

## **Priorities Committee Meeting\_Mar10\_2020**

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### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**

#### **Transit- Department Business Plan Update**

##### **Report Purpose**

To provide Priorities Committee with an update on Transit's 2020 – 2023 Business Plan.

##### **Our Prioritized Strategic Goals**

Goal 1 - Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents

Goal 6 - Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents

##### **Report**

Strathcona County Transit (SCT) provides four core functions that enhance the mobility of the community:

- Inter-municipal
- Local
- Specialized (Mobility Bus)
- Special events

These services help build a strong community to support the diverse needs of residents for an affordable transportation option within an efficient and effective multi-modal transportation network. This is needed to enable residents to have access to the many opportunities within our community such as education, employment, health care and social activities. The services Transit provides can be life changing for our customers as it may provide their only access to these opportunities.

In an ongoing effort to evaluate the services we provide in November of 2019 Transit administered a survey to residents of Strathcona County. The intent of the survey was to determine both user and non-user's overall impression of transit and their satisfaction with the service provided. Here are some of the results of the survey:

- Respondents that were either very or somewhat satisfied - 85%
- Respondents feeling safe while using SCT - 95%
- Respondents feeling buses are operated in a safe manner - 95%
- Respondents satisfied with the cleanliness of the buses - 98%
- Bus arrives at its scheduled time – 79%
- Commuter and local buses connect on a regular basis – 76%

Progress that has occurred over the past year on the core functions:

##### **Inter-municipal Conventional Transit**

Inter-municipal transit services and park and ride provide access to major regional destinations, such as downtown Edmonton and the University of Alberta. In 2019 inter-municipal ridership increased by 2.27%. Further work is being done on recommendations coming out of the Transit Master Plan such as improved evening service to the U of A and improved service to NAIT.

##### **Local Conventional Transit**

Local transit services are provided within Sherwood Park through a hub and spoke network with the Bethel Transit Terminal as the primary terminal, and the Ordze Transit Centre as a

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secondary location. In 2019 local ridership increased by 5.81%. Further work is being done on recommendations coming out of the Transit Master Plan such as Dynamic Transit, an on demand deliver option for evenings/weekends and holidays

### **Specialized Transit (Mobility Bus)**

Mobility Bus is a door-to-door service for people with mobility limitations that is provided County wide. Mobility Bus provides critical access for persons whose limitations prevent them from using the fixed-route services. In 2019 trip requests for Mobility Bus clients increased 13.60%. New scheduling software was implemented in July 2019 and in 2020 additional customer focused modules will be implemented:

Notifications module implemented in February 2020

Passenger portal module to be implemented in Q3 2020

Council approved extending rural Mobility Bus service to weekends and holidays. This will

see six hours of service provided on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays when conventional service is running. Further work is being done on recommendations coming out of the Transit Master Plan to update the eligibility requirements and on the development of a travel training program to help assist clients who could take some of their trips on the conventional service.

### **Special Events**

Special events services provide access to annual festivals and events throughout the region, including Heritage Days, Canada Day, New Year's Eve, and other community events. In the past year here are the some of the events transit provided service for and the number of trips taken:

- Birkie Ski Festival – 2020 over 1,700 trips provided
- New Year's Eve – 2019 over 1,500 trips provided
- Heritage Days – 2019 over 5,000 trips provided
- Canada Day – 2019 over 2,300 trips provided
- Chamber Trade Show – 2019 over 700 trips provided

### **Smart Bus/Smart Fare Project**

Regional Smart Bus technology was installed on all County buses in late 2019 with full implementation scheduled for Q2 2020. This will provide enhanced, customer-focused technology through real time information that customers can access through their electronic devices such as smart phones. Furthermore, the Smart Bus technology contains the necessary telecommunications and infrastructure for Smart Fare.

We continue to work with our regional partners on the Regional Smart Fare system which is scheduled for implementation in 2021. In the first phase, passengers will be able to load value into a special account and use a transit smart card to "tap on/off" any transit system in the region. Riders can take advantage of fare capping, where transit trips are paid for one trip at a time; up to a daily or monthly maximum amount. If riders lose their Smart Fare card, they can replace it without losing their account credit or fare purchase. In later phases, riders will be able to take advantage of "open payments" using their credit card, debit card or compatible device to "tap on/off" the transit systems in the Edmonton metropolitan region.

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### **Council and Committee History**

October 22, 2019 Transit provided Priorities Committee with an update on their 2019 – 2022 Business Plan.

February 26, 2019 Council approved the new Transit Master Plan

### **Other Impacts**

**Policy:** N/A

**Legislative/Legal:** N/A

**Interdepartmental:** A Regional Smart Fare System may impact Information Technology Services and Financial Services.

**Master Plan/Framework:** Transit Master Plan

### **Enclosure(s)**

1 2020 Department Business Plan Update – Transit