

**CITY OF WEYBURN
Saskatchewan**

**Final Report on the
Feasibility of a Public Transit System**

**Including:
Design and Implementation Guidelines**

W. G. Atkinson, P. Eng. (BC)

October 15, 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City applied for and received funding for this study from the Federal "Moving on Sustainable Transportation (MOST) Grant Program."

The Consultant gratefully acknowledges the advice and assistance of the following:

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Weyburn Chamber of Commerce: Jeff Richards, Manager and Jerry Ponto, member
Economic Development Downtown Revitalization Committee

South East Regional Economic Development Authority: Dylan Clarke, Manager

Rick's Delivery & Taxi Service: Rick and Myrna Davis, owner-operators

Stagecoach Tours & Charters: Ken and Scott Grams

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Mr. Blaine Frank, C.Tech.,
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October 15, 2007

Dear Blaine:

Re: Feasibility Study of a Public Transit System for the City of Weyburn

Enclosed is our **Final Report** including "a detailed preliminary design and guidelines for implementation" as requested in your letter of July 10th, 2007. The report includes a transit route predesign, a discussion of service delivery options, a draft enabling bylaw, guidelines for inter-agency agreements, four-year draft budgets, implementation tasks and a recommended implementation schedule. The proposed transit routes to initially service a population of approximately 12,000 residents are shown on the enclosed route map.

Implementation of a new transit system requires at least a two-year funding commitment. It also requires leadership and/or sponsorship from the community. At present, this community support is likely to come from the members of the informal Focus Group who have been providing advice and reviewing the design. (See Appendix "B" attached to the report.) If invited, members of this group may be willing to serve on an implementation steering committee.

Working with the City staff on this project has been an enjoyable experience. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further clarification of the report. Thank you again for the opportunity to meet and work with so many interesting people in Weyburn.

Yours truly,


W. G. (Wally) Atkinson, P. Eng.

TRANSIT GLOSSARY

The following definitions include the terminology in common usage by the operators of urban transit systems in Canada:

Public Transit Services include all scheduled transportation services offered to the general public or a segment of the general public on a non-exclusive or shared-ride basis.

Conventional Transit refers to public transit services operating on fixed routes.

Handibus refers to a wheelchair accessible vehicle that provides doorstep transit service on demand to people with disabilities. In Weyburn people with disabilities and seniors are accommodated by the Care-A-Van service.

Physically Disabled Persons are those who have a physical disability such that they are unable to board school or transit buses unless they are equipped with lifts.

Ambulatory Persons with Disabilities include people who may experience some loss of function but who are able to travel with a minimum of assistance. Most people are able to use conventional transit services when they are available within a reasonable walking distance.

Transportation Dependent includes people for whom transportation must be provided by someone else, or who are dependent upon taxis and public transit services.

Paratransit refers to flexible public transit services often provided through contractual arrangements with taxi companies operating automobiles, vans and mini-buses.

Dial-a-Ride includes demand-responsive transit or paratransit services which are activated by a telephone request. In Yorkton, for example, bus routes are established, however the buses only travel over a particular route segment upon request. In Swift Current buses follow the bus routes only during peak periods. Service must be requested during off-peak periods.

Ridership (Revenue Passengers) refers to the number of one-way person trips made on a public transit service for which a fare is received.

User-Side Subsidies are transportation subsidies given directly to riders by a funding agency. They may be in the form of tickets or vouchers.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Weyburn Public Transit Feasibility Study was completed in two phases. Phase One included an analysis of transit and paratransit service options and comparisons of the transit service strategies used by other small cities in Saskatchewan. Phase one was completed during May and June of 2007. An Interim Report covering the work of Phase One is attached to the Final Report as "Appendix A".

1.1 Summary of Phase One Feasibility Analysis

The main focus of a future transit service in Weyburn would be to accommodate lower income families, young adults, children, residents of group homes, seniors and other persons who may not have access to an automobile for a particular trip destination. In addition, it is desirable to offer an alternative mode of travel to the private automobile for social and environmental benefits. Trip purposes to be accommodated include work, education, shopping, personal business such as doctor's appointments, and social/recreational travel.

Demand Estimates: Of an estimated 270 potential customers for a public transit service, approximately 52 persons that include downtown employees, adults in remedial education programs, and the low income segment of the population have the greatest need and are likely to be the regular transit riders. At a rate of 8 one-way trips per week on weekdays, this group would generate approximately 21,000 annual trips. The other segments of the population, mainly from subdivisions that are two or more kilometres from downtown and other destinations, would use transit less frequently, generating an additional 21,000 trips for a total of 42,000, or 4.2 rides per capita annually, for an established bus transit service.

It would likely take from two to three years for a new transit service to achieve this level of demand. After that the demand would continue to grow at a rate approximately twice the rate of growth of the population.

Transit Service Options: In Phase One the Consultant examined five transit options which can also be viewed as stages in the evolution of a transit service. The more flexible options can be used to introduce service which may eventually grow to the point where fixed routes become more viable. The five options analysed include:

- A taxi subsidy similar to the current approach used in Lloydminster, Pincher Creek, Fort Saskatchewan, and Canmore, for example.
- A Shared Ride Taxi system like the one used to introduce transit service to The Battlefords in 1978.
- A flexible route diversion system similar to the current transit service in Yorkton.
- A Dial-a-Bus service similar to the current transit service in Swift Current.
- A fixed-route bus loop system similar to the technique used to introduce transit service in many small communities throughout Canada.

Selected Service Option For Further Analysis: The City Administration and City Council reviewed the Interim Report in July, 2007 and selected the fixed route transit option for a more detailed analysis in Phase Two of the Feasibility Study.

1.2 Winning Conditions for Transit Service

The response of the community during the first two years of implementing a new transit service is critical to its success or failure. Experience with both successful and unsuccessful systems in other communities offers the following guidelines for success.

Sponsorship: It is important to have a sponsoring agency that will assist with the final design, implementation and marketing of the new service. For example, the sponsor could be a public service agency, a society created for the purpose, a committee of interested stakeholders appointed by the City or a business association.

Dedicated Operator: Whether transit systems are provided through contracting with a society, public agency or private company there is no substitute for a dedicated and enthusiastic transit operator that will assist the City in marketing the new transit service.

Administrative Support: Ideally, the City employee who is appointed to supervise a municipal transit system or transit service contract should be involved in the final design and implementation of a new system. During the initial implementation period such a person would likely be needed at least 50 percent of the time to oversee the myriad tasks involved and to arrange for assistance from other municipal resource persons. In the case of a service contract the employee would work closely with the contractor during implementation. After the new system was established the duties of a transit supervisor in Weyburn would not likely require more than 10 to 15 percent of such an employee's time.

Other municipal resource persons that are likely to be needed during the design and implementation stages of a new transit system include those responsible for legal, finance, marketing, public information, drafting and public works services.

Design Flexibility: Because it is difficult to predict the community response at a neighbourhood level in advance, the transit service design must be flexible. The City must be prepared to adjust schedules, revise routings and relocate bus stops to accommodate the emerging needs of the transit riders.

Business Community Support: To be successful a transit service usually needs to be given priorities over general traffic access and parking. Bus stops in commercial areas need to be located for the convenience and safety of pedestrians. The Weyburn business community will need to support the principle of maximizing pedestrian access rather than maximizing auto spaces.

Involving the business community at an early stage in the development of a new transit system will reveal opportunities for assistance with marketing and with the provision of convenience facilities for bus drivers and passengers. For example, in some communities businesses have supplied such items as benches, shelters, route maps

and schedules, and access to washroom facilities at little or no cost to the operator.

Transit Service Priorities: To maximize exposure to the transit service and therefore ridership, the major retail generators need to have direct access to the bus service. In Weyburn, the downtown mall and the major shopping destinations will become terminal points while areas of higher density housing will be designated collection and timing points.

Sustained Marketing Program: Marketing a new transit system requires a comprehensive and sustained print media campaign. Transit schedules need to be distributed to all households. During the introduction period a free trial service can be offered. Recent experience in other cities suggests that an amount of \$10,000 would be appropriate to set aside for the initial service promotion. Ongoing promotion must be provided for in annual budgets.

2.0 FIXED ROUTE PRE-DESIGN

2.1 Design Objectives and Assumptions

The transit routes should be designed to serve all or most of the primary trip generators in Weyburn, including the following:

- Downtown (for retail employment and shopping, personal services, medical clinics, and government offices).
- Malls and major retail outlets.
- Hospitality industry (for employees).
- Seniors' and Special Care homes.
- Institutions providing post-secondary education (for low income students).
- Recreational facilities (on weekdays).
- The Weyburn General Hospital (for seniors visiting).
- Areas of higher density housing where walking distances to downtown exceed 1.5 km.

Secondary trip generators which may provide additional riders for the transit system include:

- Schools (As a back-up service.)
- Industrial sites. (Contract services for special needs and destinations.)

Acceptable travel times in Weyburn would require a loop system that provided access to the downtown within 10 to 15 minutes. This would be similar to a system used to introduce transit service in Yorkton in 1960 where one bus was able to make 20 minute loops into three different residential areas each hour. For the predesign and cost analysis, it is assumed that transit service in Weyburn would begin with a similar type of loop system.

2.2 Proposed Transit Routes and Routing Options

The proposed transit routes to initially service a population of approximately 12,000 residents are shown on the enclosed route map. The four loops shown have a combined length of 19 kilometres. They can be operated as a continuous loop on an hourly schedule with one vehicle. Individually, loops 1 and 3 and loops 2a and 2b can be operated on a 20 minute schedule so that they can be combined in varying ways to accommodate specific needs throughout the day. For example, loop 2b serving Sims Avenue West may not be required throughout the day allowing the operator to use the time saved to meet other needs. The following sections provide a description of service provided by each of the four proposed loops.

Loop 1 NE Residential: This 6 km, 20 minute loop route would normally operate anti-clockwise from a terminal point at City Centre Mall via Souris Ave., 4th St., Coteau Ave., 18th St., Warren Ave., 16th St., Douglas Rd., and 5th St. to the Senior Centre driveway on 1st St. From the Senior Centre the route would continue West to the Hospital parking area returning to the Downtown terminal point via 2nd St. Activity centres served by this loop route include:

- Weyburn Health Centre
- Haig School
- Don Mitchell Playground
- Sarcan/Workin Shop
- Greystone Manor
- Pennant Manor (738 5th St.)
- Weyburn Special Care Home
- Assiniboia Park School via 13th St.
- Weyburn Junior High School
- St. Michael's Junior High School via 13th St.
- St. Dominic Savio School
- Weyburn Leisure Centre
- Legion Towers
- Wheatland Senior Drop-In Centre
- Weyburn General Hospital
- Downtown Area

Loop 2a South Hill: This 4 km loop route would operate anti-clockwise from the terminal point in the downtown south via 2nd St., Railway Ave., and 3rd St., to the Signal Hill Art Centre on 10th Ave. S. From the Art Centre the route would continue south via 4th St. to 2nd Ave. S. At this intersection the route would either return to the downtown terminal via 3rd St., Railway Ave., Government Rd., and Souris Ave., or proceed west via the Loop 2b routing. Activity centres served by this loop route include:

- Hill Top Manor
- Parkway Lodge

- Signal Hill Art Centre
- Crocus Heritage Village
- Souris School
- River Park Campground
- Downtown Area

Loop 2b Sims Ave. West: This loop route can be operated independently as a 4 km loop to and from the downtown terminal to meet the needs of the retail and hospitality workers or combined with Loop 2a to meet the needs of shoppers throughout the day. When combined with Loop 2a the overall length of this route is 7 km which can be accommodated in a 20 minute turnaround period due to the amount of highway travel. The proposed routing is west on 2nd Ave S., via Brownlee St. to Sims Ave., and utilizing the service road access points to and from Highway 39. The return route to downtown is as described for Loop 2a above. Activity centres served by this route include:

- The hospitality industry on Sims Avenue
- Major retail outlets on Sims Ave. West
- The large trailer park on 1st Ave. S.
- Downtown apartment complex on Government Rd.

Loop 3 Tatagwa Drive: This 6 km, 20 minute loop route would normally operate clockwise from the downtown terminal point via 2nd St., Bison Ave., Government Rd., Tatagwa Dr., Saskatchewan Dr., returning to the downtown via Government Rd., Bison Ave., and 2nd St. There would be an option of a route diversion via Elizabeth St., 2nd Ave., Aitken St., 3rd Ave., and Elgin St., for example, to provide access to the playing fields and to residences upon request. The route could also be diverted for special events in the Exhibition Grounds. Activity centres served by this loop route include:

- Tatagwa View residences
- Souris Valley Extended Care Centre
- Community Health Services Building
- Queen Elizabeth School
- Weyburn Comprehensive School
- Southeast Regional College
- Weyburn Public Library
- Exhibition Grounds and Sports Complex
- Weyburn Youth Centre via Coteau Ave.

2.3 Transit Scheduling

The draft budgets in Section 7.0 of the Final Report provide for an introductory level of transit service of 10 hours daily, Monday through Friday. This would accommodate a scheduled service that operated from approximately 7:00 am until 9:30 am and from 11:30 am until 7:00 pm. If this service is successful, evening and weekend service could be added.

Schedule design is dependent upon the opening and closing times of offices, retail stores, schools, medical clinics and personal service facilities such as banks and credit unions, insurance agencies and counselling services, for example. The actual travel times of transit passengers may also be impacted by related trips to life style and day care facilities and the location of food and beverage outlets. The following are examples of typical opening and closing times in Weyburn.

- City Hall and several other business offices 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
 - All schools and Southeast Regional College 9:00 am to 3:30 pm
 - Weyburn Health Centre 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
 - Weyburn Denture Clinic 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
 - Weyburn Co-op Grocery store 8:00 am to 7:00 pm
 - Weyburn Library Noon to 8:00 pm
 - Community Low Income Center 8:00 am to 6:00 pm
 - Chiropractic Clinic 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
 - Highway retail outlets 8:00 am to 8:00 pm
 - Downtown retail outlets (Thur. night to 9:00 pm.) 8:30 am to 5:30 pm
- 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
9:30 am to 6:00 pm

The following are general guidelines for scheduling transit service:

- The above variations in start and finish times are a benefit to transit scheduling allowing the schedules to be adjusted to meet specific needs.
- Most transit riders prefer to arrive at their destinations approximately five minutes prior to start times and depart within ten minutes of their finish times. Since it is not possible to accommodate this preference in all residential areas at the same time the option of patronizing adjacent retail and service facilities enroute will need to be encouraged.
- The sequence in which the above loop routes are operated will affect the ability of the transit service to accommodate trips from one area of the City to another. For example, transit passengers originating in South Hill whose destination is the College would have direct service if these routes were in sequence. Similarly passengers from the Northeast areas whose destination is on Sims Ave. may prefer a direct routing.
- Since it is not possible to anticipate all needs in advance the service will need to be monitored and redesigned as ridership patterns emerge and potential customers describe their needs.

2.4 Service Delivery Organization

The Consultant has assumed that the City would like to deliver any future public transit service at the least cost by utilizing the knowledge and experience of existing transportation providers. Such an approach would encourage volunteers to continue to participate in the delivery of services and take advantage of the experience of those

who understand the City's transportation needs.

It has also been assumed that for any future transit system design the door-to-door service for people with disabilities currently provided by "Care-A-Van" would remain and be enhanced. The experience of other cities is that when transit service is introduced, some ambulatory persons with disabilities may choose to use the public transit service because it is more convenient. The important issue is one of choice.

Based upon the above assumptions, a future transit delivery organization can be illustrated by assigning potentially new and/or expanded roles to the existing funding agencies and transportation providers.

City of Weyburn: Budget for transit operations, acquire and own capital equipment, apply for and manage senior government funding, contract with an operator(s), install signs, maintain transit routes, assist in the promotion of the service, establish fare and service policy and provide contract liason.

Transit Operator: Employ drivers, arrange for maintenance, repairs and servicing of vehicles, supervise operations and assist the City in the promotion of the service.

Care-a-Van Operator: Assist in the training of drivers in the care of passengers using wheelchairs and mobility aids, provide back-up service during emergencies and at times that the transit service is not operating (eg 9:30 am to 11:30 am).

South East Cornerstone School Division #209: In addition to being a potential operator of the service, the Public School Division may have a role in acommodating some public transit passengers at certain times of the day on their extensive school bus network which covers all areas of the city.

Not-for-profit agencies: Potential role in providing information service to the public and/or determining elegibility for subsidized services.

Private Transportation Companies: Potential operators of the transit service.

3.0 PROVIDING FOR FLEXIBLE TRANSIT OPERATIONS

The experience of the City of Yorkton with their transit service provides some useful insights into the way to deliver a flexible, cost-effective and efficient fixed route transit service in Weyburn. This subject was discussed previously in the "Interim Report" which included comparative cost and revenue data.

From the year 1960 through 1996 Yorkton utilized a fixed route transit service delivered through an operating contract. In 1997 with increasing costs and declining ridership the City decided to allow their buses to divert off of the regular bus routes upon request. This technique is similar to the way in which evening bus service is provided in some larger cities such as Red Deer, for example.

Yorkton's experience was that with more flexible transit operations ridership and therefore revenues increased, reducing the net cost to deliver their transit service. This experience was taken into account when estimating ridership and revenues for the proposed transit service in Weyburn and is reflected in the budget estimates in Section 7.0 of the Final Report.

The key to flexibility will be to let the customers design the transit service. If there is no response from some anticipated trip origins and activity centres the service to these areas should be reduced in favour of the areas and activity centres which are generating trips.

4.0 DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The transit system needs to be custom designed to serve community needs. It is more important to provide service when it is needed than at frequent intervals. Once the ridership patterns are established the new transit system can be adjusted to meet new and emerging needs. As discussed in Section 1.2, flexibility is the key to marketing success and therefore economic success.

4.1 Transit Stops

Transit stops should be established along the routes at approximately two-block intervals (300 metres) and at terminal points for major activity centres. Some judgement will be required as to the precise locations. Generally, transit stops should be located in a relatively flat area or on a downgrade. This allows for easier acceleration, particularly on slippery streets. Transit stops are normally located on the far side of an intersection and are approximately twice the length of the vehicles to be utilized. This distance can incorporate lanes, fire hydrant clearances, super mail box allowances, and driveways to minimize the impacts on local parking.

The location of transit stops in residential areas is sensitive. One approach is to operate transit vehicles on a 'hail stop' basis until travel patterns emerge. This technique allows the location of transit stops to be established by the clientele. If possible stops should be located in the boulevard or green space, rather than in residential lawns.

A typical transit stop sign used in residential areas can be made from a single 8 foot, 4" x 4" fence post. The post can be painted "traffic yellow" and the words "transit stop" or "bus stop" stencilled in black along the sides. (The wording "TRANSIT STOP" is preferred because there are many different types of buses whose drivers may use a "BUS STOP".) A short post sign is much less intrusive in residential lawns and can easily be relocated as conditions change.

In commercial areas two signs may be required plus the curb can be painted yellow. The sign plates can be similar to standard rectangular information signs with the "no stopping" or "no parking" designation, a "bus vehicle logo", "Mon. to Fri. 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m." and a directional arrow, for example.

Portable signs may be needed while the transit routes are being adjusted to the needs of the riders. These can be fabricated by welding a pipe post to a discarded truck wheel. Such a sign can be used when transit stops have to be temporarily relocated due to construction or in troublesome areas such as mall parking lots.

4.2 Passenger Shelters

Shelters are often located at major gathering points in outlying areas. Within the commercial areas it may be possible for passengers to use lobbies and vestibules. In shopping centres it may be necessary to locate a shelter within the parking area to define the bus stop location. Some communities permit advertising on shelters which helps to defray capital and maintenance costs.

The most important locations for shelters would be at the City Centre Mall terminal and the Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire and Co-op Centre stops, for example.

4.3 Benches

If bench advertising in residential areas is acceptable to the community it may be possible to find a commercial sponsor for such amenities. Benches should be portable in case routes are changed. Contracts for bench advertising should provide for maintenance by the operator.

4.4 Fare Policy

It is recommended by the transit Consultant that the City initiate the transit service with an exact cash fare policy. Tickets and/or passes could be made available later, depending upon demand. Passes are often used for people with special needs whose fare is being paid for by a social service agency. An exact cash fare policy is the easiest for the City to administer, however there are advantages to the selling of tickets:

- Parents can pre-purchase tickets for dependants rather than dole out cash which may be used for other purposes.
- Institutions can purchase tickets for their clientele.
- The City would receive funds in advance.
- The City would benefit by "shrinkage" when tickets are not presented.
- There would be less cash to count.

The financial analysis contained in the Interim Report (see Appendix "A") assumes an average fare of \$1.90. This would accommodate the following fare policy:

Adults (including seniors)	\$2.00 to \$2.50 cash per one-way ride
Children 6 to 12 years	\$1.50 cash per one-way ride
Children 5 and under	Free
Exact change or equivalent tickets or a pass required	

Tickets should bear a City logo and the words "Weyburn Transit" and good for one (Adult or Child) fare on one side. Tickets are always serialized for audit control. Samples of suitable tickets and the names of specialized ticket printers can be supplied to the City. Master artwork and proof copies of tickets are treated like banknotes by such printers. Tickets can be printed in sheets of 10 or 20 under a common serial number. Higher value adult tickets should be printed on the lightest colour stock, while lower value tickets can be printed on darker stock. This helps to prevent counterfeiting by persons darkening low-value tickets to increase their value.

4.5 Feeder Vehicles

It was anticipated that taxi feeder vehicles could be needed in new sub-divisions where it may not be feasible to extend the transit routes. The subject was discussed with the taxi operators. Other options include:

- Having the transit operator do an extra trip or diverting the regular route if time permits.
- Attaching a feeder trip to a school bus run.
- Using the Care-A-Van when available.

Feeder services are normally a less expensive option until such times as new residential areas can support fixed-route transit service. Taxis, in shared-ride feeder service, average about two persons per taxi trip. In Weyburn a taxi vehicle might carry five persons per hour.

If taxis become involved in providing transit services in the future there are several options. Taxis need not be limited to operating conventional sedans. In specialized 'paratransit' systems serving people with disabilities, taxi operators may employ vans equipped with wheelchair ramps or lifts.

Contractual arrangements with taxi firms need to be on a flat rate per trip or per hour basis because of the difficulty in auditing charges. The best arrangement for Weyburn may be one in which the City accumulates requests from potential customers in new sub-divisions or remote areas and purchases feeder trips from a taxi firm. Such feeders would meet the transit vehicle at the ends of the transit route and the transit driver would collect the fares.

4.6 Administration

The responsibilities of a City appointed Transit Supervisor would likely include the following:

- Provide liaison between the City and the operator. Approve routes and schedules, administrative forms and logos.
- Initiate the marketing of the new transit service. Distribute tickets and schedules.
- Provide liaison with the business community and solicit their support. Solicit supporting amenities.

- Monitor the transit service through the accumulation of revenue and ridership statistics. Receive and review comments and suggestions from the community. Monitoring the transit service includes both the accumulation of statistical data and information on rider attitudes based on their experience with the transit service.
- Report monthly on the progress of the introduction of transit service including the performance of the operator.
- Make adjustments to the routes and schedules as required to accommodate the emerging ridership demand.
- Conduct a follow-up rider survey in October/November and project budget requirements for the following year.
- Evaluate requests for feeder services.

4.7 Emergency Service

There will be a need to move quickly to restore service in the event of a vehicle breakdown or other emergency. This situation needs to be discussed with the operator because it is the operator's responsibility to restore service.

4.8 Extending Service

The initial transit service application has been designed to test the response from the public under the most favourable startup conditions. This will minimize the subsidy required from the City.

It was anticipated that there would be requests for additional transit service in outlying areas and at times of the day not initially accommodated. Extensions of service that were considered included:

- Operating one bus on Saturdays (estimated cost recovery 40 percent).
- Providing three hours of service on evenings (estimated cost recovery 10 percent).
- Providing for taxi feeder services in growth areas (conditional on 100 percent cost recovery).

4.9 Miscellaneous Tasks

- Care-A-Van drivers could be utilized in the training of transit drivers.
- A method of dealing with lost property will be needed.

5.0 ENABLING BYLAWS

5.1 Transit Bylaw

The following draft bylaw wording is typical for new transit systems in Western Canada.

WHEREAS no franchise has been previously awarded to any person or corporation to

provide a Municipal Public Transit System, NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEYBURN in the Province of Saskatchewan enacts as follows:

- This Bylaw shall be called the Public Transit Bylaw.
- A Public Transit Vehicle for the purposes of this Bylaw is a public service vehicle, bus or automobile authorized by the City to provide shared public transportation accommodation within the City and within an area of fifteen miles radius of the City limits.
- This Bylaw shall provide for the prohibition of any person, partnership, association or corporation, other than a person authorized by the City, from operating a vehicle or vehicles as a Public Transit Vehicle within the City Limits and to provide for penalties sufficient to prevent the continuing breaches of such prohibitions; PROVIDED THAT, nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to interfere with the normal operation of school bus services, taxi services, buses operated by Medical, Social Service, or Charitable Institutions and Associations.
- The City shall have the right of acquiring a municipal transit system through any one or more of the following methods:
 - a) By purchasing vehicles and contracting with an individual person, partnership, registered society or association, or corporation to provide certain services including drivers.
 - b) By contracting with a bus or taxi company to provide transit service.
 - c) By establishing a municipal department.
- The City may undertake to provide municipal public transit service to serve both the City and other communities provided that the other communities agree to share the costs.
- The service policy and regulations (including fares to be charged), is established and reviewed by the City Administration, ratified by City Council, and applies to all persons who are in, upon or about any public transit vehicle operated for the City of Weyburn.
- Any person violating any of the foregoing Bylaw provisions and regulations shall, in addition to any other Liability that may be imposed by Law, be liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$2,000.

5.2 Traffic Bylaw

The Weyburn Traffic Bylaw will need to be amended to provide for "No Parking in Transit Stops". A description of the signing used to denote the transit stop may also be required in the bylaw.

6.0 INTER-AGENCY AGREEMENTS

The potential involvement of other community organizations, private transportation companies and not-for-profit agencies with the City of Weyburn staff to deliver a public transit service will require a more formal process than the existing arrangement between the City and the Care-A-Van Society. (See previous Section 2.4 "Service Delivery Organization and the "Interim Report".) Subject to a review by the City's legal counsel the following action is proposed.

Principal Transit Contractor: A formal contract should be employed. Example contracts are available from other cities including Prince Albert, North Battleford, Swift Current and Yorkton. Model contracts are available from the Government of Ontario and BC Transit in Victoria. A recent contract in the Town of Banff may also be useful. A contract with another public agency may employ less stringent conditions.

Shared Resources: Agreements to share public community resources could take the form of a 'Memorandum of Understanding'.

Interim Services: Interim services of short duration such as taxi trips could be obtained through an open City purchase order with a dollar limit.

7.0 BUDGET ESTIMATES

7.1 Assumptions

All budget estimates are in 2007 dollars. For budget analysis purposes, the following assumptions were made:

Annual Rides for a Mature Transit System: 42,000 for a flexible route diversion service. (Reduced for the initial two years of service and less flexible options.)

Initial Days of Service: Mondays through Fridays, except holidays. Annual Days: 250

Initial Hours of Service: From approximately 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Average Fare Received per Passenger: \$1.90 per ride.

Vehicles Utilized: Two 14 to 20 passenger buses equipped with wheelchair lifts. Cost: Approximately \$88,000 each. Useful Life: 8 yrs.

Annual Hours of Service: 2500. (Increased from 2375 hours in the Interim Report)

Operating Cost per Hour of Service: \$39.00 (Driver wages and benefits, fuel, maintenance and administration included).

Vehicle Lease or Replacement Cost per Hour of Service: \$8.00.

Driver Payroll Hours: 2,750. (Drivers fuel and service vehicles.)

7.2 Annual Operating Budgets

Assuming that a new transit service would likely be implemented in fall of the target

year, draft budgets have been provided for an initial four-month period and the subsequent three years. Two service options are provided for: a fixed route transit system, and the option of converting to a more flexible route diversion system, as discussed in Section 3.0 of the Final Report.

The "Implementation Costs" shown in the following table include: detailed design, implementation, and marketing costs in the initial four-month period, and monitoring and redesign costs in the subsequent years. A discussion of the derivation of the "Capital Replacement Allowance" follows in Section 7.2.

<u>FIRST FOUR MONTHS:</u>	<u>FIXED ROUTE</u>	<u>FLEXIBLE ROUTE</u>
Operations Expenditures	\$32,500	
Capital Replacement Allowance	6,700	
Implementation Costs	<u>25,000</u>	
Total Expenditures	\$64,200	
Total Revenues	<u>7,600</u>	
Net Subsidy Required	\$56,600	
 <u>FIRST FULL YEAR:</u>		
Operations Expenditures	\$ 97,500	\$ 97,500
Capital Replacement Allowance	20,000	20,000
Implementation Costs	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Total Expenditures	\$127,500	\$127,500
Total Revenues	<u>39,900</u>	<u>53,200</u>
Net Subsidy Required	\$ 87,600	\$ 74,300
 <u>SECOND FULL YEAR:</u>		
Operations Expenditures	\$ 97,500	\$ 97,500
Capital Replacement Allowance	20,000	20,000
Implementation Costs	<u>10,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
Total Expenditures	\$127,500	\$127,500
Total Revenues	<u>53,200</u>	<u>74,100</u>
Net Subsidy Required	\$ 74,300	\$ 53,400
 <u>THIRD FULL YEAR:</u>		
Operations Expenditures	\$ 97,500	\$ 97,500
Capital Replacement Allowance	20,000	20,000
Implementation Costs	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Total Expenditures	\$122,500	\$122,500
Total Revenues	<u>57,000</u>	<u>79,800</u>
Net Subsidy Required	\$ 65,500	\$ 42,700

7.3 Capital Equipment

Small transit vehicles built upon a heavy duty 'cut away' chassis have an in-service useful life of approximately eight years. Assuming a residual value of approximately \$8,000 each, a straight line amortization would require the provision of \$20,000 annually for vehicle replacement. Based on 2500 hours of service this would amount to \$8.00 per hour for a total cost of \$47.00 per hour of service. Financing costs if any, are not included.

Other capital equipment that would need to be provided for could include communications equipment, signs and posts, benches and shelters and portable sidewalk blocks for transit stops in outlying areas.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Implementation Schedule

The lead time for implementing a new transit system is dependent mainly upon the availability of vehicles. At present, a six month delivery period for specially equipped small buses is not unusual.

Because transit ridership increases as outdoor temperatures decline most new transit systems are implemented in the fall. A fall implementation also mitigates the fiscal year burden since the City would only need to budget for four months of operating costs and the one-time implementation costs in the target year when revenues are low. The following is a recommended schedule of events based on an anticipated implementation in September of the target year:

- January: Complete design specifications for the transit service. Confirm annual budgets and the source of vehicles. (Purchase, lease or turnkey contract.)
- February. Canvass potential operators for interest.
- March: Prepare tender documents or initiate negotiations with an operator.
- April: Distribute a "Potential Transit Rider Survey" to all households to identify specific needs. Include the proposed service and fares in the survey. If a tender; call for proposals from potential operators.
- May: Review proposals and select an operator.
- June: Issue a letter of intent or enter into a formal agreement for transit service with the selected operator. Discuss the proposed service at a public meeting. Design and order transit stop posts, signs, vehicle logos and tickets as required. Confirm the fare policy.

- June/July: Complete the implementation and marketing plan and the final design of the transit service. Establish the locations for transit stops, terminals, benches and shelters. Amend and pass Bylaw(s) as required.
- By July 31: Test routes and schedules with a suitable bus. Confirm routes and schedules with the operator.
- By August: Print maps and schedules. Distribute printed materials to households. Initiate marketing program with the assistance of the operator. This could include free bus rides during the first week, for example. Issue press release. Advertise the schedule in the local newspaper. Include schedule and routing information on City website.
- Typical September Service Startup Schedule.
 - September 1: Finalize instructions to driver(s).
 - September 7: Test the routes, schedules, vehicles, equipment and emergency procedures without passengers.
 - September 8 - 10: Provide free service.
 - September 13: Begin charging fares.
- September/December: Monitor service performance. Adjust routings and schedules as required. Introduce feeder services if required.

8.2 Interim Strategies

In the interim before implementing a conventional transit service Weyburn should consider the following actions:

- Explore the possibility of senior government funding assistance for a two-year transit demonstration project.
- Canvass the community for interest in sponsoring and/or operating a public transit system based on the findings of the Transit Feasibility Study.
- Implement a taxi subsidy to meet all special needs, or expand the Care-A-Van service.
- Negotiate an agreement with the public school division for joint usage of school bus shuttle services where feasible.
- Develop a location in the downtown for a transit terminal.
- Introduce a bylaw to provide the basis for a future transit service.

None of the above strategies would fully satisfy all local needs or provide a collection and distribution system, however most would assist in meeting the community needs in the short term. A carpooling and/or a bus pooling program could help to develop the market for regional transit. A full transit service could eventually develop from services for seniors and people with disabilities.

**CITY OF WEYBURN
Saskatchewan**

**Appendix A
Interim Report on the
Feasibility of a Public Transit System**

W. G. Atkinson, P. Eng. (BC)

June 30, 2007

1.0 BACKGROUND

From time to time the City of Weyburn has received requests for the City to consider the provision of some form of public transit service. Recently a petition was submitted to the City Council by a committee sponsored by the Community Low Income Center which requested that a transit feasibility study be undertaken by the City and which suggested the use of new grant funds becoming available to finance such a study.

The City applied for and received funding for the requested study from the Federal "Moving on Sustainable Transportation (MOST) Grant Program".

In April, 2007, the City of Weyburn invited several professional consultants to submit proposals for a "Feasibility Study of a Public Transit System for the City of Weyburn." The City administration reviewed several submissions and the Council of the City of Weyburn awarded the contract to Wallace G. (Wally) Atkinson, P. Eng. (BC) at their regular meeting of May 14, 2007.

1.1 Study Objectives

Weyburn, like many other urban communities experiencing peripheral growth in residential and commercial areas, is finding that walking distances have increased to the point where some form of public transit service may be feasible. Answers to the following questions are desired:

- What is the potential demand for transit in Weyburn?
- Who would operate such a service and what would it cost?
- How would it be funded?
- What type of service could be provided?
- What would be the benefits and implications of providing service?
- What would the service look like to the consumer?

1.2 Consultant Approach

To make effective use of the available budget, and because the City's terms of reference did not require completion until October 15, 2007, the Consultant divided the work into two phases.

In Phase One the feasibility in terms of cost and benefits for each of five transit service options was described and an interim report produced. The City has the opportunity of selecting a preferred service from five options described in the Interim Report for further analysis.

Should the City decide to continue, the work in Phase Two would provide a detailed preliminary design for the preferred option (or options), including a service delivery organization and guidelines for implementation.

1.3 Public Participation

Two informal "focus group" meetings were held with representatives of agencies who have a stake in the outcomes of the Public Transit Feasibility Study. The initial meeting held on May 30th addressed the issue of "community needs." A second meeting convened on June 25th reviewed several service options.

In addition to the meetings with agency representatives the Consultant interviewed all of the local transportation providers in the City, a former taxi service provider, representatives of the business community, the Rural Municipality of Weyburn and the two school divisions, City officials, the City's industrial development consultant and members of the Board and staff of the Care-A-Van Society.

2.0 COMMUNITY NEEDS

The City of Weyburn has a greater potential demand for a public transit service than other cities of a similar size and population for the following reasons:

- The walking distance to the downtown exceeds two kilometres for approximately 20% of the population and will exceed three kilometres for new subdivisions being planned.
- The proportion of seniors in the population is substantially higher than the average for urban communities in the Prairie Provinces.
- Employment in the downtown area is equivalent to an urban population of approximately 25,000 persons.
- Major trip generators and institutional care facilities are less centralized.

The main focus of a future transit service in Weyburn would be to accommodate lower income families, young adults, seniors and other persons who may not have access to an automobile for a particular trip destination. In addition, it is desirable to offer an alternative mode of travel to the private automobile for social and environmental benefits. Trip purposes to be accommodated include work, education, shopping, personal business such as doctor's appointments, and social/recreational travel.

2.1 Those Who Need Transit Service

Transit patronage in Weyburn is expected to come from the following segments of the population:

- 3% of the approximately 800 persons employed in the downtown (24 employees).
- 5% of the 2,915 seniors in the population (146 seniors).
- 10% of the 124 adult students in the remedial education programs (12 students).

- 5% of the 950 students currently being transported to and from school by school buses (47 students).
- 5% of the 495 college students (25 students).
- 2% of the 815 persons living in households with one automobile or none available (16 persons).

2.2 Trip Generation

Of the above 270 potential customers for a public transit service, the 52 persons that include downtown employees, adults in remedial education programs, and the low income group have the greatest need and are likely to be the regular transit riders. At 8 trips per week (on weekdays only), this group would generate approximately 21,000 annual trips. The other segments of the population, mainly from subdivisions that are two or more kilometres from downtown and other destinations, would use transit less frequently, generating an additional 21,000 trips for a total of 42,000, or 4.2 rides per capita annually, for an established bus transit service. It would likely take from two to three years for a new transit service to achieve this level of demand. After that the demand would continue to grow at a rate approximately twice the rate of growth of the population.

The above trip estimates may be compared to the annual transit usage for 2006 in the following cities:

Yorkton: (population -15,038) 42,172 rides
 N. Battleford: (population -14,500) 21,000 rides
 Castlegar: (population - 10,300) 40,000 rides
 Revelstoke: (population - 7,900) 22,400 rides
 Dawson Creek: (population - 10,600) 120,600 rides

3.0 EXISTING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

3.1 Care-A-Van Service

This essential "paratransit" door-to-door service for seniors and people with disabilities is operated by the Weyburn Care-A-Van Society. The service is delivered through the cooperation of several Weyburn organizations, municipal and provincial government agencies, and service clubs. Administrative duties are performed by volunteers who are members of the Board of Directors of the Society. The Consultant interviewed two Society Board members, the regular driver and the two school division representatives who are clients of the service. The dispatch office in the Weyburn General Hospital was visited. The following is a summary of the main features of the service:

Fleet: One 12-passenger mini-bus equipped with a wheelchair lift on a 2001 Ford E 450 chassis (no readily available spare vehicle).

Dispatching: By the Community Home Care receptionist.

Fares: \$6.00 flat rate.

Charters: \$30.00/hr.; vehicle rental \$12.00/hr plus \$2.00 fuel.

Wheelchair Users: Maximum 6 (2 seats fold up for each wheelchair).

Storage: Fire Hall bay.

Maintenance: R. P. Automotive.

Public Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Peak Periods: 7:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.; 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

2006 Ridership: 5,040 (annual).

Estimated Hours: 2,250 (annual).

Estimated Productivity: 2.2 rides per vehicle hour.

Cost per Ride: 2006 without depreciation - \$9.30; 2007 without depreciation - \$10.57, with depreciation - \$13.16.

Cost per Hour: 2007 with depreciation - \$29.48.

Estimated cost per hour if the Care-A-Van service was operated and dispatched by a private company - \$36.15 in 2007.

Current Concerns: There are several concerns about the existing Care-A-Van service which should be discussed with the Society.

- The service does not have a readily available spare vehicle. (The consultant found a newer suitable vehicle at the Tatagwa View homes that is not being utilized. For more information see Section 3.4.)
- The existing service is overloaded during peak periods and under-utilized during off-peak periods.
- There needs to be a more formal financial understanding between the Society and the City that ensures a continuity of service at an acceptable fare to the patrons.
- The two school divisions who are clients of the service are not following the usual practice of transferring the grant funds received from the Province for students with disabilities in the way that the City transfers Provincial funds received for other people with disabilities.

3.2 Rick's Delivery & Taxi Service

This is a home-based family-owned and operated business providing a variety of services in the Weyburn region. This business is typical of taxi operations in the smaller cities where revenues from pick-up and delivery services for passengers and packages are needed to sustain the business. At present, the passenger side of the business is under utilized due to "the difficulty in obtaining sufficient drivers with class four licences." Some trip requests are being refused.

Three of the family members who own and operate the business were interviewed. All of them expressed an interest in further diversifying their business into transit services should such an opportunity arise in the future. The following is a summary of their current resources:

Fleet: Five autos; one 15-passenger van; two Ford Windstars.

Dispatch: Home-based using Fleet Net Radio and cel phones.

Fares: Flat rates: \$6.00 in City; \$5.00 for seniors (\$1.00 added after midnight); Weyburn Airport \$12.00; McTaggart \$20.00.

Wheelchair Users: Accommodated by transfer only.

A unique marketing program of this service is the sale of colour-coded prepaid taxi vouchers for both regular customers and seniors. Rick's experiences a substantial demand for these vouchers as gifts for seniors at Christmas time. In addition, social service agencies may purchase vouchers for special programs. Recently, the Southeast Regional College has begun to purchase taxi vouchers for low-income students attending remedial education programs.

3.3 Stagecoach Bus Tours & Charters

This is an established family-owned and operated business, housed in a repair and bus storage garage complex at 42 - 10th Street. This business offers full-sized highway motorcoach charters "to anywhere." A major source of business at present is from their "Casino Tours" to both Canadian and American destinations.

Two of the owner-operators were interviewed. Their response was that their business "will expand to meet demand" and "would be willing to purchase and operate the vehicles required by the City for a future transit system contract."

Fleet: 7 full-sized motorcoaches with washrooms.

Dispatch: Private radio net.

Wheelchair Users: By transfer only.

3.4 School Bus Services

Both the Public School Division and the Separate School Division transport students who reside within Weyburn to and from schools. In addition, shuttle bus services are provided throughout the day between schools and to and from recreational, cultural and the arts program venues. Both school divisions also purchase service for students with disabilities from the Care-A-Van Society.

South East Cornerstone School Division No. 209 operates 41 buses which carry 700 students within the City, provides rural service for both school divisions, and operates a majority of the above shuttle bus services. Holy Family Catholic Separate School Division No. 140 operates two buses within Weyburn for 250 students.

3.5 Other Transportation Resources

Tatagwa View homes have a relatively new "Girardin Model 5" mini-bus built on a Ford E450 Super Duty chassis. This vehicle has seating for six ambulatory persons plus three or four wheelchair positions. The vehicle was apparently provided through a bequest from a former resident. It is used only when a staff member with the necessary drivers licence is available to drive it. The possible use of this vehicle as a backup vehicle for the public service should be discussed with the care home as it may be possible to make an arrangement of mutual benefit.

At least one of the small nursing homes in Weyburn has a van available for its residents. Other agencies are likely to purchase vehicles if the Care-A-Van service continues to be constrained during peak periods.

The retired owner of Weyburn Taxi Ltd. who has had some past experience with an attempt to provide a transit shopping service has provided her experience to the Consultant.

The Saskatchewan Transportation Company bus depot is strategically located close to downtown and on what would likely be a transit bus route. This would allow the possibility of creating a transit schedule that would synchronize with STC arrival and departure times.

4.0 SERVICE POLICY ASSUMPTIONS

The Consultant has assumed that the City would like to deliver any future public transit service at the least cost by utilizing the knowledge and experience of existing transportation providers. Such an approach would encourage volunteers to continue to participate in the delivery of services and take advantage of the experience of those who understand the City's transportation needs.

It has also been assumed that for any future transit option the basic door-to-door "Care-A-Van" service would remain and be enhanced. The experience of other cities is that when transit service is introduced, or made more accessible, some seniors may choose

to use regular public transit service because it is more convenient. The important issue is one of choice. No one should feel that they are being forced to move to the public service.

For financial comparison purposes, the following assumptions have been made for all bus transit options:

Initial service days: Mondays through Fridays, except holidays.

Initial service hours: 7:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Regular fares: \$2.00 cash or voucher including seniors and high school students: \$1.50 for children.

Average revenue: \$1.90 per ride.

Vehicles: 16 pass. vans for Dial-a-Bus; 20/24 pass. buses for other options.

Annual service hours: 2,375.

Driver payroll hours: 2,750. (Drivers fuel and service vehicles.)

5.0 SERVICE OPTIONS

Conventional fixed-route transit service is provided in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and North Battleford. The transit services in Swift Current and Yorkton are more flexible, using dial-a-bus techniques similar to the Telebus service that operated in Regina from 1971 to 1981. Recent experience with new transit services in Alberta communities suggests that the non-traditional approaches used in Swift Current, Yorkton, and small communities in B.C., called 'paratransit', may be more successful as starter transit systems. Such systems may be eligible for funding assistance as a "demonstration project".

In the submission to the City, the Consultant proposed to examine five transit options which can also be viewed as stages in the evolution of a transit service. The more flexible systems can be used to introduce service which may eventually grow to the point where fixed routes become more viable. The five options in ascending order of cost include:

- A taxi subsidy similar to the current approach used in Lloydminster, Pincher Creek, Fort Saskatchewan, and Canmore, for example.
- A Shared Ride Taxi system like the one used to introduce transit service to The Battlefords in 1978.
- A flexible route diversion system similar to the current service in Yorkton.
- A Dial-a-Bus service similar to the current transit service in Swift Current.
- A fixed-route bus loop system similar to a technique used to introduce transit

service in Yorkton in 1960 and used in many small communities throughout Canada.

5.1 Taxi Subsidies

The City of Lloydminster has two paratransit services in place. The Lloydminster Handivan Society operates in the same manner and for the same clientele as the Care-A-Van Society in Weyburn. The City provides some administrative services and a storage facility. The operations are funded by the Province of Saskatchewan grants to the City and the school divisions, user fares and community fund raising. A second service, only for seniors, is funded entirely through grants for transit systems from the Province of Alberta. It should also be noted that adults are permitted to ride on school buses (with the students) to destinations which may coincide with school bus routings. This arrangement and the two paratransit services account for the lack of a demand for transit service in Lloydminster to date.

The Lloydminster Senior Citizen Society sponsors a shared-ride taxi subsidy for seniors aged 65 or older. One or more seniors are able to arrange for a taxi to take them anywhere in the City for a cost of \$5.00 which is less than the normal taxi fare. Taxi tickets are currently sold at both Credit Unions and at the Legacy Centre. There is no means test or limit on the number of prepaid tickets that may be purchased. Approximately 11,130 tickets were sold in 2006. The taxi ticket must indicate the full fare for the ride and be signed by the ticket holder. The ticket is then turned in to the Seniors Society by the taxi company for reimbursement of the fare. The service cost approximately \$67,500 in 2006 and has an average cost per taxi trip of \$6.07. At an average taxi occupancy of 1.8 persons the service is accommodating 20,000 persons at an estimated cost of \$3.38 per ride. The City of Lloydminster contributed \$13,171 (from Alberta grant funds) to this service in 2006.

5.2 Shared-Ride Taxi Transit

In July of 1978, the community of The Battlefords, which includes the City of North Battleford, the Town of Battleford, and Saskatchewan Hospital, implemented a two-year shared-ride taxi and bus transit demonstration project. Financial assistance was provided by the two senior governments. Service began on November 28, 1978, was expanded on March 1 and December 1, 1979, and was evaluated over a two-year period, ending in November, 1980.

Shared-ride taxi services were provided only in the City of North Battleford. The taxis were scheduled to meet a fixed-route bus serving the Town at a downtown transfer terminal. Shared-ride taxi trips were made between residential areas and destinations in the downtown, including the bus transfer terminal and major trip generators in the City. Trips from one residence to another could be made by travelling via downtown and paying two fares. Originating trips were made by calling the taxi dispatcher one hour in advance or by subscribing to the service on a regular basis. For the return trip taxis waited for passengers at designated collection points including the bus terminal.

Important lessons were learned from the use of taxi service in The Battlefords:

- The subsidy required per ride for the bus portion of the service within the City was 50 percent higher than the subsidy required for the taxi service.
- The average productivity of the taxi service (3.8 rides per hour) was higher than that achieved by most other paratransit services, such as Care-A-Van (2.2 rides per hour), for example.
- The use of taxis providing doorstep to downtown service could be used as a marketing tool to build ridership quickly.
- To be successful, such a service must include financial incentives to ensure that the taxi dispatchers maximize their shared-ride trips.

5.3 Route Diversion Systems

An excellent example of a low-cost route diversion bus system is currently operating in the City of Yorkton. Potential bus stops are numbered like a fixed bus route, but the bus only goes to a particular stop if someone has phoned for that stop. This allows the bus to shortcut the route when there are no requests. This is very efficient during off-peak hours when one vehicle can easily cover the whole city. Yorkton uses a major mall, the hospital, and a downtown terminal as timing points with a fixed arrival schedule. There are no doorstep pickups.

The gathering of riders at bus stopping points conveniently spaced more closely than is usual for a fixed-route service is much more efficient than doorstep service. The current productivity of the service is 13.6 rides per hour which is high for a small community. This technique provides a good level of service since no one needs to walk very far.

Customers phoning the transit dispatch office for service are requested to:

- Find their location on the routing map and the stop number where they want to be picked up.
- Find their destination on the map and note its stop number.
- Call the Dispatch Centre and tell the Dispatcher which stop they want to be picked up from, as well as their destination stop.
- The Dispatcher provides the approximate time that the bus will arrive at the stop. Customers are advised that the times are approximate and to be at their stop about five minutes early.

There is a map which shows the gathering points which customers can print out from the Yorkton website. For details, customers can go to:

<http://www.city.yorkton.sk.ca/dept/pweng/engineering/transit/index.asp>

5.4 Dial-a-Bus Systems

There are several hundred Dial-a-Bus systems in Canada which serve the needs of most seniors and people with disabilities. Most of the larger towns and cities of all sizes

have systems in place. A majority of these systems provide service that is similar to the services provided by Care-A-Van in Weyburn. In British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec many rural and small urban communities have extended their Dial-a-Bus systems to serve anyone who has a need for transportation. The technique has also been used by some transit systems such as the one in Red Deer, for example, in place of their fixed-route service at night and during periods of low demand.

The concept was first introduced in the early 1960's as a feeder service to fixed route transit systems. By 1972 there were 18 applications of this type of demand-responsive service in Canada. Some of these systems, such as the services in Welland and Peterborough for example, utilized taxis. Today only a few remain, mainly in small cities such as the current service in Swift Current.

The Swift Current Tel-a-Bus Service is typical of this type of service. The Swift Current service is similar to the Yorkton service in that the buses operate on a fixed schedule and check in at three malls and the downtown at regular intervals. The main difference is that the buses may make doorstep pickups and deliveries in between the four time points. The travel times are therefore much longer for most riders than for a more direct service. For details, go to the following website:

<http://www.city.swift-current.sk.ca/community.php?/>

For Weyburn, one possibility for this type of service would be to expand the existing Care-A-Van service to accommodate other needs. This would require at least one additional bus and additional funding. Another possibility would be to deliver both services through a common dispatcher. The two services could each act as backup for the other and one spare vehicle would suffice for both. There could be other 'economies of scale' and mutual benefits for both services. Because of the way in which the Provincial grants are administered separate accounting for eligible passengers would be required.

5.5 Fixed-Route Transit

A fixed-route transit service can be as simple as a single residential bus loop passing through the downtown on an hourly frequency. In Weyburn, this could be similar to the loop proposed by the Community Low Income Center. The City could begin by providing bus service for shopping and medical appointments, and extend the hours of operation as the demand warranted.

The difficulty with this type of transit service is that it is not competitive with auto travel times, and therefore has little appeal for work trips. Such a fixed-route service was attempted by the former "Weyburn Taxi Ltd." in 1998, and was discontinued for lack of patronage.

To provide acceptable travel times in Weyburn would require a loop system that returned to the downtown within 10 to 15 minutes. This would be similar to a system used to introduce transit service in Yorkton in the 1960 where one bus was able to make 20 minute loops into three different residential areas each hour. For purposes of cost

analysis, it is assumed that (for this option) transit service in Weyburn would begin with a similar loop system.

6.0 FINANCIAL ANALYSES

6.1 Assumptions for Taxi Options

Flat Rates: The costs for the Taxi Subsidy Option are based on the \$6.00 flat rate in effect in May, 2007.

Fares: Fares of \$4.00 per ride for the Taxi Subsidy Option were based on the existing taxi company discount for seniors plus a matching subsidy by the City. Fares of \$3.00 per ride for the Shared Ride Taxi Option were based on a premium of \$1.00 over the bus fare. If the City were to choose one of these options fares could be adjusted annually to put a limit on the annual subsidy.

Shared Ride Costs: In a Shared Ride Taxi operation the taxi company must maximise the taxi occupancy. To ensure that this happens it is desirable to offer an incentive bonus to the taxi dispatcher. The flat rate has been increased to \$6.50 for this option. The actual cost per passenger carried is based on the average occupancy which is estimated to be 1.63 persons per vehicle trip in the first year, rising to 1.71 in the second year and 1.81 in the third year based on experience in The Battlefords. For an actual system all costs would be negotiable.

Ridership: Estimates of the annual rides for the Taxi Subsidy Option are based on Lloydminster experience; estimates of the annual rides for the Shared Ride Taxi Option are based on The Battlefords experience.

Implementation Costs: Include design costs for Shared Ride Taxi Option; contract supervision and marketing.

6.2 Assumptions For Bus Options

Hourly Costs: \$47.00 including depreciation or lease fees for two buses.

Dial-a-Bus Ridership and Fares: The same as for the Shared Ride Taxi Option.

Fixed Route Bus Ridership: Reduced from the Route Diversion Option based on recent experience in Cold Lake, Alberta.

Implementation Costs: Includes system design, monitoring, redesign and marketing.

6.3 Comparison of Transit Service Options (Revised Sept. 25/07)

Comparisons of ridership and costs for the five options analysed is shown in Exhibit 1. Transit data for actual systems is shown in Exhibit 2.

EXHIBIT 1
Annual Statistics For The Five Options Analysed

	<u>1st Year</u>	<u>2nd Year</u>	<u>3rd Year</u>
<u>TAXI SUBSIDY</u>			
Annual rides	6,000	8,000	10,000
Cost per ride	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
Revenue per ride	\$4.00	\$4.00	\$4.00
Annual subsidy	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$20,000
Implementation	\$2,500		
<u>SHARED RIDE TAXI</u>			
Annual rides	10,000	17,000	20,000
Cost per ride	\$4.00	\$3.80	\$3.60
Revenue per ride	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Annual subsidy	\$10,000	\$13,600	\$12,000
Implementation	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
<u>ROUTE DIVERSION</u>			
Annual rides	25,000	36,000	42,000
Cost per ride	\$4.47	\$3.10	\$2.66
Revenue per ride	\$1.90	\$1.90	\$1.90
Annual subsidy	\$64,250	\$43,200	\$31,920
Implementation	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
<u>DIAL-A-BUS</u>			
Annual rides	10,000	17,000	20,000
Cost per ride	\$11.16	\$6.57	\$5.58
Revenue per ride	\$3.00	\$3.00	\$3.00
Annual subsidy	\$81,600	\$60,700	\$51,600
Implementation	\$30,000	\$10,000	\$5,000
<u>FIXED ROUTE BUS</u>			
Annual rides	18,000	28,000	30,000
Cost per ride	\$6.20	\$3.98	\$3.72
Revenue per ride	\$1.90	\$1.90	\$1.90
Annual subsidy	\$77,400	\$58,240	\$54,600
Implementation	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$15,000

Notes: Annual costs for all bus options are in 2007 \$ and based on 2,375 hours @ \$47.00 = \$111,625.00. The cost for a Dial-a-Bus service could be less than this if integrated with the Care-A-Van operations and dispatching.

The taxi subsidy is based on current flat rates of \$6.00. The Shared Ride Taxi Option is based on a flat rate of \$6.50.

EXHIBIT 2
2006 Statistics for Transit Service in Saskatchewan Cities

	Battlefords	Swift Current	Yorkton
Population	14,500	16,000	15,038
Implemented System	1970 Fixed route	1980 Tel-a-Bus	1960/1997 (1) Dial-A-Bus (2)
Vehicles	1 x 24 pass.	2 x 24 pass.	1 x 24 pass.
Days	Mon. to Sat.	Mon. to Sat.	Mon. to Sat.
Hours	8 am - 5 pm 1 pm - 5 pm Sat.	7 am - 6:30 pm	8 am - 7 pm (3)
Annual rides	21,000	13,840	42,172
Annual hours	2,400	4,700	3,100
Clientele	Mainly seniors	All	All
Adult fare	\$2.00	\$1.50	\$1.75 Tickets \$1.60
Average fare	\$2.00	\$1.40	\$1.36
Fleet owner	Contractor	City	City
Access by WC	No	No	No
Operating budget	\$77,500	\$121,730	\$115,875
Revenues	\$34,300	\$19,380	\$57,300
Operating deficit	\$43,200	\$102,350	\$58,575
Other charges	(included)		\$25,000 (4)
Annual subsidy	\$43,200	\$102,350	\$83,575
Comments	Contractor has revenues from other clients and keeps the fares. (5)	Driver is paid \$18,200 and keeps the fares.	Separate administration for drivers, dispatch centre, and maintenance.

- Notes:**
- (1) Fixed route in 1960; Dial-A-Bus since 1997.
 - (2) Flexible route; stops on request.
 - (3) 9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturdays.
 - (4) Capital reserves.
 - (5) Subsidy shared between City of N. Battleford and Town of Battleford.

All three cities have separate paratransit services which can transport passengers in wheelchairs. The availability of these services to seniors reduces the market for public transit somewhat. If the vehicles in transit service were accessible to wheelchairs some passengers might find transit more convenient.

7.0 COMMUNITY BENEFITS

In Weyburn a public transit service would provide benefits to its customers in the following ways:

- Providing mobility for those customers who either do not have access to private vehicles or find taxis and private vehicles to be too expensive.
- Providing a choice for those who may prefer not to use private vehicles for a particular trip or at times that visibility is a problem or road conditions are hazardous.

The potential social, economic and environmental benefits in Weyburn are relatively modest, however the availability of an alternative to the use of private vehicles supports planning for pedestrians and other non-motorized modes of travel and can be used to enhance community goals and/or help to solve specific problems. For example, public transit service can:

- Free up some additional parking in the downtown.
- Reduce vehicle circulation in congested areas such as 3rd Street, for example.
- Reduce auto trips being made to transport students and other dependents.
- Enhance access to retail businesses and services.
- Reduce the need to operate a second vehicle in severe weather.
- Reduce the amount of hitchhiking on arterial streets.
- Complement walk trips and the use of bicycles.
- Improve access to health, education, and recreation programs.
- Offer new business opportunities for local suppliers and transportation providers.
- Make real estate on the bus route easier to market.
- Enhance the community profile.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Long Term Solutions

In the longer term the best bus transit option for Weyburn appears to be a flexible "Route Diversion System" similar to the transit system in Yorkton (see Section 5.3 of the report). Such a transit service could evolve from short-term options or be implemented as a new City service in the future. In any case, there may be significant benefits from coordinating the dispatching of a public transit service with the existing Care-a-Van service.

8.2 Short Term Solutions

In the short term the City could begin by subsidizing taxi fares for those with the greatest need. Such a program would need to be administered by a public service agency with the ability to assess needs.

Another possibility that emerged from discussions with the Transportation Manager for the Public School Division is that their existing school shuttle bus services could support hourly bus routings between schools and community activity centres. Such a service could test the market for regular bus transit service in the future. This arrangement would be similar to the arrangement that exists with the school divisions in Lloydminster (see Section 5.1 of the report).

8.3 Further Action Required

If the City intends to proceed with Phase 2 of the Public Transit Feasibility Study the following work should be undertaken:

- The Consultant would meet with the two school divisions to develop a preliminary bus service design that would satisfy the needs of the schools and the general public as much as possible.
- The Consultant would canvass local public service agencies for interest in administering a taxi subsidy program.
- Implementation guidelines would be provided for both of the above short-term options, including the delivery organization, draft enabling bylaw, inter-agency agreements, and budget estimates.

There is sufficient budget remaining to complete the above work in the fall of 2007.

APPENDIX B

INFORMAL FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES

First Meeting

Purpose: To discuss community transportation needs.

Date: May 30, 2007

Time: 9:30 a.m. to Noon

Location: City Hall, 2nd floor meeting room

Present:

Blaine Frank, City of Weyburn

Wally Atkinson, Transit Consultant

Heather Sidloski and Kerry Dolter, Weyburn Care-A-Van Society

Anna Fish, Southeast Regional College

Colleen Messer, Separate School Division

Fred Sandeski, Community Low Income Center

Invited but not available:

Warren Smith, South East Cornerstone School Division

Should be invited to next meeting:

Bernice Erickson, Weyburn Group Homes

Weyburn Community Health representative

Wheatland Senior Centre representative

Downtown merchants representative

Blaine Frank introduced the Consultant.

Wally Atkinson noted that the purpose of the meeting was to focus on community needs for some form of public transit service. This includes individual and institutional needs.

SE Regional College: Adult and remedial education programs.

Anna Fish described the public transportation needed to support the above programs, which include:

- 24 students (mainly young mothers) completing senior secondary grades at the Weyburn Comprehensive High School complex.
- 10 of the above students, including some living in assisted housing in the South Hill subdivision, who require transportation subsidies.
- Of the above, some have young children travelling with them who use the Sunrise Day Care Centre at the Composite School.
- 8 ESL students who are recent immigrants and will also require low-cost transportation (new program).

The College is coping with the above needs using some temporary funding to purchase

taxi vouchers for the students with the greatest need. The lack of a low-cost public transit service limits the ability of the College to provide, expand and/or offer new educational programs for low-income students and new Canadians.

Community Low Income Center: "Pieces of the Puzzle"

Fred Sandeski described their recent proposal for a public transit service in Weyburn which led to the current feasibility study. The highlights of the proposal are as follows:

- Target population: seniors, students, people without vehicles or with one vehicle in the household.
- A single 16.1 km loop route connecting lower income residents to most activity centres.
- Two new diesel-powered small buses required (\$80,000 each).
- Initial annual riders about 44,000; potential riders 52,000 to 80,000.
- User groups represent about 5% of population.
- Fares would likely be \$2.00 per ride.
- The net annual operating cost to the community was estimated to be approximately \$135,000.

Fred emphasized that the intention of the committee making the transit proposal was to offer a sound business and community investment and to take advantage of funding available under the "Moving On Sustainable Transportation" (MOST) grant program. Fred noted that there could be support for capital and startup costs if the system being implemented supported environmental objectives such as the use of biofuels as an example. Fred also noted that the transit service might be merged with the Care-A-Van paratransit service in the future.

At this point there was a general discussion of the acceptability of higher costs to the community. The question of service to the airport was discussed. Wally noted that while the airport would not likely support service, the rural settlements could if the RM participated in funding service in the future.

Wally expressed appreciation to Fred's committee for the very detailed cost and market research, which will be useful for the Feasibility Study.

Weekday Trip Design Data

Wally Atkinson provided the following trip estimates to illustrate the relative size of the transit markets:

- Weekday trips in Weyburn: 3 per capita = 30,000 (teenagers: 8 per day; seniors: 2 per day; babies: 0!).
- Annual trips in Weyburn (all modes): 9 million.
- Annual transit trips in Regina: 42 per capita.
- Annual transit trips in Weyburn: 4.2 per capita = 42,000 (for a mature system).
- Annual Care-A-Van trips in Weyburn: 0.5 per capita (should be about 1.0; lower number may be due to seniors using \$5.00 taxi trips).

Wally noted that the demand would not likely support separate systems for seniors and people with disabilities in the future, and that taxis are carrying some of the potential transit riders since seniors pay less for a taxi ride than for a Care-A-Van ride. Some method of integrating services and building upon existing knowledge and experience was desirable.

Holy Family Separate School Division

Colleen Messer described their student busing system including service for children with disabilities.

- Currently transporting 250 students (within Weyburn) in grades K through 9 using two buses owned and operated by the Separate School Division. (This compares with 700 students within Weyburn on the SE Cornerstone buses.)
- Eligibility criteria: 8 blocks walking distance from school.
- Rents the Care-A-Van bus from the Society for children with disabilities and pays the driver directly.
- A public system with lift-equipped vehicles could simplify the process and accommodate children not eligible for school buses.
- A transit system would also accommodate after school activities

SARCAN Workshop and Field Trips

Heather Sidloski noted that there are other similar needs in the community and that Care-A-Van service is limited during peak periods when the schools are being accommodated. At this point there was a general discussion of peak versus off-peak travel patterns and the need for riders to make appointments in off-peak periods.

Care-A-Van Society

Heather raised the following issues:

- Will the business community support public transit?
- Will taxpayers including industries object to higher taxes to support transit?

Kerry Dolter summarized the concerns of the Society:

- At present there is no room for more trips in peak periods.
- If service expands volunteers performing administrative functions to save overhead costs may be overloaded and leave.
- If service was merged with regular transit, costs may increase as service clubs and volunteers lose interest.
- Any changes in service delivery upsets customers.
- It would be desirable to retain the experienced staff in any new service.
- Would service clubs still provide funding?

Second Meeting

Purpose: To discuss transit service options (as circulated)

Date: June 25, 2007

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Location: City Hall, 2nd floor meeting room

Present:

Blaine Frank, City of Weyburn

Wally Atkinson, Transit Consultant

Heather Sidloski and Kerry Dolter, Weyburn Care-A-Van Society

Anna Fish, Southeast Regional College

Warren Smith, South East Cornerstone School Division

Fred Sandeski, Community Low Income Center

Invited but not available:

Colleen Messer, Separate School Division

Wheatland Senior Centre representative

Chamber of Commerce representative

Weyburn Community Health Representative

The need for input from the community health agencies was discussed. The Consultant advised that attempts had been made by City staff to obtain representatives from the group homes and health agencies without success. If the study continues in the fall, further attempts will be made to include their input. (Bernice Erickson was invited to the previous meeting.)

Ridership Statistics

Fred Sandeski asked for a clarification on ride statistics, i.e. one-way rides or return trips? Wally Atkinson confirmed that rides are always stated as one-way trips. (One ride equals one fare paid.)

South East Cornerstone School Buses

Warren Smith provided an overview of their school bus operations within the City. The service includes both the pickup and delivery of students to their home schools and a shuttle bus service between schools and community activity centres throughout the day. The volumes of students moving during the day could justify a fixed-route shuttle bus service.

Potential for Adults to Ride on School Buses

Wally Atkinson noted that in Lloydminster some adults ride with students on school buses where a particular school bus route is convenient for their work trips and asked if this would be feasible in Weyburn. Warren advised that under certain conditions this could be feasible. Current rules permit five (5) non school related trips on a school bus.

In the case of an adult travelling with a young child the need for child seats could be a problem. The possibility of integrating some public transportation needs with school shuttle bus services generated considerable discussion and it was agreed to explore this subject further if the City proceeds with Phase 2 of the Transit Study. Wally Atkinson agreed to include SE Cornerstone with the potential service providers in the Interim Report.

Transit Service Options

After considerable discussion of the merits of the five service options presented by the Consultant, the following consensus was obtained:

- Taxi subsidies, shared-ride taxi services, and flexible bus "route diversion" systems are feasible and could be introduced progressively.
- Dial-a-Bus systems are too expensive.
- A fixed-route bus system could be feasible for a much larger city.
- The possibility of a flexible system accommodating students and other needs on an hourly schedule should be considered.
- Putting students on transit may not work as well as putting adults on school buses because of the seating and safety requirements.

Kerry Dolter noted that a capital fund raising program would likely be needed and that the possible integration of transit and Care-A-Van services would require a lot of work.

Consultant's Note: Subsequent to this focus group meeting a progress report was made by the Consultant to the City Council meeting on June 26th, and on July 9th at the regular meeting of Council, it was decided to proceed with Phase 2 of the Transit Feasibility Study.

Third Meeting

Purpose: To discuss the Draft Final Report Summary and proposed transit routes (as circulated).

Date: October 11, 2007

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Location: City Hall, 2nd floor meeting room

Present:

Blaine Frank, City of Weyburn

Wally Atkinson, Transit Consultant

Heather Sidloski, Weyburn Care-A-Van Society

Anna Fish, Southeast Regional College

Bernice Erickson, Weyburn Group Homes

Warren Smith, South East Cornerstone School Division

Fred Sandeski, Community Low Income Center

Invited but not available:

Colleen Messer, Separate School Division

Erskine Sandiford, Wheatland Senior Centre
Jerry Ponto, Chamber of Commerce representative

Summary of Draft Final Report

Wally provided a brief overview of the report summary and stated that there were two important issues that needed to be addressed:

1. Is there sufficient information in the transit system predesign: i.e. Did the consultant miss anything? and
2. Is there any leadership or support for implementation?

Weyburn Group Homes transportation needs

Bernice noted that if public transit service was implemented the Weyburn Group Homes would still need an accessible vehicle of their own to transport certain clients whose behaviour might be a problem for a public system. (The lack of a suitable vehicle is a serious problem at present.) They prefer to drive these clients to their destination, however there are several residents of the group homes who would be able to use transit service for work trips. Their staff might also use the service.

Bernice also noted that it may be difficult to raise funds for all of the agencies that need to use vehicles and asked if it was possible to provide service without a large burden on the community. Wally suggested that some sharing of resources might be better than each agency buying their own vehicles.

Additions to the report

Anna noted that with the exception of Friday nights, there are students attending evening programs at the College until 9:45 pm that could benefit from a future evening transit service.

Also noted was that there is a need to coordinate travel for parents with children in day care so that parents do not have to pay four transit fares.

Computer scheduling of school buses

Warren provided an update to the Focus Group on their new computer scheduling program which is about ready for implementation. This program will improve the capability of the Public School Division to produce route and schedule information. This capability would be important if they were to operate transit services for the City.

Care-a-Van concerns

In response to a question from Heather about the use of Care-a-Van vehicles versus lift-equipped school buses, Warren noted that the School Division is required to have the equipment available even if there is only one student using a wheelchair. Heather also noted their problem with finances leading to the large fare increase from \$3.00 to \$6.00. Wally noted that the Care-a-Van service could lose approximately 15% of their

ridership as a result of the fare increase which is now more than the seniors taxi concession fare of \$5.00.

Wally noted that the Care-a-Van service has valuable experience in accommodating seniors with disabilities and it was agreed that their advice would be important to a new service which may depend upon Care-a-Van when transit services are not operating.

Transit fare collection

The subject of tickets versus cash or passes was discussed. Warren noted that if the Public School Division was to operate the transit service they would not want to handle cash on school buses. It was noted that businesses such as the credit unions often sell transit tickets. The Focus Group agreed that some form of pass or trip punch card would be desirable.

Potential integration of school bus and transit services

Warren described the way in which school bus and transit routes might be integrated. The existing school bus routes provide coverage to most areas of the City. The only difficulty would be between 8:30 am and 9:00 am and between 3:30 pm and 4:00 pm when school routes are normally fully utilized. During peak periods there would likely be room for a limited numbers of adults. The security issues of mixing known and unknown passengers in school buses were discussed. Warren is planning to investigate the interface between students and other passengers in more detail. Wally noted that the integration of school and transit service in Weyburn would be a unique demonstration project for Western Canada and worthy of senior government support. The Public School Division would need to meet with City representatives to discuss this subject further. There was considerable enthusiasm for this approach since it was seen as a lower cost method of introducing transit service.

Business community support

It was agreed by the group that the proposed transit service could not be implemented without the support of the business community.

Bernice suggested the need for a survey to find out if the business community would be able to more easily recruit and retain staff if a transit service was implemented. Wally noted the possibility of a mail out to all households asking if anyone had a specific need for public transportation. Blaine agreed that this could be done at nominal cost if sent out with other information such as the water bills, for example. Warren suggested that the cost of the proposed transit service be included. Heather suggested that the benefits of increased pedestrian traffic in the downtown should be emphasized.

Support for implementation

The Focus Group agreed that it would be good to build upon the existing enthusiasm for implementation and that the group could provide some leadership in the future.