March xX, 2011

Dennis Trudeau  
General Manager Transportation Services and Solid Waste  
Regional District of Nanaimo  
6300 Hammond Bay Road  
Nanaimo, BC V9T 6N2

Dear Mr. Trudeau:

RE: Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Area “A” Transit Service Review & Update

As requested, this letter reviews current and projected transit demand within Electoral Area “A” of the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN). This area is already served by the Nanaimo Regional Transit System and has options for expanded service included in the April 2008 Nanaimo Regional Transit Business Plan. Therefore, the focus of this review is primarily to re-examine current and proposed service levels for the area in light of any demographic, operational, or land use changes, particularly since the Electoral Area is in the process of finalizing a revised Official Community Plan (OCP). The revised OCP is currently going before the RDN Board of Directors for first and second reading, with the earliest potential adoption in May, 2011.

1.0 Community Overview

1.1 Community Profile and Key Destinations
RDN Electoral Area “A” is the southern-most electoral area, south of the City of Nanaimo and north of the Town of Ladysmith and Electoral Area “H” of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Area “A” has a population of approximately 6,750 in the following communities:

- **Cedar** is the centre of Area “A” and is comprised of single-family residences, a small portion of multi-family residential and commercial/retail services, such as a grocer, pharmacy and restaurants. The Cedar village area also boasts elementary, intermediate and secondary schools, a fire hall, and two community centres.

- **Cassidy** is located at the south of Area “A” and contains a significant residential population and small-scale retail uses. The Nanaimo Regional Airport is directly adjacent Cassidy.

- **Cedar by the Sea** is located at the northeast of Area “A” and is comprised of single-family residences. Cable Bay and Oceanview are two significant proposed developments immediately north of Cedar by the Sea (within the City of Nanaimo), and include up to a potential new 4,500 residential units.

- **Yellowpoint** is located at the southeast of Area “A” and contains largely large-lot residential uses, with some tourist and bed-and-breakfast activities.

- **South Wellington** is at the northwest of Area “A”. It is comprised of single-family residential properties, a commercial/industrial area adjacent the Trans Canada Highway, a school, fire hall, and community centre.
Cedar is the area’s primary service centre. The Trans Canada Highway runs north-south through Area “A” and serves as the basis for highway-oriented commercial and industrial uses in the Cassidy and South Wellington communities. South Parkway Plaza is located on the Trans Canada Highway immediately north of Area “A”. Area residents also rely heavily on Nanaimo and to a lesser extent, Ladysmith for access to employment and services.1

The remainder of Area “A” is predominantly rural in nature, including nearly 60% rural residential lands, 27% agricultural lands, and a series of parks and undeveloped crown properties.

1.2 Land Use and Demographics

The RDN is currently in the process of revising the OCP, slated for adoption as early as May 2011. While policy directions have yet to be formally adopted, there are a number of conclusions that are of interest to this study.

- Cedar and Cassidy are the only communities within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB), meaning that the majority of future development will occur in these areas. Additional residential, commercial, and mixed-use development is supported in Cedar and a range of housing types, commercial, and industrial uses are supported in Cassidy.
  - The most significant development proposed within the UCB in the near term is the Cedar Estates area in the Cedar village, which will feature mixed uses, good pedestrian connections and is the site of a new 75-unit senior’s residential development.
  - Upcoming work is proposed to take place to further define the Cedar Main Street area and the Cassidy Village.

- The OCP proposes the expansion of light industrial-zoned land in South Wellington, which in turn could increase travel demand to the area from elsewhere within the RDN.

- Significant development is proposed for Cable Bay and Ocean View, immediately north of Area “A”. A rezoning application has been submitted to the City of Nanaimo for the Cable Bay properties which includes 2,000 residential units, retail, and a hotel. The adjacent Ocean View proposal is expected to include over 2,500 residential units, a golf course, and significant commercial/retail space.

- In terms of transportation, the draft OCP supports increasing community sustainability and health by reducing dependence on automobiles. The focus of this shift is on increasing active transportation and travel modes other than single occupant vehicles. In terms of transit, the OCP specifically notes that the community supports “expanding transit service where it is justified by cost and demand to serve Cassidy and South Wellington.” The draft OCP also supports:
  - Improved handyDART and transit services to remote neighbourhoods, where it can be efficiently delivered, potentially using alternate service delivery models.
  - Use of smaller transit vehicles where feasible and other means to reduce emissions.

1 2006 Census information backs up this much stronger emphasis on travel north to the Nanaimo area rather than south to Ladysmith and the Cowichan Valley. Of the 71% (2,355 people) of Area A’s work force who travel to a regular place of work (with the remainder either working from home or at varying locations), 15% (345) commute within Area A, 67% (1,580) to elsewhere in the RDN, and 18% (415) are employed beyond the RDN, likely to other communities to the south.
- Transit service to the Airport
- Improving the link between land use and transit by a number of means (focusing density on lands within the Growth Containment Boundary, assessing transit impacts in conjunction with development, etc.)
- Looking at opportunities to gain transit-related amenities (bus shelters, park & rides, etc.) as part of the development process.

There are only a limited number of road network changes envisioned in the OCP, including:
- Future streetscape upgrade along Cedar Road within the Cedar village (Cedar Main Street).
- The potential connection between Barnes Rd and Duke Point Highway (Hwy 19), which would enable access between the Cedar village and the proposed Oceanview development.

Population growth in Area “A” has been slower than the rest of the RDN. The 2006 Census indicates that the Area “A” population is 6,751. It is expected that the 2026 population will be approximately 8,700, an increase of approximately 1.4% per year.

Based on the 2006 Census, Area “A” has slightly fewer (10.7% vs. 11.8%) youth and young adults in the age 15 to 24 age bracket, which tends to have strong transit ridership. However, the Area has a larger number of youth below the age of 15 than the rest of the RDN (16.5% vs. 14.3%). This would seem to indicate good opportunity to grow youth ridership in this community in the future.

Area “A” has slightly fewer younger seniors (ages 55 – 74) and about half the number of older seniors (age 75+) than the region as whole. Older seniors are much more likely to take transit than their younger counterparts and so these two age brackets can provide a sense of present and future transit demand by older people.

Taken by themselves, these numbers would seem to indicate less future seniors demand than other areas within the RDN. However, a significant theme within the revised OCP is the desire to build the community by attracting and retaining young families and seniors, particularly by increasing access to affordable and senior’s housing. Therefore, both the seniors and youth markets would grow as land use and development within the area evolve.

Area “A” has a higher proportion of adults aged 25 to 54 than the rest of the region (43.7% vs. 37.5%). In general, this age group can be the hardest to attract to transit and is most responsive to improved commuter frequencies and fast, direct service.
1.3 Regional Transportation
There are two major regional transportation hubs located in and adjacent to the Area “A” which are worth noting here for consideration as part of transportation options.

The Nanaimo Regional Airport (YCD) is located adjacent to Cassidy and provides air travel for the entire mid-Island. Air Canada, Island Express Air, and Orca Air operate regular passenger service to Vancouver, Victoria, and Abbotsford. Smaller operators and flight schools also operate out of the Airport. In 2006 approximately 140,000 passengers flew through YCD. The Airport forecasts 2026 passenger volumes of 334,000 passengers, almost 2.5-times the number of passengers in 2006. A recent runway expansion was undertaken to accommodate larger planes and allow for direct travel to further destinations. The Airport also plans to expand its airside and groundside uses in the future. While these uses have not been confirmed, the expansion of either commercial or industrial uses would potentially change the profile of feasible transit services to the airport site. There is currently no transit service to the Nanaimo Airport, with ground transportation now being provided by:

- Nanaimo Airporter – service to Greater Nanaimo area, including as far south as Ladysmith and north to Parksville/Qualicum.
- AC Taxi – fleet of 44 vehicles providing service to the mid-Island.
- Greyhound Bus – service between Nanaimo and Victoria four times daily.
- Car rental service – Budget, Avis, National.

Cost to park a vehicle at the Airport is $1 per hour or $8 per day, as compared to the current Nanaimo transit fare of $2.25 each way.

The Duke Point Ferry Terminal is located immediately north of Area “A” and provides passenger ferry service to Tsawwassen. No immediate changes are anticipated to the Terminal. Transit service was previously provided to the terminal when it opened but was discontinued after several years. The terminal is now served only by the Nanaimo Airporter and AC Taxi. While Duke Point Ferry Terminal is not within Area “A,” it has been considered as part of this review given its close proximity, regional significance and potential impacts on Area “A” transit routing.

2.0 Existing Transit Service

2.1 Overview of Current Transit Service
Within Area “A,” the Nanaimo Regional Transit System currently provides both conventional transit service (operating on fixed routes and schedules) and custom handyDART transit service (on demand travel for people with disabilities registered with the system).

Conventional Transit: The 7 Cinnabar / Cedar route currently offers service to the Cedar village, surrounding residential area in Cedar and the residential neighbourhood of Cinnabar north of Area “A.” Trips operate in a number of patterns, with most trips serving a loop through the more populous area of Cinnabar alone, some offering combined service to Cedar and Cinnabar, and a minority (three per weekday) serving a loop through the Cedar area alone. All trips start and end at South Parkway Plaza, where they continue in service to other Nanaimo area destinations as the route 8 South and 9 North.
In all, the number of trips serving Cedar range from seven trips per weekday to five trips per Sunday. While there are slightly more trips clustered in the afternoon commuter period, service to Cedar is very sporadic, operating at intervals that vary throughout the day from one to four hours. This inconsistent and infrequent schedule makes it harder to build ridership on the route.

Similarly, the practice of combining Cedar trips with those serving Cinnabar Valley offers operational and cost efficiencies. This practice may be appropriate for the population and density of Cedar but it also means less direct travel and therefore less convenience for passengers, again impacting potential ridership.

On the other hand, since all route 7 trips currently operate as “no transfer required” extensions to routes 8 South and 9 North—which offer direct travel to key destinations along the linear spine of the Nanaimo area (from South Parkway Plaza to Woodgrove Mall)—this operational design reduces the number of transfers required for Cinnabar and Cedar residents once they are on a bus and improves the convenience of the route.

**Custom Transit:** Custom or handyDART service is available to eligible people with a disability living in all areas within Electoral Area “A.” There are currently six individuals within Area “A” who use the service regularly. Due to the length of time required to travel to and within Area “A”, handyDART service to the area is usually limited to about three hours per week.

### 2.2 Operational Issues
Discussion with RDN Transportation Services staff noted the following key operational issues for the existing Area “A” transit services:

- The most frequent passenger complaint / request for change is for an increase in service frequency, particularly to Cedar during commuter times and additional evening trip. (Currently there is a gap in evening service Monday to Saturday with no trip offered between approximately 6:00pm and the last trip after 10:00pm.

- Lack of coverage for existing service—especially to Cassidy, the Airport and Yellow Point resorts.

- The looped nature of service in the Cedar area, meaning that local residents cannot easily access their closest service centre in both directions.

- Operational issues accessing the stops within South Parkway Plaza.

- Extremely limited access to handyDART services.

The Director for the Area also highlighted a lack of transit coverage to Cassidy, the Airport, Cedar by the Sea and Ladysmith.
3.0 Existing Business Plan Proposals for Electoral Area “A”

Approved by the RDN in April 2008, the Nanaimo Regional Transit Business Plan outlines long-term transit system objectives and development, including transit service guidelines, performance measures and service options.

A major theme underlying many of the Business Plan service options is the proposed evolution of the 8 South / 9 North routes into a frequent, limited stop “Bus Rapid Transit-style” spine for the region. Impacting feeder transit services across the entire RDN, it is envisioned that this spine would operate between Woodgrove Mall and Downtown Nanaimo, with alternating extensions operating to Vancouver Island University (VIU) and South Parkway Plaza. The eventual frequency for the route projected over an optimal ten year time frame (as outlined in the culmination of Business Plan Proposals S3, M1, M2 and M13) was to be 15 minute service throughout each weekday between Woodgrove and Downtown and 30 minute service between Downtown and South Parkway Plaza / VIU. Service between Woodgrove and Downtown was envisioned to have limited stops while the Downtown to South Parkway Plaza portion would retain more local-style stop spacing.

Similarly, the Transit Business Plan also proposed additional service on the existing VIU Connector (Proposal S8) to enable it to extend from Vancouver Island University to South Parkway Plaza on half of its trips. Offering connections to the 7 Cinnabar / Cedar at South Parkway Plaza, it would enable students and other commuters to more easily connect to the University, Nanaimo North Town Centre, Woodgrove Centre and other destinations.

Since the rapid transit route and extension to the VIU connector are so regionally significant, they are not specifically addressed in this update except where it impacts Area “A” through transfers to local services at South Parkway Plaza. This report assumes their eventual implementation as presented in the Business Plan. However, these proposed routes and all others in the region are scheduled to be reassessed and confirmed when BC Transit collaborates with the RDN to undertake an update to the Business Plan in 2012.

Local transit service options presented for Area “A” in the 2008 Transit Business Plan include:

- **Short Term Proposal S7: 7-Cinnabar/Cedar 3 additional trips per day**
  This option would add three additional trips per day (Monday to Saturday) on the 7 Cinnabar / Cedar route to increase travel choices and help make service more attractive for commuters. As noted in the recent operational review with RDN Transit staff, requests for increased service frequency have been particularly numerous from residents of these areas.

- **Medium Term Proposal M8: 7-Cinnabar/Cedar increased service frequency**
  This option was proposed to build on the three trips added in Proposal S7 and was contingent on the implementation of the rapid transit spine. Proposal M8 would improve frequency in order to provide more consistent hourly service to Cinnabar and service every two hours to Cedar during the day. As this option would now require route 7 Cinnabar / Cedar passengers to transfer from local services to the rapid transit style spine at South Parkway Plaza, it also included provision for three commuter trips in both the morning and afternoon peak weekday periods to route directly to Downtown Nanaimo. It also increased Monday to Saturday evening service.
- **Proposal M14: 7-Cinnabar/Cedar 30-minute peak period and 60-minute evening service**
  In concert with population growth, this proposal built on service implemented through proposal M8 to increase the peak period service frequencies to half-hourly service to Cinnabar and hourly service to Cedar. It also further increased evening service frequencies. (The original title to this Business Plan Proposal seems to be a misnomer as the Cinnabar area already has essentially hourly service and there are enough hours to increase Cedar evening service in Proposal M8).

The Transit Business Plan also mentions the potential to extend service to several areas south of Nanaimo without specific proposals. Consideration is given to the Cassidy / Nanaimo Regional Airport / Timberlands Road areas, noting a 2002 transit feasibility study and growing demand.

Ladysmith is also identified as a potential RDN transit destination, particularly to connect with Cowichan Valley Transit and facilitate connections between systems. Connecting service would require jurisdictional coordination with the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) and assumes provision of a Duncan to Ladysmith route within the Cowichan Valley Transit System.

### 4.0 Transit Service Option Review and Key Conclusions
Based on the Area “A” service demand profile, current operational issues and projected land use and demographics from the revised Official Community Plan, the following conclusions are drawn from the review of the existing Transit Business Plan:

- In general, the existing Transit Business Plan proposals align with the direction of the proposed Area “A” OCP, in particular the build up of service to Cedar village (in concert with increases to Cinnabar Valley service). Therefore, these options simply require updated cost information, provided in section 4.1 of this letter.

- Cassidy’s importance in the Area “A” OCP and the potential for new commercial / industrial uses at the Airport and South Wellington increase the need to specifically propose transit options for these areas. While it could perhaps have been more clearly expressed in the Transit Business Plan, it appears that the operational model proposed for the medium term route 7 Cinnabar / Cedar services would actually have sufficient time to incorporate service to South Wellington, Cassidy, and the Airport. This is discussed further in section 4.1.

- This review also specifically looked at the feasibility of transit for other neighbourhoods currently unserved by transit, in particular Cedar by the Sea and Yellowpoint. Based on the new OCP, existing road network and area demographics, scheduled transit service is not recommended for these areas since it would be cost prohibitive for the relatively low number of potential passengers. However, costing for a rural transit service option using trip windows is provided in section 4.1 for information and for potential consideration in the long term after other priority service options have been implemented.

- A Nanaimo-Ladysmith transit service cost estimate is included for information as an alternative service option for the Nanaimo Airport and Cassidy. Decision makers should be aware that Ladysmith service is currently under review by BC Transit as part of the Cowichan Valley Transit Future Plan scheduled for completion in summer 2011. Therefore, that option would be contingent on Cowichan Valley plan findings as well as BC Transit long term approach to regional services connecting communities along Vancouver Island. Ladysmith also operates a trolley bus service locally, which should be considered in any future transit plans to the area.
4.1 Updated Transit Service Options
The following provides updated transit service options for RDN Electoral Area “A.” Where existing Transit Business Plan options are still relevant, they are presented with updated cost information.

Costs provided are estimates based on projected 2011/12 budget information for the applicable conventional and handyDART portions of the Nanaimo Regional Transit System. Actual costs may vary depending on date of implementation and final operational plan. Revenue estimates are based on current Regional District of Nanaimo fares.

Vehicle costs reflect current use of asset charges for either standard-sized conventional vehicles or minibuses, as applicable. Minibuses are already in use on the handyDART portion of the Nanaimo Regional Transit system and BC Transit is in the process of evaluating additional smaller accessible vehicles for use in rural communities and small towns. In all cases, minibus vehicles are between 21 and 28 feet long and carry between 10 and 23 seated passengers with room for two to four passengers using wheelchairs and scooters.

Option 1 - Updated Transit Business Plan Proposal S7: 7-Cinnabar / Cedar Three Additional Trips per Day

- As outlined in the Transit Business Plan, this option would add three additional trips per day (Monday to Saturday) on the 7 Cinnabar / Cedar route to increase travel choices and help make service more attractive for commuters.

- Further discussion:
  - This option still makes sense as the priority improvement for Area “A.”
  - This review also looked at the feasibility of implementing an additional evening trip to Cedar at around 8:00pm, the other priority resident request. While the cost to extend an additional existing 7 Cinnabar trip to Cedar is relatively modest (130 additional annual hours, $9,000 total additional annual cost), it is not advisable to add this single evening trip due to its operational impact on other adjoining trip schedules. This negative impact is reduced when the full complement of evening trips is changed as proposed by the updated M8 option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Information – Estimated Annual Impacts</th>
<th>Option 1 - Updated Transit Business Plan Proposal S7: 7-Cinnabar / Cedar Three Additional Trips per Day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Hours: 700</td>
<td>Passenger Revenue: $19,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Ridership: 14,000</td>
<td>Total Cost: $60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicles Required: 0</td>
<td>Net Local Share of Costs: $17,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provincial Share of Costs: $24,000</td>
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</table>
Option 2 – Updated Transit Business Plan Proposal M8: 7-Cinnabar/Cedar Increased Service Frequency, Plus Service to South Wellington / Cassidy / Nanaimo Airport

- This option is contingent on the new rapid transit spine being implemented, as outlined in the Transit Business Plan.

- This option realigns Cinnabar / Cedar service to connect to that spine by transfer at South Parkway Plaza and improves service frequencies to hourly service to Cinnabar and every two hours to Cedar during the day. It also extends three commuter trips in both the morning and afternoon peak weekday periods to route directly to Downtown Nanaimo. These commuter trips bring frequencies in the commuter period closer to half-hourly for Cinnabar and hourly for Cedar.

- Further discussion:
  - The costs for this option also include provision to increase Cedar’s evening trips to hourly service.
  - Given the service model described in the Transit Business Plan, there appears to be already enough time within this option to also enable extension of service to South Wellington, Cassidy (via Hwy 1 and Vowels, Hallberg and Timberlands roads) and Nanaimo Airport. Initial service could be in the order of five trips per day.
  - Another benefit to this service model is that, depending on passenger capacity requirements and available fleet types at the time of implementation, it appears that it would be feasible to operate it with a smaller minibus.
  - As described earlier, the drawback to the service model proposed for this option is that it would now require Cedar and Cinnabar passengers to transfer from one bus to another at South Parkway Plaza. Given current schedule running times, the wait times between buses using this approach might not be optimal. The detailed scheduling and routing implications of a transfer at South Parkway Plaza should be confirmed as part of the upcoming update to the Transit Business Plan.

Updated Summary Information – Estimated Annual Impacts
Option 2 - Updated Transit Business Plan Proposal M8: 7-Cinnabar/Cedar Increased Service Frequency, Plus Service to South Wellington / Cassidy / Nanaimo Airport

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service Hours: 2,600</th>
<th>Passenger Revenue: $72,000</th>
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<td>Annual Ridership: 52,000</td>
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<td>Vehicles Required: 1</td>
<td>Net Local Share of Costs: $91,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provincial Share of Costs: $94,000</td>
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Option 3 – Updated Transit Business Plan Proposal M14: Further Frequency Improvements to the 7-Cinnabar/Cedar/ Cassidy / Airport Service

- As outlined in the Transit Business Plan, this proposal builds on service implemented in proposal M8. It would increase peak period service frequencies to at least half-hourly service to Cinnabar and hourly service to Cedar.

- Following from the discussion in Option 2, above, it also includes provision for further frequency improvements to Cassidy / Nanaimo Airport and evening service.

**Updated Summary Information – Estimated Annual Impacts**

**Option 3 - Further Frequency Improvements to the 7-Cinnabar/Cedar/ Cassidy / Airport Service**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service Hours: 2,300</th>
<th>Passenger Revenue: $63,000</th>
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<td>Vehicles Required: 1</td>
<td>Net Local Share of Costs: $81,000</td>
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<td>Provincial Share of Costs: $87,000</td>
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Option 4 – Rural handyDART Service Model

- The above conventional options would use an accessible vehicle and would therefore offer service to people with a disability at bus stops within the built up neighbourhoods of Area “A.” However, other types of service should be considered since conventional trips will not meet the needs of people who have more extensive mobility or cognitive disabilities. Considering handyDART improvements also provides a way to ensure a basic level of mobility for people with a disability living in more rural and remote neighbourhoods of Area “A.”

- The Transit Business Plan includes a number of short term and medium term options to improve handyDART service, including more service hours and increased taxi supplement and Taxi Saver Program budgets. The Business Plan states that these improvements would mainly be targeted within District 68 (Nanaimo) and District 69 (Oceanside).

- The purpose of this option, then, is to highlight a handyDART strategy that might work specifically for Area “A” as a way of balancing the positive community benefits of ensuring basic community mobility and the ability to “age in place” with the area’s overall rural nature and moderate population density.

- Further discussion:
  - This medium to long term option would more formally create a pair of handyDART “trip windows” on two days per week. A published trip window indicates to potential users when the handyDART vehicle would be available for service in their area (say 10:00am to 11:00am, 2:00pm to 3:00pm, etc.). A more specific drop off or pick up time within that trip window is provided by the dispatcher when the handyDART client books his or her trip. Trip windows can be initially created around existing regularly booked handyDART trips to minimize disruption to current users.
o By using stated trip windows, it can be easier to group a number of Area “A” passengers together on a handyDART loop through the community since passengers will book their appointments with the specified days and service times in mind. This in turn ensures that the handyDART service is as effectively used as possible.

o The handyDART vehicle only travels to where it needs to and unused time within the window is absorbed into the larger system to accommodate other handyDART requests for travel elsewhere. The existing taxi supplement and Taxi Saver programs would provide Area “A” handyDART users with other back up means of travel if the trip windows do not work.

o Over time, it is possible to evolve this service over additional times and days, as well as open up trips to people without a disability living in specified areas depending on demand and need.

o The Comox Valley Transit System uses this method to deliver service to disabled and non-disabled people in two rural electoral areas outside Comox. (www.transitbc.com/regions/com/schedules/community_bus.cfm)

Updated Summary Information – Estimated Annual Impacts
Option 4 - Rural handyDART Service Model

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service Hours: 360*</th>
<th>Passenger Revenue: $3,000</th>
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<td>Annual Ridership: 1,100</td>
<td>Total Cost: $21,000*</td>
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<td>Vehicles Required: 0*</td>
<td>Net Local Share of Costs: $8,000</td>
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<td>Provincial Share of Costs: $10,000</td>
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* Note that this option could be implemented by allocating a portion of future handyDART expansion to this service or by adding this amount of hours to that expansion. No vehicle is shown since this option would only be able to be implemented in conjunction with further expansions to handyDART fleet and hours in the rest of the system.

4.2 Additional Transit Service Considerations
This section details a number of considerations that arose out of this update but which did not fit into the above service options.

Cassidy Village Plan:
The Area “A” OCP vision for Cassidy is one of a rural village that would be developed to “become a local service centre complete with a mix of housing types.” It is proposed to conduct a village plan for Cassidy. The placement of the Cassidy village centre has a substantial impact on which form of transit is most suitable for this area, Nanaimo Airport and Ladysmith. In collaboration with RDN Transit staff, BC Transit would welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Cassidy Village plan as it develops.

Ladysmith Service:
Option 2 above details the likely ability to provide introductory service to South Wellington, Cassidy and Nanaimo Airport in conjunction with the changes to Cedar service and a regional rapid transit spine implemented at the same time. While exact routing would be confirmed upon implementation, Option 2 service to Cassidy and the Airport is built on the idea of a loop at the end of the route: Trans-Canada Hwy, Vowels Rd.,
Hallberg Rd., Timberlands Rd., Airport, return on Trans-Canada Hwy. This routing allows better access to transit for residents living in the mobile home parks on Hallberg Rd.

The alternative means of serving South Wellington, Cassidy and the Nanaimo Airport would be to include these on a connector route to Ladysmith. However, it would be advantageous for such a route to be as direct as possible, meaning that opportunity to deviate off the Trans-Canada Hwy would be limited and that in effect a choice would need to be made between offering good connection to the Airport Terminal building on one side of the highway or the Cassidy village on the other. This is why the proposed Cassidy Village Plan (and the Airport’s strategic plan) are so important. As mentioned previously, connection in Ladysmith also depends on the outcome of the Cowichan Valley Transit Future Plan.

In light of these different processes, the proposed 2012 update to the Nanaimo Regional Transit Business Plan should include a more thorough study of this regional link and more discussion and involvement would be required from the Cowichan Valley Regional District. In the meantime, the following is meant to give decision makers a preliminary sense of scope of a connection that would operate from South Parkway Plaza (and connections to other RDN services) to Downtown Ladysmith via Trans Canada Highway.

Based a preliminary schedule of five trips per weekday (two commuter trips in the morning and afternoon peak period plus a midday trip), four trips on Saturdays and three on Sundays and Holidays, such a service would require in the order of 2,100 service hours per year and have a total cost in the order of $214,000. Based on annual ridership of 27,000 and annual passenger revenue of $37,000, this would mean a provincial share of $74,000 and local share of $103,000.

**Service to Oceanview / Duke Point:**
No options are presented here for service to these areas because the development of the Oceanview site is still in flux. Also, since services to these areas would likely operate out of South Parkway Plaza, their possible impact on Area “A” service consists mainly of sharing the same vehicle to perform separate trips. Given build out time frame and the current vision of land use for the Oceanview site—as well as potential ridership on a Duke Point route—the Area “A” Options 1-3 presented above are recommended as the priority.

Alternatively, linking Oceanview service through to Area “A” would depend on implementation of a connection to Barnes Road. While a transit link through here may make it easier for Cedar by the Sea residents to access transit, the current rural nature of the Barnes Road roadway and zoning are less supportive of a transit link. **It would be wiser to enable good pedestrian and cycling linkages from Cedar by the Sea to Oceanview to enable residents to access transit there.**

**Cedar Main Street:**
The draft Area “A” OCP recommends conducting a Cedar Village plan that would include confirming transit interface. **In collaboration with RDN Transit staff, BC Transit would welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Village plan.** It may also be useful to include “Transit amenities” in Policy 6.2.7 of the plan for consideration of amenities to be provided in conjunction with rezoning applications in the Cedar Main Street area.
Park & Rides:
Both the current Area “A” OCP and the new draft (Map 3 – Active Transportation, Mobility Options, Road Network Plan, Sand and Gravel Pits) show an “Area of Interest for Transit Service / Park & Ride” in the South Wellington area, centered in the vicinity of the Trans-Canada Hwy at Morden Road. **Given the amount of service that Transit Business Plan proposes to be provided to South Parkway Plaza and the transfer model to be used, the South Parkway location (while out of Area “A”) may actually make better sense for a Park & Ride.**

Secondarily, integrating transit-related parking capacity into the Cassidy or Cedar Villages could also be effective since most people like to “chain” their trips together, especially on the way home (e.g. stop to pick up groceries, perform errands, etc.). Locating a Park & Ride near these daily services can make them more attractive. The transit planning work proposed for 2012 will include a more comprehensive look at Park & Rides throughout the RDN.

4.3 Transit Service Option Summary
The following table summarizes the updated estimated impacts for the service options presented above. All figures are annual and are based on estimates that would require review based on actual date of implementation and confirmed service and operational details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Option Summary</th>
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<td><strong>Option 1:</strong> Updated Proposal S7: 7-Cinnabar / Cedar Three Additional Trips per Day</td>
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| Vehicles Required | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0* |
| Service Hours | 700 | 2,600 | 2,300 | 360 |
| Ridership | 14,000 | 52,000 | 46,000 | 1,100 |
| Total Revenue | $19,000 | $72,000 | $63,000 | $3,000 |
| Total Cost | $60,000 | $257,000 | $232,000 | $21,000 |
| Net Local Share of Costs* | $17,000 | $94,000 | $88,000 | $8,000 |
| Provincial Share of Costs | $24,000 | $91,000 | $81,000 | $10,000 |
| Rides per Hour | 20.6 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 3.0 |
| Cost per Ride*** | $4.29 | $4.94 | $5.04 | $19.09 |

* Note that this option could be implemented by allocating a portion of future handyDART expansion to this service or by adding this amount of hours to that expansion. No vehicle is shown since this option would only be able to be implemented in conjunction with further expansions to handyDART fleet and hours in the rest of the system.
5.0 Implementation Considerations
There are a number of issues related to next steps and implementation that should be highlighted. These have been developed in consultation with RDN staff.

- **Funding** – Under the BC Transit Act, funding for transit systems must be cost shared between BC Transit and the sponsoring local government at a prescribed rate, with passenger revenues used to offset the local share of costs. This funding arrangement means that both parties must come to the table with funding before service can be implemented. For instance, if a local municipality has funding for new transit services but the corresponding provincial share is not available, then service cannot be implemented. BC Transit receives its funding on an annual basis from the provincial government. This annual funding arrangement means that BC Transit cannot confirm a timeframe for service implementations over the long term. Typically BC Transit receives more expansion requests than available expansion funding and as such BC transit cannot accommodate all expansion requests. The current economic picture may also constrain the availability of provincial funding for transit over the next few years.

Similarly, any new service would also require provision within the RDN’s budgets.

- **Prioritization** – BC Transit uses a number of transit service performance and land use criteria to prioritize available funding for service expansions between transit systems. Therefore, moving ahead on any of the options in this update would require both available provincial funding and sufficient ranking against other community requests for services. Also, implementation depends on how services are prioritized within the RDN and how it wishes to grow ridership on the Nanaimo Regional Transit System.

- **Coordination with Other Regions and Plans** – As discussed in Section 4.2 Additional Transit Service Considerations, further discussion and coordination is needed before a link could be created between the Nanaimo Regional and Cowichan Valley transit systems. This link is also contingent on the outcome of other transit and land use plans. The timing of the proposed 2012 Nanaimo Regional Transit Future Plan, updating the current Business Plan, presents a good opportunity to reconsider that link.

- **Detailed Implementation Plan** – Once funding is confirmed for any option, BC Transit will work with the RDN to create a detailed implementation plan. This plan will finalize routes, schedules, stop locations and processes and would outline a strategy to market the new service.
6.0 Conclusions

As requested, this letter has provided an update to transit service options for Electoral Area “A” of the Regional District of Nanaimo. The option order as presented (Options 1 through 4) is also suggested as the most logical order of implementation, pending available funding and ranking against other regional priorities.

It is recommended that the Regional District of Nanaimo:
- Receive this report as information and provide comment.

Please feel free to contact me or Regional Transit Manager Myrna Moore if you have any further questions on this update.

Sincerely,

Tom Day
Manager of Strategic Planning

Cc: Daniel Pearce: Regional District of Nanaimo Transportation Services
    Myrna Moore: BC Transit