



Media Release

For Immediate Release

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Summerland Free Fare Transit Becomes Permanent

Summerland – The District of Summerland will continue providing free bus fare on Route 30 for all Summerland residents following the successful completion of a one-year pilot from Earth Day 2023 to Earth Day 2024 (April 22 – April 22).

With free transit being one of its strategic priorities to build an adaptable and affordable community, Summerland Council gave approval at its March 19 meeting to continue the program indefinitely.

While other communities sometimes offer low-cost fares or select free ridership on certain days, events or holidays, and for specific age groups, the offering of on-going free fares for residents of all ages has not been done in B.C. until now.

The decision to provide free fares for Summerland residents was supported with data and information collected from a public survey launched on February 2, 2024. The survey results showed users experienced significant cost savings, increased accessibility to services and amenities, and data showing a shift in ridership with increased frequency of ridership on Route 30. Many respondents shared overwhelming support for the free fare program.

Summerland residents can access the free fare by loading a ‘Summerland Free Fare’ pass onto their new Umo card or the Umo App at any one of the BC Transit vendors in Summerland with the provision of proof of residency (either government ID, utility bill or student ID). There are two BC Transit vendors in Summerland that provide Umo cards and sell passes and tickets for BC Transit: Municipal Hall (13211 Henry Avenue) or the Summerland Aquatic and Fitness Centre (13205 Kelly Avenue).

Umo is the new BC Transit electronic fare system launched in the South Okanagan Similkameen on March 13 2024, and transitions away from paper and hard copy passes and tickets to an online digital ticket system. Tickets will continue to be accepted on all bus routes in the South Okanagan Similkameen for the time being, with cash continuing to be a permanent payment option.

There are currently five round trips between Summerland and Penticton on Route 30 from Monday to Saturday with the first bus leaving Summerland at 7:15am on weekdays. In Penticton, the bus stops at the Penticton Community Centre, Okanagan College, Penticton Regional Hospital, and Cherry Lane Mall.

Quotes

“The decision by the District of Summerland to provide free transit service to Summerland residents will encourage people to use a more sustainable, green method of traveling throughout their community. Our organization will continue to work with the District to ensure we’re continuing to provide safe and reliable public transit for everyone in the region that chooses to take the bus.”

- Bart Walman, Government Relations Manager for BC Transit

“Free bus fare keeps money in people’s pockets and ensures essential services remain accessible. It reinforces the principle that mobility is a right and that transit is a public good, like schools and libraries – services that some people use more than others but which benefits the community as a whole.”

- Doug Holmes, Mayor of Summerland

- 30 -

For more details please visit www.summerland.ca/transit

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