

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE, 2007

WHO TO WRITE AND WHAT TO ASK FOR:

In April, we gave you a number of suggestions of letters to write mostly having to do with transportation. One suggestion we made was to write a letter to the editor of the Driftwood in support of the proposed SSI public transit system and a Capital Regional District (CRD) Transportation Commission. We feel this is such a crucial issue for Salt Spring and a step towards reducing SSI green house gas emissions and at the same time helping people create new lifestyle habits,we are asking you to make this your Action Letter for June. Also, please contact Gary Holman (CRD Director) with your comments about your specific needs around transit.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Capital Regional District and BC Transit are working on a proposed transit service for SSI. Approval by local taxpayers is necessary to establish this service. This approval will be achieved through a counter petition process. It is not a vote but a silent approval of the program. If there are few people who voice their opposition and sign the counter petition, then the Transportation Commission will proceed. This is a case of where **doing nothing** means you get a Transportation Commission, Public Transit and sidewalks/pathways.

Initially, two 24-passenger minibuses will provide service Mondays through Fridays with some Saturday service during the summer months (this will grow over the years). These buses will run: 1. Between Fulford, Ganges and Vesuvius and 2. In and around Ganges. This bus would service the major seniors' residences, townhouse developments, hospital and medical offices, schools and Upper Ganges malls and the Ganges Village core area.

The buses would operate with fixed routes and schedules. Buses may also detour off their regular route to pick up and drop off passengers where possible. The buses are lift-equipped to provide service for passengers using mobility aids like scooters, wheelchairs and walkers. There will also be a bicycle rack on each bus.

The proposed Salt Spring Island Transit System would be separate from the transit service in Victoria and Cowichan. Every effort will be made to coordinate with BC Ferries schedules. Salt Spring would join BC Transit's 77 existing transit systems and use the provincial fleet of red, white and blue minibuses.

How is the system being funded?

- \$101,000 from BC Transit
- \$18,000 from fares (Requires 12-15 passenger per bus per day)
- \$61,000 from local taxes (less than \$12 per average household/year – less than a coffee a month)

The local funding partners for this transit service is the Capital Regional District. The CRD Board will determine service levels and establish the fares based on consultation and input from island residents through the soon to be established SSI Transportation Commission. BC Transit will provide its share of core annual funding as well as the minibuses, planning and marketing.

What is the process?

There are several steps before service would begin in January, 2008.

1. Provide information to residents for their comments.
2. Taxpayer approval via CRD counter petition process (tentatively June 7 – July 9, 2007).
3. Establish a new SS Transportation Commission. Besides transit, this body will develop sidewalks/pathways!! and manage parking.
4. BC Transit and CRD to select a system operator (existing operator is encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest). This operator would be under contract to BC Transit and CRD would be responsible to run the service and collect the fares.
5. CRD Board will approve service level, budget and set fares (\$2.50 fare is common for this type of service) based on recommendations by new SSI Transportation Commission.
6. Service begins January, 2008 (about 7 months from now).

When Guy Dauncey mentioned he heard SSI was getting a public transit system at his Climate Change talks at both the middle school and secondary school in April, both groups of students spontaneously applauded. Transit is crucially important to them and their parents. For all those families trying to make the commitment to live with one car or no car it will provide an alternative to getting around. It will be especially handy for those people living near Ganges. They can now leave their cars at home and have a reliable and safe way of getting into town, helping to reduce emissions and providing less need for increased parking.

The more you can describe your travel needs, the better transit can design services to meet those needs.

Please make sure to attend the Transportation Fair or GASS "Getting Around Salt Spring" Fair on June 16th. There will be activities all day in Ganges Village from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. With a Transportation Forum at Meaden Hall 7:00 pm. Eco Home Tour follows on Sunday. Ticket available at SS Books and SSI Conservancy 538-0318.

ADDRESSES:

A new Salt Spring Transportation Commission will be working with the community to upgrade, refine and improve this service and will have regular reviews of the service. Send comments by phone, e-mail or on the web at www.busonline.ca - Salt Spring Island, no later than July 15. Phone/email Gary Holman, CRD Salt Spring Director at 653-2042 or ssidirector@crd.bc.ca

PLEASE WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION TO:

**Driftwood
Dear Editor
328 Lower Ganges Rd.
SSI, B.C., V8K 2V3
driftwood@gulfislands.net**