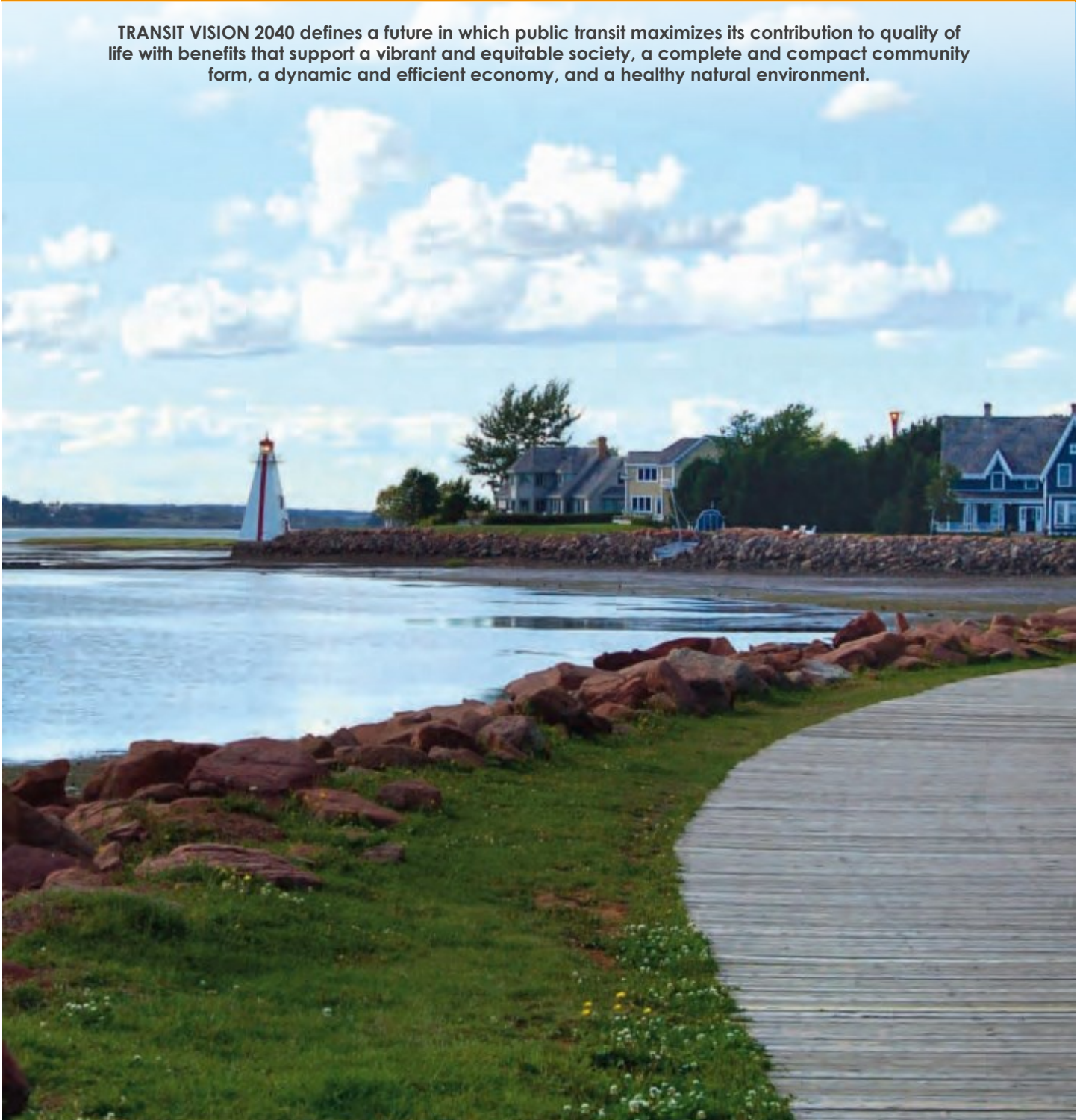


TRANSIT VISION 2040 — FROM VISION TO ACTION

TRANSIT VISION 2040 defines a future in which public transit maximizes its contribution to quality of life with benefits that support a vibrant and equitable society, a complete and compact community form, a dynamic and efficient economy, and a healthy natural environment.



THEME 2: REVOLUTIONIZING SERVICE

STRATEGIC
DIRECTION

2.5

Build service in
smaller communities

REVOLUTIONIZING SERVICE

Strategic Direction 2.5:

Build service in smaller communities

Small and rural communities present market opportunities and economic constraints for public transit that are different and more variable than those in larger urban centres. The uniqueness of each community underlines the need for flexible and innovative transit solutions involving a range of funding and operating structures. In many small communities, improving the coordination of social transportation services for seniors or persons with disabilities can make the services more effective and efficient without requiring the introduction of an entirely new transit service. However, in growing communities, the capacity of social transportation services can be stretched as the client base expands—and the interests of the public may be better served by transit services that are accessible to more members of the community. Transit service establishment can be facilitated by support from provincial governments and the involvement of local transportation providers and major employers. Neighbouring communities can work together to share risks, resources and responsibilities, yielding economies of scale while they strengthen social and economic bonds.



Partnerships between neighbouring communities, higher levels of government, and private operating companies should be formed to pool resources or gain support where limited budgets present a barrier to transit service.



Small communities should develop **educational programs** to familiarize residents with the local transit system.

Branding and **marketing** transit systems can remind community members of their transportation options and the many benefits of using transit. Transit stops, stations and vehicles should be **visible, identifiable and prominent** community features.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Indicator 1: Transit Trips per Capita

Ridership Targets:

Over the year 2010, transit ridership in communities with populations of less than 50,000 averaged 21 regular service passenger trips per capita.

By 2040, **transit ridership in small communities will double** to average 40 passenger trips per capita per year.

Indicator 2: Service per Capita

Transit Service Targets:

In 2010, transit service in communities with populations of less than 50,000 averaged roughly 0.7 revenue vehicle hours per capita.

By 2040, **transit service in small communities will increase by 80%** to average 1.3 revenue vehicle hours per capita.

Indicator 3: Planning and Policy Frameworks

Planning and Policy Targets:

By 2015, all small communities will have a **Transit Ridership Growth Plan** in place that outlines short- and long-term transit ridership goals and steps that will be taken to meet targets. These plans will be of high quality and up-to-date.

Indicator 4: Transit Promotion and Educational Programs

Promotion Targets:

In 2040, all residents of small communities will be knowledgeable of their local transit service and how to use transit. This can be done through:

- School programs
- Simple, informative webpages for transit systems
- Public events
- Posters
- Advertisements
- Incentives such as discounts at local restaurants with the purchase of a transit pass
- Visually prominent transit vehicles and facilities

INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

Partnerships between Neighbouring Communities can help small communities overcome the barrier of a limited budget; resources can be pooled to make transit a possibility. Small communities can partner with other small neighbouring communities, or agreements can be made to extend the transit services of larger cities to nearby communities. Many small Canadian communities have also obtained significant provincial funding for transit. These partnerships can help provide both local transit services and regional transit between communities.

Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia



Kings Transit Authority in Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia is one of Canada's most efficient small transit systems and a model for **cost-effective transit partnerships**

among rural communities. Its five routes cover nearly 200 km six days per week, and a significant proportion of its customers are seniors.

Funding is provided jointly by the County of Kings and the towns of Berwick, Kentville, and Wolfville. Kings Transit has expanded since its 1981 incorporation to serve towns in both Annapolis County and Hants County.



Working with Local Organizations

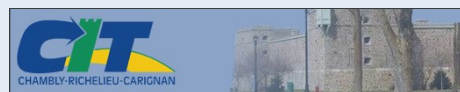
offers diverse options for providing service. A number of transit systems in small Canadian communities are working with local school boards, health providers, taxi services, and employers to increase the capacity of transit for a low cost. For example, unused seats on school buses can be used as a form of transit.

Quebec

Conseil intermunicipal de transport (CIT) Chambly-Richelieu-Carignan is one of the eleven intermunicipal transit systems represented by the provincial Association québécoise du transport



intermunicipal et municipal (AQTIM). It was established in 1984, and now serves a total of five communities in southwestern Quebec: Chambly, Richelieu, Carignan, St-Mathias-sur-Richelieu, and Marieville.



British Columbia

The **BC Municipal Systems Program** provides transit services to the province's communities located outside of the Greater Vancouver and Victoria regions. It operates through a partnership with BC Transit, local government, and a private operating company, formalized by an Annual Operating Agreement (AOA) between the parties. Through this program, small communities can use provincial funding and guidance to make transit service possible.

22 transit systems are included in the program, the majority of which are located in communities with under 50,000 residents.

Rimouski, Quebec

In 1993, the Société des transports de Rimouski began its transit service through the use of **private taxis**. The **Taxibus** service is demand-responsive and operates between hundreds of stop points throughout Rimouski's urban area. After permanently registering for a fee of \$1, members make telephone reservations and pay fares that are comparable to conventional transit fares, at \$3.30 per trip. Users of Taxibus can also purchase an unlimited monthly pass for \$103.

Taxibus makes all trips in under 15 minutes and without transfers. This convenient service has gained popularity since its implementation, and now makes 100,000 passenger trips per year.

Taxibus is highly flexible and adaptable to changing transit demands. The service requires an annual subsidy of \$100,000; a fraction of the funding required for conventional transit service.



INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

Educational programs

can be used to address the issue of unfamiliarity with transit systems. Community members such as youth and seniors may lack experience with transit and require accessible, simplified information on how the system works. Readily available information can eliminate this barrier to transit use.

Dude, was that your mom? Take the GGOB Transit!

You know, riding the bus is easy, safe, environmentally friendly and less work for your parents. You can even save some money while riding the GGOB!

North Bay, Ontario

North Bay Transit's **Go Green On the Bus (GGOB)** marketing campaign, supported by Transport Canada's **ecoMOBILITY** Program, was launched with the goal of teaching and encouraging more youth and students to use transit. The initiative involved the creation of an **informative website** (ggob.me), along with **presentations at local high schools**. Following each presentation, students were given five **complimentary transit rides**. Students were then encouraged to complete a **survey** to give feedback on their transit experience.



North Bay Transit's website simplifies transit use for those who are unfamiliar with the system. For example, the website features a video explaining how to use the Google Maps Transit Trip Planner feature.

Branding and Improving Visibility

can increase awareness of local transit systems, as well as communicate the benefits of using transit over personal vehicles. Small communities with limited budgets can often find innovative and low-cost ways to encourage members of the community to use transit, including the use of posters and social media, creating and advertising incentives for transit users, and making transit vehicles, stops and stations visually prominent and unique.

Whitehorse, Yukon

Whitehorse Transit launched the **My Transit Mix campaign** in 2011. The City was looking to promote its bus service while working within its limited budget. With the help of the local consulting group Tipping Point Strategies, research was carried out to determine the most prevalent barriers to bus ridership in Whitehorse. Strategies were then developed to address these barriers, **raising awareness of and accessibility to transit**.

A new **webpage** was created (whitehorsetransit.com), along with a **Facebook page** to keep

transit riders up-to-date on any schedule changes or promotional events. Incentives were used, such as **discounts at local restaurants** with the purchase of a bus ticket.

After the initial five-week campaign, Winnipeg Transit experienced a bus ridership increase of over 20%. Longer-term strategies will continue to work towards a higher transit modal share.



Banff, Alberta

Banff's "Roam" transit system features a total of four **hybrid-electric buses**. Each of the four buses is covered in panels with **images of a Banff National Park wildlife species**: bears, mountain goats, elk, and wolves. All photos were taken by Banff's local photographer John Marriot.



Banff's "Bear" bus

The **rebranding** strategy began in 2008 and has since been highly successful. Over Roam's first year, bus ridership increased by 36%. Roam was then awarded the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' 2009 Sustainable Transportation Award, being recognized both for the reduced fuel use of the hybrid vehicles and the promotion of an appreciation for local wildlife through the panels, rather than the use of bus exteriors for advertising.

INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

Public-Private Partnerships

(P3) are another way to obtain the resources necessary to provide good transit service in a small community. Over 35% of CUTA's transit system members have at least a portion of their service delivered by the private sector. These arrangements allow transit systems to focus on their goals and objectives while private sector partners focus on how to efficiently achieve them. Small communities in particular can benefit greatly from these improved efficiencies.

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Charlottetown introduced regular transit service for the first time in 2005 as a **public-private partnership** between the City and a **private bus operator**, serving five routes and operating six days per week. The private operator receives full transit fares along with an annual subsidy from the municipality that has been gradually reduced over time with increasing ridership. Diesel trolleys were introduced to reflect the value that the community places on its heritage.



Charlottetown trolley Source: Transport Canada

Ridership rapidly grew from 6,000 riders in the system's first month to over 12,000 monthly rides just over one year later. The service was soon extended to connect the nearby suburbs of Cornwall and Stratford. Charlottetown continues to expand its service to other Prince Edward Island communities, with a new daily service operating in the City of Summerside beginning in July 2012.

Transit Ridership Growth Plans can be used by municipalities, regions and transit systems to set local transit ridership targets. Specific strategies and timelines can be developed and implemented in order to reach these targets. Small communities face unique challenges in gaining enough support to provide convenient transit service, and can benefit significantly by developing detailed Transit Ridership Growth Plans.

Woodstock, Ontario



Ontario's Gas Tax Program allows two cents from every litre of gas tax revenue to be allocated to expanding and improving transit systems in municipalities across the province. Funding is awarded based on a formula weighting municipal population at 30% and transit ridership at 70%; municipalities are also required to develop a **Transit Ridership Growth Plan** in order to receive this funding. Between 2004 and 2010, over \$1.3 billion was awarded to municipalities through this

program, resulting in increased transit ridership, reductions in car trips, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The Gas Tax Program has helped a number of small communities begin transit service operations or expand their existing services. The City of Woodstock attributes much of its recent reinvestments in transit to the Gas Tax Program. Its 2006 Transit Ridership Growth Plan provides a five-year **strategy for increasing ridership**, combined with a ten-year **Asset Management Plan**. The Plan identifies "immediate term" initiatives to be undertaken within one year and "short term" initiatives to be undertaken over two to four years. Immediate term initiatives include upgrading route maps and schedule brochures, minor route changes, fare structure revisions to make transit more affordable, and an operational review of transit services. Short term initiatives include the implementation of recommendations of the operational review, installing new bus stop signs, launching a marketing and communications place, and installing new bus shelters at 18 existing bus stops.



City of Woodstock

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP GROWTH AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
PLAN
TO MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION ONTARIO

FEBRUARY 2006

SERVICE IN SMALLER COMMUNITIES CHECKLIST

- Is a funding strategy in place to provide the community with the transit service it needs?
- Are members of the community aware of the transit service that is available to them, as well as how to use it?
- Are community members aware of all of the economic and environmental benefits associated with choosing transit over personal vehicles?
- Does the transit system have a clear, detailed website where members of the community can find all the information they need about routes, schedules, fares, any changes to service, events and promotions?
- Are transit vehicles and facilities prominent and easily identifiable?
- Is an Accessibility Plan in place ensuring that transit is an accessible modal choice for all members of the community, including seniors and people with disabilities?
- Does the community have an up-to-date Transit Ridership Growth Plan in place outlining ridership goals and how they will be achieved?

This guide is one in a series designed to assist CUTA members with implementation of *Transit Vision 2040* strategic directions for which they are in a leadership role. It incorporates performance indicators used in annual reporting at a national level to track progress towards 2040 targets. While CUTA is taking the lead for ten of these 27 strategic directions, the remaining 17 fall within the responsibility of other stakeholders, and these guides have been developed in order to provide support to CUTA members and encourage progress toward the *Vision*. The guides summarize the goals and objectives of each strategic direction, propose performance indicators and targets, illustrate best practices from transit systems across the country and provide a checklist to assist members in reviewing their progress.