

Towards a Common Vision for Community Transportation in New Brunswick

A report on the presentations and roundtable discussions at the 2012 Provincial Transportation Conversation held by the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC), June 12-13 at the Fredericton Inn

Prepared by:
Trevor R. Hanson, PhD, P.Eng
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Executive Summary

Approximately 150 individuals from various sectors came together in Fredericton to discuss the challenges and opportunities for Community Transportation in New Brunswick. Presentations were made by 17 individuals representing a broad range of stakeholders: Community Inclusion Networks (CINs), the New Brunswick government, the health sector, municipal and transit sector, academia, the non-profit and charitable sector, and perspectives from Ontario, Quebec and Maine. Two roundtable discussions were held and participants also provided written feedback for policy directions. This document synthesizes the presentations and discussions, while also providing some potential policy directions for consideration.

What were some things roundtable discussion groups found surprising?

- Older person travel was more frequent and extensive than they originally believed
- Vehicle ownership and use in New Brunswick is high (1.4 vehicles per household)
- The extent of the demographic trend towards an aging population in New Brunswick

What were some current and future transportation concerns identified by groups?

- Accessibility (physical access for those with disabilities)
- Costs (system, infrastructure, user)
- Access to public transport
- Centralizing facilities and impact on transportation
- Access to convenient options
- Aging population and demographics
- Rural challenges
- Prohibitive regulations
- Using unused vehicles (i.e. school bus)
- Accommodating children (i.e. car seats) and families

What did groups see as some challenges for New Brunswick to address these concerns?

- Transportation service viewed as a municipal responsibility (not provincial)
- Low population densities in rural areas
- Lack of awareness and education on transportation issues
- Trending decline in bus ridership

What were some ways participants believed we can enhance the transportation system in New Brunswick?

- Improving collaboration and establishing partnerships
- The need for common vision and leadership in transportation
- Conducting needs assessments and asset mapping at the local and regional level
- Making better use of existing transportation assets
- Infrastructure and service improvements
- Enhancing education and communication

What did participants in different sectors believe were some immediate priorities for transportation policy development?

Responses from 50 participants in the four largest sectors represented at the event were organized into the following table:

| Priority Area | Non-Profit | Municipal | Provincial | Community Inclusion Network |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Access to routine medical care for those without a car | Immediate | Immediate | Immediate | Immediate |
| Identifying and minimizing barriers to entry for transportation service providers | Immediate | Immediate | Medium Term | Immediate |
| Improving knowledge and communication of existing programs and services | Immediate | Medium Term | Immediate | Immediate |
| Increasing use of communal transportation options | Medium Term | Immediate | Immediate | Medium Term |
| Developing a provincial program for volunteer driver insurance | Medium Term | Medium Term | Immediate | Immediate |
| Demonstrating innovation in government business use of transportation | Medium Term | Medium Term | Medium Term | Immediate |
| Developing regional transportation service and infrastructure plans | Medium Term | Medium Term | Medium Term | Immediate |
| Understanding the transportation impacts of re-locating government services | Long Term | Immediate | Medium Term | Medium Term |

Priority areas were called:

- “Immediate” if the responses for “Immediate” were 50% or greater of participant responses;
- “Medium Term” if the combination of responses for “Immediate” and “Medium Term” were 50% or greater of participant responses;
- “Long Term” if the combination of responses for “Immediate”, “Medium Term”, and “Long Term” were 50% or greater of participant responses;
- “Not a priority” if the responses for “Not a priority” were 50% or greater of participant responses.

How can we move forward on Community Transportation?

Three successful community transportation initiatives offered lessons for all sectors:

Pat Stafford, presenting on behalf of the Charlotte Dial-a-Ride:

- Be community driven (continuous community drive)
- Start small and manage growth carefully
- Learn and adapt through working with the people
- Have dedicated and capable staff
- Have a nucleus of committed volunteers

Claredon Robichaud, from Transport de Clare, offered some direction on community transit services:

- Identify who to serve
- Identify where people want to go

- Find a level of service to best suit community – conventional service, door to door, personal
- Choose appropriate type of vehicles and fleet size

Katherine Freund, Independent Transportation Network of America (ITN America)

- Cars are more than a ride, they are a feeling of independence and freedom
- A car-based community transportation model can take advantage of underutilized private transportation capacity, private insurance and labour
- The ITN America model rewards volunteer drivers with credits towards drives they may need in the future – credits are transferable and can be used to help others
- Consumers also pay lower fares if they schedule in advance or with others, which gives them an incentive to carpool or plan
- The ITN America model can harness power of the market for a social purpose

What are some potential next steps for a long-term approach to addressing transportation issues affecting economic and social inclusion?

1. Identify a provincial champion agency with the mandate to unite the “silos” in transportation service and infrastructure that exist among health, education, infrastructure, and transit - a role that ESIC may need to play until a long-term solution is identified
2. Address “Access to routine medical care for those without a car” which is a top priority among participants from all four sectors (Note: “Medical trips” represent 41% of all trips taken by users of Charlotte Dial-a-Ride and by users of ITN America) and other situations where economic and social exclusion may occur due to lack of access to an automobile
3. Explore repurposing existing transportation assets to better serve community transportation needs (school buses, community vans, nursing home vehicles, etc.). A better understanding of the use of the bus assets (school and other), staffing constraints, safety concerns, allocation of costs among partners, could demonstrate the feasibility (or infeasibility) of the approach. A study of this could also explore models where community transportation is also school transportation
4. Explore regional approaches to transportation infrastructure and service planning, which may provide a mechanism to overcome some of the concerns between connecting urban and rural areas



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Introduction and background

On June 12-13 2012, the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) hosted a Provincial Transportation Conversation at the Fredericton Inn. The purpose was to bring stakeholders from numerous sectors and disciplines together to talk about the mutual opportunities and challenges relating to passenger transportation in New Brunswick. Over 150 people attended and included participation from:

- Non-profit agencies, charities and community groups
- Provincial, municipal and local governments, boards and agencies
- Private sector
- Interested citizens

This report synthesizes the Conversation, including speaker summaries, roundtable discussions, and individual surveys filled out by participants. The goal of this report is to be a resource to help inform transportation service policy development in New Brunswick to foster a coordinated and effective approach in addressing challenges and opportunities.

ESIC is a New Brunswick provincial Crown Corporation with the mandate to “develop, oversee, coordinate and implement strategic initiatives and plans to reduce poverty and assist thousands of New Brunswickers to become more self-sufficient.”¹ ESIC is leading the implementation of the “*Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*” which charges ESIC with several responsibilities, including the funding of community transportation alternatives, such as Dial-a-Ride. This is being facilitated through local partnerships with 12 Community Inclusion Networks (CINs), non-profit groups committed to community development and/or poverty reduction.



¹ http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/contacts/dept_renderer.201148.html#mandates

Day 1

Presentation Summaries

| Community Transportation Dialogue-Day 1 June 12, 2012 | |
|--|---|
| 1:00 pm – 1:30 pm | Roadmap <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hon. Claude Williams, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (DTI)• Stéphane Leclair, Executive Director of ESIC |
| 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm | Starting the Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stephen Battah (Environment and Local Government)• Ahmed Dassouki (DTI)• Trevor Hanson (UNB) |
| 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm | Information is Power <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyril Johnston (EUB)• Thérèse Domingue (CRTAQ)• Harold Nicholson (Transport Action Atlantic) |

Day 1: Speaker summaries

The Provincial Transportation Conversation began at 1 pm on June 12, 2012 and continued through the afternoon.

Roadmap (Opening session)

Hon. Claude Williams
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (NBDTI)

Minister Williams highlighted the extent of the transportation infrastructure and service network in New Brunswick, and with the extensive network, the need for financial support to maintain it. Some of the major points of his presentation:

- 6 million passengers used the urban transit systems in Fredericton, Moncton, Saint John and Miramichi last year
- There is declining ridership for intercity bus (Acadian Lines) and VIA Rail
- He pointed to the geographic (urban/rural split) and demographic (doubling of the over 65 population in 20 years) challenges in the province.
- The majority of New Brunswick households have their own vehicles and close to 90% of the population uses a vehicle to go to work.
- He closed with posing a question to the audience: are people ready to change their travel habits, and if so, how can we develop strategies to encourage this?

Stéphane Leclair
Executive Director, Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC)

Mr. Leclair welcomed the attendees and spoke to several points:

- Transportation is the key to many challenges which will help New Brunswickers to have access to employment, medical appointments, after school programs and will facilitate the social inclusion of many NB citizens.
- This conference gathered a variety of speakers from different areas of Canada and USA in order to share their best practices and models that could be implemented in NB.
- The conference will encourage the participants to start having a dialogue on possible solutions for rural transportation.
- The goal of the conference was to share information with the participants so they can go home and have a dialogue with their stakeholders and put in place the model that will fit the needs and the capacity of their region.

Session 1: Starting the conversation

Steven Battah
Deputy Minister of the New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government (ELG)

While ELG does not play a direct role with transportation infrastructure provision, it works very closely with local service districts and municipalities whom all play an important role in these matters. He

noted that there has been an increase in walking and biking over past years, though we are still very reliant on automobiles, necessitating a safe environment for all road users. He outlined some of the services provided by municipalities and highlighted the need for both elected and un-elected officials to be involved in planning.

Ahmed Dassouki
Policy Analyst with NBDTI

Mr. Dassouki provided an overview of multimodal transportation in New Brunswick including statistics for VIA Rail, intercity bus (Acadian and Trius), ferries and transit.

- He highlighted some challenges with public transportation including:
 - maintaining and growing the ridership
 - the inability to initiate and negotiate services between Local Service Districts and municipalities
- He drew attention to some points with New Brunswick demographics and transportation usage:
 - Growing population of those 65 years and older (approximately 17% of population today, 30% by year 2036)
 - 47.4% of the population in NB is rural
 - Only 2.5% of New Brunswickers use transit to go to work, compared to 11.5% nationally
 - There are 1.38 vehicles for every household in New Brunswick.

He also discussed the Motor Carrier Act which regulates new and existing bus operators in the province. Some provinces in Canada do not economically regulate carriers, some have “relaxed regulation” (New Brunswick), and some are “heavily regulated” (Nova Scotia). He cited Canadian success stories including the Nova Scotia Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) and the Saskatchewan transit assistance for people with disabilities program. He also pointed to a report from the United States called TCRP 94 (Transit Cooperative Research Program) which outlined keys to success for rural transit.

Trevor Hanson
Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of New Brunswick

Dr. Hanson spoke about the need for a detailed understanding of travel behaviour and drew upon his research with Dr. Eric Hildebrand into rural older drivers in New Brunswick, which included a detailed travel diary study of 60 volunteers aged 54-92.

- He outlined that a “lack of transportation” can be defined in many ways and while national data sets and surveys can be useful, the data from a travel diary can provide very detailed information to better understand habits at an individual level. This understanding can help contribute to alternative development.
- Rural people tend to “chain” trips (leave home, complete several trips, come home again)
- In his sample, participants made 3 – 7 trips per day with a vehicle, and this decreased with age
- When asked how they would make their trips without a car, participants would rely on “friends and family “ in 52% of trips; participants would choose not to take the trip in 34% of cases
- The rated ability of participants to find alternatives depended on the trip type (participants reported the highest difficulty in finding alternate arrangements for medical trips)

He also pointed to two anecdotal examples where surveys may not capture someone’s transportation challenges: one was where an older woman had no one to drive her back from the hospital following

eye surgery; the second was where an older woman was asked about using a bus for shopping and she wondered where she would put a week's worth of groceries.

Session 2: Information is power

Cyril Johnston

Vice-Chairman of the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB)

Mr. Johnston outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Board in terms of regulating transportation services in New Brunswick.

- If someone wants to operate any kind of bus service for gain or profit, an application needs to be made to the EUB.
- The EUB is limited by statute and cannot deviate from the Motor Carrier Act and the Motor Vehicle Act.
- All licensed motor carriers in New Brunswick are public utilities.
- The EUB is not a government department nor is it an advisor to government policy.
- The Motor Carrier Act does not apply for:
 - buses not operated for “gain”
 - school buses transporting school children
 - van pools

He then described types of licenses (regular or irregular), the process of application, and the test for whether an application will be granted. Since motor carriers are considered public utilities, rates and services provided must be approved by the board. Approval is also needed to discontinue a service. Following the presentation, Mr. Johnston fielded questions relating to the power of the Board, who can apply for “contiguous zones” around municipalities (an exempt area from the Board), and safety.

Thérèse Domingue

Director of the Quebec Association of Public and Rural Community Transportation.

Ms Domingue outlined how public transportation services fit into the Quebec provincial government framework.

- Partnerships are extremely important at regulatory level, and in rural areas, the priority is mobility.
- While there is much discussion about buses, she pointed out that the easiest vehicle to send to a rural location is a taxi.
- Quebec is different than New Brunswick in that it has three levels of government involved in public transportation.
- She highlighted some funding opportunities, as well as the need for rural drivers to change their habits to see that public transportation is a viable option.
- She concluded with a call to use what transportation assets already exist (such as school buses) to create new services while also building on other programs.

Harold Nicholson

Board President of Transport Action Atlantic, advocacy group for public transportation

Mr. Nicholson spoke on the need for citizen mobility in modern societies and called on governments to be involved and have a clear vision to assist in fulfilling the need for those who drive and those who do not. Some challenges in New Brunswick:

- 1/3 of the New Brunswick population cannot or does not drive
- There are some intercity bus services where round trips cannot be made in a day, and no intra-provincial air service
- Federal cuts coming to VIA Rail may impact the frequency of operation in New Brunswick
- Rural transit is of importance to Transport Action Atlantic, and he pointed to examples such as Dial-a-Ride, Kings Transit (Nova Scotia) and Aroostook County (Maine) public transport services
- He called for the involvement of government in the provision of necessary transportation services that cannot be done privately for profit.
- He pointed out that New Brunswick currently has a Transportation Authority Act and suggested that with some tweaking it could be a passenger transportation authority. He also suggested the concept of local transit authorities which would be paid for by the provincial government.



Day 1

Summary of Roundtable Discussion

Day 1: Roundtable discussion

The first roundtable discussion was held following Session #1. The purpose of the first roundtable discussion was to “start the conversation” and was focused on answering three questions:

1. Were there any facts or ideas presented by the speakers that you found surprising?
2. In your group, develop a list of concerns you have about transportation in NB (Aim for at least five). What do you think are the most pressing concerns today? What do you think are the most pressing concerns 20 years from now?
3. Is New Brunswick well-positioned to address these concerns? Why or why not?

Participants randomly formed groups at 16 tables and assigned a facilitator and scribe to record the discussion. The responses to questions were recorded on chart paper which was collected after the session. The main points on each paper were organized into themes to permit comparison among answers from each group.

What groups found “surprising”

The results from question 1 are described in the following table. Group responses were organized into themes synthesizing the main points written on the chart paper.

Table 1: What groups found "surprising" from the presentations in Session #1

| Theme | # of groups reporting this | % of all groups |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Data on older person travel different from perception | 12 | 75% |
| NB vehicle ownership stats | 6 | 38% |
| Population and demographic trends in NB | 6 | 38% |
| Data on use of alternatives in NB | 3 | 19% |
| Lack of discussion on poverty/low income | 2 | 13% |
| Lack of discussion on accessibility | 2 | 13% |
| Gov't responsibility for transport infrastructure | 2 | 13% |
| Lack of rural alternatives | 1 | 6% |
| Lack of data on Northern NB | 1 | 6% |

The majority of groups found it surprising that the data presented on older person travel was different than their perception in terms of number of trips per day, potential use of alternatives, dependence on the automobile, and time of day of travel, that is, older drivers were more active than they thought. Several groups were also surprised by the high rates of automobile ownership in New Brunswick, including the high number of New Brunswickers that use the automobile for work purposes. Several groups highlighted that they were surprised by some of the population and demographic trends in New Brunswick, including the expected growth in older person population and the low population density. Select groups highlighted they were surprised by the data presented on the use of automobile alternatives in New Brunswick, in particular the declining number of people using intercity bus and VIA

Rail. Select groups also were surprised by the lack of discussion on transportation issues associated with poverty and low income, as well as a lack of discussion by the speakers on accessibility issues. Select groups indicated they were surprised by the extent of the responsibility of the provincial government for transportation infrastructure. One group was surprised by the lack of rural alternatives in New Brunswick, while one group also expected to see more information on the transportation needs in northern New Brunswick.

Transportation concerns identified by the groups

Groups were asked to develop a list of pressing concerns about transportation in New Brunswick. A total of 20 concerns were identified from the group responses and organized below in terms of the number of groups that specifically identified the concern in their list.

Table 2: Group-compiled concerns with transportation in New Brunswick

| Concerns | # of groups reporting this | % of all groups |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Accessibility (physical access for those with disabilities) | 8 | 50% |
| Costs (system, infrastructure, user) | 8 | 50% |
| Access to public transport | 5 | 31% |
| Centralizing facilities and impact on transportation | 5 | 31% |
| Access to convenient options | 4 | 25% |
| Aging population and demographics | 4 | 25% |
| Rural challenges | 4 | 25% |
| Prohibitive regulations | 4 | 25% |
| Using unused vehicles (i.e. school bus) | 3 | 19% |
| Accommodating children (i.e. car seats) and families | 3 | 19% |
| Challenging perceptions about car use | 2 | 13% |
| Lack of family to depend on | 2 | 13% |
| Loss of automobile alternatives (train & bus) | 2 | 13% |
| Lack of data to support decision-making | 2 | 13% |
| Lack of incentives for volunteer drivers | 1 | 6% |
| Accommodating at-risk individuals in accessing resources | 1 | 6% |
| Fear of liability as volunteer driver | 1 | 6% |
| Accommodating specific transportation needs | 1 | 6% |
| Knowledge and communication | 1 | 6% |
| Connectivity between transportation systems. | 1 | 6% |

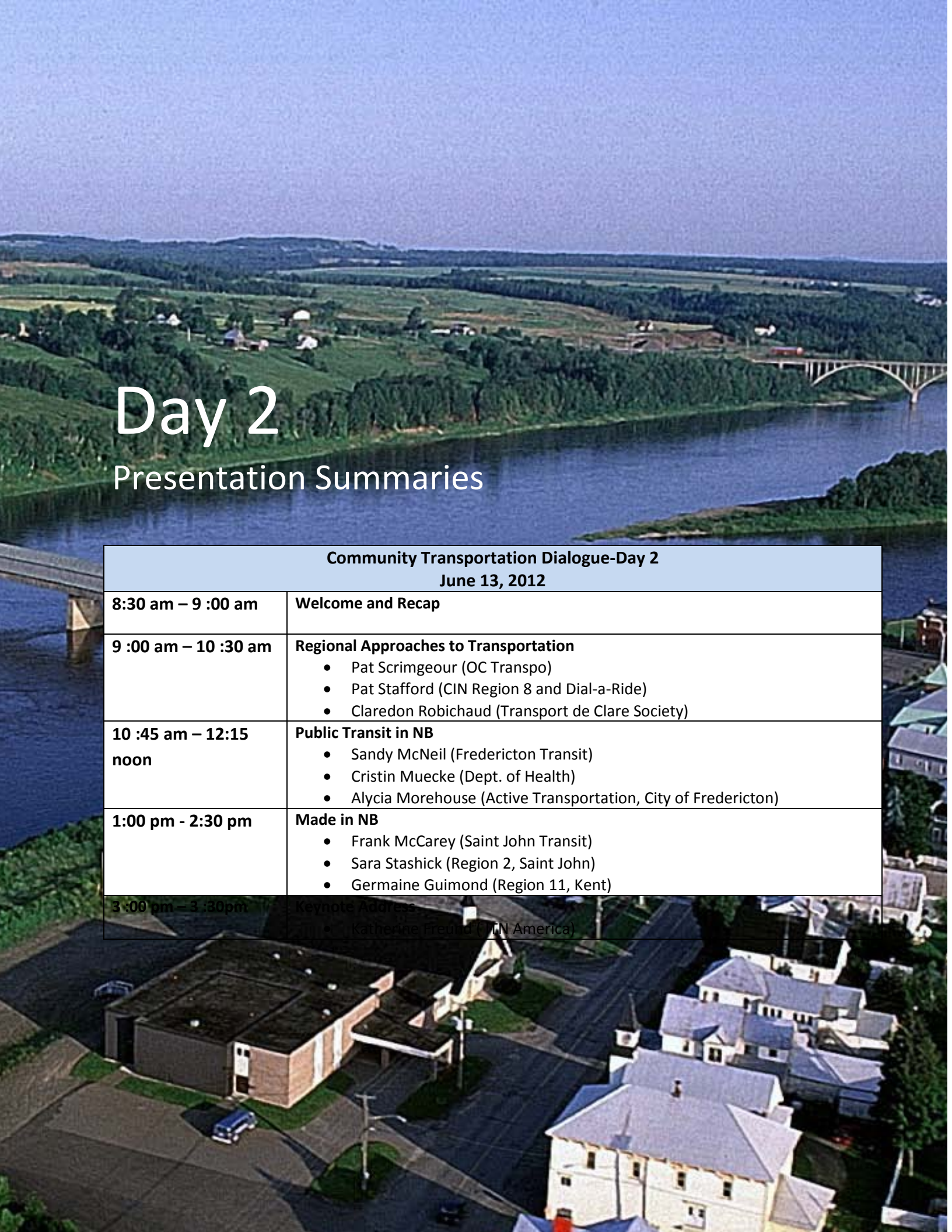
Though the list is ordered in terms of the number of groups identifying the concern, it should not be interpreted to be a ranking of the *importance* or *validity* of the concern, rather the extent to which the concern has been recognized among the groups. Each of these concerns could be explored on their own.

Is New Brunswick well-positioned to address the concerns?

A couple of groups felt that New Brunswick is not well-positioned, while two others felt that there is now interest in New Brunswick to move forward on the concerns as long as policies are enhanced and resources are made available. Other groups identified numerous challenges that needed to be understood in order to address concerns:

- Transportation service viewed as a municipal responsibility (not provincial)
- Low population densities in rural areas
- Lack of awareness and education on transportation issues
- Trending decline in bus ridership





Day 2

Presentation Summaries

| Community Transportation Dialogue-Day 2 June 13, 2012 | |
|--|--|
| 8:30 am – 9 :00 am | Welcome and Recap |
| 9 :00 am – 10 :30 am | Regional Approaches to Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pat Scrimgeour (OC Transpo)• Pat Stafford (CIN Region 8 and Dial-a-Ride)• Claredon Robichaud (Transport de Clare Society) |
| 10 :45 am – 12:15 noon | Public Transit in NB <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sandy McNeil (Fredericton Transit)• Cristin Muecke (Dept. of Health)• Alycia Morehouse (Active Transportation, City of Fredericton) |
| 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm | Made in NB <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frank McCarey (Saint John Transit)• Sara Stashick (Region 2, Saint John)• Germaine Guimond (Region 11, Kent) |
| 3 :00 pm – 3 :30pm | Keynote Address <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Katherine Freund (UIN America) |

Day 2: Speaker summaries

A total of three sessions were held on Day 2, which included regional approaches to transportation, an overview of public transit in New Brunswick, and made in New Brunswick solutions.

Session 3: Regional approaches to transportation

Pat Scrimgeour

Manager of Transit Service Planning and Reporting at OC Transpo, Ottawa

His presentation detailed the transit service in Ottawa, including how it provides and accommodates rural and regional public transportation.

- The urban transit system includes a dedicated transitway which moves 10,000 people per hour per direction and is expected to grow to 14,000 when the light rail line is opened in the future.
- OC Transpo has six routes serving 11 villages with populations ranging from 2,000 – 5,000 people. These routes serve 800 people per day.
- Additional routes have been phased out due to low ridership.
- It costs OC Transpo \$300 per trip to provide the service, but only recovers \$8.25 per trip in fares.
- Ottawa has a fleet of taxis of which 10% are accessible.
- Partnerships exist with rural and regional transportation providers where these buses are allowed access to the transitway at no charge; there is also fare integration to facilitate passenger movement.
- The City also provides funding to community agencies for transportation. These agencies can provide the service at lower cost and can also prioritize usage by riders by trip purpose (medical appointment vs. going for an ice cream).

Mr. Scrimgeour also took questions from the floor. Someone asked how liability issues are handled in funding community agencies. His response was that these organizations were asked to confirm they have coverage. He was asked how services were being provided to those who were visually impaired (such as next stop announcements). He responded that they are currently working with a new computer system that calls out the next stop automatically (instead of having the drivers do it). Someone asked about partnerships between school boards and OC Transpo. He responded that there are some partnerships in place for students to use transit buses, but that using school buses for transit was unsuccessful (people did not want to use them) and the costs were higher than expected. One person asked how OC Transpo enforces the lower costs for mobility impaired users of taxi services. He responded that any license to run taxis is issued by the City of Ottawa. The plates are transferable and can cost \$100,000 per plate, which is a substantial asset for taxi operators. Operators can get “Accessible” taxi plates for free under the condition that they must provide services to anyone within the region calling for accessible service, and operators can only charge the standard meter rate.

Pat Stafford,

Independent consultant with the Charlotte County Community Inclusion Network

Ms. Stafford presented on the Charlotte County Dial-a-Ride (CDAR) on behalf of manager Dana Planetta who was unable to attend the Conversation.

- The CDAR began in 2005 based on a model from Nova Scotia and is targeted towards anyone that cannot access affordable transportation.
- It is a dispatch based service that matches volunteer drivers with drive requests (with 48 hours notice of need).
- The use of CDAR has grown dramatically since 2005 when 144 drives were provided to 2011 when 7176 drives were provided.
- The most prevalent use of CDAR is for medical transportation (41% of all trips), followed by work trips (29%) and personal errands (11%).
- CDAR also works with the local food bank to deliver food.
- In the beginning, the cost per ride was \$76 but has been reduced to under \$20 per ride.
- There have been some challenges with volunteer drivers as some do not drive in the winter months, or are unavailable during that time.
- Funding sources include:
 - Costs met by subscription fee/membership fee/drive fees
 - Local businesses
 - Foundations
 - Charities
 - Municipalities within region
 - Community fundraising events
 - Project based funding (horizon funding for seniors)
- Still a reliance on provincial funding (cannot see a day in future where dial a ride will be completely independent)

Looking to the future, the CDAR needs to further grow its geographic coverage, raise awareness of the service, and recruit more volunteers. Ms. Stafford identified some of the keys to their success which include:

- Community driven (continuous community drive)
- Start small and manage growth carefully
- Learn and adapt through working with the people
- Dedicated and capable staff
- Nucleus of committed volunteers

Ms. Stafford fielded a question regarding the CDAR operating budget. In the first year it was \$40,000, and now is \$150,000 annually.

Claredon Robichaud
Founder and pioneer of the Transport de Clare, municipality of Clare, Nova Scotia

M. Robichaud provided some background information on Clare, which has a population of 8,000 people in an area of 50 km².

- By September 2012, he expects to have service for all of Digby County.
- Transport de Clare provides transportation with 2 vans and three buses on 450 km of road with fares of \$7.50 for a one-way trip, or \$75 per week if used for employment.
- They have been able to attract \$11,000 annually in corporate sponsorship, \$13,000 in charitable donations, and recently secured a \$28,000 school transportation contract.
- They have also donated approximately \$12,000 per year in subsidized trips.

- Since the beginning of the service in 1996, the service has grown from 4,000 trips taken over 14,000 km to 18,000 trips taken over 231,000 km in 2011.
- They have been able to leverage a total of \$10 through fares and other sources for each \$1 of government funding.

M. Robichaud highlighted the strong sense of community ownership and pride in the service and that word-of-mouth has been key to their success, but there are some challenges: high gas prices impact the organization's bottom line, but can also be an incentive to use the service; the manager of the system is unwaged and has been for 17 years; there are also challenges with overcoming "car culture".

He detailed some guidelines for planning transit service:

- Identifying who to serve
- Identifying where people want to go
- Finding a level of service to best suit community – conventional service, door to door, personal
- Choosing appropriate type of vehicles and fleet size

The Transport de Clare has also established partnerships with Acadian Lines, taxis and Kings Transit in Nova Scotia.

Session 4: Public transit in NB

Sandy McNeil

Transit Manager with the City of Fredericton

Mr. McNeil presented facts and figures on Fredericton Transit.

- Transit routes in Fredericton come within 400 m of 92% of Fredericton residences.
- The system had \$4.4 million in expenditures vs. \$1.7 million in revenues, corresponding to 1.3 million rides.
- Some of the benefits of public transit in Fredericton include:
 - Congestion mitigation (the closure of the Princess Margaret Bridge brought an increase in ridership)
 - Facilitating access to economic and social opportunities.
- Half of the Fredericton Transit fixed route fleet has features to promote accessibility including kneeling features and ramps.
- Some of the challenges identified included:
 - Mass transit thrives on high population density and there are select areas of high density in the City.
 - There are also the challenges of developing new services to accommodate development.
 - There is also the need to work with the high expectations that riders have of the service.

Alycia Morehouse

Climate Change Coordinator, City of Fredericton

Ms. Morehouse presented some facts and figures about active transportation and the Green Matters program in Fredericton:

- In 2011 the World Health Organization recognized Fredericton as having 8th best air quality in the world
- Continued encouragement for alternate transportation is the key to maintaining fresh air

- Changing habits takes time and energy...trails and bikeways our a step in the right direction
- 85km of trail within the city – a percentage of which are paved (promotes other forms of transport and allows for paved trails in the winter months)
- Closing of PM bridge caused a 28% increase in walking traffic and 125% increase in bike traffic (2010)

Ms. Morehouse fielded some questions from the floor. Someone asked about safety issues with respect to bike lanes and intersection issues. She responded by stating the onus is on everyone to help in the sharing of the roads and that they are always working towards easy and safe access. Someone asked about what kind of work is Green Matters doing to try to piece together development and management and planning in urban design? She responded that sustainability is a strong topic within the organization and work is being done to meet the community needs. She also pointed that in zoning by-law reviews there is opportunity for open discussion within the community.

Dr. Cristin Muecke
Regional Medical Officer of Health for Fredericton

Dr. Muecke's presentation focused on public health, built environment and transportation. She described "built environments" as the urban and rural developments that make up a living environment.

- Built structures matter to health since about 40% of overall health status is related to the decisions we make every day.
- It does not help to tell people to eat better and get more physical exercise if the built environment does not allow for that.
- Planning and design can affect health in terms of accessibility, exposure to injuries, and air quality/water quality/noise mitigation.
- Transportation can be a public health issue as roads are primarily designed for cars, which can discourage other users.
- Community transportation planning needs to be creative and there needs to be a plan to meet health needs within transportation options, including making all modes more convenient.
- To meet these needs we need collaboration and leadership, including learning from mistakes and others.

Dr. Muecke also fielded questions from the floor. Someone asked whether we can condition people to use active transportation from an early age, including locating schools so that students are encouraged to walk. She responded that the development of habits indirectly in these types of ways can set up situations where children can see active forms of transportation as a priority option. She continued that the more physical separation we have between daily activities the less likely we are to promote active forms of transportation. An audience member commented that even if children are within walking distance many times parents have a sense of security in driving the child to school. Another participant commented that many of those living in poverty in Fredericton are walking because affordable housing, social services, and the bottle exchange are far apart and not connected well by public transport.

Session 5: Made in New Brunswick solutions

Frank McCarey
General Manager, Saint John Transit Commission

Mr. McCarey spoke on the COMEX (Community Express) service, a commuter service operating since 2008 from Kennebecasis Valley municipalities to the City of Saint John.

- The service is a limited stop service which includes park and ride areas.
- He credited the service with helping to eliminate the need for more parking garages in the City, which are estimated to cost \$30,000 - \$40,000 per space for construction.
- There are 13 trips into the City in the morning and 13 trips out in the evening.
- The service is estimated to have removed 400 cars off the road in the City of Saint John.
- The costs for the service are covered in their entirety by passengers or municipalities receiving the service, and the recovery rate is 65%.
- There could be benefits for a similar service in Fredericton and Moncton for outlying municipalities.
- Mr. McCarey also discussed the potential for park and ride lots on major highways which could also facilitate ride sharing opportunities.

Mr. McCarey fielded questions from the floor. One person asked whether the federal transit capital fund was going to be available again for other communities. He responded that it did not appear there was evidence that the funding program would be offered again, but work is being done to hopefully have it reinstated. Another person from the floor noted that the COMEX service buses also have Wi-fi in them.

Sara Stashick
Sustainable Development Consultant, Saint John

Ms. Stashick described the research undertaken in support of the Saint John Urban Transportation Initiative on behalf of Vibrant Communities Saint John. The project steering committee included as many types of stakeholders in community as possible and was generally focused on public transit (most affordable/accessible to the target audience).

- Media engagement was strong which helped in meeting project deadlines and garnering participation.
- The goals of the study were to understand user trips of public transit riders as well as the perspectives of non-riders.
- The research employed quantitative and qualitative data methods in the survey design to better understand how transportation is inaccessible to potential users.
- There was an online survey component and focus group discussions. A total of 525 surveys were collected.

In terms of results, the surveys indicated that:

- Affordability of fares was **not** considered an issue by participants
- Rather flexibility was a key issue, including challenges with inconvenient scheduling.

She raised points that information and communication is critical in improving ridership (knowing about the service is the first step in getting people to use that service).

- Currently there are employers in Saint John that provide subsidies for parking spots; alternatively, employers could buy 2 or even 3 bus passes for their employees.
- The final report is expected to be published by July 2012, with recommendations to lead to Phase 2 implementations.

Germaine Guimond

President of the Region 11 Community Inclusion Network (Kent County)

Champion on the Transportation Committee

Ms. Guimond identified the measurable benefits to community-based transportation include accessibility to medical facilities.

- The available data through their surveys helped to identify trends where trips could potentially be eliminated by changing how a person undertakes their personal errands (for example, direct deposit banking instead of travelling to the bank).
- People living in rural locations are used to working together to get what they need since they have fewer resources than larger communities.
- One point that she advocated was for the use of school buses for community transportation (having all family members able to use the system) and called for increased collaboration from governments (including transportation and education) to make this happen.

Keynote address

Katherine Freund, founder of the Independent Transportation Network (ITN America), provided the closing keynote address.

She began her talk by profiling the unintended benefits of three large global forces: Environment and Energy, Economy, Aging population in the genesis of ITN America. The ITN America model is a not-for-profit membership model founded in Portland, Maine which creates many aspects of community:

- Personal transportation account
- Flexible approach to resources

She pointed to research that indicates women outlive the decision to not participate in a transportation system by 11 years and men by 15 years, meaning a solution was needed that would grow with the age of the population. There are some innovative aspects to the ITN America model:

- Anybody who volunteers can receive credit within the system for your own future needs
- Spend the credits:
 - Help pay for ride of lower income person (roads scholarship fund)
 - One information system and set of shared business rules, one brand and a replicable model to interconnect (build credit in Portland that can be forwarded to mother with poor mobility in Connecticut)
- Cars are more than a ride, they are a feeling of independence and freedom
- Fares charged in the way you decide to use the service (lower fares if you schedule with other people and schedule in advance) which gives consumer incentives

The ITN America model can harness power of the market for a social purpose. It only charges about half of what it really costs to take the trip, but does not require any government support. Ms. Freund pointed out if you build a model that relies on taxpayer support sooner or later you will be taken out of the budget. She also challenged the group's perceptions of transportation: people have personal space and community space needs (yards vs parks) (homes vs public stations), and this can also apply to transportation (private automobile vs transit). With the ITN America model, it provides a new community mobility option that takes advantage of underutilized private transportation capacity, private insurance and labour. It employs an information system that knows where those vehicles are and who needs a ride in order to coordinate those trips together. The ITN Everywhere model is the next step which connects people everywhere with those needing drives. People can earn credits wherever they offer a drive. The website is www.ITNAmerica.org.

Ms. Freund indicated that the reasons for using ITN America are in line with the same reasons outlined in other presentations during the conference. The data available within ITN America can lead to a lot of knowledge on driving habits and behaviours that will help in the future in meeting the actual needs of the users of ITN. Ms. Freund also presented some user feedback:

- 12% said expensive but worth it!
- 2% said too expensive
- 98% would recommend to anyone

She concluded that there are unintended benefits of an approach like ITN America. When times get tough and people work together to help each other, she believes it is better than just hiring someone to do it, and so those characteristics of rural communities that make them so special and so strong will lead to people helping each other in the future.

Ms. Freund fielded some questions from the floor. She was asked whether any Canadian affiliates had started yet. She responded that a couple of years have been spent on a business plan for Canada but has not happened yet. There are some challenges with jurisdictional differences, moving data across lines, differing insurance laws. Someone asked whether someone has to have access to the internet to use the service. She responded that it can be used with just a telephone.

Following the keynote address, closing comments were provided by **Leo-Paul Pinet**, Chair of the ESIC Board, and **Scott MacAfee**, Conference Chair and CIN Coordinator.



Day 2

Summary of Roundtable Discussion



Day 2: Roundtable discussion

Participants were organized into groups according to CIN Region to answer the question: “How can we work together to enhance the transportation system in New Brunswick?”. This question was further broken down into three sub questions to facilitate discussion:

1. What needs to happen at the “Local Level” (municipal, local service district) to ensure all New Brunswickers are able to meet their transportation needs?
2. What needs to happen at the “Regional Level” to ensure all New Brunswickers are able to meet their transportation needs?
3. How can we increase the use of transit, ridesharing and other communal forms of transport in NB? Are there barriers (legislative, policy, financial, etc) to doing this? Who has got it right in NB?

Groups were to record their answers on to the question sheets contained within their welcome package. A total of 32 sheets were received meaning that more than one sheet was completed per group which lead to some duplication in responses. Nevertheless, the responses were analyzed in their entirety to identify major themes and trends viewed by participants.

Overarching themes in roundtable discussion #2

The following three themes were the most prevalent among the recorded responses to what needs to happen at the local and regional levels in New Brunswick:

1. Improving collaboration and establishing partnerships
2. The need for common vision and leadership in transportation
3. Conducting needs assessments and asset mapping

In terms of improving collaboration, participants saw the need to improve the connection within communities, with local leaders, between communities as well as at the municipal and regional level. Developing a “common vision” centered on getting the right stakeholders, leaders and mechanisms in place at all levels. Participants also felt that needs assessments were needed at the local and regional levels in order to inform the development of a common vision.

Specific themes in roundtable discussion #2

The following eight themes were evident among smaller groups of participant responses but presented specific themes or directions that could be useful for next steps at the local, regional and provincial levels.

1. Better use of existing assets
2. Infrastructure and service improvements
3. Education and communication
4. More support for community-driven initiatives
5. Equity among alternatives/incentives
6. Cultural shifts

7. Policy-informed built environment design
8. Enhance accessibility

In terms of better use of existing assets, the concept of using school buses during their idle time was mentioned a few times and it was unclear to those respondents why this may not be possible. “Infrastructure and service improvements” included mention of the development of specific services, tailoring transit service to the work hours of low-income individuals, to having people pull over for transit buses to give them priority. Some participants also discussed the need to educate the public on transportation issues, as well as to eliminate the information and resource “silos” that can inhibit working collaboratively. There was also some discussion on providing more support, either financial or program support (such as volunteer driver insurance) at the community level to help community-driven initiatives take hold.

Some participants also identified the need to consider infrastructure and service needs for automobile alternatives in concert with road and highway infrastructure, as well as providing more incentives to use automobile alternatives. There were also comments regarding the need to shift collective thinking from a car culture to shared transportation.

There were also a few comments with respect to policy-informed built environment design. For example, transportation policies regarding automobile alternatives or the promotion of active transportation needs to manifest itself at the design level in both rural and urban developments. Finally, that accessibility for those with mobility and other disabilities be considered in the provision of transportation alternatives.



Final Survey Results



End of conference survey results

A total of 56 participants (1/3 of all participants) provided individual feedback on the Provincial Transportation Conversation. This presents some limitations to the conclusions that can be inferred from the data, however in the absence of additional data, these results can provide a starting point in terms of developing provincial passenger transportation policy.

Statistics on survey participation by location and organization

The majority of respondents were from the Fredericton Area, followed by Carleton-Victoria, Saint John and Moncton. There were no responses from the Edmundston region.

Table 3: Geographic distribution of survey respondents

| CIN # | Region | Total | CIN # | Region | Total | |
|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------------|----|
| 1 | Moncton | 5 | 7 | Miramichi | 3 | |
| 2 | Saint John | 6 | 8 | Charlotte | 2 | |
| 3 | Fredericton | 22 | 9 | Central NB | 3 | |
| 4 | Edmundston | 0 | 10 | Carleton-Victoria | 7 | |
| 5 | Restigouche | 1 | 11 | Kent | 2 | |
| 6 | Bathurst | 2 | 12 | Acadian Peninsula | 2 | |
| | | | | | Unknown | 1 |
| | | | | | Grand Total | 56 |

The largest group of respondents were from the non-profit sector.

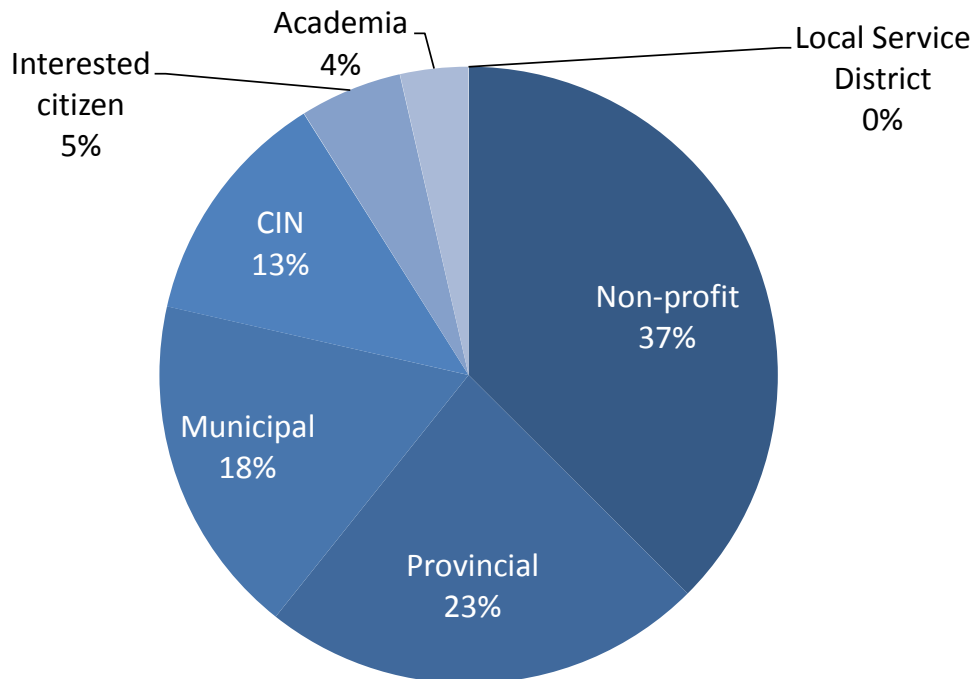


Figure 1: Sector distribution of survey respondents

Directions on a provincial transportation policy (individual response)

Respondents were asked to identify priorities for a provincial transportation policy from a list of “priority areas”. They were given four choices for priority timeframes:

- Immediate priority (<2 years)
- Medium term (2-5 years)
- Long term (>5 years)
- Not a priority

If a respondent did not indicate a priority, it was coded as “not a priority”.

Table 4: Summary of all individual survey responses on direction for provincial transportation policy

| All surveys (56 responses) | Immediate priority (<2 yrs) | Medium term (2-5 yrs) | Long term (>5 yrs) | Not a priority |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Access to routine medical care for those without a car | 73% | 16% | 7% | 4% |
| Improving knowledge and communication of existing programs and services | 59% | 23% | 7% | 11% |
| Identifying and minimizing barriers to entry for transportation service providers | 55% | 27% | 7% | 11% |
| Increasing use of communal transportation options | 50% | 23% | 14% | 13% |
| Developing a provincial program for volunteer driver insurance | 48% | 30% | 13% | 9% |
| Developing regional transportation service and infrastructure plans | 46% | 32% | 13% | 9% |
| Understanding the transportation impacts of re-locating government services | 43% | 25% | 21% | 11% |
| Demonstrating innovation in government business use of transportation | 38% | 27% | 18% | 18% |

The highest priority item identified by participants was “Access to routine medical care for those without a car”, followed by “Improving knowledge and communication of existing programs and services”.

Directions on a provincial transportation policy (sector responses)

Given that there were different sectors represented (and different numbers of respondents from each sector), the immediacy of each priority area was explored by sector and categorized as follows:

- Priority areas were called “Immediate” if the responses for “Immediate” were 50% or greater of participant responses;
- Priority areas were called “Medium Term” if the combination of responses for “Immediate” and “Medium Term” were 50% or greater of participant responses;

- Priority areas were called “Long Term” if the combination of responses for “Immediate”, “Medium Term”, and “Long Term” were 50% or greater of participant responses;
- Priority areas were called “Not a priority” if the combination of responses for “Not a priority” were 50% or greater of participant responses.

The responses for participants in the four largest respondent groups (Non-profit, provincial government, municipal government, and CIN) are presented below.

Table 5: Policy directions and priority organized by sector

| Priority Area | Non-Profit | Municipal | Provincial | CIN |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Access to routine medical care for those without a car | Immediate | Immediate | Immediate | Immediate |
| Identifying and minimizing barriers to entry for transportation service providers | Immediate | Immediate | Medium Term | Immediate |
| Improving knowledge and communication of existing programs and services | Immediate | Medium Term | Immediate | Immediate |
| Increasing use of communal transportation options | Medium Term | Immediate | Immediate | Medium Term |
| Developing a provincial program for volunteer driver insurance | Medium Term | Medium Term | Immediate | Immediate |
| Demonstrating innovation in government business use of transportation | Medium Term | Medium Term | Medium Term | Immediate |
| Developing regional transportation service and infrastructure plans | Medium Term | Medium Term | Medium Term | Immediate |
| Understanding the transportation impacts of re-locating government services | Long Term | Immediate | Medium Term | Medium Term |

It appears that “Access to routine medical care for those without a car” is a top priority among participants from all four sectors profiled here. This is also consistent with the individual responses. “Identifying and minimizing barriers to entry for transportation service providers” and “Improving knowledge and communication of existing programs and services” were “Immediate” priorities for individuals in three out of the four sectors profiled.

It should be noted that this is not a representative sample from each sector, therefore caution is urged from drawing concrete conclusions. Nevertheless, in the absence of other data, these responses could be useful in supporting further policy development efforts in New Brunswick.

Discussion of results and proposed next steps

The results of the roundtable discussions and respondent surveys suggest that this Provincial Transportation Conversation was well-received and a positive starting point to developing provincial transportation service policy. The ideas and data contained within this document could be a valuable resource for all stakeholders to springboard into concrete action.

There are numerous areas, ideas and concepts outlined in this document that government and community agencies could explore to further improve transportation in New Brunswick. The following next steps are potential directions based on themes arising throughout the Conversation:

1. Identify a provincial champion agency with the mandate to unite the “silos” in transportation service and infrastructure that exist among health, education, infrastructure, and transit. This may be a role that ESIC needs to play until a long-term solution is identified
2. Address “Access to routine medical care for those without a car” which is a top priority among participants from all four sectors (Note: “Medical trips” represent 41% of all trips taken by users of Charlotte Dial-a-Ride and by users of ITN America) and other situations where economic and social exclusion may occur due to lack of access to an automobile
3. Explore repurposing existing transportation assets to better serve community transportation needs (school buses, community vans, etc.). A better understanding of the use of the bus assets (school and other), staffing constraints, safety concerns, allocation of costs among partners, could demonstrate the feasibility (or infeasibility) of the approach. A study of this could also explore models where community transportation is also school transportation
4. Explore regional approaches to transportation infrastructure and service planning. This may provide a mechanism to overcome some of the concerns between connecting urban and rural areas

