

## Frequently Asked Questions – HOV Kelowna

### What are the hours of operation for the HOV lanes in Kelowna?

- Hours of operation for HOV lanes will be 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday to Friday, excluding holidays.

### What does this mean for me?

- During these times only HOV compliant vehicles may use the lanes.
- Outside of these times all vehicles will be permitted to use the lanes.

### Why are hours of operation being implemented?

- The changes will focus HOV lanes to the peak periods when traffic volumes and transit use are highest.
- This will support the new Rapid Transit initiatives by focusing on peak commuting periods, and periods most impacted by traffic volumes.

### Why were HOV lanes implemented in Kelowna?

- HOV lanes are designed to help move the RapidBus service along the highway for efficient, reliable service for everyone.
- Kelowna's RapidBus service is able to run smoothly by using the HOV lanes during peak transit times: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday to Friday, excluding holidays.
- HOV lanes help get more people to their destinations efficiently by reducing congestion caused by single occupant vehicles.
- HOV lanes have been part of the long-term strategy to support RapidBus along Highway 97 through Kelowna since 2009, when the first phases of the RapidBus project began.
- The planned extension of HOV lanes to Edwards Road will further enhance travel time benefits for the RapidBus service.

### **Why is the HOV lane in the curb lane?**

- Highway 97 / Harvey Avenue is an urban corridor with frequent intersection access at lower speeds.
- The curb lane HOV allows transit buses to use the lane and access stops.
- Freeway HOV lanes are typically located in the median lane on higher speed corridors.
- Utilizing the median lane for HOV in Kelowna is not appropriate as it would not be useful for the RapidBus service.

### **Where else has HOV been used in an urban corridor?**

- Curb lane HOV lanes have been operating for many years and function well in a number of locations in Canada and the USA. Some examples include:
  - Hastings Street (Burnaby) – 7 km – opened 1996
  - Granville Street (Vancouver) – 8 blocks – opened mid-1990's
  - Georgia Street (Vancouver) – 1.8 km – opened 1980's
  - St. Johns St/Clarke St Hwy 7A (Port Moody) – 2.9 km, opened 1996
  - Barnet Hwy 7A (Burnaby) – 7.9 km – opened 1996

### **Why not just add additional lanes?**

- Another lane was added in 2009 to accommodate the HOV lanes and the new Rapid Transit through Kelowna. This brought Highway 97 to 6 through lanes, plus turn lanes.
- To build beyond six lanes would require substantial right-of-way from all adjoining properties.
- Currently 20-30% of total traffic uses the HOV lanes along the corridor.

### **Why not during “rush-hour” periods?**

- Traffic analysis along the corridor shows that volumes are consistently high throughout the 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. period.
- The 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. period is also in line with peak demand for transit use.

### **How will transit service benefit?**

- Four new bus stations have been constructed, bringing the total along the existing HOV lane corridor to 10.
- The Kelowna RapidBus project is designed to improve travel time, reliability, passenger comfort and convenience. It features fast, direct service and modern, attractive amenities.
- Since implementing phase one, there's been a 10% increase in bus use in Kelowna overall and a 9% increase on the RapidBus route.
- Buses are equipped with technology that extends green lights, thereby helping them to get through intersections faster – commonly referred to as traffic signal priority.

### **Will this affect my ability to access businesses along Harvey Avenue?**

- No, any vehicle may use the HOV lane to access and exit from adjacent businesses.

### **Can commercial vehicles use the HOV lanes?**

- Yes, if they meet the HOV definition:
  - less than 5500 kg GVW and containing two or more people, including the driver.
- Non-HOV commercial vehicles can use the lanes to access businesses and make right turns at intersections, and outside of the restricted hours.

### **Why do taxis with just the driver get to use the HOV lane?**

- Taxis, HandyDart vehicles and buses are classified as HOV whether they are carrying passengers or not.

### **What are the limits of the HOV lanes?**

- The HOV lanes currently run from Highway 33 to the Pandosy / Water St intersection.
- Highway 97 will be widened from four to six lanes from Highway 33 to Edwards Road, extending the HOV lanes and RapidBus service by 4.5 kilometres. The project is expected to be [completed by fall 2017](#).