Developing Innovative Initiatives and Promoting Public Transportation as a Mobility Option for Rural Communities

ACT Canada Summit 2014
Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions

OHCC • CCSO
Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Coalition des communautés en santé de l’Ontario

RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE
Vision, Voice and Leadership

Ontario Trillium Foundation
Fondation Trillium de l’Ontario.
Relève du gouvernement de l’Ontario.
Main Project Elements:

1) Identify and document case studies of effective rural regional transportation approaches

2) A study of the current and potential models and financing sources for cost-shared, coordinated rural transportation systems

3) Communication and dialogue to share information at events and through learning channels such as webinars & forums
What do we mean by ‘rural’?

• Defined by population size, population density, and/or distance from major urban centres

• The population outside of settlements with 1,000 or more population (Stats Can)

• A population density less than 150 persons per square kilometre (OECD)

• Very different in terms of socio-economic, cultural and environmental characteristics
What do we mean by ‘transportation’?

• The act of moving someone or something from one place to another (Oxford & Webster)
• Focusing on ‘passenger’ transportation
• Travel within and between towns, hamlets and villages within a region
The Issues

• Low densities and long distances
• Small tax base with slow growth or declining populations that are aging
• Health & social services, employment, shopping & educational institutions centralized to serve higher densities
• Many non-profit organizations using their resources to help address the transportation needs of their clients
Who is Affected & How?

• Low-income families, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, etc.
• Medical appointments, grocery shopping, work or educational opportunities, recreation, leisure and social events
• Individuals struggle to get where they need to go on a daily basis
Other Challenges

- **Car culture** - general habits and attitudes are focused around private automobiles
- **Lack of access** to transportation options negatively impacts quality of life
Opportunities/Solutions

• Creative, **multi-pronged approaches** tailored to community’s unique needs

• **Collaborative solutions** more effective in addressing both financial and social needs

• **Non-profit, profit and public** institutions need to work together to find solutions
Opportunities/Solutions

• Municipal & regional governments, LHINs, health & social service agencies, and environmental groups involved in the planning, development and implementation of programs

• **Approaches**: Public Transit, Ride sharing, Car sharing, Active Transportation and Multi-modal/Integrated
Types: Public Transit

• A range of different services with various funding and operating structures
• Many communities have a variety of ‘specialized’ transportation services
• Coordination required to extend reach, and achieve efficiency & effectiveness
Bancroft / North Hastings County
Kawartha Lakes Dial-A-Ride

Deseronto Transit
Norfolk County
Types: Ride sharing

• Informal or organized, telephone and/or web-based platforms where drivers and passengers connect to arrange sharing transportation

• Requires people have a similar schedule and have common origin and/or destination

• Especially important for those who need to rely on other people to do the driving
Drivers don’t have to take the first in line,
You’re not obliged to accept a ride, that’s fine.
You accept a ride at your own risk,
But the ride is free, so consider it a gift.
Types: Car sharing

• Shared ownership for occasional use

• A number of people share the use of one or more vehicles owned by a profit or non-profit organization; or collection of friends/neighbours
Types: Active Transportation

• Non-motorized, human powered forms of transportation such as walking and cycling (alternatives to a motor vehicle)

• Requires education, social marketing, policy and infrastructure changes
Multi-modal & Integrated

• Many people rely on multiple travel options depending on the circumstances – walking, cycling, carpooling and/or public transit provide ‘alternatives’ to driving

• Multi-sector planning is essential for assessing and integrating the alternatives
Making the Case

Economic

- Many youth, seniors and people with low-incomes cannot drive or afford a car = hard to reach jobs and hard for employers to find workers -> can increase the number who choose to live and work in the community
Making the Case

Health

- Maintaining *access to healthcare* is difficult for individuals who cannot drive or do not have access to a car
- Encouraging *active transportation*, like walking and cycling, is also a way to stay healthy longer
Making the Case

Social

• Both seniors and youth with a variety of transportation options, are more likely to be able to become and remain independent -> reduced dependence on others can increase self-reliance, self-esteem and self-worth
Making the Case

Environmental

• Issues like climate change and peak oil require efforts to reduce greenhouse gases & reliance on gas/oil -> shift towards more sustainable travel modes attracts new residents, businesses and tourists
Multi-Sector Partners:

- Municipal & regional governments
- Health Units, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), Hospitals, Community Health Centres, etc.
- Social service agencies
- Employers
- Private transportation companies
- Universities, Colleges, Schools
- Environmental organizations
- Social, entertainment & leisure, sports & recreation groups
- Business - CDCs, Chambers of Commerce, BIAs
- Tourism operators and accommodators
- Faith groups, service clubs
- Individuals
For More Information

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