



## BETTER ISLAND TRANSIT

ADVOCATING FOR CONVENIENT, AFFORDABLE TRANSIT  
[www.betterislandtransit.ca](http://www.betterislandtransit.ca)

### Group Campaigns for more Public Transport Between Victoria and Duncan

(<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2078390/transport-commun-ile-vancouver-autocar>),

ICI-CBC Radio article by Mélinda Trochu, 5 June 2024.

Translated from French to English by Google

#### A huge wooden hockey stick is attached to an arena.



*Duncan, known for having the largest hockey stick in the world, is located 61 km from Victoria, taking the Malahat, Highway 1.*

Getting around by public transportation on Vancouver Island requires flexibility and often multiple connections. A group including residents, *Better Island Transit*, is campaigning for more “frequent and affordable” public transport on the island, particularly between Duncan and Victoria.

The group's president, Todd Litman, explains that more investment is needed in this sector, mainly from the province. According to him, [the] current transportation planning process does not value and invest in transportation for non-drivers.

*“In a typical community, between 20 and 40 percent of people cannot or should not drive, or do not want to drive every trip.”* A quote from Todd Litman, President, Better Island Transit

The disparities are greatest, he said, when people try to go to another city. With the clarification that if the journey remains in the same regional district, it will be easier. Between Duncan and Victoria, there are only four buses per day, he regrets, while between Victoria and Sooke, there are 43 buses.

*“Whenever I try to go to another city, the service varies from bad to terrible and it's a problem throughout British Columbia and even all of North America.”* A quote from Todd Litman, President, Better Island Transit

**The group would like a bus every hour.**

BC Transit, which manages the 66 CVX Cowichan-Victoria Express line, explains that there are approximately 1,100 weekly boardings, but that this can represent several boardings for the same person. The line, the agency explains, is geared toward customers traveling for work or school and limited service is offered on Saturdays.

BC Transit says it has not received a significant level of interest for additional service to [Duncan] at this time. However, for Todd Litman, when travelers benefit from frequent and affordable bus service, they use it.

**Todd Litman on a bike, in the street, in front of a house.**



*Group Campaigns for more Public Transport Between Victoria and Duncan*  
**Better Island Transit**

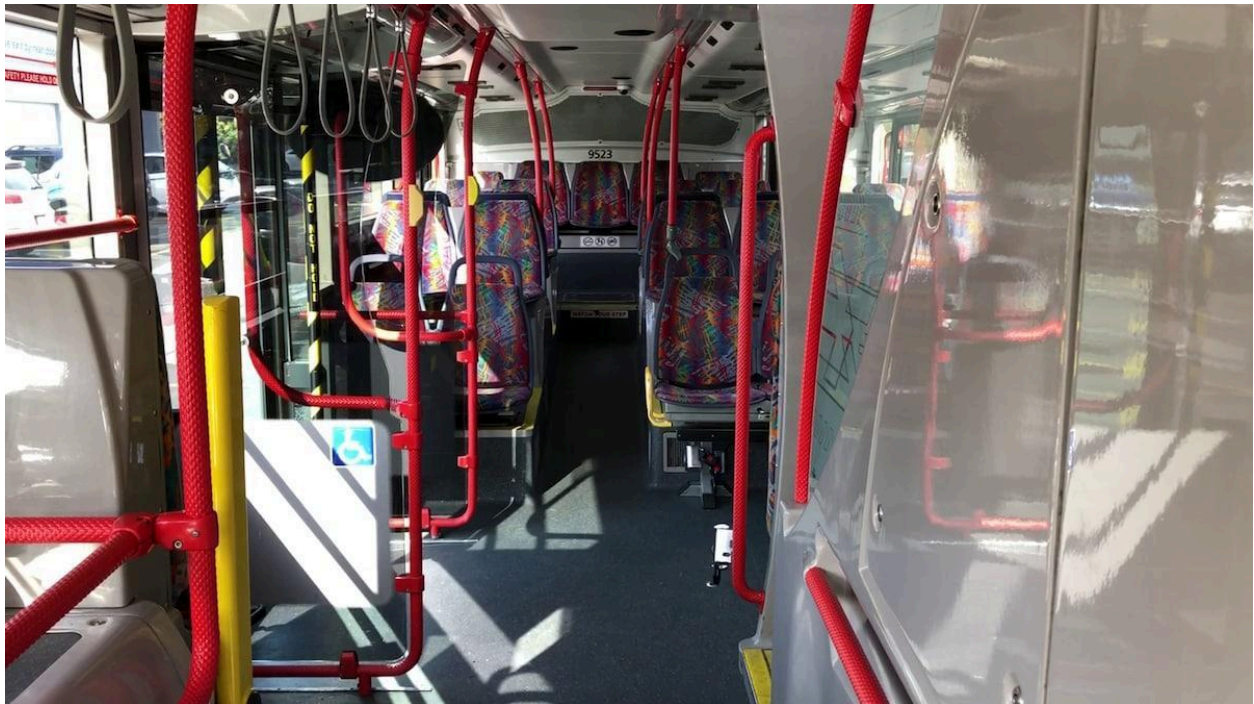
*Todd Litman says he hasn't had a car in 15 years and can travel almost anywhere in the Capital Regional District (CRD), on foot, by bike or by public transit. (Note: this is Todd riding his bamboo bike in front of his Victoria home)*

Better Island Transit would like a bus every hour between Victoria and Duncan, then Duncan and Nanaimo with fares no more than two local fares. Todd Litman says his group met with the Minister of Transportation, the CEO of BC Transit and their teams and they reportedly recognized a significant gap.

In an email, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure says investing in safe, affordable and reliable public transit services is a top priority for the province. It says British Columbia funds nearly half of BC Transit's operating and capital costs to advance important public transit services for communities.

In the 2024 budget, \$475 million over three years is dedicated to public transit in the communities served by BC Transit. Nearly \$30 million additional must be used to extend services where they are most needed.

**The interior of a bus**



*BC Transit, which manages the 66 CVX Cowichan-Victoria Express line, explains that there are approximately 1,100 weekly boardings. (Archive photo)*

Todd Litman considers that it is neither fair nor effective to ask regional districts to finance services when passengers do not necessarily stop in their regions. The solution, he says, is simple: The provincial government needs to provide a little extra funding.

### **A seasonal connection with a private company**

For his part, John Wilson, CEO of Wilson's Group, a company that holds a permit for intercity connections on the island, explains that a stop in Duncan is possible on the seasonal Victoria-Tofino route. The numbers make it unviable for private companies like ours to offer this ride full-time.

Wilson's Group's clients include tourists, Indigenous people going to their communities, people going to medical appointments or to ferries and airports. John Wilson says financing his company's lines would be more economical for the province than strengthening those of BC Transit which has problems recruiting drivers and on certain vehicles. [Our] coaches are ready to [roll] today.

The CEO regrets the constant tug of war between federal and provincial politicians over who is responsible for rural intercity transportation, but he is convinced that private companies could recreate an intercity coach network like in the days of Greyhound.

The ministry notes that BC Transit's provincial operating funding increased by 53% between 2017 and 2024, and is expected to increase by another 8% by 2026. He says he is aware of people's concerns about traffic congestion in the south of the island and has made crucial improvements with dedicated bus lanes on various roads.

Todd Litman argues that more public transportation would certainly reduce traffic jams, particularly on the Malahat, but also accidents, parking costs and air pollution.

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