

Strathcona County Transit Transit Master Plan

Project No. 10-013

D e c e m b e r 2 0 1 1

Final Report



GENIVAR Inc. 2800 Fourteenth Avenue, Suite 210, Markham, Ontario L3R 0E4
Telephone: 905.946.8900 • Fax: 905.946.8966 • www.genivar.com
Contact: Dennis Fletcher, M.E.S. • E-mail: Dennis.Fletcher@genivar.com

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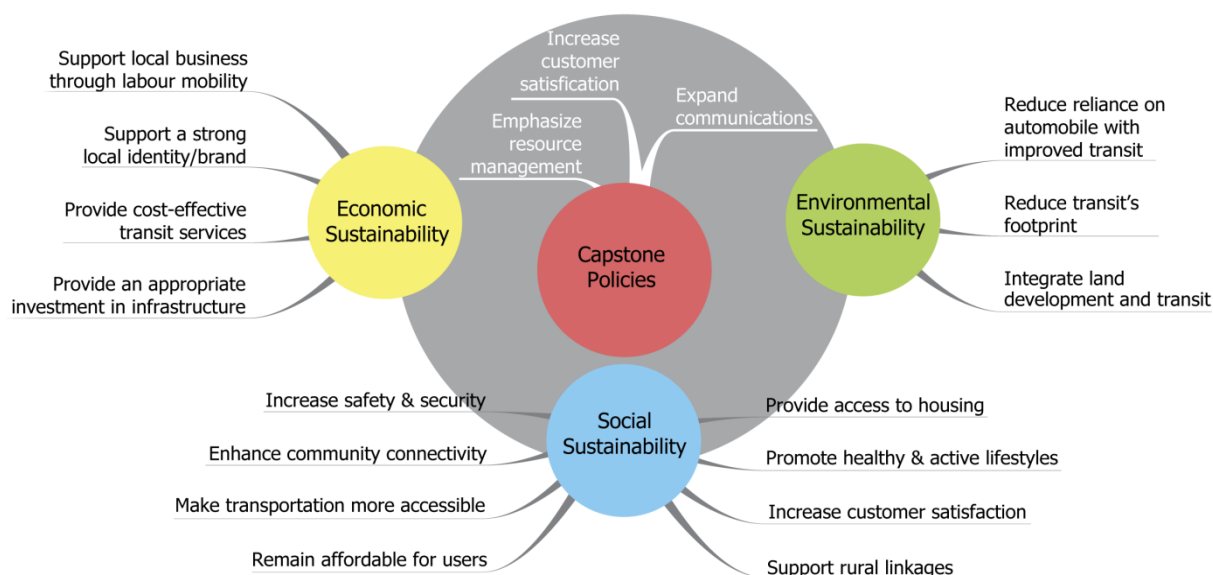
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Executive Summary

Introduction

Strathcona County's Strategic Plan and other policy documents, as well as the Capital Region Board Transit Plan, provide high-level direction for public transit in the County. Exhibit E-1 summarizes the major components of Strathcona County's strategic policy framework including relevant objectives for transit drawn from the Strategic Plan, the Municipal Development Plan, Sustainability Framework documents and other Council-approved sustainability documents.

Exhibit E-1 – Summary of Strathcona County's Strategic Policy Framework



This study provides the opportunity to build on those plans and develop a strategic framework with a common vision for transit development in the County. A well planned and designed transit system will be vital to achieving the County's Strategic Direction for sustainable development of the community.

The Transit Master Plan covers the needs of the rural parts of the County as well as the urban service area of Sherwood Park by 2021 and will be a critical policy and strategic planning document. It provides a well-defined vision and strategic direction for all transit services as well as a set of strategies to address future transit needs of the community.

The 10-year plan (2011-2021) was developed based on extensive public and stakeholder consultation and will provide guidelines to Strathcona County Transit (SCT) staff for future service design and planning to meet the travel needs of a growing community in an effective and efficient way.

Needs and Opportunities

Key opportunities and challenges for transit were drawn from numerous interviews with stakeholders, public input from workshops and an online survey, existing technical data as well as discussion with SCT staff.

Demographic Changes and Travel Behaviour

- With projected population and employment growth, travel demand is expected to grow significantly in the County and to and from other municipalities in the Region. It is expected that more people will rely on transit services for travel due to an aging population, increasing automobile costs and increasing road congestion.
- The travel data analysis and results from stakeholder and public consultation indicate that Edmonton will continue to be a key destination for employment, education and other activities for the residents of Strathcona County. However, given the proposed intensification of urban development, local travel within the County will become more important in the longer-term. Areas of intensification are identified whereby increased transit services should be made available.
- An effective transit system is required to provide alternative transportation to everyone in the community. Reducing traffic congestion and capital investments on road infrastructure as well as greenhouse gas emissions supports the County's strategic direction of environmental, social, and economic sustainability.
- There is also increasing interest in reverse commute travel from the city of Edmonton to Sherwood Park due to new developments and high cost of living in Sherwood Park. There is also a large, but dispersed, proportion of employees who work in Edmonton outside of the identified downtown core areas.
- Seniors, youth and people who have no access to other transportation alternatives rely on transit for their day to day activities and particular consideration should be given to these market groups for future transit development in the community.

Existing and Future Transit Services

- The central core areas of Edmonton are, and will continue to be, a key destination for employment, education and other activities for the residents of Strathcona County. There are opportunities to expand service and increase seating capacity to improve the overall level of service and ensure the service is attractive to both existing and new riders.
- There is an increasing need for an improved local network that can connect all residents with social, employment, government, medical and other destinations locally as well as regionally. However, local service will be challenged by the automobile-oriented lifestyle of residents. Utilization of local services may continue to be low in off-peak times.
- An aging population will result in a significant increase in specialized transit (door-to-door) demand as well as the demand for more accessible fixed-route transit. The existing specialized service should be improved in terms of service coverage, service hours, and destinations outside of the County. Strategic changes are required to improve the overall service to specialized transit users, particularly to accommodate all trip purposes and to better integrate with Edmonton's specialized transit service.
- To improve the overall accessibility of the community, SCT services need to be more accessible and better integrated with active transportation networks. Conventional and specialized transit services need to be integrated to provide more transportation alternatives to seniors and people with disabilities.

- There is a desire for transit services from rural Strathcona County connecting to Sherwood Park and Edmonton, especially for seniors, youth and those who have no other transportation alternatives. However, the service needs to be cost-efficient and effective to ensure the affordability to both users and the County. Satellite Park and Ride facilities may be considered in the rural areas to connect rural communities to intermunicipal and local services.
- Based on the existing services review and feedback from public consultation, the existing evening and weekend service Dial-A-Bus services do not meet the community's needs. There is an opportunity to provide improved services during these off-peak periods.
- Light Rail Transit (LRT) is identified as a long-term opportunity in the Capital Region Growth Plan, but lands need to be protected and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)-type service may be implemented to build up ridership and improve the overall level of service in the short to medium-term.
- Park and Ride facilities are currently operating at their capacity, and expansion is required to meet the growing demand. There are also opportunities to improve the local feeder bus system for fast and direct connections to intermunicipal services in an effort to attract more Park and Ride users to the feeder system and reduce Park and Ride demand.
- Given recent developments in the transit industry, there are opportunities to employ new technologies to improve customer service and passenger convenience including fleet management, real-time information, social media engagement, and easy fare payment options.
- For a variety of reasons there are opportunities to increase customer satisfaction. Resolving the aforementioned technical challenges and increasing two-way communication with customers are important steps to increase satisfaction. SCT also has the opportunity to proactively make customer satisfaction a greater strategic priority throughout the organization.

Transportation and Land Use Linkages

- There is a need to integrate land use, the transportation network, and transit planning to ensure sustainable development and a balanced transportation network. It is recommended that future subdivision plans (1) include a wider range of housing types and densities, and (2) provide a more permeable pedestrian, active transportation and vehicle transportation network.

Transportation Demand Management

- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a set of measures and strategies intended to improve the transportation system by reducing single-occupant travel or to redistribute the demand in space and time. Within the context of this Transit Master Plan, there are opportunities to reduce the reliance on automobiles by enhancing SCT services and improving service accessibility as well as connectivity with other transportation modes.

Recommendations

This summary of recommendations is organized around the Three Pillars of Sustainability: Social, Economic and Environmental. A key challenge for this plan's recommendations will be to find the appropriate balance between these three pillars.

To implement this vision both the County and transit customers will need to adopt new ways of delivering and using transit services. The County will need to invest in expanding transit services while strongly encouraging ridership through land-use policies and strategies that shift the demand for travel from automobiles to transit (demand management). These changes will be especially challenging in a specialized municipality that includes suburban, rural and industrial areas with distinct travel needs for transit. Together with the Integrated Transportation Master Plan, this Transit Master Plan will address the broader issues of transportation throughout the County and recommend improvements to the transit system.

The Transit Master Plan also includes a set of performance measures and a planning process. These will be important tools for planning the transit system as well as on-going monitoring of how the system is progressing to achieve the vision, goals and objectives defined by this Plan.

Recommendations of the TMP were reviewed with a range of stakeholders and made available for public review at a public open house and via an online review survey.

Vision for Transit Services

Results of a visioning workshop were used by the project team and SCT management, in conjunction with the vision-related questions from the public survey, to develop the proposed vision. The proposed vision also aligns with the framework identified in the Strathcona County's Strategic Plan.

Vision

A vision statement is intended to be a compelling and inspiring image of a desired and possible future that a community seeks to achieve. It expresses goals that are worth striving for and appeals to ideals and values that are shared in the community. Through the visioning process, the community develops a shared vision and common values.

The proposed vision statement is:

As a recognized leader in the transit industry, Strathcona County Transit takes pride in providing excellent service to the community while enhancing quality of life and promoting sustainability.

Goals

The proposed strategic goals necessary to help achieve the vision for transit are described in Exhibit E-2. These goals are derived from the mission and vision statements, public input, and the unique challenges and opportunities in Strathcona County. Recommendations will identify the best ways to achieve the goals.

Exhibit E-2 – Proposed Strategic Goals for Transit

Goal	
Social	<p>Goal 1: Maximize safety for all customers, staff and other road users</p> <p>Goal 2: Ensure that transit services address the needs of youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons with low incomes</p> <p>Goal 3: Ensure a high degree of customer satisfaction with all aspects of transit services</p>
Economic	<p>Goal 4: Help to ensure a strong local and regional economy by facilitating labour mobility and access to job sites</p> <p>Goal 5: Balance customer requests and social and environmental goals with the realities of limited resources</p> <p>Goal 6: Accommodate growing demand by maximizing the efficient use of services, infrastructure and vehicles</p> <p>Goal 7: Reinforce the County's distinct identity</p>
Environmental	<p>Goal 8: Provide an alternative to reliance on personal automobiles</p> <p>Goal 9: Adopt transit-supportive measures throughout the community</p> <p>Goal 10: Maximize transit's environmental performance</p>

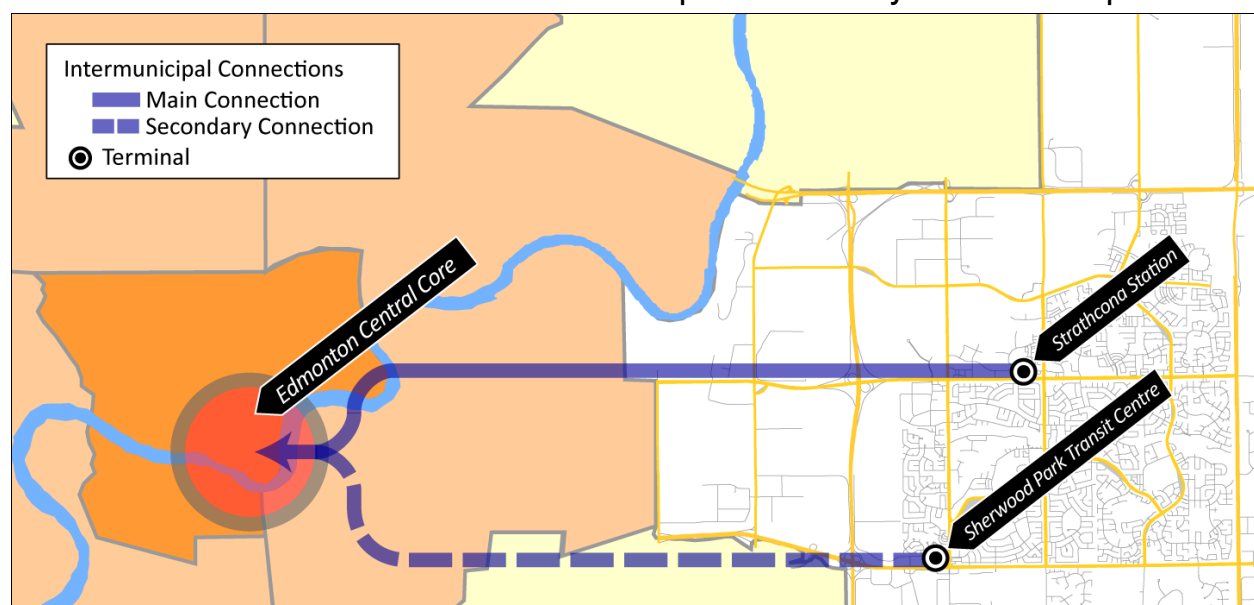
Fixed-route Transit

Recommendations for the fixed-route transit system include service strategies covering intermunicipal services between Strathcona County and Edmonton, local or feeder services operating within Sherwood Park, Park and Ride, and transit services in rural areas of the County.

Intermunicipal Services

Intermunicipal services are routes that provide connections between Strathcona County and Edmonton. As shown in Exhibit E-3, it is recommended that intermunicipal transit routes continue to operate direct connections to destinations within downtown Edmonton, and with branches connecting to the University of Alberta.

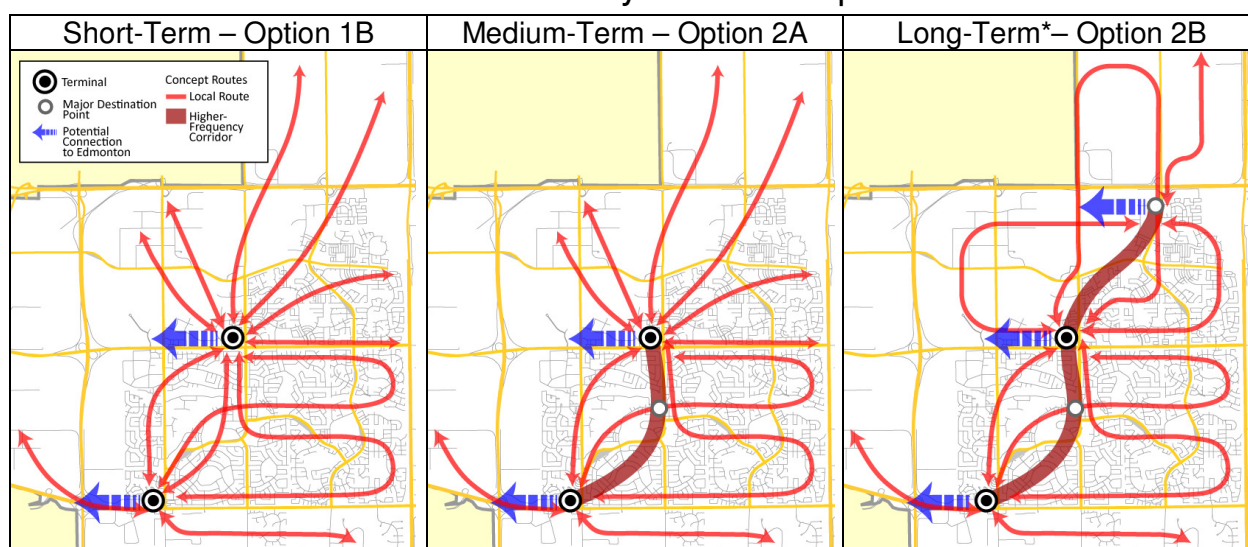
Exhibit E-3 – Recommended Intermunicipal Transit System Concept



Local and Feeder Services

Local or feeder services are routes that operate within the urban service area of Sherwood Park. The purpose of these services is to provide connections to major local destinations and to connect to intermunicipal services at the two transit terminals. It is recommended that local services should be gradually improved towards an integrated local and feeder network providing convenient connections to major local destinations and intermunicipal services. Refer to Exhibit E-4 for a map of the recommended local system concepts.

Exhibit E-4 – Recommended Local System Concepts



* The long-term concept will occur when the Emerald Hills mixed use community is developed

The short-term concept plan includes a modest change to the existing service route structure with increased convergence of routes to Strathcona Station. The medium-term calls for operation of a higher-frequency corridor connecting Strathcona Station, Centre in the Park, and Sherwood Park Transit Centre. In the long-term, when the mixed-use community at Clover Bar Road / Lakeland Drive (called Emerald Hills) is developed, the higher-frequency corridor will be extended to connect to that development. Local routes north of Baseline Road will be restructured to connect to the higher-frequency corridor.

Park and Ride Facilities

Existing Park and Ride lots are crowded and frequently over capacity. Thus, it is recommended that SCT incorporate reserved premium pay parking spaces at the Park and Ride lots in mid 2013 to coincide with the opening of the planned expansion of Strathcona Station. The purpose of the reserved premium parking fee is to encourage drivers to utilize another, more sustainable, means of accessing the intermunicipal services, while guaranteeing access for those who choose to pay the fee. This will maximize the use of infrastructure, reduce subsidies and encourage environmentally friendly travel behaviour. The fees can also offset the costs of upgraded facilities and amenities. In the future, after the new Park and Ride location reaches capacity, SCT could consider application of a parking fee for all Park and Ride users.

Rural Services

Travel demand in rural communities is too low and widely dispersed to support fixed-route service. Instead, it is recommended that SCT consider providing demand-response service to accommodate the general public in conjunction with existing specialized transit services on a space available basis for medical and social trips only (48 hour advanced booking).

It is also recommended that SCT consider a pilot Park and Ride Program. The rural Park and Ride facilities could be located using the existing parking facilities at churches or activity centres with limited rush hour-only intermunicipal service.

Additionally, SCT should continue to provide special event-based transit service to rural communities to relieve traffic and parking congestion in the vicinity of an event venue.

Specialized Transit

Increasingly, transit systems and communities are becoming aware of the need to provide equal access for all members of the community.

In our recommendations for the specialized transit system, GENIVAR has proposed a standard of equivalent service, establishing an objective that, over time, services will be equivalent in as many ways as possible. In the short-term, our recommendations focus on high priority items such as service coverage, hours of service and days of service. In the longer-term, it will be appropriate for Strathcona County to explore other ways the service can be designed to be equivalent.

Eligibility for Specialized Services

Specialized services are currently available to people with disabilities and non-disabled seniors. This permissive policy could lead to unintentional demand from persons that are able to use fixed-route services. Thus, it is recommended that the criteria should be changed to permit only those persons whose functional limitations may affect their ability to use fixed-route transit services.

Service Delivery Strategies

Specialized services should be complementary and provided when fixed-route services do not meet customer needs. There are a number of strategies for service delivery that balance the overall mobility needs of Strathcona County residents, including:

- In the rural areas, it is recommended that specialized services for medical and social trip purposes should continue to be provided.
- In Sherwood Park, specialized services will operate the same days and hours of service as fixed-route transit services and will permit work and school trip requests.
- For intermunicipal trips, specialized service will eliminate trip purpose restrictions while maintaining Edmonton service to key transfer points, fixed-route destinations and other specific destinations east of the specialized service boundary identified by SCT.
- It is also recommended that SCT enters into discussion with taxi operating companies both locally and in Edmonton to gauge the level of interest for the provision of supplemental specialized service.

Service Integration and Demand Management Strategies

Demand management strategies intend to redistribute the demand for travel on more costly (specialized) to less costly (fixed-route) services. These strategies may consist of developing partnerships with agencies and shifting demand from specialized to fixed-route services, and include:

- Develop partnerships with social service agencies, the medical community and others to address the continuity of access to programs and services.
- Introduce travel training programs providing information and training to potential and existing specialized service customers in an effort to encourage use of the fixed-route transit service.
- Develop a policy for fixed-route services that results in a fully accessible transit network to reduce the reliance on specialized services.
- Develop strategies connecting specialized transit to fixed-route services (at key transfer points) to encourage paratransit customers to utilize fixed-route transit services for part of the trip.
- Work with Edmonton's Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS) to identify the geographic area where specialized services would operate to, identify key Edmonton destinations and transfer points, and establish cohesive policies between the two specialized service systems.

Fare Strategies

The following recommendations lay out a broad strategy for the evolution of the SCT fare structure with the aims of equity, ridership growth and cost-effectiveness. Each of these recommendations will require additional work to finalize for the specific needs of the community.

- Balance equity between community support and users fares.
- Simplify the fixed-route fare structure.
- Adopt tiered pricing for fares and parking.

- Ensure affordable transit to all low-income residents.
- Encourage youth to use transit more frequently.
- Increase customer convenience.
- Review the fare reciprocity agreement with Edmonton Transit System (ETS).
- Formalize a fare reciprocity agreement with St. Albert Transit (StAT).

Fares for specialized transit would remain distinct from those for fixed-route transit in the short-term. However, the two fare structures will become increasingly related. In the future, the County could consider transitioning specialized fares for local and intermunicipal travel to be the same as fixed-route fares.

Continuous Improvement Process

Performance Measures

The recommended guidelines to guide the monitoring and development of SCT routes and services are based on current performance and peer benchmarking. The recommended values in each of these areas reflect a desire to improve service levels and promote ridership growth. The objective in establishing guidelines and monitoring performance in these areas is to improve year-over-year performance, recognizing short-term impacts of service increases.

- Amount of Service – SCT's current performance is 1.76 vehicle hours per capita. However, considering potential use of high-capacity vehicles on intermunicipal services, it is recommended that a minimum of 1.5 vehicle hours per capita should be maintained to guide the provision of services.
- Service Utilization – SCT's current performance is 22 passengers per vehicle hour. It is recommended that a minimum target of 20 passengers per vehicle hour should be established to monitor the service performance, with a long-term goal of increasing to 25 passengers per vehicle hour. SCT's current performance is 39 annual passengers per capita. It is recommended that a minimum of 40 passengers per capita should be established, with a long-term goal of increasing to 50 passengers per capita.
- Cost Recovery Ratio (R/C) – SCT's current performance is 33 percent. It is recommended that an appropriate cost recovery performance should be in a range between 35 percent to 50 percent for combined intermunicipal, and local and feeder services. Generally, cost recovery performance of intermunicipal services should be higher than that of local and feeder services.

Planning Process

To assist SCT staff in meeting the objective of a fair and balanced appraisal of service requirements, and based on technical analysis and consultation, a service review process has been developed, comprising a series of reviews and assessments of requests from different sources. This process will provide staff with a consistent, objective framework to assess requests for new or revised services.

The framework has four critical elements:

1. The recommended service standards to assess new and existing services.

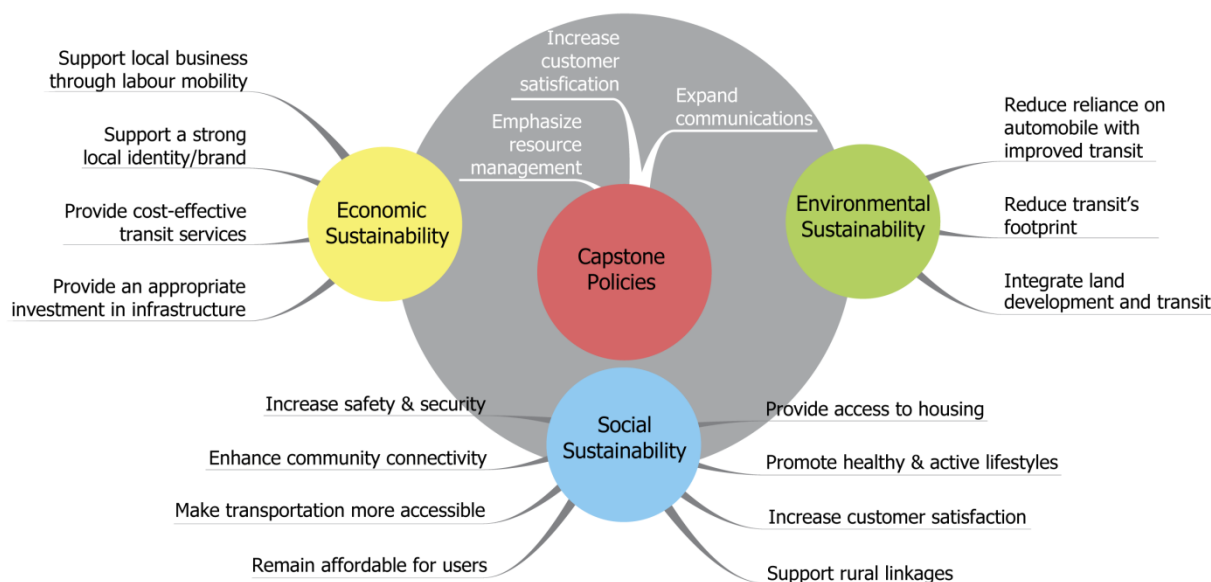
2. A series of three on-going route assessments comprising:
 - Regular route assessments as part of an on-going monitoring process.
 - Periodic service reviews to monitor the on-going performance of the system or respond to minor requests.
 - Annual service reviews to assess major requests for new or revised services.
3. The data collection program required to support the review process.
4. A comprehensive consultation process.

1. Introduction

SCT provides fixed-route and specialized transit services within Strathcona County and between the urban service area of Sherwood Park and the city of Edmonton. Due to the significant growth of the population and employment in the County, as well as the success of the U-Pass program, the system has experienced an average annual ridership increase of over 10 percent during the past years.

The County's Strategic Plan and other policy documents, as well as the Capital Region Board Transit Plan provide high-level direction for public transit in the County. Exhibit 1 summarizes the major components of Strathcona County's strategic policy framework including relevant objectives for transit drawn from the Strategic Plan, the Municipal Development Plan, Sustainability Framework documents and other Council-approved sustainability documents.

Exhibit 1 – Summary of Strathcona County's Strategic Policy Framework



This study provides the opportunity to build on those plans and develop a strategic framework with a common vision for transit development in the County. A well planned and designed transit system will be vital to achieving the County's Strategic Direction for sustainable development of the community.

The Transit Master Plan covers the years 2011-2021 and will be a critical policy and strategic planning document. It provides a well-defined vision and strategic direction for all transit services as well as a set of strategies to address future transit needs of the community.

The Plan was developed based on extensive public and stakeholder consultation and will provide guidelines to SCT staff for future service design and planning to meet the travel needs of a growing community in an effective and efficient way.

1.1.1 The Transit Master Plan Process and Structure

The following series of planning activities were conducted by SCT and GENIVAR staff during the development of the SCT Transit Master Plan:

Reviewed and identified regional and local planning policies that guide the development for transit service for the County.

- Conducted a comprehensive public consultation program to understand the needs, opportunities and challenges of the SCT system, including 50 individual meetings, four Public Open Houses and a comprehensive online survey. Review consultation with stakeholders and the public was also conducted when draft recommendations were available.
- Completed analyses of existing services, existing and future demographics, land use, and travel patterns to determine needs, opportunities, and challenges facing SCT and its passengers.
- Identified a series of draft recommendations to address identified needs, opportunities, and challenges.
- Conducted public and stakeholder review of the draft recommendations, including a public open house, online review and consultation with a range of stakeholders.
- Finalized recommendations to incorporate public and stakeholder comments and updated recommendations as required.

This report provides details of the process and recommendations and includes:

- Needs and Opportunities – summary of needs and opportunities, policy background, existing service review, changing travel needs and key transit markets, and public input.
- Recommendations – vision for transit services, fixed-route transit service strategies, specialized transit policy framework, fare strategies, transit supportive policies, and a continuous improvement process.
- Conclusion – overall conclusions of the study.
- Technical Appendix –consultation schedule, detailed responses to the online survey, review consultation summary, detailed route network evaluations, peer review, and service standards.

2. Needs and Opportunities

This section describes key opportunities and challenges for transit. The information was drawn from numerous interviews with stakeholders, public input from workshops, an online survey, existing technical data and discussion with SCT staff.

The summary is organized around the County's Strategic Plan and the Three Pillars of Sustainability: Economic, Social and Environmental. A key challenge for this plan's recommendations will be to find the appropriate balance between these three pillars.

2.1 Summary of Needs and Opportunities

This section summarizes needs and opportunities that have been identified based on background research, survey results, stakeholder and public consultations as well as the market analysis.

2.1.1 Demographic Changes and Travel Behaviour

Future Growth

With projected population and employment growth, travel demand is expected to grow significantly in the County and to and from other municipalities in the Region. It is expected that more people will rely on transit services for travel due to population growth, an aging population, increasing automobile costs, and increasing road congestion.

Changing Travel Needs

The existing travel patterns show that the city of Edmonton is the most popular work and post-secondary school trip destination for Strathcona residents, particularly the downtown and University areas. The travel data analysis and results from stakeholder and public consultation indicate that Edmonton will continue to be a key destination for employment, education and other activities for the residents of Strathcona County. However, given the proposed intensification development, internal travel within Strathcona County will become more important in the longer-term.

Future Intensification of Urban Development

Areas that will feature higher density urban development have been identified in Strathcona County. These areas should be served effectively and efficiently served by increased transit services, and include communities south of Wye Road, Centre in the Park and Aspen Trails/Emerald Hills. The Cambrian Crossing lands are also identified for mixed-use higher-density development.

Transportation Mode Shift

Most residents currently rely on driving for their transportation, particularly for internal trips. An effective transit system is required to provide alternative transportation to everyone in the community, reduce traffic congestion and capital investments on road infrastructure as well as greenhouse gas emissions and therefore support the County's strategic direction of environmental, social, economic sustainability.

Reverse Commuting and Suburban Edmonton Connections

There is also increasing interest in reverse commuting from Edmonton to Sherwood Park (in particular to Clareview and Mill Woods) due to new developments and the high cost of living in Sherwood Park. There are also a large, but dispersed, proportion of employees who work in

Edmonton outside of the identified downtown core areas. For that reason, there may be opportunities to expand intermunicipal service destinations in Edmonton to Clareview, Mill Woods and Southgate.

Other Transit Market Groups

Seniors, youth and people who have no access to other transportation alternatives rely on transit for their day-to-day activities and particular consideration should be given to these market groups for future transit development in the community.

2.1.2 Existing and Future Transit Services

Population growth, urban development and changing demographics all signal that demand for transit ridership will likely grow in the coming years. Also, the County's sustainability strategy suggests that future policies will encourage residents to choose transit and lead to still more ridership. However, the existing transit system is at or over capacity in several key areas (seating capacity, parking capacity, specialized transit capacity) and resolving these issues may be expensive. This suggests that key strategies must include: 1) a strong policy focus for transit, 2) increasing capacity through sound and innovative investments, 3) increased emphasis on efficiency of services, 4) policies that strike a balance between user-pay and subsidy, and 5) recognition that due to cost, transit cannot be all things to all people.

Intermunicipal Services

The central core areas of Edmonton are and will continue to be a key destination for employment, education and other activities for the residents of Strathcona County. Existing intermunicipal services are highly utilized, particularly during rush hours, which often results in crowded buses. There are opportunities to expand service and increase seating capacity to improve the overall level of service and ensure the service is attractive to both existing and new riders.

Additional intermunicipal service destinations in the city of Edmonton identified by the community include Clareview, Mill Woods and Southgate.

Local Services

The local services in Sherwood Park were originally set up to serve as feeder routes to take commuters to and from intermunicipal buses and are very effective at this task. However, the need for a truly local transit network within Sherwood Park has grown in recent years. The growing number of jobs has increased the need for fast local travel across Sherwood Park both for local and reverse-commuters. Today's network of routes does not meet the growing need for local travel within Sherwood Park or connections for reverse commuters. Many of the needs identified in the Social Sustainability Framework and companion documents call for a local network that can connect all residents with local social, employment, government, medical and other destinations locally as well as regionally.

The existing dual-hub local route network is inadequate in a number of ways, as multiple transfers are often required and travel time is excessive. Further to this, additional challenges exist as some areas are not covered (e.g. areas south of Wye, Aspen Trails). Local service needs to be improved to better serve travellers connecting to major destinations in Sherwood Park including Millennium Place, Sherwood Park Mall, new community centre/County Hall, Strathmoor Industrial Park, and commercial strips along Wye Road and Baseline Road.

As the hamlet of Sherwood Park has grown as large as some small Alberta cities (Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie) it is developing the need for a truly local transit network. This need will likely

accelerate with increasing numbers of local jobs and senior citizens, as well as rising fuel prices. However, unlike other small cities, Sherwood Park started as bedroom suburb and local service will be challenged by the automobile-oriented lifestyle of residents. Utilization of local services may continue to be low in off-peak times.

Accessibility and Strathcona County Accessible Transit Services

An aging population will result in a significant increase in demand for travel on Strathcona County Accessible Transit (SCAT) services, as well as an increased demand for more accessible fixed-route transit. However, the existing specialized transit service model is no longer adequate to meet the changing needs of the community. The existing SCAT service should be improved in terms of service coverage, service hours, and destinations outside of the County. Strategic changes are required to improve the overall service to SCAT users, particularly to expand the eligibility to accommodate all trip purposes and to better integrate with Edmonton's DATS.

To improve the overall accessibility of the community, SCT services need to be more accessible and more integrated with active transportation networks. Fixed-route and specialized transit services need to be integrated to provide more transportation alternatives to seniors and people with disabilities.

Rural Services

There is a desire for transit services in the rural communities connecting to Sherwood Park and Edmonton, especially for seniors, youth and those who have no other transportation alternatives. However, the service needs to be cost-efficient and effective to ensure the affordability to both users and the County.

Strong connections are identified between the north part of the County and Fort Saskatchewan and travel demand will continue to grow in the future due to proposed new development. Both fixed-route and SCAT services are desired by the rural community.

Satellite Park and Ride facilities may be considered in the rural areas to connect rural communities to intermunicipal and local services. It should be noted that provincial regulations would consider these services "intermunicipal" and subject to different regulations than local services, potentially increasing costs.

Dial-A-Bus Services

Based on our existing services review and feedback from public consultation, we have identified that existing evening and weekend service Dial-A-Bus services do not meet the community's needs. The opportunity exists to provide improved services during these off-peak periods.

Rapid Transit

Light rail transit (LRT) is identified as a long-term opportunity in the Capital Region Growth Plan, but lands need to be protected and bus rapid transit (BRT)-type service may be implemented to build up ridership and improve the overall level of service in the short to medium-term. Given the extensive road network and infrastructure, opportunities exist to implement transit priority measures in key corridors and make transit more attractive.

Park and Ride

Park and Ride facilities are currently operating at their capacity, and expansion is required to meet the growing demand. There are also opportunities to improve the local feeder system for

fast and direct connections to intermunicipal services in an effort to attract more Park and Ride users to the feeder system and reduce Park and Ride demand.

Customer Information and Fleet System Technology

Given recent developments in the transit industry, there are opportunities to employ new technologies to improve customer service and passenger convenience including fleet management, real-time information, social media engagement, and easy fare payment options.

Social media outlets are becoming increasingly popular to facilitate continuous two-way dialogue between passengers and transit agency staff. Real-time traveller information allows passengers to make better-informed decisions when taking transit services. Fleet management systems are important to ensure that vehicles continue to be well-maintained and to decrease service interruptions caused by vehicle breakdowns. Finally, easy fare payment options, such as smart card and credit card systems, make it easy for travellers to use transit services.

Customer Service

For a variety of reasons there are opportunities to increase customer satisfaction. Resolving the aforementioned technical challenges and increasing two-way communication with customers are important steps. It also seems that SCT has the opportunity to proactively make customer satisfaction a greater strategic priority throughout the organization.

2.1.3 Transportation and Land Use Linkages

There is a need to integrate land use, transportation network and transit planning to ensure sustainable development and a balanced transportation network. It is recommended that future land use development plans 1) include a wider range of housing types and densities, and 2) provide a more permeable pedestrian, active transportation and vehicle transportation network.

Additionally, there are opportunities for Strathcona County to work with neighbouring municipalities to reduce single-occupant vehicles on roadways within the County and the Capital Region.

2.1.4 Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a set of measures and strategies intended to improve the transportation system by reducing single-occupant travel or to redistribute the demand in space and time.

As it relates to TDM within the context of this Transit Master Plan, there are opportunities to reduce the reliance on automobiles by:

- Providing a convenient local service network to connect to intermunicipal transit services and discourage driving to the transit terminals altogether.
- Providing adequate and safe pedestrian access, bicycle parking infrastructure, Park and Ride facilities, as well as passenger pickup and drop off amenities at transit terminals, to make it easier for riders to conveniently access intermunicipal transit services.
- Establishing fare policies that create incentives for passengers who use services on a regular basis, and to encourage organizations and businesses to provide transit passes to their staff.
- Minimizing the number of vehicles required by each household in the longer-term by:

- Providing a convenient local service network to make travel within Sherwood Park a feasible alternative to the automobile.
- Providing frequent and cost-effective intermunicipal services as a basis for encouraging a culture of transit usage within the County.
- Narrowing the eligibility criteria for specialized transit and encouraging some of these users to use fixed-route fixed transit services through discounted fares.

2.2 Policy Background

The following section identifies the relevant objectives for transit drawn from the Strategic Plan, the Municipal Development Plan, Sustainability Framework documents and other Council-approved sustainability documents.

2.2.1 Strathcona County Strategic Plan

The 2009 Strathcona County Strategic Plan is Strathcona County's principal high-level guiding document. It provides a strategic framework to ensure that governance, community development and service delivery are considered in the County decision making process. It also provides a strategic direction that describes the future vision for Strathcona County and the goals and strategies necessary to achieve this vision. Community development perspectives that take a triple bottom-line approach of social, environmental and economic sustainability are described and form the basis of the framework documents.

Strathcona County's public services are anchored in the Council-approved vision and Strategic Plan. The following is Strathcona County's vision statement:

Strathcona County is a safe, caring and autonomous community that treasures its unique blend of urban and rural lifestyles while balancing the natural environment with economic prosperity. Through strong, effective leadership, the County is a vibrant community of choice.

Goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan help define the role of transit in the community and provide a framework for transit strategies and services in Strathcona County.

Social Sustainability

The Social Sustainability Framework lays the groundwork for the municipality to continue to be an inclusive, connected, responsible and healthy community. The Social Sustainability Framework helps determine the social impacts of government decisions and services, guides development of social policy and outlines the social roles and responsibilities of government, business and non-profit organizations. The Social Sustainability Framework encourages social equity, accessibility and community engagement. Transit plays a crucial role in advancing social sustainability throughout the community, and these principals have been integrated into development of the Transportation Master Plan. Exhibit 2 illustrates the objectives from the social sustainability framework that are most relevant for transit.

Exhibit 2 – Social Sustainability Objectives for Transit

Increase safety and security	Safety and security of customers, employees and others must continue to define all transit services and activities. SCT developed a Threat Assessment and Security Plan in 2009 and began implementing on-board video cameras in 2010 to enhance safety and security.
Enhance community connectivity	To effectively connect residents with all the necessities of life in the community, transit has to provide reasonable access to key destinations in the community for housing, employment, social, shopping, medical, recreation, government and other activities.
Make transportation more accessible	Lack of accessible transportation can be a barrier for some populations at risk of isolation including seniors, youth, low income, and persons with disabilities. For persons without access to a car it is imperative that transit should be without barriers. Travel training may help new customers become comfortable with using transit.
Remain affordable for users	Costs for transit services must be affordable for users. Fees that are too high are not affordable for persons with low-incomes and can discourage automobile users from using transit. Affordable, convenient transit can also help families by providing an alternative to the costs of owning and operating multiple automobiles.
Provide access to housing	For persons requiring assistance, affordable transportation may mean the difference in being able to stay in their own home, or having to move to social housing or seniors' housing. For others, affordable transportation means more resources for housing. In each case, transit must provide service in residential areas.
Promote healthy and active lifestyles	By accommodating bicycles and pedestrians, the County can provide opportunities for active healthy transportation connections with transit.
Increase customer satisfaction	Satisfaction with public services is an important component of quality of life, and a focus on customer satisfaction will also help to attract and retain transit riders.
Support rural linkages	Rural residential areas have grown, and there may be an opportunity for improved rural service. However, the service needs to be cost-efficient and effective to ensure the affordability to both users and the County.

Economic Sustainability

The Economic Sustainability Framework highlights the need for government financial and economic development sustainability as part of a larger effort to ensure the economic sustainability of the entire community. Public transit plays a role in many aspects of the overall economic sustainability of the community, and Exhibit 3 highlights economic sustainability objectives that are especially relevant for transit.

Exhibit 3 – Economic Sustainability Objectives for Transit

Support local business through labour mobility	Input from the local business community has noted that transit plays an important role in the local and regional mobility of workers. Providing an affordable means of getting workers to job sites is crucial for many local businesses as well as residents. Encouraging local shopping also supports business.
Support a strong local identity/brand	Strathcona County's bus fleet travels throughout the urban and rural areas, as well as the Capital Region, and is a considerable asset that can be utilized to promote the County's identity.
Provide cost-effective transit services	Transit services must be affordable for the community. In 2010, transit services were approximately 70 percent funded through taxpayer subsidy. No transit service in North America operates without subsidy. To help ensure tax rates are reasonable and competitive, transit services must be efficiently planned and operated, seek a reasonable level of cost-recovery, and strike a balance between user-pay and tax subsidy. Under-utilized services should be reconsidered. However, cost and efficiency considerations should be balanced with the community's social and environmental goals
Provide an appropriate investment in infrastructure	Sound investments in transportation infrastructure, including transit facilities and services, will help to maintain a competitive community with a high quality of life.

Environmental Sustainability

The Environmental Sustainability Framework helps determine the environmental impacts of government decisions and services and is used as a guide for responding to environmental issues, developing new policy, assessing the impact of environmental change, engaging with residents, and planning for the future. As illustrated in Exhibit 4, environmental sustainability is part of the future vision for Strathcona County and public transit is a key component of a sustainable community. Transit use reduces air pollution and traffic congestion and encourages pedestrian activity and a healthier community. The Environmental Sustainability Framework illustrates how transit can lead the way in lifestyle changes that can help to improve the local environment.

Development of the Transit Master Plan is one of the recommended strategies of the Environmental Sustainable Framework, and the role of transit as the foundation of an environmentally sustainable community is integrated into the Transit Master Plan.

Exhibit 4 – Environmental Sustainability Objectives for Transit

Reduce reliance on automobile with improved transit	Passenger automobiles are responsible for a large amount of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollution. Attracting more riders to transit can help to reduce auto traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.
Reduce transit's footprint	While buses and trains also create pollution they are far less polluting than automobiles on a per passenger basis. The County can reduce the impact on land, air emissions, energy, water, and material caused by transit operations.
Integrate land development and transit	In addition to developing an attractive transit service, the County can help guide land development to promote transit as a more competitive travel option compared with the automobile. By facilitating more compact development, transit can also help preserve land.

Capstone Policies

In addition to the three pillars, the Strategic Plan also contains guidance on Council's priorities for the delivery of public services. These "capstone policies" (outlined in Exhibit 5) provide goals, strategies and indicators.

Exhibit 5 – Capstone Policies for Transit

Increase customer satisfaction	Customers are satisfied with the quality of County service delivery. Strathcona County practices excellence in customer service based on the principles of effectiveness, efficiency, economic and equity. Strategies include innovation, and listening and responding to customer feedback. Indicators include levels of public satisfaction.
Expand communications	Strathcona County uses effective mechanisms to facilitate two-way communication with residents and stakeholders. Stakeholders are well informed about and confident in their local government. Strategies include seeking community input and responsiveness. Indicators include public awareness and satisfaction with communication efforts and input opportunities.
Emphasize resource management	Strathcona County's human, financial and physical resources are managed in a manner that addresses community needs and priorities. The County's financial resources are responsibly managed. Life expectancy of municipal and community infrastructure is met. Strategies include thoughtful budgeting and efficient energy consumption.

Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 1-2007

The Strathcona County Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is a long-range planning document that sets guidelines for growth and development in Strathcona County over the next 20 years and beyond. The MDP is consistent with the Strathcona County Strategic Plan and follows a triple bottom line approach of making decisions based on social, economic and environmental sustainability. The MDP considers all aspects of Strathcona County, including residential and commercial development, growth management, environmental sustainability, social development and transportation.

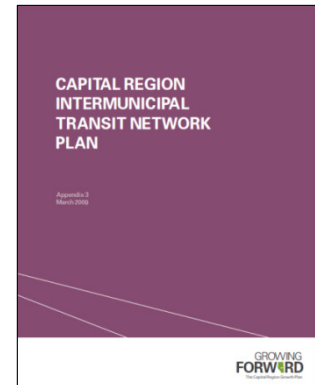
Transit objectives in the MDP include providing a safe, effective, reliable, affordable, accessible and environmentally responsible transit system for all citizens, promoting alternatives to vehicular transportation and Transportation Demand Management principals, providing new residential areas with transit service and exploring possible expansion of regional transit service to Edmonton and other municipalities. It also promotes mixed-use developments, walkable communities and compact residential development to reduce the amount of vehicle trips and kilometres traveled.

The MDP also outlines possible initiatives to manage transportation demand including:

- Discouraging single-occupant automobile travel (for example, via car-pooling, public transit, walking, and bicycling)
- Minimizing the need to travel (for example, via telecommuting)
- Spreading out the time of travel (for example, via staggering work arrival times)

2.2.2 Capital Region Board

The Capital Region Board (CRB) has developed the Capital Region Growth Plan (CRGP) that provides an integrated and strategic planning approach for future growth in the Capital Region, identifies key development patterns and infrastructure investments and co-ordinates decision-making in the Capital Region that will balance economic growth with healthy communities and the environment. The CRGP includes four inter-related components: a Land Use Plan, a Housing Plan, a Geographic Information Services Plan and an Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan (ITNP).



The ITNP intends to guide and coordinate planning and implementation of a regional transit network that will link citizens throughout the Capital Region to an efficient, convenient and seamless public transit system. It provides a long-term vision for intermunicipal (cross boundary) transit services including Strathcona County's services into Edmonton. As Strathcona County is part of the Capital Region, the CRGP is a key guiding document for development of the Transit Master Plan, particularly as it relates to existing and future services from the County to Edmonton or other municipalities in the Capital Region.

The most important component of the CRB's land use and transit plans is the strategy of intensifying land use into more compact development throughout the Capital Region, including in Strathcona County. This strategy relies in part on increasing the amount of transit service provided and getting more travellers to choose transit rather than automobiles for their travel.

Additionally, the ITNP provides a number of operational values that help to guide Strathcona County's planning process for transit. The following outlines the 11 operational values:

- Seamless
- Fast
- Reliable, on-time and predictable
- Safe
- Efficient
- Affordable

- Convenient
- Easily navigated
- Comfortable
- Connected to other modes such as walking, cycling, taxis, buses, trains and vehicles that together support a healthy lifestyle
- Cohesively linked across geographic areas via routings, schedules, fares, safety standards and facilities

2.3 Existing Service Review

This section reviews the performance of the existing service and provides a summary of challenges facing SCT based on the analysis of available operating data, GENIVAR's observations and discussions with staff. This review covers the three main transit services: specialized, local and intermunicipal (also called "commuter" services).

2.3.1 Challenges and Opportunities for Existing Transit Services

While consultations and analyses reveal that current transit services in SCT are operating well in most respects, a number of challenges exist that present opportunities for SCT to further improve customer satisfaction and system efficiencies, and to continue to respond to growing and changing community needs.

Overcrowded Buses during Rush Hours

Ridership on intermunicipal services has been steadily increasing in recent years and as a result, peak-period intermunicipal buses are frequently at capacity. A primary challenge for SCT going forward is to identify an effective means of addressing crowding on-board that often requires passengers to stand for the duration of their intermunicipal travel. Capacity may have to be expanded to facilitate high ridership levels during these periods and sufficiently address the growing demand.

Post-secondary ridership has grown significantly since the introduction of the U-Pass in 2007 and this has impacted overall SCT ridership. The program effectively manages demand for parking at the campuses of several large educational institutions and has been successful in getting post-secondary students on transit across the Capital Region. However, the resulting growth in ridership and Park and Ride use has added to the strain on transit operations in Strathcona County. SCT must balance the needs of all customers and provide an intermunicipal service that can effectively and efficiently move all commuters to and from their intermunicipal destinations.

Crowded Park and Ride Lots

Existing Park and Ride lots are crowded and frequently over capacity. In 2010, the County provided approximately 500 formal Park and Ride parking stalls with an additional 500 cars parked in the overflow lots in the Transportation and Utility Corridor (TUC), along Fir Street, and in private lots near the terminals. With the Province's decision to build new utilities in the TUC, the future of the overflow parking lot is in doubt.

Beyond the immediate need to replace the overflow parking lot, there are key philosophical questions about the economic and environmental sustainability of continuing to rely on Park and Ride expansion to attract riders to transit. While Park and Ride is a common strategy to attract transit ridership in communities that are traditionally automobile-oriented, continued Park and Ride expansion is expensive, with each new stall costing approximately \$10,000 to construct

and with additional costs to maintain. In 2008, approximately 50 percent of Strathcona's intermunicipal service passengers used Park and Ride facilities. Despite a recent announcement that parking at Strathcona Station will be expanded to 1,200 stalls, additional spaces will continue to be required to meet growing demand.

The high cost of continued parking expansion, combined with growing ridership suggests that SCT has an opportunity to promote local feeder bus services and carpooling as attractive alternatives to driving individually to a transfer terminal. Areas of Strathcona County that are already effectively served by local routes could be promoted, with local service expanded in other areas in an attempt to increase ridership and reduce demand at Park and Ride facilities.

Inadequate Passenger Terminal Facilities

The existing terminals present operational challenges for SCT. Capacity restrictions for transit vehicles at the Sherwood Park Transit Centre results in SCT buses utilizing areas of the terminal designated for passenger pick-up and drop-off. While this continues to provide passengers arriving, departing and transferring at the facility with a high level of service, it may not encourage customers to use the passenger drop-off facilities during peak periods. Expansion of the facility is not possible due to available land limitations, and adding additional levels to the parkade is cost prohibitive.

The on-street terminal that has emerged at Strathcona Station also presents challenges as it cannot adequately meet current passenger volumes, conflicts with automobile traffic, has inadequate passenger waiting facilities, and is not convenient for transferring passengers

The challenge of meeting growing capacity requirements at the existing terminals presents opportunities to develop unique solutions to complex problems. Such opportunities include exploring the possibility of utilizing the Greyhound stop near Strathcona Station to integrate transit and intercity services, or expanding bike infrastructure and passenger drop areas at both terminals in an effort to reduce demand for Park and Ride facilities.

Accessibility

While some components of SCT are accessible to persons with mobility limitations, opportunities exist to make the system fully accessible. Opportunities for SCT to increase overall accessibility include retrofit or purchase of fully accessible vehicles to ensure the entire fleet is accessible, renovating areas of Strathcona Station to better accommodate persons with disabilities, ensuring priority snow clearing at bus stops and shelters and making provisions to provide all information in accessible formats.

Increased system accessibility benefits all customers and may also reduce passenger reliance on specialized services, which are more expensive to operate. Fixed-route and specialized transit services should be integrated when possible to provide more transportation alternatives to seniors and persons with disabilities.

Given industry practices including emerging accessibility legislation in other areas of Canada, building codes, and the potential to attract more persons with disabilities to fixed-route transit, SCT should strive to make all buses and facilities, including bus stops and shelters 100 percent accessible.

SCT also has an opportunity to increase accessibility of and integration with active transportation networks, such as walking and bicycling.

Specialized Transit Policy

Originally launched in 1992 as a program focused on seniors, SCAT should be re-focused to meet the current needs of the community and align closer to industry norms. There are numerous opportunities for SCAT to improve efficiencies, including changing eligibility criteria to be similar to what is typical of other specialized transit services, changing the guidelines that have led to trip restrictions for work-related trips, unclear service boundaries, and misaligned days and hours of operation with fixed-route transit.

There is a risk that if left unchanged, this policy framework could lead to failure to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and create less efficient services. Efforts to meet demand for services simply by adding capacity may in fact lead to an upward spiral of increased demand, increased refusal rates, and the need for more services. While this spiral will not perpetuate indefinitely, it is likely to create untenable financial and operations pressures unless steps are taken to manage demand at the same time.

There are also opportunities to enhance specialized transit through greater coordination with fixed-route transit services, strategic partnerships, integration with Edmonton's DATS services, and through greater use of taxis.

Fleet Size and Composition

The County has made significant progress in recent years in standardizing the bus fleet and reducing the number of different types of buses. However, there are still several categories of bus types in the fleet, which increase training and maintenance costs and create numerous problems with service operations. SCT should utilize a standardized fleet with as few bus types as possible.

Considering the need for seating on longer distance intermunicipal services and growing peak-period demand, there is an opportunity to utilize high-capacity buses in addition to standard urban transit buses. The County has experience with highway coaches and articulated buses, and is testing a double-decker bus.

Fares

Given the fare structure and fare policy complexities created by providing multiple services (local, intermunicipal, and specialized) over a very large service area and offering a degree of fare integration with two other transit operators (ETS and StAT), the current SCT fare structure and fare policies, particularly relative to transfers, are understandably complex. SCT has an opportunity to adapt fare structures and fare policies to meet existing and future ridership, revenue and business projections in a simplified manner that makes these structures and policies as customer friendly and integrated as possible.

When developing a fare technology strategy SCT should consider the evolving plans of ETS's adoption of fare technologies, including the potential for smart cards.

Reliability and On-Time Performance

SCT's use of timed transfers to connect between intermunicipal and feeder buses puts great emphasis on the need for reliable on-time performance. As service reliability is always a concern, in particular for intermunicipal routes that are vulnerable to delays caused by weather, traffic incidents, and congestion on main arteries into Edmonton, SCT should strive to maintain reliable, dependable service despite the challenges presented by increasing congestion issues.

Customer Satisfaction

According to the 2009 Public Satisfaction Survey conducted by the County, resident satisfaction levels with transit services increased more than 20 percent between 2007 and 2009. SCT should strive to continue to increase public and customer satisfaction by focusing improvements to key areas related to reliability, comfort and customer service in general.

Support Facilities

Transit services require appropriate operational facilities to store, maintain and administer transit services. SCT faces challenges with vehicle storage, as the current facilities cannot meet the required vehicle capacity, resulting in some buses being stored outdoors in inclement weather. SCT also has an opportunity to improve management and administration efficiencies by consolidating all management, planning, and administration and operations office staff to the same building.

Safety and Security

SCT has an excellent safety record and should continue to strive towards providing customers with a safe and secure service by implementing the recommendations of the recently completed Threat Assessment and Security Plan.

Passenger Information

Route maps and schedules are currently provided via hardcopy timetables and online through the County website. SCT has an opportunity to further enhance customer convenience and service effectiveness by adopting new technologies such as providing real-time information and access to information on mobile devices.

Image or Brand

As service steadily improves and ridership continues to grow, the image of SCT in the community should grow as well. SCT should strive to ensure that the image and branding of the service is consistent across all components of the system, including vehicles, facilities and infrastructure. SCT should also take advantage of imaging and branding on large transit vehicles, which present additional opportunities to provide comprehensive information to potential and existing customers and to increase overall community awareness of the service.

Cost

Transit is an expensive service for all municipalities to provide, and is typically accompanied by growing customer expectations. In 2009, transit services cost Strathcona County 14 cents of every tax dollar spent. As the system and community continue to grow, both challenges and opportunities will be presented for SCT to balance community expectations against economic constraints.

2.3.2 Fixed-Route Service

The existing service review describes the performance of each fixed-route in the local and intermunicipal networks. The purpose of conducting this review is to identify the performance of each route, and to examine whether service adjustments or other courses of action are necessary to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency in the local and intermunicipal route networks.

Passenger activity counts from February 2009 conducted by Strathcona County Transit were used to examine the extent of transit patronage for each route in the system. A metric of passenger boardings per vehicle hour is commonly used to identify the ridership performance of

services. The discussion of ridership performance is organized based on the three distinct service operated in Strathcona County Transit: intermunicipal services, local services, and Dial-A-Bus local services.

Intermunicipal (Commuter) Services

Strathcona County Transit operates six intermunicipal routes between Edmonton and the two SCT transit terminals. Based on supplied weekday passenger counts, intermunicipal services generated approximately 37.1 boardings per vehicle hour and demonstrate the highest ridership in the system. Exhibit 6 shows the computed boardings per vehicle hour figure for all intermunicipal services in each operating period.

Exhibit 6 – Ridership Performance – Intermunicipal Services to Edmonton (2010)

		Boardings Per Vehicle Hour – Monday-Friday				
Route		AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Evenings	Overall
401	Sherwood Park Transit Centre to Downtown	49.3	37.3	37.2	34.2	40.4
402	Strathcona Station to Downtown and NAIT	41.8	17.1	32.0	No service	25.5
404	Sherwood Park Transit Centre to University of Alberta	46.7	37.0	37.8	42.3	40.1
406	Sherwood Park Transit Centre to Downtown via Government Centre	63.8	No service	69.0	No Service	65.8
413	Strathcona Station to Downtown via Government Centre	84.8	No service	51.2	No Service	63.3
414	Strathcona Station to University of Alberta	53.6	20.1	25.3	6.0	26.1
					All Intermunicipal Services	37.1

Overall, intermunicipal routes serving downtown Edmonton had the highest performance, followed by routes to the University of Alberta. Route 402 to NAIT had the lowest performance. This relative performance may reflect the difference in the number of passengers traveling to each destination.

It is noteworthy that there are six routes serving three destinations. The reason for multiple routes lies with the crowded parking at Park and Ride lots in Sherwood Park. As the first lot filled, additional routes from the second parking lot became necessary. With the expansion of Strathcona Station there may be an opportunity to consolidate the service for greater efficiency and customer services.

SCT service between downtown Edmonton and NAIT duplicates the existing ETS #15 express route as well as a future LRT line. It may be possible to increase efficiency by encouraging transfers rather than providing direct service to NAIT.

Local Services

SCT operates nine local routes connecting major destination points within Sherwood Park. Based on supplied passenger counts, local services generated approximately 16.2 passengers per vehicle hour. Exhibit 7 shows the computed boardings per vehicle hour figure for all local services in each operating period.

Exhibit 7 – Ridership Performance – Local Services (2010)

Route	Boardings Per Vehicle Hour – Monday-Friday			
	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Overall
420 Industrial Park	27.0	13.6	16.0	16.6
421 Cloverbar Ranch	27.5	12.6	14.9	16.6
422 Clarkdale Meadows	19.5	8.3	12.1	11.9
423 Sherwood Park East	19.9	10.1	12.5	13.3
425 Glen Allan	19.6	30.0	17.9	22.3
426 Brentwood	18.4	11.0	16.6	15.4
427 Connector	22.4	41.5	36.6	34.0
428 Woodbridge	15.8	13.7	14.7	14.7
429 Estates-Industrial	4.1	1.8	2.1	2.7
All Local Services				16.2

Based on ridership counts, many of the local routes are operating below the minimum utilization levels identified in the 2007 report entitled *Building For Tomorrow – A Transit Growth Strategy*. The report identifies that routes falling below 10 boardings per hour should be discontinued, while routes performing between 10 and 15 boardings per hour should be restructured.

Passenger counts reveal that riders using local services value transit services that connect to intermunicipal transit stations and local destinations as directly as possible, and with the fewest amount of transfers.

For example, Route 427 (Connector) and Route 425 (Glen Allan) are the highest-performing routes in the local network, and GENIVAR attributes this to the fewer route deviations it operates to connect between the two terminals, as well as the convenient connections these routes make to terminals and major local destinations.

Conversely, two of the poorest-performing routes, Route 422 (Clarkdale Meadows) and Route 423 (Sherwood Park East) are long, circuitous, with few major destinations along the route. Additionally, Route 429's (Estates-Industrial) poor performance is likely a result of the land uses the route serves and the limited span of service it operates.

Dial-A-Bus Services

SCT operates Dial-A-Bus during weekday evening and weekend periods. Demand-responsive services such as Dial-A-Bus are an alternative to fixed-route service where there is low ridership. Based on supplied weekday passenger counts, Dial-A-Bus services generated

approximately 12 boardings per vehicle hour. Exhibit 8 shows the computed boardings per vehicle hour figure for Dial-A-Bus services. The evening Dial-A-Bus services have an overall performance similar to midday local services.

Exhibit 8 – Ridership Performance – Dial-A-Bus Services (2010)

		Boardings Per Vehicle Hour
Route		Monday-Friday Evenings
409	Dial-A-Bus Northwest	9.9
410	Dial-A-Bus South	11.9
411	Dial-A-Bus Central	15.9
412	Dial-A-Bus Northeast	9.0
All Dial-A-Bus Services		12.1

2.3.3 Specialized Transit

Specialized transit (door-to-door service for persons with disabilities) in Strathcona County faces several challenges – rapidly growing demand, changing community expectations, a very large service area, and increasing costs – that present significant challenges to the existing SCAT service-delivery model. Specific opportunities to improve specialized transit include:

- Equity – Many communities establish a policy that specialized services should be roughly equivalent to fixed-route services with respect to days and hours of operation, service areas and trip purposes. The current rules for specialized transit do not provide this type of equity.
- Public Expectations – The public has consistently requested a higher level of specialized transit service. The chief request has been for an end to restrictions on work and school travel. Additional requests include more days of operation, greater hours of operation, greater travel to and from Edmonton, and shorter advanced booking times.
- Growing Demand – Population growth is already straining SCAT services. Additional demand for this service will come from an aging society that raises the number of eligible customers.
- Eligibility and Certification – Today, SCAT is available to people with disabilities and non-disabled seniors. Currently, there are minimal efforts to verify an applicant's claim. These practices could lead to unintentional demand from persons that are able to use fixed-route services, jeopardizing service to those that truly require specialized services.
- Large Service Area – The SCAT service area is unusually large and includes Sherwood Park, all rural portions of the County, and intermunicipal travel to some areas in Edmonton. The cost per trip on SCAT is already relatively high by industry standards. The higher costs (longer travel distance) and low productivity (few riders) of serving customers in the rural areas is likely the main contributor to this performance.
- Costs – Across the industry, rapidly growing demand for specialized services has driven costs to unsustainable levels. The existing SCAT model is not capable of absorbing growing demand without significant cost increases and declining efficiency. Expanding or enhancing this service without efficiency measures could lead to service deterioration as demand outstrips resources. The current SCAT service model does not incorporate many cost-control measures found in other specialized transit services. Alternative service models may be necessary to better meet the community's needs while controlling costs.

2.3.4 Fares

2.3.4.1 Fixed-Route Service

SCT charges a flat rate for local service within Sherwood Park and a higher flat rate for one-way intermunicipal service between Sherwood Park and Edmonton. A zone surcharge is sometimes applied for transfers from SCT local to SCT intermunicipal service when crossing the municipal boundary. Existing fares for SCT services are shown in Exhibit 9.

Exact cash fares are required and change is not provided. All period passes are non-transferable. Senior off-peak passes are valid for unlimited travel on SCT local regular and Dial-A-Bus services within Sherwood Park between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm and after 6:00 pm Monday to Friday, and anytime on weekends and holidays. Passenger classifications are indicated on the fare tables shown in Exhibit 9.

Beginning in 2006-2007 and then renewed in 2010 for an additional three-year term, SCT, ETS and StAT have a collective U-Pass agreement with the University of Alberta, NAIT and Grant MacEwan University. For 2011, participating students at each institution are required to pay \$120 for a U-Pass that is valid for unlimited travel at any time during a four-month semester on any of the three transit systems. Plans are currently underway to include students at NorQuest College in Edmonton.

SCT, ETS and StAT each operate older and relatively uncomplicated fare technology collection systems that are based on mechanical fareboxes in to which passengers deposit cash, tickets or transfer fare payments. The vehicle operator can provide visual validation to determine if the proper cash fare payment has been made. Paper-based period passes (monthly, semester and annual) are shown to the vehicle operator, who can visually validate the time period validity and passenger class. Paper-based 'tear' transfer slips are also shown to the vehicle operator, who can visually validate the transfer time and route.

Exhibit 9 - SCT Fare Table

SCT Intermunicipal Service Fare Table				
Passenger Classifications	Cash 1-way	Ticket ¹ 1-way	1-Mo. Pass	Multi-Mo. Pass
Adult	\$5.25	\$4.17	\$89.00 ²	
Senior (65 yrs and older)	\$4.25	\$4.17	\$24.00 ³	\$286.50 ⁴
Low Income Senior (GIS recipient)	\$4.25	\$4.17		\$135.00 ⁵
AISH Recipient and Limited Income Resident (<80% LICO)	\$5.25	\$4.17	\$20.00 ⁶	
Post-Secondary Student (not U-Pass)	\$5.25	\$4.17	\$80.00	
Post-Secondary Student (U-Pass)				\$120.00 ⁷
Elementary, Junior and High School Student (ID required)	\$5.25	\$4.17	\$80.00	
Child (0 to 5 yrs, accompanied by fare paying adult)	Free			
SCT Local Service Fare Table				
Passenger Classifications	Cash	Ticket ⁸	1-Mo. Pass	Multi-Mo. Pass
Adult	\$3.25	\$2.10	\$52.00	
Senior (65 yrs and older)	\$3.25	\$2.10		
Low Income Senior (GIS recipient)	\$3.25	\$2.10		
Low Income Senior (<\$50K household income)	\$3.25	\$2.10	N/C ⁹	
AISH Recipient and Limited Income Resident (<80% LICO)	\$3.25	\$2.10		
Post-Secondary Student (not U-Pass)	\$3.25	\$2.10		
Elementary, Junior and High School Student	\$3.25	\$2.10		
Junior High School Student (school hours only)	\$3.25	\$2.10	\$45.70 ¹⁰	
Child (0 to 5 yrs, accompanied by fare paying adult)	Free	Free		

Note:

1 Fixed-route service intermunicipal tickets are sold in booklets of 12

2 Proposed to be increased to \$90.00 for 2011

3 Senior Monthly Pass is valid for unlimited travel on both intermunicipal and local service

4 Senior Annual Pass is valid for unlimited travel on both intermunicipal and local service

5 Senior's Subsidized Annual Pass is valid for unlimited travel on both intermunicipal and local service

6 Everybody Rides Program valid for unlimited travel on both intermunicipal and local service

7 U-Pass is valid for unlimited travel on both intermunicipal and local service for 4-month semester

8 Fixed-route service local tickets are sold in booklets of 20

9 Senior's Off Peak Pass is valid for free travel on local service during off-peak service hours

10 Junior High School Student Pass is valid for unlimited travel on local service during school hours only

Regional Fares and Transfers

Since at least 2003, SCT and ETS have had a contractual “fare reciprocity” agreement to help transit passengers easily travel across municipal boundaries. The contract allows each organization to use the other’s fare media, while respecting the need of each organization to collect the appropriate revenue from customers.

Passengers using SCT commuter passes and paper transfer slips can connect to ETS services with no additional charge. This arrangement allows SCT passengers to transfer to most ETS services with relative ease. However, SCT commuter tickets are not valid on the LRT network due to mechanical incompatibility with LRT validation machines. While beneficial to SCT customers, there is relatively little transferring from SCT to ETS. This is likely because SCT directly serves most major destinations in Edmonton and transfers are not necessary. A 2009 SCT survey found that 12 percent of SCT passengers transferred to ETS.

The contract also allows ETS customers to transfer to SCT. This facilitates reverse commuting of employees traveling to Sherwood Park. Transferring from ETS to SCT typically requires an additional surcharge, or “zone fee”, to compensate SCT for part of the trip. Originally, this surcharge was a single price (\$1.00) and was calculated based on the difference between SCT and ETS cash fare prices. Today, most ETS (local) passes require an additional \$1.00 surcharge, while ETS tickets and paper transfer slips require a \$2.00 surcharge.

All ETS fare media are valid for trips on SCT within the city of Edmonton. This helps Edmonton residents travel locally at no additional cost. Additionally, most ETS fare media can be used to travel within Sherwood Park, with an additional \$1.00 surcharge.

The fare reciprocity contract helps to facilitate cross-boundary travel. However, surcharges at difference rates (\$1.00 versus \$2.00) can be confusing for customers and staff. The rationale for the price of the surcharge is no longer clear. There continue to be concerns within both SCT and ETS about ensuring each organization is receiving the appropriate revenue from customers.

Due to low customer interest, SCT and StAT have not yet established a formal contract to recognize each other’s fares. In 2009, less than one percent of SCT passengers transferred to StAT. Informally, StAT and SCT staff generally treat the others fares as though they were ETS fare media. StAT has its own contract with ETS.

SCAT

Existing fares for SCAT are flat rates based on geographic service areas: local within the urban service area of Sherwood Park, travel from the rural portions of the County, and travel to Edmonton.

Existing fares for SCAT services are shown in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10 – SCAT Fare Table

SCAT Service Fare Table				
Accessible Service Passenger Classifications	Cash ¹	Ticket ²	Monthly Pass	Annual Pass
Local Service around Sherwood Park	\$5.00	\$4.50		
Intermunicipal Service between Rural Strathcona County Service and Sherwood Park	\$7.25	\$6.50		
Intermunicipal Service between Sherwood Park and Edmonton	\$7.75	\$7.00		
Intermunicipal Service between Rural Strathcona County and Edmonton	\$15.00			

Note:

1 Cash fares for all three services are proposed to increase by \$0.25 for 2011

2 Accessible service local and intermunicipal tickets are sold in booklets of 10

A medically required and doctor-approved attendant may ride for free on the SCAT service when accompanying a fare-paying SCAT passenger, provided the attendant has been identified as part of the SCAT registration process. Other companions and attendants must pay the full SCAT fare and be identified at the time of booking. Exact cash fares are required and change is not provided.

Areas of Opportunity for Fares

Existing concerns regarding current fares present a number of opportunities for future improvements to the system, including:

- Simplifying the overly complicated fare structures, products and policies in an effort to increase customer convenience.
- Revising the fare discount criteria so it is based on means rather than age.
- Ensuring that sufficient capacity is available year round for both full-fare monthly intermunicipal pass holders and U-Pass holders at Park and Ride locations and on intermunicipal transit vehicles.
- Evaluating potential costs and benefits of charging for parking at Park and Ride lots.
- Exploring opportunities to further integrate fare media with ETS and StAT, including the potential for introduction of smart card technologies.

2.4 Changing Travel Needs and Key Transit Markets

2.4.1 Demographics

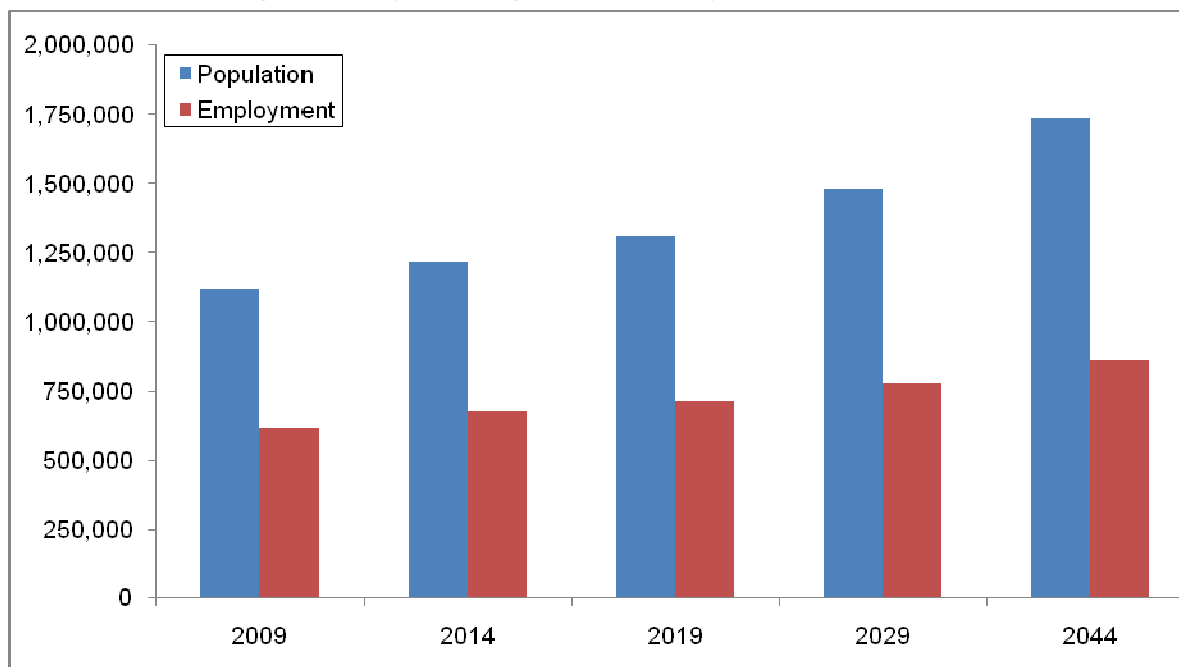
Capital Region

Exhibit 11 shows the population and employment projections in the Capital Region according to the Capital Region Growth Plan. Based on the document, population in the Capital Region is projected to grow by approximately 17 percent in the next 10 years from 1,120,613 in 2009 to

1,311,000 in 2019. Total employment in the Region is projected to grow by approximately 16 percent in next 10 years, from 620,115 in 2009 to 716,000 by 2019.

Long-range projections predict a continued growth trend to a population of 1,734,000 and employment of 862,000 by 2044, representing approximately 55 percent and 39 percent increase in total population and employment respectively.

Exhibit 11 – Capital Region Population Projections (2009-2044)



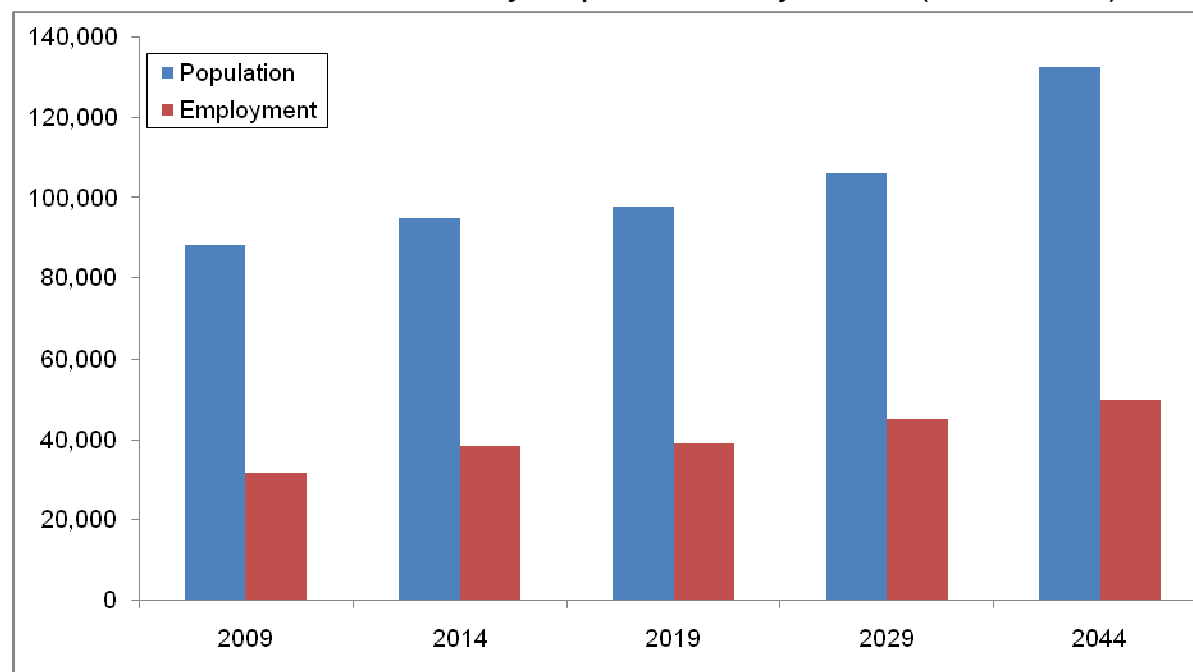
Source: Capital Region Growth Plan (2009)

Strathcona County

According to Statistics Canada Census data, Strathcona County population increased 37 percent between 1996 and 2009 from 64,176 to 87,998. This growth trend is expected to continue as population projections predict approximately 11 percent and 20 percent growth from 2009 to 98,000 by 2019 and 106,000 by 2029, which is relatively lower than Region-wide projections. However, total employment is projected to grow from 31,666 in 2009 to 39,000 by 2019 and 45,000 by 2029, representing approximately 24 percent and 43 percent growth respectively, a much higher growth rate than Region wide projections.

Long-range projections predict a population of 132,000 and employment of 49,800 in 2044, approximately 50 percent and 57 percent growth compared to 2009 figures, which indicates a slightly lower growth in population and significantly higher growth in employment compared to the Regional average. Strathcona County population and employment trends are shown in Exhibit 12.

Exhibit 12 – Strathcona County Population Projections (2009-2044)



Source: Capital Region Growth Plan (2009)

Population and Employment Distribution

GENIVAR conducted a geospatial analysis of the population and employment growth patterns that are expected to occur using available data from Strathcona's transportation model for 2005 and projected for 2041. Traffic zones were aggregated to 'superzones' to understand the potential growth patterns in different areas of the Strathcona County including both urban and rural communities.

The population and employment forecasting review is organized based on two superzone types: rural and urban superzones.

Rural Strathcona

Exhibit 13 identifies the number of people and jobs in 2005 and 2041 for each superzone in rural Strathcona. The map output suggests that significant population and employment growth is expected to occur in the rural areas east and north of the urban service area of Sherwood Park. Moderate population and employment growth is also expected to occur south and southeast of Sherwood Park. Employment growth is also expected in the areas northeast of Fort Saskatchewan.

Exhibit 13 – Population and Employment in Rural Strathcona (2005 – 2041)

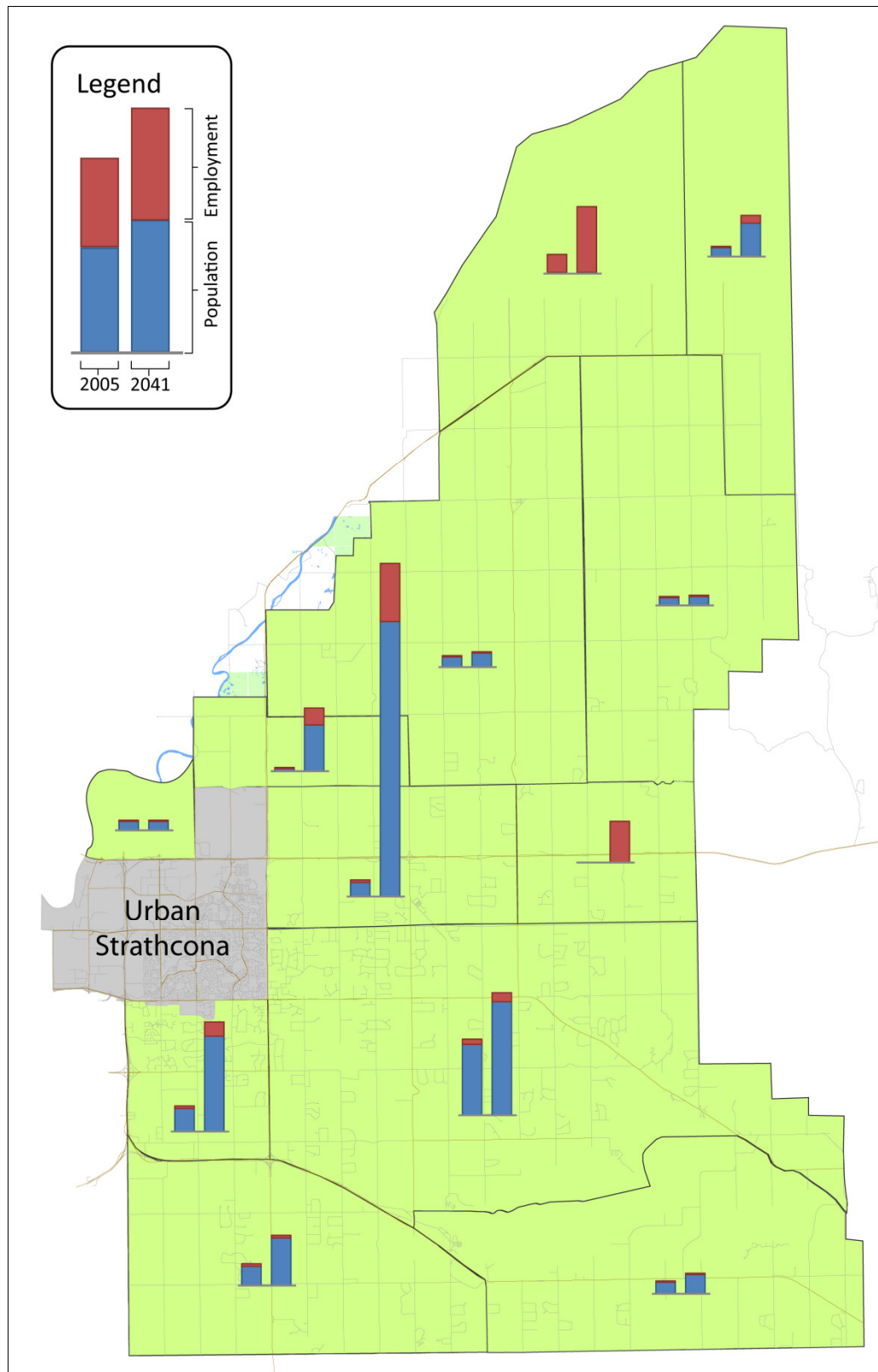
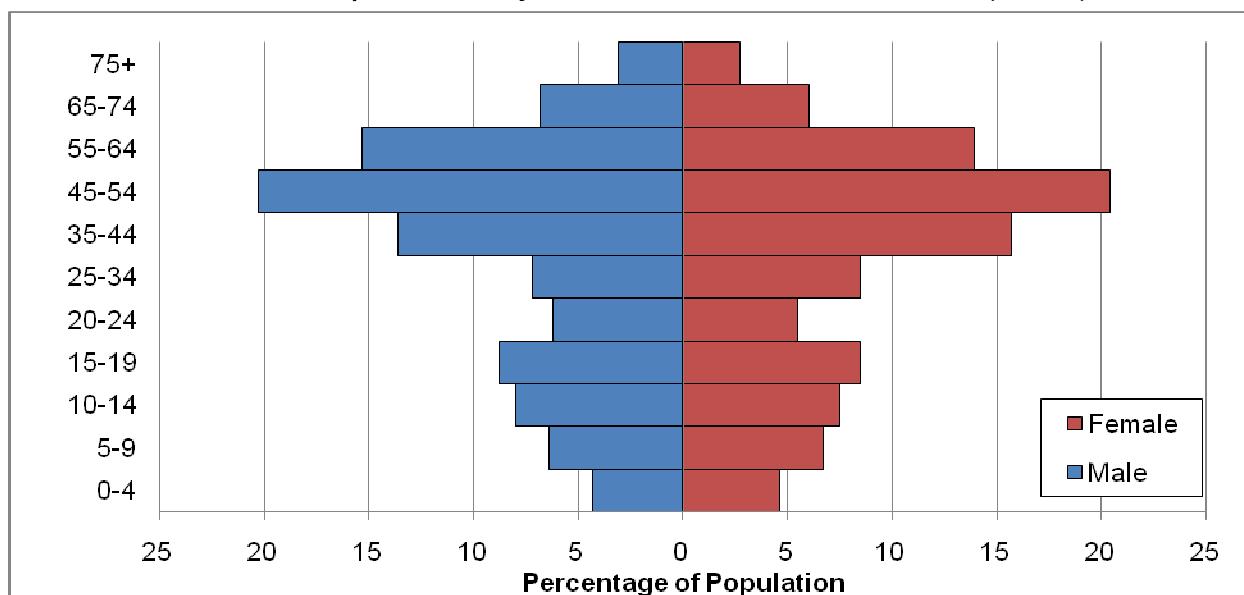


Exhibit 14 illustrates the current age distribution of residents in rural Strathcona County. As demonstrated in the population pyramid, there is a significant proportion of the population aged 45 to 54. Because the age composition of Strathcona's population is not expected to change dramatically in the next ten years, it is evident that a significant cohort will be reaching retirement age by the end of the study horizon. Thus, Strathcona County will need to ensure that municipal services, including local public transit services and specialized services, are available to an aging population.

Exhibit 14 – 2009 Population Pyramid for Rural Strathcona (2009)



Source: 2009 Municipal Census

Urban Strathcona

Exhibit 15 shows the number of people and jobs in 2005 and 2041 for each superzone in the urban service area of Sherwood Park based on available data from the 2005/2006 Strathcona Transportation Master Plan Update. Population and employment numbers remain fairly stable for most superzones in Sherwood Park between the two identified analysis years. However, considerable growth in employment is expected to occur in the areas north of Highway 16. Moderate employment growth is anticipated south of Wye Road and in the area west of Lakeland Village. Residential growth is expected to occur west of the Lakeland Village neighbourhood.

Subsequent to these calculations, the County approved additional residential development in the Cambrian Crossing area north of Highway 16. These developments could add another 7,000 residents to the urban service area by 2041; however the majority of this population is not expected within the 10-year scope of this plan.

Exhibit 15 – Population and Employment in Sherwood Park (2005 - 2041)

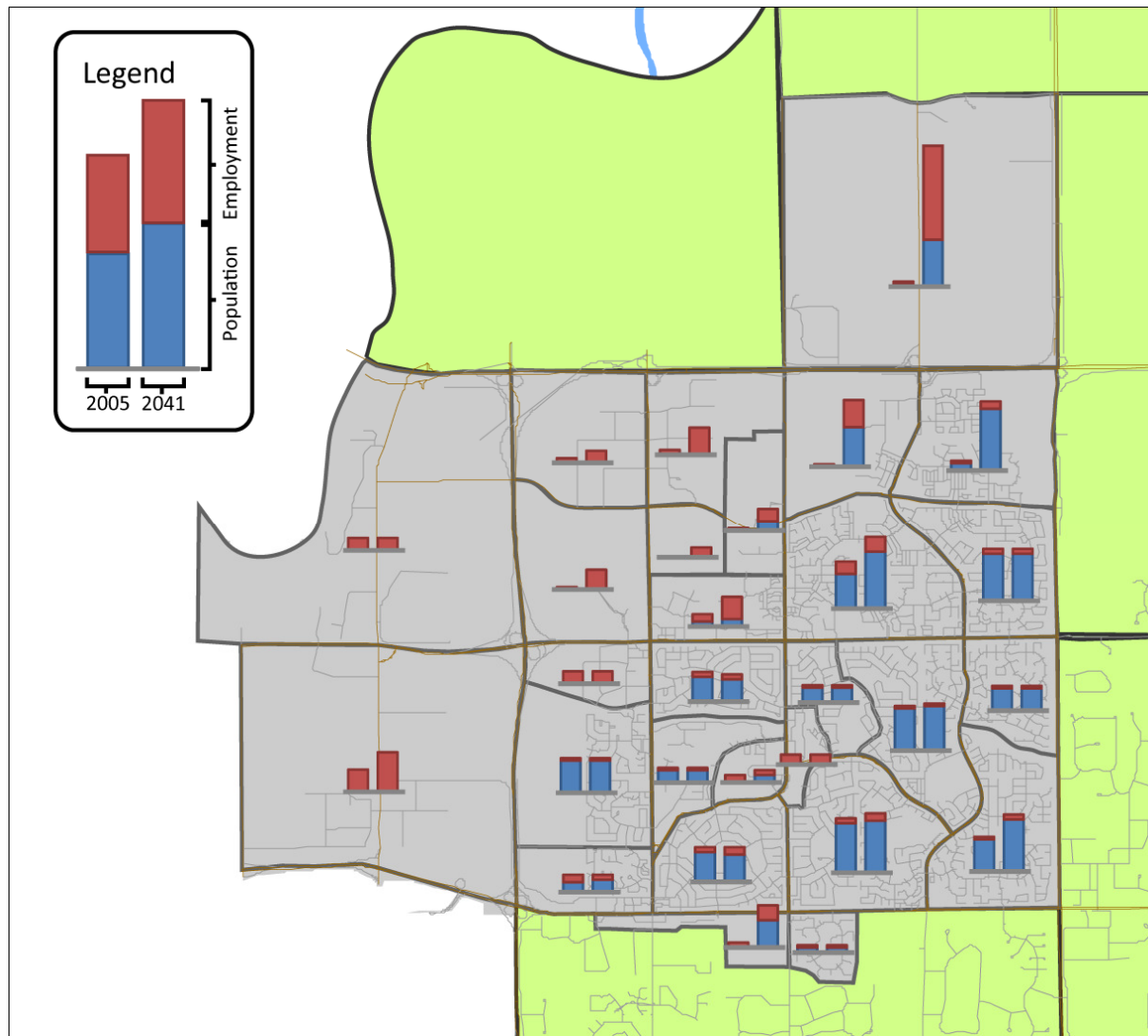
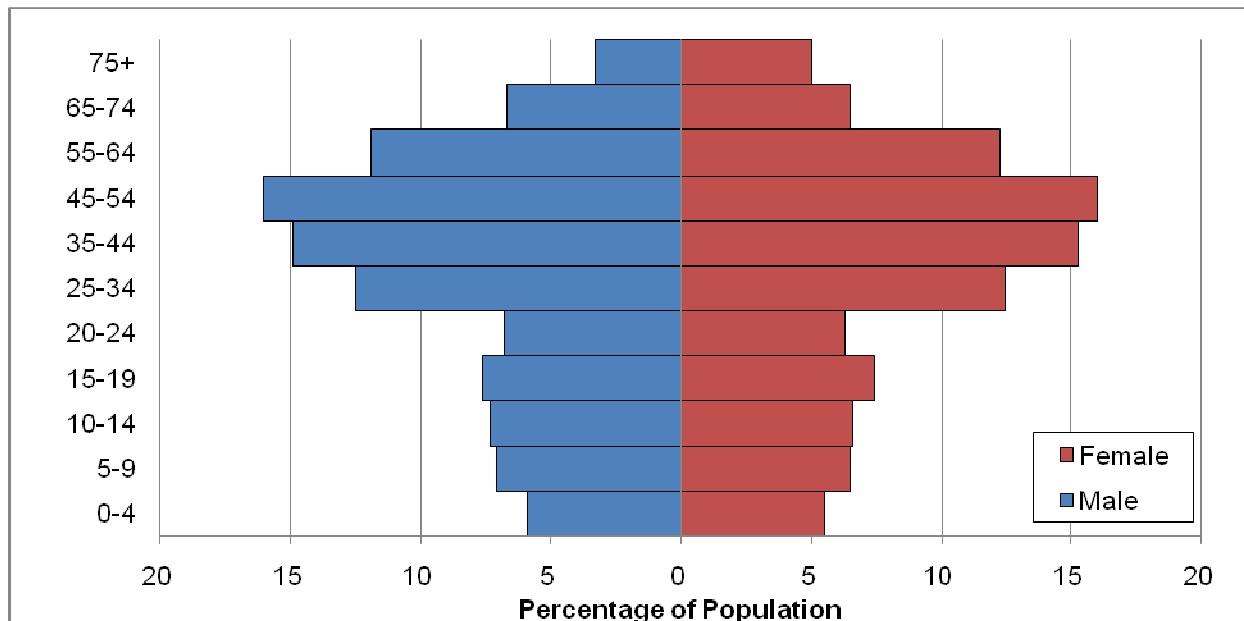


Exhibit 16 shows the 2009 age distribution of residents in the urban parts of Strathcona County. As illustrated in the diagram, the age composition of urban residents is fairly similar to what is experienced in rural Strathcona County (see Exhibit 14). The largest cohort of Strathcona's urban population is between the ages of 35 to 54, and in the next ten years the more senior portion of that cohort will approach retirement age. The larger proportion of seniors expected in Strathcona County will likely have a profound change on travel behaviour. Specifically, GENIVAR anticipates the following increased demand:

1. For local rather than intermunicipal services to Edmonton.
2. For accessible transit services.
3. To access health and retail services.
4. For specialized transit services.

Exhibit 16 – 2009 Population Pyramid in Sherwood Park



Source: 2009 Municipal Census

Persons with Disabilities

The population of persons with mobility disabilities in Strathcona County will likely increase in the coming years, as the overall County population grows. Exhibit 17 uses national incident rates for disabilities to estimate the future number of persons with disabilities in Strathcona County. As the population grows, the demand for specialized service will naturally increase. The request rate may also increase due to a larger proportion of seniors in the community.

Exhibit 17 – Future Disability Population (2009-2044)

Year	Estimated Adult Population	Transportation Disabled by Functional Disability				
		Mobility/ Agility (3.2%)	Cognitive/ Mental (1.2%)	Visual (0.38%)	Other (0.96%)	Total
2009	71,064	2,274	853	270	682	4,079
2014	76,650	2,453	920	291	736	4,400
2019	78,954	2,527	947	300	758	4,532
2029	85,561	2,738	1,027	325	821	4,911
2044	106,783	3,417	1,281	406	1,025	6,129

Source: Capital Region Growth Plan (2009), 2009 Municipal Census and Strathcona County Accessible Transit (SCAT), 2009

Summary

Population and employment projections as well as the aging trend of the population will have major impact on future transit services, including:

- Growing population and employment in the Capital Region and Strathcona County will drive demand for intermunicipal, local and specialized services.
- Increasing employment opportunities in Sherwood Park will increase demand for local services.
- Population growth in rural communities may suggest the need for expanded transit services.
- Aging population will increase demand for transit services, particularly for local and specialized service.

2.4.2 Travel Patterns

Urban Work and School Location

The 2009 Strathcona County Municipal Census provides work and school locations of residents within each enumeration area. Enumeration areas were grouped together based on approximated Sherwood Park neighbourhood boundaries and analyzed to determine the amount of residents from each neighbourhood who travel to work or school destinations at Government Centre, the Central Business District (CBD) of Edmonton, on or near the University of Alberta campus, other parts of Edmonton, within Sherwood Park or elsewhere.

On average, across all neighbourhoods, approximately 50 percent of the population work or go to school within Edmonton, 38 percent within Sherwood Park, and 11 percent elsewhere. Of the 50 percent who work or attend school in Edmonton, nine percent go to central downtown, four percent on or near the University of Alberta campus, one percent to the Government Centre and 36 percent to other parts of Edmonton.

There are no significant deviations from the neighbourhood work and school location averages. Very few neighbourhoods deviated more than five percent and none more than 10 percent from the neighbourhood work and school location averages.

Exhibit 18 shows main work and school flows from urban and rural areas in Strathcona County to the central area of Edmonton.

Exhibit 18 – Strathcona Residents Commuting Patterns (2009)

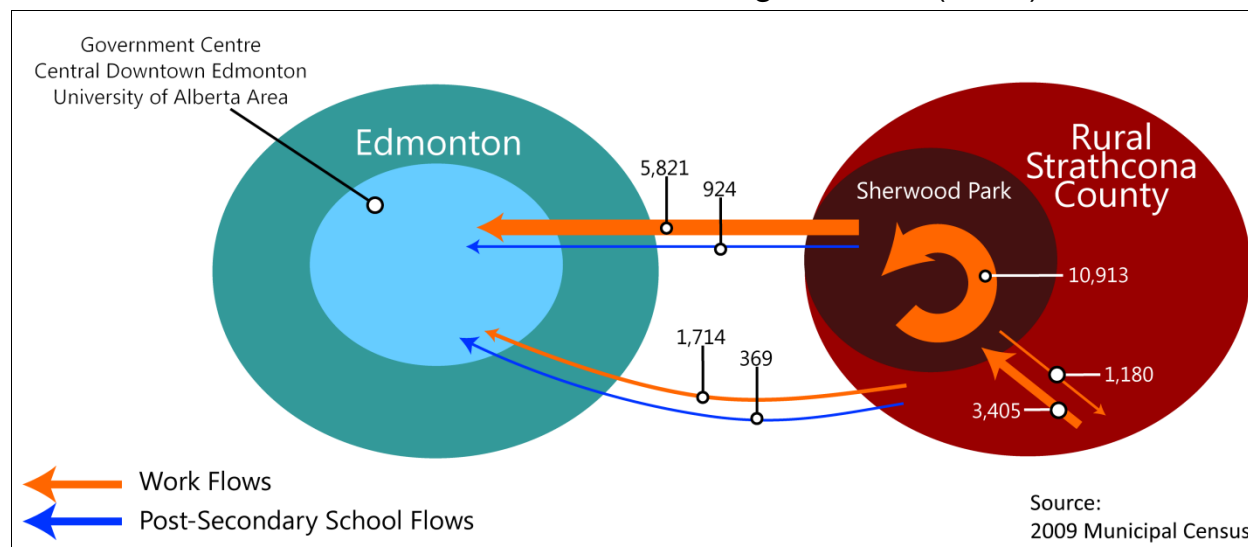


Exhibit 19 shows the work location of full-time employees residing in Sherwood Park. The data shows a significant number of employees working within the concentrated area near downtown Edmonton, including Government Centre, central downtown, and near the University of Alberta.

Exhibit 19 – Location of Full-Time Employment of Sherwood Park Residents (2009)

	Sherwood Park		Strathcona County	
	Full-Time Workers	Percent	Full-Time Workers	Percent
Sherwood Park	8,840	31%	11,528	29%
Government Centre	654	2%	819	2%
Central downtown Edmonton	3,764	13%	4,862	12%
On or near UA Campus	941	3%	1,214	3%
Other parts of Edmonton	9,977	35%	14,104	35%
Elsewhere	4,380	15%	7,885	20%
Total	28,556	100%	40,412	100%

Note: The sum of percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding

Source: Strathcona County 2009 Municipal Census

Based on the existing data and future projections, the primary users of Strathcona County intermunicipal transit services are, and will continue to be, urban residents working or studying within downtown. Existing parking policies and traffic conditions occurring in downtown are strong impetuses for higher public transit demand to and from the area. In contrast, other parts of Edmonton are less conducive to encouraging transit ridership and are likely difficult for the application of direct intermunicipal services. Thus, the CBD, Government Centre, and the University of Alberta will continue to be the primary destinations for SCT intermunicipal services.

Exhibit 19 shows that the largest group of Sherwood Park residents (35 percent) commute to areas in Edmonton outside of the central core destinations. Providing services to these areas may pose some challenges as it encompasses a large group of commuters dispersed among a large service area. Nevertheless, there may be opportunities to provide connections to these areas via ETS.

The data also demonstrates that a large group of Sherwood Park residents (31 percent) are working or going to school within the community. Local transit services mainly provide connections to intermunicipal services and are not structured for passengers whose work or school destinations are within Sherwood Park. While this market is much more difficult to serve given the low-density land uses that exist in the community, GENIVAR envisions opportunities to restructure the existing services to provide better opportunities for Sherwood Park residents to take transit to places within the community.

Rural Work and School Location

The 2009 Strathcona County Municipal Census provides work and school locations of residents within each enumeration area. Rural enumeration areas were grouped and analyzed to determine the amount of residents from each area who travel to work and school destinations located in Government Centre, the CBD of Edmonton, on or near the University of Alberta, other parts of Edmonton, within Sherwood Park or elsewhere. Exhibit 20 summarizes the location of full-time employment for rural Strathcona County residents.

Exhibit 20 – Location of Full-Time Employment of Rural Residents (2009)

	Rural Strathcona County		Strathcona County	
	Full-Time Workers	Percent	Full-Time Workers	Percent
Sherwood Park	2,688	23%	11,528	29%
Government Centre	165	1%	819	2%
Central downtown Edmonton	1,098	9%	4,862	12%
On or near UA Campus	273	2%	1,214	3%
Other parts of Edmonton	4,127	35%	14,104	35%
Elsewhere	3,505	30%	7,885	20%
Total	11,856	100%	40,412	100%

Note: The sum of percentages may not equal to 100% due to rounding

Source: Strathcona County 2009 Municipal Census

The data in Exhibit 20 provides some understanding about the overall travel patterns from rural Strathcona residents. As with Sherwood Park residents, many rural residents work in parts of the region not conducive to transit. Downtown Edmonton again stands out as the strongest potential market for transit services. However, due to low-density housing types that are situated in these areas, fixed-route transit services would not be cost effective to operate in these areas. Demand-responsive transit services may be feasible in the larger hamlets. Connections may also be feasible between northern Strathcona County and Fort Saskatchewan.

Post-Secondary Students

Exhibit 21 illustrates the full-time enrolment figures at Edmonton post-secondary institutions. According to the Ministry of Advanced Learning and Technology, reported Full-Load Enrolment (FLE) show an average increase of 2.49 percent annually over the past 10 years. The

introduction of the U-Pass at the University of Alberta, Grant MacEwan and NAIT has been tremendously successful at increasing transit ridership among post-secondary students.

Exhibit 21 – Post-Secondary Full-Time Enrolment (2010)

	Strathcona County Postcode						Total
	T8A	T8B	T8C	T8E	T8G	T8H	
University of Alberta (Fall 10)	1,780	356	114	247	93	580	3,170
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (Fall 10)	264	33	23	51	20	107	498
Grant MacEwan (Fall 10) ¹	560	97	43	79	32	246	1,057

Source: University of Alberta, NAIT and Grant MacEwan

Note:

¹ figures are for all campuses; the City Centre Campus accounts for approximately 70 percent of the total enrolment.

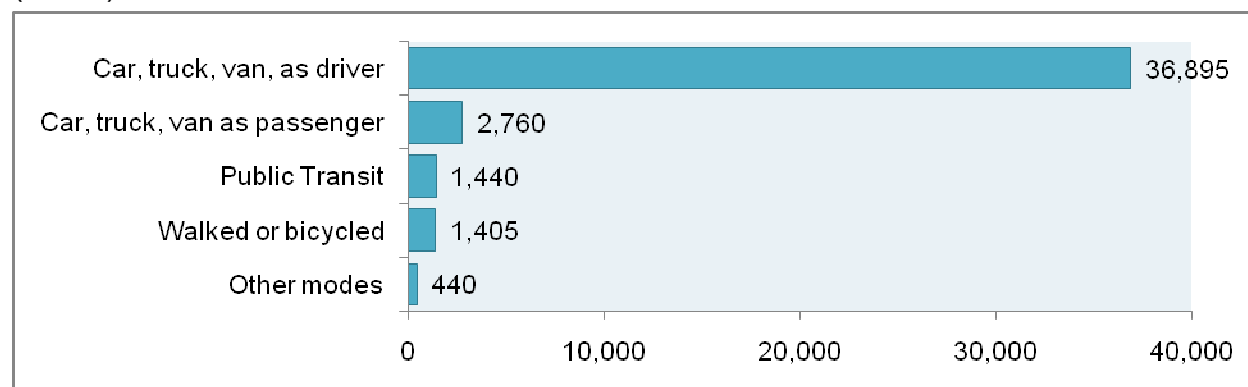
Mode of Transportation to Work

Based on the Community Profile data from the 2006 Census, nearly 86 percent of Strathcona County residents drive a car, truck or van to their place of employment. An additional six percent travel as passengers of a car, truck or van for an overall total of more than 92 percent of Strathcona County residents travelling by car, truck or van to work.

When compared to St. Albert and Edmonton, mode of transportation taken to work in Strathcona County is similar to St. Albert, where 90 percent of residents travel by car, truck or van, but differs slightly from Edmonton, where 79 percent travel by car, truck or van.

Public transit as a mode of transportation to work is lowest in Strathcona County at three percent, compared to five percent in St. Albert and 13 percent in Edmonton. Modes of transportation taken to work in Strathcona County are shown in Exhibit 22.

Exhibit 22 – Strathcona County Mode of Transportation Taken to Work (2006)



Source: 2006 Census

Strathcona County's Strategic Plan stresses the need for the appropriate investment in infrastructure and for the provision of cost-effective transit services. For that reason, it is important that SCT continue to develop a strategy that is geared specifically at promoting ridership.

Summary of Key Transit Markets

The key to increasing ridership is to focus on groups of customers with the greatest potential to grow. The ability to provide cost-effective services and collect high fare revenues are also factors. Transit is also expected to provide equitable service levels and make considerations for certain groups (for example, low income earners and persons with disabilities).

Based on changing demographics, land use patterns and travel patterns, conclusions about key markets for transit services have emerged:

- Downtown Edmonton remains the dominant destination for transit riders due to concentrated employment and school travel, and expensive parking. It also has the greatest potential for growth with a large number of adult commuters still using cars. Service can be provided cost-effectively with relative higher fare revenue.
- The University of Alberta remains a major secondary destination with high student ridership and some employment.
- Other destinations throughout the Edmonton region, including NAIT, are likely not conducive to cost-effective intermunicipal transit due to low travel demand and widely dispersed trip destinations. While direct service may not be viable, access can still be provided via connections with service from ETS.
- Demand for local transit service within Sherwood Park will likely continue to grow as the population ages and employment increases. Development policies may also encourage residents to use transit. However, due to low density development, segregated land use, high auto ownership and ubiquitous free parking, significant changes will be required to attract new riders to the local service. In addition, there will continue to be demand for local services to access intermunicipal services from segments of the population that cannot use cars.
- There will continue to be a moderate demand from the reverse commute market. This will be driven by employees who live in Edmonton and work in Sherwood Park.
- Travel demand within rural portions of the County appears to be too low and too widely dispersed to support cost-effective fixed-route transit. The CRB suggests that communities should have a minimum population of 15,000 to justify fixed-route transit services. While no parts of the rural area are expected to reach that threshold in the near future, alternative service delivery models such as demand-response services may be appropriate.
- Demand for specialized transit services will likely grow quickly in the coming years as the senior population increases.

2.4.3 Land Development Objectives

Regional and municipal land use plans are calling for more compact mixed-use urban development as a way to curb sprawl, reduce congestion, preserve the environment, protect the countryside, and reduce long-term infrastructure costs. Public transit plays a pivotal role to ensuring that our cities achieve the aforementioned objectives. Achieving those objectives will also promote the provision of effective and efficient public transit services.

Historically, residential development focused on the internal structure of the community and designed roadways, including cul-de-sacs, crescents, and curvilinear streets, to reduce travel speeds and discourage through-traffic. While the objective of creating quiet neighbourhoods is achieved, these transportation structures increase reliance on the automobile. Such patterns

are evident in Sherwood Park and create major transportation consequences. Exhibit 23 outlines these conditions and consequences.

Exhibit 23 – Historical Development Patterns and Consequences

Common Development Patterns	Transportation Consequences
Development of low-density and segregated land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lengthens distance between origins and destinations → Perpetuates reliance on the automobile → Forces transit agencies to operate longer distances to capture adequate transit market and to reach destinations
Lack of a permeable and direct street network (outside of the major arterial grid structure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lengthens distance between origins and destinations → Forces transit vehicles to make long deviations to capture riders and to ensure adequate service coverage
Lack of a permeable pedestrian and active transportation network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lengthens the access and egress distances to transit stops and other destinations → Forces transit vehicles to make route deviations to ensure passengers can access services conveniently → Worsens the competitiveness of alternative modes of transportation

The following are two local examples that exemplify the challenges for transit service provision associated with impermeable street and pedestrian networks.

As illustrated in Exhibit 24, suppose a Strathcona County resident wished to walk from the location indicated by the balloon to the commercial centre at Baseline Road and Clover Bar Road. Because of the lack of provisions made for walkways to access arterial roads, the hypothetical pedestrian must walk using the existing road network which is very circuitous and indirect. These development patterns create a disincentive to use alternative transport modes.

Exhibit 24 – Local Example of Impermeable Pedestrian Network

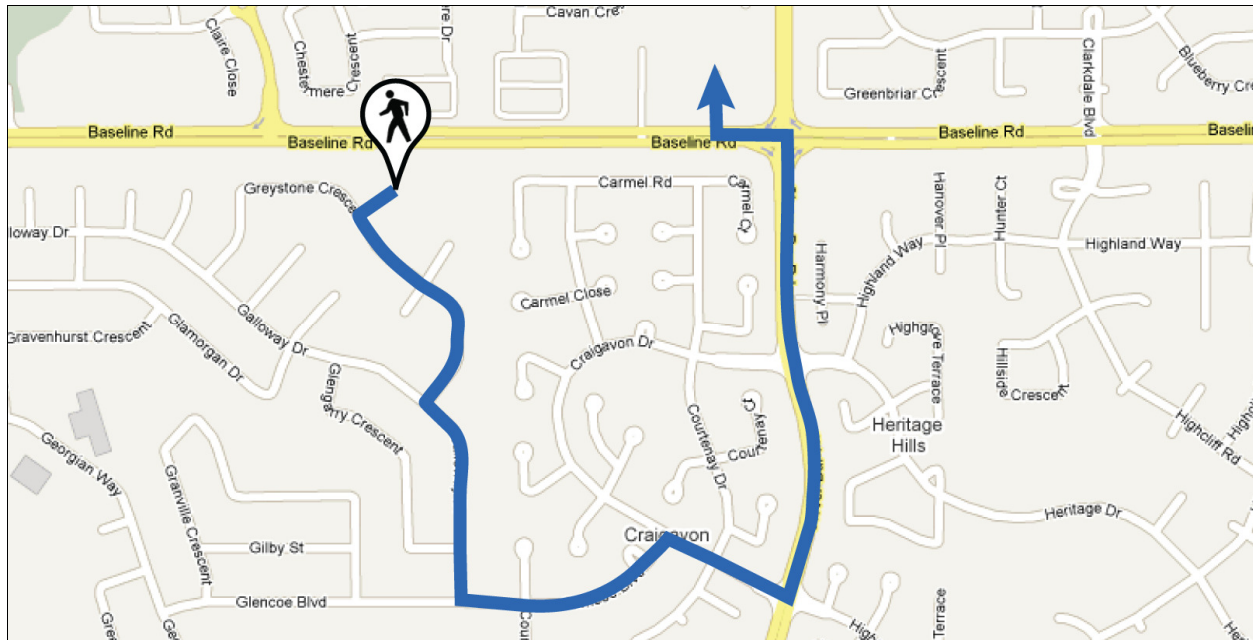
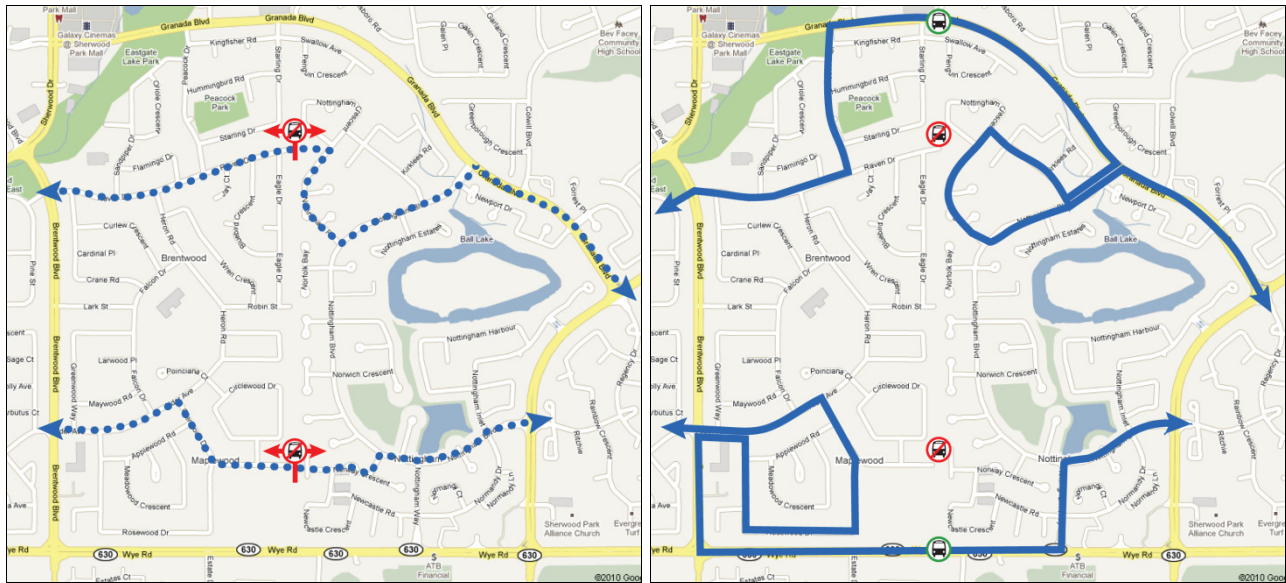


Exhibit 25 illustrates a local example of an impermeable street network and its impacts on transit service. To provide transit services that are competitive with other modes, the service must 1) connect to where people want to go, 2) connect to destinations reasonably quickly, 3) operate efficiently, and 4) be reliable and frequent. However, Sherwood Park's existing street network poses challenges to achieve these objectives because the hierarchical road system truncates road connections between different residential communities.

The left map in Exhibit 25 shows two conceptual east-west transit routes that promote route directness and operational efficiency. Due to the lack of east-west connections between Grenada Drive and Wye Road, transit vehicles must make diversions (see right map in Exhibit 25) to maintain the same service coverage. These diversions increase the in-vehicle travel time of passengers and the operational cost of providing the same degree of transit service coverage.

Exhibit 25 – Local Example of Impermeable Street Network



It may be difficult in the near-term to provide increased transportation connectivity in these established neighbourhoods, however it is encouraged that future development is planned to allow better transportation connections between communities.

Aside from providing increased transportation connectivity in new developments, Strathcona County has planned several new communities that will follow the principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)—namely the neighbourhoods in Centre in the Park, Apsen Trails/Emerald Hills, Cambrian Crossing and along parts of Wye Road.

TOD refers to the development of mixed-use higher-density urban centres that maximize access to transit and other non-motorized modes with the specific aim of encouraging increased transit ridership and supply. TOD's major design features include planning for a more permeable pedestrian and vehicle transportation network and promoting a wider mixture of land use types and densities. TOD also features levelling out the travel competitiveness between automobile and alternative modes by reducing the amount of land allocated to parking, restricting road capacity for automobiles, and giving priority to non-automobile travellers.

2.5 Public Input

2.5.1 Interviews and Public Open Houses

As part of the consultation process, GENIVAR together with SCT staff developed a comprehensive consultation plan to maximize the involvement of stakeholders and the general public. The consultation plan included a series of stakeholder interviews and Public Open Houses held in local communities.

Stakeholder interviews were held in April and May 2010 and included approximately 50 individual meetings with individuals and groups who have interests in public transportation in the area. Through these meetings we were able to establish effective two-way communication with key stakeholders to identify their needs, issues and priorities with regard to the future of transit services in Strathcona County.

In addition to the stakeholder interviews, a total of four Public Open Houses were held by GENIVAR and SCT staff throughout the County in May 2010 to provide the general public opportunities for input on their transportation issues and needs, vision and strategic direction of transit services. The Public Open Houses covered both urban and rural communities including Sherwood Park, Josephburg, Ardrossan and Fultonvale.

The first consultation focused on issues such as the transportation needs of the community, market groups and individuals, their view of the vision, mission and strategic goals of transit services and input on the future service concepts. Our consultation schedule is included as Appendix A. The following summarizes input from stakeholder interviews and Public Open Houses:

Strategic Direction

- Transit is very important to the community as it would improve the overall sustainability of the community, help relieve congestion, and provide environmental and social benefits to everyone in the community.
- Transit should be supported by land use planning such as TOD at the Park and Ride locations, higher density development in new areas and reduced parking supply for planned intensification areas.
- Land use, roads and transit planning should be coordinated and integrated to provide a balanced transportation network.
- Future transit development should be aggressive and include implementing corridor services and transit priority measures along main corridors to ensure the service is attractive to both existing and new riders.
- Though LRT would be a long-term plan, land should be protected for potential transit corridors and BRT should be considered before LRT is in place.
- Existing road infrastructure could be used for transit priority measures.
- Higher priority should be given to transit on future funding distribution.
- A good marketing strategy is required to educate people for using transit rather than driving.
- SCT should focus on core services with limited funding resources.
- SCT should be integrated with active transportation networks to improve pedestrian and bike access to transit centres and routes.

Future Needs

- More people will rely on transit in the future due to an aging population, increasing cost of transportation and road congestion.
- Priority markets should be commuters, students and seniors.
- More post-secondary students are expected to use transit due to increasing demand and reduced parking supply at the main post-secondary school campuses.
- Due to the high cost of living in Sherwood Park, there are increasing amounts of reverse commutes coming to Strathcona County from the city of Edmonton, in particular, from the Clareview and Mill Woods areas, which are also potential markets for SCT.
- Transit service to industrial lands may be for peak construction periods only.
- Major potential transit destinations in Sherwood Park include Millennium Place, Sherwood Park Mall, new community centre/County Hall, Strathmoor Industrial Park, commercial strips along Wye Road and Baseline Road and higher density residential areas south of Wye Road and north of Baseline.
- Potential transit destinations in Edmonton include City Centre, University of Alberta, Clareview, Mill Woods and Southgate.

Intermunicipal and Local Services

- Intermunicipal and local services are both important to the community, but the system will continue to be an intermunicipal focused and local feeder system.
- Services should be reliable, fast and direct.
- Intermunicipal service needs to be more frequent with more seating capacity. Better evening and weekend services are also expected on intermunicipal services.
- Additional destinations in Edmonton such as Clareview and Mill Woods should be considered in the future.
- Internal travel mainly relies on auto and the existing development patterns do not support high-level local services in the short-term. However, given the proposed intensification development, internal travel will become more important in the longer-term.
- The existing local service is designed to feed commuters, not for internal travel (for example, taking SCT to Millennium Place would require one or more transfers from most neighbourhoods).
- Local service needs to be designed to be friendlier for internal travel, especially for seniors. Local circulators should be considered to improve local travel by buses and reduce auto use.
- Extended regular service should be considered to replace the evening Dial-A-Bus service.

Rural Services

- Rural service is needed for those who do not have access to other transportation alternatives including youth and seniors, but the current population density does not warrant the service.
- Pilot projects may be implemented for limited services in the rural areas. If provided, it has to be cost-efficient and effective to ensure the affordability to both users and the County.
- Intermunicipal service may be considered to expand to rural communities.

- Charter service may be considered between Josephburg and Fort Saskatchewan.

SCAT

- Should allow for all trip purposes to make seniors and persons with disabilities more independent.
- Aging population will result in a significant increase in specialized service demand.
- Fixed-route services should be more accessible for riders with disabilities.
- Service connection should be considered to Fort Saskatchewan.
- Evening, weekend and holiday services should be considered for specialized transit.
- Service should be integrated with DATS in Edmonton.

Park and Ride

- The existing Park and Ride facilities need to be expanded due to their capacity issues and high demand.
- The overflow lot will be discontinued in the near future due to other land use planned by the province.
- Park and Ride locations may be considered in rural areas as well.
- Mixed responses on fees for Park and Ride use; some agree that it should be funded by the community not the riders, while some are willing to see user-paid Park and Ride. All agree that there will be substantial resistance based on community experience and that it would require additional investigation.
- Charging for premium seats or parking spots may be acceptable.

Funding and Fare Strategies

- Increasing funding for transit services is largely supported by the community, but a large tax increase is not the preferred option.
- Transit use should be more affordable than driving.
- Transit fares should be equitable and simple.
- R/C ratio should be improved to support transit operations.
- Fare discount should be considered for families, seniors and volunteers.

2.5.2 Visioning Process

To establish a framework for the development of strategic service options for both fixed-route and specialized transit services, a public workshop was held to obtain input into a vision for transit service in Strathcona County.

Participants in the workshop were drawn from stakeholder groups and the public, and solicited through various consultation events and public advertisements. Participants included riders of all services as well as non-riders, a variety of age groups, and both urban and rural residents.

Participants in the workshop worked to distil their future vision of transit service in Strathcona County with the following key elements:

- It is easier to take transit than the car.
- People have a positive attitude about transit.

- LRT serves the entire Capital Region.
- All residents have access to equitable levels of transit service, regardless of geography, economic situation or mobility.
- Transit services are frequent, reliable and affordable.
- Transit services are supported by a variety of access opportunities, including other transit modes, active transportation links and adequate park-and-ride facilities.
- Stops, stations and services are fully accessible, and supported by accessible neighbourhoods.
- Strathcona County accommodates an aging population through superior transit services.

These elements inform the development of specific goals and objectives in three key themes: social, environmental and economic.

2.5.3 Online Survey Results

As part of the consultation process, public surveys were developed by GENIVAR in an effort to provide as wide a range of public input to the Transit Master Plan development process. Surveys were advertised on SCT vehicles and on the Strathcona County website and were available online starting March 12, 2010. The following summarizes the public response to questions on the online survey starting March 12, 2010 and ending June 22, 2010. The survey did remain open for public response after June 22, 2010 but for the purposes of this summary, only surveys completed between March 12, 2010 and June 22, 2010 are considered. Over 700 surveys were received, which indicates a high level of interest from the community.

The following are general notes to consider regarding survey respondents:

- Gender breakdown of survey respondents was 65 percent female and 35 percent male, which does not reflect community demographics of approximately 50 percent female, 50 percent male.
- Geographic breakdown of respondents; 78 percent reside in Sherwood Park and only 17 percent in other areas of Strathcona County. This is not in line with the population balance of approximately 70 percent Sherwood Park and 30 percent rural (from 2009 Strathcona County Municipal Census Report).
- Also of note is that the degree of transit ridership among respondents may be skewed towards existing SCT riders and not representative of the relatively low existing modal split for public transit in Strathcona County. Approximately 68 percent of respondents stated that they are frequent transit riders and 56 percent cited transit as their usual form of transportation to their most frequent destination. However, this has been addressed by providing non-rider responses separately in the analysis.

The following sections provide summaries of selected questions and a summary of all survey results is included in Appendix B.

2.5.3.1 Transit Funding (Question 26, 31, 32, 33)

Survey response has indicated relatively strong overall support for funding SCT services. Based on the survey results, respondents seem to place a high value on transit in the community, as more than 70 percent have indicated that transit contributes to the well-being of the community, provides good value for tax dollars and that individuals benefit from the service, whether they use it or not.

Taxation

Respondents have also indicated strong support for offering discounted fares for low-income persons, even if taxes increase (approximately 75 percent) and making the transit system, including buses, stops and facilities, fully accessible (approximately 80 percent).

Some support was shown for increased public sector funding of transit, as nearly 49 percent support higher taxes to increase services (32 percent disagreed with higher taxes).

Non-riders and riders both indicated similar support for higher local taxes to increase service, but non-riders showed more support (approximately 11 percent higher) than non-riders for increasing fares to help fund transit.

Fares

Support for increasing taxes to fund transit is contrasted by general opposition to fare increases. Fewer than 28 percent of all respondents supported a fare (user fee) increase (more than 51 percent disagreed) and more than 73 percent feel that fares should be set to encourage the use of environmentally sustainable travel choices.

When asked directly, nearly 64 percent feel that fares should be lower to encourage ridership, while only approximately 14 percent felt fares should be higher, to reduce funding support from taxpayers.

Opinion was non-polarized regarding fare structure, as support for providing a higher level of service for passengers that pay more was split relatively equal between respondents who agree and those who disagree (approximately one third each). Nearly one third stated that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Nearly 40 percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that electronic fare cards (smart cards) would encourage them to ride transit more frequently. Some respondents may have answered in a neutral manner due to lack of information explaining smart card technologies within the survey.

Discussion

Consistent throughout the survey response and commentary relating to funding is that fares should not be increased. Some support was shown for increasing taxes to fund transit and a large majority of respondents indicate that SCT is a valued service in the community. Many comments indicate that the service is too expensive as it is, especially relative to transit systems in other municipalities, including Edmonton. Comments also expressed concern that fares are too high for the service currently provided, in particular for intermunicipal services, that they are not set at levels that encourage transit use and that service has not improved to match recent fare increases. Results of the survey suggest that fares should not be increased at this time, unless accompanied by obvious service improvements.

Rider and Non-rider Response

The following summarize differences between rider and non-rider response:

Non-riders were typically five to 10 percent higher than riders in their support for discounted fares for low-income persons and for making stops, buses and facilities fully accessible.

Non-riders did not indicate as much support for the relative value of public transit in the community. Questions relating to the relative value of transit in the community, such as transit providing good value for tax dollars, contributing to the economic well-being of the community and individuals benefitting from transit regardless whether or not they use it were all given

considerably less support from non-riders (approximately 10 to 20 percent less than riders for all questions).

Differences between rider and non-rider response in the survey could be attributed to individual bias of persons answering questions in a manner that benefits themselves the most, but non-riders higher rate of support for funding low-income and riders with disabilities, coupled with lower support for the community-wide benefits of transit may suggest that non-riders are more likely to view transit as a social service than as a viable alternative method of transportation.

2.5.3.2 SCAT (Question 23, 38, 39)

SCAT Rider-only Questions

The sample size of SCAT riders is relatively small, as only 25 responded to the survey. Responses to most SCAT “rider specific” questions were split fairly equally between agree, disagree and neither agree nor disagree, possibly due to the small sample size. “SCAT service should be expanded regardless of the cost” was the only SCAT rider only question receiving a majority of support (56 percent agree) while “When necessary, SCAT clients could travel by taxi rather than on a SCAT bus” was the only question receiving a majority of respondent disagreement (52 percent disagree).

SCAT General

The low response rate of SCAT riders is illustrated here, as only 25 of the 700 respondents who answered the general SCAT questions are SCAT riders.

A majority of survey respondents feel that SCAT should only be available to persons with a disability that prevents them from using regular transit (more than 70 percent agree), that SCAT should carry customers regardless of their reason for travel (64 percent agree), and that all SCT buses, stops and facilities should be fully accessible (more than 71 percent agree). These numbers are relatively the same for SCAT riders and SCAT non-riders, excepting that only 48 percent of SCAT riders feel that the service should only be available to persons with disabilities.

Discussion

A high level of support was found for SCAT to carry customers regardless of their reason for travel and for the SCT system to be made fully accessible. Respondents were divided on questions relating to making SCAT services equal or more similar to fixed-route services, for example “neither agree nor disagree” received approximately one third of the response when questions asked whether SCAT should serve the same destinations in Edmonton as regular transit, if SCAT should operate the same service hours and days as regular transit and whether it is acceptable or not for SCAT to charge higher fares than fixed-route transit.

Consistent throughout the survey response and commentary is that SCAT is an important component of SCT, and should be expanded to provide better transit services, similar to those offered to fixed-route transit customers and without destination restrictions. Also of note is that many respondents commented in the written response question that they are not familiar with the SCAT service.

2.5.3.3 Parking (Question 32, 34, 35, 36, 37)

Park and Ride Strategies

Throughout the survey, riders and non-riders of SCT both indicate strong support for the addition of free Park and Ride spaces in Strathcona County, and a majority feel that Park and Ride spaces and service should be expanded to rural areas for local and intermunicipal

connections. Intermunicipal connections specifically received a lot of support, with approximately 61 percent of existing riders and nearly 75 percent of non-riders indicating that Park and Ride intermunicipal service should be added in rural areas of Strathcona County. Both riders and non-riders feel that customers should be encouraged to use local buses, walk, bike or use passenger drop areas rather than Park and Ride lots, which suggests that an increase in local service would be supported.

Park and Ride Funding

Riders and non-riders were fairly split when asked if users should help pay for new parking spaces (Question 34). Among non-riders, more than 31 percent agreed that users should help pay, 41 percent disagreed and 27 percent were unsure. Among riders, approximately 27 percent agreed that users should help pay, nearly 49 percent disagreed and 25 percent were unsure. While the results certainly show opposition to asking users to pay for new parking spaces, the relatively large amount of undecided respondents suggest that public opinion could change.

Results show limited support from both riders and non-riders for charging a user fee when directly asked who should pay for the construction and on-going maintenance of Park and Ride lots (Question 35). Nearly 70 percent of riders feel that construction of parking lots should be paid either by municipal taxation or via a combination of user fees and municipal taxation (more than 65 percent of non-riders). Fewer than 10 percent of riders and non-riders feel that Park and Ride lots should be paid for and maintained primarily by monies recovered from fares. This is consistent with discussion in the Transit Funding section that identifies a preference for increasing taxes to increasing user fees in an effort to improve transit services.

Terminals

No general consensus emerged as to how to improve the existing terminals in Sherwood Park, and more than 28 percent of respondents answered “unsure”. This, and the fact that the only option to be selected by more than 31 percent of riders (respondents could select as many options as applied) was “improve ticket sales and customer service” suggests that most respondents (riders and non-riders) do not have serious concerns with the existing state of SCT terminals.

Discussion

Survey response and commentary suggest a general need for more Park and Ride facilities, a rural Park and Ride facility connecting to intermunicipal services, and that there is limited support to implement Park and Ride user fees to offset construction and maintenance of new lots.

2.5.3.4 Future Services (Question 24, 25, 42, 44)

Reasons for not using SCT

The following were the most frequently identified reasons for not using SCT by non-riders:

- Takes too long
- Service does not go where I want to go
- No direct route
- Car is more comfortable

Local Service

Of the 25 options presented, the following received the highest overall (rider and non-rider) response as “Important” or “Very Important” to respondents for the future of SCT local service:

- More frequent service during rush hours (more than 74 percent)
- More reliable service - late or early buses (nearly 69 percent)
- Less crowding on buses during rush hours (approximately 68 percent)
- Bus stops closer to home or where you need to go (approximately 64 percent)
- Helpfulness of drivers (nearly 62 percent)
- Longer hours of operation (61 percent)
- More destinations in Sherwood Park (nearly 61 percent)
- Better information on services (nearly 61 percent)

Of the 25 options presented, the following received the least frequent response as “Important” or “Very Important” to respondents for the future of SCT local service:

- More service on holidays (approximately 34 percent)
- New service to rural areas of Strathcona County (approximately 40 percent)
- Cleaner buses, stops or station (approximately 40 percent)

Intermunicipal Service

Of the 25 options presented, the following received the highest response as “Important” or “Very Important” to respondents for the future of SCT intermunicipal service:

- More frequent service during rush hour (80 percent)
- LRT to Edmonton (approximately 80 percent)
- More seats so fewer people have to stand on the bus (more than 77 percent)
- Longer hours of service (more than 71 percent)
- More reliable service – late or early buses (more than 68 percent)
- New intermunicipal routes to new destinations in Edmonton (more than 66 percent)
- Increased connectivity with the Edmonton Transit System or St. Albert Transit (more than 65 percent)

Of the 25 options presented, the following received the least frequent response as “Important” or “Very Important” to respondents for the future of SCT intermunicipal service:

- More service on holidays (approximately 33 percent)
- Service to rural areas of Strathcona County (nearly 41 percent)
- Cleaner buses, stops and stations (approximately 43 percent)
- Increased security (approximately 43 percent)
- Improved passenger facilities (nearly 44 percent)

Discussion

Riders and non-riders were, for the most part, fairly consistent in their wishes for improvements to SCT local services. Considering the most frequent reasons listed for not taking SCT and the survey “future vision” response it may be suggested that increasing service during peak periods and expanding service during off-peak times may address a number of existing issues.

Similar to local service, riders and non-riders were, for the most part, fairly consistent in their wishes for improvements to SCT intermunicipal services. Considering the most frequent reasons listed for not taking SCT and the survey “future vision” response it may be suggested that increasing service during peak periods and extending service hours may address a number of existing issues (including crowding on buses and lack of rush hour service) and improve service for the future.

A few differences exist between riders and non-riders, most notably that nearly 75 percent of riders would like to see “longer hours of service” to improve the future intermunicipal service, versus only approximately 64 percent of non-riders. An additional difference of note is that riders of both local and intermunicipal service ranked “more seats so fewer people have to stand” higher than non-riders of both (for example, approximately 82 percent of intermunicipal riders versus only 65 percent of intermunicipal non-riders), this is likely due to the fact that non-riders are not using the service and may not be familiar with the same issues as a rider would.

2.5.3.5 Sustainability Pillars

Survey respondents have provided relatively strong support for Strathcona County’s “triple bottom-line” approach of achieving balance in social, environmental and economic perspectives.

2.5.3.6 Social Sustainability

The Social Sustainability Framework is a tool that has been developed to help Strathcona County build social sustainability and to ensure a healthy, connective and supportive community for its residents. The guiding principles of the Framework are social inclusion, community connectedness, social responsibility and health and well-being. The Framework provides opportunities to assess the impacts of social change and municipal decisions on residents and to guide future planning and development in a manner that will ensure community and social issues are paramount to the process. The following survey questions relate to the Social Sustainability Framework.

Question 26 and 27

A large majority of respondents agreed somewhat or strongly with the statements “discounted fares should be available to low-income persons even if taxes increase” (approximately 75 percent), “all buses should be fully accessible for persons with mobility limitations” (approximately 80 percent), and “bus stops and transit facilities should be fully accessible for persons with mobility limitations” (83 percent).

Further to this, more than 84 percent of respondents indicate that passengers aged 65 or older should receive discounted fares. More than 61 percent identified that children between the ages of 0-5 should receive discounted fares as well.

Question 28

The following summarizes response when asked “Should transit make special consideration for any other groups in the community?”:

→ Students - 27 percent of respondents

- Persons with physical and cognitive disabilities - 26 percent of respondents
- Persons with low-income – 12 percent of respondents

Seniors, County employees, registered charities, cyclists, residents living outside Sherwood Park, non-drivers, and new immigrants were among the other responses provided in the survey. It should be noted that due to the open-ended nature of the question, several respondents noted multiple groups that they thought merited special consideration.

Question 29

The following summarizes response when asked “How can transit better meet the social needs of the community?”:

- Transit service related comments - 62 percent
 - Increased weekday local service – 14 percent
 - Increased weekday intermunicipal service – 20 percent
 - Increased or modified weekend service – 24 percent
 - Service to rural areas – four percent
- Customer service related comments – five percent
- Commendations – five percent

Discussion

Survey response indicates public support for social initiatives that SCT has already implemented, including subsidized travel for persons with physical and cognitive disabilities, students (through the U-Pass), seniors, and low-income individuals (through the “Everybody Rides” program). Given the nature of many of the responses, there does not seem to be much public awareness about these subsidies being available. There were also a sizable number of respondents (13 percent) who felt that no group merited special consideration.

Further to this, data revealed that there was a desire among respondents for “more service”, which can be primarily separated into four sub-categories: increased weekday local service, increased weekday intermunicipal service, increased weekend service (and the end of “Dial-A-Bus”) and the introduction of service into rural areas. The data also revealed that many respondents think that SCT is doing a good job in meeting social needs, and a desire by some that SCT be made more accessible and safe.

The overwhelming desire of respondents was for “more” – more buses, more routes, more destinations, and more communities served.

- There is a desire among respondents for more frequent and substantive service.
- There is a desire among respondents for more service to specific destinations. The three destinations that were most often cited were Millennium Place, Northlands / Commonwealth, and educational institutions (NAIT in particular, but also Grant MacEwan and the University of Alberta).
- “Dial-A-Bus” is not popular among most respondents. Increased weekend service – both intermunicipal and within Sherwood Park – was the most frequently made suggestion, and Dial-A-Bus was seen to be inconvenient, and a disincentive for transit use.

2.5.3.7 Environmental Sustainability

The Environmental Sustainability Framework is a tool that has been developed to ensure that growth in Strathcona County proceeds in an environmentally sustainable manner. The Framework provides opportunities to assess the impact of County decisions on the environment, to guide new policies, respond to environmental issues, and to assess the impact of changes in the environment on residents and municipal operations. Question 30 of the public survey related specifically to the Environmental Sustainability Framework.

For the most part, respondents were supportive of expanding and encouraging public transit use for environmental benefit. Results suggest a willingness to expand transit for environmental reasons but not at the expense of individual travel choice.

Approximately 84 percent of respondents agreed that public transit should be expanded to help the environment, and nearly 79 percent agreed that Strathcona County should actively encourage residents to make more environmentally sustainable transportation choices. However, 59 percent of respondents (with similar response numbers for riders and non-riders) did not agree that it should be made more difficult to drive a car to encourage transit use.

2.5.3.8 Economic Sustainability

At the time of the survey Strathcona County was developing an Economic Sustainability Framework to complement the existing Social and Environmental Frameworks. The completed Economic Sustainability Framework will guide decisions that will foster and sustain a healthy, innovative and sustainable economy that benefits residents, business and industry.

Question 31 of the public survey related specifically to the Economic Sustainability Framework.

Survey response has indicated relatively strong overall support for SCT as a contributor to the economic health of the community. This support is indicated as follows:

- More than 70 percent agree that public transit provides good value for tax dollar investment.
- More than 73 percent feel public transit contributes to the economic well being of Strathcona County.
- Nearly 78 percent agree that they benefit from having good public transit in the community, whether they use it or not.

As noted in the Transit Funding section, non-riders did not indicate as much support for the relative value of public transit in the community, and answered that they “agreed” with the preceding statements approximately 10 to 20 percent fewer than riders. These results may suggest that non-riders are more likely to view transit as a social service rather than a viable alternative method of transportation and contributing factor to the economic health of the community.

3. Recommendations

To implement this vision both Strathcona County Transit and customers will need to adopt new ways of delivering and using transit services. Strathcona County will need to invest in expanding transit services while strongly encouraging transit use through land-use policies and strategies to shift the demand for travel from automobiles to transit (demand management). These changes will be especially challenging in a specialized municipality that includes suburban, rural and industrial areas with distinct needs for transit. Together with the Integrated Transportation Master Plan, this Transit Master Plan will address the broader issues of transportation throughout the County and the recommended improvements to the transit system.

Based on our study and analysis, along with public, staff and stakeholder input, we have developed finalized recommendations for the Strathcona County Transit Master Plan. The TMP also includes a set of performance measures and a planning process, which are important tools for planning and designing the system, as well as on-going monitoring of how the system is progressing to achieve the vision, goals and objectives defined by this Plan and how well transit services are meeting the community's needs.

3.1 Public Review of Draft Recommendations

The public engagement review process began on September 26, 2011 and ran until October 28, 2011. The campaign included a range of opportunities for the public to meet face-to-face with SCT staff and the project study team to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the draft recommendations. There were multiple presentations for stakeholder groups and a public open house was held on October 17, 2011 at the Strathcona County Community Centre. The draft recommendations were summarized and on display at the open house, and attendees provided input regarding their view of the recommendations via discussion with the study team and through submission of comment forms. An online review survey was also developed, and respondents were given an opportunity to comment on the summarized draft recommendations. In total, 183 people provided online comments regarding one or more of the draft recommendations.

The Strathcona County Transit website was a vital tool for this phase of the study. The entire Draft TMP document, additional summary documents and the online survey were all made available on the website, which also contained videos with brief summaries of the recommendations.

A number of advertisements placed in the Sherwood Park News that promoted a different aspect of the TMP each week, driving people to the website to take the survey. There were also full-page advertisements that were used to promote the open house. Fliers were produced and distributed on the buses to riders, as well as placed on cars at both the Transit Centre and Strathcona Station. Six rear bus billboards were purchased to advertise the campaign on our buses throughout the community and in the city of Edmonton. Social media were also utilized to promote this campaign, through use of the County's Facebook page and Twitter accounts. Digital signage throughout the County's building was also used to remind constituents that the campaign was happening and their feedback was important.

Response from the public review period was discussed by SCT and the study team and has been incorporated into the final recommendations as required. Detailed discussion of the review consultation is provided in Appendix C.

3.2 Vision for Transit Services

Results of a visioning workshop were used by the project team and SCT management, in conjunction with the vision-related questions from the public survey, to develop the proposed vision. The proposed vision also aligns with the framework identified in the County's Strategic Plan.

This section defines the role of transit in the community and outlines the proposed values, vision, mission, goals and objectives of Strathcona County Transit.

3.2.1 Role of Transit in the Community

Based on the feedback from the community, transit serves three main roles in the community:

- **Social:** Transit plays a crucial role in helping Strathcona County to be an inclusive, accessible, connected and healthy community. Transit connects people to a variety of opportunities such as employment, shopping, recreation and medical destinations. It is especially important for residents and visitors that do not have access to a car such as youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons with low incomes. Without transit access, these groups would be at risk of becoming isolated.
- **Economic:** Transit plays an important role in the economic vitality of Strathcona County. Transit is a critical link for regional and local labour mobility and for connecting workers with employers. Because transit is largely funded by taxpayers, it is very important that services are planned and provided in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- **Environmental:** Transit plays an important role in helping to preserve the environment by attracting new riders and thereby reducing the number of cars on the road. Fewer cars help to reduce greenhouse gases and other polluting emissions.

3.2.2 Values

The expression of Strathcona County Transit's corporate and service culture includes a definition of the values that guide transit service delivery and SCT's role as an employer. The proposed values statements for SCT are:

- **Safety** – The safety of SCT staff and customers is the greatest priority for transit services.
- **Customer service** – Service to customers is an important value. SCT strives to provide unparalleled service to customers
- **Efficiency** – It is important to make the best possible use of tax and user funding. The service should be as cost-effective as possible.

3.2.3 Vision Statement

A vision statement is intended to be a compelling and inspiring image of a desired and possible future that a community seeks to achieve. It expresses goals that are worth striving for and appeals to ideals and values that are shared in the community. Through the visioning process, the community develops a shared vision and common values.

The proposed vision statement is:

As a recognized leader in the transit industry, Strathcona County Transit takes pride in providing excellent service to the community while enhancing quality of life and promoting sustainability.

3.2.4 Mission Statement

A mission statement should succinctly outline the scope of transit services. The proposed mission statement is:

Strathcona County Transit provides local, intermunicipal and specialized public transit services for the community that are Customer-focused, Accessible, Reliable, Efficient and Safe (CARES).

This simple statement clearly outlines the function of Strathcona County Transit.

3.2.5 Strategic Goals for Transit Services

This section details the strategic goals and objectives necessary to help achieve the vision for transit. The goals and objectives are derived from the mission and vision statements, public input, and the unique challenges and opportunities in Strathcona County. Recommendations will identify the best ways to achieve the objectives.

The proposed goals and objectives are summarized in Exhibit 26.

Exhibit 26 – Proposed Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objective
SOCIAL	
Goal 1: Maximize safety for all customers, staff and other road users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continually work to improve safety in all transit facilities and vehicles → Continue to implement recommendations from the 2009 Threat Assessment and Security Plan report
Goal 2: Ensure that transit services address the needs of youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons with low incomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ensure fares are equitable and affordable for youth, seniors, persons with disabilities and persons with low incomes → Ensure all transit facilities, vehicles and services are fully accessible → Provide improved specialized transit service for those who need it
Goal 3: Ensure a high degree of customer satisfaction with all aspects of transit services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Work to provide transit services that are reliable, convenient, accessible, fast, clean and comfortable with excellent customer service → Improve local transit service within the urban service area of Sherwood Park → Improve intermunicipal service between the Sherwood Park and Edmonton, and feeder bus service within Sherwood Park → Provide customer information in easy to use, convenient and understandable formats
ECONOMIC	
Goal 4: Help to ensure a strong local and regional economy by facilitating labour mobility and access to job sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Facilitate employee travel to and from Edmonton, and within the urban service area → Serve major employment destinations in the urban service area → Improve coverage and span of service to meet most employer needs
Goal 5: Balance customer requests, social and environmental goals with the realities of limited resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Balance user fees with tax support → Ensure service improvements are cost-effective

Goal	Objective
Goal 6: Accommodate growing demand by maximizing the efficiency use of services, infrastructure and vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increase connectivity with other modes of transportation such as walking, cycling and potentially intercity buses → Utilize demand management strategies, including fares and parking fees, to encourage the most economic means of travel → Avoid roadway investments that compete with transit → Consider transit priority measures to maximize efficient roadway investments → Improve efficiency through utilization of available technologies → Continuously review all aspects of management, planning and operations for opportunities to reduce costs
Goal 7: Reinforce the County's distinct identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop a consistent brand for transit services
ENVIRONMENTAL	
Goal 8: Provide an alternative to reliance on personal automobiles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Provide transit services to attract new users away from their cars → Provide transit services that enable a car-free lifestyle
Goal 9: Adopt transit-supportive measures throughout the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Continue to encourage transit-oriented urban development which is compact, mixed-use and walkable → Expand the use of demand management strategies to encourage the most environmentally sustainable means of travel
Goal 10: Maximize transit's environmental performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Maximize energy conservation → Minimize pollution from transit operations

3.3 Fixed-route Transit

3.3.1 Intermunicipal Service Recommendations

The following sections discuss the methodology, context, and conclusions that led to the recommendations for a service concept for intermunicipal transit services. It is recommended that intermunicipal transit routes operate direct connections to destinations within downtown Edmonton (for example, central business district, Government Centre, Grant MacEwan), with branches connecting to the University of Alberta. Intermunicipal services will continue to operate limited trips to NAIT and the service will be re-evaluated upon the completion of the North LRT connection in 2014.

Intermunicipal service connections to the ETS LRT network to Belvedere and Southgate stations are not recommended. However, SCT should closely monitor travel patterns between Strathcona County and the city of Edmonton and reconsider additional corridors, namely the northeast connection (Belvedere Station) and Southeast connection (Southgate Station) as the demand increases in the future.

3.3.1.1 Methodology

The recommendations derived from four methodological steps. This section outlines the approach used.

Step A: Review the Background Information

To understand the planning and transportation context for Strathcona County in the next ten years, the following information sources were used and analyzed to develop intermunicipal service concept alternatives:

- Stakeholder and public consultation feedback
- 2009 Municipal Census, Strathcona County
- Strathcona County Transit Ridership Data
- Strathcona County 2005/2006 Transportation Model Update
- 2005 Household Travel Survey, Summary Report on Weekday Travel by Residents of the Edmonton Region
- Southwest LRT Recommended Corridor, city of Edmonton
- The Way We Move: Edmonton Transportation Master Plan
- Capital Region Growth Plan
- Capital Regional Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan

Based on the analysis of the above information sources, the major conclusions that pertain to the development of service concept alternatives were identified.

Step B: Develop Service Concept Alternatives

From the background and context review, service concept alternatives were developed ranging in a wide spectrum of service possibilities that would satisfy the needs of Strathcona County residents and workers.

Step C: Evaluate the Alternatives

Evaluation criteria were developed in conjunction with SCT staff to assess the identified service concepts. Four main criteria were identified and are outlined in Exhibit 27.

Exhibit 27 – Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Criteria Description
Supports County and Regional policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Alignment with social, economic and environmental sustainability objectives → Consistency with Capital Region Growth Plans → Aligned with Vision for transit services
Promotes a growing ridership base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Promotes new riders to the network → Provides a competitive travel time with the automobile → Minimizes transfers for local and intermunicipal connections → Minimizes impacts on existing riders
Provides cost-effective transit services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Minimizes capital costs → Minimizes operating costs
Promotes ease of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ease of customer use and understanding → Ease of operation and management → Consistency with long-term planned LRT and terminal facility plans → Ease in minimizing the external forces which may challenge plans

Step D: Identify Conclusions and Recommendations

The service concept alternatives were first evaluated and rated based on their relative ability to meet the identified service goals. The service alternatives were then ranked based on how well they performed on the four main evaluation criteria.

3.3.1.2 Context

Relevant Background Information

Based on the analysis from the background review, GENIVAR identified three major conclusions for consideration in the development of the intermunicipal transit system concepts. The three conclusions are described in the sections below.

Connections to Downtown Remains a Priority

Based on existing census data, projected population data, travel patterns and the urban spatial structure of Strathcona County and the Capital Region, the primary users of SCT are and will continue to be Sherwood Park residents working or studying in Edmonton, with particular focus in the downtown area. Existing parking policies and traffic conditions occurring in downtown are strong impetuses for higher public transit demand to and from the area. Thus, SCT connections to downtown destinations (for example, CBD, Government Centre, Grant MacEwan) and the University of Alberta will continue to be the primary destinations of intermunicipal travellers.

Possible Secondary Intermunicipal Connections to Mill Woods and Clareview

The 2005 Household Travel Survey shows that 12 percent of weekday trips occur between southeast Edmonton and Sherwood Park. Additionally, with the planned construction of the Southeast LRT corridor from Mill Woods to downtown Edmonton, an SCT service connection to the future Mill Woods LRT station may provide a direct connection from Sherwood Park to Mill Woods and other areas in southern Edmonton through ETS services. Funding for the Southeast LRT has not been committed and the Southgate Station on the existing LRT corridor may be a potential interim terminus for this connection.

Connection between Sherwood Park and northeast Edmonton is also a possible service connection. Belvedere Station, for instance, provides the closest and fastest connection between Sherwood Park and the Edmonton LRT network. According to the 2005 Household Travel Survey, transit trips between Sherwood Park and the northeast Edmonton sector comprise approximately seven percent of all trips, which makes it a potential market for SCT to serve.

Feedback from stakeholder and public consultations revealed that the high cost of living in Sherwood Park may have prompted demand for Edmonton residents to reverse commute, specifically from the Clareview and Mill Woods communities.

While it was noted that a considerable amount of all trips are made between Sherwood Park and northeast Edmonton and between Sherwood Park and southeast Edmonton, the potential market for transit is limited because of the dispersed land uses and expansive parking capacities that exist in these suburban areas.

Expansion of Strathcona Station

Strathcona County recently received funding province's Green Transit Incentives Program (GreenTRIP) to redevelop and expand the existing Strathcona Station to include a total of 1,200 parking spaces, 20 off-street bus bays, an enclosed passenger platform, and improved pedestrian and bicycle access. With this expansion, Strathcona Station will become a focal point for intermunicipal services, while the Sherwood Park Transit Centre will remain operational as a satellite Park and Ride facility.

Intermunicipal Service Alternatives

From the review of the existing plans and documents as well as the assessment of existing and future transit needs, four intermunicipal service alternatives were identified. Detailed route network evaluations are included as Appendix D and the following section summarizes the four options.

Option 1 – Edmonton Connection to Downtown and the University of Alberta Only

Similar to the services to Edmonton currently operated by SCT, Option 1 calls for connections from Sherwood Park to the Edmonton central core (for example, CBD, Government Centre and Grant MacEwan). Operating service to the Downtown core also allows for convenient connections to other destinations served by the ETS transit network. In this option, trips will continue to be made to the University of Alberta. Some trips will also be extended to NAIT until the completion of the North LRT planned for 2014, at which time the service will be re-evaluated. Refer to Exhibit 28 for a map of this concept.

The benefit and drawback of this option is that it only provides intermunicipal services to downtown Edmonton and the University of Alberta. The benefit is that these destinations the highest percentage of riders in the SCT system. Because the downtown serves as a major transit hub in Edmonton, it still allows for convenient connections to other areas outside of

downtown. At the same time, this option does not provide opportunities to directly connect to other parts of Edmonton where a potential for a modal shift to transit may exist.

Option 2 – Intermunicipal Services to Downtown and Southgate Station

Option 2 calls for connections from Sherwood Park to downtown Edmonton and to Southgate Station. Services operating to downtown will continue to make special trips to the highly travelled destinations identified in Option 1. This option also includes a branch service to Southgate Station in Edmonton and will operate primarily along Anthony Henday Drive and Whitemud Drive. Refer to Exhibit 29 for a map of this concept.

The benefit of this option is that it provides options for fast connections between Sherwood Park, Southgate Station, and other communities in southern Edmonton. Operating an additional route to Edmonton would either require greater operational costs or a reduced level of service between downtown and Sherwood Park. The latter option may affect ridership on the system's most travelled routes.

While a large number of Sherwood Park residents travel to and from areas outside of Edmonton's central core, the potential transit market in these areas is limited. The Southgate Station area is not a major destination within Edmonton, and riders who wish to reach destinations within southern Edmonton will still need to transfer to the ETS network.

Option 3 – Intermunicipal Services to Downtown and Belvedere Station

Option 3 calls for connections between Sherwood Park to downtown Edmonton, and between Sherwood Park and Belvedere Station. Services operating to downtown will continue to make special trips to the highly travelled destinations identified in Option 1. This option also includes a branch service travelling between Sherwood Park and Belvedere Station in Edmonton and will operate primarily along Highway 16/Yellowhead Highway. Refer to Exhibit 30 for a map of this concept.

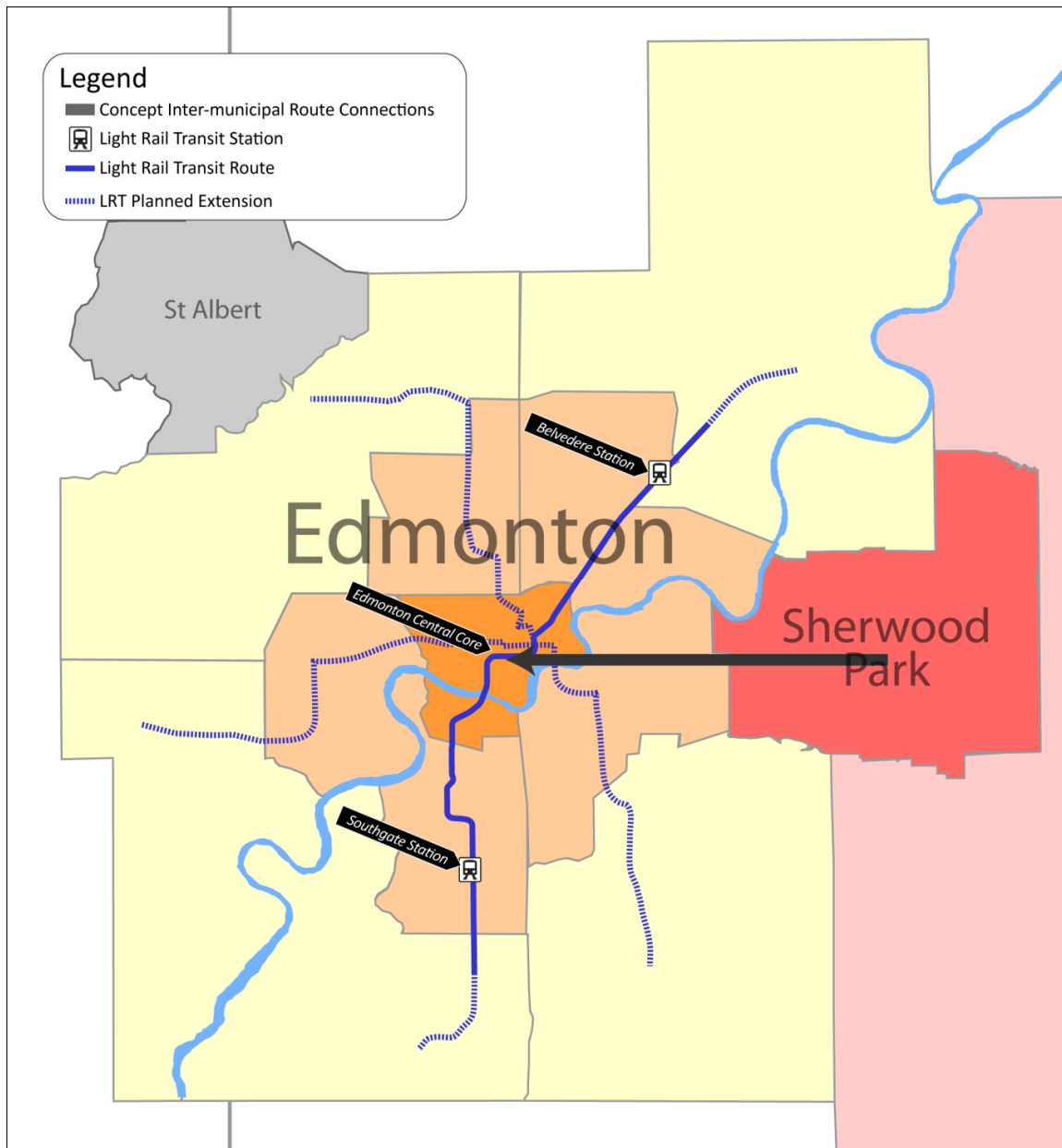
The benefit of this option is that it provides options for fast connections between Sherwood Park, Belvedere Station, and other communities in northeast Edmonton. Similar to Option 2, operating an additional route to Edmonton would either require greater operational costs or a reduction in the level of service between downtown and Sherwood Park. The latter option will adversely affect ridership on SCT's most heavily travelled routes. Option 2 also noted the limited transit market potential for trips made between Sherwood Park and the suburban areas of Edmonton. The Belvedere Station area is not a major destination within Edmonton and riders will continue to rely on the ETS system to reach their desired destination.

Option 4 – Intermunicipal Connection to Downtown, Southgate, and Belvedere Station

Option 4 calls for the operation of all three major locations within Edmonton, including downtown, Southgate Station and Belvedere Station. Services operating to downtown will continue to make special trips to the highly travelled destinations identified in Option 1. Refer to Exhibit 31 for a map of this concept.

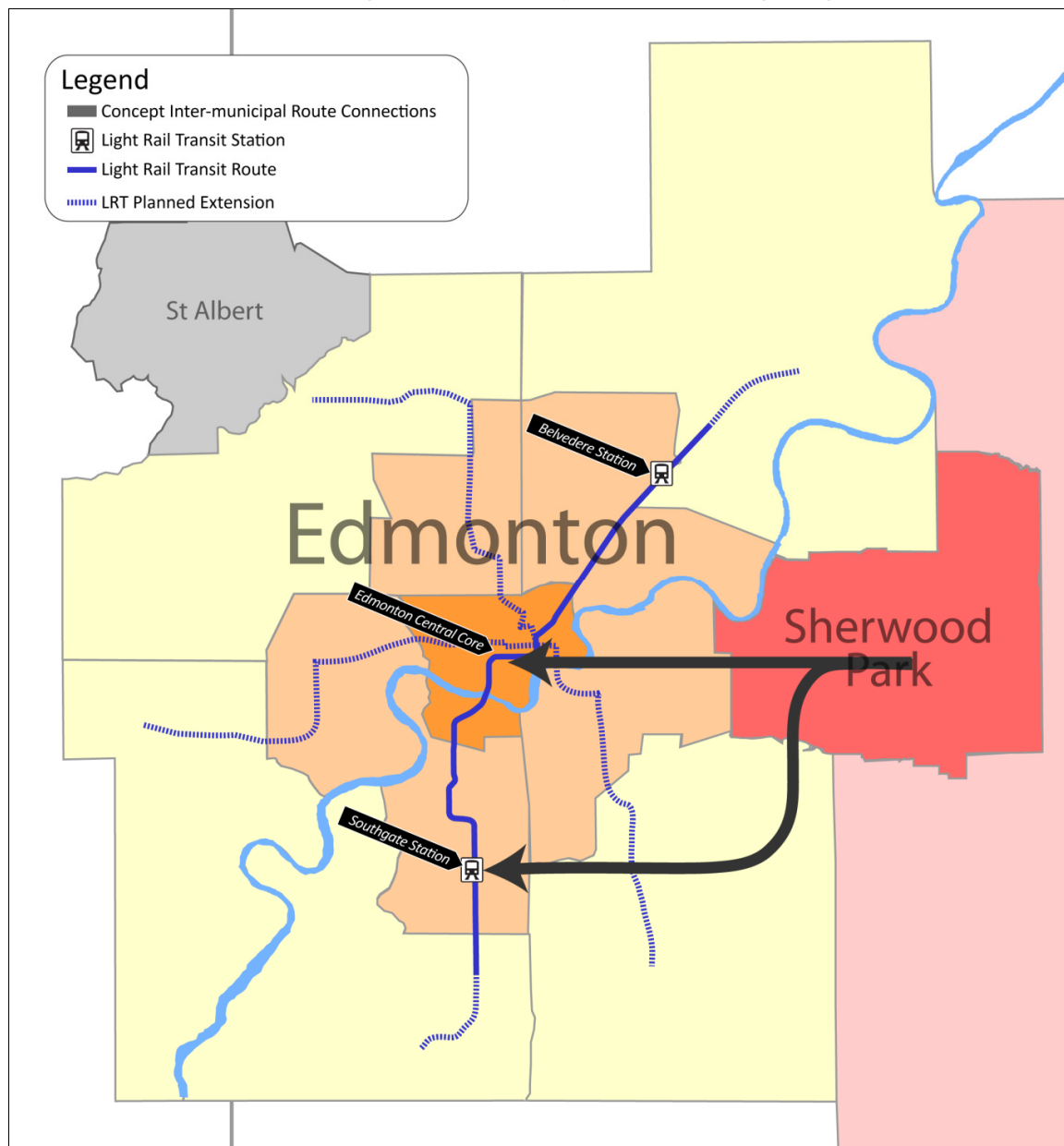
The benefit of this option is that it provides options for fast connections to and from Sherwood Park and areas in northeast and southern Edmonton. The consequence of this option is that it requires even greater operating expenses than Options 2 and 3, or a further reallocation of resources away from the downtown Edmonton to Sherwood Park service. Additionally, there is a limited potential market for transit connections between Sherwood Park and suburban Edmonton, due to its dispersed, low-density urban form. Passengers on the potential routes to Southgate and Belvedere stations will still need to connect to ETS services to reach their final destination because the two station areas are not major regional destinations.

Exhibit 28 – Intermunicipal Transit System Concept Option 1



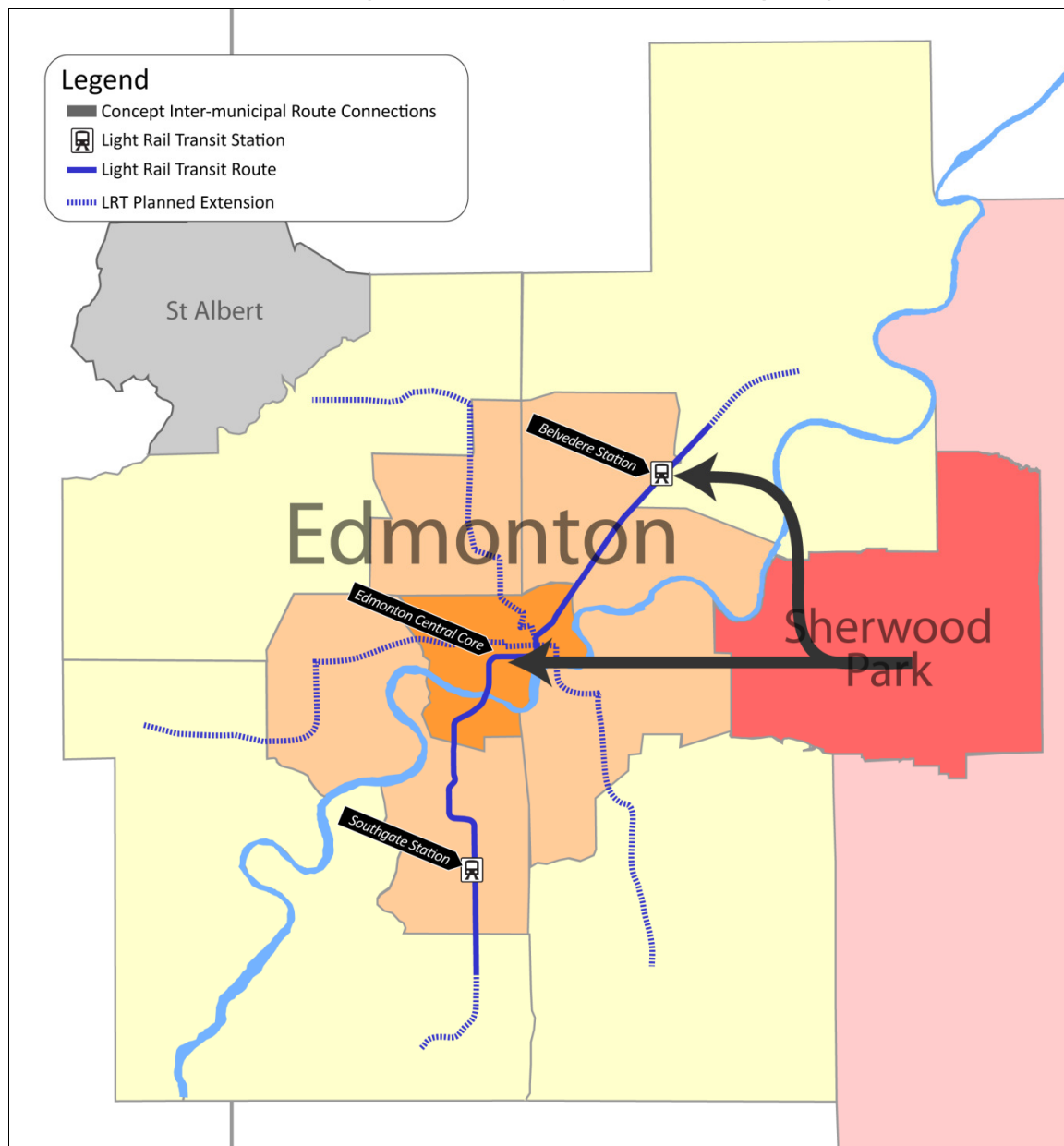
Note: The intermunicipal route connections shown on this map are intended to show on a conceptual level where intermunicipal services would connect in Edmonton and do not illustrate exact routing alignments. The exact terminus location for intermunicipal services within Sherwood Park is not defined in this concept.

Exhibit 29 – Intermunicipal Transit System Concept Option 2



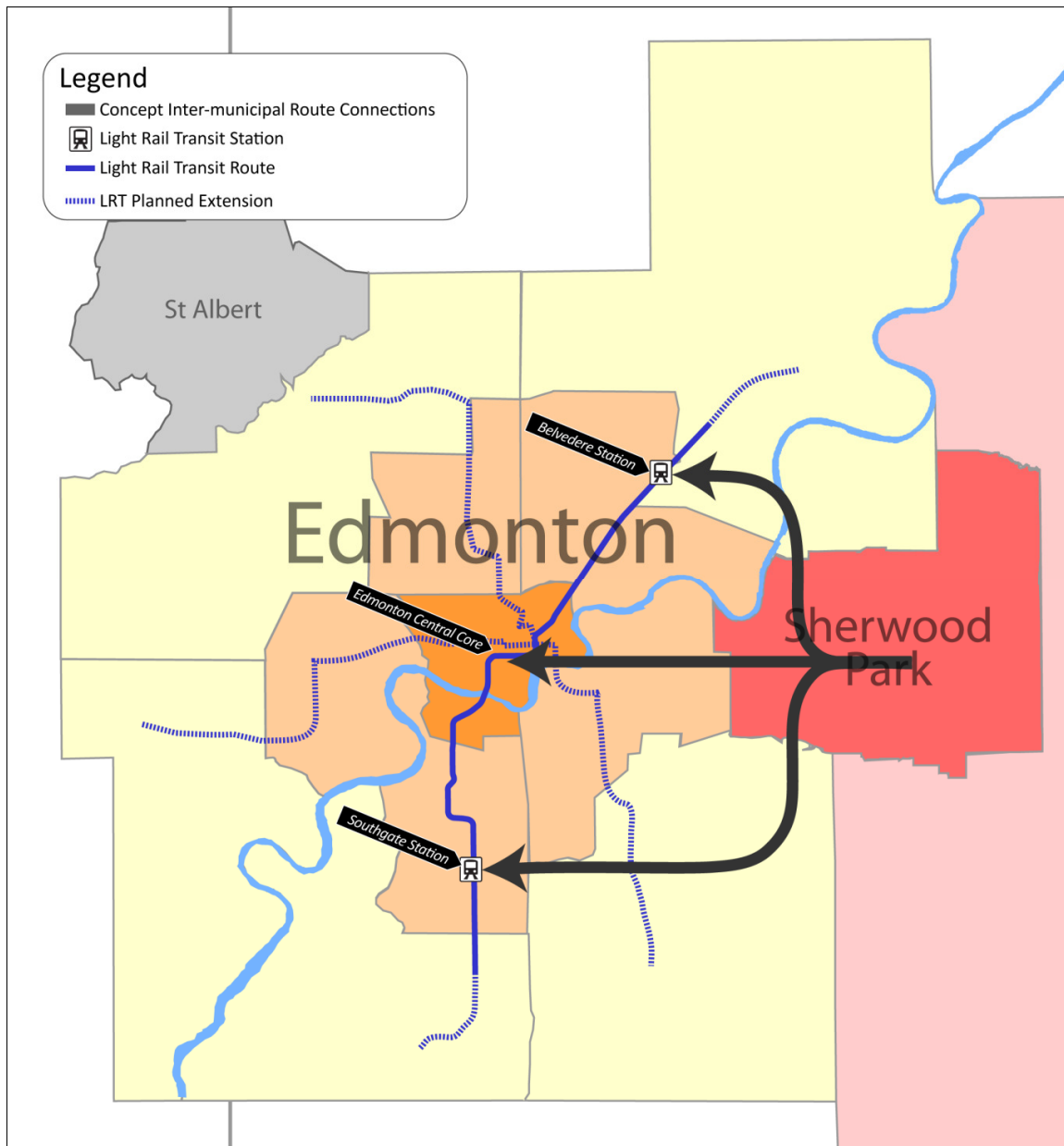
Note: The intermunicipal route connections shown on this map are intended to show on a conceptual level where intermunicipal services would connect in Edmonton and do not illustrate exact routing alignments. The exact terminus location for intermunicipal services within Sherwood Park is not defined in this concept.

Exhibit 30 – Intermunicipal Transit System Concept Option 3



Note: The intermunicipal route connections shown on this map are intended to show on a conceptual level where intermunicipal services would connect in Edmonton and do not illustrate exact routing alignments. The exact terminus location for intermunicipal services within Sherwood Park is not defined in this concept.

Exhibit 31 – Intermunicipal Transit System Concept Option 4



















Note: The intermunicipal route connections shown on this map are intended to show on a conceptual level where intermunicipal services would connect in Edmonton and do not illustrate exact routing alignments. The exact terminus location for intermunicipal services within Sherwood Park is not defined in this concept.

3.3.1.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Exhibit 32 summarizes the evaluation for the intermunicipal service concepts. Overall, Option 1 fared the highest in the evaluation particularly due to its greater ability to provide efficient transit services and promote ease of implementation. Options 2 and 3 follow Option 1, demonstrating moderate but consistent outcomes in promoting ridership, ensuring cost-effective services, and promoting ease of implementation. While Option 4 promotes a greater degree of ridership compared to the other options, the proposed connections to north, south and downtown Edmonton would come at a greater relative cost.

Exhibit 32 – Evaluation Summary – Intermunicipal Service Concepts

	Option 1 Downtown connections only	Option 2 Downtown and Southgate connections	Option 3 Downtown and Belvedere connections	Option 4 Downtown, Belvedere, and Southgate connections
Supports County and Regional policies				
Promotes a growing ridership base				
Provides cost-effective transit services				
Promotes ease of implementation				
Overall rank	1	2 (tie)	2 (tie)	4

Supports County and Regional Policies

Option 1 best supports County and Regional policies relative to the other options because it consistently supported economic, social, and environmental objectives.

The option best aligned with economic objectives is Option 1 because it provides efficient transit services in areas observed to generate the greatest demand and supports the local economy by providing frequent and direct connections to downtown Edmonton.

For meeting social objectives, Option 4 presents the best alternative for regional mobility by making connections to downtown and two suburban LRT hubs in north and south Edmonton.

All four options are uniformly rated in terms of meeting environmental objectives. Option 1 provides a more efficient use of transit resources by providing services only to areas with a large ridership base. While Options 2, 3, and 4 have the ability to further reduce automobile use compared to Option 1, the additional transit resources required to facilitate the suburban connections are offset by the lower relative shift from automobiles to transit.

Finally, all four options are evenly aligned with the vision for transit services and policies of the Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan. Each alternative promotes a culture of use for intermunicipal transit services as it continues to solidify a strong ridership base for future LRT services.

Promotes a Growing Ridership Base

Option 4 best promotes a growing ridership base, being identified as most favourable in promoting new riders and being most competitive with the automobile. Options 2, 3 and 4 are rated more favourable than Option 1 for minimizing transfer for local and intermunicipal connections because these options provide more direct connections to destinations outside of downtown. Finally, all concept alternatives are rated uniformly for minimizing impacts on existing riders.

Provides Cost-Effective Transit Services

Option 1 provides the most cost-effective transit services because the other options will require additional capital and operating costs to accommodate the additional suburban connections. For instance, Option 2, 3, and 4 require additional buses and operating hours to serve the suburban Edmonton connections and stop upgrades at the suburban transit centres to accommodate SCT buses.

Promotes Ease of Implementation

Option 1 is the easiest option to implement compared to the other options. This option is easier to operate and manage because it focuses intermunicipal services within the downtown area. Services proposed in Options 2, 3, and 4 are not as easy for customers to understand as Option 1 because they call for additional intermunicipal route branches, which could create possible confusion. Additionally, as Options 2, 3, and 4 include connections to ETS transit centres, SCT will need to make operational arrangements with ETS to use their facilities. Finally, Option 1 focuses on providing strong transit connections between Sherwood Park and downtown Edmonton, which is consistent with long-term LRT expansion plans as identified in the Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan.

Recommendation

Option 1 is the recommended alternative for intermunicipal services. Under this alternative, routes will operate direct connections to destinations within downtown Edmonton, with some branches connecting to the University of Alberta. Intermunicipal services will continue to operate limited trips to NAIT, until the completion of the North LRT connection in 2014, at which time the service will be re-evaluated.

However, as land use patterns and transit network including additional LRT corridors further develop in the Capital Region, travel patterns and travel behaviours may change in the future. It is recommended that SCT should closely monitor travel patterns between Strathcona County and Edmonton and consider additional corridors, particularly the northeast connection (Belvedere Station) and southeast connection (Southgate Station) as the demand increases in the future.

To facilitate more convenient connections within Sherwood Park, some intermunicipal trips could be interlined to operate sections of the local higher-frequency corridor. The following outlines some examples of how intermunicipal services could operate:

- Sherwood Park Transit Centre ↔ Downtown Edmonton via the higher frequency corridor making connections at Centre in the Park and Strathcona Station.
- Transfer facility at Clover Bar Road / Lakeland Drive (called Emerald Hills) ↔ University of Alberta via the higher-frequency corridor with connections at Strathcona Station, Centre in the Park, and Sherwood Park Transit Centre.

Given the high demand during peak periods on the intermunicipal service, it is recommended to consider high-capacity buses on busy routes. The high-capacity buses would have approximately double the seating capacity of a standard 40-foot bus, which would dramatically increase the overall capacity, improve passenger comfort, promote labour productivity, and boost greater efficiency. The standard buses released from the intermunicipal services can be used on other services.

Higher Order Transit and Light Rail

LRT is identified as a long-term opportunity in the Capital Region Growth Plan. The capital investment for LRT projects are relatively high comparing to bus technologies. North American light rail construction cost varies widely ranging from \$10 million per kilometre to more than \$100 million per kilometre, largely depending on the amount of tunnelling and structures required. Edmonton's new North LRT to NAIT is a 3.3 kilometre extension with a cost estimated at more than \$700 million, which includes building removal, tunnelling and land acquisition. The cost for Sherwood Park LRT extension could range from \$300 million to \$1 billion.

Given current development patterns, population density along the corridor, future development plans, and population and employment projections, potential ridership increases do not appear to warrant the costs of LRT during the timeframe of this plan. However, as the growth and land use patterns change in the future, additional capacity and improved level of service may be required in the future to meet changing travel demand and patterns.

A cost benefit analysis study is recommended to assess various future alternatives for higher order transit in the County. The study would assess the feasibility and identify advantages and disadvantages of different transit technologies, including LRT, to bring higher order transit in the County.

3.3.2 Local and Feeder Service Recommendations

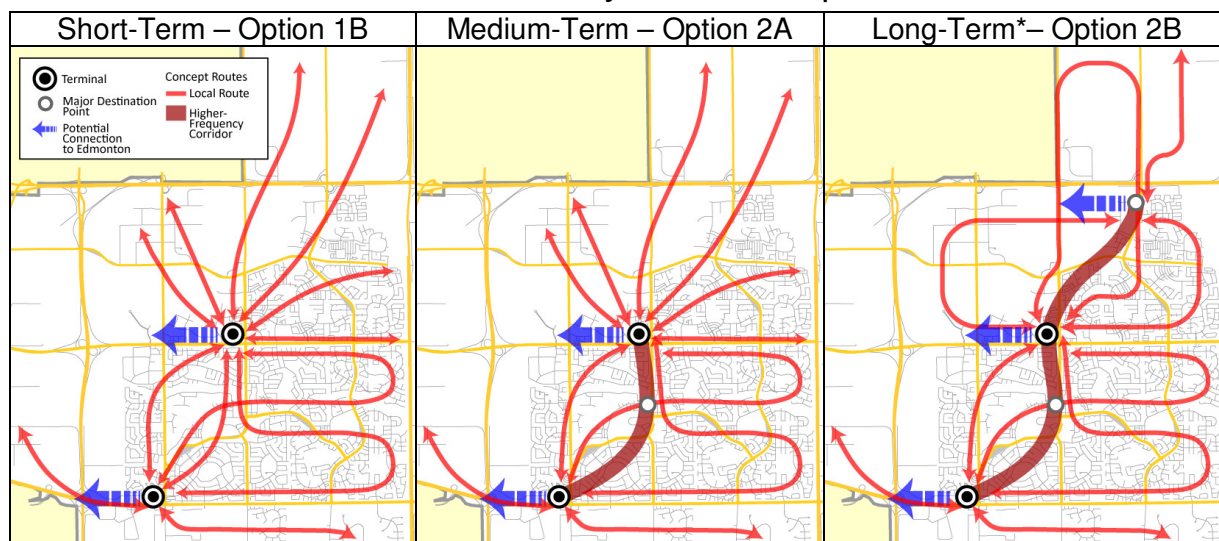
This section summarizes the methodology, context, conclusions and recommendations related to system concept options for local and feeder services within Sherwood Park. From the analysis, it is recommended local transit routes operate based on Option 1B, Option 2A, and Option 2B in the short, medium, and long-term respectively. Refer to Exhibit 33 for a map of the recommended local system concepts.

In the short-term, it is recommended that SCT apply the concept identified in Option 1B, which includes a modest change to the existing service route structure with increased convergence of routes to Strathcona Station.

The medium-term will follow the concept identified in Option 2A and calls for the operation of a higher-frequency corridor connecting Strathcona Station, Centre in the Park, and Sherwood Park Transit Centre. Other local services will operate similar to route structure identified for the short-term.

Option 2B is recommended for the long-term. When the mixed-use community at Clover Bar Road / Lakeland Drive (called Emerald Hills) is developed, the higher-frequency corridor will be extended to connect to that development. Local routes north of Baseline Road will be restructured to connect to the higher-frequency corridor.

Exhibit 33 – Recommended Local System Concepts



* The long-term concept will occur when the Emerald Hills mixed use community is developed

3.3.2.1 Methodology

Similar to intermunicipal service analysis, the recommendations were derived from the following four methodological steps:

- Step A: Review the Background Information (including local development plans)
- Step B: Develop Service Concept Alternatives
- Step C: Evaluate the Alternatives
- Step D: Identify Conclusions and Recommendations

3.3.2.2 Context

Relevant Background Information

Based on analysis from the background review, five major considerations were identified in the development of local system concepts. The five considerations are described in the following sections.

Strathcona Station Expansion

As discussed previously in this document, Strathcona Station will be redeveloped and expanded to include additional parking spaces and off-street bus bays, as well as an enclosed passenger platform. With this expansion, Strathcona Station will become a focal point for intermunicipal and local services.

Balance Feeder Services with Growing Local Travel Needs

The local routes must continue to connect passengers to intermunicipal routes at both Sherwood Park Transit Centre and the increased services expected at Strathcona Station. At the same time, these local services must also respond to the growing need for local travel within Sherwood Park.

Balance Park and Ride Facilities and Feeder Services

The background review and consultation revealed the need for the expansion of Park and Ride facilities and improvements in local services. Currently, a majority of intermunicipal transit users capitalize on supplied parking at Sherwood Park Transit Centre and Strathcona Station to connect to services to Edmonton. Park and Ride facilities should continue to play a component in satisfying the intermunicipal transit market.

Providing convenient local feeder services will alleviate the demand and the costs associated with building and maintaining parking facilities. Additionally, it will also play a role in enhancing local ridership.

Thus, there is a need to strike a balance between accommodating increasing parking needs for transit users to Edmonton (given it is SCT's largest ridership market) and enhancing local service to allow passengers to eliminate the need to drive to Sherwood Park's transit centres.

Opportunity for Improved Performance for Local Services

Based on supplied passenger counts, local services (excluding evening Dial-A-Bus service) generated approximately 16.2 passengers per vehicle hour, which is considered fairly low given the maturity of the system and when compared to the significantly higher ridership performance on services to Edmonton.

The passenger counts reveal that local routes that operate directly to transit stations and to other major local destinations perform better than those that do not. For example, Route 427 (Connector) and Route 425 (Glen Allan) are the highest-performing routes in the local network, and GENIVAR attributes it to the fewer route deviations it operates between the two terminals, as well as the convenient connections to terminals and major local destinations. Conversely, two of the poorest-performing routes, Route 422 (Clarkdale Meadows) and Route 423 (Sherwood Park East) are long and circuitous, with few major destinations along either route.

More Intensified Growth in Northeast Sherwood Park

Based on the projections from the Strathcona County 2005/2006 Transportation Model Update and the findings of the background study, employment and population growth is expected to occur in northeast Sherwood Park. The intention of these new developments, as evident in the Aspen Trails/Emerald Hills and Cambrian Crossing Area Structure Plans, is to create a denser more pedestrian-focused community. Thus, a focus on increased transit service delivery and a more strict adoption of sustainable development principles in development planning is required for that part of the urban service area.

Local Service Alternatives

Option 1A – Hub and Spoke, 1-Node

Option 1A calls the convergence of all local services at Strathcona Station, creating a traditional "hub and spoke" route network. Refer to Exhibit 34 for a map of this concept.

Local services would provide transit feeders from residential neighbourhoods to the expanded terminal facility at Strathcona Station. The Sherwood Park Transit Centre will continue to operate as a satellite Park and Ride facility, as intermunicipal services will continue to connect at both existing transit centres (with Strathcona Station used at a much greater capacity). In this option, intermunicipal services would connect transferring riders from the local network and Park and Ride at Strathcona Station and shuttle them to destinations in Edmonton.

This hub and spoke concept provides a more convenient system for commuting transit riders to Edmonton relative to Option 1B because it allows for easy operational coordination for

passenger transfers between intermunicipal and local routes almost exclusively at Strathcona Station. Focusing intermunicipal services at Strathcona Station will also ease customer understanding because all passengers can anticipate to connect to coordinated local services or to be picked up at the terminal location.

Option 1A provides some improvements over the existing dual-hub route network. However, this system concept provides fewer convenient connections for passengers travelling within Sherwood Park relative to Option 1B.

Option 1B – Hub and Spoke, 2-Node

Option 1B calls for the operation of a hub and spoke concept for routes north of Baseline Road and the operation of a modified network to the routes south of Baseline Road connecting residential communities to both terminals and major local destinations. Intermunicipal routes would operate at either transit terminals and connect to major destinations in Edmonton. Refer to Exhibit 35 for a map of this concept.

This concept will provide better service to residents south of Baseline Road, relative to Option 1A, because they will have better local connections to major destinations near Centre in the Park and Sherwood Park Mall, and maintain adequate local service coverage to residential communities. The passengers north of Baseline Road will have service comparable to Option 1A.

This system puts more emphasis on accommodating the needs of both local and intermunicipal transit riders, relative to Option 1A, without requiring a major increase in operating resources. However, the system is still geared more towards travellers to Edmonton than serving local travel needs. While the modified local routes south of Baseline Road provide more convenient connections to local destinations, routes north of Baseline Road remain focused on Strathcona Station—making it less convenient for local passengers to travel to and from destinations north of Baseline Road.

Option 2A – Higher-Frequency Local Corridor

Option 2A calls for the continued operation of two existing transit terminals at the Sherwood Park Transit Centre and Strathcona Station. The highlight feature in this option is the introduction of a higher-order transit corridor connecting Sherwood Park Transit Centre, Sherwood Park Mall, and Strathcona Station. This corridor could be operated either through:

1. The introduction of a standalone local route
 - A high-frequency service would operate and connect the three identified destinations
2. The route extension of intermunicipal services en route to Edmonton
 - Intermunicipal services terminating at Strathcona Station would be extended to serve Sherwood Park Mall and Sherwood Park Transit Centre
 - Intermunicipal services terminating at Sherwood Park Transit Centre would be extended to service Sherwood Park Mall and Strathcona Station

In this option, local services would continue to operate based on a modified hub and spoke model similar to Option 1B. Refer to Exhibit 36 for a map of this concept.

The introduction of the higher-frequency corridor brings increased benefits to both intermunicipal and local riders. The benefit to intermunicipal riders is that they have the ability to take services from either station, as they can rely on the higher-frequency transit service to connect between stations.

The proposed higher-frequency corridor service is a good first step in providing a stronger network of services for local travel. The local feeder services provide adequate coverage to Sherwood Park's residential communities, while the trunk service provides direct and frequent services to major local destinations.

Conversely, operating such a higher-frequency transit corridor would require additional resources.

Option 2B – Extended Higher-Frequency Local Corridor

Option 2B calls for the extension of the higher-order transit corridor from Strathcona Station to the planned new development northwest of Clover Bar Road and Lakeland Drive, including the Emerald Hills development. Other local routes north of Baseline Road would also be restructured to direct riders to main destinations served by the higher-order transit corridor. Refer to Exhibit 37 for a map of this concept.

The corridor could be operated as a standalone route or as an extension of intermunicipal services. The proposed intermunicipal routes could operate along the higher-order corridor either in whole or in part before shuttling passengers to destinations in Edmonton. While no major terminal facilities and Park and Ride facilities are planned in the Emerald Hills development, intermunicipal services could make connections at this major destination point before making connections in downtown Edmonton.

The general advantages and disadvantages of this option are similar to those discussed in Option 2A. However, the extension of the higher-order corridor to northeast Sherwood Park allows for more convenient local connections for residents in communities north of Baseline Road. This expansion in service will require additional operating resources.

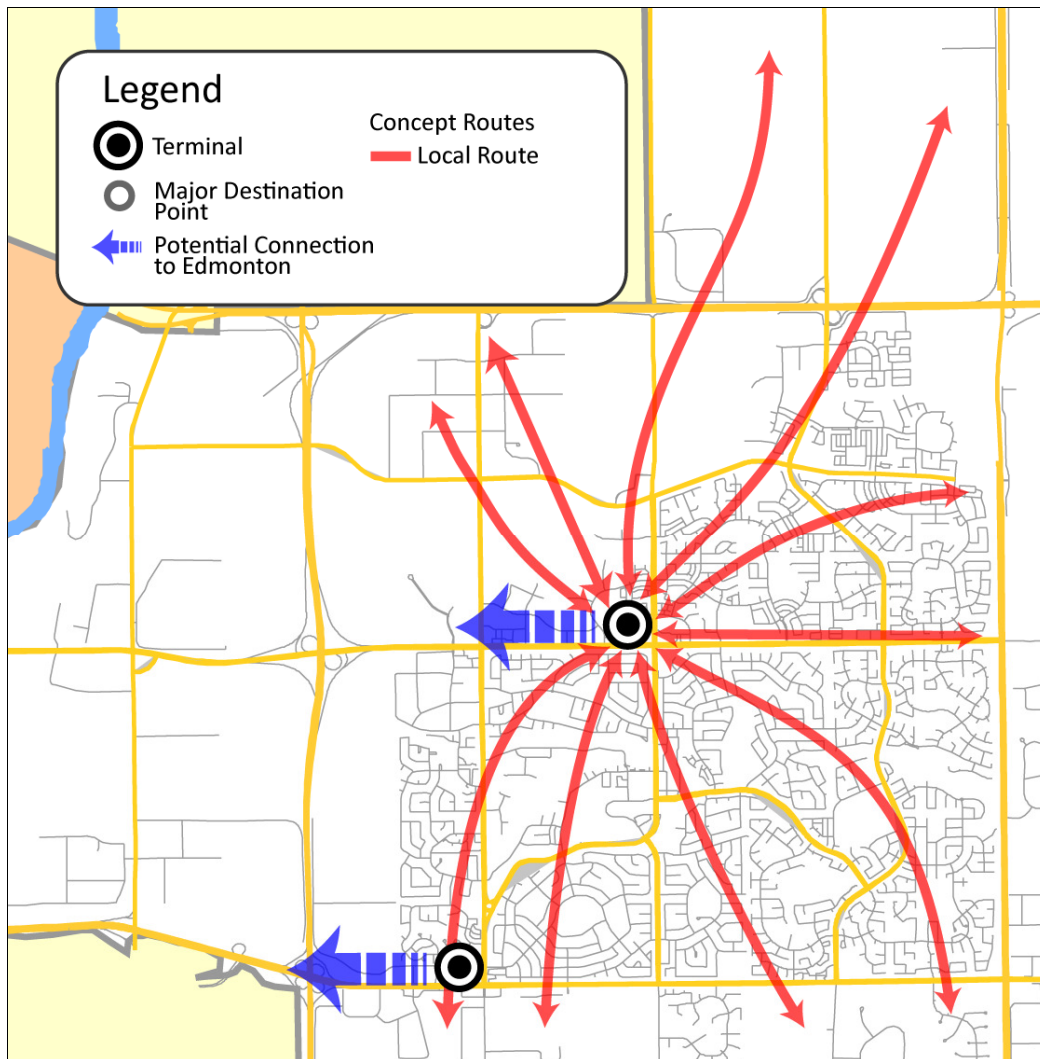
Option 3 – Grid-Like Network

Option 3 calls for the introduction of a grid-like transit network. Aside from establishing a higher-order transit corridor from Sherwood Park Transit Centre to the Urban Village at Clover Bar Road / Lakeland Drive, an additional higher-frequency corridor would operate along Broadmoor Road, Lakeland Drive, Wye Road, and Clover Bar Road. Refer to Exhibit 38 for a map of this concept.

Local services will continue to provide additional service coverage but will be restructured to connect to the higher-frequency corridors in the urban service area. While no major terminal facilities and Park and Ride facilities are planned in the development at Clover Bar Road and Lakeland Drive, intermunicipal services could make connections at this major destination point before making connections in Edmonton.

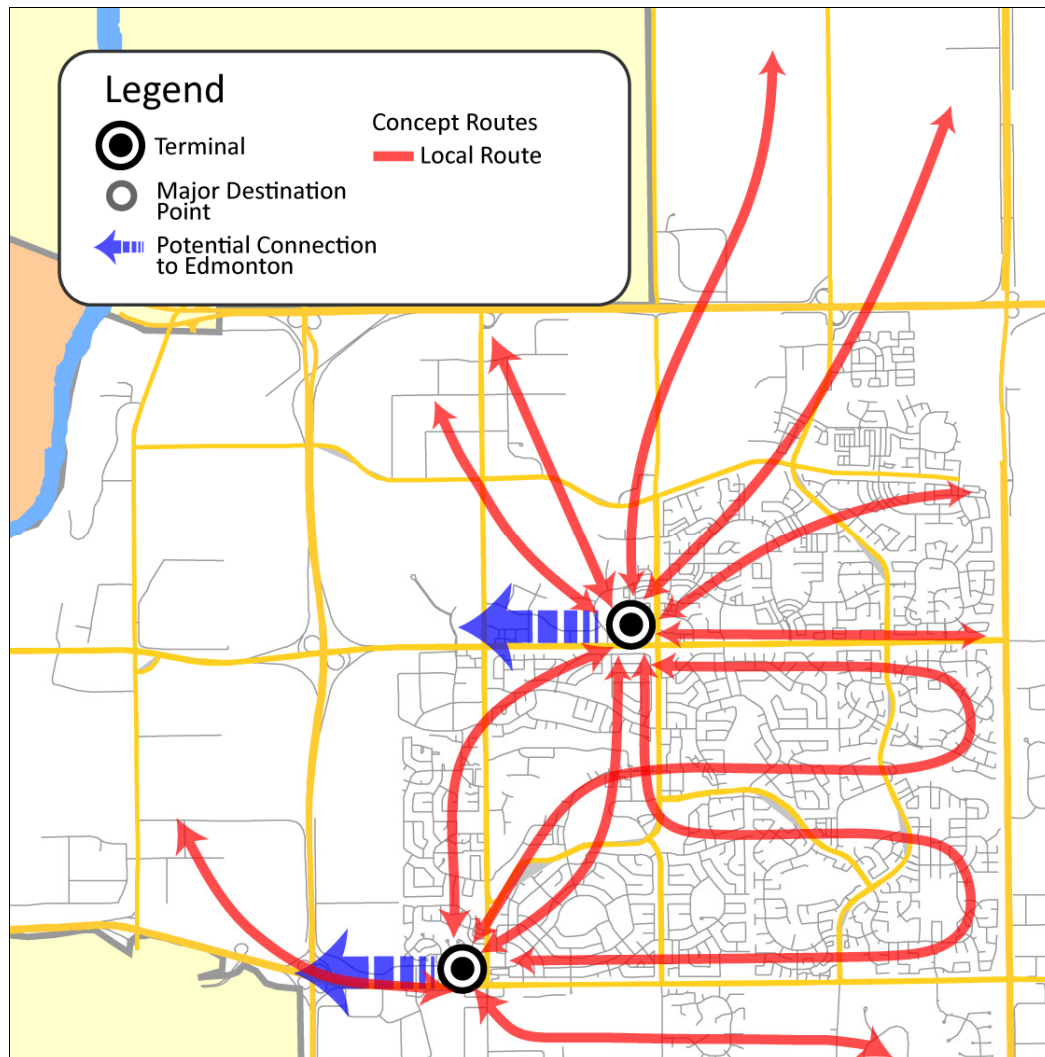
The proposed grid-like route concept provides very convenient connections for travel within Sherwood Park, however the delivery of the proposed network of services requires a significant amount of operating resources. Such a network requires a major shift in modal choice and would be ideal only in the long-term.

Exhibit 34 – Local System Concept Option 1A – Hub and Spoke, 1-Node



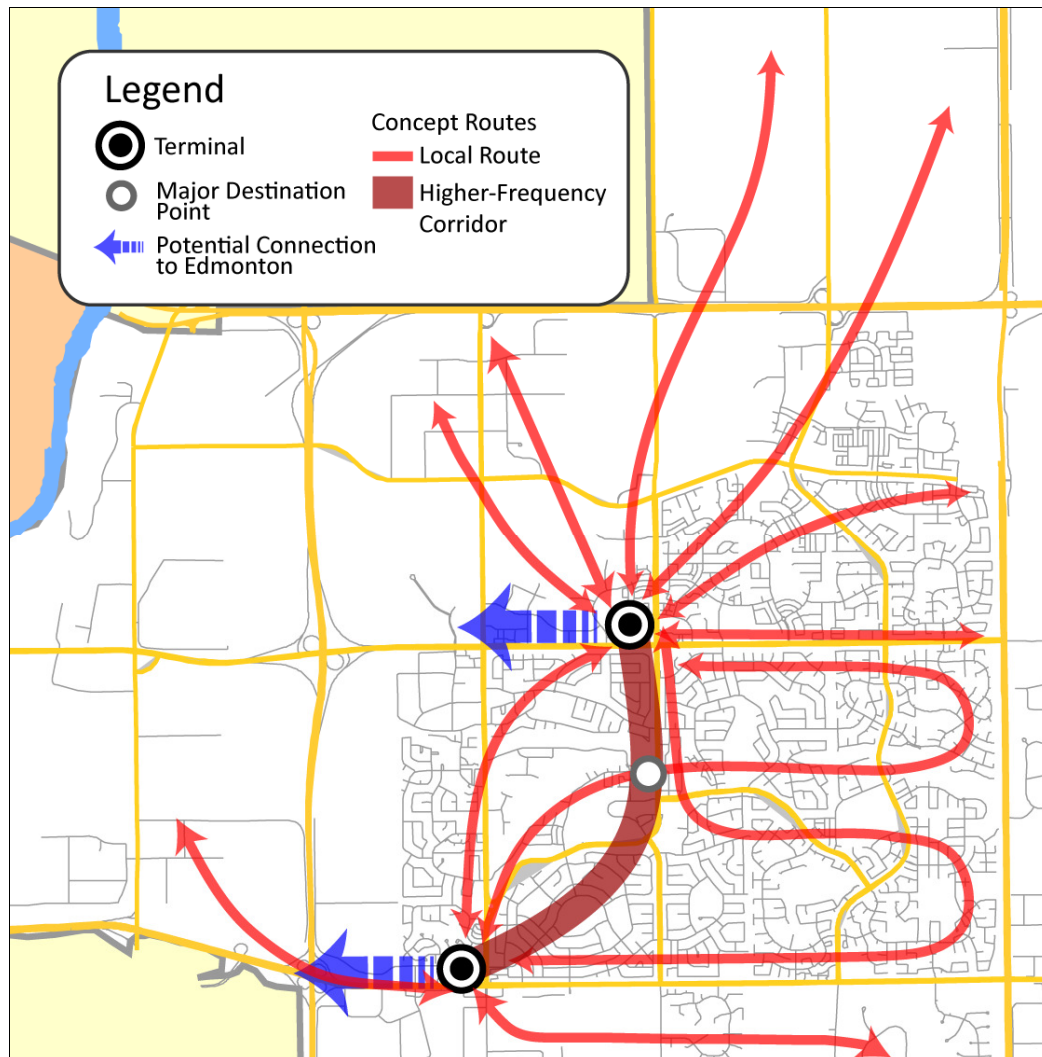
Note: The local system concepts shown on this map are intended to illustrate on a conceptual level the nature of service coverage and the general system route structure of local services. Exact route alignments are not shown.

Exhibit 35 – Local System Concept: Option 1B – Hub and Spoke, 2-Node



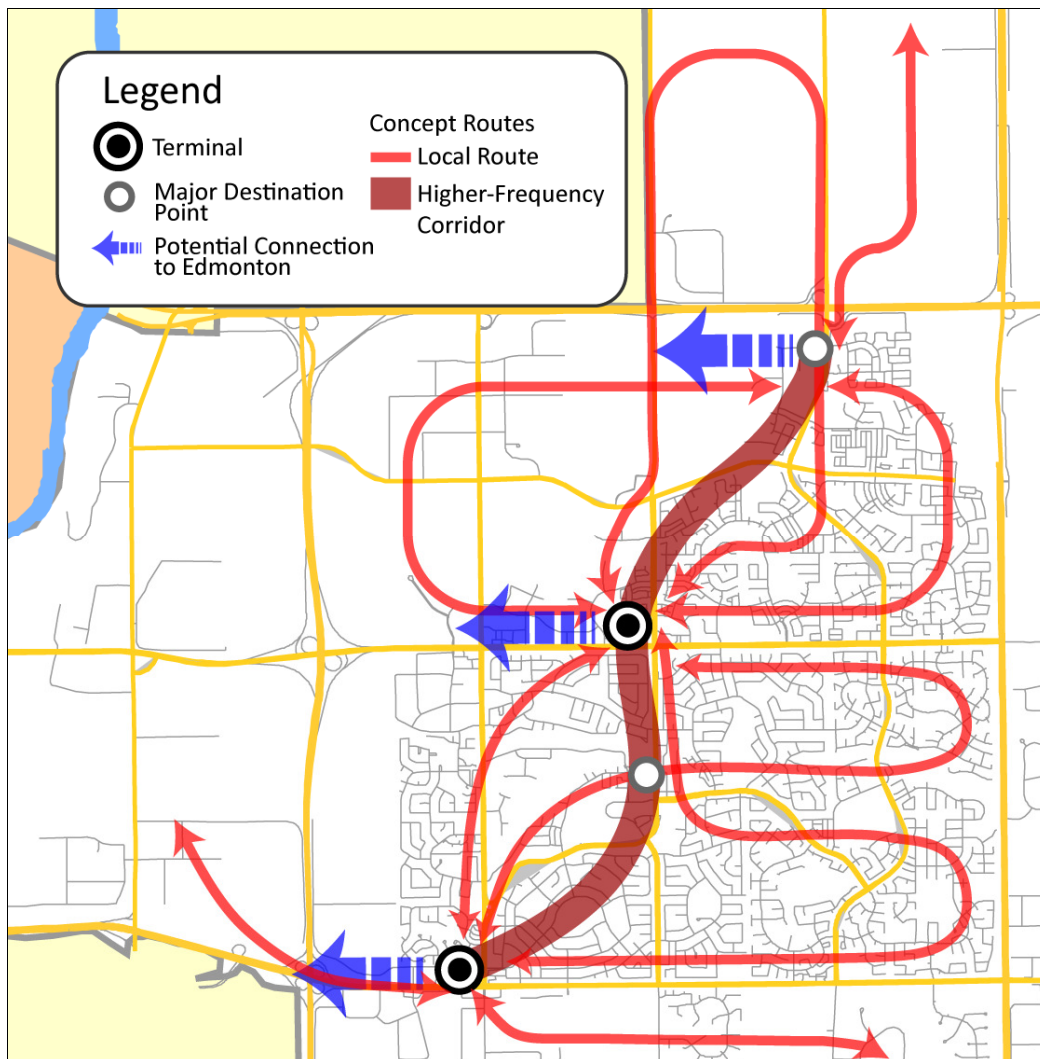
Note: The local system concepts shown on this map are intended to illustrate on a conceptual level the nature of service coverage and the general system route structure of local services. Exact route alignments are not shown.

Exhibit 36 – Local System Concept Option 2A – Higher-Frequency Corridor



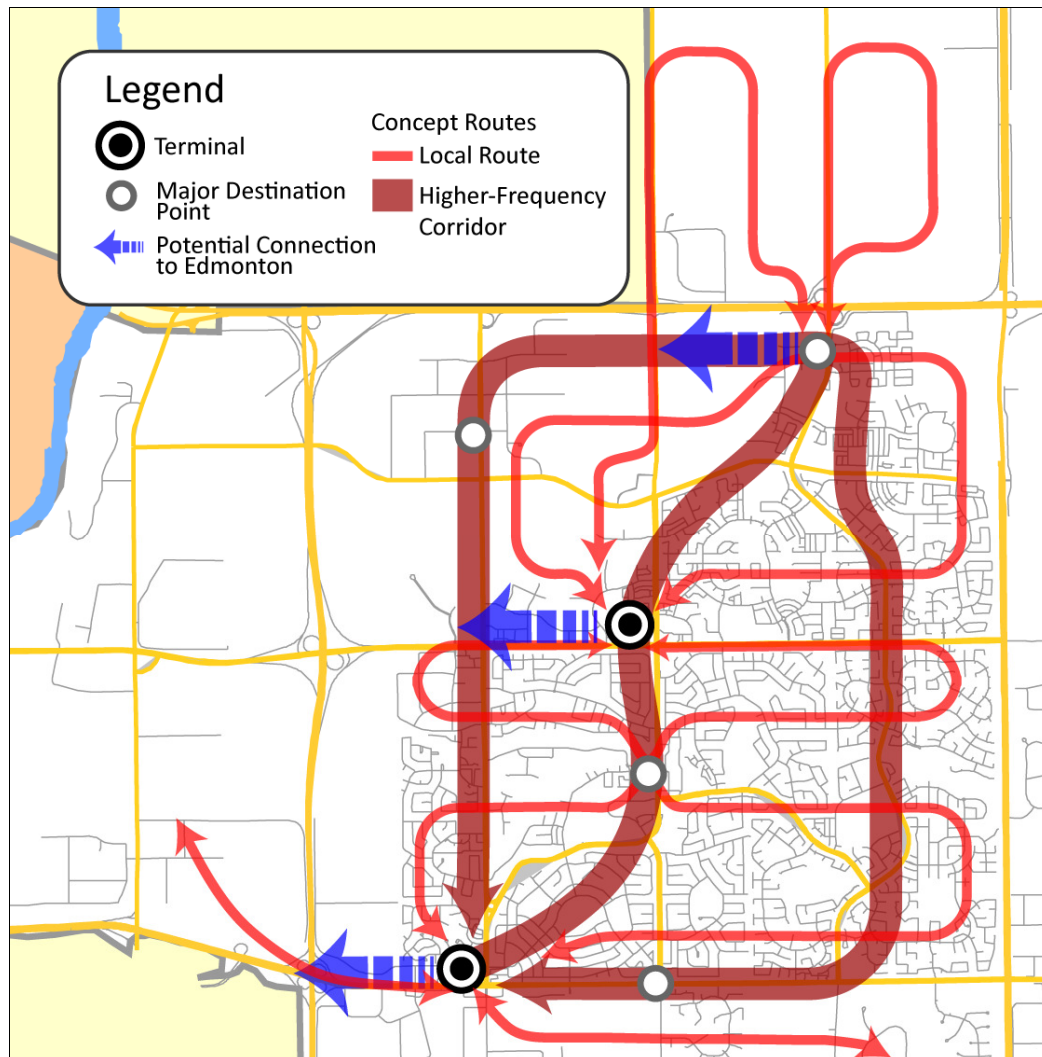
Note: The local system concepts shown on this map are intended to illustrate on a conceptual level the nature of service coverage and the general system route structure of local services. Exact route alignments are not shown.

Exhibit 37 – Local System Concept Option 2B – Extended Higher-Frequency Corridor



Note: The local system concepts shown on this map are intended to illustrate on a conceptual level the nature of service coverage and the general system route structure of local services. Exact route alignments are not shown.

Exhibit 38 – Local System Concept: Option 3 – Grid-Like Network























Note: The local system concepts shown on this map are intended to illustrate on a conceptual level the nature of service coverage and the general system route structure of local services. Exact route alignments are not shown.

3.3.2.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Exhibit 39 summarizes the evaluation for the local service concepts. Overall, Option 2B fared the highest in the evaluation, particularly with its ability to support County and Regional policies and to promote increased ridership.

Exhibit 39 – Evaluation Summary – Local Service Concepts

	Option 1A Hub and Spoke, 1 Node	Option 1B Hub and Spoke, 2 Node	Option 2A Higher Frequency Corridor	Option 2B Extended Higher- Frequency Corridor	Option 3 Grid-Like Network
Supports County and Regional policies					
Promotes a growing ridership base					
Provides cost- effective transit services					
Promotes ease of implementation					
Overall rank	5	3	2	1	4

Supports County and Regional Policies

Options 2A and 2B best support policies due to their alignment with economic and environmental objectives of the County and Region. Option 3 demonstrated strong support for social policy objectives but was comparatively lacking for satisfying economic objectives. Finally, Options 1A and 1B modestly achieved economic, social, and environmental policy objectives, compared to the other options.

Options 2A and 2B best supports economic policy objectives because they will help support the local economy by providing a notable improvement to local transit services, while still ensuring that transit service resources are supported by an appropriate ridership base.

For social objectives, Option 3 best supports regional and local mobility because it proposes the operation of an extensive local transit network that will provide convenient connections to nearly all major local destinations and intermunicipal transit hubs.

Options 2A and 2B best meet environmental policy objectives because they call for an improvement of local services that appropriately and realistically encourage reduced automobile usage. While Option 3 would attract additional ridership, it is unlikely that ridership levels will be able to support the extensive level of proposed transit service resources in the next ten years.

Finally, Options 2A, 2B, and 3 are better aligned with the policies of the Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan. These three options promote a considerable improvement to transit that promotes a culture of use for transit services as the region builds on plans to expand the rapid transit network.

Promotes a Growing Ridership Base

Overall, Option 2B and 3 best promote a growing ridership base to the SCT system. Option 3 provides the highest level of service—promoting convenient local travel and competitive travel times with the automobile. Options 2A and 2B follow Option 3 for providing an increased level of service. All options not only minimize impacts on existing riders but improve the current state of transit operations. Finally, Options 2A and 2B best minimize transfers for local and intermunicipal connections. While Option 3 provides an extensive level of services, routes operating to the Cambrian Lands development (north of Baseline Road) are truncated at the Emerald Hills destination point, which increases the number of transfers who are originating from, or are destined to, this area.

Provides Cost-effective Transit Services

Option 1A and 1B provides the most cost-effective transit services because they require few additional vehicles and service hours to operate. Options 2A and 2B include a moderate increase in fleet size and service hours, while Option 3 calls for a considerable increase.

Promotes Ease of Implementation

The conclusions are mixed when evaluating the five options based on their ease of implementation. Option 1A rates the best for ease of operation and management because all routes connect at Strathcona Station—making it easy to operate and manage routes. Options 2B and 3 include greater project risks compared to the other options because SCT will need to develop a layover facility near the Emerald Hills development, while the others do not. All options were rated uniformly for ease of customer use and understanding. Finally in terms of being consistent with long-term LRT plans, Option 3's extensive grid-like network of services will best build transit riders to feed riders to the planned LRT corridor.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended local transit routes operate based on Option 1B, Option 2A, and Option 2B in the short-, medium-, and long-term respectively.

The recommendation in the short-term is the application of Option 1B, which includes a modest change to the existing service route structure with increased convergence of routes to Strathcona Station.

In the medium-term, it is recommended that SCT transition to the Option 2A concept, where the corridor connecting Sherwood Park Transit Centre, Centre in the Park, and Strathcona Station be expanded to a higher-frequency corridor.

Option 2B is the recommended concept in the long-term; however, its implementation is dependent on fruition of the planned development of the northeast communities of Sherwood Park, notably the Emerald Hills medium-density mixed-use development and the Cambrian Lands development.

Based on the existing service review and results from public and stakeholder consultation, it is recommended that the existing evening and weekend Dial-A-Bus service is to be replaced by regular fixed-route service to ensure service consistency and improved customer service and to provide SCT customers a reliable transportation alternative for their day-to-day mobility.

From a TDM perspective, providing an improved local transit network (such as the recommended phased service concept) will assist in delivering a true alternative to the automobile within Sherwood Park. The recommended service concept encourages existing passengers to use local routes to access intermunicipal services at terminals and to promote

Sherwood Park residents to use SCT for local travel. Transit supportive land-use policies are necessary to continue to build ridership and to provide cost-effective services.

3.3.3 Park and Ride

The existing transit system has two transit hubs: Strathcona Station and Sherwood Park Transit Centre, where free Park and Ride lots, along with intermunicipal and local services are provided. In recent years challenges have emerged with the continued expansion of Park and Ride. In the near future it may no longer be cost-effective to provide free parking and the County will have to consider alternative ways to meet growing needs.

This section outlines Park and Ride and terminal facility requirements as well as management strategies to support the proposed intermunicipal and local network.

Context

For years, the two parking lots have been chronically crowded. Every time additional parking spaces have been added, they soon filled and became crowded again. In response, the County has recently announced that Strathcona Station will be expanded from 300 parking stalls to 1,200 stalls. However, this increase in parking will likely provide only temporary relief, as the additional parking will attract new users and again fill. Additional Park and Ride lots would see the same trend and require additional bus service, further driving up costs. This circular pattern could erode the efficiency of the entire system and increase the overall subsidy level.

Also, the County's new environmental and economic goals raise questions about the sustainability of continuing to provide ample free parking. Free parking can be an expensive way to grow ridership as each new surface stall costs approximately \$10,000 to build, yet is empty much of the time. Free parking also encourages single-occupant vehicle use even when less polluting alternatives exist (including feeder buses, carpooling, cycling and walking).

If intermunicipal commuters could be encouraged to shift to local feeder buses instead of utilizing free Park and Ride, the resulting change would shift intermunicipal commuters to a less expensive means of travel (feeder bus instead of Park and Ride) which is also more environmentally friendly. This also opens parking stalls that could attract other new choice riders.

In other communities, similar considerations have led municipalities and institutions to consider parking fees as a tool to encourage drivers to use alternatives such as local transit or carpools.

The following outlines the price of Park and Ride parking fees at other transit operators:

- Strathcona County Transit – no charge
- St. Albert Transit – no charge
- ETS – no charge (a pilot program is testing a reserved stall program for \$42 per month)
- Calgary Transit – \$3 per day and \$90 per month. (Note: This fee was cancelled by Calgary Council in April 2011 and reserved parking has been implemented at \$70.00 per month.)
- Winnipeg Transit – \$3 per day or \$32 per month

Further analysis in Strathcona County has found that much of the recent demand for parking comes from U-Pass holders - post-secondary students at UA, NAIT or Grant MacEwen University. U-Pass represents an opportunity to enhance transit's environmental and social sustainability by encouraging a specific segment of the intermunicipal ridership market to switch

to other means of travel, such as feeder buses, and allows students to use SCT's intermunicipal and feeder buses at no extra charge. However, as long as Park and Ride spaces remain free there is little reason for riders to take advantage of this incentive.

Another reason to consider parking fees is to help pay for the on-going costs of operating a new facility. Park and Ride users in other communities have been more accepting of fees if they see an accompanying improvement to parking facilities. The fees can also reduce the subsidy needed to operate the new facility. The expansion of Strathcona Station will also require additional on-going operating costs for amenities such as snow removal and security.

Public consultation, along with internal study team and staff discussion identified that a full user fee applied to all Park and Ride customers may not be appropriate at this time. As a result, a "premium reserved space" recommendation has been developed.

Park and Ride and Terminal Facility Requirement

The recently announced expansion of Strathcona Station provides an opportunity to rearrange services for more efficient operations, as well as improve bus terminal, additional parking and Kiss and Ride facilities.

As discussed previously for the recommended concept, intermunicipal services to downtown Edmonton would depart primarily from Strathcona Station. To facilitate more convenient connections within Sherwood Park, some intermunicipal trips could be interlined to operate with the local higher-frequency corridor starting from the Emerald Hills transfer facility and the Sherwood Park Transit Centre.

With more than 200 parking spaces and excellent passenger amenities, the Sherwood Park Transit Centre should continue to operate as a satellite Park and Ride lot. The Sherwood Park Transit Centre would also serve as a transfer facility for local and intermunicipal connections, as well as to access adjacent commercial and higher-density residential developments. Limited peak-period intermunicipal services could provide additional access to downtown Edmonton or the University of Alberta.

Transfer facilities should be integrated in the Emerald Hills development plan, Centre in the Park redevelopment plan and the existing Sherwood Park Mall area. Good pedestrian access and extensive passenger amenities such as heated shelters should be provided at these facilities to encourage transit use and provide comfort and convenient services. Direct intermunicipal services to downtown Edmonton and the University of Alberta, as well as the local corridor and feeder services could be provided from these facilities.

From a TDM perspective, it is recommended SCT transit terminals be equipped to provide good access through a variety of modes by ensuring safe and adequate pedestrian access, bicycle parking infrastructure, as well as passenger pickup and drop off areas.

Park and Ride Management Strategies

It is recommended that SCT adopt the following policies regarding the Park and Ride facilities:

- SCT should charge a fee for customers to access premium reserved parking spaces at the Park and Ride lots with the purpose of encouraging drivers to utilize another, more sustainable, means of accessing the intermunicipal services (including feeder buses, Kiss and Ride, carpool, cycling, and walking). This will maximize the use of infrastructure, reduce subsidies and encourage environmentally friendlier travel behaviour. The fees can also offset the costs of upgraded facilities and amenities.

- A premium reserved parking Park and Ride pass will allow customers to have a reserved parking space at the facilities from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM on weekdays. Reserved Park and Ride spaces should be free weekdays after 6:00 PM, and all-day on weekends and statutory holidays.
- Paid parking customers will be guaranteed access to a reserved space in the Park and Ride lot, but will not be given their own dedicated parking stall, as the spaces will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. A parking pass will be given to paid customers, who will be required to visibly display the pass within their vehicle.
- The premium reserved Park and Ride spaces should comprise 10 percent of the total spaces in each facility and be located in a preferable location within each facility.
- To ensure the sufficient availability of paid parking spaces at each Park and Ride location, reserved passes should be sold that are specific to each lot. For example, a premium reserved parking pass for Park and Ride at Strathcona Station will not be allow a customer to access the premium reserved spaces at the Sherwood Park Transit Centre.
- Premium reserved parking fees in Strathcona County should be consistent with reserved parking fees at ETS Park and Ride locations. Premium reserved passes should be offered monthly, and should not be available for weekly or daily purchase.
- Reserved parking space passes should be made available for purchase online, at the transit terminals and/or at other locations throughout Strathcona County. Parking enforcement will be necessary to ensure reserved spaces are utilized only by paid customers, and enforcement signage should be displayed in relevant areas throughout the facilities.
- Persons with disabilities should continue to park for free at spaces that are reserved for persons with disabilities. The amount and/or location of premium reserved Park and Ride spaces should not impact the amount and/or location of parking spaces for persons with disabilities.
- The reserved parking fee should come into force when the new parking facility at Strathcona Station opens in 2013. If revenue can be dedicated to help fund the construction or operation of the new facility, users may be more willing to pay as they see a related improvement.
- If the existing and new Park and Ride lots reach capacity, SCT could consider implementation of a paid parking fee for all Park and Ride customers.
- Consider continuing to provide free parking for rural residents if a general paid parking fee is applied to all Park and Ride customers.

If successful, the introduction of parking fees could maximize the use of expensive infrastructure while encouraging customers to take advantage of alternative travel modes that are less polluting.

3.3.4 Rural Service

Given that travel demand in rural communities is too low and widely dispersed to support fixed-route service, the following service strategies are recommended to guide service provision in rural communities of Strathcona County:

- Continue to provide special event-based transit service to rural communities. Fixed-route express services from rural communities to the event location can relieve traffic and parking congestion in the vicinity of an event venue.

- Continue to provide specialized transit services for medical and social trip purposes in rural communities as discussed in the next section.
- Consider demand-response service to accommodate the general public in conjunction with existing specialized transit services on a space available basis for medical and social trips only (48 hour advanced booking).
- Consider providing pilot Park and Ride facilities in rural communities where there is a minimum of 1,000 households within an approximately 10 minute drive to the facility. The rural Park and Ride could be provided using the existing parking facilities at churches or activity centres with limited peak-only intermunicipal service. Based on 2009 census data, the Ardrossan area would be a candidate for a pilot Park and Ride service.
- Consider pilot alternate day demand-response service to rural communities for medical, shopping and social activities. The service could operate one or two days per week connecting rural communities to the urban areas of the County and adjacent municipalities. Candidate routes would include south Strathcona (Hastings Lake, North Cooking Lake, South Cooking Lake, Collingwood Cove, Antler Lake and Half Moon Lake) – Ardrossan – Sherwood Park and Fort Saskatchewan – north Strathcona (Josephburg) – Ardrossan – Sherwood Park.

3.3.5 Resource Requirements

In addition to the Park and Ride and Terminal facilities, additional vehicles and vehicle hours are required for the proposed concept plan of local and intermunicipal services as well as services in rural communities.

As shown in Exhibit 40, 11 additional buses would be required for the proposed long-term local system concept including various local feeders and the higher-frequency corridor. Considering the higher ridership in the new higher density development areas and along the corridor, it is recommended to use standard 40ft buses for these local services.

The proposed intermunicipal system concept would require 12 additional standard 40ft buses. To ensure a cost-efficient service it is recommended to purchase high-capacity buses instead, each having approximately double the seating capacity of a standard 40ft bus. The standard buses released from the intermunicipal services can be used on local services.

In total, the recommended concept plan including rural services would require 12 additional new high-capacity buses and three new standard 40ft buses over the timeframe of this plan, excluding replacement buses.

The plan also calls for a significant increase in service hours including improved evening and weekend services on both intermunicipal and local routes. It is estimated that a total of 114,000, 52,000, and 5,000 vehicle hours would be required annually to operate the proposed local, intermunicipal and rural services respectively.

To accommodate the additional fleet, in particular the high-capacity buses, expansion and modifications will also be required at the existing maintenance and storage facility.

Exhibit 40 – Recommended Peak Vehicle Requirements and Annual Vehicle Hours

	Peak Buses		Annual Service Hours	
	Existing	2021	Existing	2021
Local	25	36	66,000 ⁽¹⁾	114,000
Intermunicipal	28	30 ⁽²⁾	39,000	52,000 ⁽³⁾
Rural	n/a	2 ⁽⁴⁾	n/a	5,000 ⁽⁵⁾

Note:

(1) Including evening and weekend Dial-A-Bus services

(2) Including 12 high-capacity buses

(3) Equivalent to approximately 65,000 hours if using standards 40ft buses

(4) Peak only intermunicipal service to Park and Ride facility in rural areas based on two rural Park and Ride locations

(5) Including Park and Ride service and alternate day services in rural areas

3.3.6 Transit Priority Measures and ITS

To ensure service reliability and a competitive travel time by transit, BRT-type service should be considered on key transit corridors, particularly intermunicipal transit corridors. Strathcona County's extensive road network and infrastructure provides opportunities for transit signal priority, queue jump lanes and even bus-only lanes. Candidate corridors include:

- Baseline Road/101 Avenue
- Wye Road
- Sherwood Drive
- Access to the transit centres and terminals

SCT should also work with the city of Edmonton and ETS to explore opportunities for transit priority measures along corridors and at transit centres within the city of Edmonton. This will make transit a competitive transportation alternative and set a base for the development of potential rapid transit in the future.

Intelligent Transportation System technologies including Automatic Vehicle Location, Automatic Passenger Counter, Computer-Aided Dispatch, real-time passenger information system and smartcard fare collection system should also be pursued in the near future to improve transit operations and customer services.

3.4 Specialized Transit

Transit systems and communities are becoming increasingly aware of the need to provide equal access for all members of the community, regardless of their abilities.

In previous decades, specialized transit services were often very limited, since the idea of a community accessible to all was not well developed. Today, it is no longer acceptable to deny one resident access to a community opportunity simply because that person has a disability. In spite of the advancements in accessibility on fixed-route transit vehicles, there is a segment of the population that will not be able to use a fixed-route service, even with low floor vehicles, for a variety of reasons. For these residents, the concept of a parallel specialized transit service has arisen. A parallel system ensures that people with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route transit service have access to the same transportation opportunities as other residents, even if not actually using the same system.

In recent years the transit industry has evolved to the point where it recognizes the need to provide “equivalent” service – ensuring that all residents have access to the same level and quality of service. This means, for instance:

- Equal hours of service, on the same days
- Equal area of service coverage
- Equal fares and fare media
- Alternate media for communication elements such as transit information and schedules

In many communities (and in the legislation of a growing number of jurisdictions), the idea of equal access has come to include requirements for the service to be as equivalent to fixed-route service in as many ways as possible. It is important to note that equivalence is only necessary when fixed-route services are nearby. Because the province of Alberta has not yet developed legislated requirements for specialized transit, Strathcona County has an opportunity to develop a new model for specialized transit guided by the concepts of social sustainability.

The long-term goals for the County with respect to SCT specialized services should be to work towards the principle of equivalent service. This means that services offered by for passengers with disabilities using the specialized services should be comparable to that offered to passengers on the fixed-route service.

In our recommendations for the specialized transit system, GENIVAR has adopted a standard of equivalent service, establishing an objective that, over time, services will be equivalent in as many ways as possible. Short-term recommendations focus on high priority items such as service coverage, hours of service and days of service. In the longer-term, it will be appropriate for the County to explore how service in the community can and should be designed to be equivalent.

GENIVAR has assembled a policy framework for specialized transit based on our background review, input from consultation sessions (including online survey, stakeholder and public meetings), our study and analysis of existing SCAT services and results of a 2009 SCAT review. The 2009 SCAT review is discussed in the following section and forms the basis of this policy framework.

3.4.1 Background

- Specialized transit in Strathcona County provides shared-ride transportation services to persons with disabilities and seniors meeting eligibility requirements.
- Specialized services in Strathcona County have historically been seniors-oriented and also designed to meet needs of rural residents.
- Specialized transit in Strathcona County faces a number of challenges, including growing demand, changing community expectations, eligibility criteria, the physical size of the service area, increasing costs and the existing limitations to services.
- In recent years the focus of specialized transit has been shifting to a service that meets the needs of persons with disabilities and the public consultation component of this study is supportive of this.

3.4.2 2009 Strathcona Country Accessible Transit Review

A 2009 review of SCAT services determined the existing service model is unsustainable. Recommendations were provided that, if implemented, would create a framework for a more sustainable specialized transit service for Strathcona County.

The key recommendations from the 2009 report are summarized as follows, and inform the policy framework:

- Provide different levels of service for different parts of the service area (rural, urban, and intermunicipal) and ensure SCAT provides opportunities equal to fixed-route transit.
- Implement demand management strategies to shift trips from SCAT to less expensive transportation services, with a focus on fixed-route.
- Revise eligibility criteria to ensure that SCAT services are reserved only for persons who need them.
- Eliminate trip purpose restrictions in the urban service area and for intermunicipal trips and limit rural service to non-emergency medical trips; increase use of alternate service delivery strategies.

3.4.3 Eligibility and Certification

Specialized service is by definition, shared-ride, public transit for those unable to use accessible fixed-route transit services. It is important to preserve the integrity of specialized services for those individuals who genuinely need the service.

Specialized services should be reserved for those who cannot use the fixed-route service. The application and certification process should be updated to ensure that specialized services are reserved for those with actual functional mobility impairments (for example, disabilities that prevent the use of the fixed-route service), instead of less precise criteria such as medical conditions or age that may not actually measure need.

It is important to recognize the transportation needs of persons with a cognitive disability or mental illness where functional limitations may be less straightforward to assess. Eligibility

should be based on a functional rather than medical model and persons should not be qualified or disqualified on the basis of a specific diagnosis or disability.

Recognizing the broad range of disabilities, including how a person's functional disability may affect their ability to use fixed-route transit services, the application form should reflect three categories of specialized service:

- **Unconditional eligibility** – for all trips, all of the time
- **Temporary eligibility** – limited time period (for example, surgery preventing independent use of transit)
- **Conditional eligibility** – eligible under certain conditions (for example, weather, accessible bus not available)

Recommendations

- Specialized service eligibility should be based on a functional eligibility criteria (rather than a medical model) which reflects how functional limitations may affect individual ability to use fixed-route transit services; eligibility should be defined based solely on inability to use the fixed-route system.
- If registrants are unable to travel on their own and require assistance from an attendant, (confirmed by SCT) allow the attendant to accompany the specialized passenger free of charge.
- Update all client data. Eligibility certification should be maintained by Strathcona County Transit staff.
- Do not require all applicants for an in-person assessment, but if deemed necessary, some new applicants may be required to attend an in-person interview. Develop a point or scoring system in concert with the community to identify the threshold below which applicants will be requested to attend an in-person interview. If an in-person assessment is required, a review panel made up of a cross-section of representatives from the disability community should be utilised. Free transportation should be provided for the applicant to access to the assessment site.
- Existing registrants as of August 2011 will be “grandfathered” or deemed eligible for specialized services, however, existing registrants will be requested to complete the revised application form so that the specialized service may develop and maintain a comprehensive and updated client database.
- A more detailed application form should be developed and provide more information relating to functional limitations. Greater scrutiny will increase the utility of the paper application which should continue as the first level of a more comprehensive screening process.
- Application forms should be assessed using a points based system which will reflect different weights attached to each question and applicants response. Weights will be designed to reflect that some answers are more relevant than others in determining applicant ability to use accessible fixed-route transit services.

- Specialized services should adopt a policy of recognizing eligibility from other public transit agencies or non-residents of the County and grant them temporary eligibility.

3.4.4 Service Areas

Strathcona County has a very complex three-tier service area that creates challenges for specialized transit. In the urban service area of Sherwood Park and for trips to Edmonton, the concept of equivalency should apply. However, as there is no fixed-route service in the rural parts of the County, the concept of equivalency is not relevant.

Recommendations

Urban Service Area (Sherwood Park)

- Specialized services in the urban service area of Sherwood Park area will operate the same days and hours of service as fixed-route transit services.
- Specialized services will eliminate all reference to trip purposes for trip requests in the urban transit service area of Sherwood Park and will not exclude work or school trip purposes.

Intermunicipal Service to Edmonton

- Eliminate trip purpose restrictions while maintaining Edmonton service to key transfer points, fixed-route destinations and other specific destinations east of the specialized service boundary.
- Specialized services between Edmonton and Sherwood Park area will operate the same days and hours of service as fixed-route transit services.

Rural Service

- In the near-term, specialized services in the rural areas of the County will maintain the existing operating framework. Specialized service will provide transportation for medical and social trip purposes in the rural areas of Strathcona County (similar to today).
- While maintaining the status quo for the delivery of specialized services, future consideration should be given to accommodating the general public on a space available basis in a dial-a-ride mode (48 hour advanced booking).
- Facilitate transfers to intermunicipal service.
- Consider providing service to the hospital in Fort Saskatchewan.

3.4.5 Fares

The question of fares is one that often arises. Historically, systems have justified a higher fare for specialized transit on the basis that it costs more, while others have deemed it to be a premium service that warrants a premium fare. Many communities now recognize that the service is not a premium – it has characteristics that are necessary to provide transportation. Therefore, door-to-door service is not a premium; it is merely a necessary service characteristic.

Recent legislation treats the cost issue differently. Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in Ontario, it will soon be illegal to charge more for a paratransit trip than on fixed-route services. In the United States however, the Americans with Disabilities Act recognizes that the higher cost of service may limit the ability for some communities to provide

sufficient service, and therefore allows fares for specialized transit to be up to two times the prices of the fixed-route fare.

Currently, fares for specialized services are higher than those paid by passengers on the fixed-route system. There is no reduced fare for persons with a disability to ride the fixed-route system. Under the comparability principle, it may be desirable in the long-term to also achieve parity with respect to fares. This could involve similar fare structures, including discounts, and similar fare media.

Recommendations

- Achieving fare parity should be reviewed over time, and if desirable, approached through a comprehensive transition plan.
- SCT specialized transit should continue to provide one common passenger class.

3.4.6 Transportation Demand Management Strategies

Transportation demand management strategies intend to redistribute the demand for travel on more costly (specialized) to less costly (fixed-route) services. These strategies may consist of developing partnerships with agencies and shifting demand from specialized to fixed-route services.

3.4.6.1 Service Integration Strategies

Specialized transit services are expensive to deliver, so when possible, Strathcona County Transit should consider implementation of programs and policies that integrate specialized riders with the fixed-route Strathcona County Transit system. This section provides a number of initiatives that may be taken to reduce reliance on specialized transit services.

Fully Accessible Fixed-Route Services

A key strategy for reducing reliance on specialized services, and a catalyst for successful implementation of other programs, is to ensure that all fixed-route SCT vehicles and routes are fully accessible. Effective integration between specialized and fixed-route services is dependent on the fixed-route system becoming fully accessible. This requires a fleet of low-floor, fully accessible vehicles, and fully accessible stops and shelters that are located on a fully accessible path of travel.

Recommendations

- Draft formal accessibility policy for fixed-route Strathcona County Transit that will result in a fully accessible transit network including (but not limited to), acquisition of a fully accessible fleet, accessibility at transit facilities, on vehicles, at bus stops and shelters, curbs and curb ramps and the exterior path of travel.
- Retro-fit or replace fixed-route transit vehicles as required to ensure the fleet is fully accessible.
- Draft policy that identifies and defines requirements for categorizing a fixed-route transit route as “fully accessible”; should include development of accessibility requirements for all elements of a fixed-route Strathcona County Transit route, including stops and shelters,

connective sidewalk infrastructure from stops and shelters to the municipal sidewalk network, transit terminals and on-board technologies including accessible stop calling.

- To achieve fully accessible services, the planning of routes and stops should be better integrated with planning, land development, and transportation infrastructure planning.
- Develop a mechanism that enables riders to find out which stops on an accessible fixed-route transit route are fully accessible (fully accessible stops should include appropriate curb access when boarding and alighting vehicles and an accessible path of travel connecting the passenger to their destination or the municipal sidewalk network; information could be available via telephone, on-board from drivers, online and in distributed in print format).

Fixed-route Feeder

A specialized to fixed-route feeder strategy connects specialized transit to fixed-route services (at key transfer points) if passengers are physically able to ride fixed-route services for at least part of their trip. This strategy encourages specialized transit customers to utilize fixed-route transit services for part of the trip, but maintains “door-to-door” specialized service (booked in the same manner as today) on trips to and from their home (or origin point) and transfer points.

Transfers are typically made at major transit locations or key destinations, which for SCT may include the transit terminals or major transfer facilities such as the Sherwood Park Mall. Critical to the success of this strategy is that provisions are made for a fully accessible fixed-route system, including on buses and infrastructure at terminals and key local and commuter fixed-route destinations. This type of service has the potential to reduce specialize service operating costs as well as overall trip time.

Recommendations

- Examine origin and destinations of specialized riders to identify if opportunities exist for fixed-route feeders.
- Identify strategic terminals and key destinations that can serve as transfer points between services in Strathcona County and Edmonton (including at LRT stations).
- Divert as many trips as possible through coordination of scheduling databases and specialized registrant mobility information.
- Make modifications or other provisions as required so that infrastructure on buses (local and commuter), at transfer points and destinations is fully accessible.

Travel Training

Travel training programs provide information and training to potential and existing specialized service customers in an effort to encourage use of fixed-route transit service and reduce reliance on specialized services whenever possible. Customers who are able to use fixed-route transit can be familiarized with and taught to use the existing fixed-route system. Professional third-party trainers can be contracted to provide training that ranges from basic to intensive and can include follow-up coaching. Programs can be tailored as required to groups or individuals and for a varying degree of needs and ability. Reducing demand on specialized service can better serve those who are captive riders and increase overall system efficiency.

Components of travel training can include:

- Basic orientation and system overview.
- Development of an accessible online and print “Rider’s Guide”.
- Information on routes, low-floor vehicles, trip planning, boarding, riding, alighting, scheduling, and other activities typically required to use fixed-route transit services.
- Landmark identification.
- Training riders for emergency procedures.
- Training for transit management, dispatching and scheduling, maintenance, administrative and other Strathcona County Transit staff.

Recommendations

- Develop a travel training program to teach existing specialized passengers the skills required to travel on fixed-route transit; training should be conducted by a third-party contractor and involve a staff training component.
- Strathcona Transit management should explore opportunities to partner with community-based organizations such as the Robin Hood Association in the development and administration of travel training programs for County residents.
- Specialized services shall be provided on an interim or temporary basis for some applicants to assist in transitioning to accessible fixed-route transit services.
- To further encourage ridership on fixed-route routes, a fare incentive program could be implemented that provides travel training passengers with free or reduced travel on fixed-route transit.
- A “bus buddy” program could be developed that matches experienced fixed-route transit riders with specialized riders who are able to transition to the fixed-route system.

Integration with DATS

An additional method to enhance mobility and control costs is to integrate with the DATS service in Edmonton.

In the future SCT will only provide direct specialized service to select Edmonton locations, consistent with the fixed-route intermunicipal service. Since this is a significant change from the existing, largely unregulated, practice, it may be necessary to establish additional intermunicipal destinations. At the same time, it is important to do so in a way that can allow SCT to manage its costs, and ensure the availability of resources for comparable service delivery.

As a compromise between the existing condition and strict allowance of the comparable service definition, it may be appropriate to provide service from Strathcona County to key destinations in a “boundary” or “zone” within Edmonton. Destinations would also include key transfer points such as the Clareview, Belvedere and Southgate LRT stations and the Mill Woods Transit Centre. At these key transfer points, passengers of Strathcona specialized services would be able to transfer to the DATS service for the duration of their trip to additional Edmonton locations (outside of the Strathcona County specialized service “zone”). Since service into this area is not required under the comparable service principle, trip purposes could be limited, and

destinations may be adjusted from time to time as demand warrants and resources are available.

Recommendations

- Identify a “specialized transit service zone” in the east portion of Edmonton (generally east of 66th St in the south and 75th St in the north) and the key destinations that will be served directly by Strathcona County specialized services; annually review these destinations and requests for new destinations and revise as necessary, balancing key demand locations with resource availability.
- Establish key transfer points in Edmonton, such as LRT stations and key medical and shopping facilities, based on current demand patterns. These might include, for example, Clareview Station, Belvedere Station, Grey Nuns Hospital, Mill Woods Transit Centre.
- Work with DATS on eligibility reciprocity and consistency (including for scheduling, fare media transfers and other operational and customer service components).
- Work with DATS to facilitate transfers at some of these locations, including, for example, fixed facilities (shelters, washrooms, phones, etc.), on-site supervision during peak periods or other periods, schedule coordination; ensure all transfer facilities are fully accessible.

3.4.6.2 Expand Use of Taxis

Specialized service expansion including the provision of service during low-demand times of day should be done with the use of supplemental taxi contracts. The use of taxis brings financial advantages as well as flexibility to utilize this transportation resource on an as needed basis to address peaking characteristics in demand. It will also foster a working relationship with the County's vehicle-for-hire industry and provide the ability of the industry to make a possible business case for the procurement of accessible taxis. This would benefit the entire community whether used in a specialized contract or not. The only caveat is the need to address the regulatory regime of the taxi industry. It is imperative that qualitative considerations be addressed in the policing of the industry including assurances of quality of vehicles and driver training including sensitivity awareness in the handling of persons with a disability. Taxis are currently not wheelchair-accessible and the County does not regulate taxi companies.

Recommendations

- Strathcona County Transit should enter into discussion with taxi operating companies both locally and in Edmonton to gauge the level of interest in the provision of supplemental specialized service.
- Strathcona County Transit should draft a procurement instrument and performance based contracts for the use of supplemental taxis; the contract documents will address qualitative considerations of driver training, including sensitivity training, vehicle quality, performance monitoring and reporting.

3.4.6.3 Partnership with Agencies

Typically, agency program requirements entail the transport of individuals who may not be eligible for specialized services. An opportunity may exist for Strathcona County Transit to coordinate agency or program specific transportation.

Recommendations

- Embrace the concept of community transportation service delivery to bring a more holistic perspective to transportation service delivery.
- Formalize contacts with community-based agencies and organizations to ascertain specific outstanding transportation needs which could be addressed within the specialized transit administrative framework.
- Explore opportunities to partner with the Robin Hood Association, Pioneer Housing or other private institutions with transportation resources in an attempt to coordinate all community resources and provide more access, in effect utilizing existing resources to their maximum, providing more trips and reducing demand on specialized service.

3.4.6.4 Mobility Manager

Mobility Manager has been defined as a mechanism for achieving the integration and coordination of transportation services offered by multiple providers - public, private for-profit, private non-profit and volunteer - involving a variety of travel modes and multiple sources of funding. Mobility Manager's function resembles that of a travel agency and a financial clearinghouse. The mobility management approach first addresses consumer access concerns with resulting mobility enhancement strategies that include a centralized system for efficient use of a community's transportation providers. Further, this approach will encourage resource pooling and partnering.

It is important to recognize that assuming mobility management functions is an evolutionary process requiring the building of relationships with potential community transportation partners. While a menu of opportunities exists in terms of potential responsibilities that may be assumed by a Mobility Manager, initial strategies may include providing fixed-route trip planning information to specialized service registrants. This would include providing information about using fixed-route transit services as an alternative to their specialized trip request. Providing such information is contingent on having detailed client information about an individual's ability to use fixed-route services and ensuring that such services are available in close proximity to requested trip origin and destination.

3.4.7 Accessible Website

The existing specialized transit website provides basic system information (including eligibility, hours of service, destination, contact, trip booking and other information) and application forms. The site could be expanded to provide a range of services to specialized customers in a fully accessible format, fully compatible with screen reader technology.

Recommendations

- Conduct an accessibility audit of the existing specialized transit website that considers riders with a range of disabilities, including visual impairments and cognitive disorders.
- Implement recommendations from the accessibility audit and develop a fully accessible website, based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for Level AA compliance.
- Provide more customer options in a fully accessible format, including for trip booking and information about other available services.

- Conduct periodic follow-up reviews to ensure continued compliance with updated guidelines and technology.

3.4.8 Consumer Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

There is an on-going need for consumer guidance and advice on accessible transportation (for both specialized and fixed-route transit) operations, service delivery, policy and planning.

Recommendations

- Establish a Consumer Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation (ACAT) that will provide advisory input on quality and levels of service, equity issues and human rights considerations.
- ACAT will have an eligibility sub-committee that will assist with the review and assessment of applications.

3.5 Fare Strategy

The following recommendations lay out a broad strategy for the evolution of the SCT fare structure with the aims of equity, ridership growth and cost-effectiveness. Each of these recommendations will require additional study before they can be finalized and implemented.

3.5.1 Balance Equity between Community Support and Users Fares

In 2009 revenue from fares covered less than 33 percent of SCT operating costs. The remaining costs were covered by tax revenue. It is important to ensure a level of equity between revenue from taxpayers (who may not use transit but enjoy other benefits such as cleaner air) and transit riders who directly use the system.

This report recommends that SCT work towards an appropriate range of cost recovery performance. Fares should be periodically reviewed to determine if they are maximizing revenue or should be adjusted to help meet the cost recovery target range. Regular adjustments should be made to compensate for inflation.

3.5.2 Simplify the Fixed-Route Fare Structure

The existing fare structure is complex and is often confusing for new customers and staff. Steps should be taken to simplify the fare structure wherever possible to increase customer satisfaction. Options for simplification include:

- Replace the multitude of different passenger categories by consolidating into the following six categories:
 1. Child (< 6)
 2. Everybody Rides (low-income)
 3. Discounted (all other concession fares – seniors, students, children and persons with disabilities)
 4. Adult (adults)
 5. U-Pass (participating post-secondary students)
 6. Specialized Transit Registrants (eligible for specialized transit)
- Reduce the types of passes by consolidating all concession groups (excluding those qualifying for the Everybody Rides program) into one passenger category
- Replace the student and senior commuter pass with the discounted commuter pass
- Replacing the school board pass with the discounted local pass

3.5.3 Adopt Tiered Pricing for Fares and Parking

Transit fares should be restructured to encourage the most economically and environmentally sustainable means of travel. This will help to ensure that infrastructure and services are used cost-effectively as ridership continues to grow. SCT can:

- Consider reserved parking space fees for Park and Ride users.

- Encourage intermunicipal travellers to use the feeder buses rather than Park and Ride by continuing to charge no transfer surcharge for commuter passes and tickets when riding local or feeder buses.
- Continue to allow free transfers between local buses.
- Promote free Kiss and Ride, walking or bicycle access.
- Consider providing a discount for specialized transit users to encourage them to use fixed-route transit.
- Consider fares for any fixed-route services in rural areas to be the same as an intermunicipal trip between Sherwood Park and Edmonton.

3.5.4 Ensure Affordable Transit to all Low-Income Residents

The County's "Everybody Rides" program was created to provide improved access to transit services for residents with limited income or who are on Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH). The qualifying applicants can purchase transit passes for all members of the household at a discounted rate. The program is a cutting-edge and successful fare-subsidy program and should be strengthened and expanded. Eligibility for AISH or Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) could make someone automatically eligible for the program. This will ensure that the additional subsidy is available to those in need.

Confirming eligibility should continue to be administered by the Family and Community Services Department, rather than the Transit Department.

3.5.5 Encourage Youth to Use Transit More Frequently

Youth below the age of 18 are an important ridership market for transit, especially within Sherwood Park. Youth mobility is an important aspect of social sustainability.

The County already carries many youth through a long standing arrangement with Elk Island Catholic Schools. This arrangement could be leveraged to provide youth with greater opportunity to use transit. The County could discontinue "school board" passes and issue discounted local passes to secondary students. This would eliminate time-of-day restrictions on transit use and allow youth to use the pass during evenings and weekends when transit service is utilized less frequently.

Opportunities to encourage youth to use transit via pricing should not be seen as a fare discount or concessionary program. Rather, it should be seen as a marketing strategy to temporarily help youth become familiar and comfortable with transit so that they will continue to choose transit as adults.

3.5.6 Increase Customer Convenience

In addition to new strategies and programs, other changes could make transit more attractive by increasing the convenience to customers. These ideas include:

- Intermunicipal and local tickets could be sold in a book of 10 or 20 (instead of 12) to conveniently provide customers with a full week of rides.

- Develop a direct debit process that would allow customers to automatically pay for a monthly pass via direct withdrawal from a bank account and receive the pass through the mail. This would increase convenience for customers and reduce pressure on staff during high volume sales periods.
- Consider offering employers a discount for purchasing passes in bulk. This can encourage ridership among commuters, enhance tax incentives for riders and companies, and reduce administration costs.
- Reduce administration costs by minimizing the use of small coins. Consider increasing fares in 25 cent increments.
- SCT can work with ETS, StAT and the CRB to advance the concept of a smart card system that will electronically process fare payments. The technology has the potential to increase customer convenience and allow more flexible pricing, while reducing administrative costs and fraud.

3.5.7 Review the Fare Reciprocity Agreement with ETS

The long standing contract between SCT and ETS to recognize each other's fares has served customers well. However, the original organizing tenants have become less clear over the years and a comprehensive joint review of the purpose and form of the contract may be warranted. Key issues include creating a single surcharge for transfers (rather than the current \$1 or \$2 surcharge), opportunities to utilize SCT tickets on the LRT validating machines, and improving revenue protection for both agencies.

3.5.8 Formalize a Fare Reciprocity Agreement with StAT

Although there are very few customers transferring between SCT and StAT, the two communities can increase customer convenience by formalizing the long-standing informal practice of accepting each other's fares. SCT can also consider whether agreements are necessary with emerging transit operations in Fort Saskatchewan, Spruce Grove and Leduc.

3.5.9 Specialized Transit Fares

Fares for specialized transit should remain distinct from those for fixed-route transit in the short-term. However, the two fare structures will become increasingly related. Recommendations for specialized fares include:

- Continue the practice that local fares apply within the urban service area of Sherwood Park. Trips for rural and intermunicipal areas could be higher to reflect additional costs of longer travel distances. No fundamental change to the fare structure would be required. However, it can be clarified.
- Fares for specialized transit could continue to be higher than fixed-route fares to reflect the higher cost of providing demand-response service. In the future, the County could consider transitioning specialized fares for local and intermunicipal travel to be the same as fixed-route fares.
- As all clients are either seniors or have a disability, there would be no discounts or any concessionary fares for specialized transit.

- Develop a reciprocal fare arrangement with DATS in Edmonton.
- Encourage specialized transit riders to use fixed-route transit by providing a discount on fixed-route fares, for example a discount of 50 percent from the equivalent specialized trip. This is a demand management tactic to shift customers from an expensive service to a less costly service and should not be seen as an additional subsidy.
- Set appropriate limits on attendants and companions traveling on specialized service. This would help to ensure that the limited vehicle seating is reserved for passengers who truly need the service and not voluntary traveling companions.
- Explore partnerships with local private-sector organizations and non-profit groups for opportunities to make residents aware of additional options in the community.

3.6 Transit Supportive Policies

In addition to service improvements, transit-supportive policies are important to promote transit use in the community and would include:

- Promote integrated land use and transit planning including mixed-use and higher density development as well as intensification of existing urban areas.
- Locate trip-generating land uses such as activity centres, seniors places and service centres close to transit stations and stops.
- Reduce parking requirements at major transit stations and along transit corridors to encourage transit uses.
- Ensure a continuous street network with wide sidewalks and safe crosswalks.
- Provide an extensive pedestrian and trail network for easy and safe access to major transit facilities and stops.
- Provide bicycle routes and secure bicycle parking facilities at major bus stations.
- Traffic calming measures at the major bus stations and stops to ensure pedestrian-friendly waiting and walking areas.
- Transit priority measures along key corridor and at station access points – designate existing road infrastructure for transit vehicle use and provide a competitive travel time for buses and improve service reliability.
- Use new technologies to improve customer services and service reliability including real-time passenger information.
- Improve transit system accessibility by using low-floor accessible vehicles and making stops and facilities more accessible.
- Preserve lands for future high-order transit corridors and stations.
- Preserve lands for higher density development in the vicinity of major transit stations.

3.7 Continuous Improvement Process

3.7.1 Performance Measures

The following section outlines the recommended guidelines to guide the monitoring and development of SCT routes and services based on current performance and peer benchmarking (Appendix E). The recommended values in each of these areas reflect a desire to improve service levels to promote ridership growth. Other service standards and guidelines including route performance standards are detailed in Appendix F.

The objective in establishing guidelines and monitoring performance in these areas is to improve year-over-year performance, recognizing short-term impacts of service increases.

Amount of Service

SCT's current performance is 1.76 vehicle hours per capita. However, considering potential use of high-capacity vehicles on intermunicipal services, it is recommended that a minimum of 1.5 vehicle hours per capita should be maintained to guide the provision of services.

Service Utilization

SCT current performance is 22 passengers per vehicle hour. It is recommended that a minimum target of 20 passengers per vehicle hour should be established to monitor the service performance, with a long-term goal of increasing to 25 passengers per vehicle hour.

Similar to the passengers per vehicle hour measure, the annual passengers per capita statistic measures the overall propensity of the community to use transit, and the attractiveness of the system. Higher values represent superior performance. SCT current performance is 39 passengers per capita. It is recommended that a minimum of 40 passengers per capita should be established, with a long-term goal of increasing to 50 passengers per capita.

Cost Recovery Ratio (R/C)

The financial performance measures are all affected by inflation, particularly the changing cost of fuel. Since inflationary effects on costs cannot be precisely predicted and will significantly reduce or eliminate evidence of progress in this measure, financial measures are addressed in this document as an effective monitoring tool, but not recommended as a standard. SCT should carefully monitor the following financial measures with consideration of the price index.

Cost recovery targets are a useful indicator of overall economic performance of the system and are a common performance measure in the transit industry. It is important to note however, that the indicator focuses only on economic performance, while many other factors, especially ridership, should be included to help measure performance against the various system objectives.

GENIVAR's recommended approach is to benchmark cost recovery performance against industry standards with consideration for all local factors that influence it, and then monitor cost recovery on an annual basis in the context of continuous improvement.

GENIVAR does not recommend a single value as an R/C target for a variety of reasons:

- If applied strictly, it limits the ability of transit management to achieve the other transit system's objectives. For example, service expansion often results in a short-term reduction in cost recovery performance. If the cost recovery target is strictly applied, it may thwart efforts to increase ridership. Also, not meeting a specific target may suggest a fare increase strictly to increase revenue, which may reduce ridership and affect other performance indicators. A

comprehensive assessment of proposed changes in service, fares and system features on all aspects of system performance should always be considered.

- If not applied strictly, then a single value is actually a range, and so the range should be specifically outlined and assured to be consistent with other system objectives.

An appropriate range of cost recovery performance is a range of 35 percent to 50 percent for combined intermunicipal, and local and feeder services. At the 50 percent level, costs are equally shared between users and the community, and many transit systems consider this conceptually sound. Normally, a system such as SCT should expect cost recovery performance in excess of 35 percent. A lower level of 35 percent will still allow staff the flexibility to implement service expansion programs that affect cost recovery in the short-term. Generally, cost recovery performance of intermunicipal services should be higher than that of local and feeder services.

3.7.2 Planning Process

To assist SCT staff in meeting the objective of a fair and balanced appraisal of service requirements, based on technical analysis and consultation, a service review process has been developed, comprising a series of reviews and assessments of requests from different sources. This process will provide staff with a consistent, objective framework to assess requests for new or revised services.

The framework has four critical elements:

1. The recommended service standards to assess new and existing services.
2. A series of three on-going route assessments comprising:
 - Regular route assessments as part of an on-going monitoring process
 - Periodic service reviews to monitor the on-going performance of the system or respond to minor requests
 - Annual service reviews to assess major requests for new or revised services
3. The data collection program required to support the review process.
4. A comprehensive consultation process.

Details of each element are included in Appendix F.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Building on the County's Strategic Plan and other policy documents, as well as the Capital Region Board Transit Plan, the Transit Master Plan developed a strategic framework with a well-defined vision and strategic direction for all transit services as well as a set of strategies to address future transit needs of the community.

To implement this vision, the County will need to invest in expanding transit services while strongly encouraging transit use through land-use policies and strategies to shift the demand for travel from automobiles to transit. Together with the Integrated Transportation Master Plan, this Transit Master Plan will address the broader issues of transportation throughout the County and the recommended improvements to the transit system.

Vision for Transit Services

The proposed vision statement is:

As a recognized leader in the transit industry, Strathcona County Transit takes pride in providing excellent service to the community while enhancing quality of life and promoting sustainability.

Fixed-Route Transit

Recommendations for the fixed-route transit system include service strategies covering intermunicipal services between Strathcona County and Edmonton, local and feeder services operating within Sherwood Park, Park and Ride, and transit services in rural areas of the county.

- Intermunicipal transit routes continue to operate direct connections to destinations within downtown Edmonton, with branches connecting to the University of Alberta.
- Local services should be gradually improved towards an integrated local and feeder network providing convenient connections to major local destinations and intermunicipal services. The short-term concept plan includes a modest change to the existing service route structure with increased convergence of routes to Strathcona Station. The medium-term calls for the operation of a higher-frequency corridor connecting Strathcona Station, Centre in the Park, and Sherwood Park Transit Centre. In the long-term, when the Emerald Hills mixed-use community is developed, the higher-frequency corridor will be extended to connect to that development. Local routes north of Baseline Road will be restructured to connect to the higher-frequency corridor.
- SCT should incorporate reserved premium pay parking spaces at the Park and Ride lots in mid 2013 to coincide with the opening of the planned expansion of Strathcona Station. The purpose of the reserved premium parking fee is to encourage drivers to utilize another, more sustainable, means of accessing the intermunicipal services, while guaranteeing access for those who choose to pay the fee. This will maximize the use of infrastructure, reduce subsidies and encourage environmentally friendly travel behaviour. The fees can also offset the costs of upgraded facilities and amenities. In the future, after the new Park and Ride location reaches capacity, SCT could consider application of a parking fee for all Park and Ride customers.
- SCT should consider providing demand-response service to accommodate the general public in conjunction with existing specialized transit services on a space available basis for medical and social trips only (48 hour advanced booking), and consider a pilot rural Park

and Ride Program. The rural Park and Ride facilities could be located using the existing parking facilities at churches or activity centres with limited peak-only intermunicipal service. SCT could consider continuing to provide free parking for rural residents if a general paid parking fee is applied to all Park and Ride customers. Additionally, SCT should continue to provide special event-based transit service to rural communities to relieve traffic and parking congestion in the vicinity of an event venue.

Specialized Transit

In our recommendations for the specialized transit system, GENIVAR has adopted a standard of equivalent service, establishing an objective that, over time, services will be equivalent in as many ways as possible. Short-term recommendations focus on high priority items such as service coverage, hours of service and days of service. In the longer-term, it will be appropriate for the Strathcona County community to explore how many other ways service in the community can and should be designed to be equivalent.

- It is recommended that the eligibility criteria should be changed to permit only those persons whose functional limitations may affect their ability to use fixed-route transit services.
- Specialized services should be complementary and provided when fixed-route services do not meet customer needs.
- In the rural areas, it is recommended that specialized services for medical and social trip purposes should continue to be provided.
- In the urban service area of Sherwood Park, specialized services will operate the same days and hours of service as fixed-route transit services and will permit work and school trips requests.
- For intermunicipal trips, specialized service will eliminate trip purpose restrictions while maintaining Edmonton service to key transfer points, fixed-route destinations and other specific destinations east of the specialized service boundary identified by SCT.
- Develop demand management strategies intended to redistribute the demand for travel on more costly (specialized) to less costly (fixed-route) services. These strategies may consist of developing partnerships with agencies and implementation of additional strategies that shift demand from specialized to fixed-route services.

Fare Strategies

The following recommendations lay out a broad strategy for the evolution of the SCT fare structure with the aims of equity, ridership growth and cost-effectiveness. Each of these recommendations will require additional work to finalize for the specific needs of the community.

- Balance equity between community support and customer fares.
- Simplify the fixed-route fare structure.
- Adopt tiered pricing for fares and parking.
- Ensure affordable transit to all low-income residents.
- Encourage youth to use transit more frequently.
- Increase customer convenience.

- Review the fare reciprocity agreement with ETS.
- Formalize a fare reciprocity agreement with StAT.

Fares for specialized transit would remain distinct from those for fixed-route transit in the short-term. However, the two fare structures will become increasingly related. In the future, the County could consider transitioning specialized fares for local and intermunicipal travel to be the same as fixed-route fares.

Continuous Improvement Process

The recommended guidelines to guide the monitoring and development of SCT routes and services reflect a desire to improve service levels to promote ridership growth. The objective in establishing guidelines and monitoring performance in these areas is to improve year-over-year performance, recognizing short-term impacts of service increases.

- Amount of Service – a minimum of 1.5 vehicle hours per capita should be maintained to guide the provision of services.
- Service Utilization – a minimum target of 20 passengers per vehicle hour should be established to monitor the service performance, with a long-term goal of increasing to 25 passengers per vehicle hour; a minimum of 40 passengers per capita should be established, with a long-term goal of increasing to 50 passengers per capita.
- Cost Recovery Ratio (R/C) – an appropriate range of cost recovery performance is a range of 35 percent to 50 percent for combined intermunicipal, and local and feeder services. Generally, cost recovery performance of intermunicipal services should be higher than that of local and feeder services.

A service review process is recommended to provide staff with a consistent, objective framework to assess requests for new or revised services. The framework has four critical elements:

1. The recommended service standards to assess new and existing services.
2. A series of three on-going route assessments comprising:
 - Regular route assessments as part of an on-going monitoring process
 - Periodic service reviews to monitor the on-going performance of the system or respond to minor requests
 - Annual service reviews to assess major requests for new or revised services
3. The data collection program required to support the review process.
4. A comprehensive consultation process.

Glossary

- AISH – Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped. A provincial income supplement program.
- BRT – Bus Rapid Transit.
- CBD – Central Business District.
- CRB – Capital Region Board.
- CRGP – Capital Region Growth Plan.
- DATS – Disabled Adult Transit Service. The city of Edmonton’s specialized transit service.
- Dial-A-Bus – A service delivery technique used within Sherwood Park on weekday evening, weekends and holidays. Passengers are required to call ahead to book a trip and the bus does not follow a fixed-route.
- ETS – Edmonton Transit System.
- Feeder route – A service delivery technique using a transit route intended to carry passengers from a neighbourhood to an intermunicipal transit service.
- FLE – Full load enrolment.
- GIS – Guaranteed Income Supplement.
- GMU – Grant McEwen University.
- Intermunicipal – Transit services that cross a municipal boundary. Often also called “Commuter” services.
- ITNP – Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan.
- Kiss and Ride – A service delivery technique where passengers are dropped off at a transit station to transfer to a bus.
- LICO – Low Income Cut Off.
- LRT – Light Rail Transit.
- MDP – Municipal Development Plan.
- NAIT – The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology.
- Park and Ride – A service delivery technique where passengers drive to a parking lot where they transfer to a bus.
- SCAT – Strathcona County Accessible Transit.
- SCT – Strathcona County Transit.
- Specialized Transit – Door-to-door transit services intended for persons with disabilities who can not use the fixed-route transit service.
- StAT – St. Albert Transit.

- TDM – Transportation Demand Management. A set of measures and strategies intended to improve the transportation system by reducing single-occupant travel or to redistribute the demand in space and time.
- TOD – Transit-Oriented Development. An approach to neighbourhood planning that consciously facilitates transit use through the design of the community.
- Transit mode share – The percentage of all travellers that are using transit.
- TUC – The Transportation Utility Corridor adjacent to Highway 216 (Anthony Henday) near Sherwood Park.
- UA –The University of Alberta.
- U-Pass – A regional fare program for post-secondary students.
- Zone fare – an extra fee to travel from one designated area to another. Typically used to account for the higher costs of longer distance travel.

Appendices

- A. Consultation Schedule
- B. Detailed Responses to Online Survey
- C. Review Consultation Summary
- D. Detailed Route Network Evaluations
- E. Peer Review
- F. Service Standards and Planning Process

Appendix A

Consultation Schedule

Strathcona County Transit - Stakeholder Engagement Schedule

Wednesday April 21			Meeting Room Location
1	7:45 AM	Councillor Peter Wlodarczak	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
2	9:00 AM	Councillor Vic Bidzinski	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
3	10:00 AM	Councillor Linda Osinchuk	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
4	11:00 AM	Councillor Jason Gariepy	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
5	1:00 PM	Seniors Advisory Committee Focus Group (Jodi Kelloway)	Meeting Room "A", Main Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
6	2:00 PM	Ed Riediger (Robin Hood Association)	Meeting Room "A", Main Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
7	3:00 PM	Mayor Cathy Olesen	Mayor's Office, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
8	4:00 PM	Youth Advisory Committee Focus Group (Erin McKeown)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive

Thursday April 22			Meeting Room Location
1	8:00 AM	Robyn Singelton (Chief Commissioner)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
2	9:00 AM	Denise Exton (Associate Commissioner)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
3	10:00 AM	Dawn Hemming (Coordinator, Financial Systems for Transit division)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
4	11:00 AM	Ken Fearnley (Pioneer Housing Foundation)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
5	1:00 PM	Sharon Siga (Library Manager)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
6	2:00 PM	Vern Parker (PDS Manager)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
7	3:00 PM	Admin Reps - UofA / MacEwan / NAIT (Martin Coutts / Keith Andony / Jason Roth)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
8	4:00 PM	MS Society Focus Group (Jo Berlinguette)	Room 239, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive

Friday April 23			Meeting Room Location
1	8:00 AM	Matt Carpenter (Transit Manager)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
2	9:00 AM	Todd Banks & Chris Dugan (Chamber of Commerce)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
3	10:00 AM	Transit CSRs	Transit Centre Bubble, 970 Ordze Road
4	11:00 AM	Transit Operators	Transit Operations Drivers' Lounge, 200 Streambank Avenue
5	1:00 PM	Bob Boutilier (ETS) 780-496-2810 (map attached to email)	GM's office, 15th Floor Century Place, 9803 - 102 A Avenue, Edmonton

Tuesday May 4			Meeting Room Location
1	8:00 AM	Transit Operators	Transit Operations Drivers' Lounge, 200 Streambank Avenue
2	9:00 AM	Kevin Glebe / Kelly Rudyk (CPIA)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
3	10:00 AM	Gerry Gabinet (Manager of EDT)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
4	11:00 AM	Russ Pawlyk (Manager of RPC)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
5	1:00 PM	John Elzinga / Neil Shelly (AIHA)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
6	2:00 PM	Transit Fuellers & Cleaners	Transit Operations Lunchroom, 200 Streambank Avenue
7	3:00 PM	Operations Staff (90 minute meeting)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
8	5:00 PM	Phone calls - 2 ASB Members: Jim Henry - 780-719-4383 / Mel Marler - 780-998-4786	
	6:00 PM	Phone call - 1 ASB Member - Jackie Christie - 780-918-3221	

Thursday May 6			Meeting Room Location
1	8:00 AM	Dana Sims (SCAT Supervisor)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
2	9:00 AM	Lisa Weder (Student Transportation EIPS)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
3	10:00 AM	SCAT Operators	Transit Operations Lunchroom, 200 Streambank Avenue
4	11:00 AM	Dinah Canart (Coordinator, Heartland Service Area and Rural Liaison)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
5	1:00 PM	Student Union Reps - UofA / MacEwan / NAIT (Nick Dehod / Roy Coulthard / Nils Holmgren / Geoffrey Tate)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
6	2:00 PM	Mike MacGarva (Manager of EEP)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
7	3:00 PM	Administration & Planning Staff (90 minute meeting)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
8	6:00 PM - 7:30 PM	SCAT Focus Group (90 minute meeting) (Dana Sims)	Conference Centre #1, Main Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive

Wednesday May 5			Meeting Room Location
1	8:00 AM	Transit Supervisors	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
2	9:00 AM	George Huybregts (Associate Commissioner)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
3	10:00 AM	Stan Sullivan (Fleet Manager)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
4	11:00 AM	Jackie Winter (FCS Manager)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way
5	1:00 PM	Seniors United Now (SUN) Focus Group (Jacqueline Biollo)	Transit Admin Meeting Room, 132, 2181 Premier Way

Friday May 7			Meeting Room Location
1	8:00 AM	Councillor Alan Dunn	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
2	9:00 AM	Councillor Roxanne Carr	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
3	10:00 AM	Councillor Glen Lawrence	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
4	11:00 AM	Sarah Schiff (Senior Advisor, Sustainable Infrastructure & Planning)	Meeting Room "A", Main Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive
5	2:30 PM	Councillor Jacquie Fenske	Council Meeting Room, 2nd Floor County Hall, 2001 Sherwood Drive

**Do you have an opinion about
your transit service?**

...then share it with us!

Strathcona County Transit is asking the community for feedback to help guide our future growth. As part of the Transit Master Plan, riders and non-riders, urban and rural residents of Strathcona County are encouraged to participate in an **online questionnaire** as well as our **open houses**.

Open House dates and locations

All sessions will run from 3- 7 p.m.

May 5 - The Coast Hotel

2100 Premier Way, Sherwood Park

May 25 - Josephburg Community Hall

57-54569 RR 215

May 26 - Ardrossan Recreation Centre

#8 Queen Street, Ardrossan

May 27 - Strathcona Olympiette Centre

52029 RR 224, Fultonvale

For more information and to take our questionnaire, visit:

www.strathcona.ca/transit

For a copy of the questionnaire call: 780-464-RIDE (7433)














Strathcona
County Transit

Appendix B

Detailed Responses to Online Survey

Strathcona County Transit Master Plan Public Survey







1. In which area do you live in or closest to?

		Response Percent	Response Count
In Sherwood Park		78.0%	577
Near Sherwood Park, south of Wye Road		3.0%	22
Near Sherwood Park, east of Highway 21		4.2%	31
Antler Lake		0.5%	4
Ardrossan		3.6%	27
Colchester		0.3%	2
Collingwood Cove		0.3%	2
Half Moon Lake		0.4%	3
Hastings Lake		0.0%	0
Josephburg		1.5%	11
North Cooking Lake		0.1%	1
South Cooking Lake		0.8%	6
Edmonton		5.3%	39
Other		2.0%	15
Other (please specify)			21
answered question			740
skipped question			4






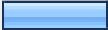
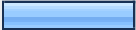
2. Please provide your postal code:

	Response Count
	694
<i>answered question</i>	694
<i>skipped question</i>	50









3. What is the purpose of your most frequent trip outside of your home?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Work 	65.7%	486
School 	17.8%	132
Shopping 	6.5%	48
Medical 	2.3%	17
Recreation/Programs 	4.3%	32
Other 	3.4%	25
Other (please specify)		42
<i>answered question</i>		740
<i>skipped question</i>		4



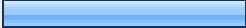
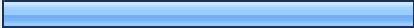


4. Where is your most frequent trip destination?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Edmonton - Downtown		31.4%	232
Edmonton - Grant MacEwan University		3.9%	29
Edmonton - NAIT		2.2%	16
Edmonton - University of Alberta		22.4%	166
Edmonton - Government Centre		5.4%	40
Sherwood Park - Sherwood Park Mall		15.4%	114
Other		19.3%	143
Other (please provide the name, postal code or nearest intersection of the final trip destination)			161
<i>answered question</i>			740
<i>skipped question</i>			4










5. How often do you travel to your most frequent destination? (include trips made by transit, automobile or any other form of transportation)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Everyday 	25.7%	190
Every weekday 	51.4%	380
Every weekend 	0.5%	4
3-4 times per week 	12.2%	90
1-2 times per week 	5.7%	42
3-4 times per month 	2.4%	18
1-2 times per month 	1.4%	10
Less than 1 time per month 	0.8%	6
answered question		740
skipped question		4

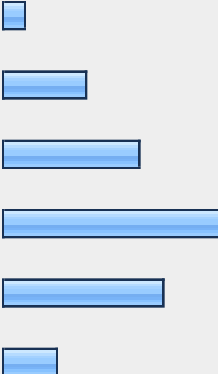
6. What time(s) of day do you travel to and from your most frequent destination? (check all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Early morning (before 6:00 A.M.) 	5.3%	39
A.M. peak (6:00 A.M. - 9:00 A.M.) 	77.8%	576
Midday (9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.) 	36.8%	272
P.M. peak (4:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.) 	62.0%	459
Evening (6:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.) 	20.9%	155
Late evening (after 10:00 P.M.) 	4.3%	32
answered question		740
skipped question		4

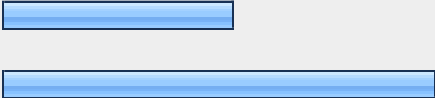
7. What is your usual form of transportation to your most frequent destination?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Drive a car without passengers 	26.8%	198
Drive a car with one passenger 	7.8%	58
Drive a car with two or more passengers 	2.3%	17
Passenger in a car 	3.0%	22
Public transit 	56.4%	417
Bike 	0.7%	5
Walk 	0.7%	5
Taxi 	0.5%	4
Other 	1.9%	14
Other (please specify)		32
answered question		740
skipped question		4






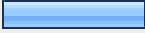




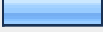



8. How old are you?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Under 18 	2.9%	21
18-22	12.2%	89
23-34	20.5%	150
35-50	32.4%	237
51-64	24.2%	177
65 or older	7.9%	58
answered question		732
skipped question		12









9. Are you:

	Response Percent	Response Count
Male 	34.6%	253
Female	65.4%	479
answered question		732
skipped question		12

10. What is your occupation?

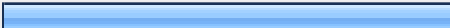

		Response Percent	Response Count
Retail/Service		5.3%	38
Manufacturing/Construction		1.8%	13
Government		19.4%	138
Health care		5.1%	36
Education		6.5%	46
Professional		21.0%	149
Clerical		6.2%	44
Homemaker		1.1%	8
Junior high school student		1.1%	8
High school student		2.0%	14
Post-secondary student		14.6%	104
Retired		8.7%	62
Unemployed		0.8%	6
Other		6.3%	45
Other (please specify)			67
answered question			711
skipped question			33

11. What is your total income?


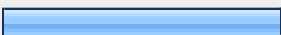
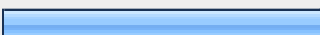

		Response Percent	Response Count
I prefer not to answer		32.1%	231
Less than \$20,000		14.6%	105
\$20,000-\$34,999		8.2%	59
\$35,000-\$49,999		8.9%	64
\$50,000-\$64,999		12.8%	92
\$65,000-\$79,999		6.8%	49
\$80,000-\$94,999		6.3%	45
\$95,000 or more		10.3%	74
<i>answered question</i>			719
<i>skipped question</i>			25

12. Are you a frequent transit rider?

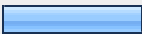
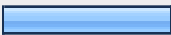
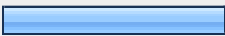


This means you have used either the regular SCT or Strathcona County Accessible Transit (SCAT) system in the last three months for at least three trips.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		67.8%	496
No		32.2%	236
<i>answered question</i>			732
<i>skipped question</i>			12

13. Which SCT service do you most frequently use?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Local service only (including school service within Sherwood Park) 	4.8%	24
Commuter service only 	41.8%	207
Both local service AND commuter service 	48.1%	238
Strathcona County Accessible Transportation (SCAT) 	5.3%	26
<i>answered question</i>		495
<i>skipped question</i>		249









14. What is your most important reason for using the SCT service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
I do not have a car available 	20.8%	5
I do not have a driver's license 	25.0%	6
I am not able to drive 	33.3%	8
Parking is a problem 	12.5%	3
Bus is more convenient 	8.3%	2
Bus is cheaper	0.0%	0
To help the environment	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		1
<i>answered question</i>		24
<i>skipped question</i>		720









15. What is your second most important reason for using the SCT service?

		Response Percent	Response Count
I do not have a car available		20.8%	5
I do not have a driver's license		8.3%	2
I am not able to drive		16.7%	4
Parking is a problem		0.0%	0
Bus is more convenient		12.5%	3
Bus is cheaper		20.8%	5
To help the environment		16.7%	4
Other		4.2%	1
Other (please specify)			1
answered question			24
skipped question			720








16. What is your most important reason for using the SCT service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
I do not have a car available 	9.3%	41
I do not have a driver's license 	4.5%	20
I am not able to drive 	3.4%	15
Parking is a problem 	18.5%	82
Bus is more convenient 	23.3%	103
Bus is cheaper 	29.1%	129
To help the environment 	8.1%	36
Other 	3.8%	17
Other (please specify)		16
<i>answered question</i>		443
<i>skipped question</i>		301









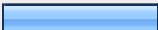
17. What is your second most important reason for using the SCT service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
I do not have a car available 	3.6%	16
I do not have a driver's license 	3.8%	17
I am not able to drive 	3.2%	14
Parking is a problem 	22.8%	101
Bus is more convenient 	17.2%	76
Bus is cheaper 	19.2%	85
To help the environment 	23.3%	103
Other 	7.0%	31
Other (please specify)		30
answered question		443
skipped question		301

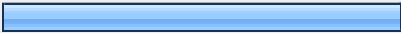

18. What is your most important reason for using the SCAT service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Taxis are too expensive	0.0%	0
Taxis are not accessible	0.0%	0
Regular buses are not accessible or available in my area 	7.7%	2
SCAT is more convenient than arranging a ride with a family member or friend 	11.5%	3
SCAT provides me with independence 	30.8%	8
No accessible private car available 	3.8%	1
Do not have a drivers license	0.0%	0
I am not able to drive 	23.1%	6
Parking is a problem	0.0%	0
To help the environment	0.0%	0
To avoid winter weather 	3.8%	1
Other 	19.2%	5
Other (please specify)		4
answered question		26
skipped question		718








19. What is your second most important reason for using the SCAT service?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Taxis are too expensive 	3.8%	1
Taxis are not accessible	0.0%	0
Regular buses are not accessible or available in my area 	23.1%	6
SCAT is more convenient than arranging a ride with a family member or friend 	3.8%	1
SCAT provides me with independence 	7.7%	2
No accessible private car available 	11.5%	3
Do not have a drivers license 	7.7%	2
I am not able to drive 	11.5%	3
Parking is a problem	0.0%	0
To help the environment	0.0%	0
To avoid winter weather 	7.7%	2
Other 	23.1%	6
Other (please specify)		5
answered question		26
skipped question		718


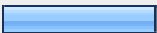


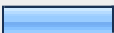


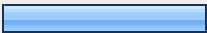
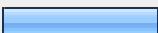
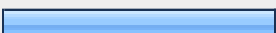





20. Which Strathcona County Transit station do you use for commuter service?

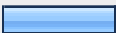
		Response Percent	Response Count
Sherwood Park Transit Centre (Wye Road)		60.0%	266
Strathcona Station (Baseline Road)		40.0%	177
answered question			443
skipped question			301

21. How do you usually travel from your home to the commuter station?

		Response Percent	Response Count
SCT local transit		42.0%	186
Walk		5.9%	26
Bike		1.6%	7
Drive vehicle and park		37.9%	168
Drop-off		8.4%	37
Car pool		1.1%	5
Other		3.2%	14
Other (please specify)			24
answered question			443
skipped question			301





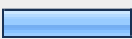


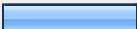








22. Please identify reasons for not using the local service more frequently to get to the commuter station. (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Inconvenient to transfer		23.7%	61
Layover time between local bus and commuter bus is too long		23.0%	59
Local service does not go where I need to in Sherwood Park		11.7%	30
Local service does not go to rural locations		18.7%	48
Local evening and weekend services do not run frequently enough		16.3%	42
Local A.M. and P.M. peak period service does not run frequently enough		15.6%	40
Local midday service does not run frequently enough		7.0%	18
Local routes take too long		30.4%	78
Nearest bus stop to my home is too far away		23.3%	60
More convenient to drive to the Park and Ride lot		41.2%	106
More convenient to bike, walk or use another form of active transportation to get to the commuter station		12.8%	33
Parking is free at the Park and Ride lots		25.7%	66
Errands are inconvenient to do on transit		23.7%	61
Fares are too high		7.8%	20
Not using local service allows me to get to the commuter station earlier and gives me a better		37.7%	97

chance at getting a seat on the commuter bus		
Other 	16.7%	43
Other (please specify)		53
answered question		257
skipped question		487

23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?						
	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
An in-person interview should be included as part of the SCAT application process to ensure eligibility	20.0% (5)	28.0% (7)	28.0% (7)	4.0% (1)	20.0% (5)	25
When necessary, SCAT clients could travel by taxi rather than on a SCAT bus	0.0% (0)	16.0% (4)	32.0% (8)	12.0% (3)	40.0% (10)	25
I would use regular transit if conditions on the system were barrier-free and if my SCAT registration card were accepted as a fare payment	20.0% (5)	8.0% (2)	40.0% (10)	0.0% (0)	32.0% (8)	25
I know how to use regular transit	24.0% (6)	12.0% (3)	36.0% (9)	4.0% (1)	24.0% (6)	25
I would like to travel to the Fort Saskatchewan Hospital on SCAT	16.0% (4)	12.0% (3)	40.0% (10)	4.0% (1)	28.0% (7)	25
SCAT service should be expanded regardless of the cost	40.0% (10)	16.0% (4)	36.0% (9)	8.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	25
answered question						25
skipped question						719

24. What is your most important reason for not using SCT?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Car is more comfortable 	12.1%	28
Buses are too crowded 	1.3%	3
Cannot find parking at Park and Ride lots 	2.2%	5
Bus stop is too far from where I live 	6.5%	15
Service does not go where I want to go 	19.0%	44
Does not start early enough 	0.9%	2
Does not run late enough 	1.3%	3
Takes too long 	19.8%	46
No direct route 	9.9%	23
Transfer is difficult 	2.2%	5
Buses are not reliable 	0.4%	1
Bus does not come often enough 	3.4%	8
Poor evening service 	0.4%	1
Poor weekend service 	0.9%	2
Safety/security concern at the bus stop and/or on the bus	0.0%	0
I cannot afford the fare 	1.3%	3
Other 	18.5%	43
Other (please specify)		49
answered question		232
skipped question		512







25. What is your second most important reason for not using SCT?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Car is more comfortable	11.6%	27
Buses are too crowded	1.3%	3
Cannot find parking at Park and Ride lots	4.3%	10
Bus stop is too far from where I live	6.5%	15
Service does not go where I want to go	10.3%	24
Does not start early enough	2.2%	5
Does not run late enough	0.0%	0
Takes too long	13.4%	31
No direct route	13.8%	32
Transfer is difficult	2.2%	5
Buses are not reliable	0.9%	2
Bus does not come often enough	8.2%	19
Poor evening service	3.0%	7
Poor weekend service	1.7%	4
Safety/security concern at the bus stop and/or on the bus	1.7%	4
I cannot afford the fare	2.2%	5
Other	16.8%	39
Other (please specify)		40
answered question		232
skipped question		512

26. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Discounted fares should be available to low-income persons, even if taxes increase	39.2% (278)	35.8% (254)	14.2% (101)	6.8% (48)	4.1% (29)	710
All buses should be fully accessible for persons with mobility limitations	50.4% (357)	29.6% (210)	11.4% (81)	6.3% (45)	2.3% (16)	709
All bus stops and transit facilities should be fully accessible for persons with mobility limitations	56.0% (396)	27.3% (193)	11.0% (78)	3.7% (26)	2.0% (14)	707
<i>answered question</i>						712
<i>skipped question</i>						32

27. Which of the following age groups should receive discounted fares? (check all that apply)

	Response Percent	Response Count
0-5 	60.7%	432
6-17 	49.4%	352
18-22 	29.6%	211
23-64 	12.8%	91
65+ 	84.1%	599
None 	8.4%	60
<i>answered question</i>		712
<i>skipped question</i>		32

28. Should transit service make special consideration for any other group (s) in the community? If yes, please specify for whom and why. (max 300 characters)

	Response Count
	235
<i>answered question</i>	235
<i>skipped question</i>	509

29. How can transit better meet the social needs of the community? (max 300 characters)

	Response Count
	317
<i>answered question</i>	317
<i>skipped question</i>	427

30. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Public transit should be expanded to help the environment	49.5% (350)	33.9% (240)	11.7% (83)	2.1% (15)	2.7% (19)	707
Strathcona County should actively encourage residents to make more environmentally sustainable transportation choices	46.4% (328)	32.0% (226)	15.3% (108)	3.8% (27)	2.5% (18)	707
It should be made more difficult to drive a car in order to encourage people to use transit	10.2% (72)	13.9% (98)	17.0% (120)	23.3% (165)	35.6% (252)	707
	answered question					707
	skipped question					37

31. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Public transit contributes to the economic well-being of my community	35.4% (249)	38.0% (267)	19.8% (139)	4.7% (33)	2.1% (15)	703
Public transit provides good value for the investment of local tax dollars	33.4% (235)	36.8% (259)	18.1% (127)	7.5% (53)	4.1% (29)	703
I would support higher local taxes to increase transit service	18.3% (129)	30.3% (213)	19.5% (137)	17.5% (123)	14.4% (101)	703
Fares should be increased to help fund improved transit service	6.0% (42)	21.8% (153)	21.6% (152)	28.3% (199)	22.3% (157)	703
I benefit from having good public transit in the community, whether I use it or not	40.3% (283)	37.6% (264)	12.7% (89)	5.8% (41)	3.7% (26)	703
<i>answered question</i>						703
<i>skipped question</i>						41

32. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Fares should be set to encourage environmentally sustainable travel choices	31.8% (221)	41.4% (288)	19.8% (138)	4.2% (29)	2.9% (20)	696
Electronic fare cards (smart cards) would encourage me to ride transit more often	14.9% (104)	20.3% (141)	40.1% (279)	12.4% (86)	12.4% (86)	696
If some passengers pay more, it is acceptable to provide a higher level of service	12.4% (86)	22.8% (159)	31.8% (221)	17.5% (122)	15.5% (108)	696
Fares should be lower, to encourage transit ridership	28.4% (198)	35.3% (246)	22.7% (158)	11.1% (77)	2.4% (17)	696
Fares should be higher, to reduce funding support from taxpayers	4.2% (29)	9.5% (66)	24.9% (173)	36.1% (251)	25.4% (177)	696
<i>answered question</i>						696
<i>skipped question</i>						48

33. What thoughts would you like to share regarding fares? (max 300 characters)

	Response Count
	337
<i>answered question</i>	337
<i>skipped question</i>	407


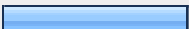
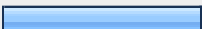




34. Given the demand and associated costs of parking, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following strategies?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Do not add any additional free parking	8.5% (58)	13.1% (89)	25.1% (171)	29.1% (198)	24.2% (165)	681
Add more free parking	31.0% (211)	29.4% (200)	25.8% (176)	9.8% (67)	4.0% (27)	681
Add parking and ask Park and Ride users to help pay for the new spaces	8.4% (57)	20.1% (137)	25.3% (172)	26.9% (183)	19.4% (132)	681
Add Park and Ride service in rural areas (for local service connections)	23.3% (159)	35.8% (244)	29.4% (200)	7.6% (52)	3.8% (26)	681
Add Park and Ride service in rural areas (for commuter service connections)	26.0% (177)	40.4% (275)	23.2% (158)	6.9% (47)	3.5% (24)	681
Strongly encourage customers to use local buses rather than using the Park and Ride lots	23.9% (163)	35.5% (242)	25.0% (170)	10.1% (69)	5.4% (37)	681
Encourage customers to walk, bike or use passenger drop areas rather than using the Park and Ride lots	19.4% (132)	32.9% (224)	25.8% (176)	13.2% (90)	8.7% (59)	681
Charging a fee to park is acceptable as long as local bus connections are provided	11.9% (81)	21.4% (146)	19.1% (130)	22.0% (150)	25.6% (174)	681
	answered question					681
	skipped question					63

35. Who should pay for the construction and on-going maintenance of Park and Ride lots?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Drivers who park in the lots		17.9%	122
All transit riders through fares		7.6%	52
All residents through municipal taxes		38.3%	261
Equal share between drivers who park in the lots and municipal taxpayers		30.7%	209
Other		5.4%	37
Other (please specify)			48
answered question			681
skipped question			63

36. How can the terminals in Sherwood Park be improved? (check all that apply)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Larger passenger drop-off areas		25.0%	170
Off-street passenger drop-off areas with temporary parking		27.8%	189
Improve indoor passenger waiting areas and amenities		29.7%	202
More passenger information		23.5%	160
Improve ticket sales and customer service at the stations		31.3%	213
Unsure		28.3%	193
Other		12.2%	83
Other (please specify)			123
answered question			681
skipped question			63

37. What thoughts would you like to share regarding Park and Ride? (max 300 characters)

	Response Count
	242
answered question	242
skipped question	502

38. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
SCAT should only be available for people with a disability that prevents them from using regular transit	35.9% (243)	34.5% (233)	20.6% (139)	5.5% (37)	3.6% (24)	676
In Edmonton, SCAT should only directly serve the same destinations as regular transit	11.7% (79)	17.9% (121)	38.3% (259)	19.8% (134)	12.3% (83)	676
SCAT should carry customers regardless of their reason for travel (school, work, medical, etc.)	30.0% (203)	33.9% (229)	23.4% (158)	7.2% (49)	5.5% (37)	676
It is acceptable for SCAT to provide more service within Sherwood Park than in other parts of Strathcona County	16.6% (112)	35.1% (237)	32.0% (216)	11.7% (79)	4.7% (32)	676
All SCT buses, facilities and bus stops should be fully accessible	39.3% (266)	31.8% (215)	21.4% (145)	5.5% (37)	1.9% (13)	676
SCAT must operate the same hours and days of service as regular transit, regardless of cost	14.2% (96)	25.6% (173)	33.6% (227)	19.5% (132)	7.1% (48)	676
It is acceptable for SCAT fares to be higher than conventional transit fares	11.2% (76)	25.6% (173)	30.3% (205)	18.5% (125)	14.3% (97)	676
	answered question					676
	skipped question					68

39. What thoughts would you like to share regarding services for persons with disabilities or SCAT? (max 300 characters)

	Response Count
	129
<i>answered question</i>	129
<i>skipped question</i>	615

40. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Students should only be transported by yellow buses	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	16.7% (1)	50.0% (3)	33.3% (2)	6
Students should be able to use public transit to get to and from school	66.7% (4)	33.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6
Buses for adults should always be separate from buses for students	0.0% (0)	50.0% (3)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	16.7% (1)	6
SCT should explore options that allow students to use transit for travel other than to and from school	33.3% (2)	50.0% (3)	16.7% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	6
	<i>answered question</i>					6
	<i>skipped question</i>					738

41. What thoughts would you like to share regarding student transportation in Sherwood Park? (max 300 characters)

Response Count	
	1
<i>answered question</i>	1
<i>skipped question</i>	743

42. If you are a transit rider, please rate the importance to you of these aspects of future LOCAL transit services.

If you are a transit non-rider, please rate the importance to you of these aspects of transit services in terms of their impact on your potential to use LOCAL transit in the future.

Future Local Service:

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important or Not Important	Somewhat Not Important	Not Important	Response Count
Longer hours of operation	27.3% (182)	33.7% (225)	23.1% (154)	7.9% (53)	7.9% (53)	667
More frequent service during rush hours	37.4% (249)	36.8% (245)	17.0% (113)	5.3% (35)	3.5% (23)	665
More frequent service in the midday or evening	22.0% (147)	33.0% (220)	28.6% (191)	9.9% (66)	6.4% (43)	667
More service on weekends	23.7% (158)	28.2% (188)	28.4% (189)	9.3% (62)	10.4% (69)	666
More service on holidays	12.8% (85)	22.3% (148)	39.2% (261)	13.2% (88)	12.5% (83)	665
More early morning service	23.9% (159)	27.9% (186)	33.6% (224)	8.6% (57)	6.0% (40)	666
Less crowding on buses during rush hours	33.3% (222)	33.6% (224)	21.6% (144)	6.5% (43)	5.0% (33)	666
Fewer transfers	24.9% (166)	31.7% (211)	33.2% (221)	5.3% (35)	5.0% (33)	666
More reliable service (late/early buses)	37.3% (249)	31.6% (211)	24.3% (162)	3.4% (23)	3.3% (22)	667
New service to rural areas of Strathcona County	17.6% (117)	22.2% (148)	36.8% (245)	10.2% (68)	13.2% (88)	666
Increased security	12.9% (86)	32.0% (213)	34.4% (229)	12.5% (83)	8.3% (55)	666
Improved passenger facilities	13.7% (91)	30.5% (203)	39.5% (263)	10.1% (67)	6.3% (42)	666
Improved drop-off facilities	12.8% (85)	30.1% (200)	41.3% (274)	8.7% (58)	7.1% (47)	664
Cleaner buses, stops or stations	11.0% (73)	29.7% (198)	42.0% (280)	10.1% (67)	7.2% (48)	666
Bus stops closer to home or where you need to go	29.2% (195)	35.4% (236)	25.5% (170)	5.1% (34)	4.8% (32)	667

Availability of parking	26.2% (174)	29.3% (195)	29.9% (199)	6.0% (40)	8.6% (57)	665
Improved bike and pedestrian amenities at bus stops	18.6% (124)	31.3% (209)	36.3% (242)	7.2% (48)	6.6% (44)	667
Improved ticket and pass sales	20.6% (137)	34.5% (230)	35.3% (235)	4.8% (32)	4.8% (32)	666
Lower bus fares	26.1% (174)	28.8% (192)	33.7% (225)	7.6% (51)	3.7% (25)	667
Improved customer service	20.2% (135)	29.4% (196)	40.0% (267)	6.6% (44)	3.7% (25)	667
Helpfulness of drivers	26.7% (178)	35.1% (234)	30.3% (202)	4.5% (30)	3.4% (23)	667
Better information on services	21.3% (141)	39.4% (261)	31.6% (209)	4.5% (30)	3.2% (21)	662
Extend regular service, replacing Dial-A-Bus service	28.6% (190)	26.3% (175)	29.8% (198)	7.7% (51)	7.7% (51)	665
More destinations in Sherwood Park	29.5% (196)	31.7% (211)	28.7% (191)	4.5% (30)	5.6% (37)	665
Other	25.3% (55)	4.6% (10)	58.5% (127)	1.8% (4)	9.7% (21)	217
Other (please specify)						89
answered question						667
skipped question						77

43. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Bus stops can sometimes be placed in front of homes to reduce walking distances from surrounding neighbourhoods	32.9% (219)	36.9% (246)	16.5% (110)	9.8% (65)	3.9% (26)	666
Bus routes can travel on streets with houses on them	47.1% (314)	35.1% (234)	12.5% (83)	3.9% (26)	1.4% (9)	666
Snow should be cleared from bus stops as soon as the roadway is cleared	53.2% (353)	32.7% (217)	11.6% (77)	2.0% (13)	0.5% (3)	663
Stops should be fully accessible to persons with disabilities	45.6% (303)	35.0% (233)	14.1% (94)	4.5% (30)	0.8% (5)	665
Development near bus stops should be more compact and walkable	35.6% (237)	36.0% (240)	26.4% (176)	1.4% (9)	0.6% (4)	666
answered question						667
skipped question						77

44. If you are a transit rider, please rate the importance to you of these aspects of future COMMUTER transit services.

If you are a transit non-rider, please rate the importance to you of these aspects of transit services in terms of their impact on your potential to use COMMUTER transit in the future.

Future Commuter Service:

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important or Not Important	Somewhat Not Important	Not Important	Response Count
Longer hours of service	37.3% (246)	33.5% (221)	19.8% (131)	4.5% (30)	4.8% (32)	660
More seats so fewer people have to stand on the bus	43.6% (288)	33.1% (219)	15.9% (105)	4.1% (27)	3.3% (22)	661
More frequent service during rush hours	45.8% (303)	33.9% (224)	15.0% (99)	2.6% (17)	2.7% (18)	661
More frequent service in the midday or evening	25.5% (168)	32.0% (211)	29.4% (194)	7.4% (49)	5.8% (38)	660
More service on weekends	24.7% (163)	23.4% (155)	33.4% (221)	8.8% (58)	9.7% (64)	661
More service on holidays	15.9% (105)	18.3% (121)	42.7% (282)	11.7% (77)	11.4% (75)	660
More early morning service	29.5% (195)	25.6% (169)	32.6% (215)	6.2% (41)	6.1% (40)	660
Fewer transfers	22.4% (148)	28.3% (187)	36.8% (243)	5.7% (38)	6.8% (45)	661
More reliable service (late/early buses)	36.4% (240)	31.8% (210)	23.8% (157)	3.5% (23)	4.5% (30)	660
Service to rural areas of Strathcona County	19.5% (129)	21.5% (142)	37.2% (246)	9.1% (60)	12.7% (84)	661
Increased security	14.5% (96)	29.0% (192)	36.6% (242)	11.3% (75)	8.5% (56)	661
Improved passenger facilities	13.9% (92)	29.8% (197)	40.6% (268)	9.1% (60)	6.5% (43)	660
Improved drop-off facilities	16.5% (109)	30.0% (198)	38.9% (257)	8.2% (54)	6.4% (42)	660
Cleaner buses, stops and stations	13.5% (89)	29.2% (193)	41.1% (271)	9.5% (63)	6.7% (44)	660
Bus stops closer to home or where you need to go	27.1% (179)	33.8% (223)	29.5% (195)	5.2% (34)	4.4% (29)	660

Availability of parking	30.9% (204)	30.6% (202)	26.2% (173)	5.2% (34)	7.1% (47)	660
Improved bike and pedestrian amenities at bus stops	17.7% (117)	33.0% (218)	37.8% (250)	5.4% (36)	6.1% (40)	661
Improved ticket and pass sales	21.5% (142)	33.6% (222)	36.0% (238)	3.8% (25)	5.1% (34)	661
Lower bus fares	29.7% (196)	26.8% (177)	34.1% (225)	6.4% (42)	3.0% (20)	660
Improved customer service	19.0% (125)	34.4% (227)	36.6% (241)	5.8% (38)	4.2% (28)	659
Helpfulness of drivers	25.3% (167)	36.9% (243)	29.6% (195)	5.0% (33)	3.2% (21)	659
Better information on services	19.7% (130)	40.1% (264)	32.5% (214)	3.5% (23)	4.2% (28)	659
Increased connectivity with Edmonton Transit Service or St. Albert Transit	35.7% (236)	29.8% (197)	25.7% (170)	3.2% (21)	5.6% (37)	661
New commuter routes to new destinations in Edmonton	35.1% (232)	31.0% (205)	25.9% (171)	2.6% (17)	5.4% (36)	661
Light rail (LRT) to Edmonton	58.9% (389)	20.3% (134)	14.2% (94)	1.4% (9)	5.3% (35)	661
Other	27.8% (47)	9.5% (16)	49.7% (84)	0.6% (1)	12.4% (21)	169
				Other (please specify)		90
				answered question		661
				skipped question		83

45. Please provide any additional comments. (max 300 characters)	
	Response Count
	282
	answered question
	282
	skipped question
	462

Appendix C

Review Consultation Summary

1. Consultation Summary

1.1 Public Review

The public engagement review process began on September 26, 2011 and ran until October 28, 2011. The campaign included a range of opportunities for the public to meet face-to-face with SCT staff and the project study team to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the draft recommendations. There were multiple presentations for stakeholder groups and a public open house was held on October 17, 2011 at the Strathcona County Community Centre. The draft recommendations were summarized and on display at the open house, and attendees provided input regarding their view of the recommendations via discussion with the study team and through submission of comment forms. An online review survey was also developed, and respondents were given an opportunity to comment on the summarized draft recommendations.

The Strathcona County Transit website was a vital tool for this phase of the study. The entire Draft TMP document, additional summary documents and the online survey were all made available on the website, which also contained videos with brief summaries of the recommendations.

In terms of print communications, there were a number of advertisements placed in the Sherwood Park News that promoted a different aspect of the TMP each week, driving people to the website to take the survey. There were also full-page advertisements that were used to promote the open house. Fliers were produced and distributed on the buses to riders, as well as placed on cars at both the Transit Centre and Strathcona Station. Six rear bus billboards were purchased to advertise the campaign on our buses throughout the community and in the city of Edmonton. Social media were also utilized to promote this campaign, through use of the County's Facebook page and Twitter accounts. Digital signage throughout the County's building was also used to remind constituents that the campaign was happening and their feedback was important.

In total, 183 people provided online comments regarding one or more of the draft recommendations. The following provide some general demographic information regarding the online review respondents:

- 61 percent female, 39 percent male
- 73 percent living in Sherwood Park, 21 percent in rural Strathcona County and seven percent in Edmonton
- 58 percent riders, 42 percent non-riders
- Among Sherwood Park respondents, 65 percent are riders and 35 percent non-riders
- Among rural Strathcona County respondents, 50 percent are riders and 50 percent non-riders
- Among Edmonton respondents, eight percent are riders and 92 percent non-riders

The following sections summarize public response to the draft recommendations received from the public open house and the online review survey, as well as additional correspondence with the public regarding review of the study.

Specialized Services

Public review of the specialized service recommendations was mostly positive, with respondents typically noting that they feel specialized transit services are an essential part of the community. Most respondents indicated that they agree with and support the recommendations.

In total, 93 respondents (51 percent of total respondents) provided commentary regarding specialized service recommendations. Of these respondents, 72 percent reside in Sherwood Park, 18 percent in rural Strathcona County and five percent in Edmonton. Approximately 63 percent are riders of at least one transit service provided by Strathcona County, while 37 percent are non-riders. It should be noted however, that only two respondents indicated that they are SCAT riders. The following summarize frequent comments received:

- Remove restrictions on trip purpose.
- Specialized transit customers should be provided with service days and hours of service equivalent to conventional transit.
- Travel training is a good idea that will help people achieve independence
- Change the name of SCAT.
- Conventional system vehicles, stops and infrastructure need to be made fully accessible if demand is to be shifted off of specialized transit.

Intermunicipal Service

Public review of the intermunicipal service recommendations was mostly positive and supportive. Respondents emphasized the value of the commuter service, the importance of connecting to key destinations in Edmonton (including throughout downtown and post-secondary institutions), and the need for more high capacity vehicles to handle higher passenger volumes taking intermunicipal travel. The following summarize frequent comments received:

- Need for more vehicles to handle intermunicipal demand and reduce crowding during peak periods.
- Larger Park and Ride lots are necessary.
- Need to expand Strathcona Station.
- Frequency of intermunicipal vehicles and hours of service need to be increased, particularly during off-peak times.
- Service to NAIT needs to be improved.
- LRT should be extended to Sherwood Park.
- Strathcona Station makes sense as the main terminal and a hub for travel to Edmonton.
- More connectivity and integration with ETS services (e.g. at the Capilano Mall ETS terminal).

Local Service

Public review of recommendations for local service was generally positive, with respondents indicating that the service is valuable and that the focus should be to improve connectivity to major destinations and terminals within Sherwood Park. Respondents indicated that while the existing local service is valuable, it is often inefficient for their needs and that the recommendations may result in an improved service. The following summarize frequent comments received:

- Need a quicker and more direct connection between the stations in Sherwood Park.
- Need improved access to destinations within Sherwood Park including Centre in the Park and recreation facilities.
- Improve connectivity between local and intermunicipal service.
- Need to extend service hours and coverage.
- A local express route is needed.
- Dial-a-Bus service needs to be improved or replaced.

Park and Ride

Respondents support the reduction of crowding at the existing Park and Ride lots and increasing the amount of parking available at Strathcona Station. Support was also shown for development of a pilot project Park and Ride lot in Ardrossan. Opposition was indicated regarding the recommendation for introduction of a fee for all Park and Ride users, with many noting that a parking fee would be a disincentive to transit use.

In total, 142 respondents (76 percent of total respondents) provided commentary regarding the Park and Ride recommendations. Of these respondents, 71 percent reside in Sherwood Park, 23 percent in rural Strathcona County and six percent in Edmonton. Approximately 60 percent of respondents are riders of at least one transit service provided by Strathcona County, while 40 percent are non-riders.

The following summarize frequent comments received:

- Improved local services would help to reduce parking demand at the Park and Ride lots
- Paid parking will be a disincentive to using intermunicipal transit.
- Paid parking will have an adverse effect on street parking in neighbourhoods and on businesses near the transit terminals.
- Paid parking will not increase use of local service, and will discourage people from taking transit altogether as local service is not convenient or frequent enough to be a viable alternative.
- Some areas of rural and urban Strathcona County do not have reasonable access to utilize local transit as an alternative to driving.
- Parking capacity at both Strathcona Station and the Sherwood Park Transit Centre needs to be expanded.
- A pilot Park and Ride location in Ardrossan is a great idea.
- Despite the vocal opposition to a parking fee, a number of respondents indicated that they support the concept of paid parking. Those in support note that the fee may help reduce parking demand at the Park and Ride lots and that revenue from the fee could be used to help finance terminal or system expansions.

Rural Service

Public review was typically very supportive of the rural service recommendations, in particular for development of a pilot Park and Ride location in Ardrossan.

In total, 92 respondents (50 percent of total respondents) provided commentary regarding the rural transit recommendations. Of these respondents, 71 percent reside in Sherwood Park, 24 percent in rural Strathcona County and five percent in Edmonton. Approximately 49 percent of respondents are riders of at least one transit service provided by Strathcona County, while 51 percent are non-riders.

The following summarize frequent comments received:

- Agree with all of these recommendations on all points, they are much needed.
- Sufficient demand exists for a Park and Ride location in Ardrossan.
- A rural Park and Ride location would reduce parking demand at the existing lots.
- Do not have free parking for rural residents and pay parking for urban Strathcona County residents.

Fares

Public review was generally supportive of recommendations for fares, with the strongest support shown for introduction of smartcard technologies and harmonizing specialized and conventional fares. The following summarize frequent comments received:

- Implementation of a smartcard system is a great idea.
- Consider an incentive fare to transition specialized transit riders to the conventional system.
- Work with other municipalities to develop a regional transit pass.
- Fares need to be kept reasonable to attract people to the system.
- Important for transit to be available and affordable for all residents; support a discounted fare for low-income residents.
- Make the fare structure less complicated and easier to understand.

General Comments

The following summarize frequent additional general comments received:

- Overall these recommendations are a step in the right direction for the future of transit in Strathcona County.
- Positive changes for persons with disabilities.
- SCT services need to be convenient and affordable to attract and maintain riders.

1.2 Stakeholder Review

A range of stakeholders were also consulted with as part of the TMP review process. SCT staff met with a number of groups and individuals to discuss the Draft Transit Master Plan (including the draft recommendations) and to gain further input. The following identifies stakeholder groups and summarizes their review comments:

- Youth Advisory Committee
- Seniors Advisory Committee
- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Robin Hood Board
- Sustainability Coordinator
- SCAT Staff
- SCT Staff

Summary of Stakeholder Review

- Generally supportive of recommendations.

- Better evening and weekend service is required.
- Eliminate Dial-a-Bus.
- Prefer use of double-decker vehicles.
- Supportive of changes to SCAT including eligibility impacts on able-bodied seniors.
- Appreciated that current SCAT users will be grandfathered in if changes are made to the eligibility criteria.
- Encourage use of clean-fuel propulsion vehicles.
- The TMP supports the objective of reducing the environmental footprint of County residents.
- Consider development of rural Park and Ride locations.
- Support recommendations to accommodate persons with accessibility and mobility challenges and to improve access throughout the transit system.
- Park and Ride user fees should be weighed against the potential for loss of ridership.
- Consider the future need for bus rapid transit lanes and connectivity to the ETS LRT.
- Understand that specialized services within Edmonton would be reduced.
- Identified need for improved transfers with DATS.
- To achieve fully accessible services, the planning of routes and stops needs to be better integrated with planning, land development, and transportation infrastructure planning.
- Ensure all transfer facilities are fully accessible for persons with mobility restrictions.
- Some stakeholders felt that urban and rural SCAT service levels should both increase.
- Some stakeholders did not like the idea that SCAT service in Edmonton would be reduced.

Appendix D

Detailed Route Network Evaluations

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Intermunicipal Service Concept Options

		Option 1 - Downtown connections only	Option 2 - Downtown and Southgate connections	Option 3 - Downtown and Belvedere connections	Option 4 - Downtown, Belvedere, and Southgate connections
Supports County and Regional policies					
	Economic	Provides efficient transit services Support local economy by providing direct connection to downtown Edmonton Support appropriate investment in infrastructure	Support local economy by providing direct connection to downtown Edmonton as well as providing transportation alternatives for potential reverse commuters from Mill Woods and Southgate area	Support local economy by providing direct connection to downtown Edmonton as well as providing transportation alternatives for potential reverse commuters from Belvedere station area	Support local economy by providing direct connection to downtown Edmonton as well as providing transportation alternatives for potential reverse commuters from Mill Woods, Southgate, and the Belvedere station area
	Social	Support social sustainability objectives by providing efficient and affordable transportation alternatives directly connecting the community to downtown Edmonton Promotes a healthy and active lifestyle by encourage less automobile usage	Supports social sustainability objectives by providing efficient and affordable transportation alternatives directly connecting the community to downtown Edmonton and Mill Woods area Promotes a healthy and active lifestyle by encourage less automobile usage	Support social sustainability objectives by providing efficient and affordable transportation alternatives directly connecting the community to downtown Edmonton and Belvedere station area Promotes a healthy and active lifestyle by encourage less automobile usage	Support social sustainability objectives by providing efficient and affordable transportation alternatives directly connecting the community to downtown Edmonton, Mill Woods, Southgate, and Belvedere station area Promotes a healthy and active lifestyle by encourage less automobile usage
	Environmental	Provides services to downtown Edmonton observed to generate the greatest demand, thus reduces auto use and parking needs in the most congested areas	Provides services to downtown Edmonton observed to generate the greatest demand, thus reduces auto use and parking needs in the most congested areas Land use patterns in suburban locations do not promote a high level of transit usage	Provides services to downtown Edmonton observed to generate the greatest demand, thus reduces auto use and parking needs in the most congested areas Land use patterns in suburban locations do not promote a high level of transit usage	Provides services to downtown Edmonton observed to generate the greatest demand, thus reduces auto use and parking needs in the most congested areas Land use patterns in suburban locations do not promote a high level of transit usage
	Regional Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan	Promotes a culture of use for intermunicipal transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit	Promotes a culture of use for intermunicipal transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit	Promotes a culture of use for intermunicipal transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit	Promotes a culture of use for intermunicipal transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Intermunicipal Service Concept Options

		Option 1 - Downtown connections only	Option 2 - Downtown and Southgate connections	Option 3 - Downtown and Belvedere connections	Option 4 - Downtown, Belvedere, and Southgate connections
	Promotes a growing ridership base				
	Promotes new riders to the network	<p>Attracts new riders with destinations in the downtown and U of A area</p> <p>Limited potential to attract new riders with destinations in other areas of the City due to transfer requirements</p>	<p>Attracts new riders with destinations in the downtown and U of A area</p> <p>Provides connections to southern Edmonton which would provide potential reverse-commute opportunities and for quick connections to Southgate Centre and LRT</p> <p>Lower potential for reverse commuting market potential due to the good traffic conditions, Sherwood Park's low-density land-use patterns and affordable parking policies</p>	<p>Attracts new riders with destinations in the downtown and U of A area</p> <p>Provides connections to northern Edmonton which would provide potential reverse-commute opportunities and for quick connections to NE LRT</p> <p>Lower potential for reverse commuting market potential due to the good traffic conditions, Sherwood Park's low-density land-use patterns and affordable parking policies</p>	<p>Attracts new riders with destinations in the downtown and U of A area</p> <p>Provides connections to northern and southern Edmonton which would provide potential reverse-commute opportunities and for quick connections to Southgate Centre and NE LRT</p> <p>Lower potential for reverse commuting market potential due to the good traffic conditions, Sherwood Park's low-density land-use patterns and affordable parking policies</p>
	Minimize impacts on existing riders	Services currently operated will continue to operate in this plan	Services currently operated will continue to operate in this plan	Services currently operated will continue to operate in this plan	Services currently operated will continue to operate in this plan
	Competitive travel time with automobile	<p>Trips to Downtown: Travel times to Downtown are modestly competitive to the automobile</p> <p>Potential for transit priority measures</p> <p>Land use, transportation, and parking context of the Downtown make transit a reliable and affordable alternative</p> <p>Trips to suburban areas: Suburban trips will be much less competitive than the automobile, because no direct services operate under this option</p>	<p>Trips to Downtown: Travel times to Downtown are modestly competitive to the automobile</p> <p>Potential for transit priority measures</p> <p>Land use, transportation, and parking context of the Downtown make transit a reliable and affordable alternative</p> <p>Trips to suburban areas: Provides a direct connection to Southgate station and Southgate Centre-- however, the dispersed land use patterns in this area means passengers will likely still need to transfer to the ETS network</p>	<p>Trips to Downtown: Travel times to Downtown are modestly competitive to the automobile</p> <p>Potential for transit priority measures</p> <p>Land use, transportation, and parking context of the Downtown make transit a reliable and affordable alternative</p> <p>Trips to suburban areas: Provides a direct connection to Belvedere station -- however, the dispersed land use patterns in this area means passengers will likely still need to transfer to the ETS network</p>	<p>Trips to Downtown: Travel times to Downtown are modestly competitive to the automobile</p> <p>Potential for transit priority measures</p> <p>Land use, transportation, and parking context of the Downtown make transit a reliable and affordable alternative</p> <p>Trips to suburban areas: Provides a direct connection to Belvedere and Southgate stations, as well as Southgate Centre-- however, the dispersed land use patterns in this area means passengers will likely still need to transfer to the ETS network</p>
	Minimizes transfers for local and intermunicipal connections	Proposed service is similar to what is currently operating, thus the amount of transfers will likely remain the same	Despite operating branch services to southwest Edmonton, riders will still likely need to connect to/from Mill Woods or Southgate to get to/from Sherwood Park	Despite operating branch services to southwest Edmonton, riders will still likely need to connect to/from Mill Woods or Southgate to get to/from Sherwood Park	Despite operating branch services to southwest Edmonton, riders will still likely need to connect to/from Mill Woods or Southgate to get to/from Sherwood Park

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Intermunicipal Service Concept Options

		Option 1 - Downtown connections only	Option 2 - Downtown and Southgate connections	Option 3 - Downtown and Belvedere connections	Option 4 - Downtown, Belvedere, and Southgate connections
	Minimizes overall costs and provides efficient transit services				
	Minimizes capital costs	Additional vehicles and terminal facilities for improved downtown connections	Additional vehicles and terminal facilities for improved downtown connections Additional vehicles for the Southgate connection and possible stop upgrades may be required at Southgate Transit Centre to accommodate Strathcona buses	Additional vehicles and terminal facilities for improved downtown connections Additional vehicles for the Southgate connection and possible stop upgrades may be required at Belvedere Transit Centre to accommodate Strathcona buses	Additional vehicles and terminal facilities for improved downtown connections Additional vehicles for the Southgate connection and possible stop upgrades may be required at Southgate Transit Centre and Belvedere Transit Centre to accommodate Strathcona buses
	Minimizes operating costs	Additional vehicle hours for improved downtown connections	Additional vehicle hours for improved downtown connections Additional vehicle hours for the Southgate connection	Additional vehicle hours for improved downtown connections Additional vehicle hours for the Belvedere connection	Additional vehicle hours for improved downtown connections Additional vehicle hours for the Southgate and Belvedere connections

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Intermunicipal Service Concept Options

		Option 1 - Downtown connections only	Option 2 - Downtown and Southgate connections	Option 3 - Downtown and Belvedere connections	Option 4 - Downtown, Belvedere, and Southgate connections
Ease of implementation					
Ease of operation and management		Operating all services to downtown makes it easier for operations staff to schedule and manage routes	Introducing one additional branch service makes scheduling more complicated	Introducing one additional branch service makes scheduling more complicated	Introducing two additional branch services makes scheduling more complicated
Ease of customer use and understanding		<p>All routes will serve the Downtown area, making it easier for passengers to follow, no matter where they are going in Edmonton</p> <p>Passengers can better rely and can depend on making connections in Downtown, since all services connect there</p>	The implementation of additional branch services creates possible increased confusion by customers due to the number of branch services	The implementation of additional branch services creates possible increased confusion by customers due to the number of branch services	The implementation of additional branch services creates possible increased confusion by customers due to the number of branch services
Ease in controlling, managing, and coordinating external forces that may challenge plan		<p>Similar to the existing operation</p> <p>No major concerns will challenge existing operations</p>	<p>Will require working with ETS to allow use of Southgate Transit Centre</p> <p>Financial obligations and ETS policies may hinder/overturn plans</p>	<p>Will require working with ETS to allow use of Belvedere Transit Centre</p> <p>Financial obligations and ETS policies may hinder/overturn plans</p>	<p>Will require working with ETS to allow use of Belvedere and Southgate transit centres</p> <p>Financial obligations and ETS policies may hinder/overturn plans</p>
Consistency with the potential long-term LRT and planned terminal facilities		Help build ridership along the potential LRT corridor	Additional branch service may divert ridership from the main corridor	Additional branch service may divert ridership from the main corridor	Additional branch service may divert ridership from the main corridor

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Local Service Concept Options

		Option 1A - Hub and Spoke, 1 Node	Option 1B - Hub and Spoke, 2 Node	Option 2A - Higher Frequency Corridor	Option 2B - Extended Higher-Frequency Corridor	Option 3 - Grid-Like Network
Supports County and Regional policies						
	Economic	Supports the local economy by providing convenient connections to intermunicipal transit services	Support the local economy by providing modest improvements to the local transit network that will allow good access within Sherwood Park and to connect to intermunicipal transit services Supports the efficient use of transit service resources	Support the local economy by providing a moderate and realistic increase in local transit services that will allow good access within Sherwood Park and to connect to intermunicipal transit services Supports the efficient use of transit service resources	Support the local economy by providing a moderate and realistic increase in local transit services that will allow good access within Sherwood Park and to connect to intermunicipal transit services Supports the efficient use of transit service resources	Support the local economy by providing an extensive local transit network that will allow good access within Sherwood Park and to connect to intermunicipal transit services
	Social	Supports social sustainability objectives by providing a set of efficient local feeder services to connect to intermunicipal transit services Provides a base service to those hoping to travel within Sherwood Park but who do not have an automobile	Supports social sustainability objectives by providing a modest local transit network that provides connections to some major local destinations and to intermunicipal transit services Provides transit service options to those hoping to travel within Sherwood Park but who do not have an automobile	Supports social sustainability objectives by providing a local transit network that provide good connections to major local destinations and to intermunicipal transit services Provides an acceptable transportation alternative to the automobile	Supports social sustainability objectives by providing a local transit network that provide good connections to major local destinations and to intermunicipal transit services Provides an acceptable transportation alternative to the automobile	Supports social sustainability objectives by providing a extensive local transit network that provides very strong connections to major local destinations and to intermunicipal transit services Provides a very competitive transportation alternative to the automobile
	Environmental	Provides extensive local feeder services, which will reduce parking requirements and automobile usage of intermunicipal commuters	Provides a balanced local system that will reduce overall automobile usage in the community	Provides an improved local system that will reduce overall automobile usage in the community Promote higher degree of integration of land use development and transit services	Provides an improved local system that will reduce overall automobile usage in the community Promote higher degree of integration of land use development and transit services including proposed Emerald Hills development	Provides an extensive local transit network that will encourage reduced automobile usage Promote higher degree of integration of land use development and transit services including proposed Emerald Hills development
	Regional IMTP	Provides extensive local feeder services, which will promote greater use of intermunicipal services	Provides a modest improvement to transit service, which will assist in promoting a culture of use for transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit	Promotes a considerable improvement in transit services, which will promote a culture of use for transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit	Promotes a considerable improvement in transit services, which will promote a culture of use for transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit	Promotes a considerable improvement in transit services, which will promote a culture of use for transit services as the region builds on plans for an expansion of rapid transit

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Local Service Concept Options

		Option 1A - Hub and Spoke, 1 Node	Option 1B - Hub and Spoke, 2 Node	Option 2A - Higher Frequency Corridor	Option 2B - Extended Higher-Frequency Corridor	Option 3 - Grid-Like Network
	Promotes a growing ridership base					
	Promotes new riders to the network	<p>Provides convenience for intermunicipal transit riders and promotes passengers to use feeder services to access intermunicipal services</p> <p>Convenience for intermunicipal services will be at a detriment to local travellers because of reduced direct connections to local destinations</p>	<p>Provides convenience for intermunicipal transit riders and promotes passengers to use feeder services to access intermunicipal services</p> <p>Southern Sherwood Park residents will have better connections to major local destinations near Centre in the Park</p> <p>Northern Sherwood Park residents will still have services converging at Strathcona Station, which is not a major local destination</p>	Higher frequency corridor makes it convenient for intermunicipal passengers to connect between the two stations, and provides good connections for local residents to connect to major destinations near Centre in the Park	<p>Higher frequency corridor makes it convenient for intermunicipal passengers to connect between stations/transfer points, and provides good connections for local residents to connect to major destinations in the urban area</p> <p>Provides even greater connection opportunities to the planned mixed-use higher-density development in Emerald Hills</p>	Provides a high level of new services that will provide very convenient connections for local travel
	Minimize impacts on existing riders	Lack of direct local connection will affect existing local users	Will maintain and improve the current state of transit connections	Will maintain and improve the current state of transit connections	Will maintain and improve the current state of transit connections	Will maintain and improve the current state of transit connections
	Competitive travel time with automobile	<p>Competitiveness with the automobile will be improved for intermunicipal services</p> <p>However, local travel will be greatly uncompetitive with the automobile because it does not provide good direction connections to local destinations</p>	<p>Competitiveness with the automobile could be improved for intermunicipal services because some routes could be coordinated at two stations</p> <p>Local travel will be uncompetitive with the automobile, particularly northern Sherwood Park residents, because it does not provide good direction connections to local destinations</p>	<p>Higher-frequency corridor makes it convenient to travel within Sherwood Park and to make connections with intermunicipal services</p> <p>Travel times will be acceptably competitive with the automobile</p>	<p>Extended higher-frequency corridor makes it convenient to travel within Sherwood Park and to make connections with intermunicipal services</p> <p>Travel times will be acceptably competitive with the automobile</p>	<p>Provides a transit network that makes it easy to travel within the Sherwood Park and to Edmonton</p> <p>Travel times will be the closest possible to what can be achieved by driving</p>
	Minimizes transfers for local and intermunicipal connections	Local network is not destination focused, passengers will have to transfer at Strathcona Station to allow for door-to-door transit connections	Local network is not destination focused, passengers will have to transfer at Strathcona Station to allow for door-to-door transit connections	<p>Northern Sherwood Park residents must to transfer to other local services to reach local destinations</p> <p>Southern Sherwood Park routes provide greater connections to the destinations near Centre in the Park, which will likely result in fewer transfers</p>	<p>Improved direct service to northern Sherwood Park</p> <p>Southern Sherwood Park routes provide greater connections to the destinations near Centre in the Park, which will likely result in fewer transfers</p>	Improved direct service to major destinations in Sherwood Park

Detailed Evaluation of Service Concept Alternatives

Local Service Concept Options

		Option 1A - Hub and Spoke, 1 Node	Option 1B - Hub and Spoke, 2 Node	Option 2A - Higher Frequency Corridor	Option 2B - Extended Higher-Frequency Corridor	Option 3 - Grid-Like Network
	Provides efficient transit services					
	Minimizes capital costs	Bus requirements will similar to today's needs	Bus requirements will similar to today's needs	Will require a moderate number of additional buses for local services	Will require a moderate number of additional buses for local services	Will require a high number of additional buses for local services
	Minimizes operating costs	Similar to existing	Similar to existing	Will require a moderate increase in vehicle service hours	Will require a moderate increase in vehicle service hours	Will require a high increase in vehicle service hours
	Ease of implementation					
	Ease of operation and management	Easy to accomodate coordinated transfers at Stathcona Station With a more simplified route concept, it will be easier to operate and manage the system	Able to accommodate coordindated transfers at Strathcona Station, however not as easily as Option 1A Route structure is slightly more complicated than Option 1A	Moderate increase in transit levels of service for this option involves more resources to operate and manage the system With a more complex route concept, it will be more difficult to accomodate coordinated transfers	Moderate increase in transit levels of service for this option involves more resources to operate and manage the system With a more complex route concept, it will be more difficult to accomodate coordinated transfers	Large increase in transit levels of service for this option involves even greater resources to operate and manage the system With a network, grid-like route concept, it will be difficult to accomodate coordinated transfers
	Ease in controlling, managing, and coordinating external forces that may challenge plan	Requires parking and terminal upgrades to Strathcona Station	Requires parking and terminal upgrades to Strathcona Station	Requires parking and terminal upgrades to Strathcona Station	Requires parking and terminal upgrades to Strathcona Station Require the development of a layover facility near the Emerald Hills development	Requires parking and terminal upgrades to Strathcona Station Require the development of a number of transfer facilities
	Ease of customer use and understanding	Routes are easy to use and understand	Routes are easy to use and understand	Routes are easy to use and understand	Routes are easy to use and understand	With a grid-like route concept, it will be more difficult for customers to use the system
	Consistency with potential long term LRT and planned terminal facilities	Hub and spoke service concept will help to feed riders to the planned LRT corridor	Improvements to existing services will help to build transit ridership and feed riders to the planned LRT corridor	Improvements to existing services will help to build transit ridership and feed riders to the planned LRT corridor	Higher-frequency corridor and local services will help to build transit ridership and feed riders to the planned LRT corridor	Extensive grid-like network of services will help to build transit ridership and feed riders to the planned LRT corridor

Appendix E

Peer Review

1. Peer Review

This section uses statistical data to compare Strathcona County's conventional and specialized transit with peers across Canada. Peer reviews can help to identify difference between municipal operations and also build a foundation for later identification of key performance measures and benchmarking against other transit operations. However, every community is different and Strathcona County's almost unique blend of local and intermunicipal services within the statistics should be considered when comparing the County with other municipalities.

1.1 Conventional Services

The transit systems benchmarked against SCT were selected by GENIVAR Consultants based on having similar population sizes, fleet sizes and urban characteristics as Strathcona County. Two major Alberta systems, Calgary and Edmonton, are also included despite its dissimilar system characteristics, for convenient reference. The eight transit systems in Strathcona County's peer group are:

- Barrie Transit
- Calgary Transit
- Codiac Transit (Moncton)
- Edmonton Transit System
- Fort McMurray Transit (Wood Buffalo)
- Kingston Transit
- LA Transit (Lethbridge)
- Niagara Transit (Niagara Falls)
- Red Deer Transit
- St. Albert Transit

Data for the benchmarking exercises were obtained in the CUTA Canadian Transit Fact Book 2008.

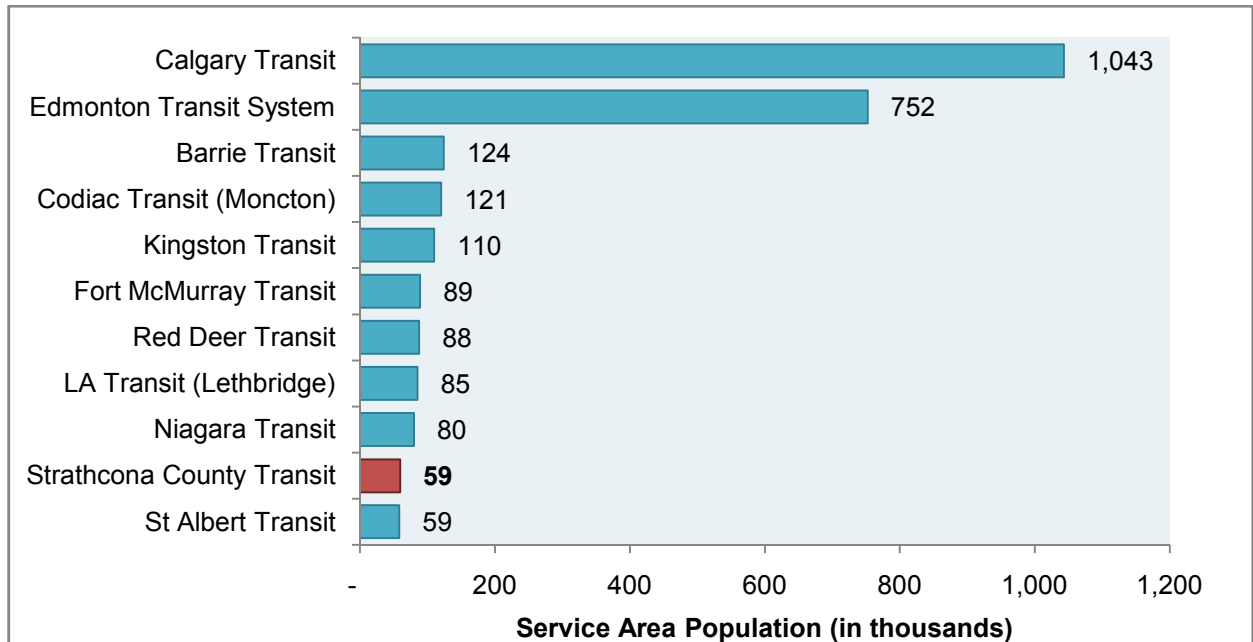
1.1.1 Peer Group System Descriptions

Service Area Population

Service Area Population is defined as the number of individuals living within the built-up area provided with regular transit service, as defined by local service standards.

As illustrated in Exhibit 1, SCT's service area population is approximately 59,000, which is the lowest of its peer group, tied with St Albert. The highest is Calgary at 1,043,000 people, and the average is approximately 237,000 people.

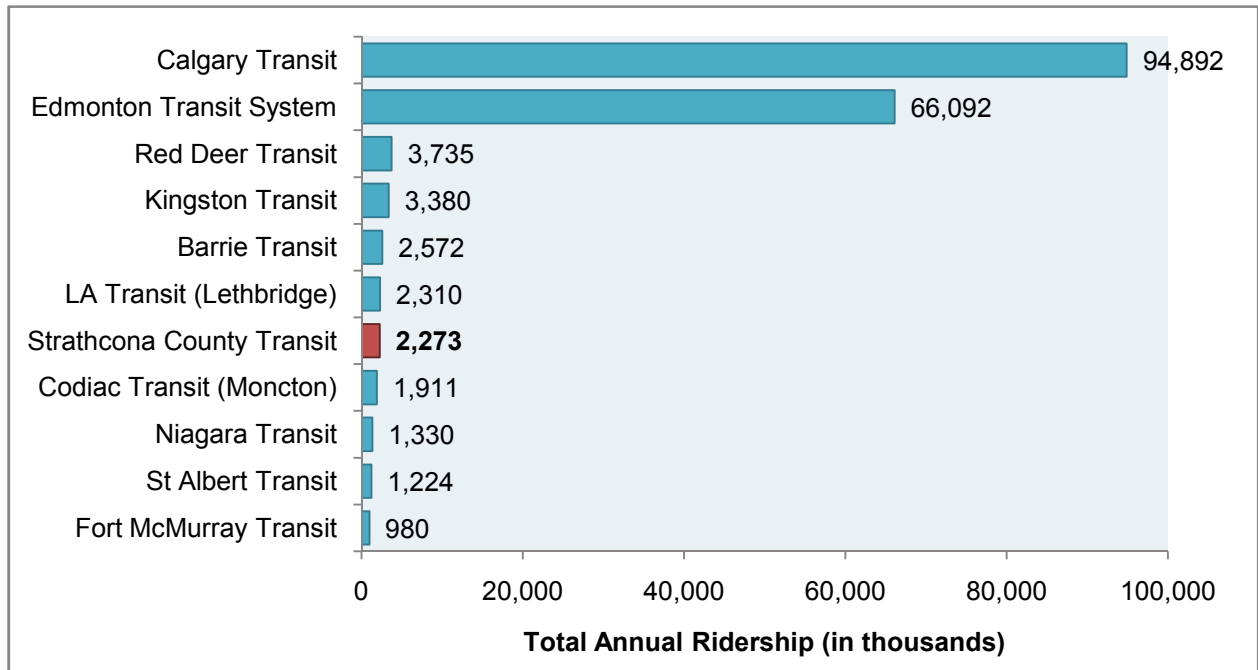
Exhibit 1 – Service Area Population (2008)



Ridership

SCT carried 2,273,000 riders in 2008, placing seventh among the transit systems in the peer group. Exhibit 2 positively demonstrates SCT's ability to capture riders considering its much smaller service area population compared to its peers.

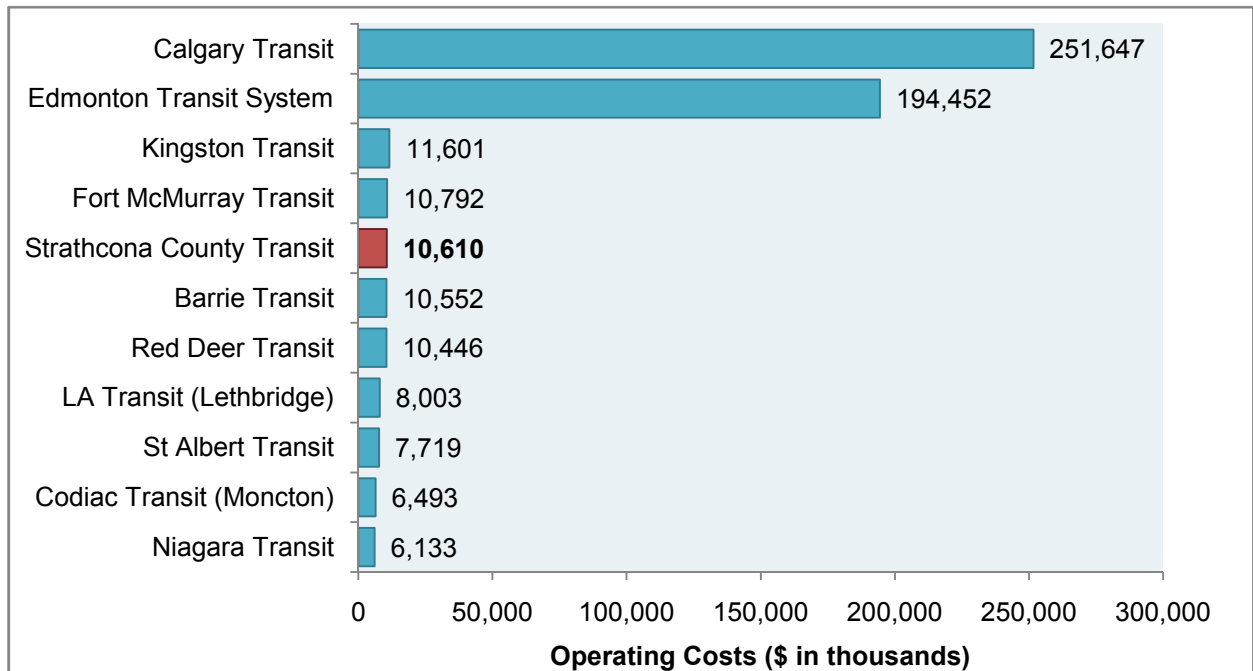
Exhibit 2 – Annual Ridership (2008)



Operating Cost

SCT has the fifth highest annual operating cost in its peer group, with a 2008 annual operating cost of \$10,610,000. As illustrated in Exhibit 3, a number of transit systems achieved a similar annual operating cost, including systems in Kingston, Fort McMurray, Barrie, and Red Deer.

Exhibit 3 – Annual Operating Cost (2008)

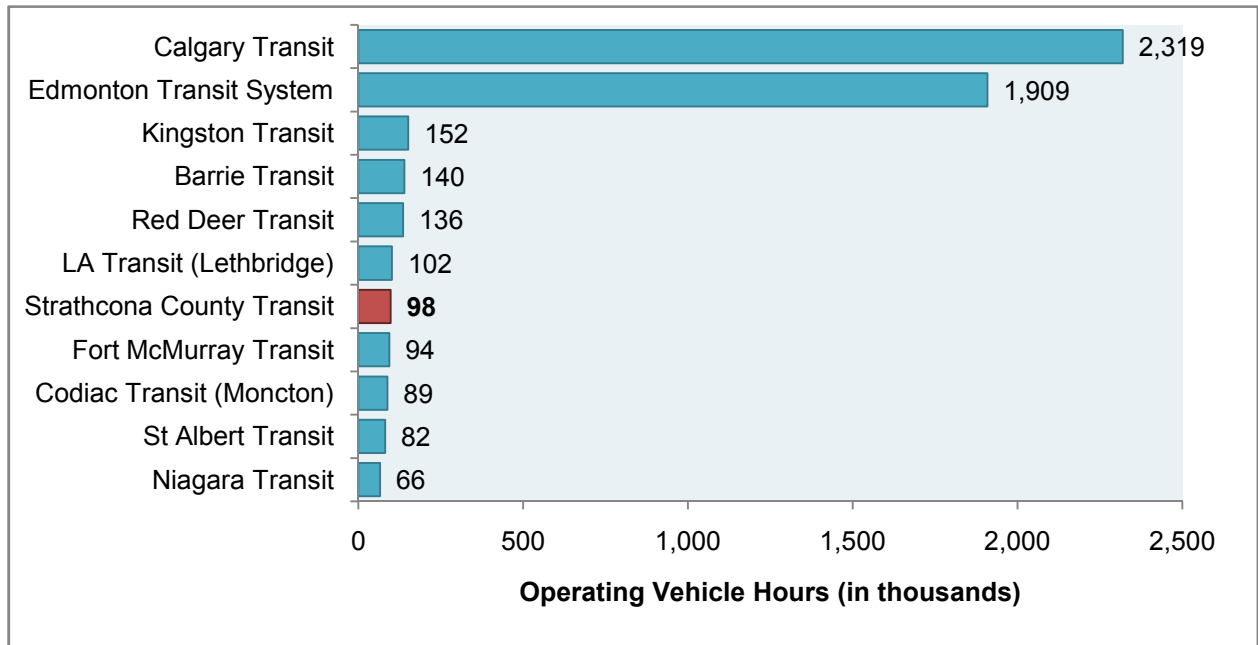


Operating costs are a reflection of the number of peak vehicles in service, along with associated operating, maintenance and plant, fuel and energy, and administration costs. SCT's relatively larger fleet and its focus on operating longer-distance intermunicipal services are likely to cause higher operating costs relative to its peers.

Operating Vehicle Hours

Operating vehicle hours is one metric used to observe the degree to which a transit system provides services to riders. SCT ranks seventh among its peer group, with approximately 98,000 annual operating vehicle hours and this is shown in Exhibit 4.

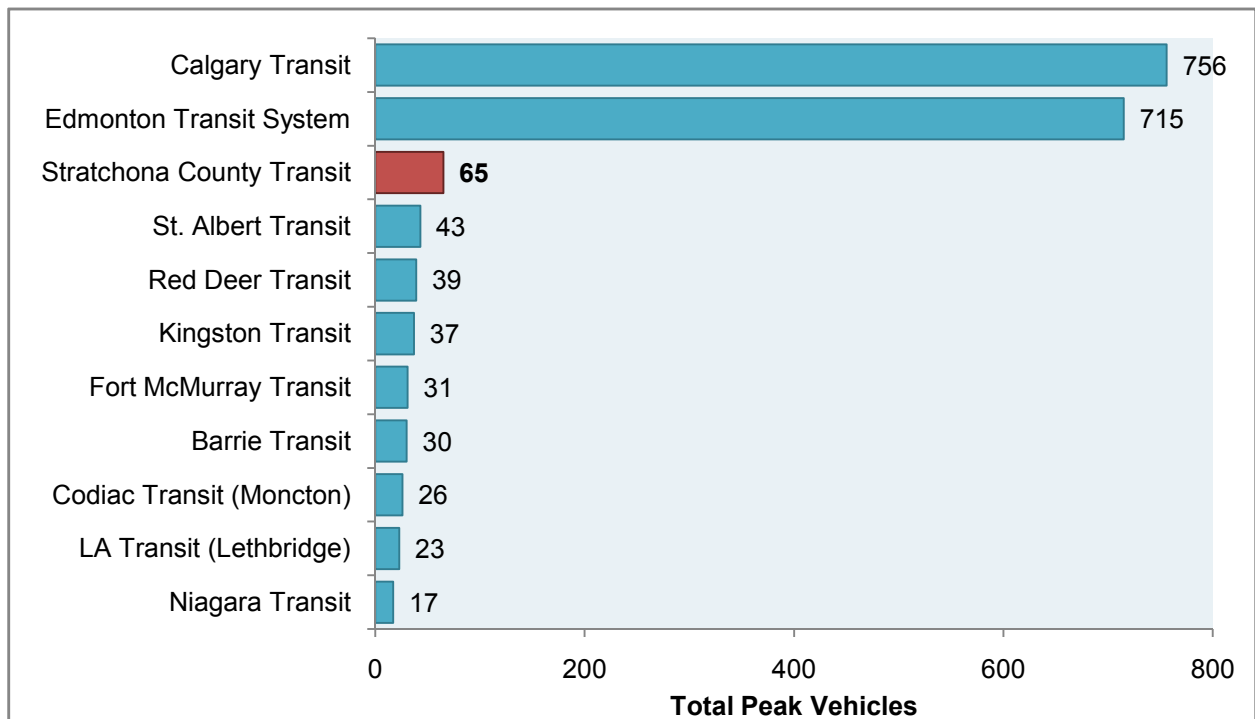
Exhibit 4 – Annual Operating Vehicle Hours (2008)



Peak Vehicle Fleet

As demonstrated in Exhibit 5, SCT ranks third among its peer group, but first excluding the two large Calgary and Edmonton systems. SCT's fleet of 65 vehicles, one-third more than the subsequent system's (St. Albert Transit) peak operating fleet. SCT requires a relatively larger peak vehicle fleet to operate its predominately intermunicipal-oriented system.

Exhibit 5 – Peak Vehicle Fleet (2008)



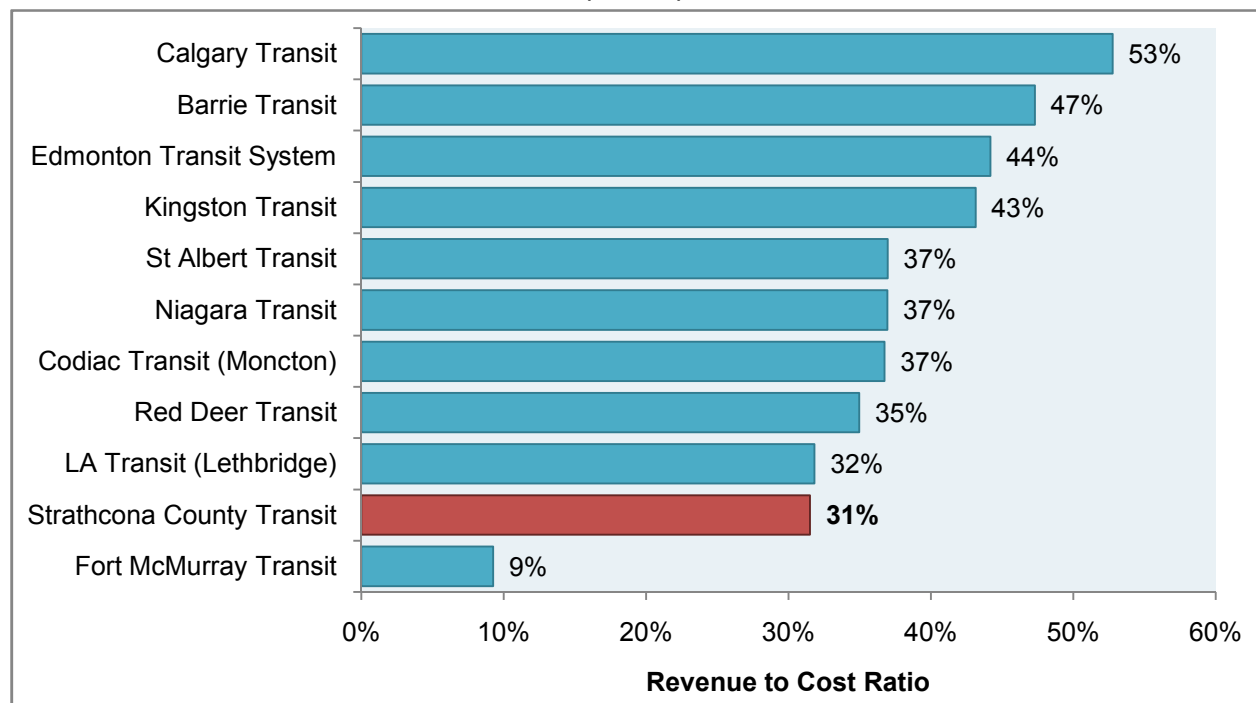
1.1.2 Performance Measures

The performance of Strathcona County Transit in several key indicator areas was compared to the performance in the peer group. In many cases, Strathcona County Transit's performance is near the group average. The following sections present each indicator comparing the peer group.

Revenue to Cost Ratio

Cost recovery is a reflection of the rate of return in a transit system; the amount of money spent to operate the system versus the amount of revenue received. As illustrated in Exhibit 6, SCT demonstrated a revenue to cost (R/C) ratio of 31 percent, placing second last to Fort McMurray Transit. However, it is noted that a number of transit systems demonstrate ratios very similar to SCT. For instance, transit systems in St Albert, Niagara Falls, Moncton, Red Deer and Lethbridge all achieved R/C ratios ranging from 32 to 37 percent. One attribute unique to SCT which may explain the relatively low R/C ratio is related to the high proportion of longer-distance intermunicipal services it operates. Operating intermunicipal services are likely to increase deadheading and increase the bus fleet requirements since the supply of and demand for services are likely concentrated within the peak periods.

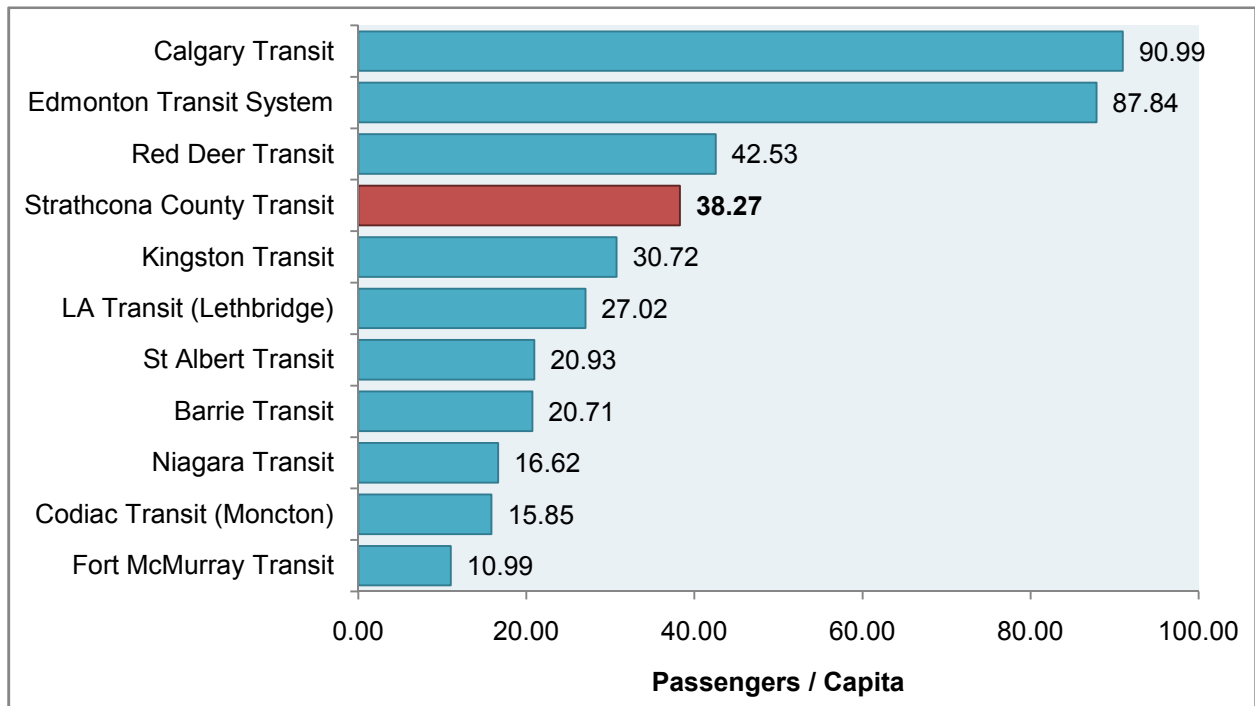
Exhibit 6 – Revenue to Cost Ratio (2008)



Passengers Per Capita

Passengers Per Capita is a reflection of the degree to which a transit system is capable of attracting ridership. Exhibit 7 shows that SCT ranked fourth, behind Calgary Edmonton and Red Deer in terms of the highest passengers per capita in the peer group. Given that predominately suburban structure of Sherwood Park, compared to the three leading transit systems in this category, SCT demonstrates good ridership compared it its peers.

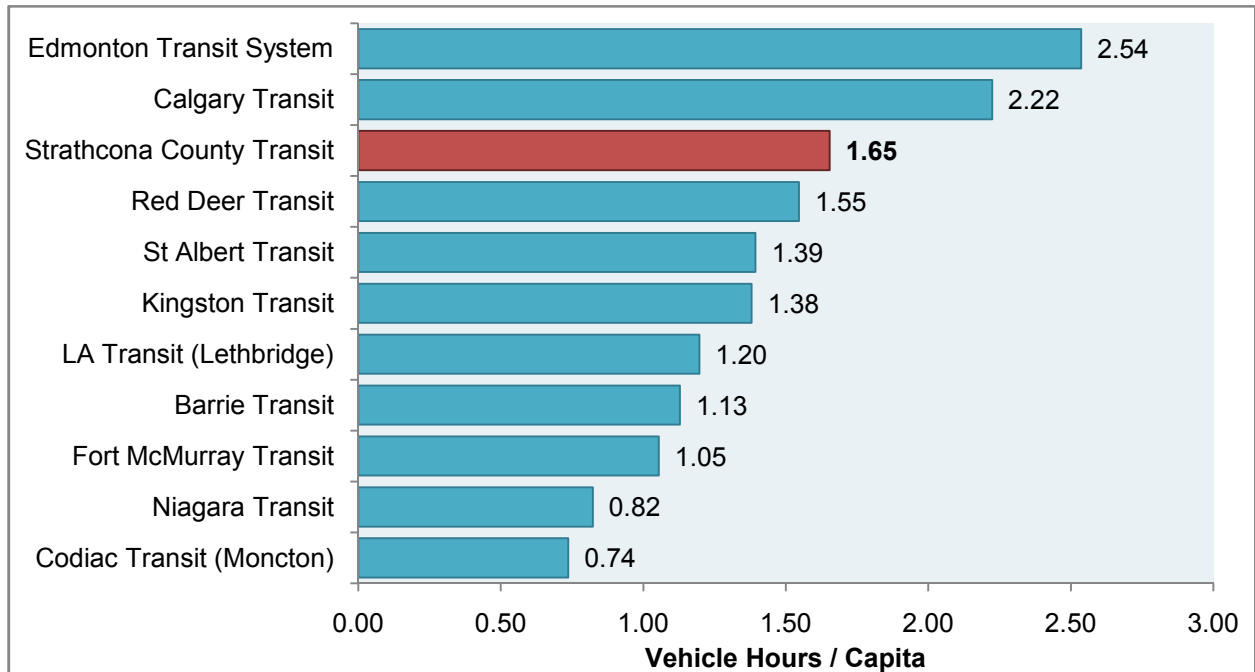
Exhibit 7 – Passengers Per Capita (2008)



Vehicle-hours Per Capita

Vehicle-hours per capita is a metric used to determine the degree of service a transit system provides to its population. As illustrated in Exhibit 8, SCT ranks third, behind Edmonton and Calgary. SCT's placement for this measure is reasonable because a large part of its business is serving commuters to and from major destinations in Edmonton. The operation of these longer distance routes may be a factor in the relatively high vehicle hours per capita figure.

Exhibit 8 – Vehicle Hours Per Capita (2008)

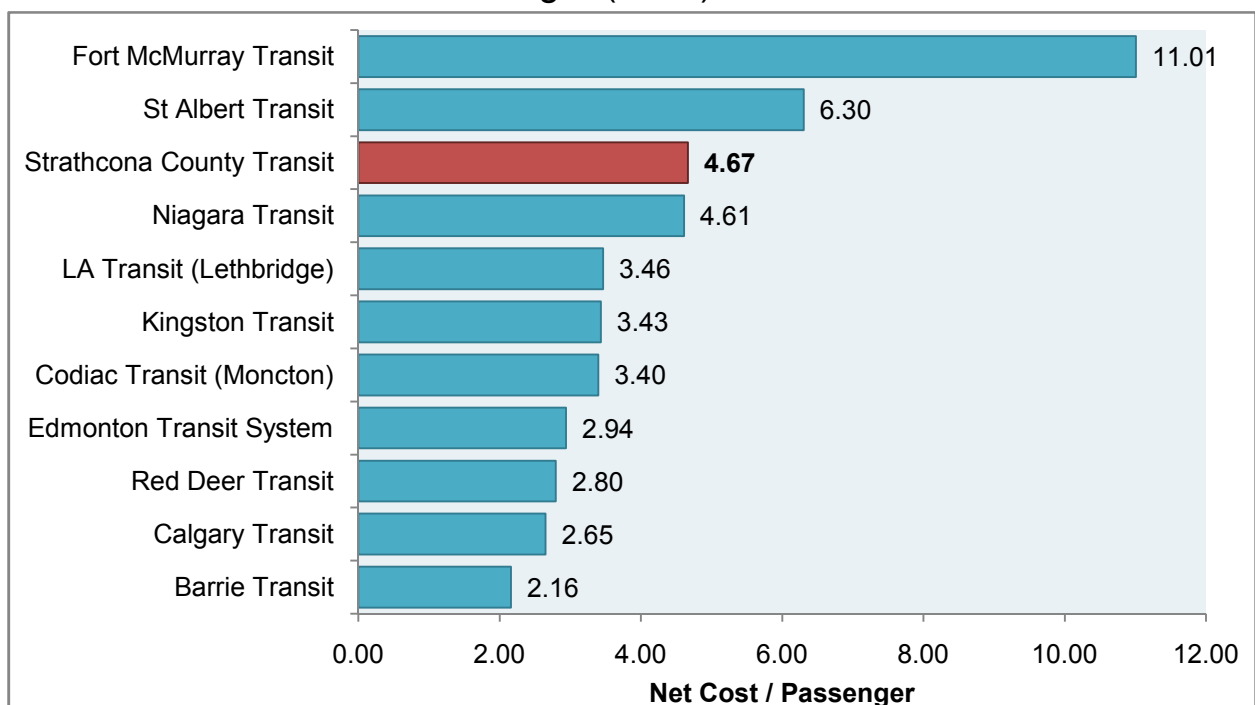


Net Cost per Passenger

The cost-effectiveness of a transit service is measured by the net cost per passenger. This refers to the number of passengers a system can attract given a set cost. As illustrated in Exhibit 9, SCT achieved the third highest net cost per passenger, placing behind Fort McMurray and St Albert. The high net cost per passenger is understandable for Fort McMurray because the transit system is currently in its infancy. However, it is notable that SCT demonstrated a more favourable net cost per passenger compared to St Albert Transit, especially given that both systems pose very similar geographic and land-use contexts.

As discussed in the R/C ratio portion of the analysis, SCTs uniquely larger proportion of longer-distance intermunicipal services are likely to cause increases in deadheading and in the requirement for vehicles because the supply of and demand for services are likely concentrated within the peak periods.

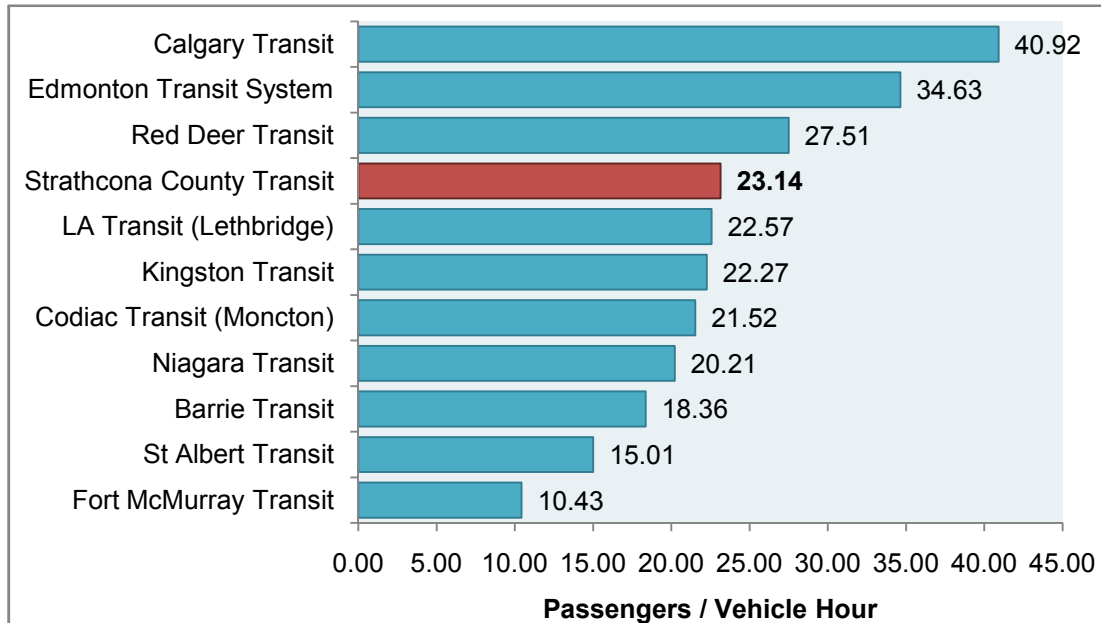
Exhibit 9 – Net Cost Per Passenger (2008)



Passengers per Vehicle-hour

Passengers per vehicle-hour is a measure used to determine the extent of transit patronage normalized for the amount of services supplied. Passengers per vehicle-hour differs from the description of boardings per vehicle hour described in Section 1 in that the measure of passengers refers to complete trips (or fares paid), while boardings includes counts of transfers. Exhibit 10 shows SCT demonstrated on average 23.14 passengers per vehicle hour, placing fourth below Calgary, Edmonton and Red Deer.

Exhibit 10 – Passengers Per Vehicle Hour (2008)

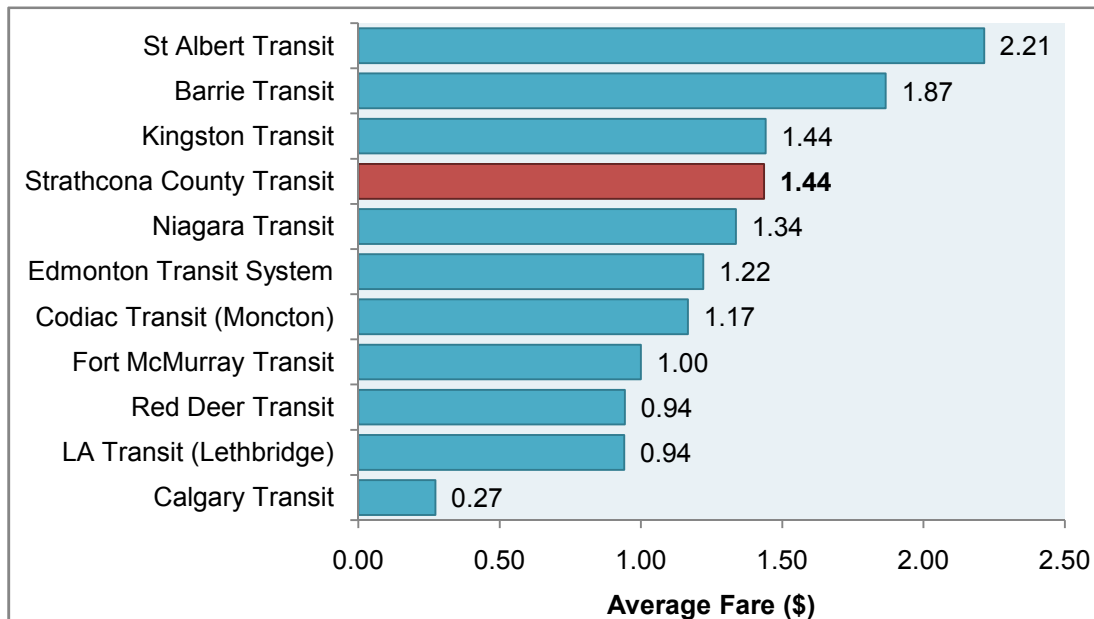


Average Fare

Average fare is a metric used to determine the affordability of transit service. As illustrated in

Exhibit 11, SCT has an average fare of \$1.44 and holds the third highest average fare, behind St Albert and Barrie Transit. SCT is tied with Kingston Transit. This figure is considered fairly low given the high number of longer-distance intermunicipal services it operates. For instance, St Albert, whose services are very similar to SCT, has an average fare of \$2.21.

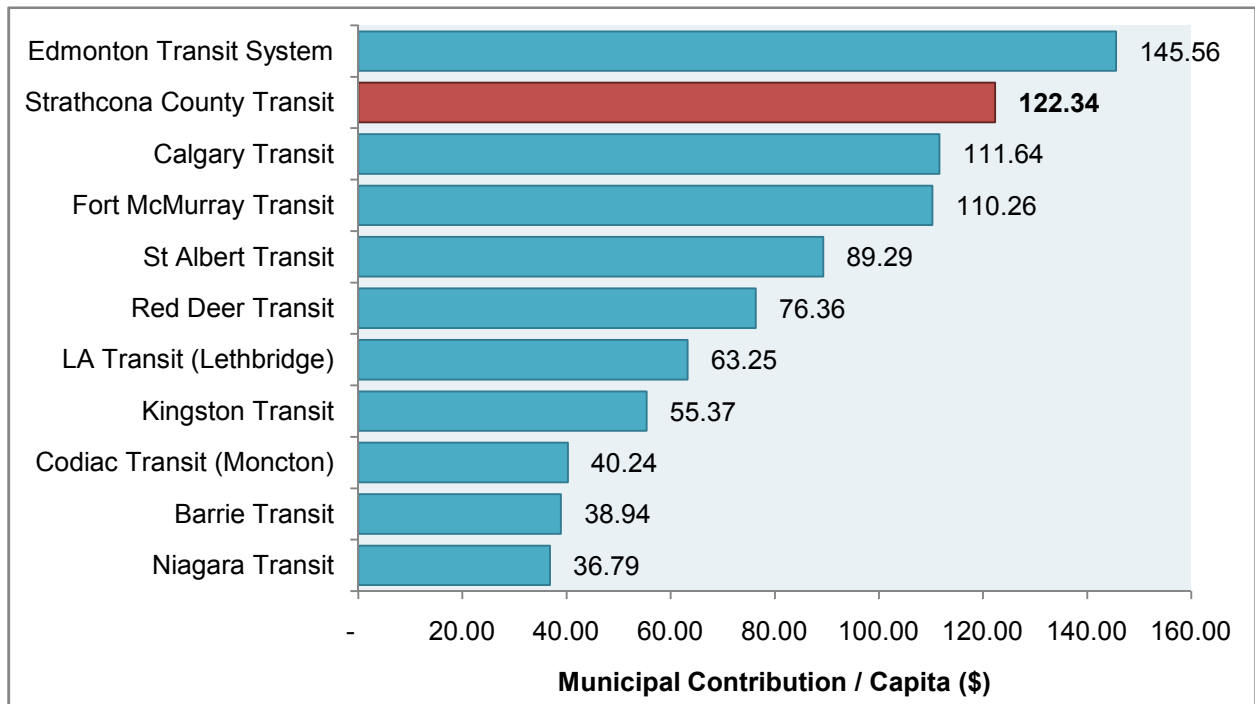
Exhibit 11 – Average Fare (2008)



Municipal Contribution per Capita

Municipal contribution per capita measures the degree of municipal subsidy normalized by its service population. Exhibit 12 shows that SCT supplies the second highest subsidy per capita for transit service in its peer group, at \$122.34. Interestingly, all seven Alberta transit systems contribute higher subsidies per capita than those outside the province. With respect to SCT, the extent of its subsidy is attributed to its relatively high level of service and its low average fare.

Exhibit 12 – Municipal Contribution / Capita (2008)



1.2 Specialized Transit Service

In addition to the peer review of conventional transit services, a peer review of Strathcona County Accessible Transit (SCAT) was also conducted using a benchmark process. The transit systems benchmarked against SCT were selected by GENIVAR based on having similar population sizes, fleet sizes and urban characteristics as Strathcona County. Larger accessible transit systems in Edmonton and Calgary are also included for reference. The eight accessible transit systems examined in this peer review are:

- Access Calgary
- Edmonton Transit Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS)
- Lethbridge Access-A-Ride
- Niagara Falls Chair-A-Van
- Red Deer Transit Action Bus
- Saint John Handi Bus
- St. Albert Transit Handibus
- Wood Buffalo Specialized Transit

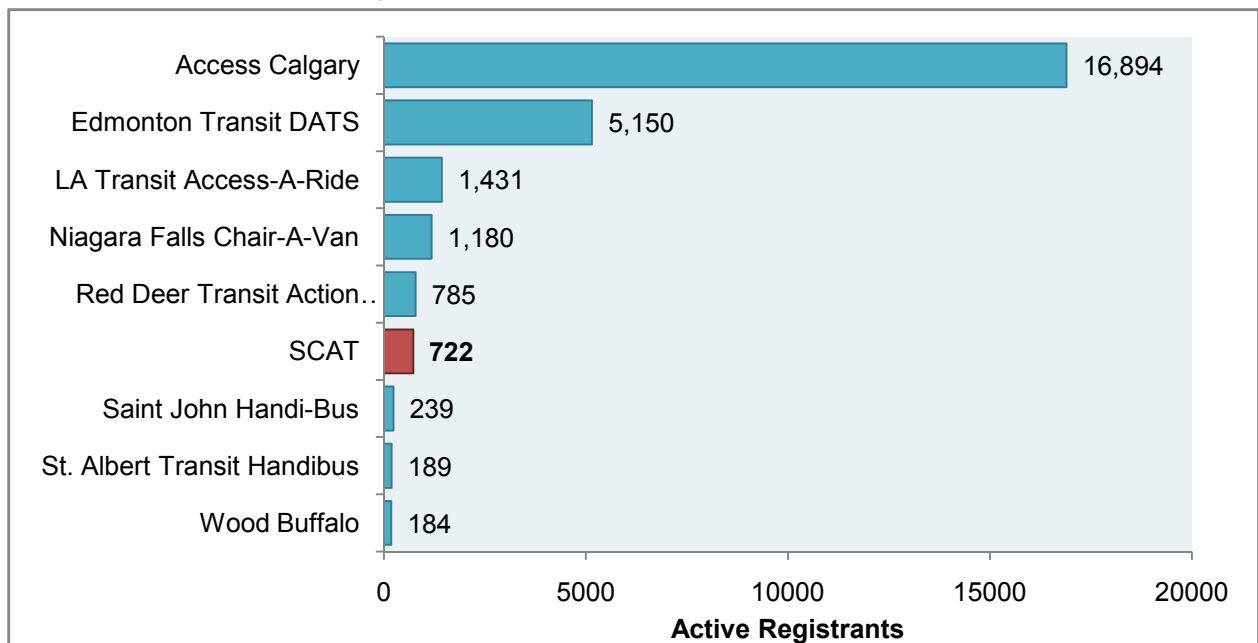
Data for the benchmarking exercises were obtained from the CUTA 2008 Fact Book.

Active Registrants

Active registrants are persons registered to use accessible transit who currently use the service. SCAT had 722 active registrants in 2008 and Exhibit 13 shows this to be more than Wood Buffalo, St. Albert Transit Handibus and Saint John Handi-Bus but less than Access Calgary, Edmonton Transit DATS, LA Transit Access-A-Ride, Niagara Falls Chair-A-Ride and Red Deer Transit Action Bus. Of note is that 722 active registrants with SCAT is much higher than 189 with the St. Albert Transit Handibus, which is significant considering the similarities between the two municipalities. However, it may be explained by the significantly higher level of intermunicipal and rural services provided by Strathcona County.

Note: Only total registrant information is available for Access Calgary and Niagara Falls Chair-A-Van.

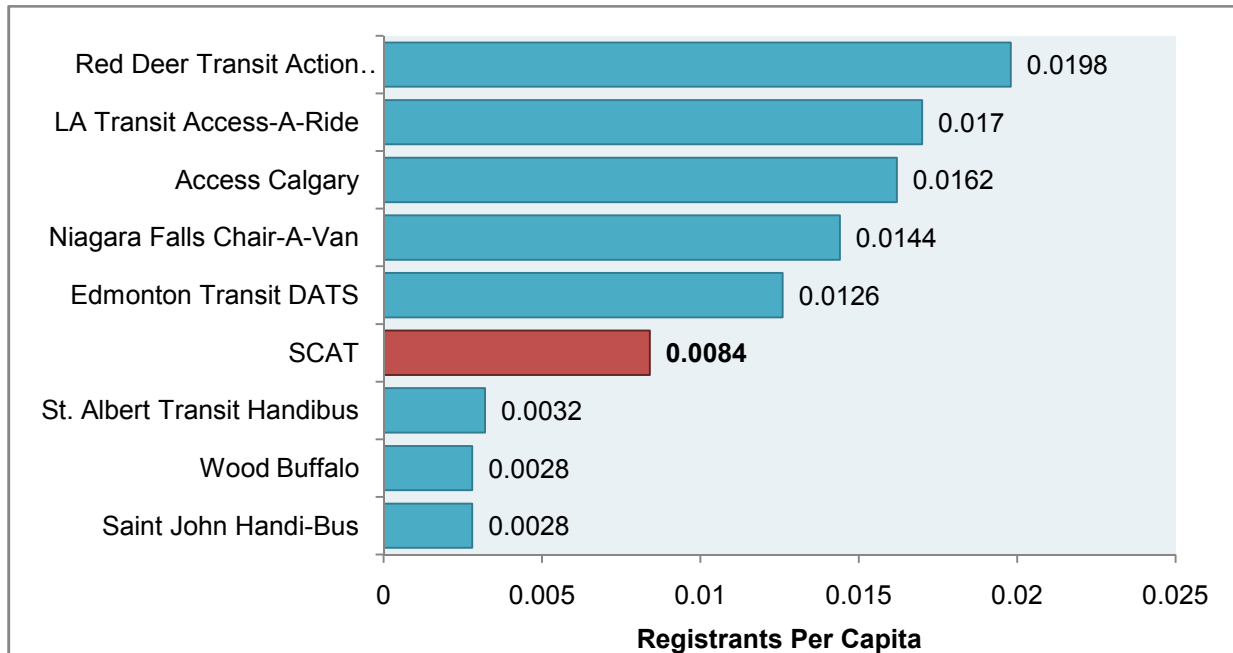
Exhibit 13 – Active Registrants (2008)



Registrants Per Capita

Registrants are active registered users who are eligible for SCAT service. Registrants per capita is the ratio of registered SCAT users to the service area population. SCAT had 0.0084 registrants per capita, which was among the lowest in the peer group. The peer group average registrants per capita was 0.0108 and only Wood Buffalo, Saint John Handi-Bus and St. Albert Transit Handibus have fewer than SCAT. Conversely, LA Transit Access-A-Ride and Red Deer Transit Action Bus both have more than 0.017 registrants per capita. These figures are illustrated in Exhibit 14.

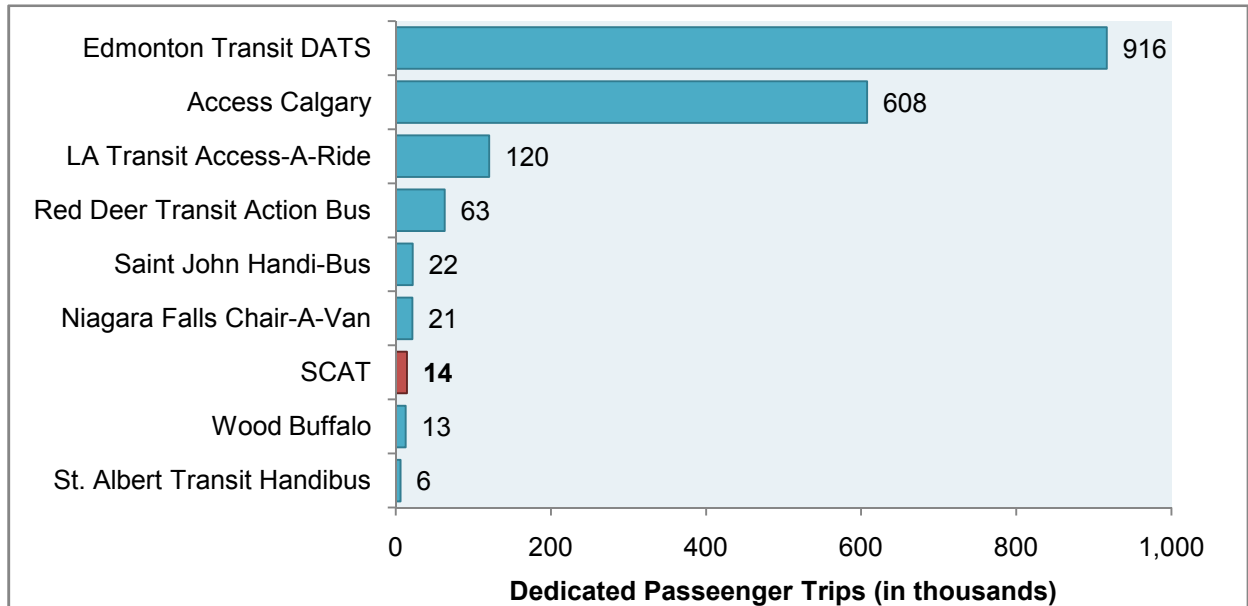
Exhibit 14 – Registrants Per Capita (2008)



Dedicated Passenger Trips

Dedicated trips are those provided on a vehicle that is dedicated exclusively to the accessible transit service, with no other service obligations. This differs from non-dedicated service provided by non-exclusive vehicles such as taxis that may be used to supplement capacity. SCAT provided 14,499 dedicated trips in 2008. As shown in Exhibit 15, the St. Albert Transit Handibus and the Wood Buffalo service are the only systems with fewer dedicated annual passenger trips than SCAT.

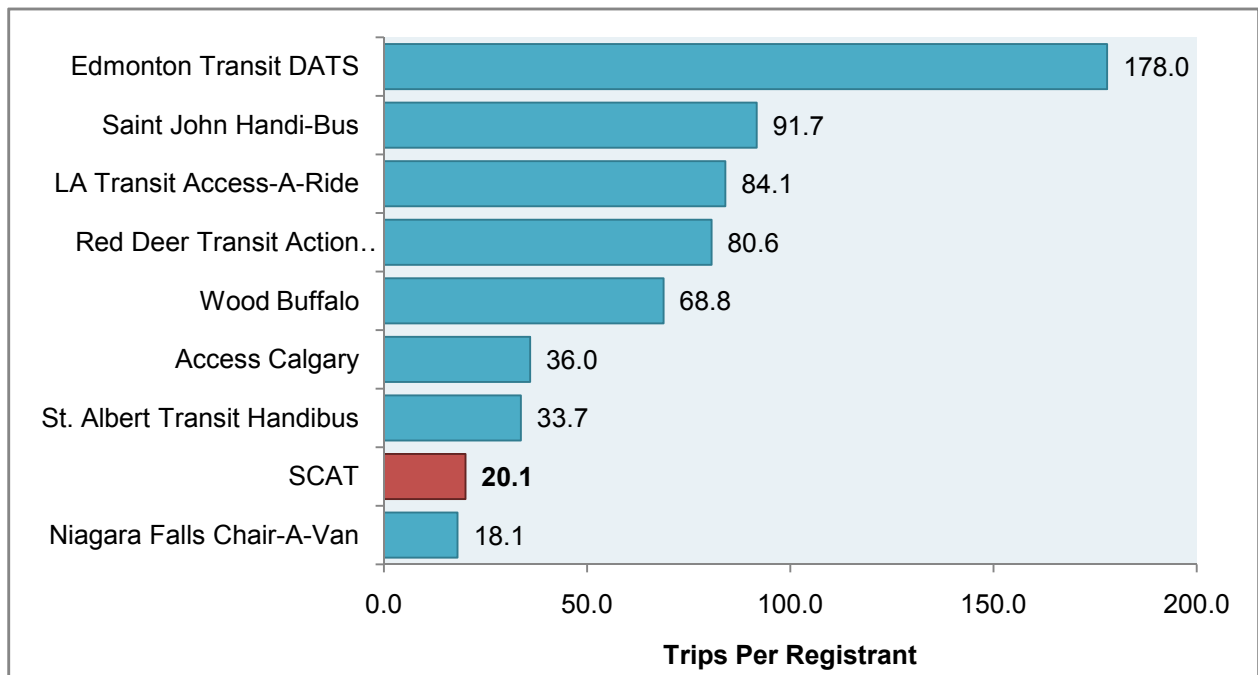
Exhibit 15 – Dedicated Passenger Trips (2008)



Trips Per Registrant

Passenger trips per registrant is an indicator that reflects how often registrants use the service and is calculated by dividing total annual passenger trips by total registrants. SCAT averaged 20.1 trips per registrant, much lower than the 67.9 average across the peer group. Niagara Falls Chair-A-Van was the only system with fewer trips per registrant than SCAT, and this is shown in Exhibit 16

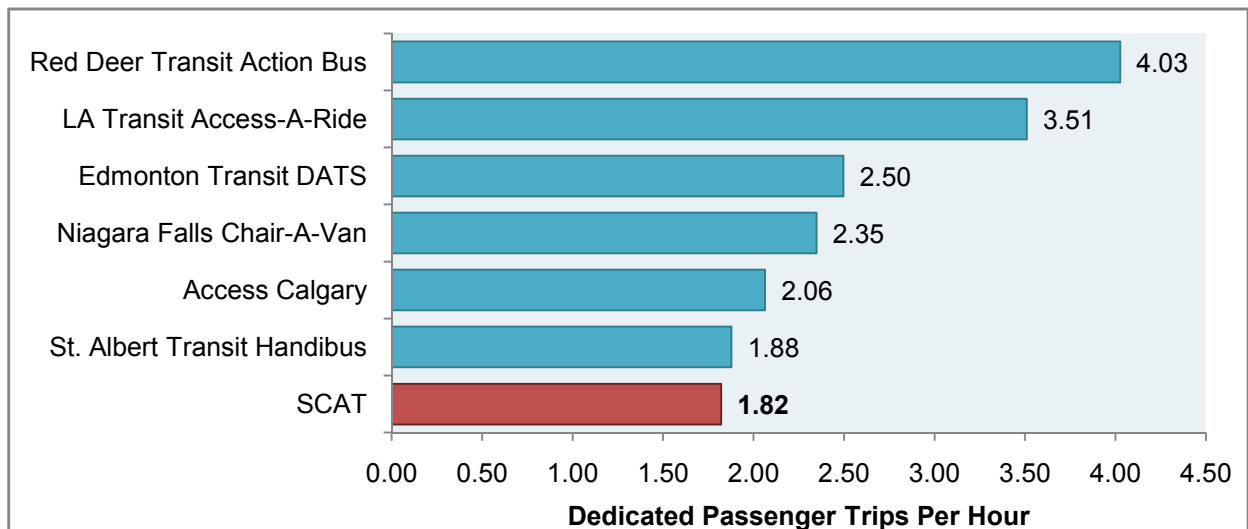
Exhibit 16 – Trips Per Registrant (2008)



Dedicated Passenger Trips Per Vehicle-Hour

Dedicated passenger trips per hour are calculated by dividing the annual dedicated passenger trips by the annual revenue hours provided by dedicated vehicles. SCAT provides 1.82 dedicated trips per hour, which is the lowest in the peer group. As illustrated in Exhibit 17, LA Transit Access-A-Ride and the Red Deer Transit Action Bus service provide the most dedicated trips per hour, with 3.51 and 4.03 respectively.

Exhibit 17 – Dedicated Passenger Trips per Vehicle-Hour (2008)



Note: Revenue vehicle hours information was not available from Saint John Handi-Bus or Wood Buffalo and dedicated passenger trips per hour could not be calculated for those systems.

Cost Per Passenger Trip

Cost per passenger trip is the average operating cost per passenger trip and is an indicator of cost effectiveness.

The 2008 SCAT cost per passenger was approximately \$28.82, which is the second highest in the peer group. Average cost per passenger trip in the peer group was \$26.63. Wood Buffalo had the highest cost per passenger trip at \$59.59. Cost per passenger trip may be higher for SCAT and Wood Buffalo in part due to the large service area the systems cover; 1,265 sq. km and 70,000 sq. km respectively. Excluding Wood Buffalo as an outlier, the average service area in the peer group was approximately 450 sq. km for each system. At 1,265 sq. km, the SCAT service area is considerably higher than average.

Cost per passenger trip for SCAT and the peer group are shown in Exhibit 18. The service area for SCAT and the peer group excluding the Wood Buffalo outlier are shown in Exhibit 19.

Exhibit 18 – Cost per Passenger Trip (2008)

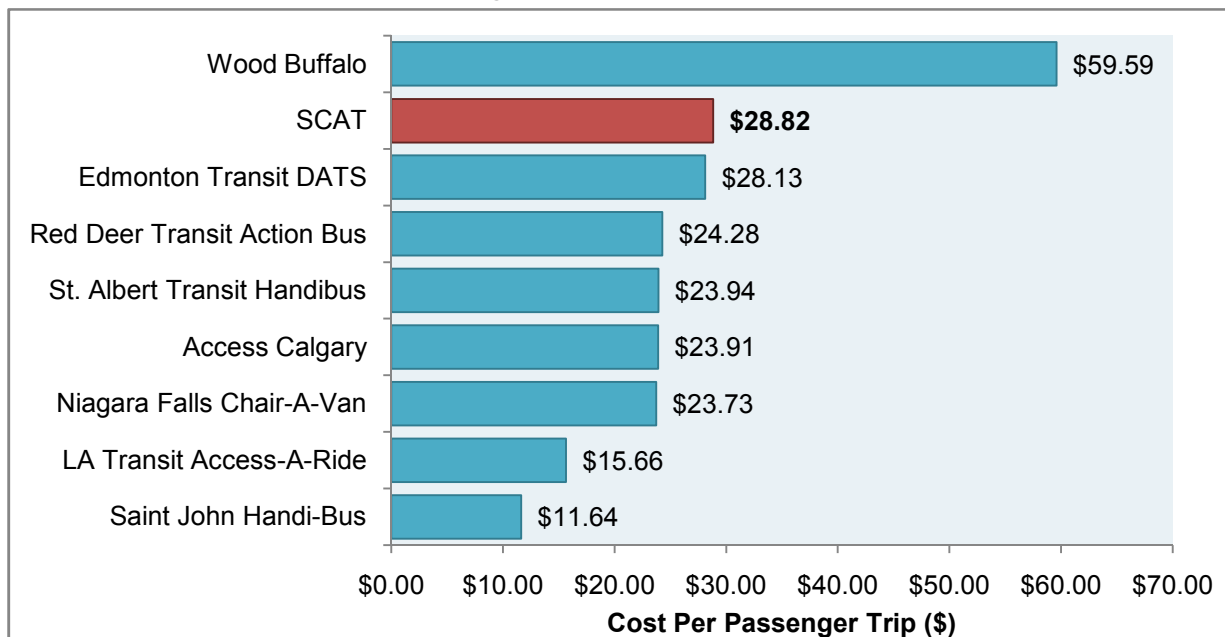
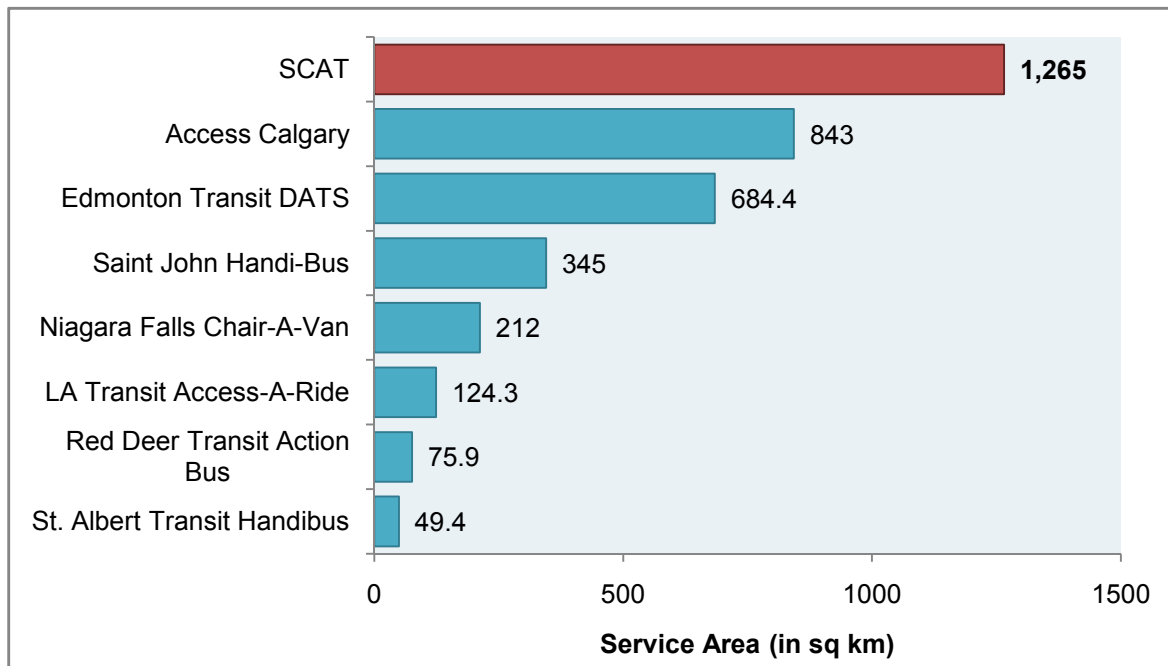


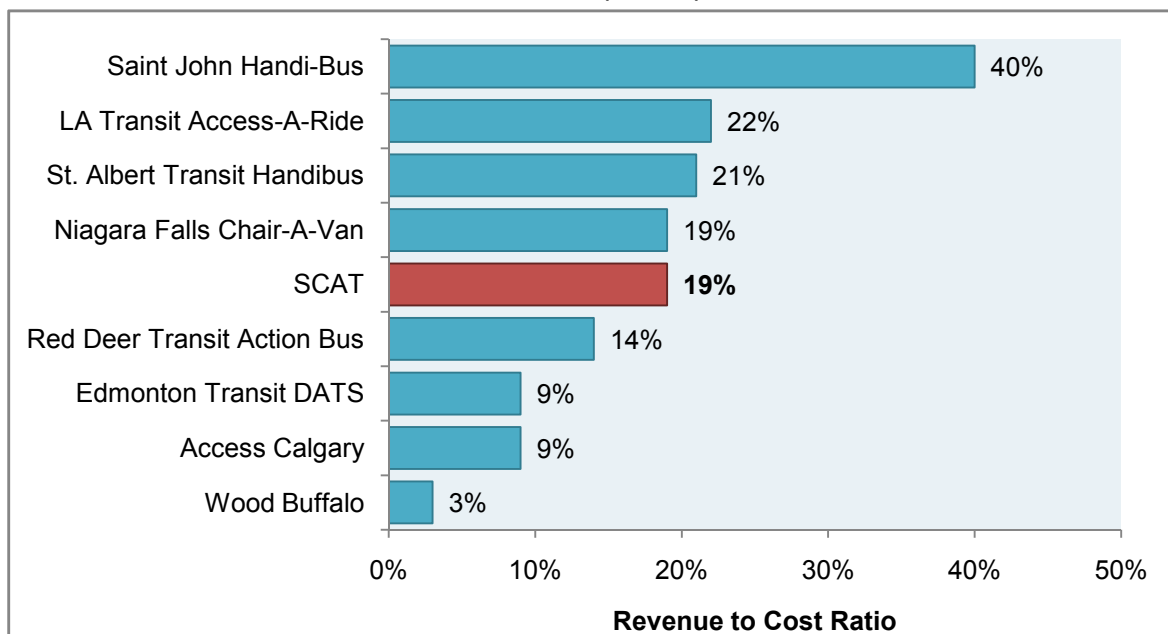
Exhibit 19 – Service Area (in sq. km) (2008)



Revenue/Cost Ratio

Revenue/cost ratio is a commonly used financial performance indicator that reflects the rate of return in a transit system and is calculated by dividing total operating revenues by total operating expenses. The SCAT revenue/cost ratio of 19 percent is slightly higher than the peer group average of 17 percent. Only St. Albert Transit Handibus, LA Transit Access-A-Ride and Saint John Handibus have higher revenue/cost ratios than SCAT and this is shown in Exhibit 20.

Exhibit 20 – Revenue to Cost Ratio (2008)



Appendix F

Service Standards and Planning Process

1. Service Standards

Service standards define transit's role within the community, and often define the transit system itself. Based on community driven objectives, they can provide a traceable assessment tool to determine the effectiveness of new and existing resources and allow for continuous quality improvement and the best use of available resources.

Service standards typically comprise:

- Performance targets to measure and monitor the system
- Benchmarks for quality of service
- Decision guidelines for implementing service changes
- Guidelines for designing routes and services

The service standards are intended to bring clarity and consistency to the process of continually adjusting and improving transit services to meet varied and changing customer needs.

Service standards define the conditions that require action when standards are not met, but allow flexibility to respond to varied customer needs and community expectations in an accountable, equitable and efficient manner.

To establish a general basis for determining appropriate benchmarks for performance measures, SCT was compared to several other systems throughout Canada. This process was intended as a general comparison only. The comparison indicates that generally, SCT performs near the group average. This would generally indicate that current performance is an appropriate minimum standard: performance does not require immediate remedial action to bring it up to an acceptable level, but in a continuous quality environment, improvement should always be incorporated into target measures.

Transit systems and decision makers are becoming increasingly aware that comparisons of one system to another are not particularly useful, since each system is different in terms of its operating environment, demographics, geography, political climate and a variety of other factors. What is important today for performance monitoring is to understand the range of performance of relevant systems and benchmark performance in that range, but then restrict monitoring of the system to year-over-year performance. This is more effective in promoting continuous quality improvement. For the same reason, more and more systems are abandoning specific performance targets in favour of continuous improvement. In this way, targets can still be set, but they are set in terms of a percentage increase in performance over previous performance.

As part of the development of the service standards, input from the community was solicited through a service standards workshop. Approximately 10 residents participated in the workshop and represented a variety of demographic groups, SCT riders, Specialized Transit riders and non-riders as well as Sherwood Park and rural residents. The input from this workshop was considered by the consultant team in the preparation of the proposed standards.

This section outlines our recommendations on service standards and guidelines for both conventional and specialized transit services along with a service review process and more detailed discussion is included in Appendix A.

1.1 Conventional Transit Services

1.1.1 Route Classifications

The proposed standards are defined for different route types that may form part of the service strategy, now or in the future. These include:

- **Intermunicipal Routes** connect Strathcona County to high demand destinations in Edmonton with direct non-stop or limited-stop service. These routes focus primarily on commuters and University students.
- **Local Routes** serve various communities and connect the communities to the major local activity centres in the urban transit service area as well as to transit terminal facilities where transfers between intermunicipal routes and local routes can be made.

Where appropriate, specific service standards and performance measures are recommended for each of these classes of service.

1.1.2 Service Design Standards

Service Coverage

SCT will consider new or revised routes to serve residents, places of work, secondary and post-secondary schools, major shopping centres and public facilities in the urban service area of Sherwood Park that are beyond the following distance from a transit route:

- 400 metres walking distance for residential areas during daytime Monday through Saturdays
- 800 metres walking distance for residential areas during other periods (weekday evenings, Saturday evenings and all day Sundays and holidays)
- 750 metres walking distance for industrial areas during peak period

The objective of this standard is to provide service to approximately 90 percent of the urban service area. An area may be excluded from consideration if 90 percent of all residences in the built up area are served.

Intermunicipal destinations are determined solely based on route performance standard. SCT shall strive to meet the same walking distance standards for intermunicipal destinations as for local services.

Hours of Service and Service Frequency

Exhibit 1 shows the recommended combination of service hours and frequency. it should be noted that these standards are minimum requirements and higher levels of service are expected depending on demand and their role in the system.

Exhibit 1 – Hours of Service and Service Frequency (Minimum Standards)

Period	Start	Finish	Service Level	
			Local Service	Intermunicipal Service
Weekdays				
AM Peak	6:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	30 minutes	30 minutes
Midday	9:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	30 minutes	60 minutes
PM Peak	3:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	30 minutes	30 minutes
Evenings	7:00 p.m.	12:00 p.m.	60 minutes	60 minutes
Saturday				
Daytime	7:00 a.m.	7:00 p.m.	30 minutes	60 minutes
Evening	7:00 p.m.	As warranted	60 minutes	60 minutes
Sunday/Holiday				
Daytime	8:00 a.m.	7:00 p.m.	30 minutes	60 minutes
Evening	7:00 p.m.	As warranted	60 minutes	60 minutes

Minimum span of service applies only to local service and base intermunicipal service (main routes connecting Sherwood Park and Edmonton). For other services such as peak-only intermunicipal service, minimum service levels are defined for each operating period, but whether or not these services operate in any given period is subject to the ridership performance levels.

A service in any period should be considered in the following order:

- To meet service coverage requirement
- To meet route performance standard

It should be noted that service may not be considered in some areas if 90 percent of the population of urban areas in the region are served and the service cannot meet the minimum route performance standard.

Also, clock face headways (for example, every 15, 30 or 60 minutes) should be considered for both intermunicipal and local services to enhance the simplicity of the system and to facilitate transfers, especially between intermunicipal and local routes.

Route Structure

- Intermunicipal Service – Intermunicipal routes shall connect the park and ride/terminal facilities in Strathcona County to major destinations in Edmonton following the most direct/fastest route. 95 percent of trips from the SCT service area to destinations directly served by intermunicipal routes such as downtown Edmonton and U of A should be accommodated with not more than one transfer. However, as SCT only directly serves a few high demand destinations in the City of Edmonton, transfers to ETS will be acceptable for passengers travelling to other destinations within the city of Edmonton.
- Local Service – Local routes will operate on the main roads in the urban service area. They will be oriented as much as possible to the main travel corridors (arterial such as Wye Road and Sherwood Drive, and collector roads such as Nottingham Blvd., Main Blvd., and Jim Common Drive), but could be deviated to schools, malls, major employers or other major attractors where ridership warrants. Within the urban

service area, 90 percent of local transit trips should be accommodated with not more than one transfer.

Route Performance Standards

For SCT services, the following ridership levels must be met unless the route is required to meet the route coverage requirement.

Exhibit 2 – Route performance Standards

	Passengers per Vehicle Hour					
			Other Service Periods		Overall	
	Average	Minimum	Average	Minimum	Average	Minimum
Intermunicipal Service	35	20	20	10	30	15
Local Service	15	8	10	5	12	7

Vehicle Loading Standards

The vehicle loading standards are intended as guidelines to ensure a reasonable level of passenger comfort. SCT will aim to limit the vehicle loading (measured at the peak point of the route over the peak 60-minute period) as follows:

- Intermunicipal Services:
 - High seating capacity vehicles (coach and double-decker buses): 110 percent of seating capacity
 - Standard and articulated vehicles: 125 percent of seating capacity
- Local services: 150 percent of the seating capacity

Trips exceeding these levels will be monitored for further assessment to determine if additional capacity is warranted, pending fleet and funding availability.

On-Time Performance

On-time departures are defined as departure from zero minutes before to three minutes after the scheduled departure time. Minimum performance threshold for on-time performance is 90 percent of all trips operating on-time. No vehicle shall leave a time point early.

1.1.3 Performance Measures

The following section outlines the recommended guidelines for guide the monitoring and development of SCT routes and services based on current performance and peer benchmarking. The recommended values in each of these areas reflect a desire to improve service levels to promote ridership growth.

The objective in establishing guidelines and monitoring performance is to improve year-over-year performance, recognizing short-term impacts of service increases.

Amount of Service

SCT's current performance is 1.76 vehicle hours per capita. However, considering potential use of high-capacity vehicles on intermunicipal services, it is recommended

that a minimum of 1.5 vehicle hours per capita should be maintained to guide the provision of services.

Service Utilization

SCT current performance is 22 passengers per vehicle hour. It is recommended that a minimum target of 20 passengers per vehicle hour should be established to monitor the service performance, with a long-term goal of increasing to 25 passengers per vehicle hour.

Similar to the passengers per vehicle hour measure, the passengers per capita statistic measures the overall propensity of the community to use transit, and the attractiveness of the system. Higher values represent superior performance. SCT current performance is 39 passengers per capita. It is recommended that a minimum of 40 passengers per capita should be established, with a long-term goal of increasing to 50 passengers per capita.

Cost recovery ratio (R/C)

Cost recovery targets are a useful indicator of overall economic performance of the system and are a common performance measure in the transit industry. It is important to note however, that the indicator focuses only on economic performance, while many other factors, especially ridership, should be included to help measure performance against the various system objectives.

GENIVAR's recommended approach is to benchmark cost recovery performance against industry standards with consideration for all local factors that influence it, then monitor cost recovery on an annual basis in the context of continuous improvement.

GENIVAR does not recommend a single value as an R/C target for a variety of reasons:

- If applied strictly, it limits the ability of transit management to achieve the other transit system's objectives. For example, service expansion often results in a short-term reduction in cost recovery performance. If the cost recovery target is strictly applied, it may thwart efforts to increase ridership. Also, not meeting a specific target may suggest a fare increase strictly to increase revenue, which may reduce ridership and affect other performance indicators. A comprehensive assessment of proposed changes in service, fares and system features on all aspects of system performance should always be considered.
- If not applied strictly, then a single value is actually a range, and so the range should be specifically outlined and assured to be consistent with other system objectives.

An appropriate range of cost recovery performance for SCT is a range of 35 percent to 50 percent. At the 50 percent level, costs are equally shared between users and the community, and many transit systems consider this conceptually sound. Normally, a system such as SCT should expect cost recovery performance in excess of 35 percent. A lower level of 35 percent will still allow staff the flexibility to implement service expansion programs that affect cost recovery in the short-term.

1.1.4 Other Guidelines

Bus Stop Guidelines

Bus stops should be placed at most intersections, passenger generators and transfer points. The spacing of stops should not normally be less than 200 metres in developed areas and 400 metres in undeveloped areas.

Bus stops at intersections must be located in the safest position, considering traffic and street conditions. Where possible, stops should be located close to signalized intersections and at the far side of the intersection.

Bus bays should be considered for stops located near major trip generators, transfer points, timing points or anywhere else where a bus is likely to have an extended stop time.

Benches and bus shelters should be placed at the main passenger generators and transfer points. Priority factors in selecting bus stops as candidates for shelters include:

- All terminals and transfer points
- High boarding locations (more than 35 passengers in peak periods)
- Unique exposure to inclement weather
- In front of senior residences and other institutional facilities

Stops and the area around them should be made accessible to people with disabilities, including wheelchairs and other mobility aids. The long-term objective of SCT is to accommodate accessible features at all of its stops. Stops and the area around them should also have a high priority for snow clearing.

Bus stops located on roads where parking is permitted, the desired length of a bus-only zone is 35 metres which allows free flow bus movement to access and exit the bus stop.

Service in New Areas

Conventional bus service shall be provided to new subdivisions with 400 households or 1,000 residents; alternative forms of service delivery (e.g. demand response services) shall be considered for new subdivisions that do not meet the criteria.

Services introduced in new areas not previously served should be guaranteed for a minimum 12 months of operation to ensure adequate time for travel patterns to adjust and for four-season ridership patterns to be accounted. At the end of the 12 months, the service must meet the minimum performance thresholds required for its class of service.

Within this trial period, interim targets are set to ensure that a service that is clearly not capable of meeting the ultimate targets is identified as early as possible. Monitoring at three, six and nine months is completed to ensure that the new service is trending towards the appropriate standard. Targets for these interim periods are set at 25 percent, 50 percent and 75 percent of the ultimate target, respectively. If the performance at the end of each period has not reached at least 75 percent of the target value, the route should be re-examined to identify potential changes to improve its performance. If the same standard is not met in the next period, the changes should be recommended.

Service in New Operating Periods

Changes that introduce service in new operating periods on an existing route or modify the existing service are subject to the similar evaluation as new routes, but over a shorter six-month period. If the service change is substantial, staff may recommend a longer trial period. For a six month trial, interim targets are established at two months and four months with target levels of 33 percent and 66 percent of the ultimate target.

Accessibility Guidelines

All buses purchased should be wheelchair accessible. Daily operation shall be designed to maximize the proportion of the service provided by accessible buses. Low-floor wheelchair accessible buses shall be deployed within the route structure to maximize the number of major origin/destinations served by consistent accessible services.

The following should be considered as long-term guidelines:

- 100 percent of conventional transit buses will be low floor and wheelchair accessible
- 100 percent of passenger facilities will be barrier free and accessible
- 100 percent of bus stops will be accessible
- All bus stops will be linked to accessible pedestrian access points
- Snow cleaning at all bus stops and adjacent pedestrian linkages will be a priority
- Mobility aids must be sized appropriately to safely fit on the transit vehicles

SCT should monitor on-going developments in accessibility standards and periodically review its system accessibility including both vehicles and stops to ensure that access is not a barrier to ridership growth.

1.2 Specialized Transit

1.2.1 Service Standards

In general, the objective of these standards is to ensure that specialized transit services operated by SCT offer comparable service levels and features as that of conventional transit services. The concept here is that passengers using the specialized transit service should be able to achieve the same travel objectives as conventional transit. This is seen as an important equity issue, and in some jurisdictions, legislation is being developed to implement this type of equity. Several Human Rights Commission rulings across the country have also imposed similar conditions on individual municipalities.

Hours of Service

It is recommended that specialized transit operates the same hours and days as the conventional service. Any expansion to the conventional transit span of service (for example, expansion of holiday service) shall be reflected in the span of service for specialized transit as well.

Service Areas

SCT specialized services will serve all areas served by conventional transit services, with comparable levels of service. These include:

- Within the urban service area (Sherwood Park)

- From Sherwood Park to select Edmonton locations
- Rural areas with conventional services

In areas where conventional services are not offered, specialized services may also be offered, but service will not necessarily be strictly comparable to other conventional or specialized transit service features, and provision of these services is subject to adequate demand and the availability of resources. This includes:

- Within the county but outside the conventional service area
- Inter-municipal trips to destinations not served by conventional transit, including other Edmonton locations and Fort Saskatchewan

Trip Purpose

Within the urban service area (Sherwood Park) and between Sherwood Park and select Edmonton destinations served by conventional transit, there shall be no restriction on trip purpose, and trip purpose information shall not be requested as part of booking a trip.

For trips in other areas where specialized transit services are provided, SCT may request trip purpose information and may prioritize trips. For trips within the rural area, or from the rural area to Sherwood Park, or to Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan destinations not served by conventional transit, trip purposes may be limited to medical and social trips only.

SCT specialized transit services will not accommodate emergency medical trips and may restrict non-emergency medical transfers.

Trip Bookings

SCT will accept bookings for trips beginning up to 48 hours prior to the desired trip time.

Mobility Aids

SCT specialized transit will accommodate mobility devices that do not exceed the dimensions of a standard wheelchair, as defined under the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This limits wheelchairs to approximately 76 cm wide, 122 cm long and not exceeding 275 kg, including the combined weight of mobility aid and passenger.

If a mobility aid exceeds these dimensions, SCT must first test the mobility aid to ensure it can be accommodated safely, and reserves the right to deny service to passengers using mobility aids that exceed these dimensions.

On-Time Performance

Specialized transit will schedule trips to provide pick-ups within 15 minutes of the arranged pick-up time. Passengers must be available to travel 15 minutes before their arranged pick-up time, and be prepared to wait up to 15 minutes after their arranged pick-up time.

1.2.2 System Design Standards

Subscription

Specialized transit will maintain sufficient fleet resources and scheduling practice to ensure that no more than 85 percent of its available capacity is dedicated to permanent or subscription trips during peak hours.

Open Returns

Specialized transit will attempt to schedule an open return as soon as possible following receipt of the information. If the expected wait will be longer than 30 minutes, Specialized Transit shall notify the passenger at the time of the call what the expected wait will be.

No-Shows / Missed Trips

Specialized transit drivers will wait up to five minutes after the arranged pick-up time or the vehicle arrival time (whichever is later) for a passenger to arrive.

Specialized transit drivers will not leave a scheduled pick-up point without authorization from their dispatcher, and will leave a “No-Show” calling card if practical.

Specialized transit drivers will not leave a scheduled pick-up point when a passenger, even if late, is within sight of the vehicle.

Unwarranted no-shows may result in billing for the missed trips. After three unwarranted no-shows in a six-month period, specialized transit staff may contact the customer to discuss and resolve the issue.

If the situation continues in the subsequent period following customer contact, specialized transit shall contact the passenger again, and service may be withdrawn.

Any passenger charged with a no-show incident may contact specialized transit staff to explain the situation and have the incident removed from the record if reasonable.

Passenger Travel Times

Specific travel time standards should be established for the various types of destinations served by specialized transit:

- Rural Trip: for trips within the rural area, travel times should not exceed 70 minutes
- Rural – Sherwood Park: for trips between the rural area and the urban service area (Sherwood Park), travel times should not exceed 90 minutes
- Sherwood Park: for trips within the urban service area (Sherwood Park), travel times should not exceed 60 minutes
- Inter-municipal Trips: for inter-municipal trips, travel times should not exceed 80 minutes

2. Planning Process

To assist SCT staff in meeting the objective of a fair and balanced appraisal of service requirements, based on technical analysis and consultation, a service review process has been developed, comprising a series of reviews and assessments of requests from different sources. This process will provide staff with a consistent, objective framework to assess requests for new or revised services.

The framework has four critical elements:

- The recommended service standards to assess new and existing services
- A series of three on-going route assessments comprising:
 - Regular route assessments as part of an on-going monitoring process
 - Periodic service reviews to monitor the on-going performance of the system or respond to minor requests
 - Annual service reviews to assess major requests for new or revised services
- The data collection program required to support the review process
- A comprehensive consultation process

2.1 A Consistent Performance Standard

For the service review framework, GENIVAR recommends that SCT evaluates its services on the basis of boardings per hour. It is important to assess boardings, or unlinked trips, so that routes that perform a high ratio transfer role are properly credited for that performance.

The boardings per hour measure gives a standard measurement against which to assess new services and provides the basis for the assessment approach used in the short-term analysis to identify routes for remedial action. Existing routes that perform higher than the system average contribute to increasing that average and should be maintained. New proposals with estimated performance (based on ridership projections) in this range can be recommended, subject to budget availability. Routes that have performance lower than the system average and higher than the minimum required by the performance standards are easily flagged and subjected to detailed assessment to determine if there are remedial measures which can improve the performance of the route. The third level of routes is the small group of routes with boardings per hour less than the minimum required for the route class. These routes have a negative influence on the average system performance and should be examined quickly to identify a major change that will improve performance. If such a change cannot be identified, or attempted solutions have proven unsuccessful the route is recommended to be discontinued unless the route is required to meet the route coverage requirement.

Each route type should be examined separately, with its own set of performance thresholds, as described in the Service Standards. These thresholds are based on existing performance, with the goal of continuous improvement.

2.2 Service Reviews

2.2.1 Regular Service Reviews

Regular service reviews are conducted on an on-going basis to ensure the most effective allocation of resources to individual routes. Each route is assessed to ensure the adequacy of its operation against several standards including adequate frequency in all periods, appropriateness of start and finish times, adequate safety and other factors.

Recommendations from this level of review can be implemented if they are minor or no cost, or if there is a specific budget allocation for them. Otherwise, recommendations are referred to the annual review process. Ideally, routes would be analyzed at regular intervals. Given SCT's size and level of operation, a thorough review of each route in a stable environment should occur at least once every two years. New routes or routes serving rapidly changing areas may require more frequent monitoring.

2.2.2 Periodic Service Reviews

Periodic service reviews are conducted on an ad hoc basis. Routes are assessed in response to customers' service requests or by staff as part of the on-going monitoring process. Service requests can fall into one or more of several categories described under the Annual Service Review.

Recommendations from this level of review can be implemented if they are minor or no cost, or if there is a specific budget allocation for them. Otherwise, recommendations are referred to the annual review process.

2.2.3 Annual Service Review

The Annual Service Review comprises an overall assessment of service proposals that have been deferred from the other review processes throughout the year, major proposals developed by staff, and proposals requested by customers as part of the consultation process.

Each proposal is assessed in terms of its:

- Ridership potential
- Contribution to modal split targets
- System accessibility
- Capital and operating costs

Measurements in each area are made and scored according to a weighted ranking system. All proposals are considered together so that an effective priority list of projects can be considered. Annual budget availability is used to determine the number of proposals from the priority list that are recommended for implementation.

Each proposal is first assessed against a set of screening standards to ensure adherence to minimum operating standards then assessed for its economic performance. If an acceptable proposal does not require capital budget and there is sufficient operating budget available, it can be implemented in the next board period. If the proposal requires additional vehicles, or there is insufficient operating budget for implementation, it is reviewed further in the Annual Service Review and compared against other proposals to ensure it is the most effective use of resources.

New routes or route changes

Routing proposals are developed on the basis of the individual request and must meet three principal routing criteria:

- Routes must be safe and operationally feasible
- The route should serve an area not already served
- There should be no avoidable duplication of service

If any of these criteria cannot be met, the proposal should be reconsidered. If it passes this initial screen, the proposal should be further assessed to ensure that it has a positive net benefit, that is, that more riders benefit from the change than those that are inconvenienced. Finally, the additional hours of the new route, route portion or routing change and new boardings should be estimated. If the new boardings per additional vehicle hour is above the route class average, the change can be implemented, subject to budget availability.

Additional periods of service

Additional periods of service such as midday or evening, are assessed for their economic performance only, assuming that the routing has already met the minimum operational standards during the current periods of service. While any additional period of service can be considered, routes are typically implemented in sequence:

- Peaks
- Midday
- Evening
- Saturday
- Sunday and holidays

If the assessment shows the boardings per vehicle hour for the period is estimated to be above the route class average, service can be implemented subject to budget availability. If assessment is below the route class average, the service proposal should be referred to the Annual Service Review.

Modified routing proposals can be considered for additional periods of service to improve ridership performance, provided they conform to the operation standards described in the assessment of new or revised routes.

2.3 Data Collection Program Requirements

The cornerstone of the Service Review process is a comprehensive data collection program including data from both SCT's operation and other elements of the transportation system.

2.3.1 On/Off Counts

An On/Off count records the number of passengers boarding and alighting at each stop, along with supporting data such as time of day, arrival time at control points, and exceptional circumstances. Full on-off counts should be conducted on each route, including weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays, on an on-going basis every two years to conform to the Regular Service Review. Regular counts should be conducted between

September and April, within the school year. Special summer counts should be conducted on routes subject to seasonal variation and as conditions warrant.

2.3.2 Standing Counts

Standing counts are supplementary counts taken by an individual 'standing' at a single point along the route. The count records route and run numbers, scheduled and actual arrival times, and arrival and departure loads. Standing counts are typically conducted at the stop identified as the peak point along the route but can also be completed at other points to meet specific needs.

2.3.3 Cordon Counts

Cordon counts are specially coordinated standing counts designed to assess the system performance at any given time across a cordon. These counts are taken at a series of points along a cordon around a particular area, such as downtown, to determine the level of transit ridership into and out of an area. Transit cordon counts should be coordinated with any automobile cordon counts conducted by the County.

2.3.4 Transfer Trace

Transfer traces are specialty counts that collect transfer information at specific points or system-wide to determine transfer characteristics at specific points, time periods or to and from certain routes. Transfer traces can be used to help design routes and interlines to minimize transfers and to identify overall travel patterns for the design of new routes and services.

2.4 Consultation Plan

The purpose of the consultation plan is to formalize a process to ensure that SCT plans are communicated and that stakeholder and public input is considered during the planning phases for improvements.

Regular and ongoing communications with the general public, key community groups and agencies, individual businesses and business groups, school boards, elected representatives and customers is vital both to hear about issues and areas of concern from them and to provide valuable information and education for them. Conducting open and regular communication in a proactive fashion will create a level of trust and reliability that will help to reduce any controversial aspects of service delivery.

A defined consultation plan with timeframes, topics, locations and issues identified will enable SCT staff to focus on obtaining the broadest cross-section of public input in both an efficient and productive manner. Individual requests for meetings and consultation could then be referred to one or another of the various components of the plan, if possible. This would help to optimize the time currently being spent on reactive responses to individual requests for public consultation and participation.

At each point of consultation and communication, it is important to present (with various degrees of emphasis depending on the group) the objectives of SCT, benefits of SCT to the broader community, and the objectives of the specific encounter.

The components of a successful consultation plan are:

- Knowing who your stakeholders are
- Defining the purpose of the consultation and communication

- Establishing a regular program of contact
- Reporting to the community on accomplishments

Consultation can be tailored to the needs or characteristics of the individual group and include:

- Issue-specific meetings with one or more stakeholders
- Public meetings, forums or open houses
- Written submissions
- Workshops
- Regular newsletters and notices

At each of the meetings, SCT will receive or present:

- Specific proposals for the short- and long-term strategies
- Options in the context of the service standards
- A comprehensive ranking of alternatives based on objectives of performance standards

Meetings can also be designed for:

- Areas Experiencing Change – to consult with the local area residents and businesses, and the elected representatives to develop specific proposals for change to services or the introduction of new services into their community, for areas of significant growth.
- External Stakeholders – comprising community agencies, business groups, transportation management associations, residents' groups.
- Neighbouring Municipalities and Transit Providers – to consult with the neighbouring municipalities and transit providers to ensure seamless services for those customers travelling beyond Strathcona County
- General Public Consultation – additional annual public consultation forums are suggested for those stakeholders and members of the public that would not have had an opportunity to provide input through the other venues.