

April 27, 2004
Updated: December 13, 2004
(after the public input session)

Rocky View Accessible Transportation Discussion Paper

Submitted by:
Paul Siller, Transportation Manager
manager@rockyviewbus.ca

Vision

Provide accessible transportation service throughout the Municipal District of Rocky View

Statement of Need

Transportation impairment (lack of accessible transportation) increases isolation of socially vulnerable rural citizens. Isolation increases dependence on others for basic needs. Increased dependence lessens ability to cope (coping skills) and removes responsibility for actions.

Through most of the Rocky View Municipal District, there is no public transportation available outside of handibus services. There are no Rocky View-based taxis nor private commuter services.

Strategy

- Provide a basic shared-ride service for persons with disability and other transportation-related impairments (No holiday /weekends /evenings)
- Encourage a “family” of services (volunteer driver, taxi, etc)
- Utilize all available community resources/ partnerships: (corporate support, lottery funds, neighbouring municipalities)

Rationale

The Municipal District of Rocky View has the largest population of any Alberta county or municipal district. In terms of economic development, the Municipality leverages proximity to Calgary, Cochrane and Airdrie as a development feature, however doesn't generally facilitate transit or handibus.

The **2001 MDRV Social Needs Assessment** identified: “...Transportation and loneliness were the most significant problems in the youngest and oldest age groups than in the middle aged age group.”

Quantitative analysis of assessment respondents indicates:

1. Demand for seniors transportation is 3 times that of Rocky View residents with disabilities
2. Demand for youth-related transportation is 5 times that of Rocky View residents with disabilities

3. Demand for disability related transportation is double that currently provided to Rocky View residents

Goals

- Improve availability of transportation for the community needs of both disabled and vulnerable non-disabled residents (social services, community services, health, employment)
- Enhance use/efficiency of existing para-transit equipment/resources/organizations
- Lower cost of transportation (per trip basis) of special needs transportation.
- Create sustainable transportation, fundable within the resources of participating passengers, municipalities and other stakeholders.

Background Considerations

Neighbouring Municipalities

Accessible transportation is a shared ride matter. Ideally the ride can be shared amongst a) passengers traveling to same destination and b) passengers residing in neighbouring municipalities. Proximity to communities with a population density greater than 8 people per acre improves sustainability of transportation.

Seniors Population

While every region has several influences that determine the actual transportation, the number of seniors (65 and over) in a community provides a simple comparison indicator.

Distance to Service Centres

A shorter travel distance reduces transportation costs. Local centres should be encouraged wherever possible. As the area outside of Calgary grows, more services are becoming available in the smaller centres (Airdrie/Cochrane). Longer travel distances reduce operation efficiency. In some cases, a satellite base should be considered permitting sub-regions to be developed.

Logistics

A vehicle needs fuel, mechanical service and all-weather parking. The driver needs access to dispatch, access to a spare vehicle, back-up for mechanical failures. The dispatcher requires trip logs, fuel receipts, and passenger information. May be difficult to facilitate over large distances.

School Division

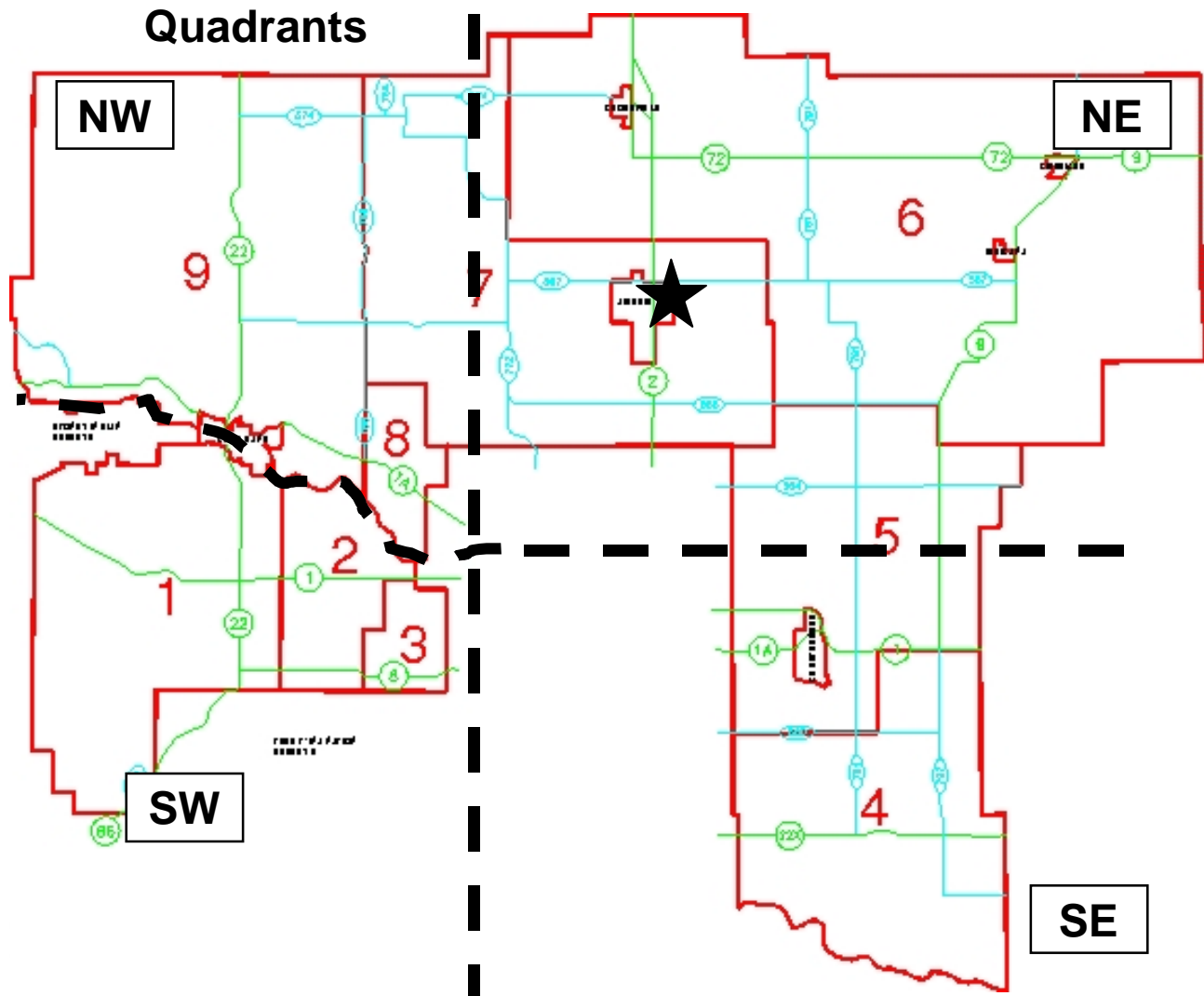
Transportation of special needs (K-12) students in a region can be a benefit or an obstacle. Provincial statutes prohibit non-school board passengers traveling with students. The bus is still available for transportation between the morning and afternoon runs. Thus certain types of travel can work outside of school transportation times. Unfortunately, time sensitive transportation such as dialysis or employment can conflict with school transportation, requiring a separate bus.

Trip Purpose

Medical trips tend to be of an occasional nature. Therapy, development and “employment” travel has a regular schedule. In an ideal situation, the two reasons of travel complement each other. Certain regions of Rocky View will favour one purpose over the other.

Specialized Transportation Providers

Rocky View’s specialized transportation providers (STP) are generally non-profit/charitable groups. Groups vary in capacity, ranging from a single tour bus to eight wheelchair accessible vehicles. Local variations arise because of differences in resources and mission. Each group responds to local needs as their resources permit. For example, one group might only use their bus for group outings; another group might only focus on seniors. Generally, the service regions of each provider do not overlap geographically.



In each quadrant:

Develop funding

- Make use of existing resources first
- Cost-shared solutions
- Lessen dependence on external parameters

Develop infrastructure/resources

- Community fund-raising program
- Vehicles (replacement and expansion)
- Facilities (shared and stand-alone)
- Dispatch software/accountability structures

Develop collaborations to broaden “family of services”

- Taxi, volunteer driver organizations, seniors groups
- Regional initiatives
- Provincial collaborations

Regional Analysis

MD of Rocky View

North West Region Districts 8, 9	North East Region Districts 6, 7
<p>Service Centres: Cochrane, Calgary, Bragg Creek</p> <p>Present STP Activity: High</p> <p>Existing Providers: Big Hill Seniors Bus, Cochrane Taxis</p> <p>Seniors Population: Division 8 7% Division 9 7%</p> <p>Region Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established transportation provider from Cochrane using semi-volunteer drivers • Wheelchair accessible bus available • Volunteer drivers: lower operating cost <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low municipal funding • Existing handibus operation dependant on supply of volunteers: may limit extra trips <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bears paw residents can share ride with Cochrane residents • Service to Cochrane instead of Calgary <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long travel distances • Sparsely settled area (acreages, ranches) 	<p>Service Centres: Airdrie, Calgary, Crossfield, Carstairs(?)</p> <p>Present STP Activity: High</p> <p>Existing Providers: RVRH, Airdrie Taxis, N. Rocky View Resource Centre Volunteers</p> <p>Seniors Population: Division 6 7% Division 7 9%</p> <p>Region Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established transportation provider based in Airdrie • Wheelchair accessible buses available <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low municipal funding • Existing handibus operation dependant on success of other transportation contracts <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RVSD operations share overhead costs • Draw on passengers from Crossfield, Irricana, Beiseker (Airdrie) • Service in Airdrie instead of Calgary <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long travel distances
South West Region Districts 1, 2,3	South East Region Districts 4, 5
<p>Service Centres: Bragg Creek, Cochrane, Calgary</p> <p>Present STP Activity: Low</p> <p>Existing Providers: Springbank Lions, Bragg Creek Snowbirds</p> <p>Seniors Population: Division 1 7% Division 2 5% Division 3 5%</p> <p>Region Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established group has a vehicle and self-funds a taxi- fare supplement <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization is oriented to group outings • No wheelchair accessible vehicles • Very far from RVRH office, increases logistical costs. Requires satellite base. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations with RVSD, Redwood Meadows, Camp Horizon (?) <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of support structures /operating costs 	<p>Service Centres: Chestermere, Calgary</p> <p>Present STP activity: Low-Medium</p> <p>Existing Providers: RVRH, Economy Taxi</p> <p>Seniors Population: Division 4 6% Division 5 9%</p> <p>Region Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established transportation provider based in Airdrie <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low municipal transportation funding • Long distance from RVRH office: increased operating costs (deadheading). Requires satellite base. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation with RVSD could share overhead costs. • Collaboration with Chestermere? <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chestermere assertion "... too small for a handibus" complicates possible shared services.

STP = Specialized Transportation Provider RVRH= Rocky View Regional Handibus

Recommendations

MD of Rocky View

<p>North West Region Districts 8, 9</p> <p>Immediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding to sustain current activity: 0.25 Bus (or equivalent) Encourage fund development efforts with MDRV business community <p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss accessible transportation at inter-municipal committee level (Cochrane) Investigate resources (cash and contributed services) available to STP Study demographics and potential need/growth Increase funding to meet growth <p>Longer term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 1.0 Bus (or equivalent) 	<p>North East Region Districts 6, 7</p> <p>Immediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding to sustain current activity: 0.5 Bus (or equivalent) Encourage fund development efforts with MDRV business community <p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss accessible transportation at inter-municipal committee level (Irricana, Beiseker, Crossfield, Airdrie) Investigate resources (cash and contributed services) available to STP Research demographics/ travel patterns for growth Increase funding to meet growth -- 1.0 Bus (or equivalent) <p>Longer term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 1.5 Bus (or equivalent)
<p>South West Region Districts 1,2,3</p> <p>Immediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request implementation plan for initial service to region. Research travel needs, possible collaborations, equipment needs, and funding plan. <p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss accessible transportation at inter-municipal committee level (Redwood Meadows, MD Foothills, ID#5) Review implementation plan Investigate resources (cash and contributed services) available to STP Encourage fund development efforts with MDRV business community Funding to sustain 1.0 Bus (or equivalent) <p>Longer term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage local transportation to Bragg Creek /Cochrane Encourage Redwood Meadows to participate (group home) 	<p>South East Region Districts 4, 5</p> <p>Immediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding to sustain current activity (0.25 Bus Equivalent) Encourage fund development efforts with MDRV business community <p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss accessible transportation at inter-municipal committee level (Chestermere) Research location of possible satellite base Research demographics/ travel patterns for growth Investigate resources (cash and contributed services) available to STP Support 0.75 Bus (or equivalent) <p>Longer term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Chestermere to participate in regional transportation initiatives Support 1.0 Bus (or equivalent)

STP = Specialized Transportation Provider RVRH= Rocky View Regional Handibus

Strategic Plan

For Rocky View Regional Handibus (2002)

2003

- Create fund development plan
- Develop business plan
- Upgrade scheduling software
- New bus and ongoing replacement program

2004

- Implement new bus replacement program
- Study demographics and potential need/growth
- Plan and determine satellite run #1
- Establish relationship with another municipality

2005

- Start satellite base #1
- Determine future service levels and bus needs
- Plan and determine satellite base #2
- Pursue joint ridership with RVSD

2006

- Start satellite base #2
- Secure new facility in response to growth
- Seek relationship with another municipality

2007

- Review
- Identify new program opportunities

Mission:

Provide community transit services for people with special transportation needs in the Municipal District of Rocky View and surrounding area

Testimonial

“Rocky View is serviced by an efficient and courteous Handibus service. Rocky View Handibus is considered one of the best operated and most customer service orientated in the Province.”

www.AlbertaFirst.com

<http://www.albertafirst.com/profiles/statspack/20700.html>

Transportation Costs

One Bus: \$55,000 –65,000 for a low mileage (urban setting)
 \$60,000 - \$70,000 per year for a high mileage situation (rural) as cost increases with higher mileage associated with remote locations

Note: “One Bus Equivalent” refers to the sum effort of multiple buses in a given region.

Cost Breakdown (Gross Cost)

Revenue Hours	7 hours/day	1,736 hours/year
Replacement Value	\$68,000	
Service Life (Years)	10 years	

Item	Hourly	Daily	Monthly	Yearly
Capital Cost	\$4.13	\$28.93	\$597.83	\$7,174.00
Fuel	6.00	42.00	868.00	10,416.00
Maintenance/repair	4.24	29.66	613.03	7,356.30
Wages	15.00	105.00	2,170.00	26,040.00
Communications	0.50	3.50	72.33	868.00
Insurance	0.86	6.00	124.00	1,488.00
Wash/Misc	0.36	2.50	51.67	620.00
Spare Bus (10%)	0.41	2.89	59.78	717.40
Dispatch/admin	5.71	40.00	826.67	9,920.00
Project Mgmt	0.93	6.50	134.33	1,612.00
Total Cost	\$38.14	\$266.98	\$5,517.64	\$66,211.70

Note: Capital fundraising by participating Special Transportation Provider can reduce annual cost by about \$7,000 per year (Capital Cost). Volunteer drivers can also reduce operating costs.

Above costs would be offset by revenues (passenger fares, etc of \$3,000 – \$12,000)

Comparison costs

- Urban School busing (Cochrane/Airdrie) approx \$ 20,000/year (ten months: 2 hours/day)
- Rural school busing \$ 40,000/year
- MDRV special constable \$72,000 (includes vehicle expenses)
- St Paul and area Handibus \$72,000/year (one vehicle)
- Grande Prairie Handibus \$55,000/year (one vehicle)

Appendix - Estimation of Regional Accessible Transportation Demand

Town /Rural Name	Seniors Population	Total Population	% Seniors	Factor	# of Possible Trips	% of Trips
MDRV Div 1	190	2805	7%	0.339	950	5%
MDRV Div 2	270	5264	5%	0.256	1350	7%
MDRV Div 3	220	4548	5%	0.242	1100	5%
MDRV Div 4	112	1757	6%	0.319	560	3%
MDRV Div 5	175	2054	9%	0.426	875	4%
MDRV Div 6	168	2431	7%	0.346	840	4%
MDRV Div 7	202	2346	9%	0.431	1010	5%
MDRV Div 8	319	4444	7%	0.359	1595	8%
MDRV Div 9	194	2792	7%	0.347	970	5%
Crossfield	195	1739	11%	0.561	975	5%
Beiseker	83	795	10%	0.522	415	2%
Irricana	35	1016	4%	0.200	203	1%
Chestermere	165	3742	4%	0.220	825	4%
Airdrie	1155	23680	5%	0.244	5775	28%
Cochrane	580	11173	5%	0.260	2900	14%
Redwood Meadows	40	2494	2%	0.080	200	1%
Note: MDRV 2000 Census Data						
Totals	4103	73080	6%	0.322	20543	100%

% Seniors

“Because a large proportion (40%) of seniors have physical disabilities, the demand for parallel transportation is very sensitive to the number of persons of 65 years or older in the population. For a given service policy, the percentage of persons aged 65 or more appears to be the most useful indicator of demand...” (Canadian Transit Handbook,) Third Edition

Factor

Inferred between national demand rates and local experience.