

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**On-Demand Transit Pilot Results****Report Purpose**

To provide Priorities Committee the results from the On-Demand Transit evening and weekend pilot.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 2 - Healthy and Safe Community

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 2 Priority - A diverse, welcoming, inclusive, and an accessible community for all

Goal 2 Priority - Social supports that enhance community well-being and safety, and build community connection

Goal 4 Priority - Optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs

Report

Strathcona County Transit launched the On-Demand Transit pilot on June 26, 2022. The service operates on evenings and weekends in Sherwood Park using existing bus stops. On-Demand Transit is a shared-ride, demand-responsive services that typically use smaller vehicles and mobile app technology to provide mobility to customers. The service model is similar to Dial-A-Bus, however, leverages technology to provide instant access to booking services, near real-time tracking of vehicles, and the most efficient route to a requested destination. Last year, Council extended the pilot to the end of 2024 to allow more time for Administration to make adjustments and collect more data.

The success of the On-Demand Transit pilot was to be measured by the following:

- a return to pre-covid ridership levels;
- decreased time on-board transit;
- reduced wait times for transit services; and
- overall customer satisfaction with On-Demand Transit.

Since the start of the pilot, the service has used 40-foot conventional buses for On-Demand Transit. Using 40-foot conventional buses was shown to have no cost savings when presented to Council on July 6, 2021. Cost savings were only expected if the service used Mobility Bus vehicles.

At the beginning of the pilot in 2022, we added additional service hours on the road for the service to increase capacity. Since switching vendors in July 2023, the service has become more efficient. However, due to continuing trends of increasing ridership on the service, these additional service hours have not been removed. Therefore, due to the additional service hours, when the fleet is fully transitioned to using Mobility Bus vehicles, the service will be cost neutral when compared to the previous fixed route evening and weekend service.

Priorities Committee Meeting_Apr16_2024

Based on the measures outlined to achieve a successful pilot, Strathcona County Transit will be recommending On-Demand Transit become permanent as part of the 2025 budget process.

Additionally, On-Demand Transit is being considered to start future transit service in areas such as Cambrian and Bremner as these new areas begin to grow in population. More information can be found in enclosure 1 On-Demand Transit Pilot Results.

Council and Committee History

March 14, 2023	Council approval: THAT the On-Demand Transit pilot for evenings and weekends be extended until December 2024.
March 7, 2023	Priorities Committee received an update on the On-Demand Transit pilot and recommended to Council that the On-Demand Transit pilot for evenings and weekend be extended until December 2024.
January 18, 2022	Council approved an amendment to motion 2021/224 by deleting the words "using Mobility Bus vehicles" and replacing them with "using transit vehicles" and approved the temporary expansion of the Mobility Bus fleet, from 13 vehicles to 15 vehicles, to accommodate the On-Demand Transit pilot.
July 6, 2021	Council approval: THAT the on-demand transit pilot for evenings and weekends from May 2022 to December 2023, using Mobility Bus vehicles, be approved.
February 26, 2019	Council approved the Transit Master Plan.

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Financial/Budget: n/a

Legislative/Legal: n/a

Interdepartmental: Transit works with Fleet and Facility Management on the delivery of transit service. Transit also works with Information Technology Services for the technology needed to deliver On-Demand Transit.

Master Plan/Framework: Strategic direction MM1: Dynamic Transit Services is an integral component of the 2019 Transit Master Plan.

Communication Plan

If approved through the 2025 budget process, communication will be provided to the public that On-Demand Transit will become permanent for evening and weekend service.

Enclosures

1	On-Demand Transit Pilot Results presentation
2	December 2023 On-Demand Transit Customer Survey Report