

**Clean Air Day – Free Rides on Transit****Report Purpose**

To seek Council's approval to provide free rides on transit on Clean Air Day, as proclaimed by the Canadian Environment Week Act, on an annual basis to promote the environmental benefits of using public transit as a means of community instead of individual cars within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

**Recommendation**

THAT Administration's annual participation with regional partners in promoting Clean Air Day by providing free rides on all Strathcona County Transit buses, be approved.

**Strategic Plan Priority Areas**

**Economy:** N/A

**Governance:** N/A

**Social:** Providing free rides on transit will encourage people to use public transit including walking to/from your bus stops promoting a healthy, active community.

**Culture:** N/A

**Environment:** County residents will be encouraged to participate in Clean Air Day and show their commitment by participating in activities that contribute to cleaner air, healthier communities and a better quality of life for all.

**Other Impacts**

**Policy:** N/A

**Legislative/Legal:** N/A

**Interdepartmental:** N/A

**Summary**

The Canadian Environment Week Act states that every year throughout Canada, the week that includes June 5 shall be kept and observed under the name of Canadian Environment Week. As a result, Environment and Climate Change Canada has declared June 3 – 9, 2018 as Canadian Environment Week. This annual event began in 1971 as a result of a bill introduced and passed by Parliament to designate one week each year that is designated to the environment. There are a number of events being planned across the country on or around these dates, including Clean Air Day on the Wednesday. Clean Air Day raises the awareness and encourages action on clean air and climate change issues. Canadians are encouraged to show their commitment by participating in activities that contribute to cleaner air, healthier communities, and a better quality of life for all.

Transit has been participating in Clean Air Day in various ways for many years. In 2007, 2016 and 2017, Strathcona County Transit (SCT) did provide free transportation on all SCT buses. In other years, we participated in customer appreciation activities, customer giveaways, and general education campaigns about transit and its benefit to the environment, as well as different ways we can contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

For 2018, and moving forward on an annual basis, we would like to join other Capital Region partners in providing free transit rides on Clean Air Day. The free rides will be offered to passengers from the participating systems, whether they are travelling on local or inter-municipal routes. By joining with our regional partners, we will be demonstrating our

commitment to reducing greenhouse gases, our continued commitment to our community, and our commitment to regional transit.

Strathcona County's participation in this regional event has resulted in an annual loss of about \$1,500 in revenues. When compared to the investment made through the regional communication and advertising plans, this is a good investment for marketing the benefits of public transit in the County.

It is also important to note that the City of Edmonton has not been providing free rides on Edmonton Transit. Their decision is based on the amount of revenue loss their system would incur. They have participated in the promotion of Clean Air Day by providing funding for advertising campaigns.

### **Communication Plan**

SCT will work with participating regional partners to promote Clean Air Day mainly through radio advertising. This will be supplemented with the local advertising of each participating transit property. SCT will promote this event locally on our website, the digital screens within the County, social media (Facebook, Twitter), and advertising in the Sherwood Park News. This will result in significant exposure for transit within the region, increasing our visibility and potential for increasing ridership.