

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 3: FOCUSING ON CUSTOMERS

STRATEGIC
DIRECTION

3.6

Provide direction when, where and how customers want it

FOCUSING ON CUSTOMERS

Strategic Direction 3.6:

Provide information when, where and how customers want it

Advances in information technology are blurring the lines between connectivity, presence and mobility. It is certain that timely, accurate, convenient and customizable passenger information will be increasingly vital to a positive transit experience. Barriers are being removed to the goal of real-time information that is delivered seamlessly, in flexible formats, by different operators and jurisdictions, and to wherever passengers happen to be—at home, on the platform, on board, or at work or play. At the same time, new opportunities are arising to offer value-added services during travel, such as news, entertainment and journey support.

Transit systems should **ensure the delivery of timely and accurate transit information** to customers using a variety of forms and media.

All transit stops and stations should clearly display the **route numbers** that serve the facility. Wherever possible, **transit maps** and **schedules** should also be provided at facilities. Technology such as GPS on transit vehicles should be used to provide **real time displays** at stops and stations, showing accurate predictions of vehicle arrival times.



Clear, detailed transit system **websites** should be created, with tools such as **online trip planners**. Web addresses should be advertised wherever possible. **Social media** pages can further provide up-to-date information. **Mobile applications** can allow for access to real time information from any location and at any time.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Indicator 1: Availability of Information at Transit Facilities

Transit Facility Targets:

By 2020, all transit stops will **display route numbers**; wherever possible, stop-specific transit **schedules and maps** will also be provided.

By 2030, all major transit stations will be equipped with **real time displays** showing accurate predictions for the next transit vehicle arrival times.

Indicator 2: Availability of Online Information

Online Information Targets:

By 2040, all transit systems will take full advantage of available technology, including:

- Providing clear, detailed webpages with all service information and timely service updates
- Providing an easy-to-use online transit trip planner
- Making mobile applications available, with mobile trip planners and service updates
- Using social media to keep customers informed

INITIATIVES AND BEST PRACTICES

Detailed Webpages and Social Media can be highly effective in improving access to transit information. Transit systems should use simple and easy-to-remember web addresses that bring customers to detailed, up-to-date route and scheduling information, along with convenient online trip planners. Social media can be used as a transit marketing tool while providing timely information about service changes.

Thunder Bay, Ontario

NextBus, developed by NextBus, Inc., is a vehicle tracking systems which uses GPS to predict real-time bus arrival times. This information can then be made available on the internet, at transit stops and stations, and through mobile devices. Thunder Bay Transit was the first Canadian transit system to adopt **NextBus**. The transit system's website provides a link that takes customers directly to its NextBus service page for live transit updates.



Several additional Canadian transit systems have since begun using NextBus, including Banff's *Roam* service, Guelph Transit, the Toronto Transit Commission, and the Societe de transport de Laval.

Real Time Displays at transit stations remove uncertainty about transit arrival times and reduce the perception of the length of time spent waiting. Technology such as GPS can monitor the location of vehicles and relay information to customers.

Calgary, Alberta



In November 2011, Calgary Transit's **Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS)** was introduced, with **real time customer information** at most C-Train stations. Displays provide customers with the predicted next three train arrivals in both **visual display** and **audio announcement**. Delays and service disruptions are also communicated through APIS in real time.

APIS uses a radio frequency identification system (RFID) rather than GPS to measure the movement of trains. By 2014, this system will be installed on all Calgary Transit routes, including bus routes.

Vancouver, British Columbia

Metro Vancouver was the first Canadian region available on **Google Transit**, which combines Google mapping with TransLink's trip planner. Vancouver's **Next Bus** service also allows for bus schedule information to be sent as a text message. Users of Next Bus can send a text message to TransLink with the short code clearly displayed on each bus stop sign to receive the next six bus arrival times within seconds. The service has been expanded to **social media**: using a unique five-digit bus stop code, **Facebook** users can store their favourite stop location and transit route number combinations, and then find out when the next six buses are scheduled to arrive.

TransLink's **Customer Service Charter** includes targets for meeting customer service needs. A section of the charter focuses on keeping customers informed, with promises to advertise detailed service change information in newspapers and on the TransLink website at least twice per year. System-wide timetables and fares information is to be available on the website. Up-to-date information is also to be displayed at 95% of bus stops at minimum. TransLink's call centre strives to have 90% of calls answered within 60 seconds.



Mobile Applications allow customers access to transit service information at any time and from any location. Many Canadian transit systems are offering real time information through these applications.

Montreal, Quebec

The Société de transport de Montréal (STM) offers a **free application** for Android and iPhone. Using GPS, the application determines the user's location within the city and **identifies the closest transit stops and stations**. The STM application allows for mobile access to all up-to-date bus schedules, quick access to saved personal itineraries and favourite stops, a trip calculator that offers up to three different travel options for the desired destination, first and last metro departure times for each station, and notifications of service disruptions causing delays of 20 minutes or more.



PASSENGER INFORMATION CHECKLIST

- Does the transit system have a clearly recognizable visual image for vehicles, stops and stations?
- Are route numbers clearly displayed at each transit stop or station?
- Are transit stops and stations equipped with maps and schedules wherever possible?
- Have all vehicles been equipped with location systems such as GPS, and is real time arrival information available to customers?
- Do all major transit stations clearly display real time vehicle arrival information?
- Does the transit system have its own webpage in place providing detailed, up-to-date information?
- Is an online trip planner available for the transit system?
- Do customers have the option of reaching a call centre for any inquiries?
- Does the transit system offer a mobile application to customers?
- Does the transit system use social media to stay connected with customers and provide immediate service updates?

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.