



# Mount Waddington Transit

April 2017

## Need and History

Mount Waddington is a region in Northern Vancouver Island that traditionally has struggled to provide an adequate public transit infrastructure. This lack of transit has a significant impact on seniors, as well as others who do not have access to a car, or cannot drive.

Community members and seniors' groups spent many years advocating for improved public transit. As a result of this work, \$35,000 was allocated to initiate a [Volunteer Transportation Network](#) and a \$250,000 grant was secured from Vancouver Island Health Authority to start a regional transportation system.

The [Mount Waddington Transit System](#) was launched in 2008. While the first month of operations saw only 85 people riding the buses, more awareness boosted the monthly ridership to a current average of 2,000 – 2,300 passengers per month.

## Operating Partners and Funders

The system is operated through a partnership between the Regional District, BC Transit, and [North Island Community Services Society](#) (the operating company). A regional tax to fund the transit system was introduced after a successful referendum and is collected by the Regional District (in partnership with the Regional District, three local First Nation communities also contribute a percentage to the system costs). BC Transit shares the costs for the system with the Regional District, and provides staff and administrative support for the system. North Island Community Services Society operates the system and receives monthly reimbursements for the day to day costs for the operation of the system. Bus shelters (important in a rainy climate!) have been donated and put up by local Rotary groups.

## Program Details

The system has three buses (all of which are wheelchair accessible) that link six of the major communities within the region (Port Hardy, Port McNeil, Coal Harbour, Fort Rupert, Alert Bay, and Malcolm Island). In addition, the transit system provides service to three local First Nation communities. Saturday service to the town of Coal Harbour will be implemented in July 2017, and the system continues to work on reaching some of the other more isolated communities. During the winter (December to March) the system connects with the local Mount Cain Shuttle Bus to provide a connection for skiers and snowboarders going to the Alpine Park.

The Mount Waddington Transit system fares are very affordable, and discounted monthly passes are available for frequent users. Fare from Port McNeil to Port Hardy (the longest trip) is \$3.75, while shorter trips cost \$1.25 or \$2.50, depending on the distance.

The Mount Waddington Transit system is an affordable way for seniors and other residents to travel between the communities in the region, which is essential for work, shopping, appointments, and holiday travel. During two 15 minute windows of time when the buses are not operating on their regular routes each day, the buses offer a HandyDart-type service to seniors in Port McNeil and Port Hardy.

The North Island Community Services Society also operates the [Volunteer Transportation Network](#), where trained volunteer drivers assist seniors, persons with disabilities or mobility challenges, and eligible North Island residents who have no alternative transportation options with local door-to-door transportation (within each of the 5 major towns) for shopping, medical or dental appointments, educational training or other needs. Volunteers are required to provide a criminal record check through the Ministry of Justice, an updated driver's abstract and must attend a driver's workshop facilitated with the local RCMP Detachment representative and one representative from the local BC Ambulance Service. Volunteer drivers receive a monthly reimbursement for their mileage.