



**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Committee of the Whole
AGENDA
Thursday, September 7, 2023**

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>First Nations Acknowledgement</u>	
	<u>AGENDA - September 7, 2023</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
3-8	Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - June 8, 2023	Approve
	<u>REPORTS</u>	
9	Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services - National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - September 30, 2023	Recommendation
10-13	Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development - Rural Bursary Policy	Discussion
	<u>REGIONAL TRANSIT</u>	
14-26	Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning Bulkley-Nechako Transit Service (Bylaw 1790) Amendment Bylaws	Discussion
	<u>CORRESPONDENCE</u>	
27-30	City of Quesnel - Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project Request for Support	Receive

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

IN-CAMERA MOTION

That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) and (2)(b) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to the following:

- ***Fire Safety Act***
- **Labour Relations**
- **Legacy Funding**
- **Northwest B.C Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA)**

ADJOURNMENT

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING****Thursday, June 8, 2023**

PRESENT:	Chair	Mark Parker
	Directors	Shane Brienen Leroy Dekens Judy Greenaway Clint Lambert Linda McGuire Shirley Moon Kevin Moutray Chris Newell Michael Riis-Christianson Stoney Stoltenberg Sarrah Storey Henry Wiebe
	Directors Absent	Gladys Atrill, Town of Smithers Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James
	Alternate Directors	Judith Friesen, District of Fort St. James Frank Wray, Town of Smithers
	Staff	Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services John Illes, Chief Financial Officer Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – arrived at 10:49 a.m., left at 11:05 a.m. Justin Greer, First Nations Liaison – via Zoom Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – arrived at 10:49 a.m. Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
	Others	Elijah Newell, Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural) Fred Sam, Councillor, Nak'azdli Whut'en

FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**CALL TO ORDER** Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:47 a.m.

**AGENDA &
 SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

Moved by Director Brien
 Seconded by Director Lambert

C.W.2023-5-1

"That the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 8, 2023 be approved; and further, that the Supplementary Agenda be dealt with at this meeting."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole
 Minutes – April 6, 2023

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
 Seconded by Director McGuire

C.W.2023-5-2

"That the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of April 6, 2023 be received."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

Regional Solid Waste Advisory
 Committee

Moved by Director Dekens
 Seconded by Director Brien

C.W.2023-5-3

"That the Committee receive the Director of Corporate Services' Regional Solid Waste Advisory Committee memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Canada's Rural & Remote
 Broadband Community
 (CRRBC) Western Conference
 and Expo – November 2-3, 2023
 in Kelowna

Moved by Director Lambert
 Seconded by Alternate Director Wray

C.W.2023-5-4

"That the Committee recommend that the Board authorize attendance of Director Riis-Christianson at the 2023 Canada's Rural & Remote Broadband Community (CRRBC) Western Conference and Expo November 2-3, 2023 in Kelowna, B.C."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Union of BC Municipalities -Minister Meetings/Ministry Staff Meetings/Resolutions

Moved by Director Storey
Seconded by Alternate Director Wray

C.W.2023-5-5

"That the Committee recommend to the Board that the Minister Meeting requests be submitted for the 2023 Union of BC Municipalities Convention as amended to include: a meeting with the Honourable Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship regarding First Nations Engagement/Collaboration meeting."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Scheduling meetings with the following Ministry Staff was also discussed:

- Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development
 - cost of living and issues for northern BC residents
- BC Emergency Health Services
- Staff will bring forward a report to a future Board Meeting for Ministry Staff meeting consideration.

BC Hydro – UBCM Meeting Request

Moved by Director Storey
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

C.W.2023-5-6

"That the Committee receive the Director of Corporate Services' BC Hydro – UBCM Meeting Request memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following discussion took place:

- Correspondence the Town of Smithers received from BC Hydro regarding its grant-in-lieu of taxes allocation
- Topics for discussion at UBCM
 - o Rural internet access to BC Hydro poles
 - o Three phase power on the Southside of Francois Lake.

REPORTS (CONT'D)

Invitation – Tachick Lake
 Healing Centre Ground-
 breaking Ceremony

Moved by Alternate Director Wray
 Seconded by Director Lambert

-June 12, 2023, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

C.W.2023-5-7

“That the Committee recommend that the Board authorize the attendance of Chair Parker and Director Moon at the Tachick Lake Healing Centre Ground-breaking Ceremony on June 12, 2023.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

District of Houston - Letter
 of Support Request

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
 Seconded by Director Newell

C.W.2023-5-8

“That the Committee recommend that the Board provide a Letter of Support to the District of Houston for their funding application to the Northern Healthy Communities Fund - Capacity Building Program.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Draft 2022 Annual Report

Moved by Director Dekens
 Seconded by Director Storey

C.W.2023-5-9

“That the Committee receive the Economic Development Assistant’s Draft 2022 Annual Report memorandum.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORRESPONDENCE

Elaine Taylor – Proposed BC
 Hydro Project CAP3: Capacitor
 Station at Telkwa

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
 Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

C.W.2023-5-10

“That the Committee receive the correspondence from Elaine Taylor – Proposed BC Hydro Project CAP3: Capacitor Station at Telkwa.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CORRESPONDENCE (CONT'D)

TransCanada Yellowhead Highway Association - Letter to the Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Moved by Director
 Seconded by Director

C.W.2023-5-11

"That the Committee receive the correspondence from the TransCanada Yellowhead Highway Association to the Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

ADMINISTRATION CORRESPONDENCE

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation -Preparations for the Province of BC, Lake Babine Nation and Government of Canada meeting with the RDBN on June 22, 2023 Moved by Director Storey
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

C.W.2023-5-12

"That the Committee receive the correspondence from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation – Preparations for the Province of BC, Lake Babine Nation and Government of Canada meeting with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako on June 22, 2023."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Save Your Public Post Offices Director Storey reported concerns that Canada Post is reviewing the 1994 Moratorium on closing post offices and is opening privatized post offices in rural communities. She has contacted MP Taylor Bachrach and Roly Russell, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development regarding concerns with Canada Post's potential closure of rural post offices. Concerns were discussed regarding the potential privatization of posts offices. Director Lambert indicated that the model utilized to open a post office on the Southside of Francois Lake when Canada Post closed its Post Office is not a suitable model that should be repeated.

NEW BUSINESS (CONT'D)

Director McGuire indicated that the Village of Granisle also received the notification regarding the potential change to Canada Post Office in their community.

IN-CAMERA MOTION

Moved by Director Storey
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

C.W.2023-5-13

"That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) and (2)(b) of the *Community Charter* for the Board to deal with matters relating to the following:

- Labour Relations
- Legacy Funding
- Provincial Memorandum of Understanding
- Northwest B.C. Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA)."

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Greenaway
 Seconded by Director Newell

C.W.2023-5-14

"That the meeting be adjourned at 11:13 a.m."

(All/Directors/Majority) **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of
 Corporate Services



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors

To: Chair and Board
From: Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Date: September 7, 2023
Subject: **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation – September 30, 2023**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Monday, October 2, 2023.

BACKGROUND

At the November 2022 Board meeting, the Board adopted the 2023 RDBN Meeting Schedule, inclusive of RDBN office closures for Statutory Holidays that land on a Saturday or Sunday. The date identified for recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation was Friday, September 29, 2023.

It has been brought to staff's attention that School District 54 and 91, as well as all financial institutions, are recognizing Monday, October 2nd as the Statutory holiday. As a result, staff are recommending that the 2023 schedule be amended.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

To: Chair and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
Date: September 7, 2023
Subject: **Rural Bursary Policy**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Discussion.

BACKGROUND

As per direction at the April 6, 2023, Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting, staff are providing a draft Rural Bursary Policy for consideration.

These recommendations come as the increasingly common practice of a few schools submitting annual Grant in Aid applications for bursaries is not in line with the Board approved Grant in Aid Policy and does not result in equitable delivery across the region.

Staff are looking for additional direction regarding the following aspects of the policy:

- 1) Eligibility - The policy currently includes public, standard (brick and mortar) schools offering Grade 12 graduation as eligible. Under this definition, there are seven eligible schools in SDs 54 and 91.
Schools operating under the BC Independent School Act and schools offering online graduation programs could also be considered at the direction of the Committee. There are four independent schools and three online schools offering graduation programs in SDs 54 and 91.
- 2) Target programs – previous discussion indicated a desire to target training for professions in high demand. Some considerations have been included in the Draft Policy already and staff are interested in hearing if there are other priority sectors the Committee would like included.
- 3) Funding mechanism – staff recommend that the Bursary Policy be budgeted annually through Regional Grant in Aid. There are two options for this process. The first is that the required amount be split between all General Government contributors, the other is that the amount be split between only Rural contributors.

Based on the consideration of seven eligible schools, the annual Regional Grant in Aid taxation per partner for both scenarios would be:

All General Government Contributors	
District of Houston	\$414
Town of Smithers	\$1,232
Village of Burns Lake	\$204
District of Fort St. James	\$285
Village of Fraser Lake	\$166
Village of Granisle	\$21
Village of Telkwa	\$198
District of Vanderhoof	\$732
Electoral Area A	\$1,103
Electoral Area B	\$334
Electoral Area C	\$558
Electoral Area D	\$376
Electoral Area E	\$318
Electoral Area F	\$781
Electoral Area G	\$278
Total	\$7,000

Rural Contributors Only	
Electoral Area A	\$2,060
Electoral Area B	\$624
Electoral Area C	\$1,042
Electoral Area D	\$702
Electoral Area E	\$595
Electoral Area F	\$1,458
Electoral Area G	\$519
Total	\$7,000

The funding mechanism will inform the Policy eligibility criteria, which can include students with either a municipal or rural permanent address, or it can include only students with a permanent address in a rural Electoral Area.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft RDBN Rural Bursary Policy



**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Rural Bursary Policy
ADOPTED: TBD**

Purpose:

To provide direction for RDBN Directors and staff regarding annual bursaries to be provided to high-school students from rural Electoral Areas within the RDBN going on to post-secondary education.

Policy:

Eligible Institutions

To be eligible, a school must offer a Grade 12 graduation program. Standard Schools in School District 54 (Bulkley Valley) and School District 91 (Nechako Lakes) will be eligible for the Rural Bursary.

Eligible Institutions in SD 54 include:

Smithers Secondary School and Houston Secondary School

Eligible Institutions in SD 91 include:

Fort St. James Secondary, Lakes District Secondary, Nechako Valley Secondary, Babine Elementary-Secondary, and Fraser Lake Elementary-Secondary.

Bursary Provision

Each eligible institution managing a bursary program will receive one \$1,000 bursary annually, payable in January of a given year, without application required. RDBN Finance staff and the staff member responsible for Grant in Aid will ensure annual payment and tracking of bursary grants.

Schools receiving a bursary will be responsible for advertising the bursary, collecting and reviewing applications, and selecting the successful student to receive the award. They will be responsible for verifying eligibility requirements are met, and the bursary payment is provided to the successful student.

Schools awarding a bursary will extend an invitation to the Rural Director to present the bursary at the Commencement Ceremony by notifying the RDBN office of the date and time at least three weeks prior to the event. Directors may choose to accept or decline the invitation to present.

Eligible Students

Advertising and awarding of the bursary must follow the eligibility requirements as outlined:

- 1) The successful student must have a permanent home address in a community served by an eligible school.
- 2) The successful student must demonstrate acceptance to a post-secondary institution.

- 3) Special consideration should be given to applicants entering the following fields:
- Medical fields of study (including veterinary medicine), such as x-ray technician, dental assistant, nursing, or veterinary technician.
 - Agriculture support fields, such as meat-cutting, crop or animal sciences.
 - Teacher or Learning Support programs.
 - Local Government or Business Administration programs.
 - Programs related to Land Use Planning, Waste Management, Finance, or Recreation Management.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

To: Chair and Committee
From: Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
Date: Sept 7, 2023
Subject: **Bulkley-Nechako Transit Service (Bylaw 1790) Amendment Bylaws**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board receive this report for discussion.

BACKGROUND

At the June 4, 2020 Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting the Committee received a staff report recommending amendments to Bylaw No. 1790 to include Electoral Areas and increase the maximum requisition amount. Consideration of this recommendation was deferred by the Board.

At the November 5, 2020 Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting the Committee received the staff report recommending amendments to Bylaw No. 1790 to include Electoral Areas and increase the maximum requisition amount. The Committee received the memo and provided no direction to staff.

At the January 27, 2022 Board meeting the Board received a staff report recommending that Bylaw No. 1790 be amended to include Electoral Areas and increase the requisition limit. The Board directed staff to consult with the Rural/Agriculture Committee.

At the May 18, 2023, Board meeting the Board Directed staff to initiate the process to amend "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016" to increase the requisition limit to \$200,000 and include interested Electoral Areas as identified at the June 8, 2023 Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting.

At the June 8, 2023 Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting the Board received a staff report asking each Rural Director to identify whether they are supportive, at this time, of their Electoral Area being included in the service area. At this meeting the Committee discussed the situation and received the staff report.

At the July 13, 2023 Board meeting the Board gave first and second readings to “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw Nos. 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016, 2023” to include Electoral Areas B, C, D, F, and G in the transit service area. Electoral Area A and E were not included at this time.

The Board also gave first and second readings to “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2017, 2023 to achieve the following;

- increase the maximum requisition amount from \$90,000 to \$200,000; and
- apply the following cost apportionment formulas:

Participant Population (A) x Benefit Factor (8) = C

C (for each participant)/ TOTAL C =%requisition for each participant

The Benefit Factor for on-corridor municipal participants is 5.

The Benefit Factor for off-corridor municipal participants is 1.

The Benefit Factor for on-corridor electoral area participants is 3.33

The Benefit Factor for off-corridor electoral area participants is 0.66.

The weighting factor for on-corridor and off-corridor participants remains unchanged; however, the charge to Electoral Area participants is based on 2/3 value of land and improvements. This was done to address Electoral Area concern regarding reduced use of the service by rural residents.

The timeline for consideration of adoption of the amendment bylaws is as follows:

Step 1 - Board 1st and 2nd readings of amendment bylaws (July, 2023)

Step 2 - UBCM meetings (September)

Step 3 - 3rd reading of amendment bylaws (October, 2023)

Step 4 - Municipal Council’s authorization of amendment bylaw (November, 2023)

Step 5 - Adoption of amendment bylaws (December, 2023)

Step 6 - Submission of amendment bylaws to the Province (December, 2023)

Step 7 - Provincial approval of amendment bylaws 60 day estimate (February, 2023)

Step 8 - Board adoption of amendment bylaws (February, 2023)

Bylaw 1790 can be amended with the consent of at least 2/3 of the participants. This includes 2/3 of the eight current participating areas plus the proposed participating areas. The Electoral Area Directors of the proposed participating areas must provide their consent in writing. It is noted that voting on Bylaw 1917 at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd readings is by current participants only. However, voting for adoption of that bylaw must include all Electoral

Area Directors which have joined the service. Should bylaw 1917 be amended prior to 3rd reading and adoption an additional month should be added to the above timeline.

Consideration of 3rd reading and adoption of the amendment bylaws is to occur following discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure regarding long term funding for the service at UBCM. The Briefing Notes prepared by staff in preparation for UBCM is attached.

Taxation Scenarios

Table 1 shows the projected taxation breakdown required to raise the \$135,000 necessary for the Bulkley-Nechako Transit Service in 2024. The table shows the projected taxation based on the current municipal participation only, and with the inclusion of all Electoral Areas wishing to consider participating at this time.

Table 1

MUNICIPAL PARTICIPATION ONLY (current situation under Bylaw 1790)				MUNICIPAL AND EA PARTICIPATION (with amendments to Bylaw 1790)		
Contributor	Assist Factor	\$135,000 Taxation	%	Assist Factor	\$135,000 Taxation	%
Smithers	5	\$42,166	31%	5	\$ 32,276	23.9%
Telkwa	5	\$11,557	8.5%	5	\$ 8,846	6.6%
Houston	5	\$23,929	17.5%	5	\$ 18,317	13.6%
Granisle	1	\$528	0.5%	1	\$ 405	0.3%
Burns Lake	5	\$13,007	9.5%	5	\$ 9,957	7.4%
Fraser Lake	5	\$7,566	5.5%	5	\$ 5,792	4.3%
Fort St. James	1	\$2,173	1.6	1	\$ 1,664	1.2%
Vanderhoof	5	\$34,074	25%	5	\$ 26,083	19.3%
Electoral Area "A"				3.33	0	0
Electoral Area "B"				3.33	\$ 6,819	5.1%
Electoral Area "C" (1/5 cost				0.66	\$ 1,018	0.8%
Electoral Area "D"				3.33	\$ 6,423	4.8%
Electoral Area "E" (1/5 cost)				0.66	0	0
Electoral Area "F"				3.33	\$ 14,058	10.4%
Electoral Area "G"				3.33	\$ 3,342	2.5%
TOTAL		\$135,000	100%		\$135,000	100%

Table 2 shows the projected taxation breakdown based on the maximum requisition amount of \$90,000), and the inclusion of Electoral Areas B, C, D, F, and G in the service.

Table 3 shows the projected taxation breakdown based on the \$200,000 maximum requisition proposed under "Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit (Highway 16) Service Establishment Amendment Bylaw No. 2017, 2023, and the inclusion of Electoral Areas B, C, D, F, and G in the service.

Table 2

MUNICIPAL AND EA TAXATION (based on current \$90,000 max requisition)			
Contributor	Assist Factor	\$90,000 Taxation	%
Smithers	5	\$ 21,517	23.9%
Telkwa	5	\$ 5,898	6.6%
Houston	5	\$ 12,211	13.6%
Granisle	1	\$ 270	0.3%
Burns Lake	5	\$ 6,638	7.4%
Fraser Lake	5	\$ 3,861	4.3%
Fort St. James	1	\$ 1,109	1.2%
Vanderhoof	5	\$ 17,389	19.3%
Electoral Area "A"	3.33	0	0
Electoral Area "B"	3.33	\$ 4,546	5.1%
Electoral Area "C"	0.66	\$ 679	0.8%
Electoral Area "D"	3.33	\$ 4,282	4.8%
Electoral Area "E"	0.66	0	0
Electoral Area "F"	3.33	\$ 9,372	10.4%
Electoral Area "G"	3.33	\$ 2,228	2.5%
TOTAL		\$90,000	100%

Table 3

MUNICIPAL AND EA TAXATION (based on \$200,000 max requisition)			
Contributor	Assist Factor	\$200,000 Taxation	%
Smithers	5	\$ 47,819	23.9%
Telkwa	5	\$ 13,106	6.6%
Houston	5	\$ 27,136	13.6%
Granisle	1	\$ 599	0.3%
Burns Lake	5	\$ 14,751	7.4%
Fraser Lake	5	\$ 8,580	4.3%
Fort St. James	1	\$ 2,465	1.2%
Vanderhoof	5	\$ 38,642	19.3%
Electoral Area "A"	3.33	0	0
Electoral Area "B"	3.33	\$ 10,102	5.1%
Electoral Area "C"	0.66	\$ 1,508	0.8%
Electoral Area "D"	3.33	\$ 9,516	4.8%
Electoral Area "E"	0.66	0	0
Electoral Area "F"	3.33	\$ 20,826	10.4%
Electoral Area "G"	3.33	\$ 4,950	2.5%
TOTAL		\$200,000	100%

Table 4 shows the projected taxation breakdown based on maintenance of the 2023 municipal taxation levels into 2024 and the inclusion of Electoral Areas B, C, D, F, and G in the service. Based on this scenario the taxation raised in 2024 would be approximately

\$115,000. Operational reserve funds (\$195,608) could be used to make up the anticipated budget deficits moving forward.

Table 4

MUNICIPAL TAXATION (based on current municipal taxation levels)			
Contributor	Assist Factor	115,000 Taxation	%
Smithers	5	\$ 27,494	23.9%
Telkwa	5	\$ 7,536	6.6%
Houston	5	\$ 15,603	13.6%
Granisle	1	\$ 345	0.3%
Burns Lake	5	\$ 8,482	7.4%
Fraser Lake	5	\$ 4,934	4.3%
Fort St. James	1	\$ 1,417	1.2%
Vanderhoof	5	\$ 22,219	19.3%
Electoral Area "A"	3.33	0	0
Electoral Area "B"	3.33	\$ 5,809	5.1%
Electoral Area "C"	0.66	\$ 867	0.8%
Electoral Area "D"	3.33	\$ 5,472	4.8%
Electoral Area "E"	0.66	0	0
Electoral Area "F"	3.33	\$ 11,975	10.4%
Electoral Area "G"	3.33	\$ 2,847	2.5%
TOTAL		\$115,000	100%

Transit and Strategic Planning Priorities

The Board's recently approved strategic plan for the 2022-26 term identifies enhanced relationships and collaboration with First Nations as its first goal and lists as an objective the identification of opportunity to provide specific services to First Nations communities.

Staff note that the provision of transit service in the region is an important service to First Nation communities and the RDBN's commitment to the service represents a significant opportunity to implement the 2022-26 strategic plan. The importance of transit to First Nations is reflected in The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls which includes the following call to action.

"We call upon all governments to ensure that adequate plans and funding are put into place for safe and affordable transit and transportation services and infrastructure for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people living in remote or rural communities. Transportation should be sufficient and readily available to Indigenous communities, and in towns and cities located in all of the provinces and territories in Canada. These plans and funding should take into consideration:

- *ways to increase safe public transit;*
- *ways to address the lack of commercial transit available;*
- *and special accommodations for fly-in, northern, and remote communities".*

Staff's opinion is that the BNTS functions as a regional service and is important to the rural residents and the region's First Nations. Therefore, it is reasonable for the Electoral Areas to participate in support of the service - if it is to continue. Electoral Area participation would also help resolve infrastructure funding challenges associated with maintaining infrastructure (capital cost-bus replacement) and improving service outside of municipalities.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSIT SERVICE

Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016

The BNTS was established with the adoption of ["Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit \(Highway 16\) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016"](#). The service started operation in June of 2017. A component of the Province's Highway 16 Action Plan, the service was established by the RDBN at the Province's request, to address the lack of public transportation along Highway 16 and to reduce hitchhiking along the Highway 16 corridor. The BNTS has seen consistent ridership and has proven itself to be a valuable service to the region.

The service includes two routes that are based out of Burns Lake. Route 161 travels on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday making a round trip to Prince George. Route 162 travels on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday making a round trip to Smithers, with an additional midday run to Houston and back to Smithers before returning to Burns Lake. The cost of a ticket is \$5 and there is an option for riders to purchase a sheet of 10 tickets for \$45.

Bus Stop Locations	Bus Stop Numbers
Vanderhoof	4 locations / 1 shelter
Fraser Lake	3 locations / 1 shelter
Burns Lake	9 locations / 2 shelters
Houston	10 locations / 2 shelters
Telkwa	2 locations / 1 shelter
Smithers	6 locations / 2 shelters
Electoral Area A	Laidlaw Road / shelter Quick Road West / sign
Electoral Area B	Broman Lake Rd. / sign Decker Lake / sign Tintagel rest stop / sign Palling Reserve / shelter
Electoral Area D	Endako Pub /sign Fort Fraser / sign Nautley Reserve / sign Stellaquo Reserve / shelter
Electoral Area F	Cluculz Lake rest stop / sign
Electoral Area G	Topley / shelter

Electoral Areas are not part of the service and do not contribute taxation to the operation of the service. However, grant in aid support from Electoral Areas has been provided in past years. The Bylaw authorizes a maximum annual requisition of \$90,000 for the cost of the service. The cost is apportioned between municipalities based on their population with a benefit factor for on-corridor participants of 5 and for off-corridor participants of 1. This means that off-corridor residents (Fort St. James and Granisle) are taxed at 1/5 the rate of residents along Hwy. 16.

Transit Service Agreement and Annual Operating Agreement

The service is a partnership between the RDBN and BC Transit. The terms of the partnership are outlined in the [Transit Service Agreement \(TSA\)](#) entered into in 2017, and Annual Operating Agreements (AOAs) entered into annually.

The TSA outlines the respective RDBN and BC Transit responsibilities as follows:

- The RDBN is responsible for reviewing and approving service and performance standards based on operating and capital budgets set by BC Transit, establishing and collecting the fares and other revenues, and recommending the annual operating budget for BC Transit approval.
- BC Transit is responsible for setting the annual budget, leasing transit vehicles to the transit service operator, managing the contract with the transit service operator,

marketing, and conducting service audits and recommending standards of service to the RDBN.

The TSA and AOA do not contain any agreement regarding the cost sharing formula between the RDBN and BC Transit. The agreement is by [letter from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure \(MoTI\)](#). The Ministry has agreed to maintain their funding of 66.7% of operational costs for the BNTS until March 31, 2025. A conventional transit system is funded by BC Transit at 46.69%. There is no agreement for cost sharing for future capital costs.

Bus Stops and Transit Shelters

When the transit service was established in 2017 MoTI entered into written agreements with municipalities (Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, Burns Lake, Houston) and First Nations (Wet'suwet'en First Nation) that MoTI would build the Bus Stops and Transit Shelters and that the municipality and First Nation would be responsible for maintenance and any associated liability for the shelters.

MoTI built the bus stops and transit shelters in the rural area. The RDBN has not agreed to be responsible for replacement or maintenance of any of the infrastructure in the rural area as it is outside of the service area. However, BC Transit staff have indicated a desire for the RDBN to take responsibility for the infrastructure in the rural area. This is an area for future negotiation under the AOA process as the RDBN and BC Transit must agree on any new bus stop or transit shelter related costs. Snow clearing around bus stops in the rural area is undertaken by MoTI contractors, and the Town of Smithers empties the garbage at the Laidlaw Road bus stop.

Requests for all new bus shelters or bus stops in the rural area, in municipalities and on First Nations reserves must be made by the RDBN according to Provincial policy, and only the RDBN can access grant funding annually for 80% of new shelters through BC Transit's Shelter Program. Under the grant program 20% of shelter construction and installation costs and cost overruns is the responsibility of the RDBN unless a different funding arrangement is negotiated in the AOA. This includes new infrastructure on reserve.

Inclusion of Electoral Areas within the service establishment bylaw would allow the RDBN to formalize its role regarding transit infrastructure in the rural area and allow for improved rural infrastructure.

Bus Replacement

In a conventional system lease fees are a cost share between the local government partner and BC Transit. The total monthly lease cost for each of the light duty buses that are in service for the BNTS would be \$3,092. This is the standard lease fee rate charged for all light duty buses, then depending on the funding agreement with BC Transit, the Local Government would pay their share. If the BNTS was a conventionally funded system this would translate to an annual cost to the RDBN of \$24,488 per bus and if lease payments were funded under the current funding formula the annual cost to the RDBN would be \$12,244 per bus.

When the transit service was established in 2017 BC Transit supplied the 3 buses required to operate the service. The buses have a 30-passenger capacity and are equipped with wheelchair lifts. These buses are scheduled for replacement in 2023. Staff have received a verbal indication from BC Transit that the busses will be replaced in 2023 with Provincial and Federal funding, however, this has not been confirmed in writing.

Ridership

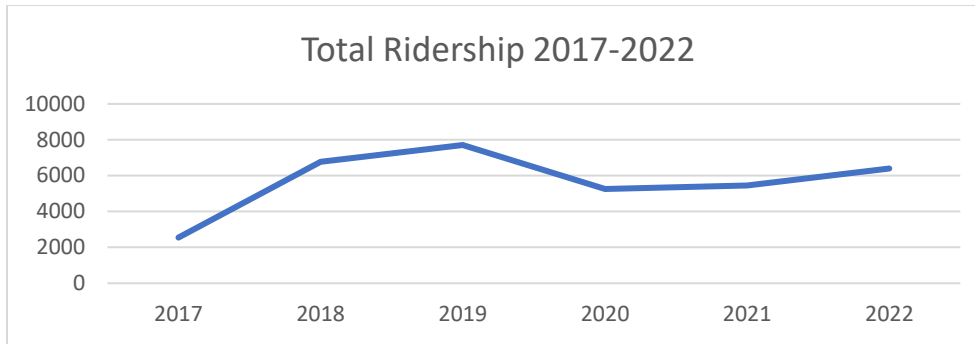
The following table provides 2022 ridership numbers. The BNTS was one of the few systems in the province where Covid-19 had little effect on ridership numbers.

Route 161 – Burns Lake to Prince George

YR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2022	318	306	427	290	310	368	293	446	319	440	399	402	4318
2021	227	249	353	253	295	301	364	357	285	324	249	312	3569
2020	423	430	328	112	198	275	258	170	268	326	228	273	3289
2019	443	272	451	432	420	395	496	249	413	503	554	512	5140
2018	361	299	394	306	491	410	433	368	364	460	473	374	4733
2017							261	316	288	339	275	362	1841

Route 162 – Burns Lake to Smithers

YR	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2022	130	110	204	182	186	164	173	241	144	175	174	195	2078
2021	125	118	164	158	136	242	176	163	118	150	161	135	1846
2020	166	239	158	114	107	190	194	97	192	189	182	144	1972
2019	216	161	210	266	228	226	232	86	206	185	325	227	2568
2018	230	95	121	160	211	195	166	189	166	175	190	148	2046
2017							153	123	90	131	90	120	707



The bus from Burns Lake to Prince George is on average 47% full and the bus from Burns Lake to Smithers is 23% full. A survey of riders was conducted in 2017 (November), 2018 (March, July, and December), and 2019 (May and November) to better understand where transit riders live. A total of 23% of riders filled out the survey. Results indicate that rural ridership was slightly higher than municipal ridership. The survey report was presented at the [October 2020 Regional Transit Committee meeting](#) (link).

Operating Costs

A breakdown of the budget for the transit service in 2023 is outlined below.

Revenue	
Municipal Taxation	\$89,500
City of PG / First Nations Partners	\$52,500
BC Transit Grant	\$9,000
User Fees	\$24,000
2022 surplus	\$36,500
Total	\$211,500
Expenses	
BC Transit AOA	\$170,000 (net \$140,000 after revenue)
Salary and Benefits	\$22,000
Other	\$24,000
Total	\$211,500

The surplus from 2022 was due to Covid Grant Funding of \$37,572

First Nations Contribution

First Nations participation in the service is limited. Of the six on-route First Nation communities 4 do not contribute consistently. First Nation funding for the last two years has totalled \$2,500 annually. None of the off-route communities contribute. First Nations participation is on an annual basis and is not secured by agreement.

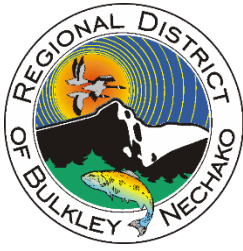
Staff have initiated preliminary discussions with BC Transit's Manager of Indigenous Relations regarding First Nations participation in the service that is consistent, equitable, and manageable for the RDBN.

Transit Service Future Plan

BC Transit has recently completed a draft Transit Service Future Plan based on a review of the performance of the system and customer's input. The plan identifies measures that may be taken to further support and improve the service moving forward. BC Transit presented this draft plan at the June 8, 2023, Regional Transit Committee meeting.

ATTACHMENTS: (Click on links below)

1. ["Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Regional Public Transit and Para-Transit \(Highway 16\) Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790, 2016" \(link\)](#)
2. [Transit Service Agreement \(TSA\) \(link\)](#)
3. [October 2020 Regional Transit Committee meeting \(link\)](#).



UBCM Briefing Notes Continued Operation of the Bulkley-Nechako Transit Service

The Issue

The Bulkley Nechako Transit Service (BNTS) started operations in June of 2017, and was negotiated at the request of the Province under tight timelines just prior to the 2017 Provincial Election. The BNTS provides public transit service along the Highway 16 corridor from Burns Lake to Smithers and Burns Lake to Prince George. The BNTS service participants are the RDBN's member municipalities.

In 2024 the RDBN's operational costs for the service are predicted to exceed the maximum requisition amount of \$90,000 established in Service Establishment Bylaw No. 1790 by approximately \$45,000. The RDBN's electoral areas are considering joining the service, and service participants are considering a bylaw amendment to increase the maximum taxation requisition necessary to support the service long term.

The RDBN Board is concerned that the cost of providing the service to taxpayers may be too great given the perceived limited benefits to those taxpayers. The cost / benefit considerations are of particular concern for the rural areas. There is also concern that the service levels provided to on-reserve populations are being subsidized at too great a level by RDBN taxpayers.

The Transit Service Agreement and Annual Operating Agreements between the RDBN and BC Transit do not commit the Province long term to the current cost sharing formula. The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) has agreed by letter from the Minister to maintain their funding of 66.7% of costs for the BNTS until March 31, 2025 for operational costs only. This short term commitment from the Province is of concern to the RDBN.

There is no agreement between the RDBN and Province for future capital costs. This long term uncertainty is of particular concern to the RDBN as the cost of bus replacement would represent a further strain on RDBN taxpayers. When the transit service was established in 2017 the Province supplied the three buses required to operate the service. These buses are scheduled for replacement in 2023 / 2024 and the RDBN has not received formal confirmation that the buses will be replaced at the cost of the Provincial and / or Federal governments.

When the transit service was established in 2017 MoTI entered into written agreements with municipalities and First Nations that MoTI would build the bus stops and transit shelters and that the municipality and First Nation would be responsible for maintenance and any associated liability for the shelters. MoTI built the bus stops and transit shelters in the rural area. The RDBN has not agreed to be responsible for replacement or maintenance of any of the infrastructure on-reserve or in the rural area as these areas are outside of the service area. MoTI has indicated a desire for the RDBN to take responsibility for the infrastructure in the rural area, and operational responsibility for new on-reserve infrastructure is unclear. These issues need to be addressed.

The Request

The RDBN requests that the Province do the following:

- commit to maintain Provincial funding of 66.7% of operational costs for the BNTS for the life of the service;
- commit to funding future capital costs for buses, bus stops, and bus shelters for the life of the service; and
- work with the RDBN to secure adequate long-term funding to cover the cost of providing transit service for on-reserve populations and provide certainty regarding responsibility for the cost of building and maintaining infrastructure on-reserve.

August 8, 2023

Via email

Communities & Stakeholders

**Re: Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project
REQUEST FOR SUPPORT**

During the July 18, 2023, Quesnel City Council Meeting, Council reviewed and discussed the status and next steps of the Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project ("Interconnector"). This project has been on hold by the Province due to other local and provincial road priorities which took precedence over the Interconnector.

The Interconnector is a bypass type project which will provide significant benefits to the Region and anyone travelling or shipping goods either North or South on Highway 97 through Quesnel. The Regional and Provincial benefits are outlined in the background section below. The goal of Quesnel City Council is to get this project back into the Provincial capital project queue, as it has already undergone the feasibility phases and the business case analysis.

Quesnel City Council requests that you pass a resolution in support of the **Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project** or, prepare a letter of support for same. Please forward the resolution or letter to the City of Quesnel for collation and delivery to the Province, care of: llong@quesnel.ca and bjohnson@quesnel.ca (SAMPLE RESOLUTION attached for reference).

ASK

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The key regional and provincial benefits of the interconnector are as follows:

- Travel time improvements through Quesnel. The traffic bottlenecks in downtown Quesnel would be bypassed.
- Improved uptime for the bridge and rail overhead.

Mayor Ron Paull

Councillors Scott Elliott, Martin Runge, Debra McKelvie, Mitch Vik, Laurey-Anne Roodenburg, Tony Goulet



- There are no traffic detours for large trucks around these bridges, so the traffic backs up very quickly in the event of a temporary bridge shutdown.
- The lack of alternative routes, combined with the age and deterioration of the infrastructure make this a high-risk section of Highway 97.
- The two main pieces of infrastructure are the Quesnel River Bridge and the Rail Overhead, both are very old and are close to the end of their life cycles.
 - The current plan by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is to rehabilitate these structures to extend their life.
 - The re-build of the Quesnel River Bridge and Rail Overhead is estimated to take 2 years to complete, with single-lane alternating traffic required for an estimated 10 month minimum of that time.
- The plan for the Interconnector completely rethinks the traffic flows in downtown Quesnel.
 - The new Quesnel River Crossing and Rail Overpass would be realigned.
 - The old infrastructure would be left in place until the new infrastructure is ready for use, significantly reducing downtime due to construction.
- Most heavy truck traffic will be gone from downtown Quesnel, reducing downtown traffic congestion, and improving safety outcomes, seven traffic lights would be bypassed.
 - Pedestrian/Vehicular interactions would be minimized.
- Improvement in safety due to dangerous goods and other heavy traffic being moved away from downtown and the hospital.

Project Scope

- The project encompasses a 3.7 km section of Highway 97 through the downtown of Quesnel, including:
 - Replacement of the existing two-lane bridge over the Quesnel River to a four-lane structure
 - Replacement of the existing two-lane B.C. Rail overhead to a four-lane structure
 - Addition of a dedicated pathway for use by pedestrians and cyclists over the structures.



- Addition of a four-lane Interconnector to bypass the Quesnel downtown core.

Council appreciates your support for this important project, benefiting the Regional and Provincial traffic that uses Highway 97 through Quesnel.

Best Regards,

Mayor Ron Paull
City of Quesnel

Enclosure(s):

- SAMPLE Resolution

cc: Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure, Rob Fleming
Union of B.C. Municipalities
North Central Local Government Association
Northern Health Authority
Industry & Stakeholders
City of Quesnel, City Manager, Byron Johnson



Sample Resolution:

Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project

WHEREAS Highway 97 is a very significant provincial highway that is critical to the continued economic prosperity of Northern and Central BC and all British Columbia;

AND WHEREAS Highway 97 is at a considerable and growing risk level for extended delays due to aged-out highway infrastructure in Quesnel, and unacceptable construction delays in the future based on the current plans by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT <The City of ?> or <The Community of ?> or <The business/stakeholder name> supports the Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project and requests the Province proceed without delay to the Functional Design phase of the project.