, especially on the Sunshine Coast and in the Cowichan Valley, reported that their growing populations are putting strains on existing transportation services.



- Participants said that limited inter- and intra-community transportation hinders communities' efforts of helping seniors age at home, especially when they do not have a Drivers Licence. Even in communities with a strong inter-community public transportation network, participants identified the challenge of helping those with mobility limitations get from their place of residence to the bus stop or transportation hub.
- A pressing need shared by all communities is for transportation services to help seniors and those with mobility limitations to access medical appointments. This need was especially pronounced on the Sunshine Coast where residents often use multiple modes of transportation (e.g., taxi from home to ferry terminal, walk on the ferry, take a taxi or bus to the hospital) to access medical services in the lower mainland. Similarly, it was a concern for those in North Vancouver Island and West Coast communities, who often need to travel to Victoria for appointments. Non-profit organizations described situations where they may help arrange transportation services that take a client from their home to the ferry terminal, and the challenges then faced by the client to navigate the steep ferry ramps and arrange a taxi or bus for themselves on the other side.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

"How do we help people age at home if there aren't inter- and intra-community transportation options?"

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

"Lack of transportation is isolating for communities and our seniors."

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“We run a service to help keep seniors living at home. The biggest need they have is transportation.”

- Some participants shared that their communities were growing, with an influx of more people and families. These participants said this immigration has resulted in more pressure on existing transportation services as well as more congestion on roadways. On the Sunshine Coast, for example, participants described that many of the new residents moving into the area can struggle with adapting to their communities due to limited transportation options to make living without a vehicle a viable option.

- Contemporary challenges in the B.C. health care system (e.g., recruiting and retaining medical professionals) is exacerbated by limited inter-community transportation options. These challenges are especially acute in small and rural communities. The lack of convenient, frequent, and reliable transportation options is placing substantial financial and emotional strain on residents, especially those who are without a personal vehicle, as they are increasingly forced to travel further for these services. Participants said that this dynamic is precluding some residents from accessing medical treatment and could even force some people to move to larger communities. For example, residents of Texada Island noted that their local family physician is retiring in August; the 750 residents of Texada will soon be without easy access to a full range of medical services and have limited transportation options for accessing a family physician.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Changes in community composition were raised as a key motivator and factor for the Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy. The intention is to align mobility with future development and shifts in population totals.

LABOUR MARKET AND INCREASING COST OF HOUSING

Participants speculated that pressures on the labour market and the increasing cost of housing will continue influencing passenger transportation in the future. In particular, participants noted that transportation is often a barrier to accessing employment opportunities. Operators spoke about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining skilled labour, and some said the increased cost of housing forces some employees to live far from where they work. Participants thought that these problems will persist in the near and long-term and will increase the need for convenient, frequent, and reliable transportation options.

- Participants in more urban areas, such as Duncan and Parksville, noted that residents are not driving cars more frequently. Some suggested this may be due to the costs of car ownership, lifestyle choices, and/or housing densification. This shift often makes it more difficult for people without a vehicle to access employment opportunities for one of two reasons: either public transportation schedules that do not coincide with their employer’s operating hours, or a lack of transportation options (such as ride hail, active transportation corridors, or other modes). In several engagement sessions, for example, participants said that their community’s major employer closes after the final bus service, meaning that employees working the last shift are unable to catch the bus home.

ONE PARTICIPANT REPRESENTING AN EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATION SAID

“I have heard that some job descriptions require applicants to have a drivers license and own a vehicle, but not for use on the job. Instead, these employers add this requirement to their job descriptions so they have some assurance that employees will be able to get to work on time due to the lack of frequent and reliable transportation options.”

- Operators in multiple engagement sessions spoke about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining skilled labour in the transportation sector, especially drivers who require special training and licenses.
- Participants also shared stories about some large employment services that temporarily strain transportation options in the community. In Sechelt, for example, the community hosts large numbers of temporary medical professionals at one time (e.g., travel nurses). These workers rely on the full capacity of taxi and ride hailing companies in the community during shift changes which limits other residents in the community from using these services.
- Most participants said that the lack of rental and affordable housing in their respective community is a barrier to attracting and retaining workers. In Tofino, for example, there is either no housing or no affordable housing where the jobs are located. This means that many employees are forced to live far from their place of employment and work around the transportation gaps they encounter. In other areas, especially when there are limited transportation options, they are unable to access their employment without a personal vehicle. Housing constraints add to the imperative for more affordable and frequent transportation options where the hours of service coincide with employees' shifts.
- Participants in many small and rural areas said that COVID-19 resulted in people from urban areas purchasing vacation properties in their communities. This has apparently led to a net increase in housing costs in those communities, which in turn affects employee's ability to commute to work.
- Some operators also said that recent changes to employment labour laws in B.C. have been problematic, as some employees take their five paid sick days off consecutively, which leaves a gap that they cannot fill on short notice.



Recommendations from Participants

Opportunities for Improvement

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Participants throughout all sessions, both in-person and online, spoke about the need for transformative change in the way transportation is governed in B.C.



- It was emphasized that the expectation of the private sector solving these problems on their own is not realistic and many indicated the necessity to approach governance in this area as a collaboration between multiple layers of government and First Nations, as well as the non-profit and for-profit sectors. This is exemplified in part through the evolution of BC Transit to operate in a non-traditional space: rather than solely being an intra-community transportation provider, local governments are seeking to partner with BC Transit to provide inter-community transportation. Another dimension of this is the increasing expectation that there is greater cooperation between different government portfolios. Namely, cooperation between the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Forests, and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. Further, consideration of all modes of transportation as a networked system – “to help people get from A to B” – necessitates collaboration between various levels of regulators that are at both the provincial and federal level.
- It was also raised that BC Transit was not necessarily created or equipped as an entity that would be responsible for inter-community transportation. Discussions ensued about whether current complexities necessitate a new governance model for BC Transit whereby one branch would be responsible for inter-community transportation and the other for intra-community transportation. It was recognized that this type of policy shift would require updates in the corresponding legislation as well as the governance and operating structures.
- Another component that participants discussed was the inability for transit systems and authorities to operate under a common fare system. Participants on the Sunshine Coast, for example, described the difficulties in having fares paid to different operators, and that BC Transit fare systems are not compatible with TransLink fare systems. It was suggested by participants in multiple communities that a common IT solution could help simplify and streamline the user experience. Some participants in rural areas stressed the need to integrate ferry and water taxi fare systems with public transportation fare systems.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“In Vancouver, you can use a Compass Card for busses, the SeaBus, the West Coast Express and the Sky Train – a similar, cross-modal collaboration is needed on the Island too.”

- Some participants and operators in the aviation space stressed that the Province should have a more active role in influencing federal aviation policy and regulatory changes due to the direct impact on residents, visitors and B.C.-based businesses. One operator also shared how difficult it is to interpret the rules and regulations set by the Passenger Transportation Board which adds risk and uncertainty to business operations. This participant stated: “The Passenger Transportation Board’s way of communicating with us has to change. Every time I go to their website, the rules and guidelines have changed. They should give us simplified guidelines for specific audiences so I don’t have to waste time chasing these details.”

- It was widely acknowledged by participants that the focus of this particular study, on the region as a whole, is a step in the right direction compared to smaller studies from the past that either focus on one community or one regional district. For example, one participant in Port Hardy spoke of the importance of a holistic approach to understanding and addressing the region’s transportation needs.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“This meeting today is a great start to the conversation of bringing us together.”

- Many participants commented on the paradox at hand: British Columbia is a car culture yet is also a province that purports to prioritize environmental sustainability and carbon reduction initiatives. While participants commented that electrification helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions it does not shift people from an individualistic mindset to the collective: society is still reliant on personal vehicles and seems unwilling to shift. **Participants expressed frustration with the lack of emphasis on, and funding of, transportation solutions that reduce society’s reliance on personal vehicles.**

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“We need a cultural shift away from our reliance on personal vehicles – providing viable transportation options is the first step to successfully shifting this mindset.”

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“We are a car culture – to shift away from this mindset, we must disincentivize travel by car.”

- Participants expressed a desire for dialogue with the Province to clarify which agency is responsible for rural roads (i.e., to determine whether accountability for a road belongs to the Ministry of Forests, a forestry company, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, or a municipality). Especially with roads under the purview of the Ministry of Forests, there was expressed frustration with the lack of maintenance. This included gravel road access to some First Nations communities.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Across almost all observed transportation studies, the need for a defined governing body or increased governance emerged.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“We are a small community – we don’t need big city solutions. We need to work together, consider the community’s transportation needs as a whole and address priorities and gaps accordingly.”

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“Good solutions come from community engagement and when people who are impacted the most have a voice.”

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Throughout the engagement sessions, especially in rural and remote communities, participants spoke about the importance of community-based partnerships and solutions.

- Participants in all sessions agreed on supporting local (private and non-profit) service providers filling a gap in communities' transportation needs rather than bringing in new public transportation services. Solutions to inter-community transportation problems were highlighted at the local level, though many operators also reported struggles when it comes to offering services due to labor shortages, operating costs, and seasonal volatility. That said, many participants equally supported expanding the frequency, geographic scope, and hours of service of public transportation services, such as BC Transit.
- Some of the initiatives that participants rely on regularly and flagged as candidates for scaling and support from the Province include:

- **Wheels for Wellness**, a non-emergency medical transportation service, that is seen to be a valued organization that provides service for over 20,000 Vancouver Island residents per year. In many communities, participants said that it is the only organization that can help people access medical appointments.
- **Coastal Rides**, a ride-hailing and ride-sharing service based on the Sunshine Coast. Coastal Rides' online platform integrates micro transit in rural communities.
- **The Gertie Bus**, Gabriola Island's community bus service, which is reportedly well-subscribed and fills the inter-community transportation gap for residents and tourists on the Island. It was proposed that the Gertie model could be replicated on other Gulf and rural islands; the administrative burden might then be shared to improve its feasibility in other island communities.
- **AquaLink** which is a scheduled water taxi service connecting the Southern Gulf Islands of Salt Spring, Galiano, Mayne, Saturna and Pender. Participants in the Gulf and Rural Island session spoke highly of this service and, to support its viability, said that long-term sustainable funding from a partnership with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure would be helpful for the rural islands.
- **The Zunga Bus** in Powell River which is a bookable intra-community transportation provider that offers door-to-door service. Trips can be booked through an App and the website.
- **The Tofino-Ucluelet Multi-Use Pathway**, ʔapsčiiik ʔašii, which is viewed as a highly successful initiative in the area that provides a dedicated, safe pathway for active transportation between First Nations and other communities.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

"Non-profit organizations filling gaps at the community level need to be adequately funded. These services are desperately needed by communities and will never be able to pay for themselves."

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

"Operational funding is crucial to community-led transportation services."

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Across almost all observed transportation studies, community-based collaboration, buses, or sharing of resources and shuttles emerged as core opportunities.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

There was widespread support throughout engagement sessions for the Province to provide more support to transportation service providers.



- Among participants and providers, there was strong desire for **governments to play a more active role in coordinating and funding inter-community transportation**. Across all sessions, participants empathized with private providers of the challenges they face with offering affordable yet profitable transportation options. As stated bluntly by several participants, no one expects a private company to operate at a loss for offering routine inter-community transportation services. Many participants supported the idea of the Provincial government subsidizing local transportation service providers to enable them to keep providing services.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“Expecting private operators to fill this space today is an unrealistic expectation.”

- Transportation operators pointed to the Northern Development Initiative Trust’s Inter-City Passenger Transportation Services for Northern BC (IPTS) Program as a good model for supporting service providers. The IPTS program aims to provide safe, reliable, and affordable transportation for rural communities in Northern B.C. The proposal-based program provides grant funding for service providers who are qualified and experienced public passenger transportation companies to manage and operate inter-city passenger transportation services for routes in Northern B.C. Currently, 19 separate passenger transportation services are receiving this funding.
- Some communities described their efforts to work with BC Transit to fill gaps in transporting residents between communities for employment and other services. They described the benefit of this approach was that the funding model is a balance between local government, provincial government, and users.
- Participants pointed to the perceived inequity in the type of transportation infrastructure being funded by taxpayers. As one participant said, “the things that drive on the roads should pay for the roads.” Several participants raised challenges with the lack of funding available to maintain and upgrade wharfs and airports. They expressed the view that **private cars should be paying a greater share and help subsidize other modes of transportation**. For example, they spoke about the Coquihalla Highway once being a toll highway and lamented this was no longer the case, as this type of fare generation is a model that could be used to support lesser used infrastructure that is necessary for inter-community transportation.

ACTIVE AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

Inter-community passenger transportation via active and alternative transportation corridors was endorsed in all engagement sessions. For example, participants spoke highly of the newly completed active transportation path between Tofino and Ucluelet. Throughout the engagement, participants supported expanding and improving the safety of active and alternative transportation corridor. The most frequently mentioned safety measure was a physical barrier between the vehicle road and corridor. Additional measures were paved roads and lights.



- Many participants spoke of a need for more infrastructure and planning related to bicycles and other modes of active transportation. They suggested that more bicycle racks on buses, safe storage lockers, and dedicated bike lanes would improve safety and feasibility. In Sechelt, for example, participants spoke of the potential for inter-community passenger transportation between Langdale and Lund for e-bikes, bikes, and scooters if there was a safe and designated multiuse path. They stated that an enlarged and paved shoulder would be needed. Many participants viewed active transportation networks, enabling, and encouraging more people to bike and walk between communities, as directly supporting the community's economic development and vibrancy; and in light of this, as something that could be further supported by Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

"At this time, it feels like Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is just the Ministry of Cars and Trucks."

ONE PARTICIPANT IN THE GULF AND RURAL ISLANDS SESSION SAID

"To encourage people to walk and bike, it is vital to create the conditions where more people can safely use active modes of transportation."Trucks."

- In other regions, participants spoke of the importance of **connecting ferry terminals to active transportation corridors** so that being a walk-on (or bike-on) ferry passenger is more feasible.
 - Participants in Tofino noted that BC Hydro has recently made significant power upgrades on the West Coast, opening possibilities for more electric car charging stations. However, they also noted that many businesses cannot afford the initial capital investment needed for these stations or electric vehicles and that this would ultimately not reduce the problems associated with the high number of cars on the roads.
- **Establishing more transportation hubs that connect different transportation modes, including bus terminals and Park n' Ride lots, would improve connectivity** and help people be less reliant on their personal vehicles

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

In the Southern Gulf Island Transportation Integration Plan, the Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan, Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy, and Cortes Island Transportation Demand Study, active transportation and infrastructure emerged as key opportunities.

Innovations and Proposals

Throughout the engagement sessions, participants shared ideas for how to address identified challenges, as well as build on existing strengths.

ACTIVE AND ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

- One of the most frequent proposals heard across the sessions was the creation of an inter-regional transportation body (e.g., transportation authority) with the mandate to bring together various transportation modes, to promote collaboration, and fulfil a common vision of a fully integrated passenger transportation network.



PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“What is lacking is vision from the government to bring together ideas and voices with regards to transportation.”

- Transportation providers operating in siloes gets in the way of coordinated transit between regions and inter-community connectivity. An overarching transportation body that considers public and private transportation options, and can act as a coordinating force, could help fill gaps and consider “the whole picture” of B.C.’s transportation needs. In Duncan, a participant described models in other jurisdictions that are able to coordinate funding for various transportation projects according to a strategic plan that reflects goals from multiple levels of government.

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“We need a regional transportation authority so that we can set priorities from a regional perspective... transportation modes should be connected, schedules should be in alignment, and there should be a central hub of information about existing services.”

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“What we have now is a fractured collection of stop-gaps.”

INFORMATION SHARING

- Participants frequently indicated a lack of knowledge about what services and programs currently exist for inter-community transportation. They stressed a desire for a central and easily accessible repository of information where providers, schedules, routes, and fares were all clearly displayed.
- One participant suggested that user data collected through this kind of central information hub, or a transportation App, could be used to inform future route and schedule planning.



PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“One of the biggest issues is that residents are not aware of the transportation options and programs available in our own community.”

PARTICIPANT QUOTE

“I didn’t know about some of the services I heard about today.”

COMBINING PASSENGER AND CARGO

- Some participants spoke about the possibility of combining passenger and cargo transportation as a way to increase the affordability and availability of passenger transportation services. In Campbell River, for example, one participant spoke about the opportunity of working with transportation partners in Port Hardy to see if they can share cargo space. It was acknowledged that current regulatory structures, insurance, and licensing frameworks may need to be altered to accommodate these changes.



COMBINED RIDE-HAIL AND CAR SHARE PROGRAMS

- Participants within several communities spoke highly of the potential of car sharing programs. However, barriers were noted such as: high start-up costs, fluctuations in demand (for both seasonal residents and tourists), storage, vehicular maintenance, software maintenance, membership, and fee structure etc. Some participants suggested the possibility of combining ride hailing and car sharing which would help supplement communities’ transportation needs and address some of the barriers mentioned above.



LOCALLY OR REGIONALLY COORDINATED MODEL (FRAMEWORK)

- Participants within several communities spoke highly of the potential of car sharing programs. However, barriers were noted such as: high start-up costs, fluctuations in demand (for both seasonal residents and tourists), storage, vehicular maintenance, software maintenance, membership, and fee structure etc. Some participants suggested the possibility of combining ride hailing and car sharing which would help supplement communities’ transportation needs and address some of the barriers mentioned above.
- Some participants spoke of the potential for a locally or regionally coordinated model or framework that would bring together First Nations, local governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. At the West Coast session, for example, participants spoke of a local large employer that provides their own shuttle service to transport employees to and from work. While not in use, it was suggested these vehicles could potentially be used throughout the day by the community or designated groups.



PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

In the transportation studies observed to inform this study, the following proposals and innovations were recommended:

- **Southern Gulf Island Transportation Integration Plan:**
 - Establish a Southern Gulf Islands transportation service and commission.
- **Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case:**
 - Restore the passenger and freight rail service and allow for a robust commuter system within the CRD.
- **Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan:**
 - To develop and build an integration plan around the most frequently travelled destinations in the SGI by engaging in community consultation and collaborating with CRD board.
- **Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy:**
 - The development of rapid service connecting key destinations and population centers along the City of Nanaimo's key corridors.
- **Micro-Transit in Micro-Communities: A Community Bus Feasibility Study for Quadra Island:**
 - A weekday commuter service designed to provide commuters to the ferry at Quathiaski Cover and Campbell River with consistent options before and after work.
- **Cortes Island Transportation Demand Study:**
 - The introduction of a Transportation Demand Management Task Force, Car Stop Program, Green Rider program, and Active Transportation Infrastructure and amenities.
- **BC Transit Exploring Inter-Regional Transit Service:**
 - Develop increased service for post-secondary institutions and hospitals from Cowichan Valley to VIU.
- **Age-Friendly Transportation Planning Study – Village of Tahsis BC:**
 - Develop a hybrid system of scheduled transportation service and on-demand trip requests.
- **Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast Region Air Transportation Outlook Final Report:**
 - Infrastructure development for airports in communities throughout the coastal region to increase accessibility and frequency of use.

Next Steps

This report is intended to provide the provincial government, other levels of government and interested parties, with information to help inform future policy and investment decisions in the region.

The ideas and insights contained in this report will also inform the design of a capacity fund for discrete initiatives prioritized by communities through this study. This new \$200,000 micro-granting program, funded by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, will distribute grants between \$5,000 to \$15,000. The fund will support regional transportation planning, delivery of regional transportation services, and/or capacity building related to regional passenger transportation. The fund will be administered by MNP LLP and have a review committee comprised of management personnel from the Vancouver Island Economic Trust (the Trust) and Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA).

Information about the fund, eligibility, and the application process, will be available on the Trust's website in late 2023.

The Trust, VIEA and MNP wish to thank all participants for their time, energy, and insights on inter-community passenger transportation.



Appendices

Appendix A: Engagement Approach and Methods

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The overarching approach employed in this study was appreciative inquiry, which identifies the best of what has occurred in the past in combination with the challenges faced as well as upcoming opportunities. The study utilized principles from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Foundations of Public Participation, including clearly communicating the role of the consultations along with how those engaged are contributing.

All engagement approaches were designed with the aim of enabling full participation; respecting Indigenous Reconciliation; being clear on how the engagements balanced the provision of information with the seeking of feedback, advice and/or recommendations; and building on existing knowledge versus duplicating past research and/or consultative undertakings. Another core underpinning was collaboration with the Trust and VIEA – both organizations brought highly valued expertise, insights and experiences to the design and execution of the study.

The study was structured into four phases, with an early emphasis on proper planning and setting up the collaborative process with the project team. From there, the approach moved into the research, then facilitated engagements and concluded with the “what we heard” report.



CULTURAL SAFETY AND INCLUSIVITY

An underpinning to this study was provisions for inclusive and culturally safe dialogues, with representation from cross-sector partners and community members, such that all voices were heard and respected. Cultural safety and accessibility were prioritized throughout the study and in all engagement sessions. Culture safety is defined as an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in social systems. All sessions were opened with discussions about cultural safety and participant anonymity, and the sessions were designed with accessibility as a core principle.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Participant lists for the facilitated sessions were generated in collaboration with the Trust and VIEA, with the goal of including a diverse group of representatives from different levels of government, First Nations, community service organizations, business associations, non-profit organizations, and transportation service providers. Participants were invited by email; follow-up was done via emails and phone calls.

The survey was open to the public and promoted via community radio, community print and on-line newspapers and social media. In addition, participants at the in-person and community sessions were encouraged to participate in the survey and distribute the link to their own networks. The survey was open for three weeks. To encourage participation, survey respondents could opt into a draw to win one of five \$100 VISA gift cards.

The overall target audience included representatives and people within the following areas:

- North Vancouver Island and the Broughton Archipelago
- Strathcona
- qathet and Desolation Sound
- Comox Valley
- Pacific Rim and Alberni Valley
- Sunshine Coast
- Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum Beach
- Cowichan Valley and Juan de Fuca
- Southern Gulf Islands

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION

Funds were made available to help cover travel costs for Indigenous people located in remote areas to attend the in-person engagement sessions. In addition, honoraria were offered to Indigenous participants at in-person and virtual sessions.

INFORMATION SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in the online survey was anonymous. The views and options shared through the survey were not associated with any individual and were only accessible by MNP. The survey was hosted by SimpleSurvey, a Canadian online survey platform. SimpleSurvey servers are located in Canada.

No video or audio recording took place in the online or in-person engagement sessions, and individual comments and feedback were not shared with any other party.

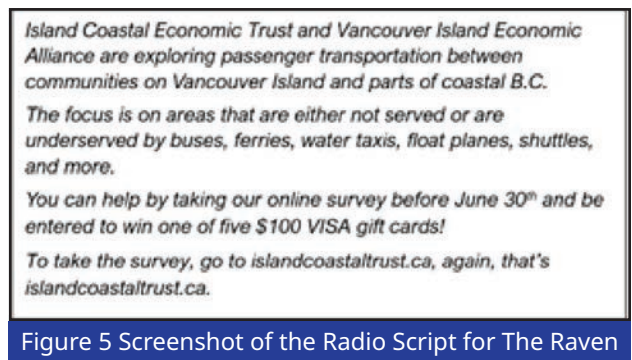


Figure 5 Screenshot of the Radio Script for The Raven



Figure 6 Screenshot of the BlackPress Article

ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

DESCRIPTION	DATE/TIME
In-Person: Sechelt	Tuesday, June 13 (9:30 am – 12:30 pm)
In-Person: Powell River	Wednesday, June 14 (9:30 am – 12:30 pm)
In-Person: Duncan	Monday, June 19 (9:30 am – 12:30 pm)
In-Person: Port Hardy	Tuesday, June 20 (1:00 pm – 4:00 pm)
In-Person: Campbell River	Thursday, June 22 (2:30 pm – 5:30 pm)
In-Person: Parksville	Thursday, June 23 (9:30 am – 12:30 pm)
In-Person: Port Alberni	Monday, June 26 (1:00 pm – 4:00 pm)
Virtual (Gulf and Rural Islands)	Tuesday, June 27 (1:00 pm – 4:00 pm)
In-Person: Tofino	Wednesday, June 28 (1:00 pm – 4:00 pm)
Virtual (South Coastal)	Thursday, June 29 (9:00 am – 10:30 am)
Virtual (Mid-Coastal and Sunshine Coast)	Thursday, June 29 (11:00 am – 12:30 pm)
Virtual (North Coastal)	Thursday, June 29 (3:00 pm – 4:30 pm)
Virtual (Spotlight #1: Transportation Service Providers)	Friday, June 30 (9:00 am – 10:30 am)
Virtual (Spotlight #2: Community-Based and Informal Transportation)	Friday, June 30 (11:00 am – 12:30 pm)
Virtual (Spotlight #3: First Nations and Indigenous Organizations)	Thursday, July 27 (2:00 pm – 4:00 pm)

PAST STUDIES

Transportation studies already conducted within the geographic boundaries of this study, and completed within approximately the past 10 years, were reviewed prior to drafting the survey or conducting the in-person and online engagement sessions. The past studies, summarized in Appendix C, informed the survey and engagement session discussion questions for this study.

These studies were provided to MNP by the Trust and VIEA, as well as sourced online by MNP.

MNP summarized the studies, noted key themes, and incorporated these ideas as well as lessons learned into the survey and engagement session questions for this project.

GIS MAPS AND TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER TABLES

The information presented in the maps, and listed in Appendix E and F, is based on information available on transportation operators' websites, and in some cases from direct phone calls with individual companies. The information is deemed to be only as accurate as the information posted on the company websites as of July 2023. It is acknowledged that transportation routes, scheduling and pricing is in a state of continuous change.

RESEARCH METHODS

METHODS	DESCRIPTION
Document Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Past transportation studies were researched.• Transportation providers' schedule, fare, and service offerings were documented from their respective websites.
Informal 1:1 Phone Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sessions were hosted with stake (rights) holders identified by ICET and VIEA. Sessions were by invitation.
Facilitated Online and In-Person Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sessions were hosted with stake (rights) holders identified by ICET and VIEA. Sessions were by invitation.
Surveying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respondents were self-selecting to participate, based on awareness and interest.• Results cannot be extrapolated to the whole population; they have limited generalizability.• A non-random survey is a good method for identifying major themes and the relative importance of the themes for everyone in the broader population who has a direct interest/stake in the topic.

ANALYTICAL APPROACHES

METHODS	DESCRIPTION
Content Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Past transportation studies were researched.• Transportation providers' schedule, fare, and service offerings were documented from their respective websites.
GIS Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sessions were hosted with stake (rights) holders identified by ICET and VIEA. Sessions were by invitation.
Thematic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sessions were hosted with stake (rights) holders identified by ICET and VIEA. Sessions were by invitation.

Appendix B: Participating Organizations

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

S/N	Organization
1	'Namgis First Nation
2	Alberni Clayoquot Health Network
3	Alberni Climate Action
4	Alberni Island Shuttle Bus
5	Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce
6	AquaLink
7	Area A Regional District of Mount Waddington
8	BC Aviation Council
9	BC Community Bus Coalition
10	BC Ferries Advisory Committee
11	BC Transit
12	Better at Home- Langdale & Sechelt
13	Canada's National Observer
14	Capital Regional District
15	Capital Regional District Director for Southern Gulf Island
16	Capital Regional District Liaison for Food Security on Galiano Island
17	Care for a Lift
18	City of Campbell River
19	City of Courtenay
20	Municipality of North Cowichan
21	Town of Lake Cowichan
22	City of Nanaimo
23	City of Powell River
24	City of Qualicum Beach
25	Coast Car Co-Op
26	Coastal Rides
27	Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot
28	Community Futures Central Island
29	Community Futures Mount Waddington
30	Community Futures, Sunshine Coast
31	Comox Valley Airport
32	Comox Valley Regional District
33	Cortes Community Economic Development Association
34	Cowichan Valley Regional District
35	Cowichan Visitor Centre
36	Crystal Cove Beach Resort
37	District of Port Hardy
38	District of Sechelt

S/N	Organization
39	District of Tofino
40	Ditidaht First Nation
41	Errington Coombs
42	Ferry Advisory Committee of Gabriola Island
43	Gabriola's Environmentally Responsible Trans Island Express (GERTIE)
44	Galiano Island Community Transportation Society
45	Gibsons Landing Harbour Authority
47	Gulf Island Seaplanes
48	Hardy Bay Seniors Society
49	Hupacasath First Nation
50	Huu-ay-aht First Nation
51	Inclusion Powell River
52	Island Corridor Foundation
53	Kona Winds Charters
54	Lift Community Services
55	Mid Island Métis Nation
56	Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation
57	Moving Around Pender Alternative Transportation Society
58	Municipality of North Cowichan
59	North Island Employment Foundations Society (NIEFS)
60	Northern Sunshine Coast Ferry Committee
61	Pacific Coastal Airlines
62	Parksville Career Centre
63	Parksville Qualicum Foundation
64	Port Alice Health Forum
65	qathet Regional Cycling Association
66	qathet Regional District
67	Quadra Island Climate Action Network
68	Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce
69	Qualicum Beach Council
70	Quatsino First Nation
71	Regional District of Nanaimo
72	Rural Island Economic Partnership (RIEP)
73	School District 47 – Powell River Board of Education
74	Southern Gulf Islands Tourism Partnerships
75	Strathcona Regional District
76	Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
77	Sunshine Coast Connector
78	Sunshine Coast Regional District
79	Sunshine Coast Tourism
80	Tla'amin Nation
81	Tofino Taxi
82	Tourism Industry Association of BC
83	Tourism Tofino

S/N	Organization
84	Town of Gibsons
85	Transportation Choices Sunshine Coast (TRACS)
86	Ucluelet Chamber of Commerce
87	United Way British Columbia
88	Vancouver Coastal Health
89	Vancouver Island Health Authority
90	Vancouver Island University
91	Village of Gold River
92	Village of Port Alice
93	Village of Tahsis
94	Wei Wai Kai First Nation
95	Wei Wai Kum First Nation
96	West Coast Helicopters
97	Wheels for Wellness
98	Wilson's Groups of Companies
99	WorkLink Employment Port Renfrew

Appendix C: Summary of Past Studies

OVERALL FINDINGS

Each study presents a unique perspective with regards to transportation challenges and solutions based on the experience of the group being studied. Overall, a few consistent themes emerge.

Although the studies reflect different regions, authorities, and governing bodies, there was a common theme of solving complex transportation challenges through meaningful collaboration and integration. The findings from each study present a series of solutions that involve either information sharing, collaborative advocacy, or the integration of modes of transportation across service providers. Many of the studies recommend establishing governing bodies, authorities, or task forces to create integrative solutions.

A second consistent theme is to explore alternative and modern transportation. This arises through recommendations about alternative fuel, electric vehicles or vessels, and active transportation infrastructure.

All studies indicate that the communities consulted sought increased connectivity, collaboration, and sustainability.

STUDY SUMMARIES

- The following tables summarize relevant past transportation studies. The tables include the regions studied, engagement methods, project description, barriers and challenges, opportunities, findings and recommendations, and next steps.

NAME	Southern Gulf Island Transportation Integration Plan
DATE	2022
REGION(S)	This project focused on the five largest islands within the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) Electoral Area: Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, and Saturna. The project also included nearby islands like Penelakut and Salt Spring. The study engaged part-time residents of these locations.
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	The process involved an in-depth community engagement and stakeholder consultation program. The information was sourced through targeted outreach, community mapping events, digital engagement platforms (interactive mapping, quick polls, surveys, and an ideas forum), virtual Q&A sessions, past community and transportation plan reviews, and analysis development of mode-specific options. The first round of community involvement sourced 2,500 project page visits and 695 survey submissions, and the second round totalled 1,500 project page visits, 365 surveys, and 43 Q&A participants.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	The study focused on developing transportation service options and costing models that are realistic, feasible, and meet community needs and support inter-island connection; undertaking community mapping of existing and future trails to determine community needs and future priorities and support the refinement of recommendations; outlining an action plan and recommendations for the future CRD transportation service on land and water; and understanding the CRD's role in supporting identified community needs and integrated transportation.

BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	The study mentioned the complexity of the jurisdiction. SGI is an unincorporated Electoral Area within the Capital Regional District. There are shared accountabilities for transportation across Islands Trust, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, BC Ferries, and School District. The SGI does not have a transportation service function within the CRD. There are significant downsides to this lack of formal governmental jurisdiction and these overlapping accountabilities. Some identified are the gap in funding sources, the delay in transportation improvements, and disjointed coordination across initiatives to meet community transportation goals.
OPPORTUNITIES	The top priority of those participating in the public engagement is improving public transportation options – community bus options, shuttles, taxis, or Car Stop programs. The next highest priorities are identified as improving pedestrian trails and walking routes, water transportation, cycling routes, and coordination between transportation services. The last priority identified is to improve signage and information. The study presents four options of services, ranging from the status quo to a system with slight change to a fully integrated transportation service with substantial change to all service areas.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	The study recommends formally establishing a Southern Gulf Islands transportation service. This includes establishing a transportation commission, integrating transportation services, providing staff support to seek larger federal and provincial grants, licences of occupation, roadside paths, and implementing shared technology and infrastructure.
NEXT STEPS	This report suggests that in the first year of implementation, the newly elected (2022) CRD board considers and adopts a bylaw to establish the recommended SGI transportation commission. Following the establishment, the study outlines the advertisement of commissioner’s positions, funding requests, and job description development for supporting staff. In the second half of the first year, the study recommends developing a strategy plan and prioritized work plan, priorities for the work plan, developing a grant program 2024, and progress with the work plans. The final step in the study is to confirm the budget and work plan priorities for the Transportation Service.

NAME	Vancouver Island Rail Initial Business Case
DATE	May 2022
REGION(S)	This business case addressed supporting North-South travel on Vancouver Island along the east coast using Highway 1 stretching from Victoria to Nanaimo, Highway 19 from Nanaimo to Courtenay, and beyond to the northernmost communities of the Island, and Highway 4 from Parksville to Port Alberni and the communities on the west coast of Vancouver Island.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS	--
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	This business case addressed the need for the restoration of the passenger and freight rail service to Vancouver Island by upgrading the existing Island Rail Corridor. This case envisioned the establishment of twelve (12) stations along the proposed corridor: Courtenay, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Duncan, Shawnigan Lake, Westhills, Langford, Six Mile, Esquimalt, Johnson St. Bridge.
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	There are currently very few travel options throughout Vancouver Island.
OPPORTUNITIES	If the restored train service was fully integrated into the transportation network, the following opportunities were identified – a reliable transportation link between Island communities, increased access to specialized services, business, and entertainment across the island, stimulate economic growth in Island communities, promote environmental sustainability, and add additional service and mobility options for disadvantaged members of communities.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	The case highlighted the opportunities of restoring the passenger and freight rail service as allowing for a robust commuter system with the Capital Regional District (CRD), intercity commuter services into the CRD, regional trains between areas outside of the CRD, as well as a function freight operation throughout the entire Island with an emphasis on ports. The total project costs are estimated to be \$431,000,000.
NEXT STEPS	The provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) and ICF form a joint multi-disciplinary team to oversee the development of an Updated Business Case with a refined project scope to determine the project planning process, available funding options, and operational management of the new system. The case also recommends including train operations modelling, detailed service analysis to integrate the new system into the transportation network, review of rolling stock and available equipment, detailed design and cost estimates, and confirm and update all capital, operating, and maintenance costs as data emerges.

NAME	Southern Gulf Islands Active Transportation Plan
DATE	March 2022
REGION(S)	Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area: Galiano, Mayne, Saturna and North and South Pender Islands.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS	Three rounds of public engagement were conducted for this study. Targeted Outreach held in the spring of 2021 involved virtual workshops with the Transit Advisory Groups, stakeholder outreach, and information provided to the community via the CRD website, posters, and a media release. This information was used to present in the round one public engagement in late summer and early fall 2021. It was held as an in-person community mapping exercise and an online platform that offered interactive mapping, quick polls, a survey, and an ideas forum.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	Following the receipt of an Active Transportation Planning Grant from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the CRD dedicated the funds to developing an Active Transportation Plan for the largest islands in the SGI. The objectives of the study are to build n existing mapping proposals, conduct policy analysis to define best practices in trail building, and community engagement to include community maps to prioritize key active transportation routing.
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	Eight major issues are identified as specific to SGI's active transportation network; There is no resource for maps of all the trails currently located on the Southern Gulf Islands, multiple organizations are working on trail network improvements, existing road network falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI), lack of safety on roads for cyclists and pedestrians, funding challenges, lack of integrated transportation, available federal funding grants for rural areas, and technological advances in mobility and the increased need for an electric bike charging station.
OPPORTUNITIES	Five opportunities areas surfaced as priorities to guide Active Transportation-related improvements on the SGI in the near term. The five priority themes are Coordination, Funding, Safety and Accessibility, Improved Connectivity, and Convenience and Comfort.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	Using an interactive map on the engagement site, a total of 106 pins were added to the map to indicate where participants most frequently travel in the SGI. The top ten pins identified were as follows: Magic Lake Active Transportation Connections, Bedwell Harbour Road Walking/Rolling Improvements, Driftwood Centre Active Transportation Connections, Otter Bay Active Transportation Connection, Sturdies Bay Trail Extensions, Sturdies Bay Trail Safety, Mackinnon Road Active and Public Transportation Connections, Brooks Point Active Transportation Extension, Thieves Bay Active Transportation Connection, and General Safety Concerns.
NEXT STEPS	The study identified three next steps in developing the Transportation Integration Plan. To develop/cost out options and make recommendations, to engage in community consultation on draft options and costing, and to deliver final report to the CRD Board and seek direction on implementation.

NAME	Regional District of Nanaimo Transit Redevelopment Strategy
DATE	February 2022
REGION(S)	Regional District of Nanaimo
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	This study involved two phases of engagement with local governments and First Nations, transit staff, passengers, the public, and stakeholders. The first engagement method occurred in June and July of 2021. This phase collected input regarding the current system, observed issues, and future opportunities. The second phase of the engagement in October and November of 2021 presented proposed system changes and priorities for feedback and further ideation. This feedback served as instrumental in developing the final transit redevelopment strategy recommendations.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	The plan seeks to discover how to optimize current services by improving efficiency and effectiveness and how to focus future investment in service and infrastructure on increasing ridership, align mobility with future development and shifts in population totals, and integrate transit with increased active transportation.
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	The key barriers and challenges identified in the study are the clarity and legibility of the system, duplication of services, naming conventions and numbering, land-use development patterns, and consistency. There are low service levels for almost all routes on weekends, East-west connectivity is poor and reflects the underlying road network, certain corridors are currently stocked with repeat service that would be better redistributed throughout the system, large gaps in service exist in areas with low density and very dispersed land uses. Ridership was significantly impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic.
OPPORTUNITIES	The study found that developing a network that is layered with different kinds of routes tailored to infrastructure needs, legible and comprehensive in its numbering system, able to address areas of high demand, and uses resources wisely to eliminate duplication are all key opportunity areas. The opportunities to address these areas were found to be expansion hours, planning initiatives, and technological advancements in transit.

<p>FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS</p>	<p>The study presents a clear network strategy covering service layers and revised route types, recommended service strategy improvements to further develop the system routes and schedules, longer-term strategies that extend beyond the focus of the plan, and service strategy estimated impacts presenting the financial and performance estimates for the recommended service strategies.</p> <p>Service Layers: The study suggests rapid service connecting key destinations and population centres along the City of Nanaimo’s Highway 19A and Highway 1 corridors for primary routes, frequent service on key corridors with regular stop spacing that provide connection to rapid bus and major neighbourhoods and destinations, and reliable and regular regional services connecting key population centres within the region (Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville and the City of Nanaimo, as well as connection points to the District of Lantzville and Electoral Areas E and G).</p> <p>Pending local confirmed and provincial funding, the study recommends a series of strategy and implementation actions over the course of 5 years. In the first year, the study recommends minor routing adjustments and additional service frequency to lay the foundation for developing a Nanaimo Rapid Line. In years 2-5, the study recommends the implementation of a rapid line and central system restructuring to better service key transit destinations through Nanaimo, and the VIU line and hospital line.</p>
<p>NEXT STEPS</p>	<p>--</p>

NAME	Micro-transit in Micro-communities: A Community Bus Feasibility Study for Quadra Island
DATE	April 2020
REGION(S)	Quadra Island
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	This study engaged in a document review of current plans to evaluate the current state and community perspective and engaged in a public survey, and interviews with residents of the community and self-identified and interested mobility advocates from neighbouring Cortes Island.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	This study addressed whether a community bus is feasible for Quadra Island. By assessing existing community buses in similar communities, the study sets forth recommendations for the operation of a community bus. A recommendation to pursue service for five service trips daily to service major destinations is made, as well as the next steps regarding engagement, governance, and implementation.
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	Residents experience a gap in service for health appointments. Concerns around seniors not leaving their homes due to lack of access to a vehicle. Ferries experience overloads in the busy season.
OPPORTUNITIES	An opportunity exists to alleviate the vehicle infrastructure pressure on ferries and the island. With transportation options, residents could use the ferry on foot. Adults, seniors, and youth all provide unique opportunities for use as they each would have a need addressed in the existence of a community bus. Partnership opportunities were identified in the study, noting BC Transit, BC Ferries, Friends of Cortes Island Society, Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), Cortes Island Business and Tourism Association (CIBATA), the community halls on Cortes, South Cortes Community Association, Whale town Community Association, Yacht clubs, resorts, Harbour Authority, School District, Island Carshare Co-Op, Hollyhock (currently owns and operates two vans), and Klahoose First Nation as potential partners for next steps.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>A review of similar systems found that fares are necessary to offset operational costs and contribute a significant portion of the funds necessary to maintain service on the road. Mayne Island, Saturna Island, Hornby Island, and Pender Island buses have consistently been donation based. There are successful services that are run on demand as opposed to on a fixed schedule. However, fixed routes are more effective as they allow users to become accustomed to the service and increase use and integration into daily life. Many systems adjust routes and schedules for peak seasons. It was a consistent finding that systems without adequate funding suffer from employee burnout.</p> <p>The study recommends a weekday commuter service designed to provide commuters to the ferry at Quathiaski Cove and Campbell River with consistent options for before and after-work trips.</p>

NEXT STEPS	The study identified the need for thorough planning in collaboration with the community to identify potential implementation organizational structure and service details. Once the community has been engaged to select a service option, a specification of routes, schedules, maintenance, vehicles, and costs, should be undertaken by the necessary group leading this development.
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NAME	Cortes Island Transportation Demand Study
DATE	August 25, 2017
REGION(S)	Cortes Island
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	The engagement methods for this study included the establishment of the following: An advisory group – September 2016; Online discussion forum - September 2016 - June 2017; Visitor survey – September to October 2016; Open house 1 – November 2, 2016; Resident survey – December 2016 to January 2017; Open house 2 – March 26, 2017; and Stakeholder interviews - March 2017 to May 2017.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	The aim of this study was to explore strategies to strengthen and increase the transportation options for Cortes Island. The study encompasses options for both residents and visitors. The study had the intention to reduce the Island’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. This was achieved through a comprehensive public engagement process with an advisory committee and surveys specific to residents and visitors. The study evaluated an array of potential initiatives and strategies for increasing transport options on Cortes.
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	--
OPPORTUNITIES	--
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	The study recommended the following actions: Introduction of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Task Force; Introduction of a Car-stop program; Revitalization of the Green Rider program; Introduction of a bicycle repair station; Introduction of various cycling safety improvements; Introduction of a Bike hub including a bicycle electric charging station and other cycling related amenities; Introduction of an electric vehicle charging station; Funding support for existing initiatives such as Cortesrideshare.ca; Exploration of Quadra Island crossing opportunities; Introduction of a webcam at Whaletown ferry terminal; and Further study to generate pedestrian roadside and short-cut path development.
NEXT STEPS	In the short-term, 12 priorities are identified as high-priority: create a transportation demand management (TDM) task force and coordination, introduce a pilot Car-Stop, revitalize a Green Rider Program, Funding for Cortesrideshare.ca, link cortesrideshare.ca to CRD website, add cycling support amenities, add share the road signs, add bike stencils to Seaford road, and more.

NAME	B.C. Coastal Ferries Consultation and Engagement Fall 2012
DATE	February 2013
REGION(S)	Across British Columbia
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	<p>A total of 4,518 participant interactions took place during the consultation and engagement process of Fall 2012. 2,056 people attended 41 consultation events, 1,259 feedback forms were received, and 703 written submissions received. Additionally, 500 random selection participants contributed to an online poll. A consultation and engagement website were available on the project website. Additionally, a dedicated project Twitter account was created. 502 people attended 13 small group meetings held in Queen Charlotte City, Prince Rupert, Nanaimo, Salt Spring Island, Powell River, Port Hardy, Vancouver, Cortes Island, Gibsons, Comox/Courtenay, Victoria, and a remote webinar. 1,554 people attended 27 public open house meetings held in Sandspit, Queen Charlotte City, Masset, Gabriola Island, Penelakut, Thetis Island, Pender Island, Salt Spring Island, Nanaimo, Galiano Island, Powell River, Klemtu, Bella Coola, Albert Bay, Sointula, Vancouver, Quadra Island, Bowen Island, Gibsons, Mayne Island, Saturna Island, Comox/Courtenay, Texada Island, Victoria, Hornby Island, and Denman Island.</p>
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	<p>The study was designed to consult and engage the public and stakeholders about the depth and nature of the challenges facing the coastal ferry system. The study focused on two key areas for consideration. First, the immediate challenge of achieving \$26 million in savings to 2016. The engagement sought feedback on this challenge. The second area for consideration was the long-term vision of what strategies should be pursued to achieve the long-term vision of connecting coastal communities while maintaining affordability, efficiency, and sustainability.</p>
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	<p>The key themes from 27 public open houses and 13 small group meetings are that fares are not affordable, BC ferries should be an essential part of the provincial highway system and should be funded by the province and taxpayers, high operational costs and decreasing ridership/revenue, concerns regarding operations (reservations, scheduling, coordination's, connecting ferries, and port locations), concerns about service reductions (coastal communities relying on ferry transit), and concerns about taxes to fund ferry service.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	--

FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>When addressing the two areas for consideration and strategies to achieving these goals, participants indicated that basic levels of ferry service were a top priority. Similarly, being concerned about significant annual shortfalls was the second priority identified.</p> <p>In seeking feedback on achieving \$26 million in savings to 2016, the engagement found that 46% of participants ranked Basic Levels of Ferry Service as the top consideration for BC ferries to consider when adjusting. In the minds of participants, ferry service is essential, and basic routes must be maintained. 130 participants commented that reducing or cancelling underused routes or sailings might be possible. 66-67% of participants agreed that using alternative ferry technologies such as cable ferries or passenger-only vessels would be worthwhile. 58% of participants noted that serving routes with passenger-only ferries and reducing vehicle passage is a potential option, but there is a problem with the lack of public transit and lack of parking. 62% of participants were in support of tunnels or bridges being used for some routes.</p> <p>The second area for consideration was the long-term vision of what strategies should be pursued to achieve the long-term vision of connecting coastal communities while maintaining affordability, efficiency, and sustainability. The BC Ferry Commissioner recommended that a vision should be based on a long-term demand forecast. This vision should explore the use of alternate service providers, innovative fuel alternatives, and the connection with other transportation systems and modes.</p>
NEXT STEPS	--

NAME	BC Transit Exploring Inter-Regional Transit Service
DATE	No Date
REGION(S)	Campbell River, Comox Valley, Cowichan Valley, and RDN
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	The study proportioned the total volume on the corridor using data collected from MoTI) by using mode split data from Canada Census. The study evaluates the proportions of commuter travel demand using Canada census Mode split data. Similarly, the study proportioned the travel patterns of students and employees using major employers and post secondary institutions within the study area. To capture the market, a combination of surrogate measures (age group, population density, ratio employment to population, and income level) were used.
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	To estimate the market potential for inter-regional transit across four regional boundaries including Campbell River, Comox Valley, Cowichan Valley and RDN.

BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	The challenge with commuter markets is the range of attendance times in school schedules, split campuses for the same program. A disincentive would be the current lack of parking controls, and incentives identified were the lack of U Pass programs.
OPPORTUNITIES	In collaboration with local governments, BC Transit has completed its future the largest urban communities outside of Victoria. Community and stakeholder engagement indicated a request for interregional connections, despite priorities for service type varying between communities.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	The study determined that for this study area, the most significant potential market are post-secondary institutions. Major hospitals indicated significant potential for the commuter market as well. Throughout the study, only one commuter market was identified as a potential for a regular transportation service, and that was found to be Cowichan Valley to VIU.
NEXT STEPS	--

NAME	Age-Friendly Transportation Planning Study - Village of Tahsis BC
DATE	November 2020
REGION(S)	Tahsis, Campbell River
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	The engagement methods used were the age-friendly transportation survey in the summer of 2020, community consultations, and online discussions (World Café)
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	This study was conducted to understand and develop solutions to the transportation challenges Tahsis seniors & older adults face in meeting their needs (shopping, food, and health). The study was broken down into three phases, firstly gathering key findings to understand the what the village sees as their most prominent needs. Secondly, they choose three core strategies based off the responses and gave eight detailed recommendations to improve transportation needs. Lastly, a three-stage plan was created to implement the recommendations.
BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	The main road has many concerns for the respondents with its stretch over 60 km, which is winding, steep, and unpaved gravel, along with the rain and snowy conditions. During the drive, there is a lack of cell service causing concerns for drivers to warn others or call for help. These conditions cause the drive to be a three-hour haul with many respondents feeling unsafe driving that long in those conditions. Finally, the trip is expensive, costing around \$177.48 on top of their bills.

OPPORTUNITIES	The implementation of coordinated shopping can increase efficiency and lower costs. Potentially using informal services for food delivery identified in the World Café could further increase efficiency and cost reduction. To further reduce transportation, they could partner with services providers to bring services to the village for a “service day”, where they can treat larger groups of people more efficiently. The World Café suggested reaching out to service providers to engage in more virtual appointments to reduce travel and appointment restrictions.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	Eight areas were identified and recommended for focus. Firstly, advocating for road improvements as road safety is the greatest barrier. Four of the recommendations were created to reduce the number of trips needed: bulk shopping, bringing service days to Tahsis, finding more services with virtual appointments, and having a hybrid system of a scheduled transportation service and on-demand trip requests. The other three recommendations focus on how they are transporting the community members this includes: obtaining a community-owned and operated vehicle, recruiting volunteer drivers, and establishing fares.
NEXT STEPS	Three stages were identified to implement the recommendations. Stage one highlights continuing advocacy for better road conditions, coordinating shopping, started looking to bring services to Tahsis and virtual appointments, and applying for community vehicle funding. Stage two focuses on creating a traveling plan by purchasing a vehicle, recruiting a pool of volunteer drivers, creating a transportation schedule, and getting community feedback. Lastly, Stage three puts together the transportation service by establishing fares, completing the driver training program, and recruiting community members to pilot the services, which will lead to launching the service.

NAME	Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast Region Air Transportation Outlook – Final Report
DATE	June 2008
REGION(S)	Vancouver Island (North of Malahat), Sunshine Coast, Airports – Port Hardy, Port McNeil, Campbell River, Comox, Port Alberni, Tofino, Qualicum Beach, Nanaimo, Powell River, Gibsons/Sechelt.
ENGAGEMENT METHODS	--
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF STUDY (<150 WORDS)	This study reviewed and assessed trends in Canada, the U.S., and other major trading countries to see how regional aviation has evolved to identify how it affects the future—identifying what roles these airports play and what infrastructure they may need in the growing Vancouver Island and Sunshine Coast region.

BARRIERS/ CHALLENGES	The major challenge faced in the airline industry is making advancements in your infrastructure and technology with the high costs of running the business. Fuel prices are rising, causing airlines to look for ways to keep prices reasonable. The high fixed costs in the airline business problematize airline operations during economic downturns.
OPPORTUNITIES	Many nations and Canada have started privatizing parts of or the entirety of airport infrastructure. This privatization means airports are run with more care as they must turn a profit. Airports are being run the maximum profit which will help offset the high fixed costs, leaving them with more money for infrastructure. Canada has seen an increase in spending by tourists, there is an opportunity to increase tourism in the region heavily.
FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS	With the increase in shorter, more frequent vacations, tourists want direct access to where they are travelling, but no airports can support regional jets other than Victoria and Comox. To achieve the economic potential offered by the region, infrastructure needs to be expanded in the airports allowing more direct travel at a greater rate. Communities in the areas will need financial assistance from the government to improve the airport systems.
NEXT STEPS	--

Appendix D: Maps of Scheduled Transportation Services Providers

The information presented in the maps is based on information available for company websites, and in some cases from direct phone calls with individual companies. The information is deemed to be only as accurate as the information posted on the company websites as of July 2023. It is acknowledged that transportation routes, scheduling, and pricing change continuously.

Four maps are presented with information on providers who offer scheduled services. Transportation companies that provide charter services are not indicated on the maps.

The services illustrated on the maps are as follows:

1. All transportation providers with scheduled services
2. Scheduled Land-Based Transportation
3. Scheduled Water-Based Transportation
4. Scheduled Air-Based Transportation

The information presented in the following maps represents scheduled transportation services, which has been defined as transportation services that either have set schedules or set locations and fares. It is recognized that the maps may not include transportation services within some regions that are by charter and, in some cases, by regular or routine charters out of some communities.

Please see Appendix E for more details about providers' schedules and fares.

FIGURE D1: SCHEDULED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES - OVERVIEW

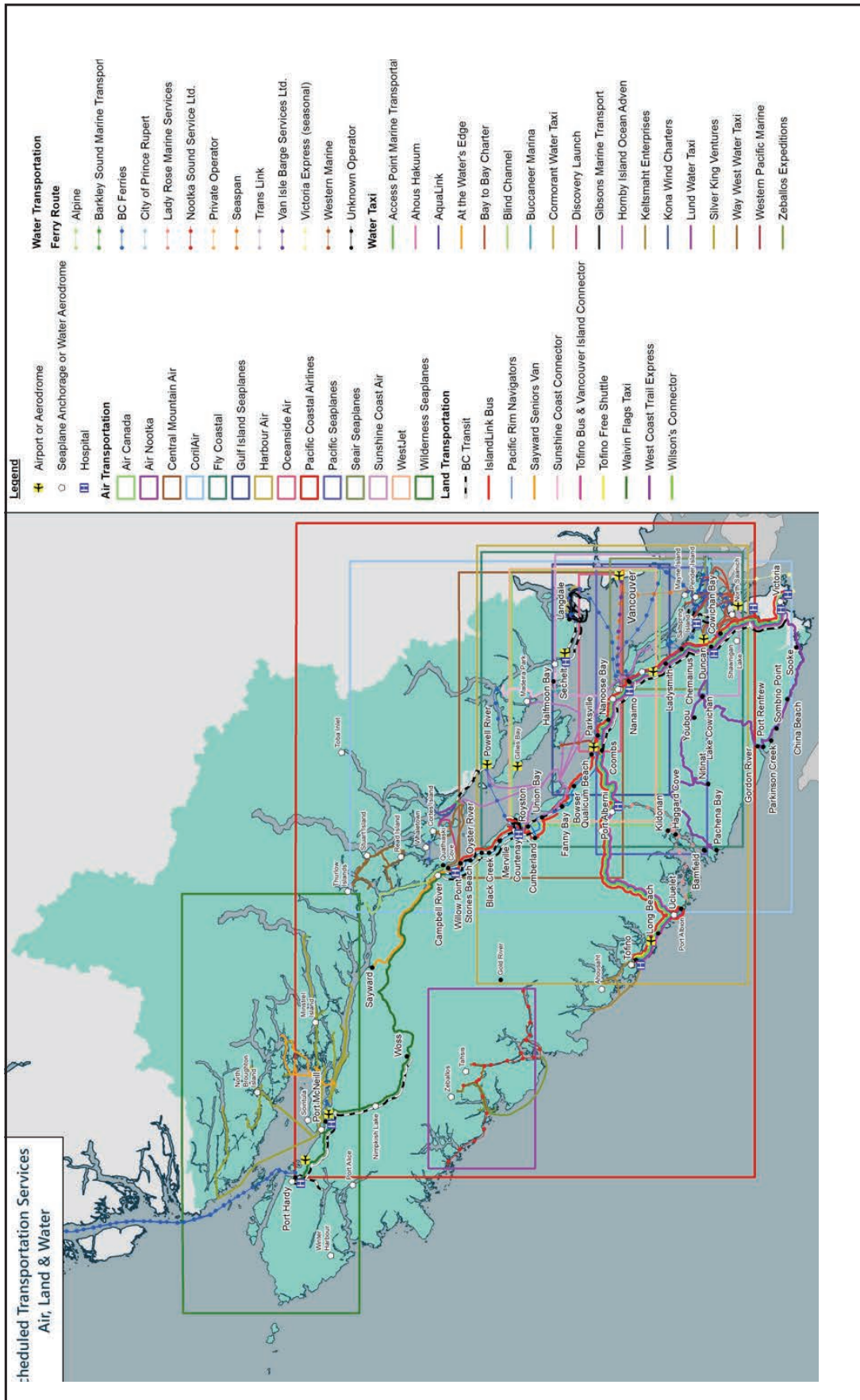
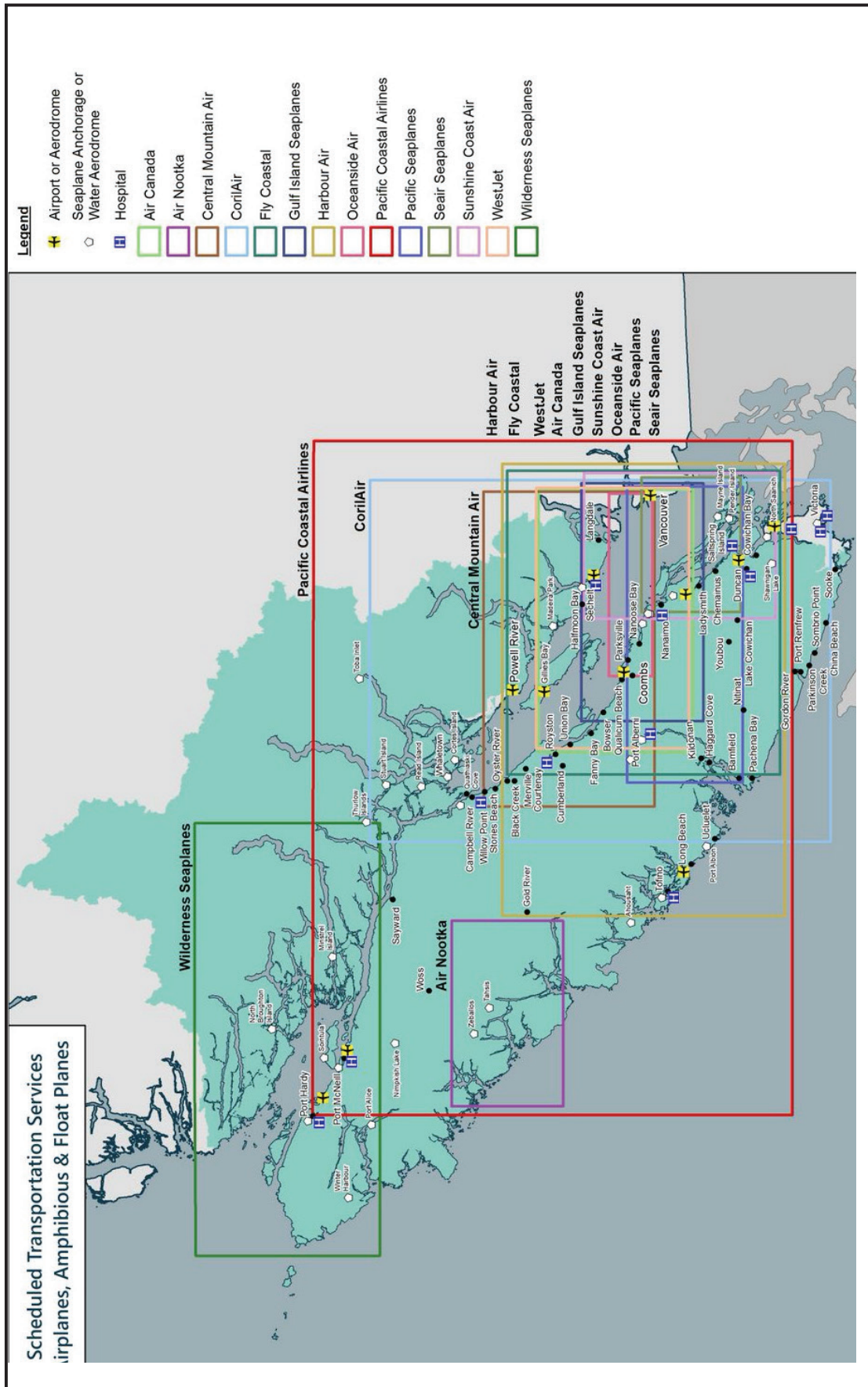


FIGURE D4: SCHEDULED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES - AIR



Appendix E: Tables of Scheduled Transportation Service Providers

- The information presented in the tables below and in the maps on transportation providers is based on information available for company websites, and in some cases from direct phone calls with individual companies. The information is deemed to be only as accurate as the information posted on the company websites as of July 2023. It is acknowledged that transportation routes, scheduling, and pricing change continuously.
- Scheduled services capture transportation services with a fixed posted departure/arrival time and/or fixed posted rates for predetermined destinations.
- Ranges are provided for transportation rates for one-way services and have been approximated to the nearest whole number, excluding applicable taxes and fees set by the provider. Ranges have been used to represent variability in fares depending on the time of advanced bookings, fare classes, and time of scheduling.
- Terminology used is defined as follows:
 - Local communities represent communities within the same regional district.
 - Regional communities represent communities in different regional districts.
 - Hub community represents the primary regional base of operations or primary departure point for transportation providers.

The table below shows only those operations that provide regularly scheduled service.

TABLE E1: SCHEDULED WATER TAXI SERVICES AND FARES

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Ahousaht	• Ahous Hakuum • Keltsmaht Enterprise	Local: Tofino, Hot Springs Cove	1 - 4 trips per day	5 days/week	\$10 - \$500
Blind Channel	• Blind Channel Water Taxi	Local: Rock Bay, Campbell River	Variable	Variable	\$150 - \$580
Bowen Island	• Cormorant	Regional: Gambier Harbour etc.	3-6 trips per day	4-6 days	\$34-\$40
Campbell River	• Way West • Discovery Launch	Local: Savary Island, Hernando Island etc.	1-5 trips per day	3-7 days	\$40-\$125
French Creek	• Western Pacific Marine	Regional: Lasqueti Island	2- 3 trips per day	4 – 6 days/week	\$6 - \$12
Gibsons	• Kona Wind Charters • Gibsons Marine	Local: Keats Landing, New Brighton etc.	14-16 trips per day	6-7 days	Free - \$550
Lund	• Lund Water Taxi • Access Point Marine Transportation	Local: Savary Island, Finn Bay	2- 9 trips per day	7 days/week	\$7 - \$15
Port Alberni	• Lady Rose Marine	Local: Bamfield etc.	1 trip per day	3-4 days	\$39 -\$48
Port McNeill	• Silver King Ventures	Local: Alert Bay, Echo Bay etc.	Variable	Variable	\$236/hour

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Secret Cove	• Buccaneer Marina	Local: Thormanby Island	Variable	Variable	\$15 - \$42
Sidney	• Bay to Bay Charters	Local: Galiano & Mayne Islands etc.	Variable	Variable	\$160 - \$545
Southern Gulf Islands	• Aqualink	Local: Galiano, Mayne, Saturna etc.	2 trips per day	2 - 3 days/week	\$16 - \$21
Telegraph Cove	• At the Water's Edge	Local: Swanson Island, Echo Bay etc.	Variable	Variable	\$355 - \$810
Zeballos	• Zeballos Expeditions	Local: Tahsis, Port Eliza, Yuquot etc.	Variable	Variable	\$400 - \$600

TABLE E2: SCHEDULED BUS AND SHUTTLE SERVICES AND FARES

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Port Hardy	• Waivin' Flags Taxi	Local: Woss, Port McNeill Regional: Campbell River	1-2 trips per day	1-3 days/week	\$75 - \$100
Sechelt	• Sunshine Coast Connector	Local: Gibsons, Egmont etc.	1 trip per day	7 days/week	\$20-\$70
Tofino	• Pacific Rim Navigators	Regional: Gambier Harbour etc.	Variable	Variable	\$180 - \$1200
Victoria	• West Coast Trail Express • Island Link • Wilson's Connector	Local: Ucluelet Regional: Nanaimo, Victoria etc.	1-7 trips per day	7 days/week	\$5-\$145

TABLE E3: SCHEDULED INTER-COMMUNITY BC TRANSIT BUS SERVICES AND FARES

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Campbell River	• BC Transit (Campbell River Transit System)	Local: Oyster River	4 - 10 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$2
Cowichan	• BC Transit (Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System)	Local: Duncan, Mill Bay etc. Regional: Victoria	2-4 trips per day	5-6 days/week	Free - \$10
Comox Valley	• BC Transit (Comox Valley Regional Transit System)	Local: Cumberland Regional: Oyster River	2-6 trips per day	6 days/week	Free - \$2

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Nanaimo	• BC Transit (Regional District of Nanaimo)	Local: Parksville, Qualicum Beach Regional: Ladysmith, Duncan etc.	7-19 trips per day	1-7 days/week	Free - \$8
Port Hardy	• BC Transit (Mount Waddington Transit System)	Local: Port McNeill, Woss, Coal Harbour Quatsino	2-5 trips per day	1-5 days/week	\$2 - \$4
Powell River	• BC Transit (Powell River Transit System)	Local: Lund	2 trips per day	4 days/week	Free - \$3
Salt Spring Island	• BC Transit (Salt Spring Island)	Local: Fulford Harbour, Vesuvius Bay etc.	3 - 19 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$2
Sunshine Coast	• BC Transit (Sunshine Coast Regional Transit System)	Local: Langdale, Sechelt	9-17 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$2

TABLE E4: SCHEDULED BC FERRIES SERVICES AND FARES

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Brentwood Bay	• BC Ferries	Regional: Mill Bay	8-9 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$8
Buckley Bay	• BC Ferries	Local: Denman Island West	16-25 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$10
Campbell River	• BC Ferries	Local: Quadra Island (Quathiaski Cove)	27-29 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$10
Chemainus	• BC Ferries	Local: Thetis & Penelakut Islands	9-10 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$10
Crofton	• BC Ferries	Regional: Salt Spring Island	12 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$12
Denman Island East	• BC Ferries	Local: Hornby Island	11-15 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$10
Horseshoe Bay	• BC Ferries	Regional: Nanaimo, Langdale etc.	8-12 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$19
Langdale	• BC Ferries	Local: Gambier Island, Keats Island	8-12 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$7
Nanaimo Harbour	• BC Ferries	Local: Gabriola Island	20-22 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$10
Port Hardy	• BC Ferries	Regional: Prince Rupert, Bella Coola etc.	1 trip per day	4 days/week	\$15 - \$189
Powell River	• BC Ferries	Local: Texada Island	4-9 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$15
Quadra Island (Heriot Bay)	• BC Ferries	Regional: Comox	6-7 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$11
Sechelt Peninsula	• BC Ferries	Local: Cortes Island	8 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$15

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Southern Gulf Islands	• BC Ferries	Regional: Powell River	1-10 trips per day	4-7 days/week	Free - \$9
Swartz Bay	• BC Ferries	Local: Inter-Island Travel	4-10 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$13
Tsawwassen	• BC Ferries	Regional: Tsawwassen	2-10 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$19
Swartz Bay	• BC Ferries	Local: Salt Spring, Galiano, Mayne, Pender & Saturna Islands	4-10 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$13
Tsawwassen	• BC Ferries	Regional: Victoria, Nanaimo, Southern Gulf Islands	2-10 trips per day	7 days/week	Free - \$19

TABLE E5: SCHEDULED FLOAT AND AMPHIBIOUS PLANE SERVICES AND FARES

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Campbell River	• Coril Air	Local: Sonora Island, Owen Bay etc. Regional: Lund, Savary Island etc.	1 trip per day	Variable	\$134 -
Gabriola Island	• Gulf Islands Sea Planes	Regional: YVR, Decourcy, Thetis etc.	Variable	Variable	\$132 - \$355
Gold River	• Air Nootka	Local: Zeballos, Tahsis, Chamiss Bay etc.	1 trip per day	6-7 days/week	\$150 - \$195
Nanaimo	• Seair Seaplanes • Pacific Seaplanes	Regional: Richmond, Southern Gulf Islands etc.	1 - 12 trips per day	6 - 7 days/week	\$70 - \$399
Port Hardy	• Wilderness Seaplanes	Local: Sointula etc. Regional: Bella Bella etc.	1 trip per day	1-7 days/week	\$250 - \$524
Qualicum Beach	• Oceanside Air	Regional: Vancouver	Variable	Variable	\$140 - \$165
Sechelt	• Sunshine Coast Air • Fly Coastal	Regional: YVR, Qualicum, Nanaimo, Victoria etc	Variable	Variable	\$75 - \$338
Victoria	• Harbour Air	Regional: Tofino, Sechelt, Comox, Powell River, Nanaimo etc.	Variable	Variable	\$91 - \$404

TABLE E5: SCHEDULED FLOAT AND AMPHIBIOUS PLANE SERVICES AND FARES

HUB COMMUNITY	TRANSPORT OPERATOR	COMMUNITIES SERVED	TRIP FREQUENCY	DAYS SERVED	PRICE RANGE
Vancouver	• Air Canada	Regional: • Nanaimo, • Comox	• 4 trips per day • 3 trips per day	7 days/week	• \$150 - \$304 • \$215 - \$226
Vancouver	• West Jet	Regional: • Comox, • Nanaimo	2 trips per day	7 days/week	• \$138 - \$767 • \$325 - \$609
Vancouver	• Central Mountain Air	Regional: • Campbell River	1-2 trips per day	5-6 trips/week	• \$148 - \$250
Vancouver	• Pacific Coastal Airlines	Regional: • Campbell River, • Comox, • Port Hardy, • Tofino • Powell River	• 3 trips per day • 1 trip per day • 2 trips per day • 2 trips per day • 5 trips per day	6-7 days/week	• \$152 - \$256 • \$213 - \$254 • \$299 - \$415 • \$227 - \$353 • \$138 - \$213

Appendix F: Scheduled and Chartered Transportation Service Providers

Notes:

- The information presented in the tables below and in the maps on transportation providers is based on information available for company websites, and in some cases from direct phone calls with individual companies. The information is deemed to be only as accurate as the information posted on the company websites as of July 2023. It is acknowledged that transportation routes, scheduling, and pricing change continuously.
- Scheduled services capture transportation services with a fixed posted departure/arrival time and/or fixed posted rates for predetermined destinations.
- Ranges are provided for transportation rates for one-way services and have been approximated to the nearest whole number, excluding applicable taxes and fees set by the provider. Ranges have been used to represent variability in fares depending on the time of advanced bookings, fare classes, time of scheduling.
- Terminology used is defined as follows:
 - Local communities represent communities within the same regional district.
 - Regional communities represent communities in different regional districts.
 - Hub community represents the primary regional base of operations or primary departure point for transportation providers.

The following list contains the companies providing scheduled and/or charter water taxi transportation services in the region.

TABLE F1: WATER TAXIS

NO.	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	Way West	Scheduled	Campbell River
2.	Discovery Launch	Scheduled	Campbell River
3.	Lady Rose Marine	Scheduled	Port Alberni
4.	Cormorant	Scheduled	Bowen Island
5.	Kona Wind Charters	Scheduled	Gibsons
6.	Gibsons Marine Transport	Scheduled	Gibsons
7.	Lund	Scheduled	Lund
8.	Access Point Marine Transportation	Scheduled	Lund
9.	Western Pacific Marine	Scheduled	French Creek
10.	Buccaneer Marina	Scheduled	Secret Cove
11.	Aqualink	Scheduled	Southern Gulf Islands
12.	Bay to Bay Charters	Scheduled	Sidney
13.	Zeballos Expeditions	Scheduled	Zeballos
14.	Silver King Ventures	Scheduled	Port McNeill
15.	At the Water's Edge	Scheduled	Telegraph Cove
16.	Blind Channel	Scheduled	Blind Channel
17.	Keltsmaht Enterprises	Scheduled	Ahousaht
18.	Ahous Hakuum	Scheduled	Ahousaht
19.	Hornby Island Ocean Adventures	Scheduled	Hornby Island
20.	Miss Mary & Tuff Eagle	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
21.	Big Bay Bee	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
22.	Carter Reign	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
23.	Eagle Adventure	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
24.	G.I. Charles	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
25.	G2	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
26.	Hailey Irene	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
27.	Kenzie Girl	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
28.	Miss Terri	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
29.	MV TYCO	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
30.	Princess Claudine	Non-Scheduled	Ahousaht
31.	Coastland Marine	Non-Scheduled	Egmont
32.	Siiqaa Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Kyuquot
33.	White Rock Sea Tours	Non-Scheduled	Surrey
34.	Island Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Sidney
35.	Muchalaht Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Muchalaht First Nation
36.	Cape Scott Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Port Hardy
37.	Quest Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Campbell River

NO.	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
38.	Coastal Water Taxi & Transport Ltd	Non-Scheduled	Campbell River
39.	Meares Island Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Tofino
40.	Inlet Express Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Bamfield
41.	Bamfield Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Bamfield
42.	Palyn Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Port McNeill
43.	Hali'wud Water Taxi	Non-Scheduled	Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation
44.	Mackay Whale Watching	Non-Scheduled	Port McNeill

The following list contains the companies providing scheduled and/or charter bus/shuttle transportation services in the region.

TABLE F2: BUS AND SHUTTLE

NO.	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	Sunshine Coast Connector	Scheduled	Sechelt
2.	West Coast Trail Express	Scheduled	Victoria
3.	Island Link	Scheduled	Victoria
4.	Wilson's Connector	Scheduled	Victoria
5.	Waivin' Flags Taxi	Scheduled	Port Hardy
6.	Nanaimo Airporter	Non-Scheduled	Nanaimo
7.	Alberni Island Shuttle	Non-Scheduled	Port Alberni
8.	The Island Chauffeur	Non-Scheduled	Parksville

The following list contains the Regional Transit Systems providing scheduled bus transportation services in the region.

TABLE F3: BC TRANSIT

NO.	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	Campbell River Transit System	Scheduled	Campbell River
2.	Comox Valley Regional Transit System	Scheduled	Comox Valley
3.	Cowichan Valley Regional Transit System	Scheduled	Cowichan Valley
4.	Mount Waddington Regional Transit System	Scheduled	Mount Waddington
5.	Powell River Regional Transit System	Scheduled	Powell River
6.	Regional District of Nanaimo Transit System	Scheduled	Nanaimo
7.	Salt Spring Island Regional Transit System	Scheduled	Salt Spring Island
8.	Sunshine Coast Regional Transit System	Scheduled	Sunshine Coast

The following list contains routes served by BC Ferries in the region.

TABLE F4: PASSENGER FERRY

NO.	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Tsawwassen
2.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Horseshoe Bay
3.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Swartz Bay
4.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Southern Gulf Islands
5.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Crofton
6.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Sechelt Peninsula
7.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Brentwood Bay
8.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Langdale
9.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Powell River
10.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Nanaimo Harbour
11.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Chemainus
12.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Buckley Bay
13.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Denman Island
14.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Campbell River
15.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Quadra Island
16.	BC Ferries	Scheduled	Port Hardy

The following list contains the companies providing float/amphibious plane transportation services in the region.

TABLE F5: FLOAT PLANE

NO.	CATEGORY	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	Amphibious Plane	Fly Coastal	Scheduled	Sechelt
2.	Float Plane	Harbour Air	Scheduled	Victoria
3.	Float Plane	Gulf Islands Sea Planes	Scheduled	Gabriola Island
4.	Float Plane	Seair Seaplanes	Scheduled	Nanaimo
5.	Float Plane	Pacific Seaplanes	Scheduled	Nanaimo
6.	Float Plane	Coril Air	Scheduled	Campbell River
7.	Float Plane	Sunshine Coast Air	Scheduled	Sechelt
8.	Float Plane	Oceanside Air	Scheduled	Qualicum Beach
9.	Float Plane	Air Nootka	Scheduled	Gold River
10.	Float Plane	Wilderness Seaplanes	Scheduled	Port Hardy
11.	Float Plane	Vancouver Island Air	Non-Scheduled	Campbell River
12.	Float Plane	Tofino Air	Non-Scheduled	Tofino
13.	Float Plane	Atleo River Air Service	Non-Scheduled	Tofino
14.	Float Plane	VanCity Seaplanes	Non-Scheduled	Vancouver

The following list contains the companies providing float/amphibious plane transportation services in the region.

TABLE F6: REGULAR PLANES

NO.	CATEGORY	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	Amphibious Plane	Scheduled	Sechelt
2.	Float Plane	Scheduled	Victoria
3.	Float Plane	Scheduled	Gabriola Island
4.	Float Plane	Scheduled	Nanaimo

The following list contains the organizations providing non-emergency medical and community ride share transport services in the region.

TABLE F6: REGULAR PLANES

NO.	CATEGORY	PROVIDER	SCHEDULED/CHARTER	HUB COMMUNITY
1.	Non-Emergency Medical Transport	Wheels for Wellness	Non-Scheduled	Comox
2.	Sayward Senior Van	Community Rideshare	Non-Scheduled	Sayward

Appendix G: Regional Summaries

SUNSHINE COAST

MEETING LOCATION: SEHEL T	
Meeting Date: June 13th, 2023	
Identified Gaps	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants identified a gap in accessing vehicles with wheelchair lifts and other accessibility supports.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY, FREQUENCY, AND RELIABILITY Participants emphasized the infrequency of transit and how unpredictability prevents access to medical services in a timely manner. Additionally, they stated the system is only built to accommodate regular working hours.</p> <p>ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION Participants noted a gap in safe, usable active transportation routes. This is a concern for school-aged children and adults.</p> <p>CLIMATE CHANGE AND WEATHER Participants noted that the one-road structure is not built for climate change or adverse weather conditions and is susceptible to flooding due to high tides.</p> <p>DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES Participants stated infrastructure planning does not considering rising population and demographic changes.</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE Infrastructure gaps were cited, such as the lack of ports in critical areas and neglected secondary roads.</p> <p>SAFETY The lack of late transit options presents a safety risk for those stuck between modes of transportation (for example, at a ferry terminals or bus stops).</p>
Partners	<p>Overall, participants identified a need to be heard and supported by government and agency partners and funding support to subsidize and grow community-based transportation providers. Partnership opportunities identified were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Collaboration between existing private transportation providers (2) BC Transit (3) MoTI (Expansion funding and ongoing operating subsidies) (4) BC Ferries
Opportunities and Innovations	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Accessible rental or share vehicles (2) Multi-use path from Langdale to Lund wide enough to accommodate emergency vehicles (3) Ride or car share initiatives (motorcars, park and ride, etc.) (4) Sharing resources (e.g., shuttle buses) (5) Express buses to city centres and smaller buses to service community routes

QATHET AND DESOLATION SOUND

MEETING LOCATION: POWELL RIVER

Meeting Date: June 14th, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants noted the lack of accessibility for folks who cannot move between modes of transportation with ease or cannot afford the multiple fares. A second consistent concern was the lack of wheelchair-accessible vehicles.</p> <p>INCLUSIVITY Participants raised concerns about bias and prejudice being worse toward members of marginalized communities. One participant noted that there is a serious issue for community members living on the former reserve receiving consistent transit service.</p> <p>LABOUR FORCE AND HOUSING There is a concern about folks without housing needing access to transit and being unable to use the service. A second concern is the closure of the mill and employees needing access to reliable transportation to be retrained through VIU.</p> <p>K-12 STUDENTS AND EXTRACURRICULARS Concerns were noted that school-aged children cannot rely on transportation modes to access after-school and extracurricular activities. Participants shared that teachers are hesitant to volunteer to chaperone after-school programs, due to the concern that they could be stuck a ferry ride away with thirty children to shelter and supervise.</p> <p>SAFETY Participants discussed the concern that without consistent transportation schedules or the lack of late service, people can be stranded without access to transportation. For example, people will sleep in their car at the ferry terminal due to a lack of service after working hours. Lastly, participants noted that initiatives designed to solve the transportation issue are often without safety controls.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Overall, participants identified a need to be heard and supported by government and agency partners and funding support to subsidize and grow community-based transportation providers. Partnership opportunities identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Collaboration between existing private transportation providers (2) BC Transit (3) MoTI (Expansion funding and ongoing operating subsidies) (4) BC Ferries
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Accessible rental or share vehicles (2) Multi-use path from Langdale to Lund wide enough to accommodate emergency vehicles (3) Ride or car share initiatives (motorcars, park and ride, etc.) (4) Sharing resources (e.g., shuttle buses) (5) Express buses to city centres and smaller buses to service community routes

COWICHAN VALLEY AND JUAN DE FUCA

MEETING LOCATION: DUNCAN

Meeting Date: June 19th, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants shared concern over the lack of accessible vehicles and supports, like wheelchair lifts.</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE Participants voiced concerns about the lack of funding to maintain and improve existing roads, airports, and transit infrastructure. One participant noted the lack of infrastructure creates a barrier to tourism.</p> <p>K-12 STUDENTS AND EXTRACURRICULARS Participants stated that school-aged children spend long hours commuting to and from activities without reliable, dedicated transportation options.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY Participants discussed the lack of options to connect First Nations community members to other communities. The departure of Greyhound and Wilson buses left a real gap for community members.</p> <p>LABOUR FORCE Participants emphasized that the transit system is not always considerate of or accessible to employees working in key destinations. For example, one participant contributed that the mall hours are until 5:30 pm PST, and the last bus service is at 5:15 pm PST.</p> <p>CONNECTIVITY Participants discussed the complexity and challenge of commuting over the Malahat into Victoria.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Participants noted the need to partner with government and MOTI for funding support to develop a transit system that works for the community. Partnership opportunities identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MOTI (2) Community non-profits
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Subsidies for private bus operators (2) Rideshare and car rental services (3) Development of another main road into Duncan (4) Rail service developed (5) Develop an integrated hub for current and future transit options to connect and share information

NORTH VANCOUVER ISLAND, SOUTH CENTRAL COAST, AND THE BROUGHTON ARCHIPELAGO

MEETING LOCATION: PORT HARDY

Meeting Date: June 20th, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants voiced a concern for safety due to the inaccessibility of the transit locations. Participant referenced several locations as challenging for seniors to access due to the steep nature of the terrain. Secondly, the rapidly aging population in the community requires access to transit for medical services.</p> <p>TAXI AVAILABILITY Participants identified a very limited on-demand service. One participant contributed there are three or four taxis available for booking in the community.</p> <p>FREQUENCY AND CONSISTENCY Participants identified the current infrequency of public transit schedules.</p> <p>COST Participant voiced concern that the pricing structure of airlines often require a person to book far in advance. They also stated the cost of bus charters is a barrier - one participant noted that it is \$95.00 an hour to rent buses for seniors. Participants also noted the high costs of operating transportation services, such as charter buses and medical evacuation helicopters.</p> <p>LABOUR FORCE Transportation was identified by participants as a barrier to a visiting medical professionals in training.</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE Participant stated that the lack of infrastructure was a barrier to further tourism development.</p> <p>K-12 STUDENTS AND EXTRACURRICULARS Concerns were raised that school-aged children lack access to transportation for extracurricular activities and that facilities for school-aged programs are closing due to lack of use.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Participants noted the need to partner with government and MOTI for funding support to develop a transit system that works for the community. Partnership opportunities identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MOTI (2) Community non-profits
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Subsidies for private bus operators (2) Rideshare and car rental services (3) Development of another main road into Duncan (4) Rail service developed (5) Develop an integrated hub for current and future transit options to connect and share information

STRATHCONA REGION AND DISCOVERY ISLANDS

MEETING LOCATION: CAMPBELL RIVER

Meeting Date: June 22nd, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE Participants noted that the secondary roads are in serious decline in terms of quality and condition. The discussion pointed to that participants realize specially equipped buses are handle non-paved roads.</p> <p>COST Participants discussed the cost barriers to be operating a transportation service.</p> <p>SAFETY The community mentioned the lack of safe emergency routes. Secondly, participants voiced safety concerns with hitchhiking and car sharing. Lastly, one participant noted the importance of safety and qualification checks for transit operators.</p> <p>REGULATORY CHALLENGES Participants discussed the insurance and liability challenges with solutions in the community. For example, with car-sharing, difficulties in obtaining liability or insurance can act as a barrier.</p> <p>WEATHER AND ADVERSE CONDITIONS Participants stated concern over the lack of weather preparedness and planning, given the conditions in the winter months.</p> <p>CONNECTIVITY Participants noted that people are looking for greater connectivity between buses and ferries. Secondly, they voiced a need for connections to the airport.</p> <p>TAXIS AND ON-DEMAND SERVICE Participants discussed the need for bookable taxi service.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Participants noted the need to partner with government and MOTI for funding support to develop a transit system that works for the community. Partnership opportunities identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MOTI (2) Community non-profits
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Subsidies for private bus operators (2) Rideshare and car rental services (3) Development of another main road into Duncan (4) Rail service developed (5) Develop an integrated hub for current and future transit options to connect and share information

NANAIMO, PARKSVILLE, QUALICUM BEACH, AND COMOX VALLEY

MEETING LOCATION: PARKSVILLE

Meeting Date: June 23rd, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants identified that options are very limited for people without a driver's license or living with a disability.</p> <p>SAFETY Participants emphasized concern over the lack of safety at bus stops or protection from weather.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY Participants noted that despite many people wanting to choose a transportation option outside of a personal vehicle, alternative options are simply not available.</p> <p>LABOUR FORCE Participants discussed that there is a lack of transit service to employees coming from Nanaimo. They will not fill roles that require need to be open past 7 pm PST, because there are no transit options after regular business hours.</p> <p>CONNECTIVITY Participants discussed the lack of connectivity, preventing the ability to connect between modes and successfully travel across Vancouver Island.</p> <p>LACK OF VEHICLES Participants discussed the shift in young people away from owning vehicles and holding licenses. There are currently very limited options available for these folks to reach their employment destinations.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Participants identified the following partnership opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) BC Ferries (2) MOTI to develop controlled active transportation options and connections to highway (3) Cross-model collaboration between providers and operators (4) Develop a multi-regional transportation authority (5) BC Transit
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Central information repository for providers and users (2) Introduce on-demand transit (3) Action on connecting the communities and integrating a regional transit authority (4) Increase hours for providers like HandyDART or IslandLink (5) Support for shuttle buses and rideshare programs

PACIFIC RIM AND ALBERNI VALLEY

MEETING LOCATION: PORT ALBERNI

Meeting Date: June 26th, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants discussed a lack of accessible options identified for the aging population. One participant noted that members of their community on welfare and disability no longer receive transportation supports.</p> <p>SAFETY Participants discussed concerns of safety for their children and community members needing to rely on car-hailing, ridesharing, and hitchhiking.</p> <p>CLIMATE CHANGE AND WEATHER Participants identified a lack of planning for climate change emergencies.</p> <p>EMERGENCY SERVICES Participants discussed a need for emergency route planning. One participant noted that members of their community have passed away from ambulances taking too long to arrive.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY Participants stated there is a lack of access to First Nations Communities in the Alberni Valley and surrounding areas. For students and commuters, there is a gap in timely, frequent service.</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE Participants stated that there is a lack of infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists - the major corridor going through Port Alberni does not have sidewalks or lanes for bikes. In addition, trails are not connected or useable to or around Sprout Lake.</p> <p>K-12 STUDENTS Participants discussed a concern over the lack of bus service for school-aged children receiving service. They also stated that some First Nations communities are not being serviced at all, forcing their community to purchase city bus transit passes to send their children to school.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Overall, participants noted the need for developing real community plans for the wellbeing of all Port Alberni and surrounding area residents. Partnership opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MOTI (2) Government of BC (3) Regional District Transportation Committee
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Active transportation infrastructure (2) Develop connection from Port Alberni to Qualicum (3) Develop infrastructure, focusing on the East-West route (4) Develop robust community planning and representation

RURAL AND GULF ISLANDS

MEETING LOCATION: ONLINE (VIA ZOOM)

Meeting Date: June 27th, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>INFRASTRUCTURE Participants noted a lack of accessible, useable water infrastructure such as docks. Secondly, participants discussed the lack of options for parking vehicles at ferry stations, which results in people having to bring vehicles on the ferry.</p> <p>CONNECTIVITY Participants discussed the issue and barrier with the transportation hub not being in close enough proximity to the dock. For those travelling without a vehicle, participants stated it is difficult to access ferry terminals or other transportation hubs.</p> <p>ACCESSIBILITY Concerns were raised around aging population and the need for medical access.</p> <p>COST Participants stated the greatest barrier in accessing transportation is cost. One participant noted that one-fifth of their weekly salary goes to transportation.</p> <p>WEATHER Participants discussed that given the remote nature of the communities, preparing for adverse weather, and dealing with cancellations is extremely challenging.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Participants identified the following partnership opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) MOTI (2) Passenger Transportation Board (3) Not-for-Profit transportation service providers (4) Entrepreneurs and business owners in rural islands (6) BC Ferries
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Active Transportation Infrastructure (2) Rideshare and Coop Programs (3) Larger transportation hubs, integrated with park-and-ride options (4) BC Community Bus Coalition

WEST COAST AND CLAYOQUOT SOUND

MEETING LOCATION: TOFINO

Meeting Date: June 28th, 2023

<p>Identified Gaps</p>	<p>ACCESSIBILITY Participants discussed the issue of seniors being unable to access key medical services due to a lack of transportation options.</p> <p>AVAILABILITY AND RELIABILITY Participants stated that the lack availability of transportation options outside of peak season was a significant barrier. Participants stated concern that people cannot access transportation options for essential services. A third concern raised was that Ahousaht's community of over 1000 people do not have accessible or low cost transportation options.</p> <p>INFRASTRUCTURE It was stated that the current road infrastructure is not built for the amount of travel and rental vehicles coming to the region during the summer months.</p> <p>SAFETY Due to lack of transportation options, participants voiced concern over people walking between Tofino and Ucluelet during the night.</p> <p>TOURISM Participants shared that the economy in Tofino is largely based on tourism and, workers do not have access to transportation outside of the hours required by tourists.</p> <p>K-12 STUDENTS AND EXTRACURRICULARS Participants noted the concern around school aged children not being able to access extracurriculars activities due to a lack of transportation. There are serious concerns about unsafe conditions and long hours in transit.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Participants identified the following partnership opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Tofino Bus (2) Wilson Bus (2) MOTI (Funding support for providers) (4) Community leaders
<p>Opportunities and Innovations</p>	<p>Participants identified the following opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Car share programs (2) Subsidize transportation options available (E.g., Wheels for Wellness, Water Taxis, Shuttles).

Appendix H: Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Island Coastal Inter-Community Transportation Study Survey was open to the public for 25 days, from June 6 to June 30, and received 1,452 responses of which 1,096 were considered completed and valid submissions.

Survey respondents were most likely to be in their thirties and making between \$75,001 to \$150,000 in household income. The communities of Port Alberni, Courtenay, Port Alice, Nanaimo, Whaletown and Gabriola had the most respondents. Most survey participants reported to live in more populated and urban centres, as opposed to rural communities.

Another commonality across survey respondents was that most had access to a personal car. In fact, car-based transportation was rather prevalent in responses, as it was by far the most frequently reported mode of transportation between communities, for transporting kids to school, and for making inter-community trips for shopping, recreation, visiting family or friends, and work among other reasons.

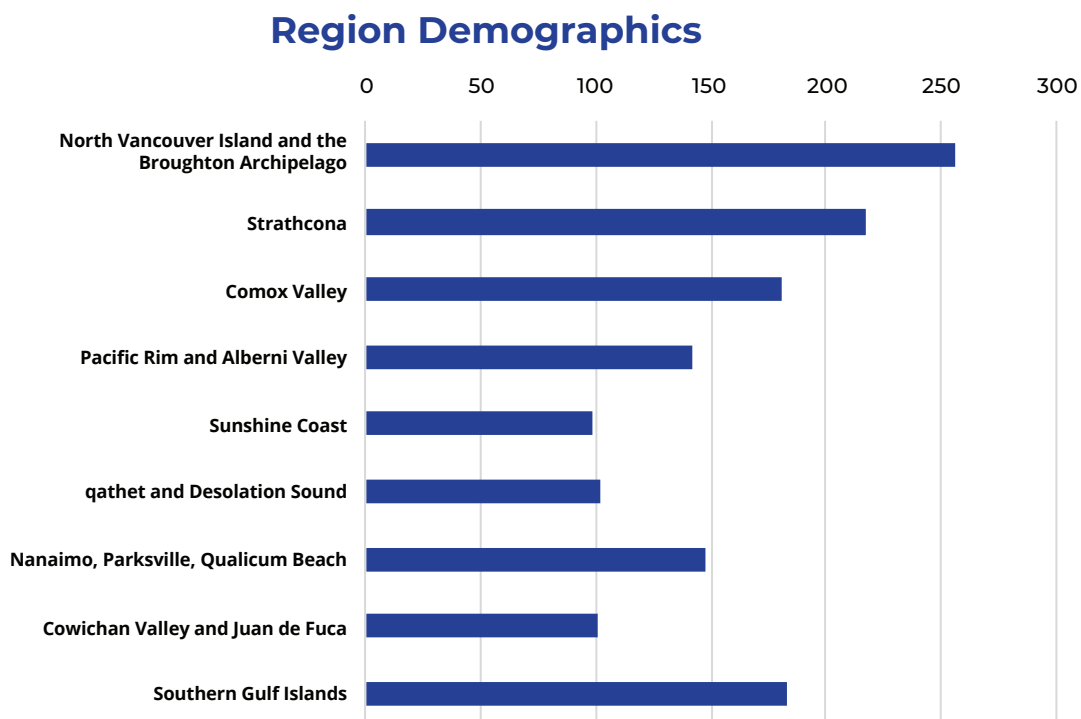
The main challenges of inter-community transportation were cost, trip duration, and that available options do not go to the respondent's final destination. Safer options, more frequent trips, and improved connectivity between those options were stressed as critical in improving inter-community travel. Busses, including public, private, and community-operated, was the most desired form of transportation infrastructure.

Designing around the current overreliance of personal vehicles is the main, cross-cutting theme that survey respondents kept reiterating.

More community-operated and public busses were highly requested, as was making use of existing infrastructure. As communities change, respondents said they need their transportation infrastructure to change with it and local, shared, and connected options are the changes they wish to see.

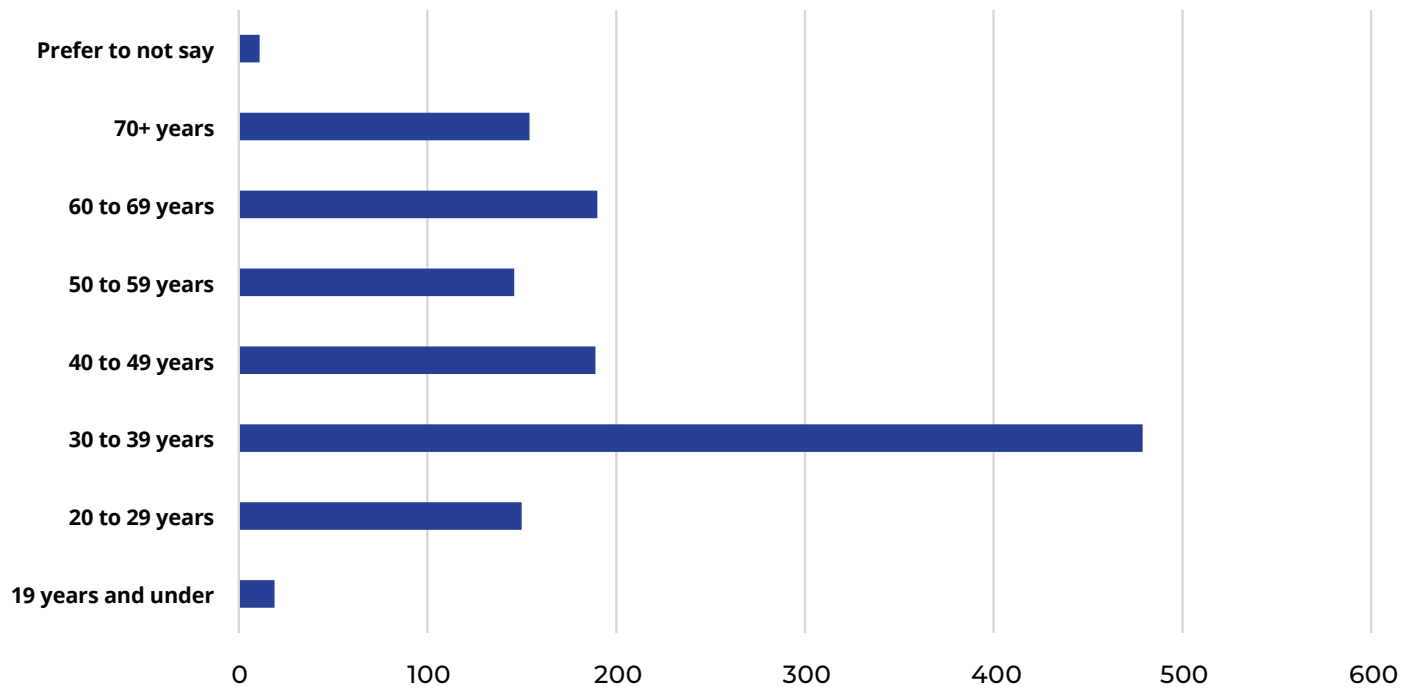
SURVEY RESULTS

1. Where do you live, or live closest to?



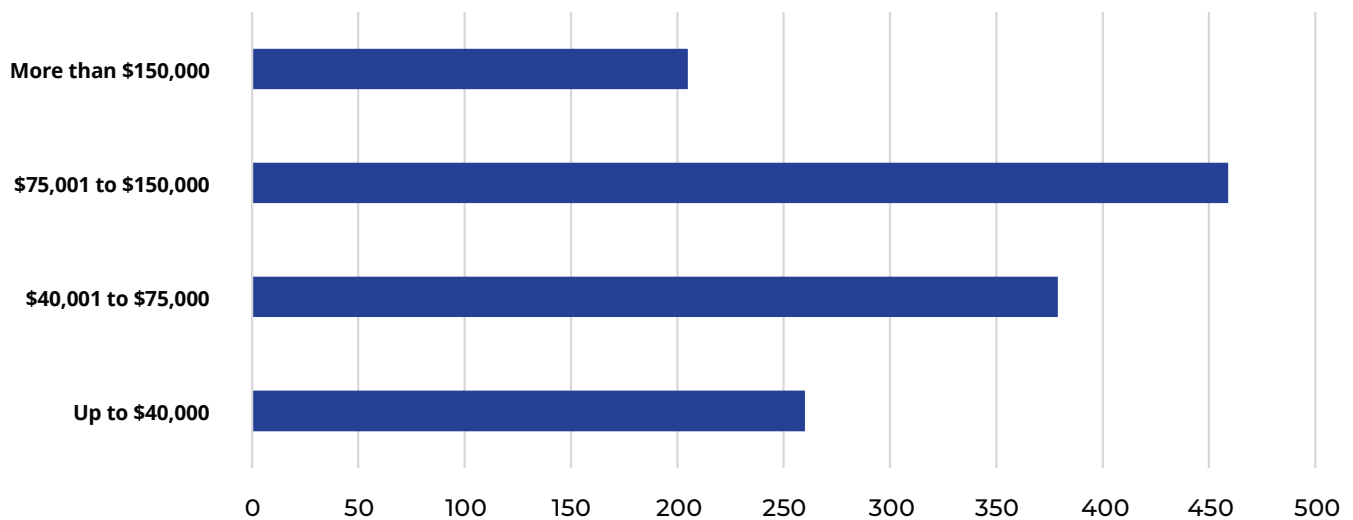
2. What age range do you fall within?

Age Demographics

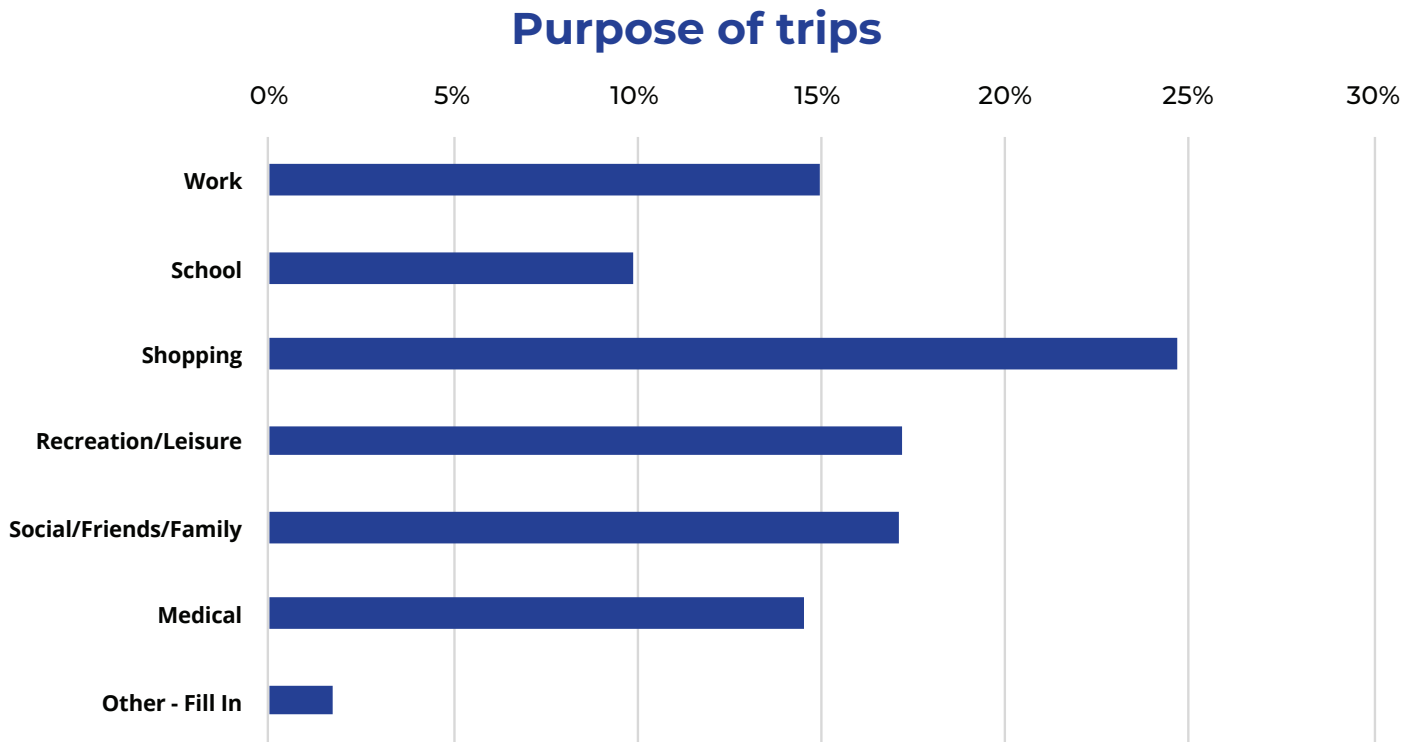


3. What is your household income range?

Income Demographics

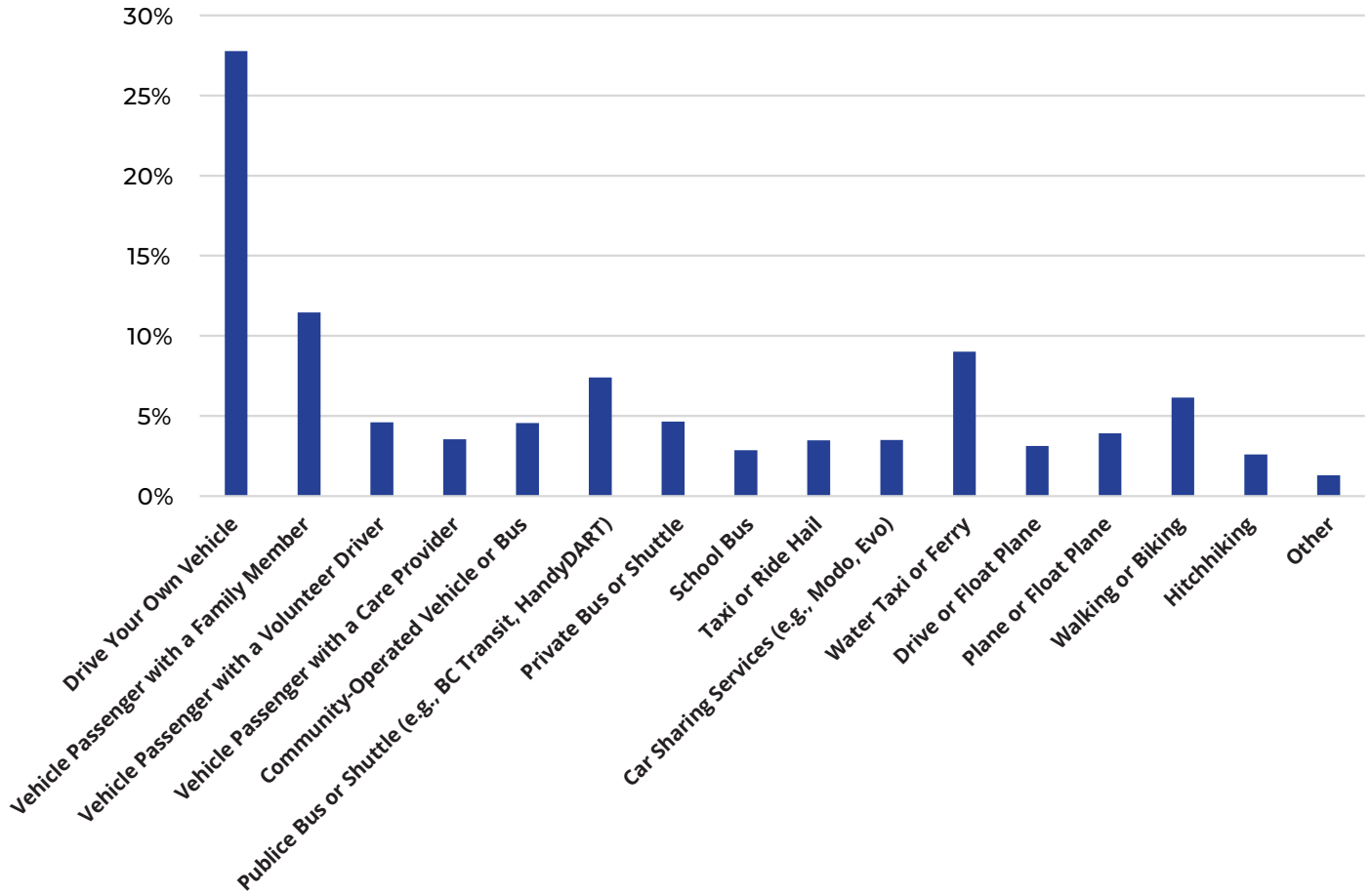


4. What is the purpose of your trips to your top regional travel destinations?



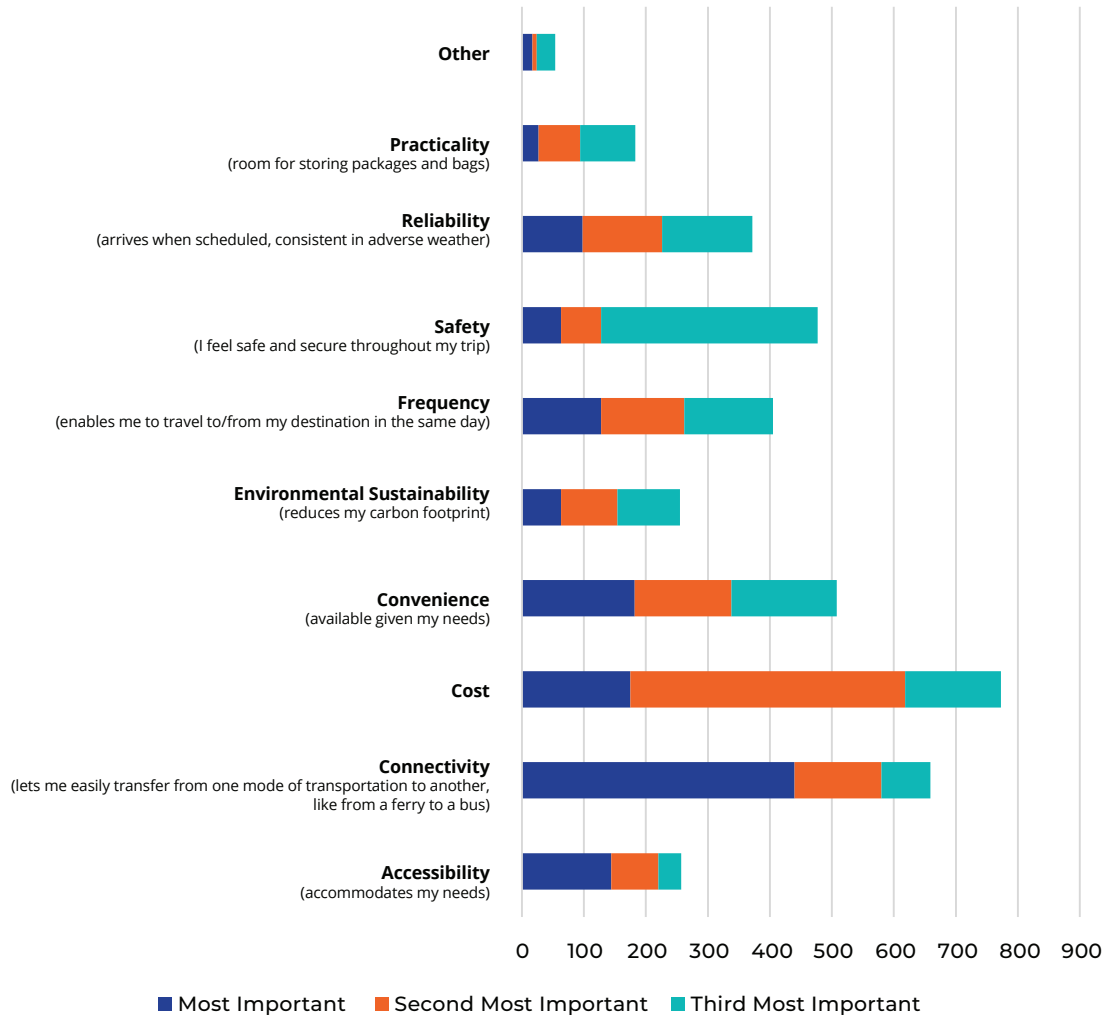
5. What are your current methods of transportation to your top regional travel destinations?

Methods of Transportation



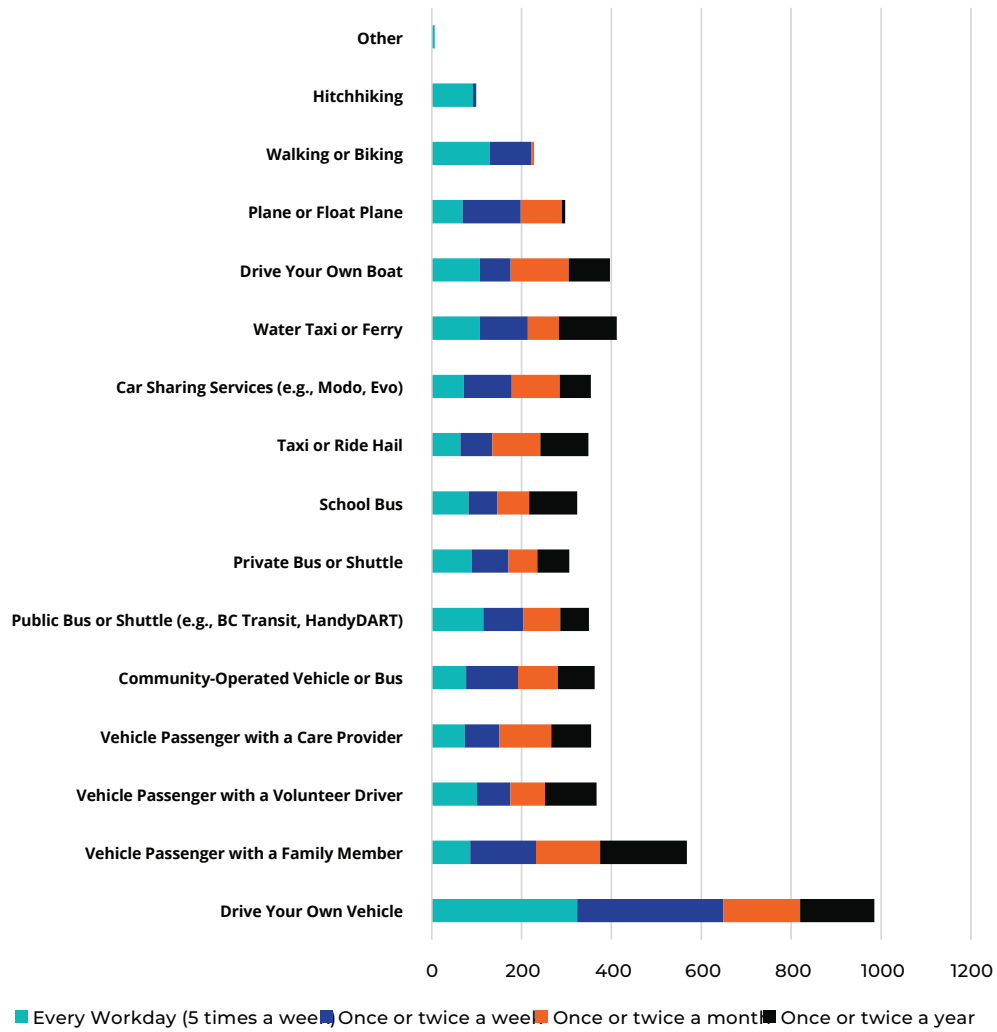
6. When you travel among communities, what are the three most important things you consider?

Priorities when traveling among communities



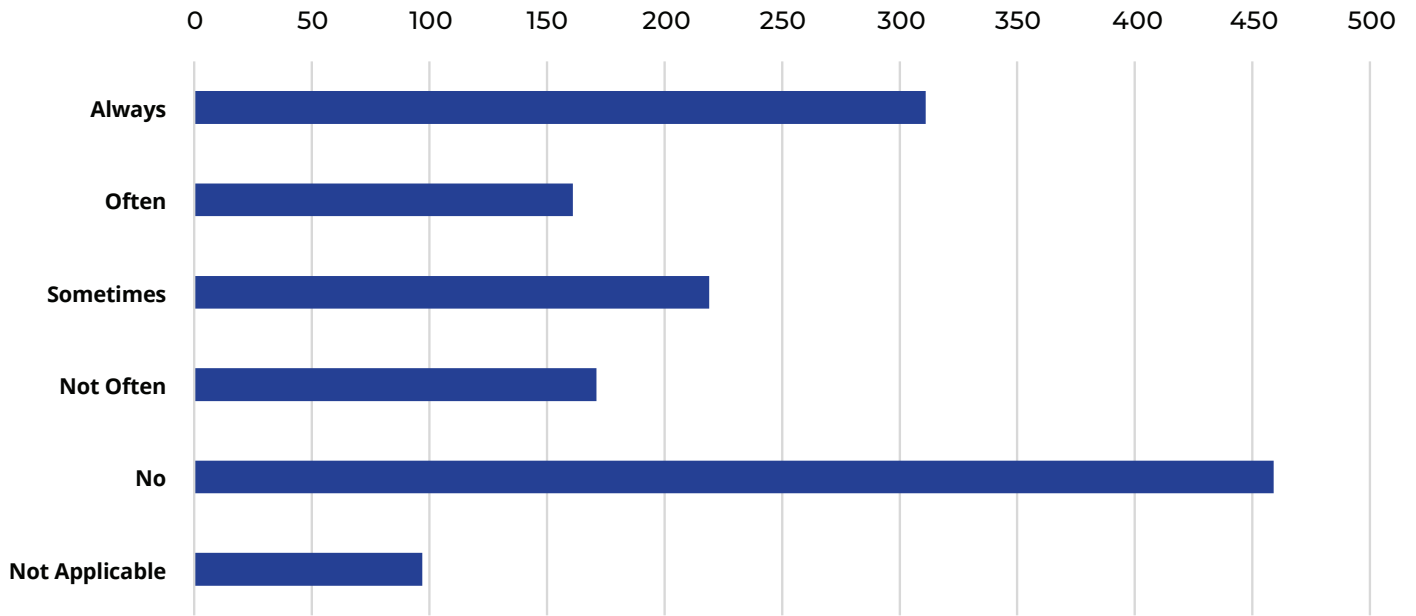
7. When you travel among communities, how often do you use these transportation options?

Travel Method Frequency



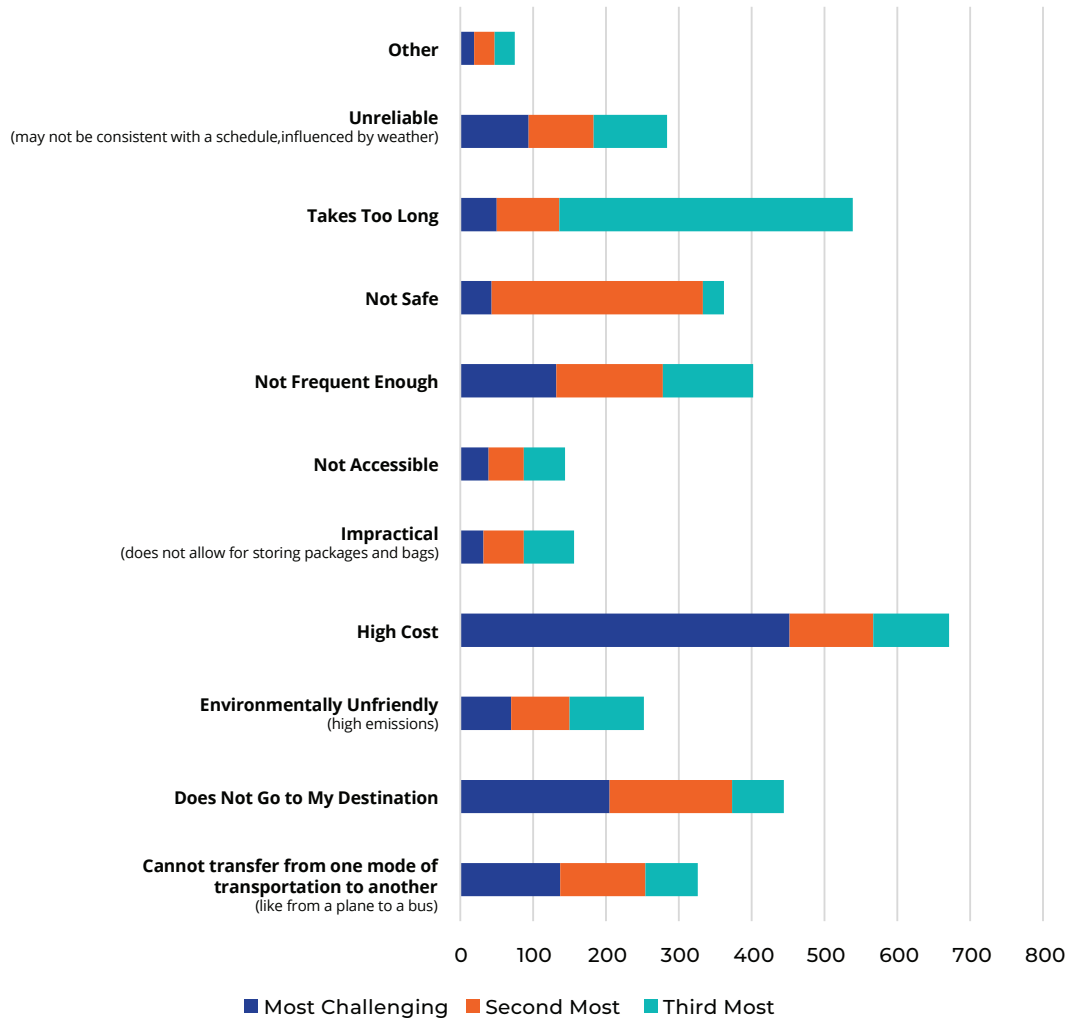
8. Do you use programs that help with transportation costs?

Frequency using programs that help with travel costs



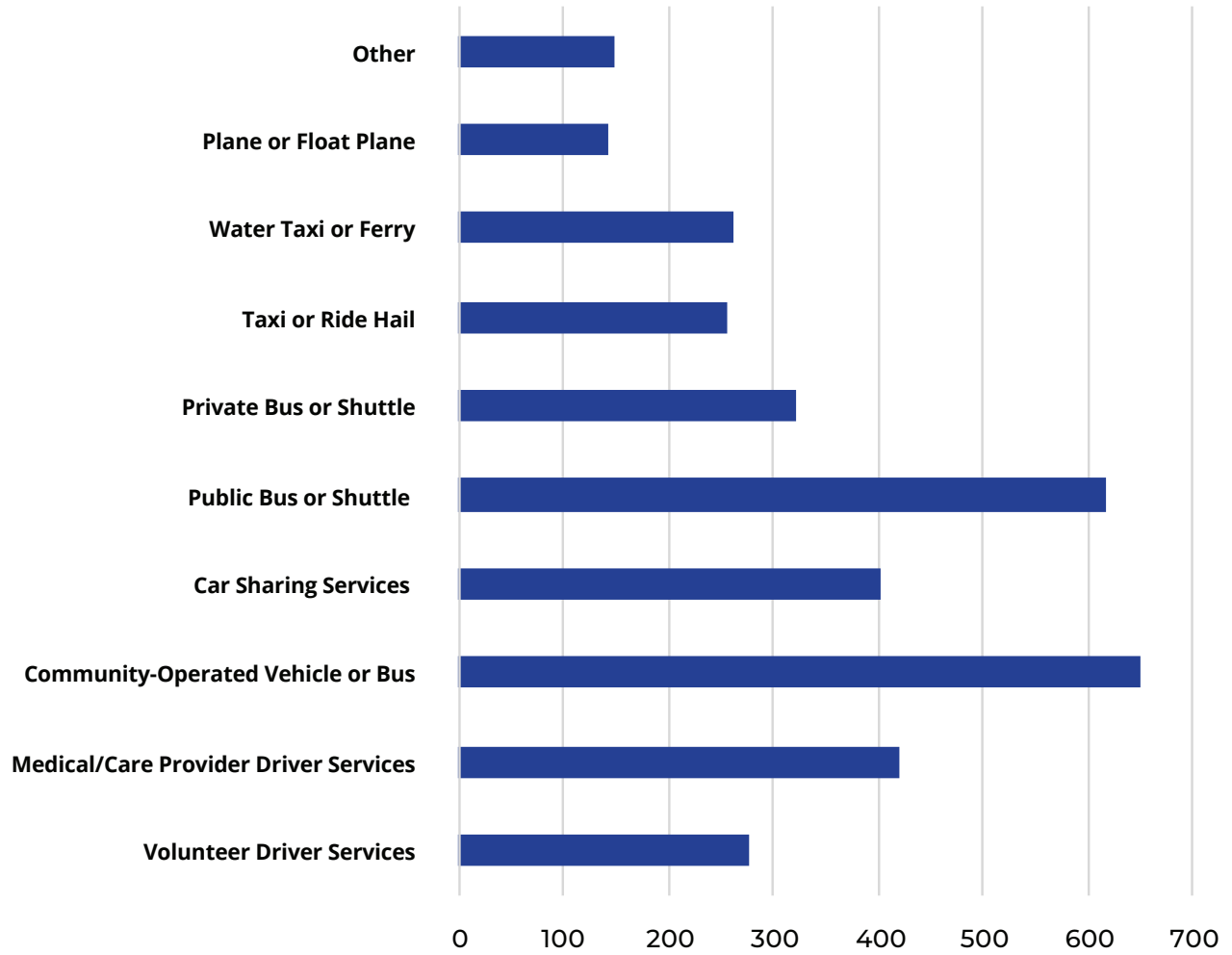
9. When you travel among communities, what are the top three challenges that make it hard?

Top challenges when traveling among communities



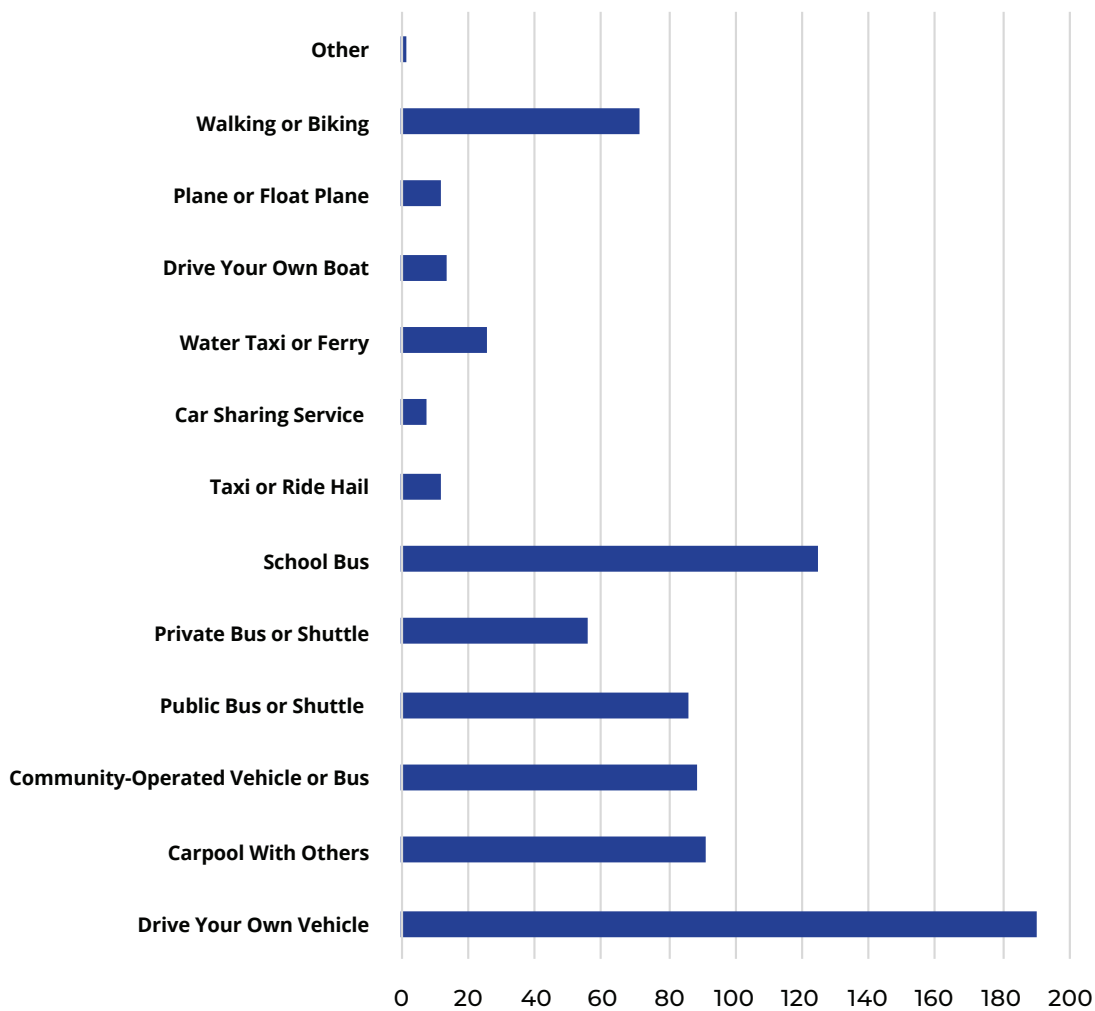
10. What does your community need (or need more of) to improve travel among communities?

Community needs to improve travel



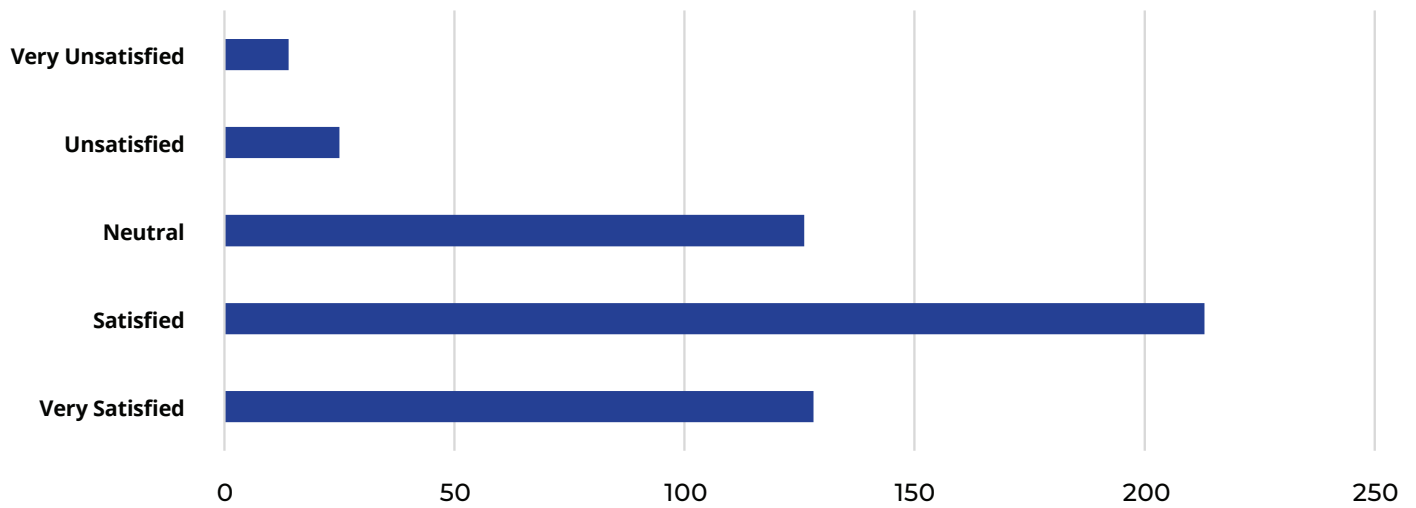
11. What mode of transportation do you use to transport your child/children to school or school-related events?

Methods of Transporting Kids to School



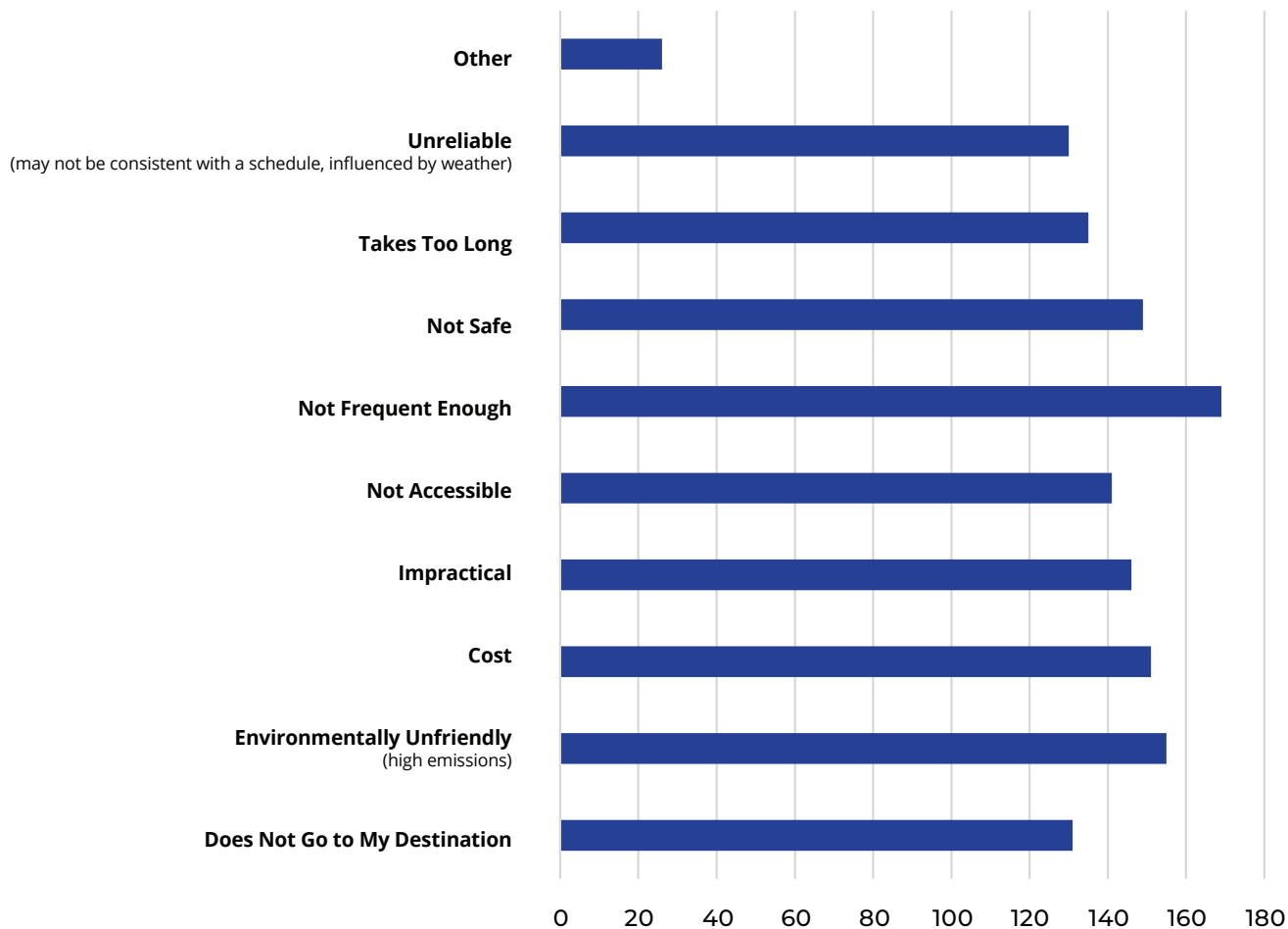
12. What best describes your opinion of transportation options available for your child/children for school or school-related events?

Satisfaction levels with school transportation options



13. Please select your main challenges regarding transportation options available for your child/children for school or school-related events.

Challenges with transporting kids to school or school-related events



MNP