

From Surfaces to Services

An inclusive and sustainable transportation strategy for the province of New Brunswick, 2017-2037

Rural and urban transportation advisory committee
NB Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

December 2017



Ensemble  pour vaincre la pauvreté
Overcoming Poverty  Together

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Letter to the ESIC Board

27 June, 2017

Dear Members of the Board:

The New Brunswick Rural and Urban Transportation Advisory Committee (RUTAC) has the honour to submit *From surfaces to services: an inclusive and sustainable transportation strategy* for the Province of New Brunswick. This report and its recommendations are the product of two years of expert and public consultations, research, and concerted efforts among RUTAC's volunteer members. We are grateful to the many experts who met with us and to the hundreds of New Brunswickers who appeared and voiced passionately the need for integrated, inclusive and sustainable transportation in New Brunswick. We hope our report and recommendations will convey the urgency and importance of such a strategy, as well as the leadership role needed from the Province of New Brunswick.

RUTAC was given a broad mandate by the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) to propose improved mobility options for New Brunswick. More than a dozen devoted citizens, motivated by a shared sense of duty to build a better province, volunteered hundreds of hours to develop this strategy. Aurore Thériault was also a dear member who we lost along the way. Richard Beauregard-Long provided invaluable technical advice. We could not have succeeded without the leadership and support of ESIC staff: Stéphane Leclair, Scott MacAfee, Marie-Eve Grégoire and Sylvette Drisdelle.

Our mission was to help make New Brunswick more accessible. Over the years, private vehicles have made mobility convenient to many, but it has come at significant costs. Our dependence on private vehicles has created a heavy financial burden on middle income families, while posing even greater obstacles to vulnerable populations: people living in poverty, people with a disability, people living in rural, remote and aboriginal communities, youth, seniors and immigrants. They may lack the physical ability or financial means to drive a car to access jobs, services, healthcare, education, cultural and social activities. It diminishes the quality of life to families and communities. The lack of transportation options also burden government finances: fewer people work and pay taxes, while increasing public service delivery costs. Hence improving access is not only a question of fairness; it is also about tapping into our most valuable resources: our people.

While we were motivated by individuals and families who struggle with mobility and access in everyday life, our advisory committee also recognized that *available*, *affordable* and *accessible* mobility options are critical to achieving broader priorities, ranging from job creation and youth retention to containing healthcare costs and achieving lower carbon targets. Our recommendations aim to address both specific needs of those currently excluded and better options for the majority. To achieve this, we need to improve the integration, connectivity and sustainability of the system.

New Brunswick has significant needs and gaps in transportation policies and service that impact the ability of citizens to meet their needs. We have good people and goodwill to address these. Now, we need a provincial strategy, providing a framework and supported by a commitment to invest in transportation services and to support initiatives that align public, private and community assets and initiatives. We look forward to your comments and to integrate feedback into a final report in the weeks ahead.

Submitted respectfully,

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1. Introduction

When New Brunswick began modernizing its road and highway infrastructure in the 1950s and 1960s, it was with the vision of helping New Brunswickers meet their mobility needs. The automobile permitted a wider choice of where to live and work than ever before, freeing people from the constraints of transit and intercity bus and rail schedules. The road to economic and social inclusion was, in fact, a road.

Today, accessing jobs, services and amenities in New Brunswick relies heavily on private vehicles, yet there is a growing number of people for whom the ability to own and drive their own car is becoming less realistic or desirable. Consider:

- The family living in poverty who cannot afford a car to access jobs, a doctor's appointment or a child's after school activities;
- The older adult who has lived their entire life with the mobility provided by the automobile, but who is now dealing with the health effects of aging that make driving difficult or impossible;
- The young person, whose job prospects and finances are more precarious than a generation ago, and concerned about environmental impacts, who reluctantly defaults to private automobiles;
- The person with a mobility disability who requires accessible transportation to access jobs, health services and recreation, but who cannot afford to buy an accessible vehicle and lives where public transportation or volunteer driver programs do not have accessible vehicles;
- The newcomer, who may never have needed or owned a vehicle before, who must buy a vehicle in order to access the labour market and services, or ultimately decide to take their skills to other provinces where inexpensive shared transportation options are available;
- The New Brunswick family, demonstrably spending more of its income on transportation than the Canadian average, has less disposable income for essentials.

The consequences of these issues will become broader and more pronounced in an era of demographic and climatic changes, economic uncertainty, and increasingly finite natural and financial resources.

The growing examples of people unable to find transportation to medical appointments, or who have a disability and lack accessible transportation options, or who are unable to make current transit options work for them, highlight the need for a new vision for transportation in the province. We need to view transportation as an essential service, as we do for health, education and public safety

A strategy that helps Joanne and Samuel

Joanne is a single mother living in social housing in the North End of Saint John, with her 4-year old son Samuel. Social Development help pay childcare at an assigned facility near NBCC so Joanne can work a job on the East Side. Without a car, her daily journey takes two hours of commuting using separate routes to access childcare, then work, and another two hours on the way back. Joanne wants to work. There is no other way to explain why she commutes four hours on little more than minimum wage. *This Strategy proposes more effective coordination of transportation and social service systems to help New Brunswickers like Joanne and Samuel empower their lives.*

A strategy that helps Sandra and Caroline

Sandra is a music teacher who lives in a rural area with her widowed mother, Caroline, an active community volunteer. Sandra has a visual impairment, and so relies on her mother to take her by car to music classes she gives at the community centre and at clients' houses. Their active and productive lives are set to change; Caroline is losing her driver's license due to her own deteriorating eyesight. The hardship is shared throughout the community. Sandra loses a source of income. Kids lose a beloved music teacher. Friends will miss Caroline's company. *This Strategy proposes better shared services helping New Brunswickers like Sandra and Caroline meet their transportation needs in their communities.*

This is a vision that ensures every New Brunswicker has opportunities to access the transportation they need to achieve economic and social inclusion. It is a vision that builds on the strengths of existing transportation achievements, services and programs, but pivots to a new way of thinking that fosters active and shared transportation alternatives, and includes the broader built environment in our decision-making. It is a vision allowing New Brunswick to anticipate and address the challenges ahead.

Achieving this vision starts with outlining specific and concrete actions that can be taken by all levels of government, communities, citizens, as well as the private and volunteer sector. It means actions in terms of programs that encourage and facilitate ride-sharing and universal access, and changing policies that unnecessarily or excessively regulate transportation services. It means identifying, providing and supporting the conditions for transit to viably compete, or at least complement, the default choice of private automobiles. It means considering trip-making behaviour in the development and location of government and private sector facilities to make it easier to achieve inclusive and sustainable transportation goals. It means making active transportation a more realistic choice.

This inclusive and sustainable transportation strategy represents the first time in New Brunswick that a transportation strategy has been developed to look broadly across all aspects of transportation provision in the province. It recognizes jurisdictional differences, but is not tied to them. It recognizes differing authorities and responsibilities, but speaks to all of them. It is informed by historic arguments, but presents new solutions.

A strategy that helps Alicia and Armand

The young couple and their daughter immigrated to Moncton centre in 2014. Armand cannot work in Canada as an engineer as he did before, but he has found work in nearby Dieppe. Unfortunately, the daycare close to their apartment opens its doors no earlier than 7:30am, his employer will not let him start later than 8am, and despite being a straight line down Main Street, the 7km bus journey takes 50 minutes. Armand had to buy a car. Alicia started working temp jobs, and now works a clerical position in an area unserved by transit, so she also purchased a car. They are drawing upon savings to get by, and are looking to move to Montreal where, despite higher rent prices, the cost of living is less as they can more easily live on one car or even none. *This Strategy proposes better coordination of transportation services and employer engagement to help young families stay in New Brunswick.*

A strategy that helps Linda and Robert

Robert inherited his family's house in Lincoln, where he lives with his wife Linda and two children, Patrick and Stephanie. Robert works 9 km away in downtown Fredericton while Linda works in Oromocto 12 km in the opposite direction. The family has long owned two cars to accommodate work commute and kids' after-school activities. Robert and Linda may appear to be financially comfortable. Their \$75,000 after-tax household income puts them well above the New Brunswick average, yet they have little to show for this in terms of retirement savings or education plans. They spend a third of their net disposable income on transportation. They are mulling a decision to buy a third car as Patrick readies to attend nearby UNB. *This Strategy proposes coordinated regional transportation planning and services to help New Brunswickers save money on transportation so they can invest in themselves, their education and retirement.*

2. Developing a comprehensive transportation strategy

RUTAC mandate

Consultations and discussions hosted by ESIC and its community partners have constantly identified “Transportation issues” as important obstacles to inclusion of some people or sectors in social and economic activities. Issues included the high cost of owning a car and the lack of effective shared transportation options. Recognizing the need for a strategic approach to address these issues, in 2015 ESIC struck a 14-member provincial Rural and Urban Transportation Advisory Committee (RUTAC) to propose a comprehensive transportation strategy and recommendations for the province, reflecting its urban and rural specificities. The Committee consisted of volunteers representing all geographic areas of New Brunswick, with varied backgrounds including engineers, community developers and planners. The strategy and recommendations result from 2015 and 2016 RUTAC stakeholder consultations, site visits, and feedback from previous ESIC consultations.

Guiding principles

When scoping the issues, Committee members quickly realized that New Brunswick faced a considerable challenge: it was not apparent where the responsibility lies to address the existing and anticipated transportation challenges. Issues ranged from people unable to get to medical appointments; to transit stopping at municipal borders; to inconvenient locations of new schools and to challenges with funding innovative services. Moreover, ideas successfully deployed elsewhere, such as using school buses for community transportation, had particular hurdles to overcome in New Brunswick. Members concluded that this Strategy and its recommendations, needed to articulate the broader issues facing transportation in New Brunswick and provide clear guidance on how to achieve the necessary leadership to address the types of transportation issues citizens face every day. The Committee developed guiding principles that would inform its approach to articulating the issues, identifying needs, and presenting recommendations. Any recommendations developed were to satisfy at least one of the following principles:

- Make transportation **affordable** for individuals and families;
- Make the transportation system **accessible** for persons with a disability;
- Make transportation more **available** where there are few alternatives;
- Make the transportation system **more sustainable** environmentally and economically;
- Improve **economic inclusion** and **quality of life**;
- Support **social inclusion** to overcome isolation and foster active living;
- Ensure **integrated, transparent and informed** long term transportation and land use planning.

Scope of strategy

The Committee recognized there is a broad audience for this Strategy: citizens, as well as public, private, and non-profit sectors. The Committee was initially tasked with developing distinct urban and rural strategies. However, in light of job commuting and service consumption patterns, it became apparent that what was needed was a unified strategy recognizing the specificities of *rural* and *urban* settings, but also focused on integrating modes and communities. The Strategy is comprehensive but not exhaustive; it does not explore issues relating to air service or ferries, for example, although arguments and principles apply there as well. Nevertheless, the Strategy is intended to be as broad reaching as practicable, delving into issues that intersect municipal, provincial and federal jurisdictions, if it meant improving access for New Brunswickers. Recommendations represent the heart of the Strategy, and reflect the overall vision, subject to the guiding principles to inform transportation service development for the next 20 years.

3. The need for an integrated transportation vision

The Committee passionately believes that New Brunswick needs a new vision for transportation, but it realizes that changing from an existing course to a new one will take considerable commitment and effort. Citizens need justification for that effort. There is a strong case to reconsider New Brunswick's current approach to transportation, but there has not been an effective platform to make this case to New Brunswickers prior to this Strategy. The following section details the Committee's **five major reasons** for a **new vision** for transportation in New Brunswick.

Reason #1: New Brunswick has largely achieved its previous vision for automobile-based mobility, but this mobility now makes populations dependent on the ability to own and drive a car.

All over North America following World War II, the growing population embraced automobile transportation, creating considerable demand for publicly funded highway infrastructure. Using late 1940s Saint John to illustrate this, plans were developed for a harbour bridge and highway system that eventually replaced the commuter rail, streetcars and harbour ferry. From the 1960s to the 1980s, major ring road and bypass highway projects changed the landscape of travel within all New Brunswick's cities, while from the 1990s to the 2010s major highway projects made it faster, easier and safer to travel by car throughout the province. Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) data show 91% of New Brunswick workers now use the automobile to commute.

While the automobile is currently central for mobility in New Brunswick, several factors will make it more difficult for New Brunswickers to meet their needs with an automobile in the future. Consider:

- Statistics Canada projects that the population of older adults (65 years and older) in New Brunswick will increase to between 30.9% and 32.6% of the total population (medium growth scenario) (Statistics Canada, 2015); there is currently no plan to help prepare for the number of people in this group who will look to transition from being drivers to passengers due to health effects of aging and the onset of a disability.
- New Brunswick has the second highest rate of disability in Canada, and mobility is the most prevalent disability type, second only to pain (Statistics Canada 2012). A mobility disability often makes independent driving problematic, and planning is needed to ensure the availability of public, private and community accessible transportation.
- New Brunswick's debt servicing obligations, and increased health expenditures, will increasingly constrain funding for highway infrastructure spending; this will mean making strategic investments targeted at improving use of existing capacity, which will also mean looking at transportation programs and services that improve mobility.
- Aggressive global, federal, and provincial climate change emissions targets will impact the transportation sector. Of New Brunswick's 15,496 kt of CO₂ equivalents in 2014, transportation contributed 4000 kt (25.8%), and half of which came from passenger vehicles (Province of New Brunswick, 2016). These targets will result in policies which will make private vehicle use more expensive.
- Technology is changing rapidly and requires regulatory review. As Ticoll (2015) writes, there are numerous regulatory challenges for which most jurisdictions including New Brunswick are not fully prepared for in the medium and long term. For instance, fully electric vehicles will reshape distribution networks for car fuelling stations and municipal revenues drawn from gas taxes.

Reason #2: There is no broad “vision for mobility” for transit, bus and passenger rail services in New Brunswick today, only a duty to provide economical services that have yet to achieve their full potential to attract riders.

Presently in New Brunswick, most of the remaining alternatives to driving are a legacy of systems that lost ridership to the automobile. They are maintained by governments out of a duty to the public good, but are not integrated as part of a broader vision that would see these modes as competing or preferable to the automobile. In the 1970s, the largest New Brunswick municipalities assumed the responsibilities for the failing private transit services. In the words of the transportation background study for Fredericton’s 1974 transportation plan this was to ensure an economical means of transportation for “the young, the poor, [persons with a disability], and the old”. However, today, only 2.2% of New Brunswick workers commute with transit, the second lowest rate nationally, and one third the rate of neighbouring Nova Scotia (NHS 2011).

Passenger rail is another area where governments (federal) assumed ownership to ensure service despite the lack of profit motive. VIA Rail was created in the 1970s as a federal Crown Corporation to free freight railways of money-losing passenger operations. Presently in New Brunswick, the frequency, speed and availability of service has been reduced in an effort to improve economy but now makes it the least attractive of any motorized travel option. For example, a journey from Campbellton to Moncton takes 5 hours and 35 min by rail¹, 4 hours 45 min by intercity bus (Maritime Bus) and 3 hours and 15 min by car². The three day per week frequency makes it impractical for commuters.

Intercity bus services, such as SMT, then Acadian Lines, and now Maritime Bus, were never publicly owned in New Brunswick, but are private companies subject to government approved routes and fares and have restricted competition. This approach to economic regulation no longer exists for freight rail and air industries in Canada, though there are reports that services in smaller communities can be in jeopardy under both the current regulatory system and a deregulated environment (Council of Deputy Ministers, 2010). The Intercity Bus Services Task Force of the Council of Deputy Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety recommended that all jurisdictions commit to reviewing their economic controls, and, if necessary, introduce amendments to make it easier for carriers to adjust fares, schedules and routes, among other things (Council of Deputy Ministers, 2010).

Although transit, intercity bus, and passenger rail are not currently meeting their potential for ridership, they have strong organizational foundations that, if sufficiently resourced or integrated into a broader vision and plan for mobility, can develop into alternatives to driving that attract users through increased service area and frequency, for example.

¹Taken from VIA Rail website

²Source: google maps

Reason #3: New Brunswickers are looking for a “vision for mobility” that improves access for those in greatest need, lessens the costs to citizens, and ensures support for community initiatives that use transportation to foster economic and social inclusion.

The discussions at numerous ESIC events, as well as the stakeholder sessions hosted by RUTAC, highlight that many New Brunswickers are concerned about being able to meet their needs with their current transportation options. However, there are some recent and successful initiatives that offer considerable potential for replication and transportation improvement. Examples include regional volunteer driver programs, suburban commuter transit in Saint John (COMEX), and park’n’ride locations.

While many New Brunswickers are looking for transit, intercity bus, and passenger rail to be more useful for their trip-making needs, many are also looking for support for more informal services, such as volunteer driver programs. This support could be financial, but could also be in terms of programs and initiatives that make it easier for people to volunteer their time and offset costs. This will be of particular need in rural areas and for helping to meet the individualized transportation needs of persons with a disability.

Similarly, it is challenging to accommodate the growing interest in Active Transportation or “AT” (e.g. walking, biking, wheeling) for supporting travel to work or school in New Brunswick due to missing mechanisms to facilitate connectivity of the broader network, in particular connecting urban, rural and unincorporated areas (Hanson, et al, 2015).

Reason #4: New Brunswickers presently look to the automobile to facilitate their economic and social inclusion, therefore changing their behavior can be a long process that needs to begin sooner rather than later.

Given that most of urban New Brunswick and nearly all of rural New Brunswick is now exclusively dependent on the automobile, this new Strategy must acknowledge that, for most people, the automobile will continue to be the transportation mechanism that facilitates economic and social inclusion. Policies and initiatives that look at curbing automobile usage first require mechanisms in place to ensure such initiatives result in positive impacts. Similarly, for persons with a disability, programs such as the Stan Cassidy Centre Adaptive Driving Service, New Brunswick Vehicle Retrofit Program, and programs for accessible transportation infrastructure and vehicles, will be crucial for ensuring that all New Brunswickers can access transportation.

Reason #5: A common vision is needed by entities responsible for planning and delivering transportation to realize efficiency gains with societal benefits through improved public health and access to employment.

The provision of transportation in New Brunswick is a shared responsibility among municipal, provincial, and federal jurisdictions, as well as the non-profit and the private sectors. Within each jurisdiction and sector, transportation can become further segmented between provision of service (e.g. municipal transit), infrastructure (e.g. Department of Transportation and Infrastructure of NB does not have a mandate for service), and programming to support transportation access (e.g. provincial funding for access to training). There are also land-use planning decisions which influence choice of transportation mode, such as residential density and locations of essential services like health, shopping and education. Currently, there is no official mechanism to facilitate coordination of all those involved with transportation in New Brunswick. Organizations operate independently of a broader vision, often referred to as “silos”, and typically concerned with the direct costs and benefits of the scope of their organizations and programs. The result is missed opportunities for integration and innovation for meeting the transportation needs of New Brunswickers.

Consider that in 2014 the provincial government spent \$6 million to transport people to medical appointments and employment training programs (internal data, GNB Social Development). This expenditure provides a societal benefit by avoiding costs to the provincial healthcare system due to missed appointments from a lack of transportation. It also contributes to the broader economy. In some cases, taxis may be the most appropriate choice, however there may be opportunities to explore other transportation partnerships, including non-profit operations in locations where taxis do not operate, if a forum existed among multiple transportation service providers.

Consider that motor vehicle traffic incidents are the number one cause of accidents leading to death in New Brunswick. They account for 28% of cases, with an estimated economic cost of \$100 million in healthcare and lost productivity (Province of New Brunswick 2012b). While geometric and other highway safety improvements can reduce the frequency and severity of collisions, ultimately reducing healthcare costs, there has been no discussion on the potential for investment in alternate transportation services to be another way to reduce costs. The youngest (<25 years old) and oldest (85 years and older) New Brunswickers have been found to have the highest collision rates (Hildebrand and Myrick, 2001), yet much of the policy discussion relates to reducing driving privileges rather than finding acceptable alternatives (Hanson and Hildebrand, 2011). Given New Brunswick's population is aging, and the health effects of aging can make driving difficult or impossible over time, it is currently unclear how New Brunswick is preparing to meet the transportation needs of older New Brunswickers who may no longer be able to drive. Investments in services that help facilitate the transition from driver to passenger may result in considerable benefits in terms of avoided healthcare costs.

Consider that New Brunswickers themselves are spending considerably out-of-pocket on transportation. While the automobile has increased mobility for many New Brunswickers, it has made them among the most car-dependent Canadians. They drive 750km per year more than the Canadian average (NRC, Canadian Vehicle Survey 2009) and emit 9.4% more CO₂ per vehicle (Statistics Canada, Environmental Accounts and Statistics, 2009, cited in Bourgeois and Folster 2014). They commute more between communities (32.5% vs 20.6% for the average Canadian, NHS 2011), and do so with private vehicles (90.4% vs 78.6%) more than anywhere in Canada. The median New Brunswick household dedicates one fifth (19%) of its budget to transportation, compared to 15% for Canadian households (Statistics Canada, Survey of household spending, 2013). Financially, a single parent raising two children may be financially better on social assistance than working 35 hours a week, since the average daycare consumes \$5 of hourly salary per child, and maintaining a car the equivalent of \$6/hr (Bourgeois and Folster 2014). Given that in New Brunswick, nearly two thirds (63%) of employers experienced difficulty hiring workers over the previous year (CFIB, 2015: 3), reducing transportation costs and improving options could help more New Brunswickers access jobs, and employers fill them. It is challenging to reduce the individual costs to New Brunswickers without a coordinated approach.

Persons with a disability in New Brunswick face considerable challenges in having accessible jobs and services. In Canada, people with disabilities earn \$9000 less annually, are 50% less likely to hold university degrees, and are 6.5% (women) and 8.5% (men) more likely to be underemployed – that is, working part time while preferring full time work (Statistics Canada, 2009). Accessible transportation facilitates participation in the labour market, at considerable benefits to the New Brunswick and Canadian economies (CUTA 2013), yet a person with a mobility disability may have to navigate a transportation system and built environment where accessibility components may not be coordinated.

Given that health and social spending continues to outpace provincial revenue growth, governments need to look to innovative ways to manage these costs. The challenge is that governments have typically focused on costs and benefits within each department rather than integrating them across all departments. Investing in transportation that ensures people make their medical appointments, or are able to get to work, has tangible benefits in health and wellness that can greatly exceed the cost of providing the service. However, New Brunswick has yet to develop the mechanisms to facilitate this.

4. Requirements for achieving an integrated transportation vision

The Committee believes that New Brunswick’s transportation strategy needs to go beyond previous compartmentalized efforts made by governments, where strategies were developed to relate to the existing mandate of a specific department or agency. Achieving this requires that the Strategy do what no previous government transportation strategy has done: articulate what was missing from New Brunswick’s approach to transportation that prevented this broader view and, ultimately, prevented a coordinated response to issues. Among other challenges, greater cross-departmental coordination of services will require accounting and management coordination in reallocating funds within government departments.

These *requirements* are necessary for helping shift how New Brunswickers think about and use transportation in New Brunswick, from a focus exclusively on transportation *surfaces* (e.g. roads) to include transportation *services* (e.g. community driver programs, transit).

The Committee has identified **five** requirements for achieving an integrated multimodal transportation system in New Brunswick:

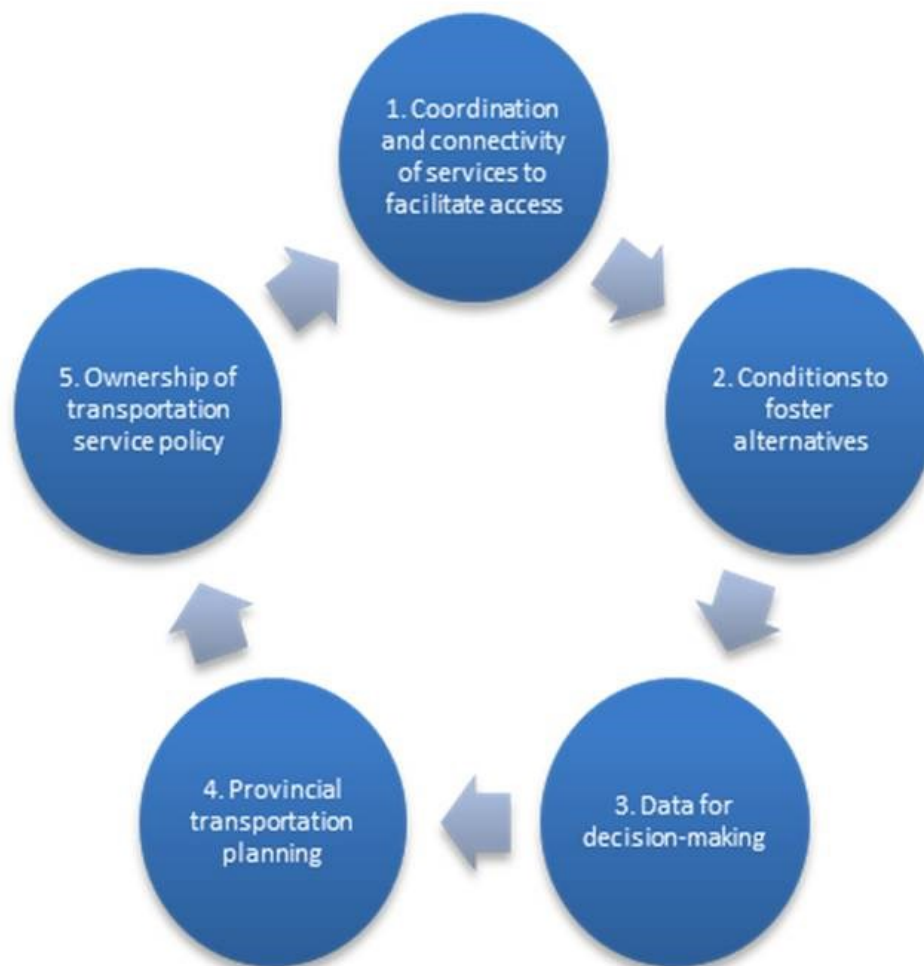


Figure 1: Five requirements for New Brunswick's transportation system

Requirement #1: Coordination and connectivity of services to facilitate access

Many public and private organizations will make decisions about locating their services which provide the greatest benefit to their individual organizations. The challenge is that by working independently, they can miss opportunities to effectively coordinate or co-locate services, which could ultimately reduce car trip making, increase use of active transportation, and make it more efficient to provide service with mass transit or other shared transportation. Even for those with a car, it is unclear whether major infrastructure and service location decisions have considered the broader impacts of increased travel distances. Coordination and connectivity problems include:

- The development of major health, educational, and social services in greenfield locations away from established developments and transportation links;
- Intercity and transit bus terminals that are not in proximity to one another to facilitate transfers;
- Lack of same-day return for some intercity bus services and passenger rail service;
- Lack of optimal use of accessible modes of transportation, and lack of accessible transportation in general.

There are also challenges to coordinate government policy goals that rely on transportation.

One of the challenges to coordination is having the conditions to foster successful and inclusive alternatives. This is the second requirement.

Requirement #2: Conditions to foster successful and inclusive alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle

Successfully pivoting New Brunswick from its dependency on the single-occupancy vehicle will mean ensuring alternatives that New Brunswickers prefer. Examples of ensuring conditions for success include:

- Facilitating a more regional approach to transit through broader service provision and cost and infrastructure sharing (e.g. vehicles, back-office including dispatch);
- Reducing financial burden on transit operators, such as eliminating provincial property tax on transit buildings;
- Relaxing or eliminating regulations for those wishing to provide intercity transportation services;
- Equipping unincorporated areas with the ability to procure and support shared transportation and active transportation;
- Ensuring service provision considers accessibility at all stages of the journey;
- Developing programs and facilities to support drive share programs including regional “Park’n’rides.”

Requirement #3: Transportation data for decision-making

While there are many sources for transportation data in New Brunswick (e.g. vehicle counts), to support transportation infrastructure planning, there are actually little data to support service planning. Statistics Canada data are focused primarily on commuting behavior, with no specific details on actual daily trip-making and mode choice, for example. Only the larger cities have the resources to dig deeper, though typically focus on transportation needs within their boundaries. ESIC supported several data collection exercises by non-profit groups in smaller communities to help establish their community transportation services, and while providing useful results, were on a project-by-project and not readily integrated to provide the larger picture of transportation service needs.

The challenge is that many individuals and stakeholders are seeking solutions with limited or no data to scope out the extent of the problem. The mechanisms are also missing to consolidate public input. When data become available, this leads to the fourth requirement: Province-wide transportation planning.

Requirement #4: Province-wide transportation planning

While the larger individual municipalities are engaged in transportation planning to help guide their infrastructure and service investments, many areas of New Brunswick are not covered by a transportation plan. Some recent transportation planning exercises in Greater Moncton and Greater Saint John have involved outlying or adjacent municipalities; however, there is no obligation for coordination of transportation service planning among smaller municipalities and unincorporated areas. Some exercises may not engage all partners, including public, private and community programs. This gap needs to be filled. Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) could be the facilitating agent for regional transportation planning since they have representation from municipal and unincorporated areas and have been tasked with aspects of regional planning. There is still need for clear direction from the provincial government regarding their planning scope and available resourcing.

Requirement #5: Ownership of a provincial transportation planning and service policy

Successfully addressing the previous four requirements can be resolved by designating a single agency or branch to have ownership of developing and enacting a transportation planning and service policy in New Brunswick. It is unclear whether an existing agency or branch could assume this responsibility; therefore, a new agency or branch may be best suited.

There have been three main multimodal transportation policy documents either released by New Brunswick or where the Government of New Brunswick has participated in including:

- *Looking to the Future: A Plan for Investing in Canada's Transportation System (2008)*
- *Charting the Course: Atlantic Canada Transportation Strategy (2008-2018)*
- *New Brunswick at the Centre. (2008-2018)*

The overarching theme of each document was for highway infrastructure funding, and while there is some mention of transit, there are no specifics with respect to the strategic directions. In "New Brunswick at the Centre", New Brunswick's multimodal plan, there are no specifics on fostering the development of community transportation, including transit, community driver programs and intercity bus service. The documents clearly delineate municipal responsibility for transit, as well as a role for federal funding in transit, but do not specify a provincial role aside from "encouraging" and "promoting". Given that travel needs go beyond municipal borders, and 37% of New Brunswickers do not live in a municipality (Province of New Brunswick, 2017), there needs to be a tangible role for the provincial government in facilitating the development of alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles. At a minimum, New Brunswick could adopt a provincial "**Statement of Interest**" regarding transportation that recognizes key issues to address and provides guidance to departments, agencies and stakeholders how to align efforts and support initiatives.

5. Implementing an integrated transportation vision

This section addresses one of the most prevalent needs expressed to the Committee by individuals and stakeholders: the need for broader coordination among decision-makers in order to implement an integrated transportation vision. A comprehensive transportation strategy will facilitate this by addressing four interconnected areas at once: transportation services, information, behaviours and the built environment. Better decision coordination is needed across municipalities, jurisdictions, and departments, and to involve private, non-profit sector and community stakeholders. Breaking down the silos is crucial for this vision to be implemented.

Acting in the four areas simultaneously can maximize return on public investments making transportation more accessible, affordable and available. The four connecting pieces, or “levers”, describes the conceptual approaches that governments can use to take action:

- **Communication** shares vital information between citizens, planners and service providers.
- **Incentives and nudges** coax people to act on information in order to change behaviours.
- **Design** helps improve how people’s behaviours interact with the built environment.
- **Planning** allows the coordination of land use (buildings, roads, parking) with needs and services.

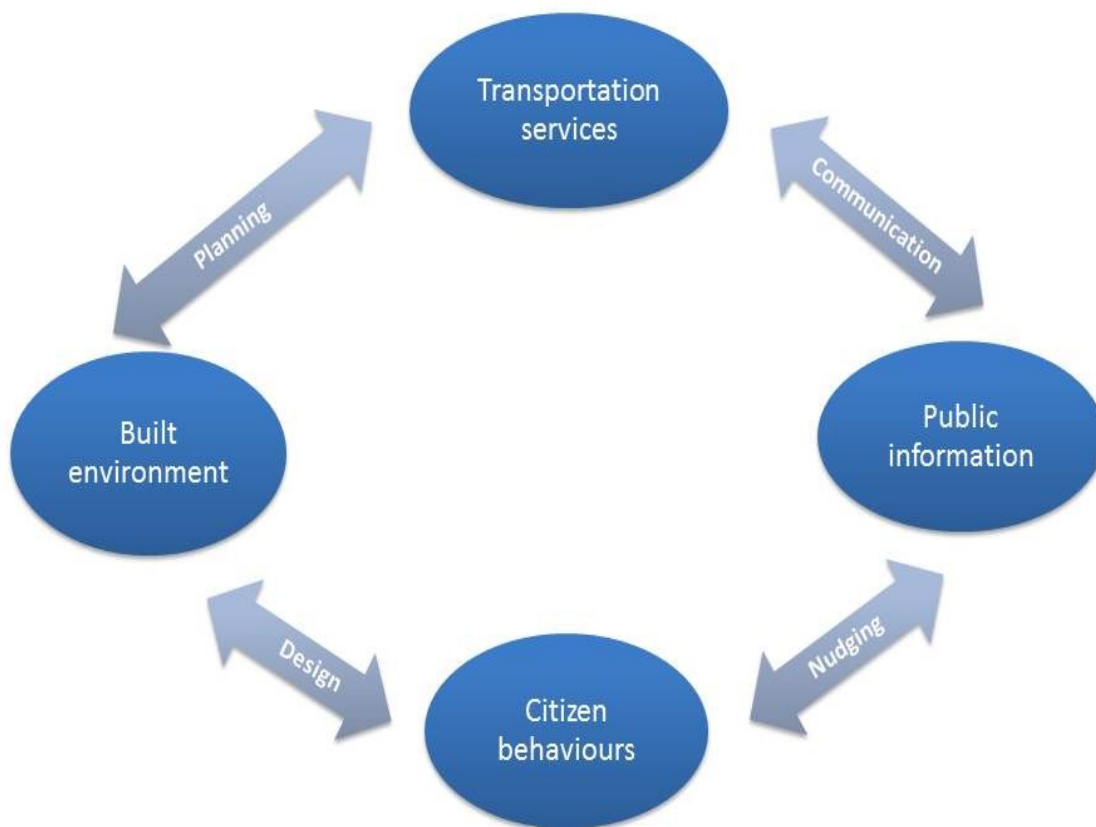


Figure 2: 4 levers to guide implementation

Provincial Statement of Interest:

A means to implement a vision for integrated transportation in New Brunswick

The Committee has presented a vision for an integrated transportation system in New Brunswick; why it is needed, and what is required to achieve it. Critical to the success of the Strategy is for the Government of New Brunswick to adopt a “Statement of Interest” recognizing the key issues outlined in this strategy. These issues can be framed as “Goals” to provide guidance to departments, agencies and stakeholders in aligning efforts and supporting initiatives, and they can be operationalized through specific policies.

The Committee has developed broad recommendations that can be considered as the Statement of Interest goals, while also including specific recommendations that can be incorporated into policies. The Committee recommends that the Province, specifically through its Executive Council, adopts this Statement of Interest or develops one similar to it, in order to provide a common vision and consistency in setting out policies, programs and initiatives.

Provincial Interest in Transportation

New Brunswick has an interest in supporting the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of urban and rural communities by developing and promoting a provincial, integrated, affordable, accessible, multimodal, sustainable transportation plan.

Transportation is critical for New Brunswickers to achieve economic and social inclusion, maintain quality of life, and access essential services such as healthcare and education. The availability, affordability, and accessibility of transportation options, as well as the location of services and land use decisions, impact how people are able to use transportation to meet their needs. Demographic and climatic changes, economic uncertainty, and depleting natural and financial resources will make relying on the automobile a less feasible option over time. New Brunswick will need to set goals and take actions in terms of planning, designing, communicating and changing behaviours to enhance the feasibility of alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicles. The result is an integrated transportation system that maximizes benefits to citizens, society and the economy, while minimizing impacts to the environment.

Goals

1. To maximize the economic and social inclusion of individuals and families, including those with a disability, by ensuring the availability of affordable, accessible and effective transportation options;
2. To ensure the transportation needs of New Brunswickers are systematically understood and addressed by employing consistent and effective province-wide and regional approaches to integrated transportation and land use planning and transportation service delivery;
3. To maximize the benefits of current investments in transportation by enhancing coordination within and among the provincial, municipal and federal public sectors, and the non-profit and private sectors.
4. To enhance the vibrancy and sustainability of urban and rural areas through land use patterns, development design, and location choices of essential public and private services that cater to users of transit, community driver programs, ridesharing, and active transportation, while reducing reliance on the single occupancy automobile.
5. To identify and address gaps in roles and responsibilities in transportation planning and service provision that limit broader coordination, system integration, and achievement of department or agency targets for economic and social inclusion, modal split, and climate change mitigation.
6. To ensure that provincial funding, legislative and regulatory mechanisms exist to develop, sustain and grow alternatives to the private automobile for local and intercity travel, including dedicated provincial support for municipal and regional transit systems, and non-profit community transportation programs.

6. Recommendations

The Committee believes the goal of the strategy is to outline how to develop mechanisms to ensure New Brunswickers who need transportation can access it. Five major requirements were identified as missing from the New Brunswick Transportation system. The following represents overall recommendations to address these gaps, and taken in their entirety, align with the broader goals outlined in the proposed Statement of Interest. These recommendations are drawn from the collective experience of the Committee members, consultations with stakeholders, as well as scoping strategies put forth in other jurisdictions.

Recommendation #1: Clarify roles and responsibilities for transportation services in New Brunswick

One of the most prevalent needs expressed to the Committee by individuals and stakeholders was the need for broader coordination among decision-makers in order to implement an integrated transportation vision. The following recommendations identify approaches to clarify roles and responsibilities for transportation policy, planning and service provision among stakeholders.

1.1 Adopt a provincial transportation services Statement of Interest to set a provincial vision and goals

Underlying need: A statement of interest defines a government's commitment to tackling intersecting challenges such as transportation, poverty reduction, climate change and economic development. It provides a lens to filter cross-departmental services and programs. It sets a vision, connects priorities, and helps other stakeholders align their efforts. Direct costs for transportation infrastructure and service are typically compartmentalized by agency, while benefits can accrue to all of society, such as through reduced healthcare costs from safer roads. A broader view of benefits may result in the support of new transportation initiatives that may not have been previously considered in the "siloed" compartments of government. The ownership of the statement of interest is best given to a provincial entity whose decisions reach across departments.

Recommended lead: Executive Council Office (ECO)

1.2 Ensure provincial laws, regulations and policies are amended or in place to enable the recommendations in this Strategy

Underlying need: Implementing some recommendations proposed in this strategy will require prior legislative review and changes. Changes include but are not limited to the Community Planning Act, Regional Service Delivery Act, Department of Education and Department of Transportation and Infrastructure policies. While legislative changes may be implicit in the recommendations, the Committee wishes to highlight to all parties that this is a necessary step to ensure progress on the files identified within the Strategy.

Recommended lead: Executive Council Office (ECO).

1.3 Review provincial department and agency internal transportation policies and practices to identify opportunities to collaborate and coordinate with each other and with transportation providers to enhance and streamline the user experience, in particular for Department of Social Development and Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training & Labour clients accessing essential programs

Underlying need: Several provincial government departments individually rely on various transportation services to support their programs and clients. The challenge is that by working independently, they can miss opportunities to effectively coordinate practices or co-locate services, or to engage with transportation service providers. This can create confusion for clients and service providers who access services across departments. For example, the reimbursement rate to clients for private vehicle usage varies within the provincial government. In addition, a targeted review is needed of Social Development and Post-Secondary Education, Training & Labour transportation policies and practices in Social Assistance, the Disability Support Program and the Long-Term Care program to enhance access to pre-employment, medical and community participation transportation funding for clients of the Departments. Similarly, there is not an official mechanism that permits dialogue between government service providers and transportation service providers where coordinating services, such as medical appointments, could provide critical mass for ridership.

Recommended lead: Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation, Department of Social Development, and Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

1.4 Investigate the potential for a single provincial entity to oversee the operationalization of the transportation strategy

Underlying need: New Brunswickers need to be clear on what agency or organization has the responsibility to address systematic transportation issues. Even provincial government agencies and municipalities need this clarity as they negotiate a system that has many overlapping aspects involving transportation service, but no overarching authority. A single provincial entity, such as an agency, department or branch (within a department) could provide a single point of contact for transportation service and policy issues, although it would need resourcing. A main component of this entity could involve supporting planning and forecasting, and data collection, ultimately resulting in the development of sustainable and accessible transportation alternatives that support New Brunswickers transportation needs. In addition to filling a policy and transportation leadership vacuum, this organization could be the home for various provincial transportation programs that are operating in isolation within the provincial government. For example, the “New Brunswick Transportation Authority” served a similar role in the past for the development of marine ports and airports and could possibly be reconvened to serve a broader passenger transportation role.

Recommended lead: Executive Council Office (ECO).

Recommendation #2. Improve the planning, provision and alignment of transportation services

There are several different types of planning in New Brunswick, ranging from planning on the types of buildings that can be placed in a certain location (e.g. land use), to forecasting the need for new transportation services in the future (e.g. transportation planning). The challenge is that sometimes these different types of planning may not be as effectively integrated as they could be in New Brunswick to ensure broader societal goals are met, especially with respect to fostering active and shared transportation. For example, decisions that restrict population density may have an unintended effect of making it more challenging to establish the critical mass for a transit service.

In some cases, the transportation and land use planning may be effectively integrated, but the planning, and subsequent services are limited to municipal borders due to funding and governance mechanisms. Some recent transportation planning exercises in Greater Moncton and Greater Saint John have involved outlying or adjacent municipalities; however, there is no obligation for coordination of transportation service planning among smaller municipalities and unincorporated areas. Some exercises may not engage all partners, including public, private and community programs. The recommendations below outline ways to improve how transportation is planned, provided, and aligned with the built environment, including funding mechanisms, planning frameworks, assessing impacts of decision-making on transportation use, and ways to encourage ridership through targeted developments.

2.1 Dedicate provincial funding for expanding transit and community transportation to help meet the goals of the strategy

Underlying need: The CUTA Canadian Transit Factbook shows that New Brunswick municipalities spent \$14.7 million on transit in 2013: \$7.3 million in Moncton, \$5.5 million in Saint John, \$1.7 million in Fredericton, and \$200,000 in Miramichi. While the Province of New Brunswick provides approximately \$6 million per year to transport Social Development clients to healthcare facilities and employment training, plus allocations for community transportation through the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC), it does not provide any direct funding to support municipal and community transit operations. Direct financial support is needed in order to move forward on the broader implementation of the goals of the provincial transportation strategy which include developing, sustaining and growing alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle. This funding could involve some repurposing or consolidation of existing funding for transportation services throughout various provincial agencies, but must not be repurposed from funding already allocated to municipalities. It could come in the form of matched funding to municipal transit expenditures. It may be possible to allocate funding, where appropriate, through existing revenue sources such as licensing fees, provincial fuel taxes and the federal fuel tax allocation. Further to this, it makes sense to explore using a portion of the provincial highway capital budget for the construction of infrastructure that enhances the operation of transit. The Government of New Brunswick could also contribute through the removal of provincial property taxes on transit infrastructure.

Recommended lead: Executive Council Office (ECO), Department of Finance

2.2 Mandate Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) to develop regional transportation plans.

Underlying need. New Brunswick shows the highest rate of inter-city commuting in Canada, yet transportation planning in New Brunswick has typically been driven by the needs of individual municipalities, not broader regions. Currently, the maintenance of streets, parking and transit are tasked to local governments, whereas labour markets, retail, leisure and service delivery largely unfold at regional scales. Improving sustainable transportation ridership depends on improved linkages to New Brunswick's network of communities which are completely dependent on the automobile. The Committee believes that RSCs could work with member communities who already undertake transportation planning to expand the scope of planning activities to the region and facilitate the cost sharing of these activities. This would also have the benefit of including the rural areas organized into Local Service Districts, which currently have no involvement or input into transportation service planning in New Brunswick. These transportation planning activities will also need to be aligned with land use planning.

Recommended lead: Department of Environment and Local Government, Regional Service Commissions

2.3 Require provincial departments and municipalities to develop Transportation Impact Assessments (TIAs) when locating large-scale developments.

Underlying need: TIAs apply a shared transportation and active transportation lens when approving developments. Building or relocating hospitals, schools, service outlets and commercial developments has major impacts on transportation needs. Many jurisdictions use TIAs in tandem with environmental impact assessments (EIAs) when approving projects, to help assess the sum of development-related impacts. TIAs help ensure development decisions respect transportation master plans, specifying acceptable levels of transportation services, and highlighting how citizens can access the infrastructure by using available, affordable and accessible transportation options. While TIAs are not used in New Brunswick, there are templates that could be adapted from other jurisdictions, such as <http://ottawa.ca/cs/groups/content/@webottawa/documents/pdf/mdaw/mtm3/~edisp/cap137401.pdf>

Recommended lead: Department of Environment and Local Government and Regional service Commissions

2.4 Further align transportation and land use planning to encourage developments, including social housing, that foster transit access and use

Underlying need: The sustainability of transportation options tends to improve with critical mass and population density. More sustainable building and neighborhood design, including transit-oriented developments, can be a boon to private developers and municipal governments alike. Achieving greater density can increase developers' property value, increase a municipality's property tax revenues, and lower per capita infrastructure and service costs (water, sewer, snow removal). New Brunswick cities have historically required parking commensurate with land use and net floor area, though there are examples where the number of minimum spaces can be reduced based on the presence of transit stops or new large facilities take advantage of existing parking. This approach should be encouraged.

One major challenge for coordination is ensuring that those who can least afford to own and operate an automobile have access to safe, efficient and reliable alternatives. Social (or subsidized) housing locations need to be provided in areas where residents can take full advantage of transit and Active Transportation to meet their needs.

Recommended lead: Department of Finance, Department of Environment and Local Government, RSCs, municipalities, New Brunswick Non Profit Housing Association



Recommendation #3: Improve and integrate transportation data for decision-making and trip-making

There are many sources for transportation data in New Brunswick (e.g. vehicle counts), to support transportation infrastructure planning; however, there are few data available to support service planning or planning for the future. The following recommendations would provide decision-makers (e.g. transportation providers, policy makers and individual citizens) with the data and analysis they need to ensure transportation services and policies are aligned with the needs of New Brunswickers now and in the future.

Data integration between service providers also presents an opportunity to streamline the travel planning experience for users. People find it easier shifting from their automobiles to transit and other shared transportation for their trip-making when the experience is convenient, such as dealing with one app or website that aligns schedules and fare payments, rather than with multiple service providers (Vivre en ville 2013). In the future, new approaches to mobility such as Transportation-as-a-service (TaaS, or Mobility-as-a-service, or MaaS) promise to shift the focus from personal ownership of transportation modes onto transportation as a service, managed intermodally, with the focus being the journey. This will require effective data integration.

3.1 Explore the potential for a provincial household travel survey to support transportation planning in New Brunswick

Underlying need: Household travel surveys are common tools to help transportation planners understand the transportation needs of households and the individuals living there. Since these tools are most often only used only in large urban areas in New Brunswick, the transportation needs of citizens living in smaller towns, villages and unincorporated areas is not well understood. A routine approach to collecting these data will help decision-makers at all levels better understand current and changing transportation needs in the province.

Recommended lead: Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

3.2 Enhance the data collection capabilities of transit operators and non-profit community transportation operators to support their decision-making

Underlying need: While transit operators in New Brunswick are making progress towards better passenger usage data, the data collection equipment costs can limit the scope of their data collection. Non-profit community transportation operators may collect some data, but it can be a labour-intensive paper-based process. Provincial financial support could permit both transit operators and non-profit transportation operators to conduct data collection exercises or engage experts to gain a better understanding of their operations without needing to reduce service to offset data collection costs.

Recommended lead: Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

3.3 Study the deployment of an integrated mobile, web and phone-based travel planning platform in New Brunswick

Underlying need: While New Brunswick currently has a 511 phone number and website for disseminating weather and traveler information, this service only provides information on weather and road conditions that impact automobile travel, with some limited information on river ferries. There is currently no system that permits travelers to have the same type of information about all the available public or shared transportation services in the province. A further extension to this could be a system able to access schedules and make payment for a single voyage taken across multiple service providers (such as transit and intercity bus). There have been considerable advancements in online trip planning tools (e.g. Google Maps, Bing Maps) which



permit users to estimate and compare travel times from an origin to a destination by various modes in New Brunswick, but they still lack full integration among all modes. These tools are also not accessible by those with limited computer literacy. A study could investigate the potential to officially extend these integrated planning services in the 511 service, or to seek integration into a “211” initiative, a number reserved in the United States for “Essential Community Services” (FCC, 2017) that has found some interest in Canada as well.

Recommended leads: Department of Social Development, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

3.4 Support research to help improve transportation planning, policy and operations

Underlying need: Ensuring research remains incorporated in a provincial transportation strategy will help inform decision-making, provide additional insight to policy making, and contribute to enhanced transportation service delivery and operations. It can also be used to pilot and evaluate new and innovative ideas, while assessing their impact through a number of different lenses, including health, social sciences and engineering and the natural sciences. Examples include additional research into the effectiveness and impact of volunteer driver programs, and gaps in accessible transportation provision.

Recommended leads: New Brunswick post-secondary institutions, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, other possible leads: New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network, New Brunswick Health Research Foundation

Recommendation #4: Enhance the availability of affordable, accessible and effective urban and rural transportation options

Successfully pivoting New Brunswick from its dependency on the single-occupancy vehicle will mean ensuring alternatives that New Brunswickers will accept. The following recommendations outline ways to enhance the availability of affordable, accessible and effective urban and rural transportation options by fostering the conditions for success of these options.

4.1 Enhance the regional reach of transit and foster collaboration with non-profit transportation operators and intercity bus

Underlying need: There are some recent and successful examples of regional transportation initiatives in New Brunswick that offer considerable potential for replication including: regional volunteer driver programs, suburban commuter transit in Saint John (COMEX), and park'n'ride locations. Further coordination of these programs, including intercity bus, could make these options a realistic and preferable choice to commuting by driving one's own automobile.

Recommended leads: Regional Service Commissions, transit departments/agencies/commissions

4.2 Provide stable core funding to allow community transportation initiatives to focus on service delivery

Underlying need: Many communities are served by volunteer driver programs partially funded by Community Inclusion Networks (CINs), various other government funded programs, private sponsors, service clubs and others. The majority of operations in New Brunswick are based in smaller towns and villages and have developed in response to a lack of shared or affordable private transportation in their communities and surrounding areas. They transport persons with mobility issues and those who do not own vehicles to appointments and errands using a volunteer's vehicle. One of the most frequented trip purpose is travel to medical appointments. Each volunteer driver program has to train, accredit and insure drivers, reimburse them, provide dispatch scheduling services, write grant applications, and bookkeeping among other activities. Given the growing importance of these programs to helping New Brunswickers meet their needs with transportation, these programs need to have the right conditions to foster growth and success. The Government of New Brunswick could take the lead in helping to alleviate the overhead burden through a provincial program that ensures group insurance coverage, stable funding, and consistent training.

Recommended lead: Department of Health, Department of Social Development.

4.3 Study the multi-purposing of assets like school buses, nursing home shuttles, and other accessible vehicles to serve as community transportation vehicles.

Underlying need: The Committee believes there is a considerable interest among New Brunswickers to see existing provincial transportation assets, such as school buses, used or made available to support individual and community transportation needs. The challenge is that there are numerous regulatory and policy constraints that complicate this for school bus use in particular, including ensuring sufficient capacity for all eligible students, ensuring busses are available to transport students during a mid-day school closure, and maintaining student safety. Nevertheless, there is precedent for this approach in other jurisdictions and a study could clarify the potential for school busses to serve as community transportation, including identifying and regulations or policies that would need to be changed to facilitate the service.

There is also great potential to leverage nursing homes for assisting in rural and community transportation. A nursing home may be an accessible public building in a rural community, offering potential for leveraging overhead and office space for organizing community transportation. Many homes own accessible vehicles to transport their residents, and these vehicles could be shared with community groups. There have been some pilot projects in New Brunswick that have investigated this approach on an individual nursing home basis; however, there is the potential to study how this could be approached on a provincial level, including the potential for partnering with volunteer driver programs.

Recommended leads: Department of Education, New Brunswick Nursing Home Association

4.4 Enhance accessibility of transportation for persons with a disability by setting implementation targets for fully accessible transit systems, parking, funding for vehicle retrofits, and adaptive driving services

The Committee recommends that governments and service providers take a holistic approach to addressing accessibility needs in transportation, including honouring existing barrier-free requirements. The Committee has included here a list of “early wins” that are specific actions that can be taken immediately, especially in light of the expected increased demand for accessible services in the future:

- 4.4.1 Implement fully accessible municipal transit routes within the next 5 years, and to develop incentives for accessible taxis;**
- 4.4.2 Ensure annual provincial funding for the New Brunswick Vehicle Retrofit Program is increased at a rate to accommodate the growth in users and address current application backlog; approximately 15% per year for the next 4 years.**
- 4.4.3 Expand the provincial Adaptive Driving Service (Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation) to five days per week and investigate a satellite clinic elsewhere in New Brunswick;**

Recommended lead: Department of Social Development, municipal transit departments/agencies/commissions

4.5 Encourage businesses to help in the design, use and funding of community transportation initiatives

Underlying need: Workers are not alone in feeling the prohibitive costs of private vehicles in accessing the labour market. Employers also signal difficulties hiring and retaining workers. While fixed-route transit is typically a large city initiative, a number of communities throughout New Brunswick have taken the initiative to develop smaller scale transportation programs, such as providing a community van or single route bus service. Local businesses can play a valuable role in helping tailor a community transportation initiative to the needs of its workers or clients, enhancing ridership and benefiting other users as well. Community transportation initiatives could work with large employers as well as chambers of commerce to identify needs and make routes and times mutually accommodating. Improved transportation to grocery stores, banking, government services and others can provide economic benefits that may warrant the participation of these service providers as well.

Recommended lead: Community transportation providers, municipalities, Department of Post Secondary Education and Labour, employers, Chambers of Commerce.

4.6 Explore ways to encourage ridership, connectivity and network growth in intercity bus

Underlying need: Intercity bus operations are currently privately owned, but economically regulated through the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) of New Brunswick, which approves routes, fares, and entrants to the market. There is potential to enhance ridership and connectivity, though the mechanism to do this is unclear. While experience in other modes has found economic deregulation improved competition, better prices, and a better ability to adapt to market conditions, economic regulation is typically maintained in intercity bus travel to ensure service to smaller markets. Research is needed to determine ways to enhance New Brunswickers use of intercity bus, which may include understanding and cataloguing opportunities for coordination, and exploring current mechanisms for economic regulation.

Recommended lead: Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

4.7 Make VIA Rail in New Brunswick a realistic alternative for daily commuters and intercity travelers

Given that the Government of Canada sees passenger rail as an essential national service, it needs to use VIA Rail to more effectively serve commuters and intercity travelers in New Brunswick. The service in New Brunswick serves primarily tourist clientele due to its infrequent operation, while it caters to business and other travelers in the Quebec City to Windsor corridor. Making VIA Rail service a realistic option for commuters and intercity travelers in New Brunswick would provide a concrete way to facilitate economic inclusion while also helping to reduce dependence on the automobile. The Province of New Brunswick will need to continue to work with the federal Crown Corporation VIA Rail to highlight the potential for enhanced service in New Brunswick.

Recommended lead: Department of Transportation and Infrastructure

4.8 Encourage and enable the development of Active Transportation infrastructure to support walking, biking, and wheeling in urban and rural areas

Active transportation (AT) is any form of human powered transportation and is a key part of a maintaining a healthy lifestyle and reducing automobile dependence. New Brunswick faces particular challenges in that there are currently no mechanisms for funding and planning AT infrastructure and programs in unincorporated areas, though this could be addressed through Regional Service Commission adoption of transportation planning duties. At a minimum, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NB DTI) could be tasked to pave the shoulders of high traffic rural routes and connectors to rural schools as part of its routine road maintenance activities.

Provincial and municipal governments can play an important role in helping to build a culture of AT use by ensuring that built environment decisions (e.g., schools, public buildings, businesses) utilize an active transportation lens when developing the locations, spaces, routes and interactions. Programs that encourage group use of AT, such as a “walking or biking school bus” help to build this culture, and do not necessarily have to be limited to urban applications or walking from home. Incorporating lessons and activities in the public education system, such as ensuring more opportunities to walk, bike or wheel to school, and fostering transit use, would assist in encouraging long-term changes to travel behaviour.

Improved active transportation infrastructure, such as “Complete Streets,” that includes design elements to facilitate safe and efficient use by vehicles and AT users, is an approach worthy of consideration among all urban and rural areas in New Brunswick.

4.8.1 Promote the “Complete Streets” concept for consideration in all New Brunswick urban and rural areas

4.8.2 Promote amenities, such as bike racks, lockers and showers, at places of work to encourage cycling for commuting

4.8.3 Implement an awareness campaign to promote the health, social and environmental benefits of Active Transportation use

4.8.4 Encourage bike co-ops in making bicycle ownership and maintenance affordable, easy and fun

Underlying need: Every year, municipalities and law enforcement officials come into possession of hundreds of bicycles, many of which are never claimed by their owners. ‘Bike co-ops’ can help pair people with unclaimed bikes and teach them, particularly youth, newcomers and new converts, to service their new bikes. Governments and private sector sports shops could team up and offer voucher incentives to trade in old bikes for upgrades if they become more serious, and repurpose old bikes to others.

Recommended lead: Municipal governments working with not-for-profits, Wellness Branch within the Department of Social Development.

4.9 Continue and expand the practice of making transit more affordable and understandable to those most in need

Underlying need: While less expensive than owning a vehicle, transit passes can represent a significant household expense for those living in poverty and may be the only feasible option for someone to maintain economic and social inclusion. All municipal transit operations include some type of transit discount pass, and some also have programs that distribute free or discounted passes to non-profit groups for distribution to their clients. Existing, and new transit operations, should continue to provide free or discounted transportation passes to lower income household members and newcomers through partnerships with local non-profit groups, particularly during low use periods. Further, transit operators may wish to conduct outreach to assist new and prospective users in navigating the system, including hiring post-secondary aged young adults to assist designated passengers

Recommended lead: Municipal transit departments/agencies/commissions

4.10 Develop standards and guidelines for emerging on-demand and autonomous (e.g. self-driving) mobility services

Underlying need: On-demand ride sharing services like Uber and Lyft have captured a considerable share of trips in many large metropolitan areas, and it is likely that these types of services will soon become available among New Brunswick cities despite a number of issues that have been associated with them. In addition, autonomous (e.g. self-driving) and semi-autonomous vehicles are gradually emerging as feasible transportation options well, though there has been limited discussion on their application in the New Brunswick context. Ticoll (2015) outlines many of these disruptions, from more immediate autonomous commercial vehicles on highways to on-demand services, as well as their impact on trucking and taxi industry jobs, data proprietorship, and fiscal revenues. The UK government, for example, is looking to autonomous vehicles as a means to address 'last mile' challenges by bridging residents in rural communities onto existing and accessible transportation networks.

Recommended lead: Department of Justice and Public Safety (Motor Vehicle Act)

Recommendation #5: Develop an action plan to implement the strategy

Recommendations in this strategy outline approaches to effectively implement and operationalize the strategy, over a period of years though in the interim, there is a need to ensure the strategy is effectively communicated to those who need to take action, and for progress to be monitored.

5.1 Assemble a provincial transportation oversight committee to monitor progress on the implementation of the Strategy until clear ownership is achieved

Underlying need: This oversight committee would serve to oversee the implementation, monitoring and communications for the Strategy until clear ownership is achieved. Members should include representatives from government, public transportation, private transportation, community driver programs, active transportation and disability organizations.

Recommended lead: Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation.



7. Summary

This Strategy represents a major contribution to transportation service and policy in New Brunswick. This inclusive and sustainable transportation strategy represents the first time in New Brunswick that a transportation strategy has been developed to look broadly across all aspects of transportation provision in the province. The focus is on areas which have the greatest opportunity to make a difference by addressing the systematic issues that have resulted in many New Brunswickers not having access to the transportation they want and need. The following summarizes the content of this document, and presents a thorough and solid approach to positioning New Brunswick to meet the challenges and opportunities of the next 20 years.

There are five main reasons why a new transportation vision is needed in New Brunswick:

Reason #1: New Brunswick has largely achieved its previous vision for automobile-based mobility, but this mobility now makes populations dependent on the ability to own and drive a car.

Reason #2: There is no broad “vision for mobility” for transit, bus and passenger rail services in New Brunswick today, only a duty to provide economical services that have yet to achieve their full potential to attract riders.

Reason #3: New Brunswickers are looking for a “vision for mobility” that improves access for those in greatest need, lessens the costs to citizens, and ensures support for community initiatives that use transportation to foster economic and social inclusion.

Reason #4: New Brunswickers presently look to the automobile to facilitate their economic and social inclusion, therefore changing their behavior can be a long process that needs to begin sooner rather than later.

Reason #5: A common vision is needed by entities responsible for planning and delivering transportation to realize efficiency gains with societal benefits through improved public health and access to employment.

The Committee also realized that achieving any vision requires first understanding whether the pieces are in place to ensure the new vision, whatever it may be, can be enacted.

There are five major requirements that are needed to ensure New Brunswick can pivot to a new transportation vision:

Requirement #1: Coordination and connectivity of services to facilitate access;

Requirement #2: Conditions to foster successful and inclusive alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle;

Requirement #3: Transportation data for decision-making;

Requirement #4: Province-wide transportation planning;

Requirement #5: Ownership of a provincial transportation planning and service policy.

The Committee believed that by understanding the reasons why a new strategy is needed, and the requirements of the system to ensure any vision can be enacted, it could develop a vision for transportation that facilitate the pivot to a new way of thinking about transportation in New Brunswick.

The Committee believed that any Strategy wishing to improve transportation options for its citizens significantly had to align transportation investments with three other areas of intervention (**levers**). Improved **land use planning** can alleviate transportation issues, and avoid creating them in the first place, by locating public infrastructure and services (e.g. healthcare, education, shopping and leisure) in areas accessible by active and shared transportation. Improved **information** sharing by providers can raise public awareness on options, while better information on traveler needs (active, shared, and single-occupancy vehicle users alike) can improve the offering of shared services (e.g. coverage, frequency, travel times). Pivoting to more inclusive and sustainable transportation options includes focusing on **behaviours**, such as nudges to shift travel mode choices at critical points in decision-making (e.g. buying or replacing a vehicle) and improving the design of buildings and the built environment to enhance the utility of shared and active transportation.

The Committee developed a vision for transportation that was best articulated as a “Statement of Interest”. **There are six main goals that should form the basis for a vision to guide the future of transportation policy and service in New Brunswick**

Statement of Interest: New Brunswick has an interest in supporting the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of urban and rural communities by developing and promoting a provincial, integrated, affordable, accessible, multimodal, sustainable transportation plan.

Goals

1. **To maximize the economic and social inclusion of individuals and families, including those with a disability, by ensuring the availability of affordable, accessible and effective transportation options;**
2. **To ensure the transportation needs of New Brunswickers are systematically understood and addressed by employing consistent and effective province-wide and regional approaches to integrated transportation and land use planning and transportation service delivery;**
3. **To maximize the benefits of current investments in transportation by enhancing coordination within and among the provincial, municipal and federal public sectors, and the non-profit and private sectors.**
4. **To enhance the vibrancy and sustainability of urban and rural areas through land use patterns, development design, and location choices of essential public and private services that cater to users of transit, community driver programs, ridesharing, and active transportation, while reducing reliance on the single occupancy automobile.**
5. **To identify and address gaps in roles and responsibilities in transportation planning and service provision that currently limit broader coordination, system integration, and achievement of department or agency targets for economic and social inclusion, modal split, and climate change mitigation.**
6. **To ensure that provincial funding, legislative and regulatory mechanisms exist to develop, sustain and grow alternatives to the private automobile for local and intercity travel, including dedicated provincial support for municipal and regional transit systems, and non-profit community transportation programs.**

Finally, the Committee has prepared a set of five main recommendations, including 31 supporting recommendations, to meet the identified requirements for the transportation, and permit achieving the six goals outlined in the vision.

The five main recommendations and 31 supporting recommendations are:

Recommendation #1: Clarify roles and responsibilities for transportation services in New Brunswick

- 1.1 Adopting a provincial transportation services Statement of Interest to set a provincial vision and goals
- 1.2 Ensuring provincial laws, regulations and policies are amended or in place to enable the recommendations in this Strategy
- 1.3 Reviewing provincial department and agency internal transportation policies and practices to identify opportunities to collaborate and coordinate with each other and with transportation providers to enhance and streamline the user experience, in particular for Social Development and Post-Secondary Education, Training & Labour clients accessing essential programs
- 1.4 Investigating the potential for a single provincial entity to oversee the operationalization of the transportation Strategy

Recommendation #2: Improve the planning, delivery and alignment of transportation services

- 2.1 Dedicating provincial funding for expanding transit and community transportation to help meet the goals of the strategy
- 2.2 Mandating Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) to develop regional transportation plans.
- 2.3 Requiring provincial departments and municipalities to develop Transportation Impact Assessments (TIAs) when locating large-scale developments.
- 2.4 Further aligning transportation and land use planning to encourage developments, including social housing, that foster transit access and use

Recommendation #3: Improve and integrate transportation data for decision-making and trip-making

- 3.1 Exploring the potential for a provincial household travel survey to support transportation planning in New Brunswick
- 3.2 Enhancing the data collection capabilities of transit operators and non-profit community transportation operators to support their decision-making
- 3.3 Study the deployment of an integrated mobile, web and phone-based travel planning platform in New Brunswick
- 3.4 Supporting research to help improve transportation planning, policy and operations

Recommendation #4: Enhance the availability of affordable, accessible and effective urban and rural transportation options

- 4.1 Enhancing the regional reach of transit and foster collaboration with non-profit transportation operators and intercity bus
- 4.2 Providing stable core funding to allow community transportation initiatives to focus on service delivery
- 4.3 Studying the multi-purposing of assets like school buses and nursing home shuttles to serve as accessible community transportation vehicles
- 4.4 Enhancing accessibility of transportation for persons with a disability by setting implementation targets for fully accessible transit systems, parking, funding for vehicle retrofits, and adaptive driving services:
 - 4.4.1 Implementing fully accessible municipal transit routes within the next 5 years, and to developing incentives for accessible taxis
 - 4.4.2 Ensuring annual provincial funding for the New Brunswick Vehicle Retrofit Program is increased at a rate to accommodate the growth in users and address current application backlog; approximately 15% per year for the next 4 years.
 - 4.4.3 Expanding the provincial Adaptive Driving Service (Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation) to five days per week and investigate a satellite clinic elsewhere in New Brunswick;
- 4.5 Encouraging businesses to help in the design, use and funding of community transportation initiatives
- 4.6 Exploring ways to encourage ridership, connectivity and network growth in intercity bus
- 4.7 Make VIA Rail in New Brunswick a realistic alternative for daily commuters and intercity travelers
- 4.8 Encouraging and enabling the development of Active Transportation infrastructure to support walking, biking, and wheeling in urban and rural areas
 - 4.8.1 Promoting the “Complete Streets” concept for consideration in all New Brunswick urban and rural areas
 - 4.8.2 Promoting amenities, such as bike racks, lockers and showers, at places of work to encourage cycling for commuting
 - 4.8.3 Implementing an awareness campaign to promote the health, social and environmental benefits of Active Transportation use
- 4.9 Encouraging bike co-ops in making bicycle ownership and maintenance affordable, easy and fun
- 4.10 Continuing and expand the practice of making transit more affordable and understandable to those most in need
- 4.11 Developing standards and guidelines for emerging on-demand and autonomous (e.g. self-driving) mobility services

Recommendation #5: Develop an action plan to implement the strategy

- 5.1 Assembling a provincial transportation oversight committee to monitor progress on the implementation of the Strategy until clear ownership is achieved

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9. Appendix: List of invited presenters

Between 2015 and 2017, the following individuals or organizations were invited to provide information to help the Committee better understand various aspects of transportation in New Brunswick. Their inclusion here is not an indication of their endorsement or support of the report or its findings.

- Allain, Angela. Codiac Transpo
- Arsenault, Jake. Black Arcs
- Atkinson, Susan. New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Governance (NBELG)
- Bartlett, Ted. Transport Action Atlantic
- Basque, MéliSSa. Déplacement Péninsule
- Beers, Kim. Tele-Drive Albert County
- Bossé, Normand. New Brunswick Child Youth Advocate (NBCYA)
- Brown, Joanna. Rural Rides
- Capital City Cycles, Fredericton
- Cassidy, Mike. Coach Atlantic Group
- Clair, Lori. Black Arcs
- Coon, David. Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of New Brunswick.
- Dassouki, Ahmed. New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NB DTI)
- Desjardins, Michel. Post-Carbon Moncton.
- Doyle, James. New Brunswick Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (NB DTI)
- Eidlin, Eric. United States Federal Transit Administration
- Farquharson, Susan. Charlotte County Dial a Ride
- Gould, Kevin, New Brunswick Office of the Chief Medical Officer for Health (OCMOH)
- Johnstone, Lori. New Brunswick Social Development (NBSD)
- Kocyla, Benjamin. Commission de Services Régionaux de la Péninsule Acadienne (CSRPA)
- MacKenzie, Patricia. New Brunswick Executive Council Office (NBECO)
- Mancuso, Michelina. New Brunswick Health Council (NBHC)
- Mills, Dan. New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education and Training (NB PETL)
- Muecke, Cristin. New Brunswick Office of the Chief Medical Officer for Health (OCMOH)
- Pinet, Léo-Paul. Centre de Bénévolat de la Péninsule acadienne
- Pitre, Wenda. Coach Atlantic Group
- Pollack, Candace. New Brunswick Child Youth Advocate (NBCYA)
- Price, Jeff. United States Federal Transit Authority
- Richard, Gaston. New Brunswick Employment and Continuous Learning Services (NB ECLS)
- Sanford, Olivia, New Brunswick Office of the Chief Medical Officer for Health (OCMOH)
- Saunders, Brian. Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons (PCSDP)
- Savard, Daniel. New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Governance (NBELG)
- Savoie, Gilmond. Transport Communautaire Kent
- Savoie, Nicole. New Brunswick Employment and Continuous Learning Services (NB ECLS)
- Talbot, Michael. Intelligent Mobility, Government of the United Kingdom
- Thibodeau, Stéphane. City of Moncton
- Ticoll, David. University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs.
- Webber, Thomas. New Brunswick Education and Early Childhood Development (NB EECD)
- Whalen, Christian. New Brunswick Child Youth Advocate (NBCYA)
- White-Masry, Karen. New Brunswick Office of the Chief Medical Officer for Health (OCMOH)

