CITY OF ST ALBERT TRANSIT

2013

Transit Long Term Department Plan 2013 - 2027



City of St. Albert

2/04/2013

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Part 1 Conventional Transit

1.0 Executive Summary

St. Albert Transit's Long Term Department Plan is a strategic policy and planning document that is intended to provide a framework for the development of future transit services for the next fifteen years. It also aims to position Transit as a key component of the community that must be recognized and accommodated in future land use planning decisions.

At the same time, the Plan must be reflective of and consistent with the vision, values, and objectives of St. Albert City Council and the major statutory plans that are derived from these policies – namely the Municipal Development Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. St. Albert Transit's current Long Term Department Plan was compiled in January of 2006. In an effort to keep the document current and relevant, it is necessary to periodically undertake a review of its policies and recommendations to ensure that they are reflective of new population trends, technologies, passenger needs, roadway networks, regional considerations, and Provincial directions.

The purpose of this updated plan is to reiterate and, where necessary, update planning guidelines in a continued effort to grow ridership and position transit as a valued and relevant component of the overall transportation system in the City of St. Albert.

2.0 Policy and Regulatory Environment

2.1 Council Priorities

All policies and strategies developed by City of St. Albert administration must, first and foremost, align with Council's established priorities and this Long Term Plan attempts to fulfill this important objective.

City Council has identified four areas of primary focus within the priority statement. And each identifies a series of goals and objectives that are intended to advance the city toward fulfillment of these priorities.


Report to the Community City Council provides direction to Administration through a variety of forward-looking policies and governance. Council's Strategy, comprising the mission statement, values, vision, goals and priorities, is the predominant governance direction for Administration. City Council updated the goals and priorities for their term at their annual strategic planning session in January 2012.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES 2012

MARCH 31, 2012

GOAL | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL | COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The four areas of focus are 1.) Economic Development, 2.) Community Development, 3.) Environment, and 4.) Governance.

2.1.1 Economic Development

Goal – Build and diversify St. Albert's economy in partnership with the community and key stakeholders.

St. Albert Transit recognizes that the needs of the commercial and industrial sector are evolving, and there is a need to ensure that the business community has access to transit services that will facilitate travel to their location for employees and for customers. Many of the recommendations listed in this Transit Plan are intended to support the City's continuing efforts to attract business development in an environment that is relying more and more on transit availability to accommodate a wider employee and customer base.

2.1.2 Community Development

Goal – Strengthen St. Albert's social fabric and enhance the safety and health of St. Albert's families.

Mobility and access to transportation are key components of a community's overall well being. And one measure of a community's ability to meet the needs of its residents is the availability and access to transit and other modes of transportation that are not predicated on the automobile. Many of the recommendations contained in this plan are aimed at encouraging ridership growth by creating a service that is seen as a relevant and competitive alternative to the automobile. Increased transit usage also promotes a healthier lifestyle, as transit travel

Importance of Transit

Public transit is an essential community service that plays a valued role in the daily lives of many residents and in the economic health and vitality of the business community. It is:

- **An integral component of the overall transportation system in St. Albert, increasing the capacity of major arterial roadways.**
- **A basic transportation mode for individuals with no other option.**
- **An alternative form of transportation for those who wish to use it for some of their needs.**
- **Supportive of business as it provides workers access to their places of employment.**
- **The environmentally-responsible choice.**
- **Identified by Capital Region Board as priority to provide a long-term sustainable alternative to automobile usage.**
- **A contribution to a municipality's competitive advantage. More businesses and home buyers are making transit availability a component of their location decision.**
- **A statistically safer mode of transportation than the automobile and part of a healthier lifestyle.**

usually involves a walking component and is a safer mode of transportation than the automobile.

2.1.3 Environment

Goal - Preserve and promote the enjoyment and responsible development of natural areas.

Associated within this priority are several objectives aimed at promoting environmental stewardship and mitigating adverse impacts on the environment. Transit continues to not only promote the increased usage of transit in an effort to reduce greenhouse gases, but has shown strong leadership toward the establishment of a series of environmental management policies that have enabled transit to achieve ISO 14001 certification recognizing its commitment to sound environmental stewardship.

This plan aims to continue and enhance the already considerable efforts transit has made toward this goal. Principle among these is to encourage greater use of transit and divert a higher proportion of the public to the more sustainable and environmentally-sensitive transportation mode.

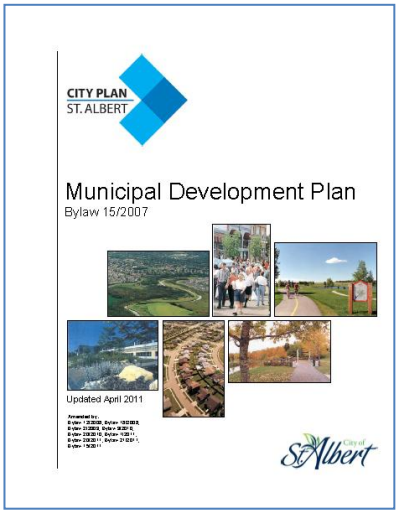
2.1.4 Governance

Goal - Improve efficiency, plan strategically, enhance accountability, and build effective partnerships and relationships to ensure the right choices for St. Albert in both the immediate and longer term.

This plan attempts to recognize and incorporate many of the objectives listed in this priority area including strategic planning, fostering positive and productive working relationships with community groups and external organizations, and exploring opportunities for enhanced efficiencies and cost-reduction – including recommendations for policy review to ensure effective and efficient delivery of service – and carrying forward the principles of continuous improvement.

2.2 Long Term Planning Documents

2.2.1 The Municipal Development Plan 2007



Long term planning documents are the tools with which Council's vision and objectives carry forward to the actual development of the community and its many components. The principle administrative documents that are particularly relevant to Transit are The Municipal Development Plan of 2007 (known as CityPlan) and the Transportation Master Plan of 2008. The Transit Plan serves as a sub-component of these policy statements with the intent of providing more detailed recommendations specific to transit services.

Relevant provisions of **CityPlan** as they pertain to transit include:

- The Vision Statement
    - *St. Albert is an inclusive, family-oriented community that values its natural, cultural, historical and recreational amenities. Our community secures the safety and well-being of its people through controlled growth, innovation and dynamic leadership.*

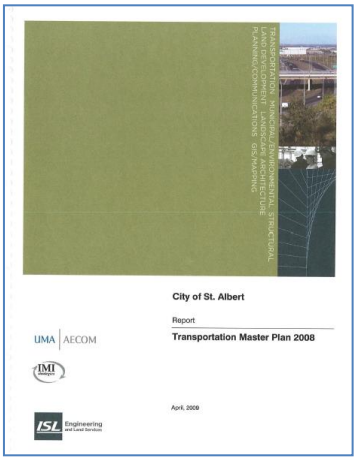
- Relevant guiding principles include:
    - **St. Albert residents live full and active lives**. Promote a variety of cultural and recreational activities and facilities to meet diverse, multi-generational needs.
    - **St. Albert's local government continues to be responsive, approachable and an accountable steward of public funds and trusts**. Ensure that St. Albert is a dynamic leader regarding regional cooperation in business and volunteerism.
    - **The downtown is the traditional heart of our community**. Make it a people place – where people of all ages and walks of life come together to celebrate special events, for commerce, and to nourish their spirits with arts, culture, learning and St. Albert's heritage.
    - **St. Albert needs a safe, efficient flow of traffic while maintaining the serenity and safety of our neighbourhoods**. Pursue innovative approaches for the movement of people and goods through and within the community.
    - **St. Albert seeks the development of light industry, appropriately located, and the development of commercial enterprises to meet regional and local needs.**

CityPlan contains a number of neighbourhood design guidelines that recognize the importance of transit and are intended to more capably accommodate transit service and encourage its use. In particular, the guidelines stipulate minimum housing densities, optimal locations for higher-density housing, and a number of other characteristics intended to make transit more efficient and accessible - to promote compact urban form and greater environmental sustainability.

The original MDP compiled in 2007 was amended in 2011, with St. Albert City Council directing administration to revise the plan to include a direction for development to approach minimum density standards of 30 housing units per hectare, to include one Transit Oriented Development node (TOD), and a stipulation encouraging a move to higher-density infill development.

The provisions for future development now outlined in the MDP are now the basis for which transit services are to be implemented.

2.2.2 Transportation Master Plan



The City of St. Albert Transportation Master Plan of 2008 builds on the policies adopted in the Municipal Development Plan and contains more detailed guidelines for the development of Transit as a component of the overall transportation network for St. Albert for the next 25 years.

Many of the recommendations put forth by the TMP involve the integration of land use, neighbourhood design, sustainable transportation modes, and greater dependence on transit. This Transit Plan will remain consistent with the direction of City Council set forth in the Municipal Development Plan. Provisions in the TMP that are aimed at expanding and promoting transit services in St. Albert include:

- "The City of St. Albert recognizes the longer term limitations of arterial roadway expansion and will focus longer term efforts on maximizing available roadway capacity through congestion management techniques, intelligent transportation technologies, and transit priority measures to provide viable transportation choices to its residents, particularly during high demand periods."
- "introduce transit priority measures along St. Albert Trail to isolate transit from the growing congestion. [Such measures include] exclusive transit lanes..."
- "efforts will be made to support the extension of LRT service along St. Albert Trail to the northern edge of the city."

With respect to sustainable transportation modes, the TMP recommends:

- "Increasing the level of resources the city will dedicate to transit service improvements ... and implementing a city transit capital levy in developing areas to assist in paying for the transit capital costs."
- "...more frequent service, additional park and ride facilities, more destinations in Edmonton, and earlier introduction of transit service into new neighbourhoods."

Recommendations specific to public transit strategies include:

- Replace Village Transit Station with a new park and ride transit facility in the Anthony Henday corridor near St. Albert Trail.
- Transit Priority signals that enable bus-activated green-phase extension and red-phase truncations to reduce delays and increase reliability.
- Intersection queue-jump lanes and signals.
- Bus lanes on St. Albert Trail.
- Real time passenger information at transit stations.
- Introduction of "smart card" fare payment technology.
- Transit centre and Park and Ride at north end of city.
- Significant restructuring of local transit services.

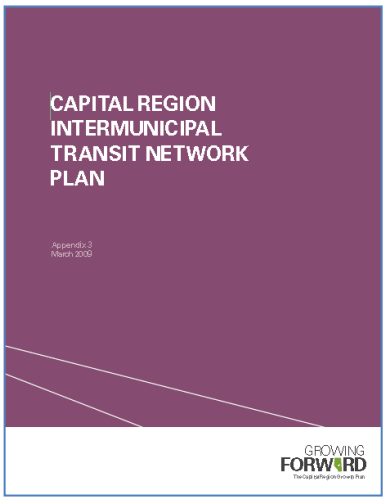
Achievements have been made in reference to a number of these goals since 2008 when the TMP was approved. Progress continues toward the acquisition of land for the **Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride***, application for Green Trip funding for the facility, and preliminary design. Queue jump signalling has been installed and is in operation at a number of key intersections such as Anthony Henday Drive and St. Albert Trail (northbound), 137 Avenue and St. Albert Trail (northbound) and Yellowhead Trail and St. Albert Trail (southbound). Nextbus real time tracking information is now available to customers through their computers or smart phones, but is not yet set up at transit stations. St. Albert Transit does not intend to invest funding for this infrastructure at Village Transit Centre in light of the fact that this centre will be phased out when South Transit Centre is constructed.

2.2.3 Capital Region Board Growth Plan

The Capital Region Board was created by the Government of Alberta in 2008 as a means to coordinate planning and development decisions within the Capital Region with the goal of minimizing conflict between municipalities and ensuring sustained economic growth and a healthy environment.

*** For the purpose of this report, the future transit facility slated for the Anthony Henday corridor between St. Albert and Edmonton will be referred to as the Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride until a formal naming process has been conducted. The use of this name is supported by the City of Edmonton.**

One of the first tasks of the CRB was to compile the Capital Region Growth Plan. From this, the CRB developed the Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan (ITNP) which established a focus on Smart Growth planning principles of sustainable compact urban form that lends itself to more efficient and accessible transit service, and reduces dependency on the automobile. St. Albert Transit must recognize and reflect the direction established by City Council that not all of the elements of smart growth will be imposed on future development, and that land developers will be given broader choices of the variety of housing that they feel is reflective of the market and of the community. This is a significant message for the direction of future growth in St. Albert, and one that must be incorporated into St. Albert Transit's own plan, and all similar policy documents that are under the umbrella of the Municipal Development Plan.



The vision of the Capital Region Board as it relates to transit is as follows:

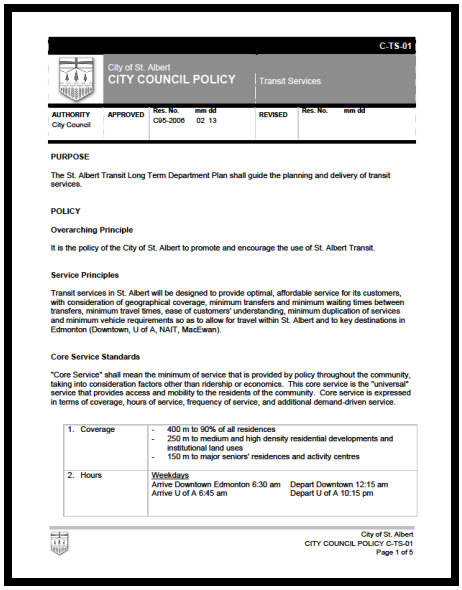
> *"The Region's transit network enables the Capital Region to achieve its economic, social, and environmental objectives by making transit a convenient and competitive mode of transportation."*

The ITNP identifies 11 operating values that are seen as the benchmark of a regional network that achieves this vision. These are as follows:

- *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*
- *Cohesively linked across geographic areas via routings, schedules, fares, safety standards and facilities*

These important attributes will play a key role in guiding the development of St. Albert Transit in the short and long term and will serve as the framework for this Long Term plan.

2.2.4 City of St. Albert Transit Services Policy



C-TS-01

City of St. Albert
CITY COUNCIL POLICY | Transit Services

AUTHORITY	APPROVED		REVISED	
City Council	Res. No.	mm dd	Res. No.	mm dd
	C95-2006	02 13		

PURPOSE

The St. Albert Transit Long Term Department Plan shall guide the planning and delivery of transit services.

POLICY

Overarching Principle

It is the policy of the City of St. Albert to promote and encourage the use of St. Albert Transit.

Service Principles

Transit services in St. Albert will be designed to provide optimal, affordable service for its customers, with consideration of geographical coverage, minimum transfers and minimum waiting times between transfers, minimum travel times, ease of customers' understanding, minimum duplication of services and minimum vehicle requirements so as to allow for travel within St. Albert and to key destinations in Edmonton (Downtown, U of A, NAIT, MacEwan).

Core Service Standards

"Core Service" shall mean the minimum of service that is provided by policy throughout the community, taking into consideration factors other than ridership or economics. This core service is the "universal" service that provides access and mobility to the residents of the community. Core service is expressed in terms of coverage, hours of service, frequency of service, and additional demand-driven service.

1. Coverage	- 400 m to 90% of all residences - 250 m to medium and high density residential developments and institutional land uses - 150 m to major seniors' residences and activity centres
2. Hours	Weekdays Arrive Downtown Edmonton 6:30 am — Depart Downtown 12:15 am Arrive U of A 6:45 am — Depart U of A 10:15 pm

City of St. Albert
CITY COUNCIL POLICY C-TS-01
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The first is Bylaw 34/87 being a bylaw to operate a public transit system. This document addresses the roles and responsibilities of the transit manager and also establishes a code of conduct for transit users – in particular, the behaviors that are not tolerated. Since its adoption in 1987, there has been little change to this document and there is no recommendation for a revision to it based on this LTDP. As situations arise that call for an amendment to a particular clause in the bylaw, these will be dealt with accordingly and through proper administrative channels.

The second document is C-TS-01, referred to as the Transit Services Policy. Adopted in 2005, it serves as the framework that guides the level of service offered throughout the community.

Of particular note in the policy is the Overarching Principle which reads:

> *"It is the policy of the City of St. Albert to promote and encourage the use of St. Albert Transit."*

And the Service Principles statement which reads:

> *"Transit services in St. Albert will be designed to provide optimal, affordable, service for its customers with consideration of geographical coverage, minimum transfers, and minimum waiting times between transfers, minimum travel times, ease of customers' understanding, minimum duplication of services, and minimum vehicle requirements so as to allow for travel within St. Albert and to key destinations in Edmonton."*

The service standards stipulated in the policy include (but are not limited to) the following:

- ***Area coverage*** *– Expressed in terms of walking distance to a transit bus stop. Identified as a maximum 400m to 90% of all residents, 250m to higher density and institutional land uses, and 150m to seniors residences and activity centres.*

- ***Hours of operation*** *– Service start times and end times. First bus is to arrive at downtown Edmonton at 6:30 a.m. on weekdays, with last bus departing downtown Edmonton 12:15 a.m., and local service is to support these commuter trips.*

- ***Frequency*** *– The period of time between bus occurrences. Identified as a maximum of 30 minutes in peak periods and 60 minutes for all others.*

- ***Demand-Drive Services*** *– stipulates a minimum level of demand of 10 boardings per service hour to warrant additional service.*

- ***Maximum Trip Time*** *- Local routes travel time will not exceed 20 minutes to Transit Station in peak periods and 30 minutes off-peak for 80% of riders.*

- ***Vehicle Loading*** *– Maximum 100% of seated capacity for trips longer than 25 minutes, 115% for trips less than 25 minutes, and 150% for local trips.*

- ***Staging*** *– Refers to point of time when service is introduced into a new community - peak period service at 30% completion, full day at 60%, and complete service at 75%.*

The Transit Services Policy also contains the St. Albert Transit Fare Strategy Guiding Principles. These are aimed at guiding administration in its annual review of fare structure and pricing. From this review comes the fare-pricing recommendations that are presented to City Council for budgeting consideration.

St. Albert Transit Fare Strategy Guiding Principles	
1.	All persons travelling on St. Albert transit shall pay a fare reflective of the service provided.
2.	Concession to (reductions from) regular fares will aim to be consistent and have a clear rationale and justification.
3.	Total transit revenues should recover in the range of 40% to 60% of direct operating costs.
4.	The cost to ride transit should acknowledge the cost of providing the service and change accordingly.
5.	The cost to ride transit shall consider and reflect the general rate change in the all items consumer price index.
6.	Committed riders shall be rewarded with a lower cost per ride (discount for bulk buy).
7.	The cost for a ride within St. Albert should be similar to that of other midsized municipalities in Alberta.

8.	The cost for a ride to/from Edmonton should reflect the longer distance (and cost) • 8a – the cost of a cash ride to/from Edmonton should reflect the longer distance (and cost) and be in the order of at least twice the St. Albert local or ETS fare • 8b – the cost of a monthly adult pass for travel to/from Edmonton should reflect the longer distance (and cost) and be in the order 50% higher than a local pass and/or in the order of 25% higher than ETS
9.	It is accepted that there is a negative elasticity to fare increases.
10.	Council of the City of St. Albert will establish transit fares on an annual basis considering and balancing the adopted principles.

The complete Transit Services Policy is included in Appendix A:

This Department Plan will, in following sections, examine these guidelines and assess them for relevance in today's environment.

3.0 St. Albert Transit Today

3.1 Milestones

Since the passing of the current Long Term Department Plan in 2006, St. Albert Transit has experienced a number of significant changes and achievements that will influence its direction and priorities for future service in the short and long term. These include the following:

2007 – U-Pass program begins operation for students at the University of Alberta and Grant MacEwan University. Program offers subsidized transit passes to ALL full time students regardless of transit usage. The goal is to reduce private vehicle usage and encourage more sustainable forms of transportation.

2008 – The Government of Alberta creates the Capital Region Board to coordinate planning and development decisions within the Capital Region, to minimize conflict between municipalities, and to ensure sustained economic growth and a healthy environment.

2009 – The Capital Region Board compiles the Capital Region Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan which aims to provide strategic guidance for the development of coordinated regional transit services.

2009 – City of Edmonton develops preliminary corridor for LRT between NAIT Station and the Transportation Utility Corridor near the intersection of St. Albert Trail and Campbell Road.

2009 – A number of new information and marketing programs are initiated to provide better service to our customers and to position Transit as an important component of the community. These include "e-notice" subscription messaging service, "Learn-to Ride" training workshops for seniors, and free local service on Saturdays during the summer months.

2009 – Introduction of GPS-based Automatic Vehicle Locator technology on all buses. This equipment allows real-time vehicle location, speed, travel time, and travel history. StAT is the first transit system in Alberta to employ such technology.

2010 – Completion of additions to the Dez Liggett Transit Facility.

2010 – StAT's entire fleet is fully accessible with low-floor, ramp-equipped buses. Bike racks are installed on all buses to further encourage alternative forms of transportation.

2011 – "Nextbus" real-time information system is rolled out to the general public. Customers can access real time bus arrival information from their computers or smart phones. The new service amalgamates GPS technology introduced in 2009 with scheduling and bus stop information. StAT is first transit system in Capital Region to utilize real time customer information. Within the first year of operation, Nextbus registers over 162,000 visits to the site.

2011 – St. Albert Inn introduces daily parking fee for transit customers who wish to park on the portion of the Village Transit Station Park and Ride that is owned by the Inn. $4.00 daily fee reduces the size of the free-parking lot by 35%. Already strained park and ride facility now limited to less than 300 spaces. Concerns are raised regarding possible drop in ridership and increased usage of unauthorized parking spaces in vicinity of the transit centres. The move reaffirms priority for construction of Campbell Road Park and Ride Station.

2011 – U-pass program is expanded to include NAIT students and summer graduate students of the University of Alberta.

2006 – 2011 – Transit fares are increased the same amount each year. Cost of adult monthly pass increases by $5.00 each year since the passing of the 2006 Long Term Department Plan. An increase of 10% is implemented for 2012.

2011 – StAT successfully recertified as ISO 14001 compliant, recognizing an ongoing commitment to reduce environmental impacts and to promote the benefits of riding transit.

2011 – St. Albert Transit retains the services of consultant IBI Group to conduct a review of the current Handibus operation and to assess future demand and system requirements. Report was presented to City Council in March of 2012.

2011 – St. Albert Transit renews operating contract with Diversified Transportation Ltd. for another 6-year period.

2011 – Province of Alberta introduces the Bus Modernization Program. Program establishes new regulations and requirements for transit agencies, like StAT, that travel from one municipality into another. Rules for obtaining the Operator Authority Certificate are changed to include reported daily inspections, vehicle weight permits, and limitations on numbers of standing passengers. The program was introduced with considerable controversy from transit agencies across the province who felt the new regulations would create undue cost burdens in terms of human resources and time added to drivers' shifts. St. Albert Transit is fully certified under this new regulation.

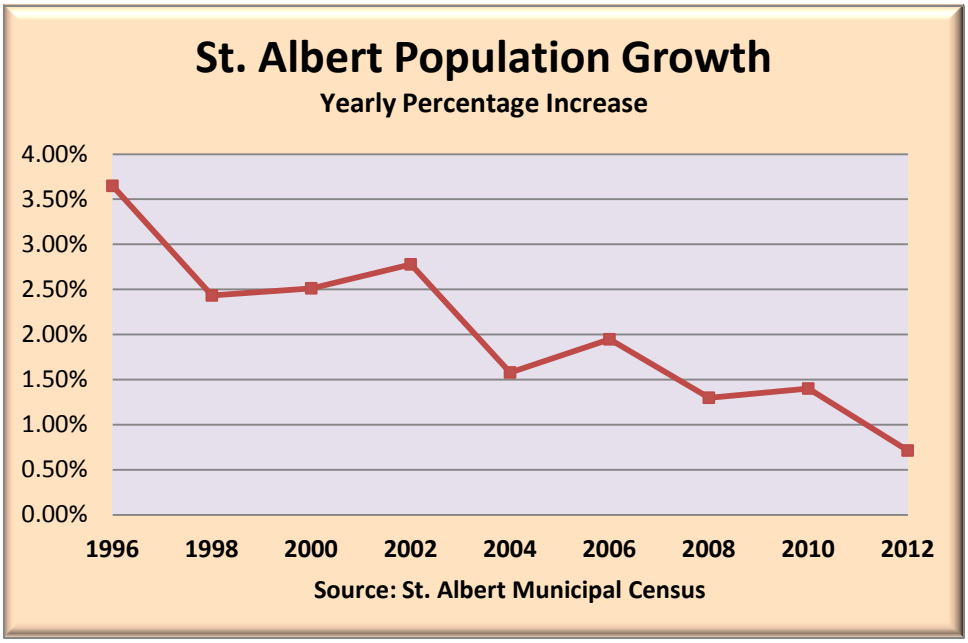
2012 – St. Albert Transit becomes fully integrated into the Google Transit trip planning information network, and the program is made available to the public. Google Transit Trip Planning allows passengers to access origin-to-destination routing information on-line. Information is linked with Edmonton Transit and other regional partners to provide comprehensive point-to-point trip planning information for the entire region.

2012 – U-pass program is expanded to include summer under-graduate students of the University of Alberta.

4.0 Statistical Review

4.1 Population Trends

In 2006, the St. Albert Planning and Development Department prepared a report for City Council entitled "The Population and Demographics Discussion Paper". This report shed light on a number of trends which ran counter to the population projections of the early 2000's. Its findings were not available when the current Transit LTDP was compiled. Among the findings was a notable decline in the growth rate of St. Albert since 2001. Prior to 2001, St. Albert was consistently one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta, with an average growth rate of 2.5% since 1986. In 2012, its growth rate is one of the slowest of all the urban areas within the Capital Region.



The report states that:

> *"Given current land limitations, limited available developers, decreasing household sizes and limited variety of housing choices, it is expected that the growth rate will not rise significantly in the next five years."*

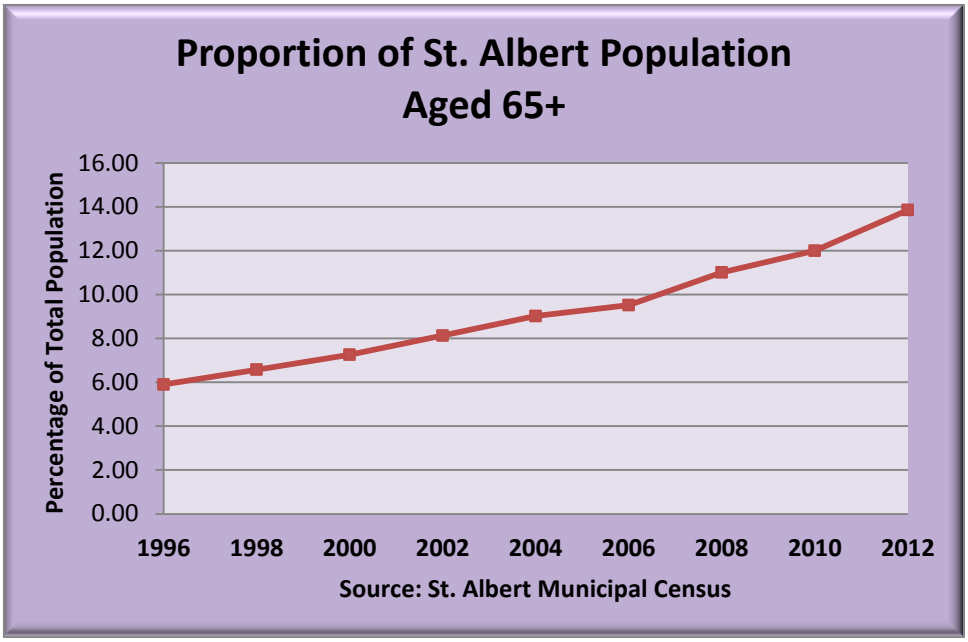
The Municipal Development Plan of 2007 predicted a population of 69,130 for St. Albert in 2012. The actual population was approximately 61,000. A number of possible reasons have been cited for this including a lack of housing options that meet the needs of a broader proportion of potential residents, and the slow progress of smaller-width lots. Only since 2006 have these lots been permitted in St. Albert and their numbers are still very small. The lack of this housing option has likely compelled newer and younger buyers to look elsewhere. In addition, St. Albert has a "much lower proportion of rental units than most municipalities in the region".

These trends are indicative of two of the principle challenges facing St. Albert Transit. The low population growth rate inevitably leads to a low passenger growth rate - and passenger growth will likely continue to fall short of being able to offset the increases in operating costs. This will create significant pressure on Transit's ability to maintain a revenue/cost ratio of 40%, and a greater proportion of cost will be placed on the general tax levy.

Secondly, the City of St. Albert has a disproportionately high ratio of low density single-family housing. Such neighbourhoods run counter to the idea of shorter direct local routes to the transit stations. In order to provide service to enough households to make a route economically viable, a route must travel longer distances. Longer distances mean longer travel times, and longer travel times reduce the convenience and competitiveness of the route, and new passengers are less likely to be drawn to the service.

The City of St. Albert has since 2007 established a direction calling for slightly higher minimum housing densities and encouraging more housing varieties, but the impacts of these decisions will not be felt for many years, and creating a network of short direct local routes will remain a significant challenge.

4.1.1 Seniors Population



According to City of St. Albert Census 2012, 13.86% of the City's population falls into the "Seniors" category of 65+. But more significantly, 22.6% of the population is considered "Mature Adults" between ages 50 and 64 that will enter the "seniors" category within the timeframe of this plan. These are groups that represent the fastest growing demographics in St. Albert by a considerable margin. The travel needs of this expanding group will differ from the needs of the working commuter, and St. Albert Transit will need to adapt its services and introduce new ones that are more tailored to the needs of the seniors' community. Such services will likely involve an expanded program of travel training seminars for seniors, the replacement of the current Dial-a-bus service with easier to understand fixed routing, and the development of a new community service route that connects a variety of key local origins and destinations favoured by the seniors' community.

4.1.2 Population and Ridership Projections

CITY OF ST. ALBERT PROJECTED POPULATION AND TRANSIT RIDERSHIP 2012 to 2027

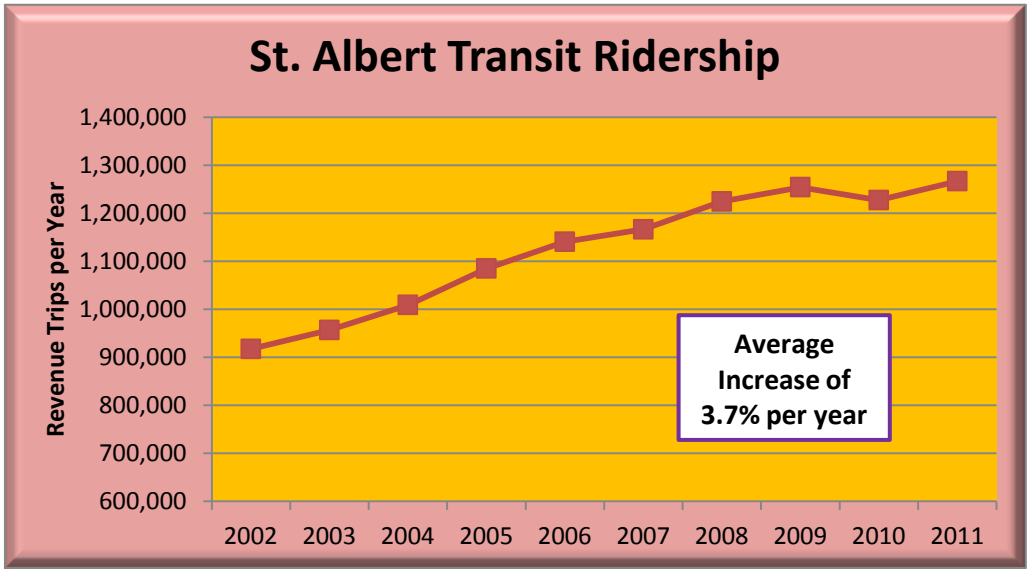
Year	1.4% Annual Growth Rate		Bus Requirements
	Population	Ridership	
2012	60,994	1,218,891	53
2013	61,848	1,242,135	54
2014	62,714	1,265,823	59
2015	63,592	1,322,051	62
2016	64,482	1,347,262	63
2017	65,385	1,372,954	64
2018	66,300	1,399,137	65
2019	67,229	1,425,818	66
2020	68,170	1,453,009	68
2021	69,124	1,480,717	69
2022	70,092	1,508,955	70
2023	71,073	1,537,730	72
2024	72,068	1,567,055	73
2025	73,077	1,596,939	74
2026	74,100	1,627,392	74
2027	75,138	1,658,427	75

1.4% represents St. Albert's growth rate from 2001 to 2011. There is little evidence to indicate that this rate will change and is perhaps the most reliable rate to base predictions. This rate is supported by the City of St. Albert Corporate Business Plan and Budget 2012-2014.

Includes growth in ridership equal to the population growth rate plus 0.5% modal shift. Exception is year 2015 with introduction of South Park and Ride which will bring estimated 3% growth from modal shift.

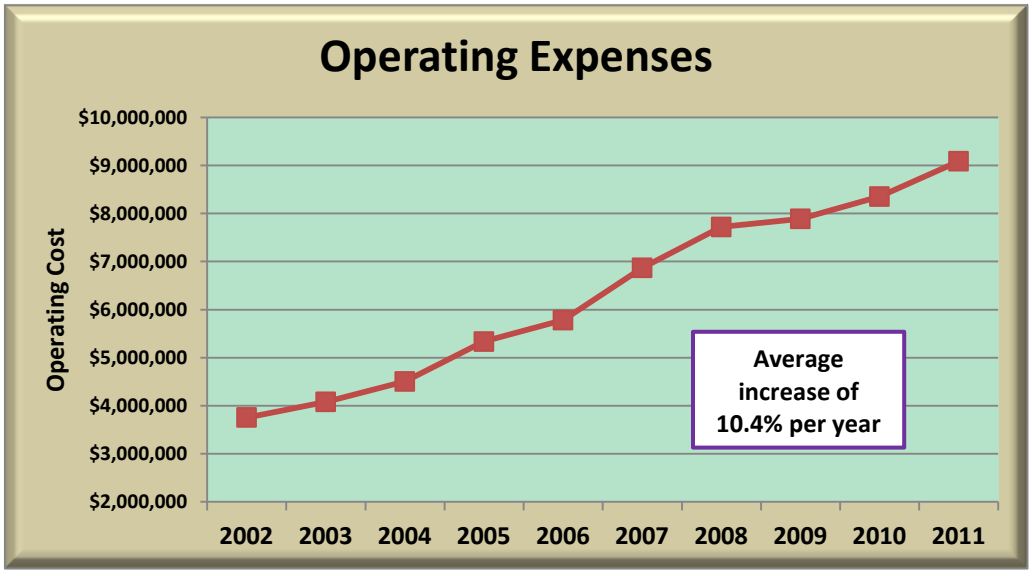
4.2 Service and Performance Trends

4.2.1 Ridership



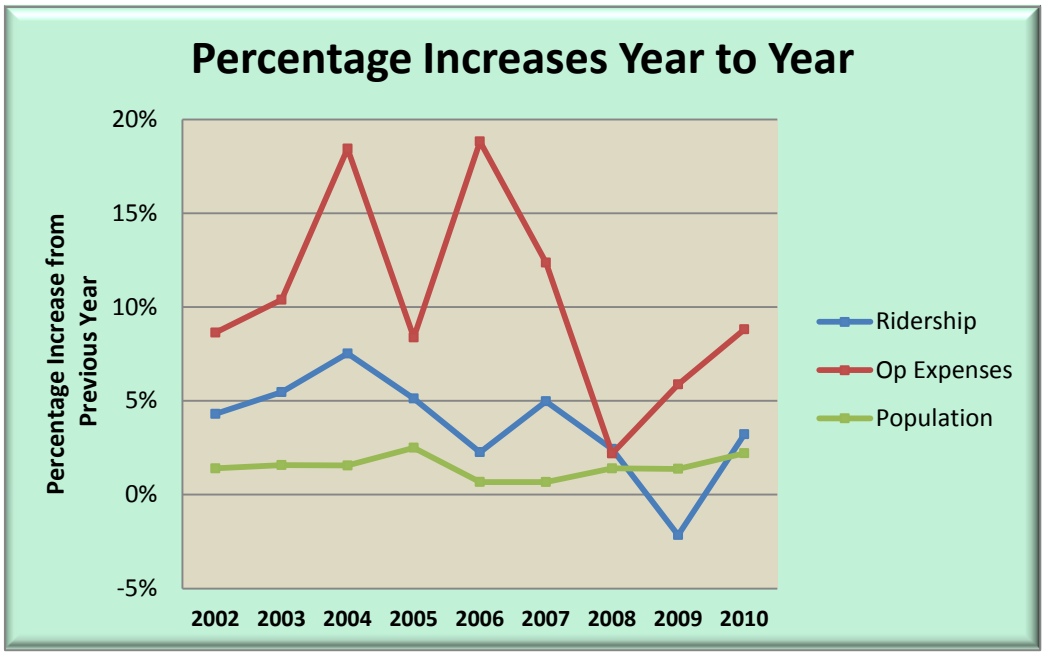
Passenger ridership has grown an average of 3.7% per year since 2002 but has slowed to 2.1% per year since 2006. St. Albert's overall population has grown at an average of 1.4% per year over the same period. Ridership growth has consistently outpaced population growth. This is an indication that a portion of new ridership is the result of "modal shift" – individuals who switch to transit from the automobile for some of their transportation needs.

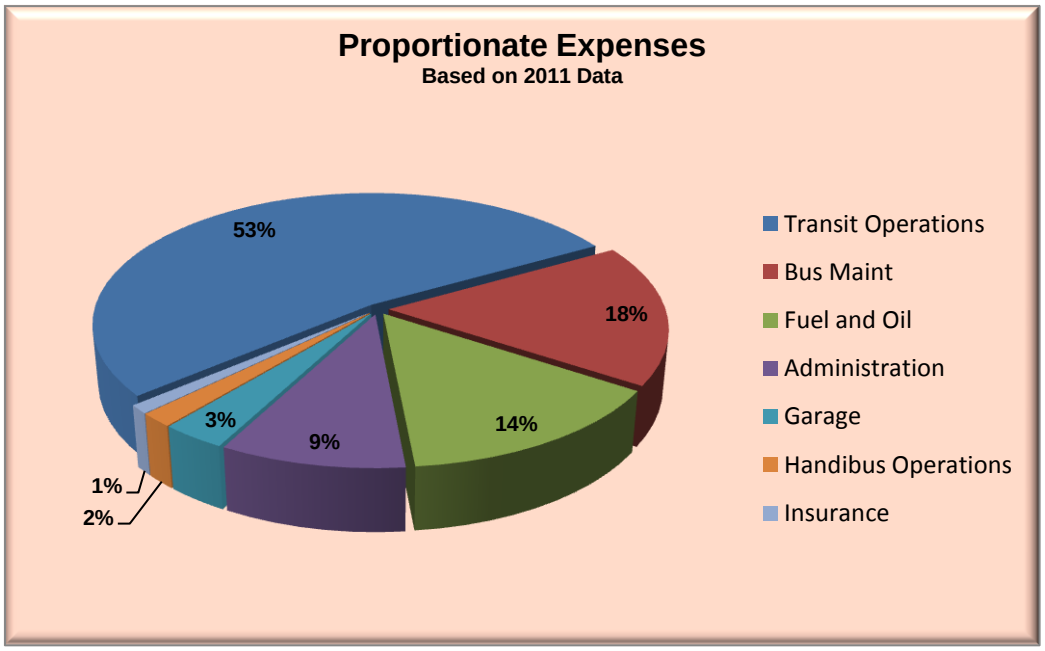
4.2.2 Operating Expenses



Operating expenses represent the principle challenge facing St. Albert Transit as it attempts to meet the growing demands of the ridership and to position itself as a viable and competitive alternative to the automobile.

Operating expenses have continually outpaced both the growth in ridership and the growth in overall population.





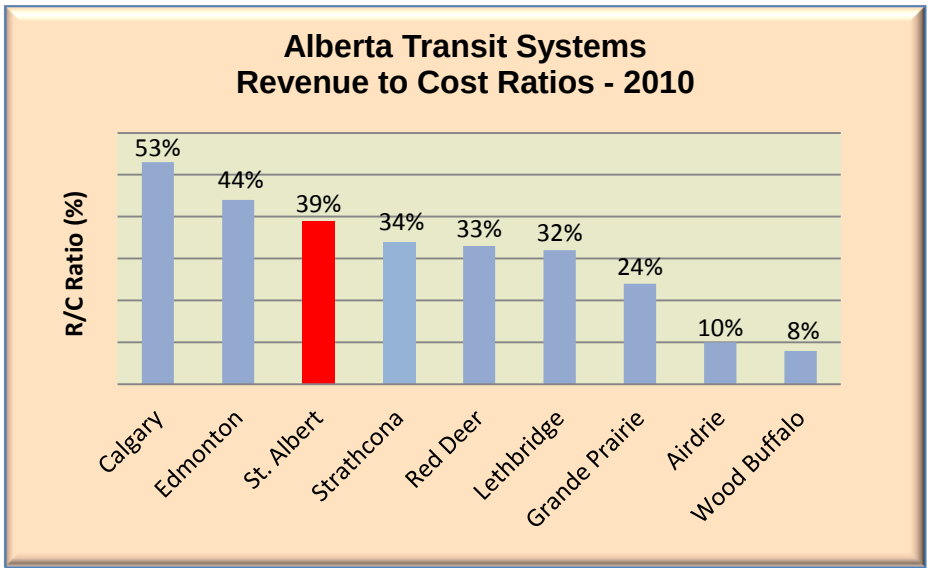
53% of the cost of transit is attributable to the actual operation of the vehicles – namely the drivers, dispatchers, inspectors, and supervisors – currently contracted to Diversified Transportation Ltd. Maintenance and fuel account for an additional 32%. Altogether, 85% of expenses are directly the result of operation of the buses.

In general, there are two ways to achieve reductions in operating expenses. One is to increase revenue from fares through fare price increases and ridership growth. Ridership will grow as service expands, evolves, and becomes more attractive. Much of this Long Term Plan focuses on strategies to achieve ridership growth. The other is to reduce service. Service reductions represent a considerable risk in terms of limiting options, convenience, and overall attractiveness of transit, and are usually met with disproportionate reductions in ridership, creating a perpetuating cycle which prompts even further reductions.

4.2.3 Revenue to Cost Ratio

Transit operation costs are funded through three sources - revenue paid by transit users, the general tax levy, and, to a lesser degree, advertising revenue. The portion of operational expense recovered through fare revenue and advertising is known as the revenue-to-cost ratio. The guiding principles identify an optimal revenue/cost ratio of between 40% and 60%.

Recent trends experienced by transit operations throughout Alberta are that operational cost increases continue to outpace the ability of systems to attract sufficient new ridership, and many are experiencing cost recovery ratios in the low 30% range.



4.2.4 Benchmark Statistics

St. Albert Transit, in concert with the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA), complies a variety of statistics related to service standards and system performance. In an effort to increase efficiencies and move forward with the concept of continuous improvement, it is important to identify target objectives for each of these indices. And because continuous improvement is predicated on the ability to measure, it would be beneficial to establish a system of quarterly reporting to gauge progress.

Among these statistics are the following:

- **Ridership per Year** – The number of passenger trips taken each year. The number is reflective of an entire trip. For example, if a passenger requires a transfer to complete a journey, it is registered as one trip, not two.

   **Target** = Equal or greater than the overall rate of population growth for St. Albert.

- **Revenue to Cost Ratio** – The proportion of the total operating cost that is recovered from fare revenue and other sources such as advertising. It identifies the portion of expense that is recovered from users and the portion attributable to the tax levy.

   **Target** = Maintain between 35% and 40%.

- **Coverage** – the percentage of all residents in the community that are within 400 meters of access to transit (250m for higher density residential, and 150m for seniors residences and activity centres).

   **Target** = 90% of residents within prescribed distance to Transit.

- **Boardings per Hour** – A measure of passenger usage specific to individual routes, and refers to number of passengers boarding the service for each hour of operation.

   **Target** = Minimum of 10 boardings per hour system-wide.

- **Service Reliability** – a measure of adherence to the published schedule. A bus is considered on-time if no more than 3 minutes late or 1 minute early of scheduled arrival at identified timing points.

   **Target** = 90% on-time performance system-wide.

- **Vehicle Hours per Capita** – a measure of how many hours of operation are provided in relation to the population size. Since 2008, the number of service hours deployed each year has been either 1.3 or 1.4 hours per capita.
-  **Target** = Maintain minimum 1.3 to 1.4 annual service hours per capita.

Transit represents a considerable investment for any municipality – both in terms of one-time capital expenditures and on-going operating costs. It is incumbent on Administration to ensure that all efforts are taken to recognize the importance of maximizing efficiencies and seeking ways to mitigate costs.

4.3 Fares

Transit operating costs are met by three sources - passenger revenue by way of fares, the general taxpayer through the property tax levy, and advertising. Administrations are tasked with finding a reasonable balance among the three.

But in establishing this balance, there is recognition that the cost of the service has limits, over which the perception of the customer is that the service is no longer worth the expense – "might as well drive." The negative impact to ridership as a result of fare increases is known as fare elasticity, and it is especially acute in smaller suburban municipalities like St. Albert where a vast majority of the population has access to alternative forms of transportation such as automobiles.

St. Albert Transit and the City of St. Albert Financial Services Branch have begun the process of compiling a fare model that will attempt to measure the level of fare elasticity that has been experienced in the past and how future ridership growth is affected by fare price increases.

Along with attempts to keep fares at a reasonable rate is the consideration that transit is also a community service and one of its principle aims is to provide transportation services to those who have no alternative choices. For this reason, it is recommended that St. Albert Transit introduce an inclusionary level of fare pricing for individuals and families who fall below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) level as established by the Canada Revenue Agency, or who receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). This would be regionally consistent as both

Edmonton Transit and Strathcona Transit offer similar subsidized fare products. Eligibility will be established through the office of Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) as is currently done with the AISH recipients. This change should not be seen as having a negative impact on revenue but instead as potential revenue from persons who were not able to make use of transit prior.

St. Albert Transit currently maintains a long-standing agreement with the City of Edmonton that has each agency recognizing the fares of the other, allowing transferability between the two. In the Edmonton-to-St. Albert direction, Edmonton Transit users are asked to pay either $1 or $2 extra as a zone fee. This is necessary to prevent the possibility of all St. Albert Transit customers buying lower cost Edmonton Transit fare products.

There is currently no mechanism for transferring fare revenue from StAT to ETS under this agreement. It is generally accepted that the rate of transfer between the two is too low to dedicate resources necessary to monitoring it. This could change with the extension of LRT to NAIT station and beyond. The rate of transfer between the systems could grow significantly as StAT will likely terminate a small number of its commuter routes at NAIT Station where passengers can transfer to the LRT. The future Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride will not only serve as the principle hub of St. Albert Transit, but will also facilitate access to a number of Edmonton Transit routes servicing surrounding industrial areas and the Northgate Transit Centre. Transfers between the two systems will grow substantially. This number will increase to nearly 100% of our commuter passengers once the LRT is extended to St. Albert's boundaries. It will be important to re-visit this arrangement to ensure that a proper fare revenue arrangement is in place prior to 2014 when NAIT Station and St. Albert's Campbell Road Transit Centre are scheduled to open. This will lay the groundwork for future agreements that will be needed when LRT is extended to St. Albert.

Advertising revenue contributes a very limited amount to the overall operating costs – approximately 1.5%. Advertising is currently administered by a contracted provider and revenues are based on a proportion of the profits earned by that provider. Revenue increases will reflect the market pricing as established by this third party and are expected to rise moderately, but will continue to form only a small proportion of general revenue.

5.0 2011 St. Albert Transit Passenger Survey and Route Study

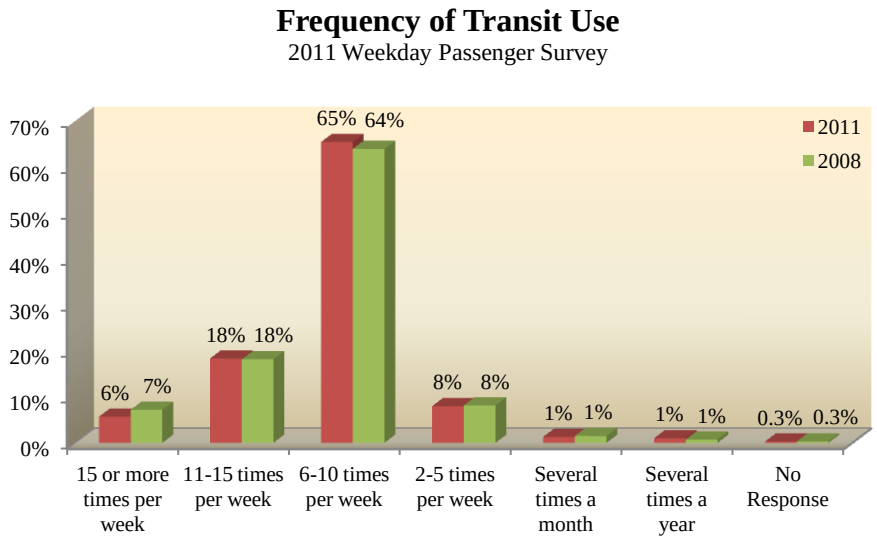
Every three years, St. Albert Transit conducts an extensive survey of our passengers in an effort to identify the current levels of satisfaction with the system, its services, and its costs. The survey is a forum that gives our passengers the ability to convey to administration what they believe to be the positive attributes of the system, elements that need to be improved, and

services that need to be added. It is one of the most powerful tools available to assess not only the needs and desires of our customers, but to identify how such interests have evolved or changed over time.

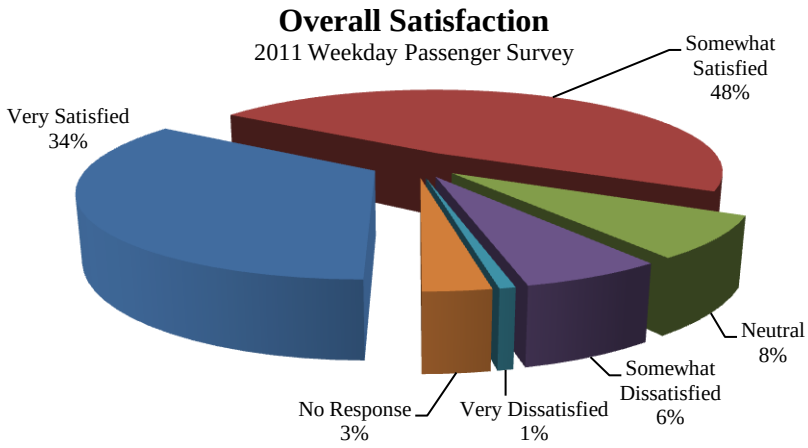
St. Albert Transit conducted the Customer Satisfaction and On-board Ridership surveys in February and March of 2011. The On-Board component of the survey involved putting surveyors aboard buses to record passenger boardings and alightings at each stop, fare medium utilized, and travel time between schedule points. Approximately 520 hours of operation were surveyed, representing a complete weekday, evening, Saturday and Sunday on every route in the system. The process provided a comprehensive picture of the service provided by St. Albert Transit.

Some of the key findings of the study were as follows:

- The strong majority of respondents (89%) identified themselves as frequent users of transit riding more than 3 days a week. They use transit mainly because it costs less than driving, it is more convenient than driving, or they feel it is an environmentally friendly alternative to driving. As well, the majority of riders are using transit to commute to work (52%) or to attend a post secondary institution (43%). These findings are consistent with the previous survey.



- The majority of respondents (82%) stated they are satisfied (48%) or very satisfied (34%) with the overall quality of transit service. Respondents are most satisfied with the safe operation of the buses, cleanliness of the buses, and availability of route and schedule information. Respondents are least satisfied with availability of spaces at Park & Ride, frequency of service during non-peak hours, and local travel time.



- Respondents identified transit priority measures on St. Albert Trail, having a heated shelter at St. Albert Exchange, and increased commuter frequency (both peak hour and non-peak hour service) as the top priorities for service improvements. Respondents also revealed a high likelihood to use real-time transit information.

- The most commonly used information source remains the StAT Ride Guide (47%). However, internet use increased significantly since the last survey, from 31% in 2008 to 42% in 2011. Respondents are generally satisfied with all sources of information provided by St. Albert Transit.

- Route 201 to Downtown had the most activity during weekday service, accounting for 19.8% of the system's total activity. Route 203 to the University was the second most active route, accounting for 18.9% of total activity during weekday service. During weeknight service, Route 203 was the most active (41.4%), followed by the Dial-a-bus service (37.8%). Route 201 was also the most active during Saturday and Sunday periods, accounting for 29.7% and 55.7% of total activity respectively.

- 79% of StAT buses arrive on time or early to their timing points. On average 75% of StAT buses arrive on time (within 3 minutes of the scheduled arrival time), 4% arrive early, 22% arrive late. StAT's service reliability standard is that 90% of the buses shall be "on time"; therefore, the service is not currently meeting this standard.

- 45% of all patrons utilize a monthly bus pass, 44% a U-Pass, 4% use tickets, 4% cash and 3% transfers.

The survey process included a survey of bus operators. Of particular note was that overall satisfaction with the system rose 11% from 2008 to 2011 – 67% to 78%. Operators viewed frequency of service during peak hours, seat availability, and customer service provided by drivers as satisfactory or very satisfactory at over 80%.

The elements of the system that drivers were least satisfied with were:

- Local travel times;
- Schedule reliability;
- Commuter travel times;
- Cleanliness of buses;
- Availability of bus shelters and benches.

Many of these concerns expressed by operators reflect the comments made to them by customers and in many cases, the drivers are reiterating what they hear on the road to the surveyors. Drivers can be a most useful source of information when gauging the issues that are important to our customers.

With respect to schedule reliability of local routes, drivers indicated that Routes A11, A7, A8, and A9 (in that order) were the most difficult routes to keep on time. Routes 202 and 201 (in that order) were the seen as the most difficult commuter routes to keep to schedule.

Perhaps the most telling aspect of the drivers' survey is that it basically mirrors the opinions expressed in the 2008. This speaks to an evident inability to direct limited resources to address on-going problems.

6.0 SWOT ANALYSIS

6.1 Strengths

Existing services have a customer satisfaction level of 89% - a very high level of endorsement.

A 100% low floor accessible fleet. Every bus in the fleet is accessible to those passengers with mobility issues and mobility aids and boarding and alighting is easier for all.

All buses are equipped with bicycle racks to encourage and facilitate transferability between sustainable and healthier modes of transportation.

Modern garage, maintenance, and office facilities.

Modern scheduling and shift design technology, including computer-aided dispatch and road supervision.

Available real-time customer information system (Nextbus) that identifies the arrival time of any route to any bus stop location.

Comfortable, clean, and well maintained fleet.

Transit centres that are centrally located along the principle vehicle corridor into Edmonton. This allows each commuter route to serve both centres without significant deviations from the principle corridor. Two parallel sets of commuter routes are not necessary.

High quality customer service via the StAT website (over 200,000 page hits annually), telephone (over 15,000 calls handled each year), Nextbus, "e-notice", Google Transit and in person.

Transit Priority signaling at key intersections 137 Ave/St. Albert Trail, Yellowhead Trail/St. Albert Trail, and Anthony Henday Drive/St. Albert Trail.

A highly-evolved commitment to transit technology and innovation that has established St. Albert Transit as a leader in technological advancement not only in the region but in all of Alberta. This commitment ensures that StAT is well-positioned to accommodate new technologies as they are developed. St. Albert Transit is one of three systems with transit trip planner (Calgary and Edmonton the others) and the only one with more than 5 buses to have real time information with GPS and Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) on all buses.

Highly qualified administration staff with formal education in engineering and planning.

6.2 Weaknesses

Pricing of fare products is higher than other capital region partners. With higher prices come higher service expectations and difficulties in attracting new ridership.

Little demand for reverse commuting and limited potential for expansion of this market.

Operating cost increases continue to outpace increases in revenue and ridership.

A transportation culture that is highly reliant on automobile usage and a high degree of access to multiple vehicles. Such entrenched habits are difficult to change.

Transit is introduced into new neighbourhoods too late in the development process. Too many new residents into an area will develop automobile-dependent travel habits that are very difficult to change.

Many of the challenges faced in terms or speed of travel, convenience, and reliability are influenced by factors that are outside the municipal boundaries of St. Albert and are not within St. Albert's ability to control or rectify. These challenges are principally in Edmonton –

and particularly downtown Edmonton. Despite a very effective working relationship between the two cities, solutions to these challenges remain at the discretion of Edmonton.

6.3 Opportunities

New Campbell Road Park and Ride facility will require complete redesign of all local transit routes and represents the best opportunity to create a local route network that will provide more direct and faster service to commuter routes – a genuine competitive service that passengers will view as a suitable alternative to the automobile.

New roadway systems in the capital region have been completed or are nearing completion that will have a positive impact on roadway congestion in the St. Albert – Edmonton corridors.

New transit technology and innovation which will allow Stat to continue the customer service and operational improvements already started with the introduction and pioneering of new technologies.

A 2012 comprehensive review of St. Albert Transit's Handibus service has provided insight and direction on how to move this function forward to meet the challenges of an aging population.

6.4 Threats/Challenges

Existing garage facility is at capacity and unable to accommodate fleet expansion.

Increased congestion on major arterial roadways in Edmonton and St. Albert has dramatically impacted transit's ability to remain on schedule. Schedule reliability is the cornerstone of a timed-transfer system such as StAT, and if compromised, can severely impact passenger confidence in the system and weaken the opportunity to attract new ridership.

Local routes are circuitous and time consuming. They do not offer service that is competitive to the automobile.

Low population growth rate will limit potential to generate new ridership from this market segment (vs. the generation of ridership from the existing population).

Low housing densities will continue to present challenges to the local route network as routes have to travel longer distances to serve a sufficiently sized customer pool. Longer distances translate into longer travel times, reducing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the local routes.

Aging population will place demands on the system for additional services specifically tailored for the seniors' community.

Difficulty in attracting and maintaining experienced staff. As StAT adds services and adopts new technologies, the need to supplement existing staffing levels with trained and professional individuals will continue to challenge the present administration.

7.0 Goals, Objectives, Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this plan will identify service enhancements, and explore opportunities for operating efficiencies aimed at improving cost recovery, by addressing the following components of the overall transit operation:

- **Transit Service**
- **Promotion and Marketing**
- **Capital Investment and Facilities**
- **Policies and Guidelines**
- **Fares**
- **Environmental Sustainability**
- **Administration and Staffing**

7.1 Transit Service

For the purposes of organization, this report will utilize the operating values identified in the Capital Region Board's Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan as the foundation for a series of recommendations regarding service. These operating values are as follows:

- *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*
- *Cohesively linked across geographic areas via routings, schedules, fares, safety standards and facilities*

7.1.1 Reliable, on-time and predictable

There is no attribute to any transit system that is more essential than reliability. The ability to retain existing ridership and attract new ridership is dependant, first and foremost, on offering reliable service that people can depend on.

St. Albert Transit is increasingly experiencing greater difficulties in staying on schedule. This is due mostly to growing congestion on the principle arterial roadways and the array of construction projects undertaken throughout both St. Albert and Edmonton.

There are a number of essential initiatives that must accompany the opening of the Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride. The new facility will require a restructure of all routes in the system, and as such, presents a unique opportunity to improve reliability, travel time, and overall attractiveness of the system. Project timelines will necessitate that these projects commence approximately two years prior to the opening of the centre to allow sufficient time to prepare budget projections to be submitted for Council approval. Implementation, however, will coincide with the opening of South TC.

Recommendations:

- **Link Time Review (to coincide with opening of Campbell Rd Transit Centre)**
  Conduct a thorough review of schedule link times (time required to travel between two or more major points along the route) to ensure sufficient time is allotted to complete the trip. Adjust schedules accordingly where necessary and assign additional buses to maintain capacity and frequency. Establish a process for the periodic review of link times to ensure that schedule reliability continues to remain a primary focus of St. Albert Transit.

- **Transit Priority Signals in St. Albert and Edmonton (to coincide with opening of Campbell Rd Transit Centre)**
  Continue to advocate for transit priority measures within the St. Albert Trail corridor, and pursue opportunities to work in cooperation with the City of Edmonton to implement transit-priority measures where possible in Edmonton. Seek the involvement of the Capital Region Board to promote such measures and perhaps extend funding support. Although St. Albert Transit would certainly benefit from the introduction of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along the extent of St. Albert Trail, it is recommended that a number of other measures be taken initially to facilitate ease of access to the trail, and faster travel when on it. These include congestion management techniques, intelligent transportation technologies, and transit priority signals that enable bus-activated green-phase extension, red-phase truncations, and queue-jumping – measures which assist all vehicles and do reduce private vehicle capacity along St. Albert's principle corridor.

7.1.2 Seamless

Transfers between routes reduce the overall attractiveness of any transit system. They are also a critical component of the timed-transfer system used by St. Albert Transit. It is important to minimize transfers and to minimize wait times where transfers are inevitable.

Recommendations:

- **Transfer Connection Review (to coincide with opening of Campbell Rd Transit Centre)**
  Verify and adjust, if necessary, the transfer timing at the transit centres to ensure seamless transferability between routes in the peak direction.

Seamless also refers to relative ease of payment and transfer between St. Albert Transit and the other regional operators. This concept is addressed in detail in Section 5.1.11 – "Cohesively linked across geographic area".

7.1.3 Fast

The future of transit, and its ability to capture a growing percentage of the commuter market, lay in its ability to offer travel times that are competitive to the automobile. Passengers can accept that transit systems are not as fast and convenient as automobiles, but there are limitations to tolerance. It is difficult for the customer to accept a 20-minute trip by bus that takes 5 minutes by car. Within reason, local feeder routes should be kept as short and direct as possible. Commuter routes should be maintained as express or limited stop to minimize travel time.

Recommendations:

- **Local and Commuter Route Restructure (to coincide with opening of Campbell Rd Transit Centre)**
  Undertake a complete local route restructure to coincide with the opening of the new Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride slated for completion in 2014. This represents a unique opportunity to implement a network of local routes that are shorter and more direct. The new facility presents the best opportunity in recent years to re-establish transit as a competitive and convenient alternative to the automobile – an alternative that will attract new ridership. It also positions transit to better serve St. Albert's commercial/industrial sector by providing employees and customers with a transportation alternative to key commercial districts in the north and to future employment areas slated for the west side.

- **Limit Stops in Edmonton**
  Ensure that any new commuter routes introduced into Edmonton are limited stop and travel in the most direct corridor that is reasonably possible.

7.1.4 Safe

Passenger safety is maximized by transit systems in many ways. Perhaps the most effective is through the stringent maintenance of a highly trained and professional staff of vehicle operators backed by reliable communication equipment and ready access to inspectors and dispatchers in the event of an emergency or potential criminal action.

For passengers to be attracted to the transit system, they must feel that they are in a safe environment. All the components that form part of the travel experience must reflect this ideal that the passenger is made to feel that they are in a safe environment.

Recommendations:

- **Operator Training**
  St. Albert Transit will continue its program of ensuring that operators, inspectors, and dispatchers are fully trained uniformed professionals.

- **On Board Camera**
  Implement the proposed on-board bus camera equipment. The presence of on-board video surveillance is quickly evolving into an industry standard as one of the most effective measures to deter threatening behavior and instill confidence in passengers that the environment is safe.

- **Accessible Future Bus Stops**
  Ensure that future bus stops are not only fully accessible by persons with mobility challenges, but are built and maintained to a standard that ensures safe access and approach (including curb cuts where necessary), as well as proper lighting, easy-to-read signage, and safe distance from vehicle traffic movements.

- **Upgrade Existing Stops to Ensure Accessibility**
  Undertake a program of reconstructing or renovating existing bus stops to ensure that proper standards for access to the stop, as well as a suitable bus stop pad, bench, and shelter (if necessary), are effectively maintained.

- **Video Surveillance**
  When new facilities are constructed, ensure that passenger safety measures such as lighting, video surveillance, and emergency telephones are considered and incorporated into the design.

- **Bus Maintenance Program**
  Maintain effective program of bus fleet maintenance – utilizing advanced fleet maintenance software - to ensure that each vehicle is in fully capable condition prior to being assigned to service. The maintenance program is to be supplemented by regular daily, weekly and monthly inspections in accordance with appropriate provincial and federal government regulations – particularly, the National Safety Code and the Alberta Transportation's Bus Modernization Regulation.

- **Safe Bus**
  Continue to expand the promotion of "Safe Bus" initiative aimed at informing the community that transit vehicles can be used as a safe haven in the event that a citizen is in need of assistance or protection.

- **Transit Security Peace Officers**
  As the transit system expands, there will be a need formally establish a system of coordination with the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Transit on security issues and the use of peace officers to patrol and enforce security at the Campbell Road Transit Centre and on St. Albert Transit vehicles operating in Edmonton. Further steps in relation to this matter may include consideration of the establishment of a City of St. Albert Transit peace officer compliment to address transit security issues within St. Albert boundaries.

7.1.5 Efficient

Transit services are costly, and it is implicit upon Administration to provide services in the most cost effective manner possible. This entails using each bus to its maximum potential, ensuring operator shifts are managed effectively to minimize wasted hours and downtime, ensuring the vehicle fleet is maintained to the highest industry standards in an effort to minimize the number of buses removed from service. Administration must actively consider and assess any and all options that can reduce cost and improve efficiency, in accordance with the principles of continuous improvement.

It is in relation to system efficiency that investments in technology and software can pay significant dividends. Software programming is available to maximize the opportunities in regard to scheduling, route interlining, shift design, and fleet administration and has become an essential component of transit system administration throughout North America.

Efficiency progress is measured in a number of ways through statistics compiled each year by St. Albert Transit for the CUTA annual report. These include the cost/recovery ratio, cost per passenger, cost per vehicle hour, and passengers per vehicle hour. These benchmarks are compiled on an annual basis and can be used to compare the efficiency of St. Albert Transit on a year to year basis or with other transit operations in the region or across the province.

Recommendations:

- **On-going Investment in Software**
  Invest, on an ongoing basis, in appropriate software to ensure that efficiencies in scheduling, shift design, fleet administration, vehicle diagnostics, building operation, etc, can be maximized and operating costs controlled accordingly. In addition, establish reserve to fund various technological upgrades and associated software and hardware procurement that may be required to provide continued support this capacity.

- **On board surveillance equipment**
  As mentioned above, implement the proposed on-board bus camera equipment. In addition to the safety component, it can also serve as an effective cost control mechanism by identifying and confirming circumstances involving vehicle accidents and possibly personal injury incidents. Benefits include potential reduction in insurance premiums, insurance claims, and legal actions brought against the City of St. Albert.

7.1.6 Affordable

Transit fare structures and strategies are among the most difficult component of transit operation to reconcile. Of particular note is the fact that there are two principle sources of funding to cover the operational expenses of the system – the transit user and the general taxpayer. City Councils and Transit Administrations throughout North America struggle to find a reasonable balance between the two.

A number of factors are weighed and accounted for in the decision to set pricing and to raise prices. These include:

- Asking passengers to pay a fair proportion of the cost of providing the service.
    - If fares are too highly priced, the service becomes too expensive for many to use. Those with alternative transportation such as an automobile will migrate away from transit.
    - If the fare is too low, the general taxpayer is relied upon for a disproportionate amount of the overall cost of service.
- Other considerations include:
    - Should the municipality offer discounted fare products?
    - Who is eligible for discount fares?
        - Seniors
        - Students
        - Children
        - Lower income households or individuals
        - Mobility challenged or handicapped persons
    - What should the level of discount be?
    - What are other similar or nearby transit systems rates for fare products?

Recommendations regarding fares and fare strategy will be addressed later in this plan.

7.1.7 Convenient

The level of convenience associated with any transit system is a constantly moving target principally influenced by technology. But in general, when referring to transit systems, convenience can be broken into three components: ease of access, ease of payment, and ease of information.

Ease of access refers to the physical or geographical component of transit - proximity to bus stops, suitable sidewalks or walkways to the bus stop, availability of benches or shelters, ease and safety of boarding the bus, and comfortable and accommodating travel. Improvements to bus stops were identified earlier in this section of the report under the “Safe” heading.

Ease of payment and ease of information are general reflections of our customers’ demands for modern methods of accommodating both – methods that are now commonplace in their daily lives. Common retail practices of internet purchase and prepaid swipe card technology are growing in popularity and are forms of payment that will eventually have to be accommodated by St. Albert Transit and the City of St. Albert as a whole.

Recommendations:

- **Open Payment - Smart Card**
  St. Albert Transit will be placed in a position where it will have to invest in "Smart Card" or "Open Payment" fare payment technology. Smart Card utilizes a card issued by the agency which can have funding applied and added to it. Open Payment enables payment through the use of an individual's debit or credit card. Timelines for implementation are unknown as of the writing of this report. But noteworthy is that the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Transit have begun to move toward the introduction of this technology. Edmonton Transit, as of mid 2012, has proposed a pilot program that will later expand into full introduction of smart or open payment technology. Timelines, however, remain uncertain, and are dependant on funding approval. It is important that St. Albert Transit be involved in the pilot program testing phase as it will likely be in StAT's best interests to adopt the same (or similar) system as Edmonton Transit.

  The City of St. Albert should approve, and hold in reserve, funding that can be readily accessed once the preferred technology has been tested and approved in cooperation with our regional partners. Explore opportunities for provincial funding eligibility. See 15-Year Capital Plan attached to this report. Pre-approval will enable St. Albert Transit to proceed with implementation concurrently with the regional partners.

- **Web Payment**
  StAT and other civic departments shall move toward full accommodation of web-based payment for their consumer products.

The third component is ease of access to information. More and more, individuals are relying on internet-based sources of information that they can access at a moments notice from a broad variety of equipment from desktop computers to mobile devices such as tablets and smart phones. And not only does the source need to provide basic information, but demand is growing for instant messages and bulletins, real time information, and social networking.

Transit systems, like many other public services, will continue to be pressured to invest in and adopt new communication technologies. And these new technologies, unlike the efficiency or payment technologies already mentioned, do not necessarily achieve cost savings or cost avoidance.

Recommendations:

- **Real Time Regional Trip Planner**
  Proceed with full implementation of Google Trip Planner in an effort to be regionally consistent. Ensure full integration with Edmonton Transit and Strathcona Transit's trip inquiry formats. This includes full integration of Nextbus real time information with Google Trip Planner when this capability is made available by Google.

- **Real Time Arrival Signage at Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride**
  Continue to build on the real-time capabilities offered by Nextbus by expanding access to the information through the use of real-time arrival signage at the new Campbell Road Transit Centre. Consider the same technology for St. Albert Centre Exchange if the equipment has the capability to be relocated to a new facility.

- **Automated Stop Announcements**
  Progress to automated stop announcements as next step in real-time information dissemination. This function is an advancement toward accommodation of visually impaired passengers.

- **Expand into Social Media**
  Expand the ability to disseminate important information regarding delays and detours through the City of St. Albert social media accounts. Maintain program of electronic notification currently being conducted through "e-Notice" program.

- **Real Time Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System with Nextbus**
  Introduce Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to customer call centre that will enable customers to obtain real time bus arrival information without the need to speak directly to a representative.

7.1.8 Easily Navigated

It is important to ensure that detailed route and schedule information is not only available but easily understood. To this end, it is important that transit systems strive to reduce anomalies or irregularities in schedules and maps that can lead to passenger confusion.

Recommendations:

- **Reduce Scheduling Inconsistencies (to coincide with opening of Campbell Road Transit Centre)**

Where possible, reduce schedule inconsistencies such as varying frequency or varying timings. If frequency must be varied to meet fluctuating demand, ensure that timing, or clockface headway, is consistent throughout the schedule. For example, if timing is :13 and :43 minutes past the hour, maintain this throughout the schedule. If frequency is reduced to hourly, attempt to maintain one of the timings, either :13 or :43.

- **Reduce Route and Scheduling Deviations**
  Minimize the use of trips that deviate from the route's principle line of travel. Strive for consistency in timing and line of travel. Where short trips are required to address spiking demand particularly in the peak periods, maintain consistent clockface headways and avoid any variation in destination. Alter only the origin end. For example, if a commuter route returning to St. Albert in the pm peak stops at both Village Transit Station and the St. Albert Centre Exchange, ensure that any trip added to address demand also stops at both centres. If passengers are accustomed to a route stopping at both, do not introduce an individual trip that only services one.

- **Replace Dial-a-Bus with Fixed Route Service**
  Replace dial-a-bus system used in evening and weekend periods with fixed route service. Route network could be a "late-night" variation of local routes that provides basic service but does not necessarily meet the 400m walking distance standard to transit. Such practices are common for transit operations during very low demand periods and are currently utilized in many areas of Edmonton. As such, the service would be regionally consistent.

- **(Interim measure) Initiate text messaging for Dial-a-Bus trip booking**
  Currently, passengers requesting dial-a-bus pick up are required to phone the driver directly during specified portions of the hour. Text messaging will enable the passenger to contact the driver outside of these periods and receive verification from the driver when safe to do so. This reduces the potential for busy signals and not reaching the driver.

- **Statutory Holiday Service**
  As workforce and student needs evolve, St. Albert Transit continues to receive significant numbers of requests for statutory holiday service. Pilot projects conducted in the past have shown that ridership on statutory holiday service equates that of regular Sunday service and would show a level of regional consistency with Edmonton Transit.

7.1.9 Comfortable

Passenger comfort is a key component of the overall transit experience and St. Albert currently maintains a number of practices and policies specific to passenger comfort. With respect to the bus vehicles, St. Albert Transit orders its vehicles with fabric or similarly cushioned seating. Also, Transit Services Policy C-TS-01 limits the number of standees to 0 for trips longer than 25 minutes, ensuring that all passengers are seated. But comfort is not limited to the vehicles but extends to the bus stops and transit centres.

Recommendations:

- **Heated Shelter at St. Albert Centre Exchange**
  Install heated bus shelters at St. Albert Centre Exchange. This improvement has been consistently cited by our customers as one of the priority actions that they would like to see from St. Albert Transit.

- **Bus Pads and Benches**
  Continue to pursue for the provision of bus benches, and suitable concrete pad bases, at all bus stops where boardings per day equal 10 or greater.

- **Premium Seating**
  Continue practice of ensuring bus specifications are set to promote passenger comfort.

7.1.10 Connected to other modes such as walking, cycling, taxis, buses, trains and vehicles that together support a healthy lifestyle

Connectivity with other modes of transportation typically associated with a healthy lifestyle remains a focus at St. Albert Transit but much work remains to be done in this regard. Successes in this regard include the fact that all buses are fitted with bicycle carriers that promote interaction between cycling and transit.

The new Campbell Road Park and Ride Facility, due to geographic location limitations, offers limited connectivity to cycling and none to walking. Due to its isolation and location south of the transportation utility corridor, it is principally an interface between transit and automobile. Opportunities to provide connectivity with other forms of healthy transportation should therefore be a priority elsewhere in the system and in particular at St. Albert Centre Exchange and the future North Park and Ride.

Recommendations:

- **Advocate for Transit in Planning Process**
  Continue to advocate for transit interests within the planning and development community of St. Albert. Continue and escalate efforts to ensure that future neighbourhoods, commercial/industrial districts, and developments reflect transit-friendly design in the area structure plan, subdivision approval, and development permit stages. Strive to convey the importance of ensuring that all residences in new areas fall within 400m of access to transit, that higher density land uses are located along transit corridors, and that the collector roadway network is accessible through neighbourhood street layout and use of walkways.

- **Bike Racks At St. Albert Centre Exchange**
  Install bicycle racking equipment at St. Albert Centre Exchange and ensure that bicycle racks are available at the future South Park and Ride.

7.1.11 Cohesively linked across geographic areas via routings, schedules, fares, safety standards and facilities

The Capital Region Board was created by the Government of Alberta in 2008 as a means to coordinate planning and development decisions within the Capital Region with the goal of minimizing conflict between municipalities and ensuring sustained economic growth and a healthy environment.

Regional considerations will continue to play a greater role in the decision-making process of the individual partner operations like St. Albert Transit. These regional considerations will influence the future of routes, fares, fare payment, technology and software, and accessible services. At the time of this writing, a governance structure was being formulated that will define the extent and structure of the authority of this body. But regardless of the authority granted to the Board, it is important to recognize that it represents an opportunity for regional cooperation and coordination that will benefit transportation and land use planning for all the municipalities in the region.

Recommendations:

- **Promote Regional Consistency**
  As one of three transit service providers in the metropolitan area, St. Albert Transit should continue to provide leadership in any CRB initiatives that are aimed at promoting consistency and transparency with all transit service partners in the region. Examples include fare structures and technologies, transit priority measures, funding requests, trip-planning applications, and smart bus technologies.

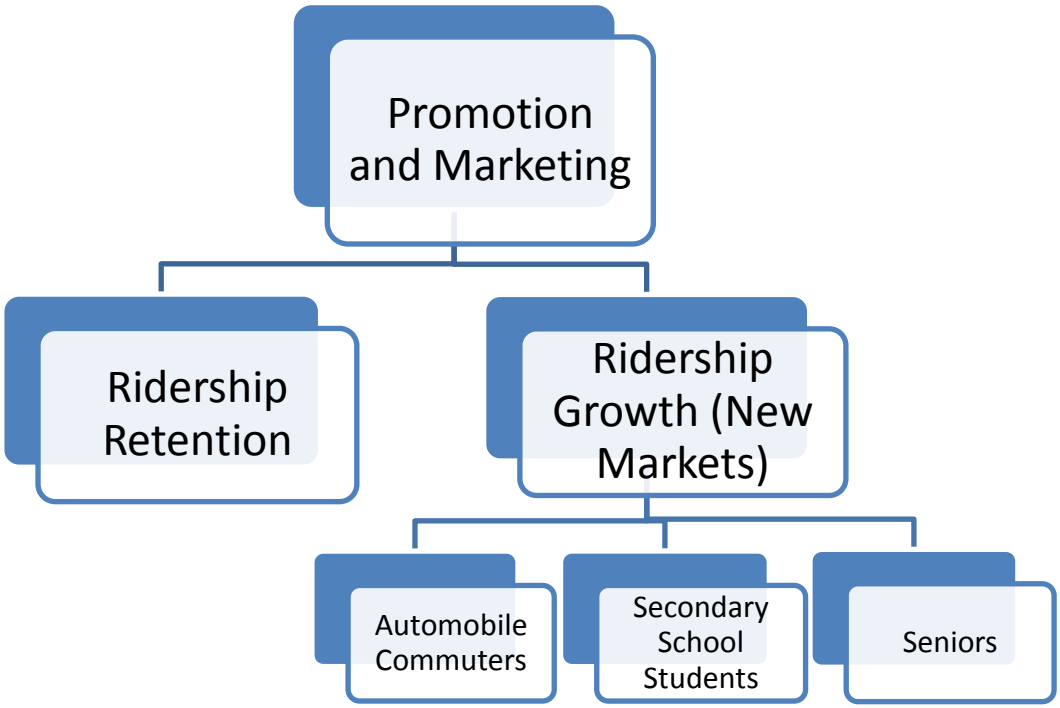
- **Integration with NAIT LRT**
  Continue to work with the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Transit to ensure timely, effective, and mutually agreeable bus route integration with future LRT stations - such as the NAIT station slated to open in 2014.

- **Support Northwest LRT Extension**
  Continue to show commitment and cooperation with the City of Edmonton in its efforts to extend the LRT to the southern boundaries of St. Albert. St. Albert City Council has already laid the foundation for this commitment by directing financial resources to Edmonton's Northwest LRT Functional Alignment Study.

- **Represent City of St. Albert**
  Although it is important to provide leadership in the regional context, St. Albert Transit must continue to recognize that it is a service owned and operated by the residents of the City of St. Albert, and it is important to protect the interests of the City of St. Albert while at the same time showing cooperation in a regional context.

7.2 Promotion and Marketing

Promotion and marketing is conducted with two aims – to retain existing ridership, and to grow new ridership. Most promotion and marketing initiatives undertaken are generally geared to accomplish both. The quality of the service and of the experience will dictate the level of retention, and level of new ridership attracted to the system. In terms of growing ridership, marketing and promotion initiatives must focus on the three principal target audiences – current automobile commuters, secondary school youth, and seniors.



Many of the directives detailed in the preceding sections must be implemented in order to make the existing service competitive and attractive to these groups. Steps to make the current route network accessible, convenient, competitive, and reliable are absolutely necessary in order to market the system to automobile users. And as automobile usage becomes more and more expensive – parking, insurance, gasoline – this group becomes more accepting of the idea to give transit a try.

Regardless of the potential to attract new passengers, it is of even greater priority to retain the existing ridership. Perhaps our greatest marketing resource is our current customer base. A vast majority of these citizens have transportation alternatives and choose St. Albert Transit. Their satisfaction can prove to be our most valuable marketing tool. Maintaining a reputation for reliability and convenience is the most effective means of ensuring the current customer base remains loyal and does not make use of those alternatives.

Recommendations:

- **Marketing Plan**
  St. Albert Transit Administration recommends maintaining a marketing responsibility within its administrative structure specifically targeted toward transit usage and ridership growth. Revise the Transit Marketing Plan accordingly to reflect the direction established by this Long Term Department Plan.

- **Automobile Market**
  Actively initiate marketing programs targeting the automobile commuter. This very challenging segment of the commuting public represent one of the greatest sources of potential new ridership.

- **School Market**
  Actively target secondary school youth in an effort to encourage transit habits that will continue throughout post-secondary and adult stages. Two possible actions that can serve this purpose are: a.) enter into talks with local school boards to explore opportunities where transit services can be utilized to transport students. Aim is to increase ridership with minimal investment of additional buses or service hours, create transit-oriented habits, and create efficiencies for transit and the school boards; and b.) offer pricing incentives to students during summer periods to encourage use for recreation and employment.

- **Seniors Market**
  Continue and expand efforts to orient seniors on the use of transit as an effective transportation option especially for local travel. Encourage the establishment of a network of transit experts – seniors who already make use of transit who can escort other seniors and provide on the street guidance and orientation. Perhaps consider discounted fare products to transit coaches to encourage participation.

- **Employer Program**
  Recognize Edmonton Transit Employer partnership discounts for employees who reside in St. Albert. Explore similar partnerships with larger St. Albert employers.

- **Free access to wireless internet on transit vehicles**
  As wireless connectivity plays an ever-growing role in the lives of residents, St. Albert Transit should examine the potential market benefits of offering free wireless access to customers aboard our buses. The ability to conduct work or recreation while on route presents a functional opportunity and advantage that is not available to the automobile commuter. Wifi availability could potentially generate ridership by encouraging commuters to shift from automobile to public transit.

7.3 Capital Investment and Facilities

Transit Administration has compiled a 10-year capital budget that is intended to provide a timing framework for new capital investment over the next 10 years.

The investment profile is reflective of a number of initiatives and trends that were identified as part of the 2006 Long Term Department Plan. It is necessary to revisit and update the document so that it reflects today's trends.

Much of the capital plan remains accurate and relevant. These components include

- Campbell Road Transit Centre and Park and Ride land and construction
- Garage facility expansion (vehicle storage)
- Fleet replacement
- Growth buses
- Preventative Maintenance (corrosion prevention)
- Vehicle video surveillance
- Fleet management software
- North Transit Centre and Park and Ride land acquisition and construction
- Bus stop shelters
- Smart card technology and equipment

Other components should be removed from consideration and the funding reassigned. These include:

- Any reference to Bus Rapid Transit – vehicles, stations, and priority measures.
    - Bus Rapid Transit only works with the construction of exclusive bus lanes and corridors that allow for faster travel times than the automobile to principle destinations. Implementation of such a service is predicated on the participation of the City of Edmonton in terms of construction of BRT lanes and priority signalling. As is the case presently, Edmonton has abandoned its BRT initiative and has instead chosen to focus exclusively on LRT for its future high speed transit.

The City of Edmonton has developed initial plans to extend LRT from the NAIT station to the southern boundary of St. Albert. The location of the station adjacent to St. Albert will be incorporated into the design of the future South Transit Centre facility.

St. Albert City Council strongly supports the extension of LRT to the Campbell Road Transit Centre, and has committed funding and any further support needed to move this initiative to the construction phase.

Although an LRT corridor has been established between NAIT station and the Campbell Road TC, timelines have not yet been established. Edmonton's priority lines have been identified as the southeast and west extensions, and it appears that these will precede the northwest line to St. Albert. It is uncertain if LRT will be extended to St. Albert during the timeline of this long term department plan. As such, it is important that St. Albert Transit structure its 10-year capital budget as it would without LRT. There is considerable risk associated with deferring key capital investments when there is a high degree of uncertainty and speculation surrounding LRT timelines. Once the LRT to Campbell Road Transit Centre is announced, St. Albert Transit will have between 2 and 4 years to adjust the capital budget accordingly.

ST. ALBERT TRANSIT FLEET ESTIMATES
2012 to 2027

Year	1.4% Annual Growth Rate		Estimated Fleet size	Bus Purchases (replacement buses do not add to fleet size)					
				Replacement		Growth		New Comm Route	
	Population	Ridership		Reg	Artic	Reg	Artic	Reg	Artic
2012	60,994	1,218,891	**53**		2	0	0	0	0
2013	61,848	1,242,135	**53**			0	0	0	0
2014	62,714	1,265,823	**59**	3		4	2	0	0
2015	63,592	1,322,051	**59**	5		0	0	0	0
2016	64,482	1,347,262	**64**			0	1	2	2
2017	65,385	1,372,954	**67**			2	0	1	0
2018	66,300	1,399,137	**67**			0	0	0	0
2019	67,229	1,425,818	**67**		5	0	0	0	0
2020	68,170	1,453,009	**69**			2	0	0	0
2021	69,124	1,480,717	**69**			0	0	0	0
2022	70,092	1,508,955	**71**			2	0	0	0
2023	71,073	1,537,730	**71**			0	0	0	0
2024	72,068	1,567,055	**73**	3	7	0	2	0	0
2025	73,077	1,596,939	**73**	13		0	0	0	0
2026	74,100	1,627,392	**74**			0	1	0	0
2027	75,138	1,658,427	**75**	9	6	1	0	0	0

*2013 scheduled to replace 3 existing Handibuses and purchase 2 additional.

In December of 2012, St. Albert City Council voted to extend funding to an LRT functional alignment study that will lay the preliminary groundwork for further extension of LRT from the Campbell Road Transit Centre through St. Albert to the proposed North End Transit Centre.

As important as the Campbell Road Transit Centre is the ability of St. Albert Transit to adequately accommodate, store, and service growth buses that are added to the fleet. The current garage facility is at capacity and cannot accommodate additional buses. Growth in ridership and a restructuring of the local network will require additional buses, and additional buses require storage. It is imperative that St. Albert Transit and City's engineering department begin the process of assessing the potential for maximum expansion of the present garage facility in an effort to potentially avoid the need to construct an entirely separate satellite garage. Expansion of the existing facility is the most cost-effective and efficient option available.

Recommendations:

- **Garage**
  Current garage facility is at capacity and cannot accommodate fleet growth. Expansion of the existing facility remains, along with the South Transit Centre and Park and Ride, St. Albert Transit's principle investment priority and is tentatively targeted for 2016 in this plan.

- **Bus Replacement**
  Maintain the provisions contained in the current 10-year capital plan regarding replacement buses and new growth buses.

- **Growth Buses**
  Additional buses will be necessary to accommodate urban expansion and ridership growth. These will be used to provide service to new neighbourhoods, increase the capacity of existing commuter lines, and introduce new commuter routes as demand warrants. Of particular note, as illustrated in the previous table, is the proposed number of extra buses required to implement the proposed local route restructure that will accompany the opening of the South Transit Centre and Park and Ride.

- **Small Buses**
  Include with the present funding allotment for bus purchases, the purchase of up to 4 smaller buses that can be utilized for specific "seniors-focused" community routes that require travel onto parking lots and other locations that cannot be used by regular buses. Seniors represent a growing proportion of St. Albert Transit's ridership market and service that is tailored to their needs will serve to relieve the demand for more costly services like Handibus.

- **Fleet Maintenance Software**
  Investment toward the purchase of appropriate fleet-maintenance software in an effort to maximize maintenance efficiencies and minimize vehicle down time.

- **North Transit Centre and Park and Ride**
  Maintain commitment to the development of the North Transit Centre and Park and Ride facility tentatively slated for the annex area approximately 1 km north of Villeneuve Road on St. Albert Trail. Preliminary scheduling and the Capital plan have this facility slated for construction in 2019. This timeframe, however, can be revisited and adjusted to a later date to reflect area development and system requirements. The facility will serve to meet demand for park and ride for St. Albert's full build-out population. It is also the cornerstone of St. Albert's only designated future Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) node located to the north and west.

The proposed 2012-2027 Capital Investment Strategy is included in Appendix B.

7.4 Policies and Guidelines

As previously referenced, City Council Policy C-TS-01 adopted in 2005, referred to as the Transit Services Policy, establishes the framework that guides the level of service offered throughout the community. This Department Plan recommends that City Council consider a number of revisions to this policy.

Recommendations:

- **Core Service Standards – Coverage**

Include a provision which identifies coverage criteria for industrial parks at 800 meters and for evening and late night service also at 800 metres.

Many transit operations, including Edmonton Transit, will reduce the level of coverage in very low demand areas or time periods in order to provide a very basic level of service at a more reasonable cost. Such a provision will prove to be important as St. Albert moves toward the development of future industrial parks and for the replacement of the dial-a-bus with fixed route service.

- **Performance measurement – Ridership demand**

The current performance target has been set at 10 boardings per service hour. Below this figure and the route becomes a candidate for service reduction. It is recommended that this figure be broken into separate standards for peak and non-peak service.

Peak service should attain a minimum rate of usage of 15 boardings per hour while off-peak should attain 10 boardings per hour.

This distinction will allow StAT Administration to better gauge transit usage. If performance during peak periods is satisfactory but falls below standard during off-peak, St. Albert Transit can then incrementally target service reductions to the off-peak periods if necessary. This can allow for retention of service when demand warrants.

- **Staging of service in developing areas**

The service standards policy stipulates that peak-hour transit service be provided to a developing area two years after development commences or when the area is 30% complete. Full day service is to be provided at 60% completion, and complete transit service (including Saturdays) at 75%.

There is a growing body of research that indicates an advantage to introducing transit service into new neighbourhoods earlier in the development process. Edmonton Transit has compiled their own data which supports this theory. The research has shown that transit routes have a much greater opportunity for long term success if they are introduced very early in the development phase - prior to the formation of habits that are reliant on the automobile, or perhaps before the purchase of the second automobile. Once automobile habits become entrenched, they are difficult to break, and the opportunity for the route to succeed markedly diminishes.

It is recommended that transit service be introduced into developing neighbourhoods as early as the point when the area reaches 100 households of occupancy. Such a standard is also contingent on the availability of suitable roadways that allow the bus to enter and exit an area. The construction of a suitable roadway and turnaround must be incorporated into the earliest phases of development. Although ridership demand will be low initially, the introduction is an investment in the long term viability of the route.

And finally on this point, it is recommended that the City of St. Albert explore cost-sharing arrangements with the development community that will partially offset the costs of earlier service provision. As is the case currently in the City of Edmonton, developers are encouraged to contribute the cost of operating the service for the first two years. Aside from the benefits to the transit system, such an investment has been used as a selling feature that a developer can take advantage of. Terms and cost percentages can be adjusted depending on the direction of Council in recognition of the local development climate.

- **Fare strategy principles – 40% to 60% cost recovery from revenues**

The cost recovery ratio is defined as the portion of total operating costs that are offset by fare and other revenues. The current policy establishes a target of 40% to 60%. Such a standard is more indicative of transit systems operating in larger cities and does not necessarily translate as a feasible standard for smaller systems in medium size centres or satellite communities. There are no systems in Alberta outside of Calgary Transit and Edmonton Transit that have cost recovery ratios above 40% (Calgary = 52% and Edmonton = 44%). Most are below 35%. The 40% ratio target threatens to create an

untenable situation whereby fares would have to be raised to a level that would make transit usage too expensive in the eyes of many riders. One of transit's principle competitive advantages – cost of travel – would be lost and the system would be less attractive. Ridership would consequently diminish sharply.

It is recommended that the 40% to 60% cost recovery ratio target be lowered to 35% in keeping with the realities faced by smaller operators. 40% and higher is unrealistic in communities where housing and employment densities are low, population growth is low to moderate, and commuter trips are longer. This is, in combination with other recommendations in this plan aimed at growing ridership and finding efficiencies, will keep transit fares at a level that maintains transit as a viable alternative to the automobile.

- **Vehicle Loading**

The Services Policy currently limits passenger loading of any bus to no more than 100% of seated capacity for trips longer than 25 minutes. This standard was intended to ensure that all passengers on commuter trips into Edmonton were afforded the comfort of having a seat available to them due to the length of the trip. It has become a signature component of StAT's commuter travel and a unique and desirable aspect of the transit experience. While the standard represents a unique feature that our customers have become accustomed, it presents two challenges to daily bus operation that limit opportunities for efficiencies. Firstly, limiting standees to 0 requires Administration to introduce additional buses to the schedule that may go underutilized. This is costly and inefficient. It would be more effective to identify instances where "consecutive" trips experience significant standing loads before an additional bus is put into service. This will ensure that the additional bus has the customer base that can reasonably support the expanded capacity. This can enable Administration to increase efficiencies of scale by making maximum use of its current commuter fleet.

Secondly, the Government of Alberta, in the conditions it establishes as part of the Operating Authority Certificate – the permit that allows St. Albert Transit to operate intermunicipal service – recognizes the policy pertaining to the limited standing loads and sets the standard to reflect our guidelines. This effectively limits our ability to operate when standing loads exceed the guideline. Our permit limits StAT to a maximum passenger load that cannot always be adhered to. The permit conditions do recognize that isolated circumstances and unpredictable spikes in demand can result in loads that exceed the guideline. But it is important that the policy be amended so that St. Albert Transit is allowed to operate as any transit service can reasonably expect – whereby certain buses will, from time to time, experience passenger loads over the desired level established by the policy. This can be achieved by amending the wording of the policy in such a manner as to stipulate that the loading limits are guidelines that serve to identify potential capacity issues and are not intended to strictly limit numbers of standees.

7.5 Fares

Recommendations:

- **LICO Fares**
  Introduce a subsidized fare for individuals and households who fall below the LICO as established by the Canada Revenue Agency or who receive Guaranteed Income Supplements. The products should be offered at the same discount as the current AISH monthly pass. Similar products are offered by the two regional transit partners although their subsidization level is greater.

- **Fare Model**
  Compile a fare pricing strategy that will provide guidance and direction in setting future fare price increases. It is important that this model recognizes and attempts to quantify the impact of fare elasticity on overall ridership. This will better position Administration and Council to set pricing that carefully balances user revenue and tax levy contribution while also establishing pricing that maintains Transit's image as a reasonably cost-effective alternative to the automobile.

- **Revenue Distribution with NAIT Station**
  Proactively negotiate a fair and equitable revenue sharing program with Edmonton Transit prior to opening of the NAIT LRT Station in 2014. This agreement will serve as the basis for future negotiations focused on the South Park and Ride – a facility that lies within the boundaries of the City of Edmonton on land owned by the Alberta Government and subleased from Edmonton.

- **Web-Based Fare Product Purchase**
  Invest in appropriate hardware and software that will permit purchase of fare products via computer, or by phone, from home or office.

7.6 Environmental Sustainability

Sustainability is the theory that we must reduce and minimize our impact, commonly referred to as our environmental footprint, on our land and resources, so that the future generations will not be deprived of similar opportunities for economic, social, and environmental fulfillment. Key principles of sustainability include reducing the amount of land required to house each individual or family, to reduce fossil fuel consumption, to recycle, to create less waste, to reduce our use of harmful chemicals, to use less water, and to adopt a healthier lifestyle that includes more walking and cycling.

For all orders of government, and in all sectors of private enterprise, the principles of sustainability continue to play a larger role in everyday operations and planning. At the municipal government level, Councils and society are seeing the benefits of greater participation and adherence to the principles of sustainability and are adopting formal environmental policies outlining their action plans for greater environmental stewardship. The City of St. Albert is no exception, having completed its Environmental Master Plan in January of 2009. Regardless of which municipal plan one examines, transit represents a key component in the sustainability aspirations of all of them.

But it is only one component of an environmental action framework that must include a comprehensive approach to overall land use planning. In order to ensure the long term viability of transit in a community, it is necessary to create urban areas that promote transit use, and that provide a greater opportunity to ensure the long term success of the service. In this regard, it is critical that planning administrations recognize transit as an important component of land use planning, and not just an afterthought to be squeezed into the final plan.

Sustainability models – as they relate to land use planning – generally reflect a move toward more compact forms of urban development. They stress the idea of more people living on smaller tracts of land, mixed land uses within close proximity (residential, educational, recreational, commercial, etc.), and convenient access to transit. Together these initiatives are intended to reduce the need for automobile use, and the associated emissions of greenhouse gases.

St. Albert Transit, in cooperation with the St. Albert Department of Environmental Management, is a regional leader in it efforts to reduce emissions and other potentially harmful impacts by achieving and maintaining ISO 14001 certification – the internationally recognized program for identifying, measuring, and reducing an organization's environmental footprint.

Recommendations:

- **ISO 14001**
  Maintain St. Albert Transit's focus on remaining an industry leader in the field of environmental stewardship by continuing to comply with the regulations and requirements of the ISO 14001 certification process.

- **Smart Driver**
  Continue to include emissions-reduction practices in the training programs of new and existing operators, such as the idling policy to reduce unnecessary engine usage and "smart-driver" practices.

- **Advocate for Transit-Supportive Urban Design**
  Continue efforts to raise the profile of transit as an important component of the land use planning and development process. Encourage land use and urban design more considerate of transit. Promote the advantage of a greater role for transit planning early in the design phase of Area Structure Plans and subdivision applications.

7.7 Administration, Staffing, and Our Employees

It is a common challenge for smaller or medium-sized transit agencies to establish and maintain a suitable compliment of staff not only to maintain the fleet but also to address the constantly growing levels of technology and software required to meet passenger demand for higher levels of service and to increase efficiency of transit operations. Small administrations are pressured to place expanded responsibilities on very limited administration staff, particularly in the area of technology and software.

St. Albert Transit is proud of its professional and dedicated administrative and fleet employees who, together with our highly trained team of drivers and supervisory staff, provide the highest level of service to the residents of St. Albert Transit. They continue to meet the growing challenges associated with the overall operation and support of the system while at the same time addressing the implementation of new services and technologies.

In order to continue to meet these challenges, and to maintain the high standards of safety and service that our customers have come to rely upon, it is necessary to ensure that a sufficient compliment of trained and professional personnel is retained. This will address two aims: 1) to devote sufficient human resources to the procurement, implementation, and maintenance of new technologies designed to increase efficiencies and improve customer service and, 2) to reduce the growing liability associated with intricate knowledge held by one person rather than a team.

The staffing recommendations identified in this section will position transit well to accommodate important technological advancements that are commonplace in the transit industry, such as scheduling, smartcard, fleet maintenance, and Handibus booking software. Proper staffing levels will serve to avoid the risk associated with deferment of investment decisions that can often result in the need for a significant, and perhaps disproportionate, investment of capital and operating resources in later years.

Recommendations:

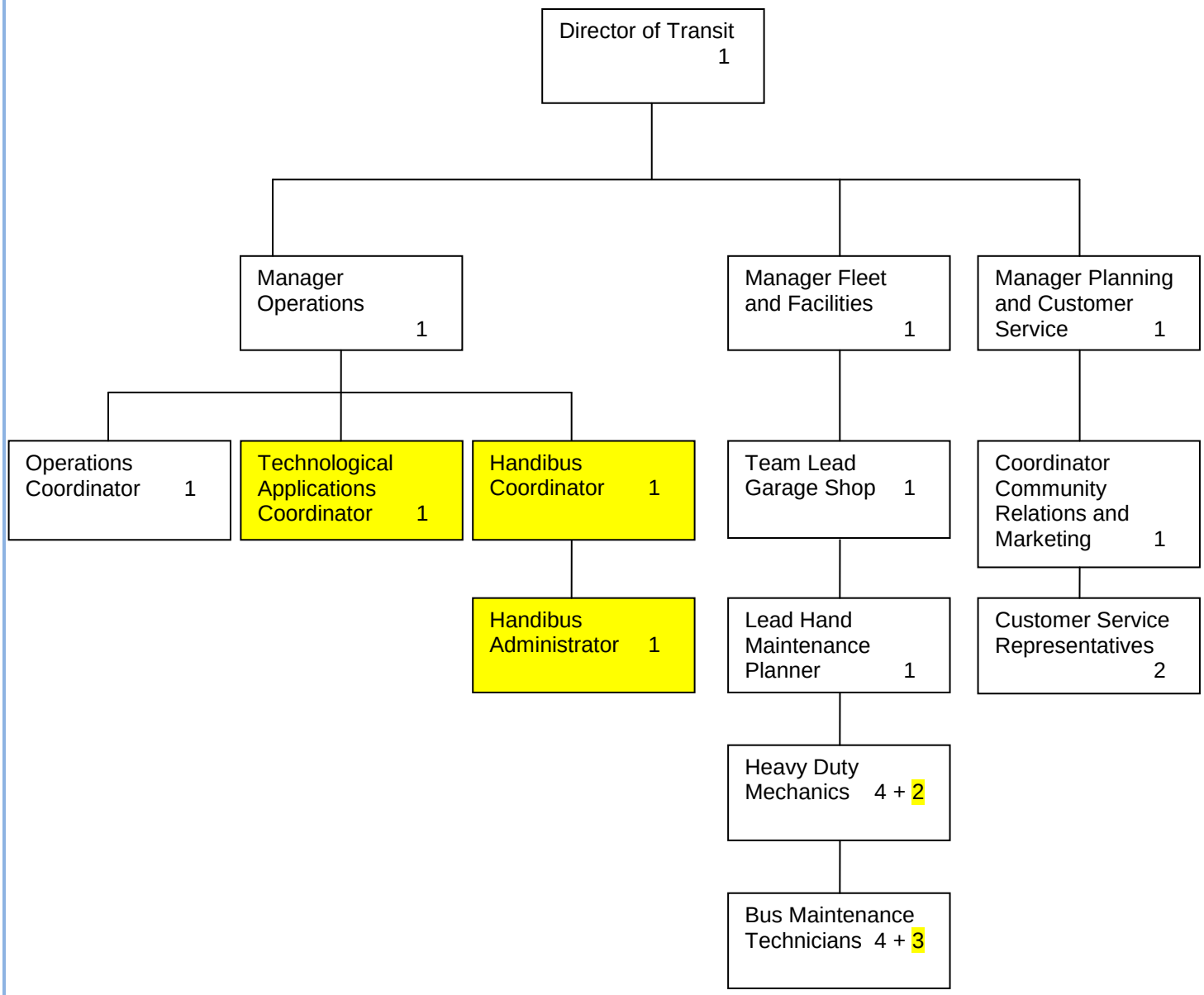
- **Technological Applications Coordinator**
  Pursue as priority the creation and fulfillment of position of Technological Applications Coordinator to support the implementation and maintenance of Transit's broad array of existing and future software applications. This technological expertise will be essential in maintaining the software and hardware required to achieve efficiencies in customer service, scheduling, vehicle maintenance, vehicle location, and Handibus administration and booking. This position would also be responsible for the planning and scheduling of special events and charters.

- **Handibus Administrator**
  Create and fulfill one additional Handibus customer service representative to administer daily operations including booking and scheduling, and to conduct ancillary administrative duties such as registration and contract administration.

- **Fleet Maintenance**
  Maintain sufficient fleet servicing staff of 0.25 FTE per transit vehicle. If vehicle requirements grow to the predicted 75 by the year 2027, this will require the addition of 5 fleet maintenance positions, including 2 certified mechanics and 3 utility service positions.

- **Handibus Coordinator**
  To address the anticipated growth in the Handibus Operation, it may be necessary to separate the operation under the leadership of a specific coordinator reporting to the manager of Operations. Coordinator would be responsible for overall operation including vehicle acquisition, software procurement and maintenance, service development, policy, and budget administration.

7.7.1 Recommended Organizational Chart



New Positions

Target date for new position – Handibus Coordinator = 2013
Target date for new position – Technological Applications Coordinator = 2014
Target date for new position – Handibus Administrator = 2015/2016
Target date for new position – Service Staff = Ongoing to reflect fleet expansion

7.8 Summary of Recommended Initiatives

The following tables summarize the project initiatives identified in this plan.

Transit Long Term Department Plan
Project Summary

*Specific number indicates that project costing has been estimated

Project	Extra Staffing Resources					
Transit Service	External St. Albert Department	Private Consultant	Service Hours	Capital*	Priority	Implementation
South Transit Centre and Park and Ride						
Associated Projects						
Local and commuter route restructure			↑	$150,000	HIGH	Fall 2014
Link time review			↑	$$$	HIGH	Fall 2013
Transit priority signals			↓	$1,000,000	MED	Fall 2014
Transfer connection review			Neutral		HIGH	Fall 2013
Limit stops in Edmonton			Neutral		MED	Ongoing
Reduce scheduling inconsistencies			↑	$$$	HIGH	Fall 2014
Safe						
Operator training			Neutral	$$	HIGH	Ongoing
Drive Cam			Neutral	$30,000	MED	Fall 2014
Accessible future bus stops			Neutral	$$	MED	Ongoing
Upgrade existing stops (accessibility)			Neutral	$$	HIGH	Ongoing
Video surveillance			Neutral	$$	MED	Fall 2014
Bus maintenance program			Neutral	$30,000	HIGH	Ongoing
Safe bus			Neutral	$	LOW	Ongoing
Transit Security Peace Officers			Neutral	$$$	LOW	To be determined
Efficient						
On-going investment in software			Neutral	$60,000	HIGH	Ongoing
Drive Cam			Neutral	$$	MED	Fall 2014
Affordable (See ``Fares`` below)						
Convenient						
Open payment/smart card			Neutral	$1,700,000	HIGH	To be determined
Web payment			Neutral	$$	MED	Summer 2012
Real time regional trip planner			Neutral	$	MED	To be determined
Wayside signs starting at Campbell Rd TC/P&R			Neutral	$$	MED	Fall 2014
Automated stop announcements			Neutral	$$	MED	Fall 2016
Expand into social media			Neutral	$	MED	Ongoing
Real time IVR with NextBus			Neutral	$$	HIGH	Spring 2014
Easily Navigated						
Reduce scheduling inconsistencies	See above		↑	$$$	HIGH	Fall 2014
Reduce route and scheduling deviations			↑	$$$	HIGH	Fall 2014
Replace Dial-A-Bus with fixed route			↑	$$$	MED	Fall 2013
Dial-A-Bus Text Message Booking			Neutral		MED	Fall 2013
Statutory Holiday Service			↑	$$$	MED	To be determined
Comfortable						
Heated bus shelter at SACE			Neutral	$$	HIGH	Fall 2014
Bus pads/benches			Neutral	$240,000	HIGH	Ongoing
Premium seating			Neutral	$	LOW	Ongoing
Connected to other alternative modes						
Advocate for transit in planning process			Neutral		HIGH	Ongoing
Bike racks at SACE			Neutral	$	LOW	Spring 2014
Cohesively linked across region						
Promote regional consistency			Neutral		MED	Ongoing
Integration with NAIT LRT			↓	Reduction	HIGH	Fall 2014
Support NW LRT extension			Neutral		HIGH	Ongoing
Represent City of St. Albert			Neutral		HIGH	Ongoing

Transit Long Term Department Plan
Project Summary

*Specific number indicates that project costing has been estimated

Project	Extra Staffing Resources					
	External St. Albert Department	Private Consultant	Service Hours	Capital*	Priority	Implementation
Promotion and Marketing						
Marketing Plan						
Automobile market			Neutral	$	MED	Summer 2013
School market			Neutral	$	MED	Summer 2013
Seniors market			Neutral	$	MED	Summer 2013
Employer program			Neutral	$	MED	Summer 2013
Wireless Internet on Buses			Neutral	$$$	MED	To be determined
Capital Investment and Facilities						
Garage			Neutral	$4,000,000	HIGH	Spring 2016
Bus replacement			Neutral	$31,905,000	HIGH	Ongoing
Growth buses			↑	$12,700,000	HIGH	Ongoing
Small buses			↑	$$$	LOW	Summer 2016
Fleet maintenance software			Neutral	$30,000	HIGH	Spring 2013
North TC/P&R			↑	$15,000,000	LOW	Fall 2019
Policies and Guidelines						
Service Standards						
Coverage			↑	$$$	MED	Spring 2013
Minimum ridership			↑	Reduction	MED	Spring 2013
Service introduction			↑	$$$	MED	Spring 2013
Cost recovery			Neutral	$$$	MED	Spring 2013
Loading			↓	Reduction	MED	Spring 2013
Fares						
LICO Fares			Neutral	$	MED	Fall 2014
Fare model			Neutral	$$	MED	Summer 2015
Revenue distribution with NAIT station			Neutral	$$	HIGH	Winter 2013
Web Based fare product purchase			Neutral	$$	MED	Summer 2014
Environmental Sustainablitiy						
ISO 14001			Neutral	$	MED	Ongoing
Smart Driver training			Neutral	$$	LOW	Ongoing
Advocate for transit-supportive urban design			Neutral		HIGH	Ongoing
Administration and Staffing						
Handibus Coordinator			Neutral	$$$	HIGH	Spring 2013
Technological Applications Coordinator			Neutral	$$$	HIGH	Spring 2014
Fleet maintenance staffing			Neutral	$$$	HIGH	Ongoing
Handibus administrator			Neutral	$$$	HIGH	Fall 2015/16

8.0 Summary and Conclusion

Transit requires a considerable commitment of funding resources to operate a modern well-maintained fleet and to maintain all of the technology and support functions necessary to ensure that the service meets the needs of the public and operates at maximum efficiency.

Nonetheless, across the province and the country, municipalities are seeing the benefits of transit as a cost-effective alternative to roadway construction and a more sustainable form of transportation that will serve future generations in an efficient and environmentally responsible fashion – and are making substantial investments toward it.

There are ~~a~~ numerous ways that municipalities can support transit and contribute to its long term viability and many of these are outlined in this report. The overriding goal of these measures is to raise the image and profile of transit from a basic or secondary transportation alternative to one of a real and relevant option that offers genuine advantages over the automobile in terms of cost, convenience, and overall experience. This will be the way to grow ridership and ensure sustainability.

Many municipalities are seeing additional opportunities to grow ridership by encouraging more sustainable forms of land use development that incorporate transit as a key community asset. Long-term policies promoting higher housing densities, more housing varieties, and ease of access are aimed at generating additional ridership that would have easily turned to the single occupancy vehicle.

And finally, transit can often take advantage of external circumstances to grow ridership, such as increased costs of automobile usage in terms of fuel, parking, and insurance. These factors can play a pivotal role in convincing automobile users to try transit. Maintaining these customers will depend on the reliability, ease, and comfort of the experience.

It is critical that the City of St. Albert, St. Albert City Council, and Transit Administration continue to move forward in terms of continuous improvement – to take all efforts necessary to maximize efficiencies while at the same time investing in key infrastructure and technology that our customers are demanding. But it is also important that measures taken are consistent with the goals and objectives of the community as outlined in policy documents such as the Municipal Growth Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. This Department Plan attempts to achieve this consistency and ensure a strong future for transit that will increase its appeal as a necessary and practical alternative to the automobile.

And finally, it is important that strategic plans of this nature recognize that spiraling advances in technology will continue to present both opportunities and challenges that will require revisiting of the plan on a regular basis. The public consultation process brought to the attention of administration a potential “game-changing” technology that could affect not only

transit but the entire transportation spectrum in the foreseeable future. This technology is the self-driving vehicle. Such technology is already at a significant level of development and its impact should not be underestimated. As technologies such as this continue to evolve play a greater role in society, it will be important to recognize the opportunities they present, and to attempt to foresee the impact on future capital and operating investments - to take full advantage of the opportunities to improve the community experience for the residents of St. Albert.

St. Albert Transit
Long Term Department Plan

Part 2

Handibus Services



9.0 INTRODUCTION

In 2011, St. Albert Transit commissioned IBI Group Consultants to review its current Handibus operation and recommend a process for growing the system to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled citizens of St. Albert who are unable to utilize conventional transit. The final report was presented to St. Albert City Council in May of 2012.

This Long Term Department Plan will focus on the recommendations outlined in that report. For a complete background of the existing Handibus operation, including short and long term challenges, options for addressing future demand, and capital and operating costs associated with each recommendation, please refer to the final Handibus Report.

9.1 PROFILE OF EXISTING HANDIBUS OPERATIONS

St. Albert Transit operates both a conventional bus system with regular buses on fixed routes and schedules, and Handibus, a specialized transit system for the disabled and mobility-challenged community. These two systems complement each other to ultimately provide an accessible public transit system for St. Albert.

Although St. Albert Transit's fleet of regular buses is 100% accessible, there is still a segment of the population, due to physical or cognitive disabilities, who are unable to access and make use of conventional transit. Handibus is designed to provide these individuals with a transportation option to meet some of their everyday travel requirements. All Handibus customers must be registered with St. Albert Transit prior to booking a trip.

Handibus provides advanced booking, door-to-door service from any location within St. Albert, to any destination within St. Albert city limits. Service Hours are Monday to Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (excluding statutory holidays). This service is provided by a City-owned wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Travel is possible to/from Edmonton during peak hours (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.) for the purposes of work or education. Transportation in a taxi contracted by the City.

All Handibus bookings are on a "first come, first served" basis, based on availability. Trips can be booked to a maximum of 4 weeks in advance as schedules allow. Trips are booked within a 20 minute scheduling window (to ensure flexibility in the system, passengers are requested to be ready 10 minutes before and up to 10 minutes after their scheduled pick up time).

10.0 Recommendations – A Way Forward

The following section presents a series of recommendations designed to:

- Preserve the integrity of Handibus as a valuable and important service for residents of St. Albert who are unable to use accessible conventional transit due to physical or cognitive disability;

- Recognize the goal of the Capital Region Board to provide the same level of regional accessibility as is desired for conventional transit – opening new doors of opportunity within the greater regional area ;

- Maximize the utility of current and future investments made by the City in accessible conventional transit and accompanying infrastructure;

- Provide flexible mobility options with a cost-effective mix of accessible shared-ride public transportation services;

- Achieve consistency with legislative guidelines of the Province's Human Rights Commission of *delivery of fair & equitable service*;

- Recognize and incorporate the spirit of industry legislative/regulatory requirements (i.e., Ontario's *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) & Integrated Accessibility Standards);

- Be fiscally responsible and accountable.

Handibus specialized transportation provides an invaluable service for the City's disabled community. Together with the goal of providing fully-accessible conventional transit, the City of St. Albert strives to maintain a parallel system that provides a similar level of service, with similar choice of local and regional destinations, for residents who are unable to utilize conventional transit. Specialized transportation is intended to impart to individuals with disabilities the respect and dignity of providing the same public transportation opportunities that are available to everyone else.

The recommendations for Handibus study address service expansion, additional (integrated) service planning, performance monitoring, contract preparations, and an amended eligibility and certification processes. Over time, these changes will require additional administrative/operational resources for the effective management of the Handibus program.

10.1 Service Standards for Specialized Transit

In an effort to provide a framework to guide the decision-making process involving Handibus, the following actions are recommended:

Recommendations:

- **Develop Service Standards for Specialized Transit**
  An established set of service standard guidelines will guide the development and implementation of service improvements and will allow for effective monitoring of passenger usage and efficient allocation of resources.

  The following are recommended service standards for the Handibus program.

Service Characteristic	Recommended Service Standard
Trip Coverage/Trip Denials An unaccommodated trip is when Handibus cannot schedule a trip within one hour before or one hour after the desired time of pick-up. A trip is considered unaccommodated if all vehicles are booked for the desired time window and the customer is unable to travel at another time.	The Handibus program shall accommodate 80% of all trips requested by eligible registrants (within recommended parameters including 24 hour advance booking requirement).
Span of Service	Handibus services will operate hours of service and days of the week comparable to the conventional service.
On-time Performance	All vehicles shall arrive at the pick-up points no earlier than 10 minutes before and no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, 95% of the time.
Maximum Travel Times	The maximum time any passenger is aboard a Handibus vehicle shall not exceed 1.5 times the travel time it would take to make a comparable trip on conventional transit, 100% of the time.
Service Utilization Standards	The vehicles dedicated to the Handibus service should achieve a minimum utilization or productivity level of 2.5 passengers per revenue hour on a daily basis on average.
Cost Recovery Targets	A minimum cost recovery of 8% based on a Handibus fare identical to the regular adult cash fare on the conventional fixed route services.

Door-to-Door Service	Passenger assistance at any trip origin or destination will be limited to inside the first set of accessible doors.

Regional Service

Service Characteristic	Recommended Service Standard
Trip Coverage/Trip Denials An unaccommodated trip is when Handibus cannot schedule a trip within one hour before or one hour after the desired time of pick-up. A trip is denied if pick-up cannot be accommodated within this time window or if the customer does not have the flexibility to travel at another time.	The Handibus program shall accommodate 80% of all trips requested by eligible registrants (within recommended parameters including 24 hour advance booking requirement). Handibus shall provide service within 400 meters from conventional StAT bus stops.
Span of Service	Handibus services will operate hours of service and days of the week comparable to the conventional service.
On-time Performance	All vehicles shall arrive at the pick-up points no earlier than 10 minutes before and no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, 95% of the time.
Maximum Travel Times	The maximum time any passenger is aboard a Handibus vehicle shall be between 1 and 2 times the travel time it would take to make a comparable trip on conventional transit, 100% of the time.
Service Utilization Standards	The vehicles dedicated to the Handibus service should achieve a minimum utilization or productivity level of 2 passengers per revenue hour on a daily basis on average.
Cost Recovery Targets	A minimum cost recovery of 8% based on a Handibus fare identical to the adult cash fare charged for conventional fixed route services.
Door-to-Door Service	Passenger assistance at any trip origin or destination will be limited to inside the first set of accessible doors.

10.2 Application Screening

In order to maximize the benefit of resources allocated to specialized transit , St. Albert Handibus limits access to its service to people identified as eligible through its application and screening process. Along with persons unable to use conventional transit due to physical limitations, it is also important to respect the transportation needs of persons with cognitive disabilities or mental illnesses where functional limitations may be less straightforward to assess. The recommended application process reflects the requirements of those with a non-physical functional limitation and recognizes the transit trip cycle of getting to a bus, waiting for a bus, boarding a bus, and being able to function independently in the community. Handibus registration is extended to any resident if there is any part of the conventional transportation system which cannot be used or navigated due to a functional disability.

Recommendation:

- **Introduce More Stringent Application Screening**
  The Handibus eligibility and certification process provides the initial opportunity to ensure that specialized transit is provided to those who cannot use accessible conventional transit. Persons with disabilities who can make use conventional Service should be directed to do so – at least for portions of the year.

  Implement the use of a more detailed application form, grandfathering in existing registrants. A copy of the recommended form is included in the Handibus Report. If additional information is required about the applicant's disability and how if affects his or her use of St. Albert Transit's accessible fixed route transit services, an applicant may be requested to attend an in-person interview.

  Recognizing the broad range of disabilities, including how a person's functional disability may affect their ability to use conventional transit services, the amended application form reflects three categories of specialized service:

Category I:	Persons unable to board, ride or disembark independently from a conventional or community bus vehicle, even if accessible.
Category II:	Persons with a temporary disability.

Category III:	Persons whose specific disability, or disability plus environmental barriers (e.g. distance, terrain, weather), prevents them from getting to the boarding location or from the disembarking location of a conventional transit vehicle.

10.3 Booking and Scheduling

St. Albert Transit has two options available to modernize and grow its trip booking capabilities and increase trip sharing efficiencies. One is to administer this activity in-house by purchasing appropriate software and allocating the necessary staffing compliment to operate it. The second is to enter into a third-party contract with Edmonton Disabled Adults Transportation System (DATS) which already operates such systems and is capable of accommodating St. Albert's booking and scheduling requirements.

The decision on which option to pursue is typically driven by trip volumes. Software procurement can total approximately $65,000. Ongoing expenses include an annual licensing fee of approximately $6,500 and $75,000 per year for staffing (1.5 FTE). Strathcona County, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and Lethbridge have all chosen to manage their own scheduling system functions.

A third party contract with DATS will cost, in 2012 figures, $4.25 per booking. At 2011 Handibus trip volumes, this cost would amount to $33,000. The point at which an in-house system is more cost effective is reached at approximately 16,000 bookings. According to the estimates of the Handibus review, St. Albert's operation is expected to reach this figure by 2017 to 2018.

Recommendation:

- **Booking and Scheduling**
  To address Handibus's booking and scheduling requirements, and to maximize the usage and efficiency of the Handibus fleet, St. Albert Transit should enter into a third party contract with DATS to provide this service. At the same time, St. Albert Transit Administration should begin the process of assessing and acquiring an appropriate in-house software package, and ensuring sufficient staffing resources to operate it. The in-house system should be operational for when demand is expected to exceed 16,000 trips per year, expected in 2017 or 2018.

10.4 Regional Service to Edmonton

Regional service into Edmonton remains the most frequently identified improvement to Handibus service requested by clients and potential clients. The Handibus review study identified several scenarios and recommended a phased in route-based approach that, in the end, would provide a service roughly equivalent to the conventional service in terms of operating hours and areas served.

Recommendation:

- **Regional Service into Edmonton**

  Phase 1 (initial regional service) - Introduce off peak, daily service to select key destinations in Edmonton (eg. Glenrose, Royal Alex, U of A, etc.) in a fashion similar to a prescribed fixed route. Service would operate during midday period between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. using an existing StAT vehicle. An addition to the fleet would not be required in this phase. Rides will be booked and scheduled by Edmonton DATS. Handibus would continue to provide the limited non-dedicated peak hour taxi service that it presently does.

  Phase 2 (one year later) - Introduce daily scheduled peak hour Handibus service serving comparable destinations as conventional transit (Downtown and University areas) and incorporate stops at select medical facilities including the Glenrose and Royal Alex. Use a StAT owned fleet but rides will be booked and scheduled by Edmonton DATS. Migrate current non-dedicated taxi customers to Handibus service.

  Phase 3 (on-going) - Expand the regional service into Edmonton by introducing additional routes and areas of coverage on an incremental basis as demand increases and resources permit.

10.5 Integration with regional partners DATS and Strathcona's SCAT to standardize eligibility criteria and facilitate trip transfers.

There exists the potential to offer Handibus clients an almost limitless choice of destinations in the Metro Edmonton area if a reciprocal arrangement can be made with the regional accessible-transit partners, particularly DATS, to facilitate transfers between the two systems.

Recommendation:

- **Standardized Eligibility and Transfer Facilitation with Regional Partners**

Initiate discussions with officials at DATS and SCAT to address reciprocal arrangements for eligibility and the coordination of trip transfers. Such discussions may also contribute to the wider consideration of regional transit integration at the Capital Region board level.

10.6 Use of Supplemental Taxis

Handibus service expansion specifically during low-demand times of day or lower trip density areas 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 City's taxi industry and provide the ability of the industry to make a possible business case for the procurement of accessible taxis. This would be of benefit to the entire community whether used in a Handibus 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. StAT will need to develop contract documents and monitor the performance of supplemental taxi service requiring additional staff resources.

Recommendations:

- **To pursue the option of supplemental taxi service St. Albert transit officials will enter into discussion with local or regional taxi companies to explore the level of interest in the provision of supplemental service for Handibus.**

- **Contract with taxi company**
  City of St. Albert Administration draft a procurement instrument and performance-based contract for the use of supplemental taxis. The contract documents will address qualitative considerations of driver training, sensitivity training, vehicle quality, performance monitoring, reporting, need for criminal record checks, and defined channels of communications.

10.7 Hours of Operation

It is the goal of this recommendation to make the hours of availability of Handibus equitable to conventional transit service. Handibus service shall be available to customers whose trip origin and destination are within the same catchment area as fixed route transit services. The "same catchment area" would reflect route by route considerations with Handibus operating within 400m of that route. For example, if there is no evening service on a specific conventional transit route, then Handibus need not provide evening service in an area up to 400m of that route alignment.

Recommendation:

- **Extend periods and days of operation**

As with the expansion of regional service, it is recommended that St. Albert Transit adopt a phased-in approach to the implementation of additional periods and days of operation. Phase 1 will involve expansion of hours and days of the local operation. This will have Handibus hours extended to operate from 5:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. weekdays, 6:15 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. on Saturdays and 8:45 a.m. to 7:45 p.m. on Sundays. This represents a 74 hour per week increase in service and a considerable investment of financial resources.

Considerable cost savings could be realized if evening and weekend service could be accommodated through supplemental taxi service provided through contract with a private provider. Detailed costing estimates can be found in the Handibus Review report attached to this document.

Regional service would be addressed in an incremental fashion as described earlier in this report under the recommendations for regional expansion of service.

10.8 Fare Policy

In order to be equitable with conventional transit service, Handibus cash fares shall be the same as those charged on conventional transit.

Recommendation:

- **Fare policy**

It is recommended that the cash fare for a one-way Handibus trip shall be the same as that charged on conventional transit.

10.9 Encourage use of Conventional Transit

Often, there is a perception that the conventional transit system is inaccessible when in fact the reality is that if one can access a bus stop, then he or she has complete access to the conventional system. It is recognized, however, that conventional transit is unable to provide to-the-door service at either the origin or destination, and that walking distances can be very challenging for some.

When possible, Handibus users should be encouraged to make use of conventional transit (which is, in the case of St. Albert Transit 100% wheelchair accessible) for some trips, or for portions of trips. This can be done by customer service representatives at the time of trip booking. The agent could identify opportunities to make use of regular transit if it is faster and cheaper to use for particular trips, or times of day, or even favourable times of the year when ground conditions are less risky.

Recommendations:

- **Encourage use of conventional transit**
  St. Albert Transit should take measures to encourage the voluntary use of accessible conventional transit for those Handibus registrants able to do so - possibly for some trips, some of the time - through the use of referral and information services relating to travel training and trip planning.

- **Allow free use of conventional transit**
  Investigate the possibility of allowing Handibus registrants to travel free of charge on regular conventional transit. This recommendation is contingent on the introduction of more stringent application process with more detailed and specific eligibility criteria.

10.10 Handibus Vehicle Capacity



The size and wheelchair/ambulatory configuration of current Handibus vehicles presents challenges in transporting more people as well as in the loading and off- loading of passengers. Low floor specialized transit buses (accessed using a ramp rather than a lift) enable much faster loading and off-loading and are reportedly preferred by passengers.



Recommendation:

- **Higher capacity vehicles**
  Future Handibus vehicle purchases should be larger capacity, low-floor purpose-built buses for the replacement and expansion of the current Handibus fleet.

10.11 Integrated Service Planning

Recommendation:

- St. Albert undertake additional service planning to investigate the possibility of a route deviation component for Dial-a-bus services to serve the demand for Handibus for those hours of the day or days of the week (i.e., evenings and weekends) when a Handibus cannot attain 70 percent of targeted productivity (as measured by trips per hour). Such service planning study may also consider the use of shared-ride supplemental taxis to meet these expanded hours of service.

10.12 Collaboration with the Community and Province

Because of the critical role played by Alberta Health and by the Alberta Government in establishing where and when certain medical procedures are conducted, it may prove beneficial to enter into discussions, independently and in conjunction with the Capital Region Board, regarding coordination of medical services. Perhaps there is opportunity to working with key medical facilities to set up block appointments for St. Albert residents that would enable Handibus to meet greater number of client obligations with each bus trip. Secondly, the impact of the aging population and growing size will continue to create very difficult financial challenges for the operating municipality. As such, it is important to remain in communication with Provincial authorities, again independently, through the Capital Region Board, and in cooperation with other service-providing municipalities, to explore and promote the need for cost- sharing initiatives that would address the financial impact on individual cities.

Recommendation:

- **Collaboration with Alberta Health and Provincial Government**

Initiate discussions with key medical procedure-providing facilities to explore opportunities for trip efficiencies and reliability. It is in the best interests of the facility to accommodate such practices as block appointments if they reduce incidents of no-shows.

Advocate as a municipality, and in conjunction with the Capital Region Board and other service-providing agencies, for provincial government involvement in cost-sharing initiatives to reduce the financial burden facing the service providers.

10.13 Community Mobility Manager

The City of St. Albert has an opportunity to embrace the concept of mobility management. A Mobility Manager (Transportation Coordinator), employed outside of the transit agency, as concurred by Dr. Dobbs' presentation in February 2012, would be tasked with integrating and coordinating transportation services offered not only by Handibus, but by a family of service providers - public, private for-profit, private non-profit, and volunteer. The Mobility Manager's function resembles that of a travel agency by attempting to maximize transportation options for the senior and disabled communities (say for example community outings and recreational trips) while at the same time attempting to both relieve excessive demand for Handibus and assisting Handibus to achieve a higher proportion of shared rides. Such a facilitator would bring a more holistic perspective to transportation service delivery throughout the service area and formalize contacts with community based agencies and organizations for the provision of a wider variety of travel opportunities.

It is important to recognize that mobility management is an evolutionary process requiring the building of relationships with potential community transportation partners. Perhaps an initial strategy would include building on the current relationship with the Seniors Working Group and possibly expanding such a discussion group to include other local agencies and organizations whose client populations require transportation. The intent of generating on-going dialogue is to gauge interest in the sharing of resources. This information could also be utilized by St. Albert Transit staff to advise Handibus customers of other transportation resources available in the City.

10.14 Summary of Recommended Handibus Initiatives

The following table summarizes the project initiatives identified in this section of the plan. Detailed descriptions and explanations of the projects follow.

Transit Long Term Department Plan
Handibus Project Summary

*Specific number indicates that project costing has been estimated

Handibus Service	Project	Extra Staffing Resources: External St. Albert Department	Extra Staffing Resources: Private Consultant	Service Hours	Capital	Priority	Implementation
Service and Eligibility							
	Handibus Service Standards			↑	$$$	HIGH	Spring 2014
	Stringent application screening			↓	$	HIGH	Spring 2014
	Booking and Scheduling			↑	$$$	HIGH	Spring 2014
	Regional Service Phase 1			↑	$222,000	HIGH	Fall 2013
	Regional Service Phase 2			↑	$403,000	HIGH	Fall 2014
	Regional Service Phase 3			↑	$345,000	HIGH	Fall 2015
	Regional Standardization			Neutral	$$	MED	Spring 2014
	Supplemental Taxi usage			↓	$$	MED	Spring 2014
	Contract with taxi company			↓	$$	MED	Spring 2014
Service Equity (with conventional transit)							
	Day and period extensions			↑	$$$	HIGH	Spring 2014
	Fare Policy			Neutral	$	HIGH	Spring 2013
	Encourage use of conventional transit			Neutral	$	HIGH	On-going
	Allow free use of conventional transit			Neutral	$	HIGH	Spring 2014
Other							
	Vehicles			Neutral	$$$	HIGH	Spring 2014
	Collaboration with Alberta Health			↓		MED	Spring 2014
	Community Mobility Manager			Neutral	$	LOW	Spring 2015

11.0 Handibus Specialized Transit 5-Year Plan

Table 11A provides a Handibus 5-year financial plan reflecting projections for each the years 2012 through 2016. Cost projections for the period of this Long Term Plan include two additional Handibus vehicles in 2018 to accommodate ridership growth.

The trip or travel demand estimates and corresponding financials reflect the recommended approach. Notable estimates and characteristics of the 5-year plan include:

- Passenger trips will increase by over 80 percent from 7,810 to 14,100 trips in 2016. The 2016 figure includes 3,400 regional/Edmonton trips.
- Net operating costs will increase by 136 percent. This includes:
    - the introduction of limited regularly scheduled Handibus service to Edmonton;
    - expanded Handibus hours of service;
    - the introduction of local weekend service;
    - the contracting for trip booking and scheduling services (including the use of automated scheduling software) and;
    - expanded StAT administration.
- The net cost per capita will increase from $3.44 to $7.81 or 127 percent.

Exhibit 11A: Handibus 5-Year Financial Plan

Assumes Integration of Transit and Specialized Transit Services and Implementation of Short Term Specialized Transit Service Plan 2012-2016

	Estimated Actual	Projections				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
City Population	61,000	61,800	62,730	63,670	64,080	64,500
Handibus Registrants	305	325	350	370	390	410
In-Service Vehicles (local)	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.5
In-Service Vehicles (Regional/Edmonton)			0.8	1.5	1.5	1.5
Total In-Service Vehicles	2.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Spare Vehicles	1	1	1	1	1	1
Revenue Vehicle Hours (Local)	3,280	3,280	3,280	3,280	3,540	3,540
Revenue Vehicle Hours (Regional/Edmonton)			625	1,255	1,255	1,255
Total Revenue Hours	3,280	3,280	3,905	4,535	4,795	4,795
Passenger Trips	7,810	7,820	10,215	12,000	13,100	14,100
Local	6,792	6,800	8,200	8,400	9,700	10,700
Passengers/Hour	2.07	2.07	2.50	2.56	2.74	3.02
Regional/Edmonton	1,018	1,020	2,015	3,600	3,400	3,400
Passengers/Hour			2.40*	2.40*	2.50	2.50
Passenger Revenue	$39,675	$39,700	$41,580	$46,800	$49,500	$52,500
Average Fare	$5.08	$5.08	$4.07	$3.90	$3.78	$3.72
Administrative Costs	$51,800	$51,800	$85,000	$90,000	$90,000	$90,000
3rd Party Trip Booking/Scheduling Contract			$41,240	$51,000	$55,675	$59,925
Supplemental Taxi Contract	$20,360	$20,360	$20,360	$20,360	$81,390	$142,415
Operations/Service Delivery						
Local	$180,400	$180,400	$180,400	$180,400	$187,550	$194,700
Regional/Edmonton			$34,510	$69,025	$69,025	$69,025
Total Operating Cost	$252,560	$ 252,560	$361,510	$410,785	$ 483,640	$556,065
Net Operating Cost (combined local & regional)	$212,885	$ 212,860	$319,930	$363,985	$ 434,140	$503,565
Net Cost/Passenger	$27.26	$27.22	$31.32	$30.33	$33.14	$35.71
Net Cost/Capita	$3.49	$3.44	$5.10	$5.72	$6.77	$7.81
Revenue/Cost	0.16	0.16	0.12	0.11	0.10	0.09
Capital Expenditures						
vehicle expansion (increased wheelchair capacity)				$200,000		

* excludes trips by non-dedicated taxi service

Appendix A – Transit Services Policy

Appendix B - Capital Investment Strategy

Appendix C – Summary of Feedback on the Transit Long Term Department Plan

St. Albert Transit
Long Term Department Plan

Appendix A

Transit Services Policy

C-TS-01

City of St. Albert
CITY COUNCIL POLICY

Transit Services

AUTHORITY	APPROVED	Res. No.	mm dd	REVISED	Res. No.	mm dd
City Council		C95-2006	02 13			

PURPOSE

The St. Albert Transit Long Term Department Plan shall guide the planning and delivery of transit services.

POLICY

Overarching Principle

It is the policy of the City of St. Albert to promote and encourage the use of St. Albert Transit.

Service Principles

Transit services in St. Albert will be designed to provide optimal, affordable service for its customers, with consideration of geographical coverage, minimum transfers and minimum waiting times between transfers, minimum travel times, ease of customers' understanding, minimum duplication of services and minimum vehicle requirements so as to allow for travel within St. Albert and to key destinations in Edmonton (Downtown, U of A, NAIT, MacEwan).

Core Service Standards

"Core Service" shall mean the minimum of service that is provided by policy throughout the community, taking into consideration factors other than ridership or economics. This core service is the "universal" service that provides access and mobility to the residents of the community. Core service is expressed in terms of coverage, hours of service, frequency of service, and additional demand-driven service.

1. Coverage	- 400 m to 90% of all residences - 250 m to medium and high density residential developments and institutional land uses - 150 m to major seniors' residences and activity centres
2. Hours	<u>Weekdays</u> Arrive Downtown Edmonton 6:30 am — Depart Downtown 12:15 am Arrive U of A 6:45 am — Depart U of A 10:15 pm

	Saturday Arrive Downtown 7:45 am Depart Downtown 12:15 am Sunday Arrive Downtown 11:15 am Depart Downtown 6:15 pm Local service will support these commuter trips.
3. Frequency	Local Service: - 30 minute frequency during Weekday Peak Periods - 60 minute frequency during all other Weekday Periods and Weekends Downtown Edmonton Service: - 30 minute frequency during Weekday Peak Periods - 60 minute frequency during all other Weekday Periods and Weekends U of A, NAIT, MacEwan Service: - 30 minute frequency during Weekday Peak Periods - 60 minute frequency during all other Weekday Periods during regular services hours
4. Demand-Drive Services	Additional coverage, service hours, or service frequencies to the standards mentioned above will be provided subject to meeting and sustaining the minimum required performance target of 10 rides/Service Hour.

Schedule Design Standards

1. Service Hours	Demand Drive Services – Additional service earlier or later than the core times will be provided subject to meeting the required performance target of 10 rides/Service Hour.
2. Service Frequency	Demand Drive Service – Additional more frequent service will be provided beyond the core frequency subject to meeting and sustaining the required performance target of 10 rides/Service Hour.
3. Maximum Trip Time	Service to Edmonton: Limited stop and express services will be used but trip times are subject to traffic conditions. Local Feeder Routes (from VTS to destination in St. Albert): - 20 minutes during Weekday Peak Periods - 30 minutes at all other time for 80% of riders
4. Vehicle Loading	Maximum of 100% seated capacity for trips longer than 25 minutes Maximum of 115% seated capacity for trips less than 25 minutes Maximum of 150% seated capacity for local trips

5.	Staging of Service in Developing Areas	Peak period service introduced 2 years after the new subdivision is opened or when it is 30% complete. Full day service when 60% complete. Complete service when the area is 75% complete.

Route Design Standards

1.	Service Coverage	- Core service - 600 m from industrial land
2.	Transfer Limitation	Service designed to minimize transfers between buses and to minimize wait time between transfers.
3.	Bus Stop Requirements	Transit Zones (Stops) will be accessible for customers in wheelchairs or other mobility devices, installed in a safe location, and spaced to conform with the walking distance service standard.
4.	New or Extended Services	Trial period = minimum of 12 months. During the 12 months, service will be monitored and the performance reviewed based on specific ridership criteria (10 rides/Service Hour).

Service Delivery Standards

1.	Service Reliability	All scheduled buses will go into service at all times "on time". No bus shall leave earlier than its designated departure. At least 90% of the buses system-wide shall be "on time" if they are no more than 3 minutes late (all trips) and 1 minute early (on pick up trips only) of their designated schedules.

Passenger Amenity and Safety Standards

1.	Shelter Warrants	Transit passenger shelters will be provided at all transit exchanges, all major transfer locations, high usage transit zones, and at locations open to the elements.
2.	Accident Rate per Million KM	System-wide service will strive to target an accident rate of no more than 15.5 vehicle accidents per one million kilometers.
3.	Vehicle and Maintenance Considerations	All new buses purchased by St. Albert Transit will be fully accessible and will be purchased and maintained such that their aesthetic appeal will encourage public use. Also, consideration will be given to providing the size of vehicle appropriate for the level of demand, subject to operational efficiencies.

Definitions of Economic and Productivity Performance Measurement

1. "Revenue to Direct Operating Cost Ratio" shall mean the national (CUTA) measure that describes the revenue recovery rate of the system. It monitors the ability to strike a balance between keeping the transit service affordable and having users cover a fair portion of the direct operating cost.

2. "Revenue to Total (capital and operating) Cost Ratio" shall mean the same as above but also includes all capital costs. Thus, all costs to the community are considered.

3. "Rides per Capita" shall mean measuring community support for transit and monitors the number of individuals directly benefiting from the service. It is a benchmark to compare St. Albert Transit to other transit systems.

4. "Service Hours per Capita" shall mean monitoring the amount of service provided to the community. It is a benchmark to compare St. Albert Transit to other transit systems.

5. "Customer Satisfaction" shall mean monitoring St. Albert Transit user's perception of the overall service performance. It will be measure through market research, by collecting customer's ratings of overall satisfaction with St. Albert Transit services.

6. "Cost per Kilometre" shall mean measuring cost-effectiveness. It evaluates how efficiently St. Albert Transit can provide service on a per km basis, irrespective of where the service is going or how much it is utilized.

7. "Cost per Passenger" shall mean measuring cost-effectiveness. It evaluates how efficiently St. Albert Transit can provide service on a per passenger basis, irrespective of where the service is going or how much it is utilized.

8. "Net Cost per Passenger" shall mean the same as above but also includes consideration of passenger revenue.

9. "Cost per Service Hour" shall mean measuring cost-effectiveness. It evaluates how efficiently St. Albert Transit can provide service on a per service hour basis, irrespective of where the service is going or how much it is utilized.

Fare Strategy Principles

1. All persons traveling on St. Albert Transit shall pay a fare reflective of the product offered.

2. Concession to (reductions from) regular fares will aim to be consistent and have a clear rationale and justification.

3. Total transit revenues should recover in the range of 40% to 60% of direct operating costs.

4. The cost to ride transit should acknowledge the cost of providing the service and change accordingly.

5. The cost to ride transit shall consider and reflect the general rate change in the all items consumer price index.

6. Committed riders shall be rewarded with a lower cost per ride (discount for bulk buy approach).

7. The cost for a ride within St. Albert should be similar to that of other small municipalities in Alberta.

8. The cost for a ride to/from Edmonton should reflect the longer distance (and cost).

    a. The cost of a cash ride to/from Edmonton should reflect the longer distance (and cost) and be in the order of at least twice the St. Albert local or ETS fare.

    b. The cost of a monthly adult pass for travel to/from Edmonton should reflect the longer distance (and cost) and be in the order 50% higher than a local pass and/or in the order of 25% higher than ETS.

9. It is accepted that there is a negative elasticity to fare increases.

10. Council of the City of St. Albert will establish transit fares on an annual basis considering and balancing the adopted principles.

Capital Funding

Capital funding for transit services shall be addressed through the Ten-Year Capital Plan.

Cross References: City of St. Albert Transit Long Term Department Plan 2005-2020

St. Albert Transit
Long Term Department Plan

Appendix B

Capital Investment Strategy

Long Term Department Plan 15 Year Capital Projection 2013 - 2027

Priority	Project Description	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total
1.1	Transit Replacement 2012- 2022	600,000	1,350,000	2,250,000	340,000			3,650,000		640,000	400,000		6,460,000	5,850,000	400,000	8,430,000	**30,370,000**
1.2	Bus Components (transmission and engine replacement)	45,000		120,000	140,000	105,000	555,000	130,000		370,000	75,000	20,000	40,000	195,000	220,000	140,000	**2,155,000**
1.3	Transit Growth Bus Purchases 2013- 2022		400,000	3,260,000	3,090,000	780,000	400,000		710,000		900,000		1,460,000		730,000	450,000	**12,180,000**
2	**Campbell Road Transit Station and P&R Land & Const**	3,000,000	12,000,000	15,000,000													**27,000,000**
3	Garage Expansion**				5,000,000												**5,000,000**
4	Fleet Management System softw are	35,000															**35,000**
5	Fuel Management System	60,000															**60,000**
6	Smart Card Fare Collection System			1,700,000													**1,700,000**
7	Transit Priority Pre-emption				150,000		150,000		150,000								**450,000**
8	Heated Shelter SACE		50,000														
9	Transit Waiting Shelters				60,000			60,000				60,000					**180,000**
10	Technological Upgrades				30,000			30,000			30,000			30,000			**120,000**
11	On-board Video Surveillance***	145,000															**145,000**
12	North Transit Centre and Park & Ride - Land & Construct		800,000		500,000	1,500,000	6,000,000	7,000,000									**15,800,000**
	Total	**3,885,000**	**14,600,000**	**22,330,000**	**9,310,000**	**2,385,000**	**7,105,000**	**10,870,000**	**860,000**	**1,010,000**	**1,405,000**	**80,000**	**7,960,000**	**6,075,000**	**1,350,000**	**9,020,000**	**95,195,000**

***Campbell Rd Transit Station and Park & Ride Land & Construct** **$20,000,000 refundable from Provincial Green Trip Program**

**Previously Proposed Satellite Garage - Design & Construct	650,000	1,000,000	9,000,000	

*** $105,000 of this total has beeen previously identified

Fleet Purchase Details

Replacement Purchases		Transmission and Engine Replacemen		New Growth Buses	
2013	3 handibuses	2013	3 trans, 0 eng	2013	
2014	3 regular buses	2014	0 trans, 0 eng	2014	2 Handibuses
2015	5 regular buses	2015	0 trans, 6 eng	2015	2 artic buses, 4 regular buses
2016	1 tow truck, 1 sw eeper, 1 hoist	2016	4 trans, 4 eng	2016	3 artic buses, 2 regular buses
2017		2017	3 trans, 3 eng	2017	3 community buses
2018		2018	13 trans, 18 eng	2018	2 Handibuses
2019	5 artic buses	2019	6 trans, 2 eng	2019	
2020		2020	0 trans, 0 eng	2020	1 regular bus, 1 community bus
2021	3 handibuses, 1 hoist	2021	10 trans, 11 eng	2021	
2022	2 handibuses	2022	5 trans, 0 eng	2022	2 regular buses
2023		2023	0 trans, 1 eng	2023	
2024	7 artic buses, 3 regular buses	2024	0 trans, 2 eng	2024	2 artic buses
2025	13 regular buses	2025	5 trans, 6 eng	2025	
2026	2 Handibuses	2026	8 trans, 5 eng	2026	1 artic bus
2027	6 artic buses, 9 regular buses	2027	4 trans, 4 eng	2027	1 regular bus

Articulated Bus = $730,000
Regular 12m Bus = $450,000
Community Bus (10m) = $260,000
Handibus = $200,000
Tow Truck = $250,000
Sw eeper = $50,000
Hoist = $40,000
Engine Replacement = $20,000
Transmission Replacement = $15,000

***Updated January 17, 2013

City of St. Albert Cultivate Life

St. Albert Transit
Long Term Department Plan

Appendix C

Summary of Feedback on the Transit Long Term Department Plan

Transit Long Term Department Plan
Public Input Phase
Feedback Summarization

The yellow shading indicates comments which have been addressed in the report, either specifically, or as part of a broader initiative.

Council

City Council members provided a wide variety of comments ranging from typographical and grammatical considerations to a number specific suggestions listed below:

- Examine the use of variable cost analysis to determine if 60% cost recovery is even possible;
- Introduce of quarterly scorecards reporting of key performance indicators ;
- Emphasize the positive aspects of the great service we provide;
- Focus was the long term sustainability of transit – that although StAT operates a high quality service, it is important to identify and report on performance indicators which show trends in the efficiency and effectiveness of transit service. In order to address questions regarding empty buses, need for service, cost recovery rate, etc. study, either internally or externally with a consultant, is needed to ensure Transit is being as efficient as possible to insure its long term sustainability. The long term plan should address efficiency measures such as rides per capita, cost per capita, ridership, boardings per hour to make this monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness possible;
- Supports the plan's focus a simpler and more effective local route network;
- Examine the possibility of introducing High Occupancy Vehicle lanes to St. Albert Trail;
- Ensure that planning for t transit service is an integral component of the planning for the new employment lands;
- Explore the idea of providing free wireless internet access on our vehicles.

Comments received from Open House session held December 4, 2012 at St. Albert Place.

Respondant

- Supports expansion of Handibus service;
- Likes Dial-bus and does not favor phasing it out. Wants it extended 1 to 2 hours on Sundays;
- Wants to see some level of service on statutory holidays. This would be helpful for wheel chair bound people who need to travel on important holidays;
- Believes fares should reflect the cost of operation and account for 40 to 60% of those costs;
- Wants full service for Oakmont [editorial note: I believe the customer is referring to the lack of service on Oak Vista Drive. StAT has prepared an initial design to introduce service on this roadway.]

Respondant -

- Asks StAT to maintain some level of bus service in the area of Village Transit Station once the new park and ride is constructed.

Respondant

- (Mostly verbal exchange) Wants to see improvements in local route network to provide better inter-neighbourhood service.
- More specifically, suggests changes to A14 Walmart to Village Transit Station. Make schedule more route and schedule more consistent and utilize roads parallel to St. Albert Trail.

Respondant

- Requests the introduction of a yearly student bus pass (has grade-school child attending school in Edmonton) rather than monthly.

Respondant

- Supports South Park and Ride. Believes it will reduce traffic on main roads and increase ridership dramatically.
- Believes Dial-a-Bus is antiquated.
- South and North Park and Ride is key to developing new ridership, and Smartcard will ease payment.
- Needs to be a realized convenience for ridership to increase. Making it easier to catch a bus at more intervals with less wait period will be of huge benefit.
- Dial-a-Bus should utilize texting to confirm approximate time of pick-up. The ten minute window to call the driver is not convenient. Using text allows the rider to text anytime to the driver and allows the driver to text back when convenient.

Input received via e-mail

To maintain the confidentiality of the sender, e-mail comments contained in this summary are labelled as Customer numbers. Some editing has been done to remove specific references to personal information.

Customer #1

- St. Albert needs a route to WEM weekends mornings and evening. Our son works...on Sat, and Sunday mornings he can't get to work on time (8 AM) due to St. Albert bus schedules. He runs into the same problems at night.

- In the past we tried signing up a teenage child to a summer camp at NAIT (west end campus) and when we learned that it would take over an hour travel time and $10./day fee. We dropped the course.

- Student passes: Our son needs a year-round student pass because he is doing an apprenticeship program which runs throughout the year including the summer months, however your student rates are only available during the months of Sept-June. We feel this needs to be changed.

  Thanks, I hope this input is helpful.

- One last wish is for the eventual construction of an LRT extension to St. Albert.

Customer #2

- I heard about the comment input from the public about the St.Albert Transit! I went over the proposed form that seems to be online, which is really neat to see about all the things that are being spoken about. What I'm not so sure about is one of the statements about the times for when a bus goes to downtown Edmonton at 6:30am, and last one reaches there at about 12:15am. Does that mean the St.Albert commuting routes to the St. Albert Mall station is extended as well? Longer bus times would be really useful for a lot of people. My friends and I are always trying to find ways to get around town after work since some of us can't drive.
- Since the buses often end at 6:50 for the commute route I take, it's not helpful for trying to head home since I'm done work at 7. I may have misunderstood the form though about the bus times since it did say something about the local commutes as well!

Customer #3

- I think it is a good system, using the commuter route 209. However, I have some remarks in regards to the 208 and 209 route. The purpose of the 209 is for those commuters who wish to have a direct route to downtown Edmonton. Unfairly, it does not stop at both Transit Centres. St. Albert has to change that. If you are servicing St. Albert commuters, then those that wish a direct route not stopping at a number of Edmonton locations (as with the 209), then the 208 has to stop at both St. Albert transit Centres. While it flies in the face of the "non-stop" idea, it has to be a fair service for all of St. Albert commuters, and not just those who can leave from, in my opinion, an unfairly favoured transit Centre. To be non-stop once it leaves St. Albert makes sense.

Customer #4

- I thought your proposals were very good. Bus lanes was something for many years that I thought would be a good idea. I have been commuting to Edmonton on your St. Albert transit for over 20 years. And you are right that the traffic and crowded buses is becoming a bigger and bigger problem. Sometimes the ride is quite torturous, especially on a snowy day when the bus crawls all the way to St. Albert. Another suggestion I have heard from other riders is that there should be separate buses that go directly to NAIT and Grant MacEwan, and separate buses that go straight downtown, so that the commuters riding to/from work would not have to crowd in with all the students. Perhaps also bus routes via the new Anthony Henday could make the trip to/from Edmonton shorter.

Customer #5

- I just skimmed the 'Long-Term Department Plan' and wanted to say that the document is well thought out and appears to meet the needs of our community. Prior to moving to Alberta, my wife and I were both frequent users of mass transit, but we currently only use transit from or in St. Albert a few times a month. I commute via auto everyday and would like to use the bus, but the options from Erin Ridge are painfully long to get to and from downtown. A north-end transit station would be great for me and an expanded park and ride option WITH PARKING would also get me buying a monthly pass.

Customer #6

- Rather than expand services to areas based on the percentage of land development, would it not be better to canvas the residents to determine transit needs?

- Presently transit has an annual operating deficit of approximately $6 million per year.

- It is apparent that inner city transit is not in high demand in St. Albert, and the only routes that are break even at bested are the routes to/from Edmonton during peak morning and afternoon times.

- Increasing routes and schedules is only going to increase the deficit.

- Based on current rider ships, me [I believe the customer intended to say "more"] transit lots and busses are not needed at this time, and probably not for the next 15 years.

Customer #6 (additional comments)

- Yes, transit is a community service similar to libraries, swimming pools, and skating rinks.

- All communality services are subsidized by tax payers, however transit is at the top of the list.

- Edmonton Transit has an operating deficit of $168 million per year, with an annual ridership of over 80 million. The tax payer subsidy per ride is $2.10

- St. Albert transit has an operating deficit of $6.8 million per year, with a ridership of 1.2 million.

- The per ride subsidy is $5.64

- The vast majority of users commute to and from Edmonton. The inner city ridership is less than 7 per cent, which results in the largest subsidy. Empty buses running thru the city cost all tax payers, even the commuters represented by higher user fees.

- The rational for increased transit service can not be based on neighbourhood development. Surveys should be completed to determine needs and then an attempt made to set up schedules.

- Customer #7

- I have reviewed the draft Transit Long Term Plan and provide the following comments.

- I have to say as a layperson I found it very informative. It presents transit 'science' in ways that are easy to understand.

- [Editor's note: Customer cites a couple of grammatical errors.]

- I wondered if it would put a 'community service spin' if you referenced the beginning of providing park & ride service for downtown St. Albert events, Farmers' Market, and Rainmaker Rodeo in section 3.1 Milestones. It is just a small piece of the transit picture, but still significant in serving community event and residents & visitors.

Customer #8 (Internal City of St. Albert submission)

- I had a quick look at the Plan. Its looks very good, so good work!

- My only comment revolves around Safety. I noticed that the documents speaks a bit about how to continue to train drivers, implement cameras etc. but was it ever contemplated to look to start a security or peace officer program similar to Edmonton?

- I know that over the years you guys have had some challenges with security, challenging customers etc. It may be appropriate to start to plan or think about an internal security expert to start and then perhaps expand out to officers who ride the bus every once and a while to randomly enforce and have a presence on the busses.

- I guess another service delivery option is for MES to expand their current role at look to assist Transit with security and enforcement of rules.

Customer #9

- In response to the City of St. Albert's request for public input in relation to the proposed Transit Long Term Department Plan 2012-2027, as both a resident of St. Albert and as a professional planner with another local municipality (with past international transportation planning experience), I believe your document is extremely thorough - with every stone overturned. I congratulate you on a work well done, and wish you well with its implementation.

Customer #10

- This letter recommends a review of the A11 bus service route managed by St. Albert Transit. The purpose of this letter is to highlight the fact that the area of Pineview/Parkwood is over-serviced by the bus system and therefore subjected to excess noise and traffic. In fact, a total of five bus routes, the A9, A10, A11, A12 and A13, service a small area of less than 2.0 kilometers squared resulting in a total of 108 buses per weekday through the Pineview/Parkwood

neighbourhood. As a specific example, that is 35 buses running between 6:00 am and 9:00 am through an area that is approximately 1.6 km across its longest dimension. The A11 line services a route that is for the most part redundant with the A10, A12 and A13 lines. The resulting negative impacts from the redundant bus routes in Pineview/Parkwood are: a) too many buses with very low ridership in the area, and therefore inefficient cost to the St. Albert taxpayer, b) excess environmental pollution caused by bus noise and exhaust, and c) safety concerns due to the high number of buses driving through cross walks, playgrounds and schools in the area.

- The St. Albert Transit policy of having transit stops 400 meters within 90% of dwelling units is more than met in the Pineview/Parkwood area. In fact, the previous St. Albert Transit Long-Term Department Plan dated January 16, 2006, indicated that the A11 line should be discontinued through Pineview while maintaining the A9 and A12 routes which would service the north and south portions adequately. This makes sense because the longest walking distance from the midpoint between the A9 (Primeau Lane) and A12 (Page Drive) is less than 250 metres.

- The issues with the A11 line do not appear to be isolated to the Pineview/Parkwood area. The entire route has been identified as long and unnecessarily "winding" by riders and because of this it is frequently off its schedule. Almost the entire A11 route is redundant, except for one small section along Sir Winston Churchill Avenue, which still satisfies the 400 meter policy with service by the A9 route. Overall, the A11 route needs to be addressed and could be re-structured to coincide with the opening of the South Transit Centre as per the recommendations that were put forward in the recent Transit Long-Term Department Plan 2012-2027.

- On a personal note, I fully support the St. Albert Transit system and use it myself for travel to the St. Albert Farmers Market and my husband has commuted regularly on the 211 Express via downtown Edmonton. I have forwarded this recommendation because I am a concerned citizen of St. Albert, a taxpayer and someone who puts a high value on efficiency, cost saving, and environmental impact in my community. I have made it a priority to observe the operation of the A11 line through Parkwood and have noted the following: a) many times buses pass within 5 minutes of each other going in opposite directions or follow one after the other going in the same direction, b) after 1.5 years of observation, I have seen the A11 bus stop to pick up passengers 6 times despite 23 buses per day on the current schedule , c) I see empty buses pass by 8 times out of 10, especially the mid-day and evening buses, and d) double long "accordion" buses are sometimes used on this route, and should probably be reserved for commuter buses exclusively. The purpose for this recommendation is to highlight the need for a review of the bus system currently offered on the A11 line, and perhaps other service lines as well. Understandably, these bus routes have been in place for a long time, and it can be challenging to review and

change them from time to time. However, in the spirit of cost efficiency, environmental impact and neighbourhood safety, I would ask that you please do the due diligence to review ridership and schedules in Pineview/Parkwood and create a more efficient bus route plan for our neighbourhood, whether in the short or longer term. The residents of Parkwood would very much appreciate it.

Thank you for your time in consideration of this matter. I would welcome a discussion, in person, to review St. Albert Transit's rationale for the routes and schedules as they are currently, and to explore options for a more efficient route system.

Customer #11 (Internal City of St. Albert submission)

- Definitely subsidizing low-income residents who use transportation is key and that would include seniors, AISH recipients and others living with low incomes.

I would add:

- Transit stops and stations are age-friendly (shelter, lighting, benches and curb cuts)
- Travel routes are aligned with desired destinations (daytime route that considers the needs of seniors – food, medical care, community events etc.)
- Drivers are considerate of the needs of older persons.
- Information is provided in an age-friendly format.
- The signs are easy to read.

Customer #12

- I have briefly read through the Transit Long Term Department Plan 2012-2027 Draft and wish to make the following comments, all based around the fact that within about five years we will see the implementation of autonomous vehicles (driverless, self-driving vehicles or 'autonomes' as I call them) on the public roads in North America. This will be a paradigm shift in how we 'do' road transportation and will be transformative for public transportation and should ideally be planned for now in order to facilitate a smooth transition, and in order to maximize the benefits at the earliest opportunity.

- I have spoken on this subject earlier this year to Minister Stephen Khan, who has referred me via the Ministry of Enterprise and Advanced Education to speak to the Alberta Economic implications in Canada and I lead the Autonomous Vehicle Task Force for ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) Canada. I have also written a paper on this subject that was presented at the Canadian Multidisciplinary Road Safety Conference in June 2012. My presentation to the ITS Canada ACGM can

be found here [Note: customer includes an attachment of powerpoint presentation further describing the technology.]

- To assist you in understanding I have attached my latest presentation given to the Northern Alberta Section of the Institution of Transportation Engineers (ITE) – I would particularly draw your attention to pages 27 and 29 where I highlight the impact that this technology will have on public transportation. I could only cover this particular topic briefly in my general presentation but my research and thinking have developed significantly beyond this.

- My concern is that the Draft Transit report only makes fleeting reference in section 2.2.2 on page 9 to 'intelligent transportation technologies' and makes no specific reference to autonomous vehicles. Because this autonomous technology is so transformative and so disruptive to existing business models, and very likely to be implemented in 5 years, or very soon after, then I consider that to demonstrate due diligence that the report must in some way give cognisance to this possibility. My research tells me that it is not a matter of 'if', but 'when' we will see autonomes – and they will completely transform road transportation and have a major impact on wider society – very similar to the smartphone and social media revolution.

- Very briefly the autonome will replace buses and reduce ridership of the LRT because it will provide a cheaper, more efficient service from door-to-door than can possibly be offered by other forms of transport. As autonome market penetration increases, so we will see greater and greater benefits. In November the Earth Institute of Columbia University released some research which indicates that an autonome transport system has the potential to reduce total transportation

- costs to the average user by 85% whilst giving a greater level of service. Their figures indicate that in a City of 200,000 vehicles, that 120,000 could be replaced by 18,000 autonomes acting like 'super taxis' - thereby achieving economic, congestion and environmental benefits whilst increasing the level of service to travellers, particularly during rush hours. I can provide a copy of this Earth Institute research on request.

- Taking the key points in the Draft Transit report, and assuming that autonomes are certified safe for body-out use and that StAT, or commercial competitors are running a mixed service of car type autonomes:

- **Reliable, on-time and predictable** – an autonome solution will not be limited to routes and timetables and will dynamically respond to smartphone requests and at optimum fleet size could typically respond within a couple of minutes and will provide a door-to-door service.

- **Seamless** – there will be no need for transfers.
- **Fast** – this autonome system would be the fastest door-to-door service possible, even faster than by private car as potential parking issues are often experienced in urban centres.
- **Safe** – autonomes have the potential to remove human error from the roads (the cause of 93% of collisions) - there will be no safer form of road transportation.
- **Efficient** – the autonomes will be programmed to drive safely, economically and with minimal wear-and-tear. Studies of autonomes in open pit mines have shown fuel savings and reduced maintenance.
- **Affordable** – the Earth Institute, Columbia University Research suggests typical transportation costs for an individual will reduce by 85% - this will be much cheaper than even the most heavily subsidised current transit system can achieve and much cheaper than private car ownership.
- **Convenient** – the autonome will provide door-to-door service 24/7, payment can be via contactless credit/debit card or by smartphone, on online account etc. Any en-route delays will be dealt with by dynamic real-time re-routing.
- **Easily Navigated** – schedules will no longer be required – a smartphone interface is all that is needed.
- **Comfortable** – the autonome will be like a conventional car – but in the future could be designed without the need for a driving seat. There will be no requirement for bus shelters or similar infrastructure.
- **Connected to other modes such as walking, cycling, taxis, buses, trains and vehicles that together support a healthy lifestyle** – the users will have more time to do these activities in their increased spare time – or deliberately arrange their travel such that they include these modes.
- **Cohesively linked across geographic areas via routings, schedules, fares, safety standards and facilities** – there is no requirement for this function as the service is door-to-door.

- It should be noted that some 14% of Canadians are registered disabled and for a significant proportion of these an autonome solution will provide improved ease of access – especially if part of the autonome fleet is specified for disabled access.

- It is my belief that despite the hurdles to this technology that the benefits are so compelling that when autonomes become available in around five years in 2017 that the rate of uptake will be very rapid indeed. If public transport organizations like StAT have not planned for this paradigm shift then private enterprise will rapidly provide an alternative 'super-taxi' service that will undermine all revenue and business models.

- In my opinion this draft report is incomplete without providing due cognisance of an autonome future and would be unable to demonstrate due diligence to any future challenges unless it is significantly modified.

- If you would appreciate to know more about autonomes then please do not hesitate to contact me. If a presentation on this subject tailored for StAT use would be helpful then I would be willing to provide one as I believe as a transportation and road safety specialist within Alberta that I have a moral imperative to assist with its rapid implementation.

- I also note that your report mentions the LRT and that autonomes would have a similar impact on the LRT plans. However, my efforts in reaching out to parties involved with the LRT project have been unsuccessful thus far. If you would kindly pass my comments to that team I would most appreciate it, because as a Provincial tax payer I would like to ensure that my contributions are spent as wisely as can be achieved with the knowledge available at the time.