

Department Business Plan Update

Strathcona County Transit
October 22, 2019

Department overview

- Transit provides access to all aspects of the community including employment, social, medical, shopping, and government destinations.
- In addition, we help to enhance economic and environmental sustainability of the County by improving labour mobility and reducing automobile use.
- Transit services are highly integrated to reduce costs and enhance efficiency.
- Our staff are customer focused while maintaining safety and reliability.
- Over 2,000 individuals use transit every weekday.
- Annually, Transit travels over 3.3 million kilometres and transports over 1.6 million riders.

Department overview

- Transit has a staff of 132.05 FTE equivalent
 - No current vacancies
- We operate a fleet of 89 buses
 - 52 regular conventional buses
 - 24 double decker buses
 - 13 specialized transit buses (Mobility Bus)
- We operate out of two terminals
 - Bethel Transit Terminal (BTT)
 - Ordze Transit Centre (OTC)

Core business functions

- Core business function #1 – Inter-Municipal transit
- Core business function #2 – Local transit
- Core business function #3 – Mobility Bus
- Core business function #4 – Special events

Progress on core function forecast

- The 2019 – 2022 Transit Business Plan did not have any changes to its core functions
- This was due to the new Transit Master Plan being completed in early 2019
- A major accomplishment in spring 2019 has been the accreditation of Transit's new operator training program by the Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada (MCPCC)

Initiatives

Smart Fare/ Smart Bus Technology Implementation

- Approved in the 2016 Capital Budget
- Smart Bus equipment has been installed on all Strathcona County buses
 - Implementation planned for early 2020
 - Customer focused technology providing real time information that will enable passengers to track their bus using their smart phones
 - It will also provide audible and digital next stop announcements on the buses
- Smart Fare will have a phased implementation
 - Phase one will feature pay-as-you-go and fare capping
 - Phase two will include distance based fares and the ability to use credit cards

Initiatives

Mobility Bus Vehicle Additions

- Fare Parity for Mobility Bus clients was approved in the 2018 Operating Budget
- To accommodate the anticipated increase in trip requests due to fare parity the following were approved in the 2018 Operating Budget:
 - The operational costs for the expansion of the Mobility Bus fleet by three buses in 2018 by extending the life of three buses scheduled for replacement.
 - Implementation of new scheduling software which was implemented in August 2019
 - Implementation of the Notifications (Q4 2019) and Passenger Portal (Q1 2020) modules
 - Implementation of a new accessible taxi contract to be completed in Q1 2020
 - Implementing a department based performance measure of completing 98% of the trip requests received
- Approved In Principle in the 2019 – 2023 Capital Budget
 - AUTO 1791 - Mobility Bus Vehicle Additions for the addition of three buses in 2021

Initiatives

FIRST YEAR OF FARE PARITY IMPACT							
	2017	2018	2019	Increase in Trip Requests	% of Increase in Trip Requests	Number of Trip Requests Denied	% of Trips Requests Completed
July	1,514	1,654		325	21%	0	100%
August	1,561	1,620		348	22%	0	100%
September	1,544	1,749		574	37%	0	100%
October	1,820	1,736		764	42%	0	100%
November	1,923	1,811		700	36%	45	98.28%
December	1,488	1,611		530	36%	15	99.26%
January		1,839	2,424	770	47%	36	98.51%
February		1,909	2,087	467	29%	57	97.27%
March		2,118	2,496	747	43%	56	97.76%
April		2,584	2,313	577	33%	31	98.66%
May		2,623	2,355	544	30%	7	99.70%
June		2,018	2,079	468	29%	0	100%
AVERAGE					34%	21	99.12%

Initiatives

Recommendations from the 2019 Transit Master Plan

- Implementation of a Dynamic Transit (on demand) pilot project for evening, weekend and statutory holiday local service
- Extending evening service to the University of Alberta weekdays from September to April
- Expansion of rural Mobility Bus service to weekends and statutory holidays
- Extending mandatory attendants ride free to conventional services

Initiatives

Recommendations from the 2019 Transit Master Plan

- Implementation of travel training for Mobility Bus clients who could use conventional transit for some of their trips
- Review of Mobility Bus eligibility requirements to be completed in 2020
- Evening and weekend inter-municipal service plan to be completed in 2020
- NAIT service improvement plan to be completed in 2020
- Park and Ride strategies to be completed in 2020

Smart Fare/ Smart Bus Technology Implementation - Status

Overall Initiative Status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	Y	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to Strategic Goals

- Goal 2: Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure
- Result: Efficient and effective multi-modal transportation network
- Goal 5: Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships
- Result: Regional assets leveraged for mutual benefit
- Goal 6: Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents
- Result: Connected, accessible multi-modal transportation network, including trails

Key Deliverables

- Smart Fare is a regional transit fare payment system that uses the latest technology to make it easier for customers to pay for their trips.
- Smart Bus is the foundation of the information and telecommunications infrastructure that allows the fare technologies to function.

Opportunities/Challenges

- Smart Fare technology replaces paper fare media with the electronic equivalent for cash, passes, and tickets.
- Fare amounts are computed electronically without the need for a bus driver to visually validate the fare product or money dropped in the fare box.
- Payment details are recorded, which helps to reduce fare disputes, ensures the correct fare has been paid, and provides comprehensive ridership, revenue, and audit reports based on actual transactions.
- Smart Fare technologies provide real benefits to transit agencies in terms of better data collection for improving service levels, and integration with neighbouring transit systems.

Risks

As this is a regional project led by the COE, Strathcona County has limited ability to control the overall progress of the project.

Mitigation

Strathcona County continues to be actively involved with COE on the progress of the project.

Associate Commissioner Johnston is part of the Regional Smart Fare Executive Steering Committee

Transit Director Coombs is part of the Regional Smart Fare Resourcing and Risk Steering Committee

Mobility Bus Vehicle Additions - Status

Overall Initiative Status



Initiative status	Current status	Previous status
Time	G	G
Scope	G	G
Budget	G	G

Alignment to Strategic Goals

- Goal 1: Build strong communities to support the diverse needs of residents
- Result: Diverse and inclusive communities
- Goal 2: Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure
- Result: Efficient and effective multi-modal transportation network
- Goal 6: Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents
- Result: Connected, accessible multi-modal transportation network, including trails

Key Deliverables

- A permanent increase to the Mobility Bus fleet from 10 buses to 13 buses to meet demand and maintain an adequate spare rate (allow for buses out of service for maintenance or repair work).

Opportunities/Challenges

- As part of the 2015 Transit Fare Strategy Final Report, fare parity (56% reduction in average fare) for Mobility Bus clients was recommended and approved in the 2018 Operating Budget.
- With this significant decrease in cost it is expected that demand for Mobility Bus will increase up to 62%.
- When this is combined with the current client growth trends, before fare parity, it is expected overall growth will result in an increase from about 21,000 trips in 2017 to over 45,000 trips in 2021 which will require additional transit vehicles.

Risks

N/A

Mitigation

N/A

Questions?

