

# Creation of Bow Valley Regional Transit Services Commission

Work continues on creating a new regional organization for managing transit services in the Bow Valley. The second workshop with Steering Committee members was held on July 23, 2009. This workshop was held to discuss key components of the items that need to be submitted prior to creating a Commission. These items include:

- a draft regulation to be approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs to establish the commission and outline its basic organization and powers;
- a detailed bylaw establishing the direction, functions and procedures for the BVRTSC; and
- a five-year business plan including budgets, organizational charts and service descriptions.

Key feedback from this workshop included:

- The number of members on the Commission with voting power should be in the 8 – 10 range to enable it to function efficiently.
- There should be two voting members from each of the three municipalities – Canmore, Banff and Improvement District #9, and perhaps more than two members in total from the ski areas and the accommodation sector.
- The Commission should initially have non-voting members from Parks Canada (1), Alberta Government (2), tourism groups (1) and environmental groups (1).
- The Commission should allow for future voting members to be added if they make a significant long-term contribution to the operations or capital expenditures of the Commission and its public transit services, with the definition of “significant” being determined by the Commission.
- Key financial decisions, including approval of the annual budgets and five-year plans of the Commission, should have to be approved by a majority of its voting members and the public or private sector member most impacted in terms of costs.

Clearly, the primary purpose of the BVRTSC is to be a provider of the **regional transit service improvements** in the Banff, Canmore and Lake Louise areas. As well, improvements to local transit service (i.e., a new local bus service in Canmore and the enhancement of local bus service in Banff), as well as improvements to the existing winter (skiing), and new summer (hiking and camping) transit services are important components of the Commission’s work.

As well as new transit services, the BVRTSC mandate is to improve transit facilities and supporting services including: possible implementation of a regional Smartcard for fare payment; marketing of services to visitors, residents, and employers; and provision of new accessible buses, new shelters at regular bus stops, and transit hubs/centres for convenient transfers between local, regional and special seasonal services.

Important to the success of the new Commission will be hiring an experienced Transit Manager and obtaining additional and sustainable funding sources for transit.

The key benefits of establishing a regional transit services commission will be to provide new local and regional services and enhance existing services in order to:

- protect and improve the local environment (i.e., air and water quality and wildlife);
- offer a new means for residents and visitors to experience the attractions of the Bow Valley;
- enhance mobility for residents, employees, and visitors in Canmore and the Banff National Park;
- provide improved mobility for international guests; and
- attract more recognition and visitors to the national park.

The next workshop will be in late August to enable detailed discussions to occur in the meantime with all parties on the draft regulation, bylaw and business plan and discuss modifications to these documents.

For more information on this project, to tell us where you think transit services should be added or improved in the Bow Valley, or your thoughts on this initiative, please contact:

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