

November 16, 2023

BC Transit Launches Umo Digital Fare Payments in the Regional District of Nanaimo Transit System

Transit System: Regional District of Nanaimo

Today – BC Transit and the Regional District of Nanaimo celebrate the launch of the Umo (pronounced “you-mo”) electronic fare system in the Regional District of Nanaimo Transit System. Umo introduces contactless payment methods and new fare products to the region that improve the transit experience by allowing riders to pick the best options for their lifestyle and travel habits. With this development riders can now seamlessly travel on BC Transit’s interregional routes connecting Central Vancouver Island, Cowichan Valley, and Southern Vancouver Island with one convenient payment method.

New payment methods include the Umo Mobility app and a reloadable Umo card. The **Umo Mobility app** is free in the Apple App and Google Play stores. Once downloaded, riders create an account to purchase and manage their fare products. When ready to travel, riders open their app to display a dynamic QR code that serves as their fare product. As riders board the bus, they present their app’s QR code to a new onboard digital validator. The Umo app also provides riders with additional tools to help them plan their trip including real-time information and maps. Riders looking to get the most out of their transit experience can also use the app to create alerts that will inform them when they are nearing their stop while travelling and if their fare product is running low on funds or nearing its expiration date.

Riders also have the choice of using a reloadable Umo card. A **Umo card** can be picked up for free from a BC Transit Umo vendor. The card is designed for continued use and can be continually topped up with fare products through a vendor, online at ca.umopass.com, or through Umo’s customer service call centre at 877-380-8181. When ready to travel, riders will tap their card at the new onboard validator. While not required for use, riders are recommended to register their card by creating a Umo account online or through Umo customer service using the unique number on the back of their card. Registering a Umo card will safeguard any loaded fare product in the event their card is misplaced. A growing list of BC Transit Umo fare vendors in the regional district can be found at bctransit.com/nanaimo/fares/wheretobuy.

At a future date, BC Transit plans to provincially enable onboard payments with debit and credit cards. These additional payment methods will provide wider access to transit perfect for riders who utilize transit services occasionally. Both debit and credit cards will benefit from the same fare-capping policy mobile app and reloadable card riders receive.

Umo's arrival introduces changes and improvements to some of the fare products riders use with the introduction of the 30-Day Pass and Cash Balance fare products. The **30-Day Pass**, eventually replacing the existing Monthly Pass, provides riders with the same convenience of having an unlimited long-term fare product but introduces the flexibility of not having to wait until the start of a calendar month to use it. **Cash Balance**, an alternative to cash and paper Tickets, is a stored dollar amount a rider draws from as additional trips are taken. The exact date for the removal of the Monthly Pass fare product is still to be confirmed but BC Transit plans to provide riders several months to transition to a new Umo payment method. While it is expected most riders will find one of Umo's new payment methods a more convenient option, cash will continue to be accepted for those riders who prefer to use it.

The popular **DayPASS** fare product also sees improvements with Umo's arrival through an increase in the number of ways riders can access it and by lowering a rider's commitment to purchasing it. Riders paying with a Cash Balance fare product will have their fare capped and automatically converted to a DayPASS after payment on their second trip of the day. This means regardless of a rider's chosen Umo payment method a rider will never pay more than two times the value of a cash fare for unlimited daily travel within the regional district. A rider will know a DayPASS has been applied to their payment method by referencing a confirmation message on the onboard validator's digital screen.

BC Transit's **Umo customer service call centre** is live to support riders. Riders can call 877-380-8181 toll-free from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. Monday – Friday and 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday to speak to a dedicated BC Transit Umo expert and have their questions answered or receive support. The organization would like to let riders know they expect a period of transition as riders familiarize themselves with Umo payment methods and interact with the new onboard equipment for the first time. Transit drivers will continue to prioritize customer service above fare collection as Umo is rolled out should riders encounter challenges.

BC Transit's Electronic Fare Collection System Project to implement Umo across the province is funded through the Public Transit Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. This project is cost-shared with the Government of Canada contributing 50 per cent of eligible costs, the Province of British Columbia contributing 40 per cent, and the project's local government partners contributing the remaining 10 per cent. The total cost for this project in 30 transit systems is \$23,200,000.

For more information on Umo, including video tutorials, frequently asked questions, please visit bctransit.com/umo.

Quotes below.

Media Contacts

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QUOTES:

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, MP for North Vancouver – “The Government of Canada is pleased to invest in important initiatives like Umo which will provide British Columbians with more flexible transit options and a more efficient

overall experience. This investment in a modern, reliable, and efficient public transport network contributes to economic activity, community development, and climate action.”

Rob Fleming, B.C. Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure – “The introduction of this tap-the-app technology in Nanaimo is great news for transit users here and across the province, as BC Transit continues moving toward cashless tap-to-pay options in communities across B.C. This new payment method makes it easier and more to access transit and will encourage more people to discover the convenience and efficiency of our world-class public transit system.”

Vanessa Craig, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo – “The Regional District of Nanaimo is committed to working with and supporting our partners to ensure our transit service is accessible, effective, and meets the needs of riders. Implementing BC Transit’s Umo option is an exciting step that will improve access and foster seamless connections for our riders both within our region and beyond.”

Tim Croyle, Vice President, Operations and Chief Operating Officer, BC Transit – “I am so pleased to continue to take meaningful steps to achieving our goal of making BC Transit ‘your best transportation solution’ with the launch of Umo in the Regional District of Nanaimo Transit System. BC Transit is very excited to provide our riders with the innovative Umo solution and increase their access to selecting transit as their mode of choice more often.”