

Public Meetings about an Application to Reduce Inter-city Bus Service

Why does the Board hold public meetings?

The Board regulates minimum service levels for private inter-city bus operators. Licences set out

- a) the routes that a company can operate and
- b) the minimum service frequency for each community on a route.

This is referred to as “minimum route frequency” or MRF. The Board must approve any MRF reductions or route eliminations.

Inter-city bus operators applying for a route elimination or MRF reduction must:

- a) publish notice of proposed changes on their websites and
- b) post notices in terminals, depot or agents premises
- c) provide written notice of proposed changes to mayors and councils of affected municipalities and chairs of regional districts.

Public notices must tell people that they can provide written comments to the Passenger Transportation Board by a certain date. The notices must give Board contact information.

Comments received by the Board are sent to the applicant for a response. Note: (The Board only includes the name, city and province of the private citizens in the information sent to the applicant. Applicants must sign an undertaking that they will only use the information for the purpose of the application.)

After reviewing the comments and the applicant's response, the Board may:

- make a final decision on the application
- make a preliminary decision on parts of the application
- hold public meetings in some communities.

The Board considers the content of the comments as well as the number of comments in its decisions. Often, the Board finds detailed comments from individuals about how often they use the service more informative than letters or petitions that only have general information.

The Board is holding a public meeting in my area. How do I tell the Board my thoughts?

If you want to speak at a public meeting, you need to register with the Board office. To register, you must contact the Board. Contact information is as follows:

Passenger Transportation Board

Phone: 250-953-3777

Fax: 250-953-3788

Email: ptboard@gov.bc.ca

The Board posts the names of registered speakers on a “speakers list” near the door to the meeting room. This list is posted about 15-30 minutes before the start of the public meeting.

If you are a registered speaker, please come to the start of the meeting. This way you will learn about the format of the meeting. You will also hear a presentation from the applicant.

What is the format for public meetings?

The public meeting is led by a Board member. This person is the “Chair”. Formats may vary from meeting to meeting. However, most follow the format outlined below.

1. The Chair starts the meeting by talking about:
 - the purpose of the meeting
 - the application
 - meeting procedures
 - the Board’s decision-making process

The Chair will ask people if they have any questions about the meeting process or procedure.

2. The applicant will make a brief presentation about the change it is seeking.
3. The Hearing Officer will call speakers in the order listed on the speakers list.
 - Testimony will not be sworn testimony. Speakers will not be subject to cross examination. However, the applicant may be permitted to ask one or two questions of a speaker.
 - Speakers are encouraged to tell the Board how often they use the bus and how the changes could affect them.
 - If a speaker brings a written statement, this may be left with the Hearing Officer. A copy would be given to the applicant. (Speakers should bring two or three copies.)
 - A speaker at a public meeting does not become a “party” to the application.
4. The applicant will be allowed to make a brief closing statement to the public.
 - The Board may allow the applicant to send written submissions to the Board after the public meeting. These would not be shared with speakers.
5. The Chair will close the meeting and describe the next steps in the Board’s decision-making process.

The Board’s final decision will be posted on its website. Decisions include reasons that explain why the Board reached its decision. Decisions are published in the Board’s *Weekly Bulletin* and posted on the Board web site. If an application is approved, the decision will set terms and conditions of licence. The Board process usually ends when the decision is made and published.

If the Board approves the service reduction, the inter-city bus operator may have to publish notice and dates of the changes in community newspapers. Notices would be published before the service reduction occurs.

How Does the Board make its decision?

In making decisions on inter-city bus applications to reduce service, the Board considers:

- *Public Need* – is the ridership on a route sufficient to demonstrate public demand for the route. Are there any transportation alternatives available?

- *Sound Economic Conditions* (in the passenger transportation business) - what is the financial health of the applicant? What will be the effect of the service reduction on the applicant's viability?
- *Applicant Fitness* – the Board is likely to apply the logic that a licensee seeking a reduction is a fit and proper person to provide the service proposed unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary.

Can I record a public meeting?

Generally, the Board discourages the use of recording devices. The Chair must approve the use of any recording device. You must ask for this permission before the start of the meeting.

The Chair may give permission to a journalist to record the proceedings on certain conditions. For example, the Board may allow a journalist to make a recording for the purpose of checking his or her notes.

If you make unauthorized recording, you may be asked to leave all copies with the Board.

More Information

[Inter-city Bus Web Page](#)