RM of Piney Transit Options

Phase I

Spring 2021
Prepared by
Connie Gamble



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I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development plan is an initiative of the RM of Piney encouraged by a 2020/21 Building Sustainable Communities grant in response to recent surveys and community public forums. The initiative aligns with the strategic plan to support the betterment of individual lives in the community, more specifically the age in place focus. This planning will form Phase I and provide the RM with information on transit option solutions and service potential to improve transportation shortfalls within the municipality.



The need of transportation support has been repeatedly expressed by community members in various forums and surveys with the need to travel to urban centers for services and shopping while also fulfilling a social need. Local services can provide some essential goods but they don't provide everything. According to the latest survey 35% of residents travel to Steinbach weekly and 27% go to Winnipeg monthly, 1 and 2 hour trips respectively for many residents.

The ability to travel for work, school, shopping and services is taken for granted by many people with access to a personal vehicle or public transit. However, for others who do not own a car or are unable to drive by choice or necessity and do not have access to public transit, being able to take part in daily life is a burden to arrange rides and/or financially limiting.

For those who do not own a car or unable to drive by choice or necessity, to take part in daily life is a burden to arrange rides and/or financially limiting.

Regional transportation in rural Manitoba is an issue echoed by those who had previously relied on Greyhound Bus service which ceased for the RM of Piney in 2009 with no replacement. The complexity of providing adequate transportation in rural areas is becoming increasingly recognized as a priority issue to ensure a sustained quality of life for rural seniors according to the Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS) transportation toolkit.

Seventy percent of rural municipalities have handi/accessible transit service however there are many gaps in service; especially for those that don't live within a town making trips especially to larger urban centers expensive. The provincial mobility disadvantaged transportation program (MDTP) is aimed at these types of services but grants have not increased in some 30 years leaving many services financially precarious and regional transportation lacking.

Transportation has also been identified as a determinant of health by the World Health Organization.

With transportation support, communities have the opportunity to improve social factors, employment, tourism and the environment although it is difficult to show an X amount of investment is a Y return in the community.

The RM is a sparsely populated area where previously available services have been centralized to larger urban areas. Although the focus of the report is on seniors and those in need, residents of all ages can benefit from improved transportation services.

TONS Transportation Options Network for Seniors

According to TONS, there is a growing concern around the sustainability of accessible van operations in Manitoba mostly due to lack of funding support, outdated models of service, transportation dead zones and underutilized vans. There is a lot of potential but some drastic changes and collaboration are needed.

With 35% of the 1725 residents over the age of 60 and median income lower than the provincial average, affordability is a key issue. Although the fares people were willing to pay varied considerably within each community, on average an individual resident is willing to pay about 20 cents per km. Depending on the type of vehicle, non-profit accessible van services charge 40-80 cents per km and many also charge driver fees requiring multiple passengers for affordability.

The primary challenges to implement transit is not only funding, but ridership, a vehicle and drivers; a sufficient number of passengers riding together in an appropriate type of vehicle with qualified and available drivers in an ongoing sustainable manner. Many logistical items will also need to be addressed from scheduling to where a vehicle is located to operation protocols as well as ownership.

Four primary passenger types arose through public consultation:

1) Seniors to travel to a variety of locations for medical appointments,
2) Seniors attending community activities including social group outings, day programs, congregate meals, as well as visiting within the RM or neighbouring municipalities,
3) Passengers who want to shop in a wide variety of stores or obtain services in Steinbach and Winnipeg,
4) Passengers interested to travel either within the RM, neighboring regions, to Steinbach or Winnipeg for events or attractions.

The RM of Piney (RM) is reliant on personally owned vehicles with the nearest Canadian urban area about one hour away for many residents. With few services in the majority of the RM, travel is required for many necessities including medical appointments.
35% of residents > age 60 (seniors).



There is a continued role for private vehicles and volunteers as they provide a valuable resource for those currently unable to travel to medical appointments and there may be opportunities to improve the manner in which they are engaged.

According to a CAA article in 2018, 67% of Canadians don't know the cost of owning and operating a common vehicle for a year and excluding depreciation, fuel is most costly at $1500 with routine maintenance $500-$700 for a compact car. Assuming 20,000 km per year the operating cost could be $10,000 or 50 cents per km. Other research notes that those who no longer drive their own vehicles could re-invest this money into their continued mobility and transportation budget.

The list of transit options investigated included private vehicles, corporate vehicles operating under the MDTP as a community van, taxi/vehicle for hire, technology supports, car sharing and bus charter.

To meet the needs of the majority and work towards a sustainable operation, an accessible community van should be further explored. It is expected that 4-5 people will have to travel together to achieve the amount people are willing to pay individually on average according to the most recent survey and funding available during spring 2021.

With improved rural broadband, technology supported apps to match drivers and passengers could be further investigated to support transportation.

Bus charters could be an occasional solution when there are many more passengers to make it cost effective. As there is no local service available, it would need to be booked in advance from Winnipeg. School buses are not available to provide this service.

A provincial/municipal/local partnership is best suited as a business model to effectively operate a transit service. Funding and support from a variety of sources is common for community van type services throughout Canada. With the provincial MDTP grant, the municipality must be a sponsor but need not operate the service. With the most recent throne speech statement in 2020, there is the potential for grants to be made available as the Government stated investment in all types of infrastructure including public transit and rural broadband. Increased broadband would support communications requirements in community vans for safety purposes, dispatch, scheduling and other communications with drivers or regional service potential.

With the expectation of seniors to increase by 43% in Manitoba over the next 20 years, those who choose not to drive, or reach the point when cessation of driving becomes necessary due to functional and health decrements, transit options will to allow residents to age in their rural communities. If residents are not able to access services or social opportunities they will be compelled to move elsewhere. Social connectedness matters to us all for well-being and quality of life.

Interim steps, consideration of a community van, municipal support, promotion and future steps are summarized in section XV to move transit service forward for the RM of Piney.

With an expected 43% increase in seniors in Manitoba over 20 years, interim steps recommended including further pursuit of an accessible community van with a provincial/municipal/local partnership.

II ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the many supporters providing information for this report including the public who took the time to submit surveys and attend open houses. In the RM of Piney area support by Service to Seniors Coordinator, Chair of East Borderland Community Housing, Sunrise Economic Development, Piney Chamber of Commerce and to Carl and Kay's Fine Foods and Woodridge Vintage Corner Store for allowing survey box collections.

Thanks to all the rural municipalities/towns/communities and accessible/handivan services that took the time to share valuable information on their operations for this report including in the RMs of Stuartburn, Desalaberry, Emerson-Franklin, Morris, West Interlake and Argyle.

Thank you to the Transportation Options Network for Seniors (TONS) for networking opportunities, resources and other project support.



III PURPOSE OF REPORT

- Phase I - transit options and service potential
- Research approach

This report is intended to provide information to evaluate the options and feasibility of public transit in the RM of Piney to meet the needs of people requiring transportation support as part of a community.

The transit development plan is the initiative of the RM of Piney encouraged by responses in several recent surveys, community public forums and aligns with the strategic plan to support the betterment of individual lives in the community, more specifically the age in place focus. The work is supported through a 2020/21 Building Sustainable Communities grant as well as the Gas Tax rebate from the Manitoba government as funded from the Federal government.

***Community Response**
***RM Strategic Plan -Age in Place** } **transit options & service potential** ⟹ **PHASE I TRANSIT**
***Grants**

This planning will form Phase I and provide the RM with information on transit option solutions and service potential to improve transportation shortfalls within the municipality that may include medical transport (non-urgent), public transit and product delivery. The intent is to develop a plan with a focus on seniors, mobility challenges and low-income residents but residents of all ages to benefit from improved transportation supports and potentially replace single car use.



Research Approach

A variety of sources and methods are relied upon to gather data about transportation related issues. Sources include online searches, community consultation, surveys, communication with neighboring regions and other rural municipalities, government agencies, academics, insurance providers, seniors organizations, academic sites, transportation providers and community partners East Borderland Community Housing, Service to Seniors, Sunrise Corner and the Piney Chamber of Commerce.

Community consultation, including past survey transportation related responses, is used to identify the type of service most useful to those requiring transportation supports. Public open houses were held in Piney, Sprague and Woodridge in September 2020. A transportation survey was offered in paper, electronic and telephone format in September and October 2020.

IV BACKGROUND

- What is the transit need
- Current situation in the RM of Piney

COMMUNITY VOICES

*need to travel to urban town/city for services
*no transit option except private vehicle reliance
*difficult to find drivers
*informal rides too expensive for some
*missing discontinued Greyhound Bus

RESEARCH FINDS

*lack of adequate rural transportation common
*transportation becoming recognized as priority for seniors
*safety issues for those compelled to drive
*transportation is quality of life issue
*MB population of seniors to grow 43% over 20 years

Transit Need

The complexity of providing adequate transportation in rural areas of Manitoba is becoming increasingly recognized as a priority issue to ensure a sustained quality of life for rural seniors.[1]

Rural residents are more reliant on personally-owned vehicles than their urban counterparts. Some residents who have physical or mobility limitations may not drive. Safety is an issue for those who are compelled for their independence to drive but should no longer drive or are not comfortable driving to larger urban centers. Vehicles can be expensive to purchase and maintain and some residents may not have a driver's license.

> According to the Manitoba Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities; A Guide
>
> "As one caregiver's comment illustrates, however, the costs go beyond that of the price of gas. The real cost of this "underground" transportation system is the discomfort older persons have with their dependence on others to get around the community and beyond—a loss of both their independence and their pride. Several participants also raised a critical question: what do people without family members or helpful neighbours do?"

Transportation is a quality of life issue with the ability to live in a rural, remote community. Transportation options can foster independent living to allow residents to age in their community rather than moving away for services and social engagement. Transportation is integral to daily life for food, healthcare, education, employment, shopping (clothing to hardware to household/farm supplies) as well as recreation and entertainment.

Manitoba expects its population of seniors to increase by 43 per cent over the next 20 years[2]. A 2010 report by Transport Canada warned that lack of transportation is "a top concern" for seniors in rural areas, a demographic that will gradually form a bigger share of the population. Transportation has been identified as a determinant of health by the World Health Organization[3]. A study by the Seniors Transportation Working Group focusing on the mobility needs and transportation issues of an aging rural population in Manitoba finds that while significant mobility resources exist in some parts of the province, the lack of transportation alternatives in many small communities puts resident elders at greater risk of social isolation and a poor quality of life[4].

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[1] TONS transportation toolkit

[2] https://www.gov.mb.ca/seniors/afmb/index.html

[3] https://seniorsocialisolation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/working_together.pdf page 18

[4] https://tonsmb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/research-Rural-Report_MobilityNeeds_2006.pdf

Current Situation

In the RM of Piney residents are virtually 100% reliant on personally-owned vehicles (with the exception of school buses for children) since the demise of the Greyhound bus service to the RM in 2009 and discontinued stops by White Owl buses in 2015. The nearest taxi service in Steinbach is an hour away for many residents making it cost prohibitive. Some residents don't drive by choice or necessity. Those without access to a vehicle or unable to drive rely on friends, family or volunteers have no other options.

The Service to Seniors coordinator provides an informal ride matching service with privately owned vehicles, however, this option is said to be too expensive for some residents, at 35 cents per kilometre, and it is sometimes difficult to find available volunteer drivers as needed. About 1 trip per month was arranged in the fall of 2019 and spring 2020, while others arrange their own.

In the fall of 2020, a provincial grant was made available during the COVID-19 pandemic to fund essential transportation for seniors as costs rise with various restrictions during the unprecedented health challenge. Twelve trips were arranged in October 2020. As the number of COVID19 cases grew, volunteers were reluctant to continue to use their own vehicles, often being seniors themselves. Other rural regions with accessible transit that chose to operate for essential trips only had shields installed around drivers and transported only one passenger at a time.

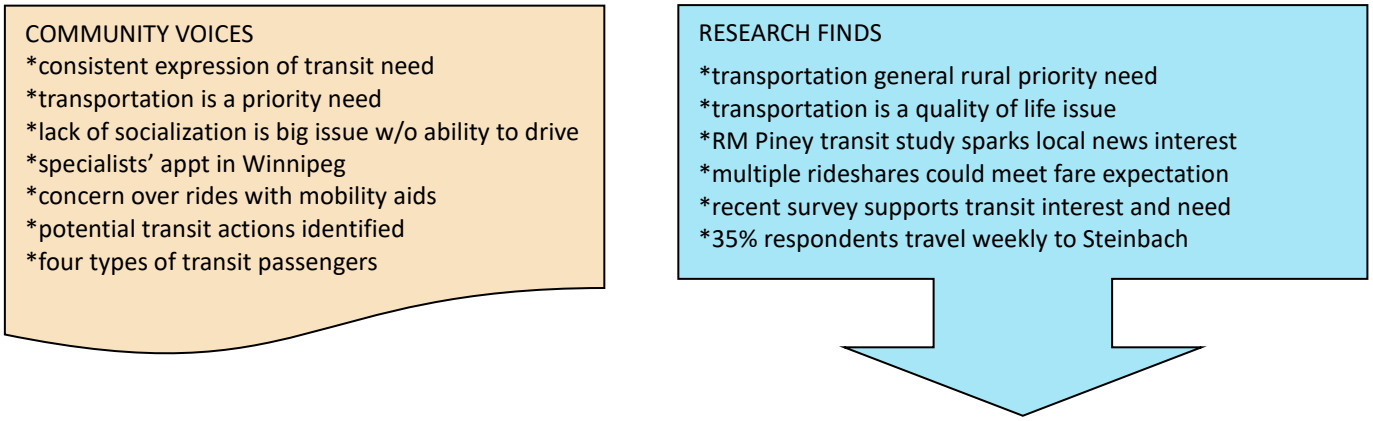
With very few services in the majority of the RM of Piney (compounded by inadequate internet) travel is required for many necessities. A major issue regarding service access in rural areas has been the centralization of the public and private services due to the increasing strain of maintaining services in sparsely populated and geographically isolated communities[5]. The local MPI agency is one example that closed in 2018. Local grocery store prices are more expensive with increasing transportation costs from urban areas but were able to increase stock during the COVID19 pandemic and the ongoing closure of the Canada/US border. A summary of retail and limited services in the RM of Piney is listed below:

- ✓ Grocery – Sprague, Woodridge, Vassar each have a small store – two are currently for sale
- ✓ Post office combined with grocery store in Sprague, Woodridge
- ✓ School kindergarten to grade 12- Sprague
- ✓ Banking – one in Sprague
- ✓ Healthcare – one limited primary health in Sprague with visiting doctors
- ✓ Hospitality (accommodations, restaurant/food, beverage room) – Sprague, Woodridge, South Junction
- ✓ Hair care – South Junction, Vassar, Woodridge
- ✓ 55+ independent living built in 2012. Additional housing for a personal care home and supportive care is planned dependant on fundraising efforts
- ✓ Community centers and senior centers located in Middlebro, Piney, South Junction, Sprague, Woodridge, Vassar
- ✓ Numerous general contractors and home-based businesses in many communities
- ✓ Forestry and peat harvesting
- ✓ Conservation and Climate office in Sprague

[5] Rural Report Mobility Needs 2006

V JUSTIFICATION

- Ongoing Need Identified by Communities
- 2020 Transportation Survey



Seniors have been requesting transportation support for appointments, access for services and social outings through public surveys and informally through a variety of RM forums. The desire of residents to have transportation options is a consistent need expressed in recent RM of Piney surveys:

- Transportation was ranked the highest need when respondents identified their top 3 service requirements in the October 2019 Housing Supply & Demand Survey.
- Under the RM's Age Friendly Initiative May 2018, respondents stated transportation support as one of the needs required to maintain a quality of life within the RM of Piney
- With the 75 Transportation surveys submitted October 2020, comments were supportive of the initiative especially for seniors and the often repeated the need to replace the lost Greyhound bus service.

<u>Housing Supply & Demand Survey October 2019</u>
Transportation was the highest ranked response to the following question:

- Knowing that you may not be able to afford certain services if you are only willing to pay certain amounts, what are the top 3 services you need/want to have in place as you get older?
  On the same survey was a 30% response for social and recreation opportunities. Other comments included:
- "Lack of socialization becomes a big issue when you live alone and cannot drive anymore."
- "Transportation to medical appointment in Winnipeg with specialists a couple of times a year is what I need. I don't drive in the heavy city traffic."
- "… seniors day in Piney Hall…if you are handicapped you are not able to go … no one is going to come pick you up. People don't want to deal with walkers and wheelchairs."

<u>Age Friendly Piney Community Consultation May 2018</u>
Individuals were asked to list the top five issues they felt needed to be most urgently addressed in their community. Forty-four participants (75%) identified at least one priority area. 47% of

participants included transportation (e.g., getting to larger centres for health appointments and other events and activities by public transportation or Handi-van) as a priority area.

Priority 4 of the report included the following potential transportation actions:

- Develop a system whereby residents can share transportation costs to larger centres (e.g., Steinbach and Winnipeg) to assist those who do not drive.
- Ask residents, especially older adults, to help develop a plan to ride share which also includes the Handi-van. This would include an effective method to communicate available rides (may include Services for Seniors or the RM of Piney website).
- Research grants and costs to acquire a Handi-van for all residents in the RM of Piney who need transportation to larger centres for appointments and shopping.

<u>2020 Transportation Survey & Communications</u>

- An open house was held in Piney September 7, in Sprague September 21 and in Woodridge September 24, 2020 with a total of 12 attendees. The RM of Piney Facebook page and RM monthly newsletters advertised the availability of the transit survey and open house dates.
- The RM of Piney monthly newsletter continued to provide updates on the transit project which sparked interest from a number of local news forums and local articles referenced the RM of Piney transit project.
- The Carillon "RM of Piney studies transit solutions" on September 17, 2020 by Jordan Ross
  - Update February 22, 2021 Pandemic Delays Pilot
- The Manitoba Co-operator "Rural community considers public transit options" on October 14, 2020 by Geralyn Wichers
- Dawson Trail Dispatch "Piney Tests Transit Plan" November 2020 issue by Marianne Curtis

The transportation survey yielded 75 responses.

Ridership is based on passengers and their transit preferences. Based on local community consultation, longer distance travel is a more sought-after service rather than local travel within a resident's own community. With a third of residents in the RM of Piney being 60 years old and better, this group is referenced here as "seniors" to distinguish their transit requirement while the term "passengers" includes all age groups. Seniors were 51% of survey respondents.

❖ Consultation revealed four primary types of transit passengers, although other travel needs and destinations were identified:

1) Seniors with requirement to travel to a variety of locations for medical appointments
   - Steinbach, Winnipeg, Morden, Altona, St. Anne
2) Seniors attending community activities including social group outings, day programs, congregate meals, as well as visiting within the RM or neighbouring municipalities
3) Passengers who want to shop in a wide variety of stores or obtain services in Steinbach and Winnipeg
4) Passengers interested to travel either within the RM, to Steinbach or Winnipeg for events or attractions.

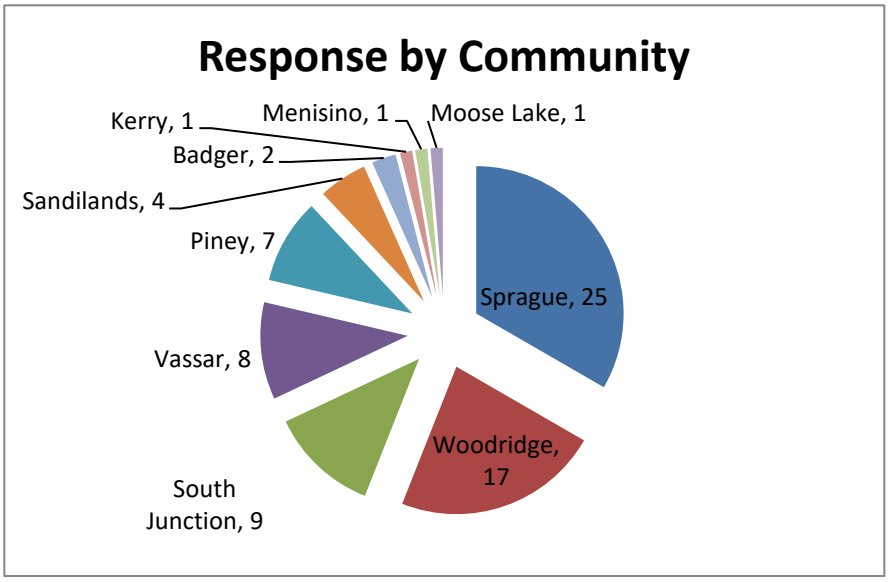
- **35% of survey respondents make a trip to Steinbach weekly, 27% go monthly, while 20% go to Winnipeg monthly and 51% sometimes. Shopping and medical purposes were selected as primary purposes for travel to Steinbach and Winnipeg.**
- **Travelling for events in the RM of Piney ranked slightly higher in frequency than travelling elsewhere.**
- **48% would consider parcel pickup/delivery to Steinbach, 32% no, 20% no answer.**

Several inquiries were also made for travel to Roseau and Warroad in the USA. Survey respondents indicated that such travel would support medical, shopping and other purposes.

Survey Highlights – See Appendix 1 for more survey result details

The two largest communities of Sprague and Woodridge provided 42 of the 75 responses

- Survey was also offered to neighboring areas, Moose Lake and Buffalo Point, as both are without transit



- The range of a round trip from a community to Steinbach varied considerably within each community itself. On average people are willing to pay an equivalent of 20 cents per kilometre considering the wide range of potential fares responses in the survey.
- Comments supported the need for transit especially for seniors and those without access to a vehicle. Those that do not need the service currently know others that need it and would appreciate knowing the service is available when they are in need.
- The frequency of travel for shopping, visiting, medical and events in noted in Appendix 1 to travel within the RM of Piney, to Steinbach, to Winnipeg and to neighboring regions.

VI DEMOGRAPHICS

- Older population in isolated, physically large land area
- Sprague and Woodridge largest community although no central community

COMMUNITY VOICES

*quiet, rural lifestyle
*some return to area for retirement
*deep community roots
*some moved away for more services, socialization
*no central community

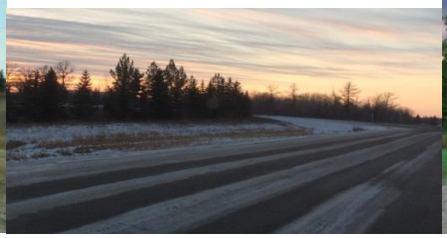
RESEARCH FINDS

*35% of residents > age 60; population 1725
*RM one of physically largest in MB
*isolated community
*growing interest in rural properties
*lower than MB average income
*maintained gravel & paved road network

The RM of Piney provides a quiet rural lifestyle at the extreme southeast corner of Manitoba, along the Canada-US border. Some residents were born in the area, some moved away for school/work and came back for retirement, and others enjoy the lifestyle with an abundance of natural resources in this area of 2433 square kilometres of which Crown land makes up 75%. It is a heavily forested area interspersed with agriculture land and part of the Sunrise Corner for tourism and economic development with its neighboring municipality of Stuartburn. As one of the physically largest of 98 rural municipalities in Manitoba, it has an extensive and well-maintained transportation network with several highways connecting urban areas with each other. The paved provincial highway 12 runs east-west along the lower third of the RM and ends at the US border. For further geography details see Appendix 2.

Agriculture, forestry, industry, tourism with a number of retail, service and manufacturing businesses are in the region. The logging industry and the railway gave rise to many of the communities and continues today. There is no central community but Sprague and Woodridge are the more populated areas. Sprague is in the southeast of the RM near the US border and Woodridge is approximately 55 km northwest.

The municipal infrastructure of roads is comprised of 4% paved roads and 96% gravel roads providing additional challenges with often harsh winter driving conditions. From many communities in the RM, residents travel an hour or two northwest to larger urban shopping and service areas of Steinbach and Winnipeg in Manitoba. Prior to the pandemic, residents in the southern portion often crossed the US border for shopping, medical and services.


As per the latest available 2016 census, the population is 1725 with 0.7 people per square kilometre. Since 2011, the RM's population has increased by 0.3%. Seasonal residents add approximately 25% to the sparse population throughout the year with growth particularly in the Woodridge and Sandilands sub-divisions that are about 50 km from Steinbach and an additional 70 km to Winnipeg. These sub-divisions are in the northwest section of the RM and thus closer to Steinbach and Winnipeg.

There is a growing interest in the RM of Piney and other regions of rural properties especially during the COVID19 pandemic "An explosion in Piney's housing market in 2020 has left the rural municipality in state

of bewilderment and awe."[6] The latest Census identifies 610 or 35% of residents aged 60 and better and 52% over the age of 50. The median age is 51 with median total income in 2015 among recipients of $23,962 as compared to $34,188 for Manitoba. Income includes double the amount of government transfers in the area as compared to the Manitoba average. Manitoba's population of seniors is expected to increase by 43 per cent over the next 20 years.

VII OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The overarching objectives of transit intent is to provide a sustainable, cost effective mode of travel available to RM of Piney region to continue to live in the community and have access to services, to socialize, to work and to learn.

More specifically, a public transit service is expected to:

- ✓ **be affordable and sustainable**
- ✓ **Serve entire RM Piney or a larger region**
- ✓ **focus on seniors and those in need**
- ✓ **not be intended as medical transport for urgent care**
- ✓ **provide door to door service in RM Piney/region**
- ✓ **transport people and potentially goods**
- ✓ **Be available year round**

RM VISION

To create a safe, healthy and prosperous environment to live, work and play in; and to encourage development that will complement and enhance the way of life for all residents.

Evaluation will include social, economic, and environmental considerations.

- Social – the impact on people in the communities with the provision of transit services
- Economic – the cost of acquiring and operating transit services including fares
- Environmental – the impact on the environment with a selected vehicle and operating plan

In terms of evaluation criteria, passengers and transit operators may have different perspectives on affordability, sustainability, reliability, availability, safety, predictability and door to door service. Affordability and sustainability are a contentious balancing act especially for a non-profit. Further details of perspectives are in listed in Appendix 3.

VIII OPPORTUNITIES

- Social Factors
  - Age in place & maintain residents in rural communities
  - Community spirit and inclusive communities
  - Alleviate social isolation
  - Well-being, quality of life, safety
- Employer Resource
- Tourism
- Environmental



[6] Pembina Valley Online "Explosion in Piney Housing Market Blowing Away All Expectations" Connor Gerbrandt, December 9, 2020 and "COVID Prompts Increased Interest In "The Rural Lifestyle", Connor Gerbrandt, May 24, 2020

COMMUNITY VOICES
*access to services needed
*longer distance to urban for shopping and medical
*desire for social outing opportunities
*reduce social isolation

RESEARCH FINDS
*promote community inclusiveness
*promote safety for those compelled to drive w/o travel options
*transportation important to reduce social isolation
*benefits for employers, tourism, environmental

Social factors

With the lack of services in the RM of Piney, the need to travel longer distances to urban centers for shopping, services and medical is supported by results of the 2020 transportation study. Being able to access services not available locally rather than being compelled to move elsewhere, allows residents of all ages to live in a rural area and to age in place within their communities, to visit with family and friends, and to take part in community events. Providing a public transit option will alleviate the need to drive and promote safety when you are no longer able to drive or have the confidence to safety drive but have no other options. This is intended to be promoted as community inclusiveness, by bringing awareness of ride share opportunities. Many social trips for all ages were suggested and are listed in the summary of public transit destinations section of Appendix 1.

Social inclusion can impact both the physical *and* mental health of community members[7]according to the Social Plan H BC Healthy Communities. Transportation's link to inclusive communities is also echoed by the Minister of Rural Economic Development.

> "Making sure everyone can get where they need to go safely, quickly and comfortably is essential to creating inclusive communities. Supporting vital projects like the purchase of these handi-vans in Selkirk, Morden and Morris, will ensure that all members of the community have transportation options that meet their unique needs."
> *The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Rural Economic Development Gov't of Canada News Release February 13, 2019*

Social connectedness matters to well-being and quality of life making transportation important for services and for social outings. Social isolation can occur where people may be alone and do not ask for help with their steadfast self-reliance and have no or little social contact. With the COVID-19 pandemic stay home orders in the Spring and Fall of 2020, most people better understand social isolation and feelings of despair by being alone and not able to go places or see friends and family.



[7]https://planh.ca/take-action/healthy-society/page/inclusive-communities

A University of Winnipeg (Urban Studies) study found that while significant mobility resources exist in some parts of the province, the lack of transportation alternatives in many small communities puts resident elders at greater risk of social isolation and a poor quality of life[8].

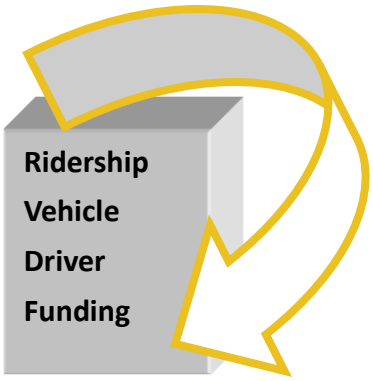
Employers could potentially tap into labour markets by improving the mobility of potential employees such as lower-income residents, youth, the working elderly and residents of communities that currently do not have transportation options. Efficient and affordable transportation is an important driver in economic growth in rural areas.[9]

Public transportation can attract **tourists** who might not otherwise visit the community or know where to go. Outings could be planned for residents and non-residents whether it be historical tours, day at the lake or community festivals as group travel may be more inviting and entertaining. Group charter services are provided by other accessible transit operators to support additional revenue opportunities for operational sustainability.

The potential to reduce local air pollution, and contribute to local climate change strategies by using a ride share rather than multiple vehicles travelling as individuals is also a potential. No specific **environmental** studies in this regard have been undertaken at this time and are included as a general comment.

IX CHALLENGES

- Ridership, vehicle, driver, funding
- Buy local
- Local investment and return
- Continued financial support
- Climate
- Distance to passengers and services
- Geography
- Cost of service
- Communications



COMMUNITY VOICES
*affordability concerns for long distance to urban
*limited local services
*medical difficult to coordinate rideshare
*accommodate wheelchairs, walkers
*cost of services to come to RM
*sparse population for fundraising

RESEARCH FINDS
*consistent ridership numbers required for sustainability
*large physical area with sparse and spread out population
*providing access to urban area may keep rural residents
*economic and social considerations
*lack of cell and internet capability for communications
*competing local fundraising projects

[8]https://tonsmb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/research-Rural-Report_MobilityNeeds_2006.pdf

[9] Rural Health Information Hub (US)

The very basic elements and challenges to a transit plan are ridership, a vehicle, a driver and funding.

Ridership will be determined by the cost of fares, schedule, availability and safety according to the 2020 transportation survey results. Appropriate scheduling is a priority to get passengers where they want to go, when they want to go. Ridership will be influenced favourably if a transit service is promoted as a community transport rather than the potential stigma and the outdated concept of a "handi van" where some may infer those who need help rather than community inclusiveness and open to all.

Ridership will be enhanced with an appropriate **vehicle**. Having a suitable vehicle will dictate how it can be used. Medical appointments were expressed as potentially difficult to schedule for ride shares which refers to multiple passengers travelling to the same/similar destinations using the same vehicle at the same time. "Difficult to ride share" infers that these may be one-off schedules and likely require a smaller and less expense vehicle for single rides. Shopping trips and social outings are conducive to a larger vehicle to bring together those who are not able to get to community events or choose not to drive. Vehicle accessibility is an important factor whether for mobility aid such as wheelchairs or ease of entering and egress. A survey respondent noted that a local senior's day at the community center did not accommodate the travel need for someone in a wheelchair.

Volunteer **drivers** will favourably impact cash flow, but if there is volunteer fatigue, a paid driver may attract greater willingness to drive. Those willing and available to drive may not hold a class 4 license if a larger vehicle is required for 11 or more passengers. The coordination of drivers' and vehicle location within a large physical land area is another logistical challenge.

It is expected that with the start of a transit service, only one vehicle will be made available unless significant **funding** opportunities are forthcoming. Financial support of a transit service is comprised of affordable fares, fundraising and grants. If fares are too high, those that could benefit may choose not to travel. If fares are too low and no other grants are available, the transit service will not be sustainable. Funds need to consider operational items such as scheduling, oversight and reporting requirements along with ongoing driver and vehicle service needs. There could be greater revenue opportunities with the capacity to transport more passengers to contribute favourable to the financial bottom line. With a lower than Manitoba average income, a third of residents over age 60 and low population density per square kilometre, sustainable transportation requires financial support. Charters and parcel pick/up delivery options are also expected to aid financial support.



Negative feedback may be rendered by **local business** for requests to go shopping outside the RM. However, a "local {Ontario} sustainability report produced in 2011… indicates that access to large urban centers needs to be occasionally provided in order to retain residents in rural areas in the long term".[10] This is similar to private car owners who travel to larger urban areas to purchase items and services not available in the RM.

It will be difficult to show that an X amount of **investment is a Y return** within the community. Transit options need to consider the financial aspect, but also the social opportunities as described in Section VIII with community rewards now and in the future. A service solution is expected to take time for community members to increase ridership knowledge and usage and operations to adjust to preferences.

[10] Ontario's Accelerating Rural Transportation Options

Continued financial support is generally more difficult once an operation is established. Fundraising efforts often support starting a new service but not necessarily ongoing costs. In the past government grants provide for initial funding for a new vehicle but limited in the way for ongoing or replacement vehicles.

Long **harsh winters** are common in the area increasing potential of isolation. The 2006 Rural Report Mobility Needs was not completed because "The greatest difficulty encountered in this study was attempting to visit rural seniors in their communities because of the dangerous winter driving conditions that are commonplace throughout Manitoba."

With no central community in the region, **seniors are spread out in the physically large land** area thus requiring longer travel distances within the RM itself to gather for ride shares as well as travelling to the intended destination.

The next largest Canadian urban center is Steinbach where a number of residents regularly travel for groceries, supplies and services. Depending on the residence within the RM this could be more than **one hour away**, thus It is costly to have service such as repairman come to RM. Prior to the current COVID19 pandemic and the closing of the US/Canada border, a number of residents in the southern portion of the RM travelled to Roseau or Warroad, Minnesota, USA which is about half the distance.

Being situated in the southeast corner of the province has its **limitations for government supports** which need a 'rural lens'[11] as programs that work in urban areas do not in rural as noted by the FCM. Rural areas have unique needs especially as services have been centralized to large population areas. Regional transportation and government support is needed for rural areas to survive.

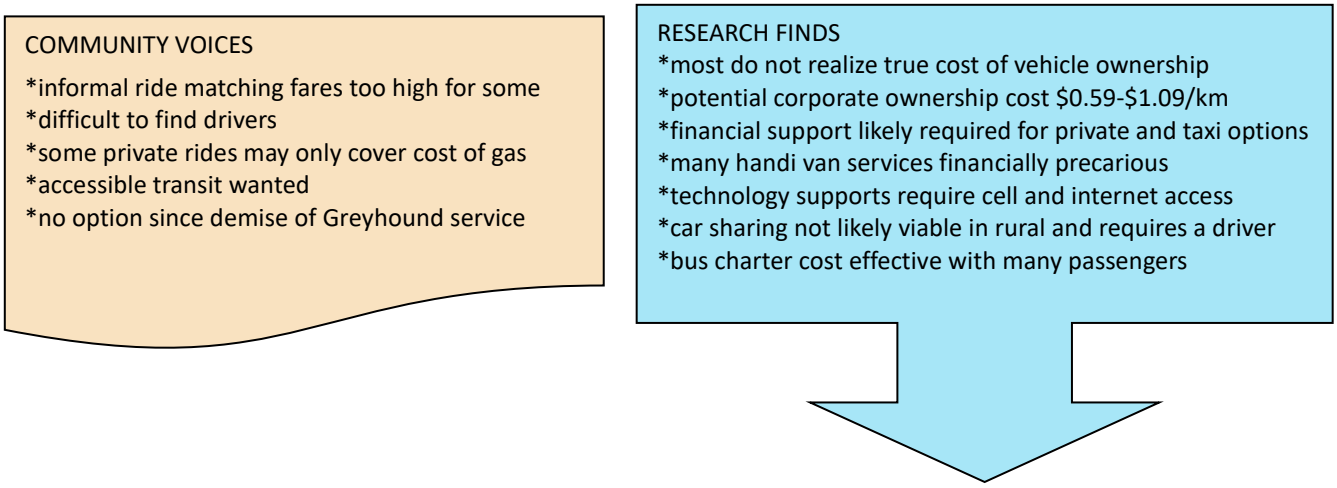
Being a lower income area, **fares need to be low enough** for those that most need the transportation support however it has been noted on several occasions that some may not fully appreciate the current costs of operating a vehicle. As per section X-A ownership costs and depending on the vehicle, a personal vehicle could cost 50 cents a kilometre and a larger community vehicle could be twice as costly or more. Nevertheless, with fewer services offered in a rural area, the reasons to travel multiply.

The region experiences poor or **lack of cellular and internet coverage** is many areas. This is a hindrance to both safety and general communications required in public transportation whether for dispatch, emergencies or operational information in addition to on-line shopping opportunities for residents.

X TRANSIT OPTIONS

- Private and/or Corporate Owned Vehicle
  - Driver and Insurance Considerations
  - Vehicle Examples and Ownership Costs
- Accessible/Handi Transit as per the Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program (MDTP)
- Taxi/Vehicle for Hire
- Technology Supports
- Car Sharing
- Bus Charter

[11] https://data.fcm.ca/documents/resources/building-better-lives-together.pdf



A number of potential options exist for travel with different types of vehicles, different driver options and booking arrangements. The options explored include private or corporate owned vehicles, accessible/handi transit (may be corporate, agency owned or independent contractor), taxi/ vehicle for hire, technology supports, car sharing and bus charter. A more extensive listing of options is included for greater completeness, although, many may not be applicable considering the rural, widely dispersed population and lower income nature of this region. A summary of pros and cons for each option is included within each section.

A. VEHICLES– PRIVATE AND/OR CORPORATE OWNED

Privately owned vehicles are currently used; whether for their own purpose, for friends and family or for an informal ride matching of seniors with volunteers. The size and style of the vehicle may determine if those with physical challenges are able to enter and exit with ease.

The transportation 2020 survey results showed that 41% drove their own vehicle daily and 28% drove weekly. Half as many respondents rely on friends and family as compared to using their own vehicle indicating there are quite a few who don't drive and may be appreciative of another option to travel.

Some current arrangements with a volunteer driver using their own vehicle may only cover the cost of gas and is subject to the benevolence of the driver unless additional funding is available as periodically as experienced during the COVID pandemic government supports. Over the longer term this arrangement with senior drivers may not be sustainable with volunteer fatigue.

- According to CAA poll, 67% of Canadians don't realize the full cost of owning and operating a common vehicle for a year. The cost to operate is dependent on a number of factors such as the age and condition of the vehicle, reliability of make and model, driver habits, weather and road conditions to list a few.
- Assuming a newer privately owned minivan is driven less than 400 km per week or 20,000 km per year with 70% highway vs city driving, gas remains at its current low (in summer 2020) of $1.02 per litre, good road and weather conditions, the operating cost of the minivan for a year could be approximately $10,000 or 50 cents per km based on CAA's driving costs calculator[12].

Private vehicles may not be equipped to accommodate wheelchair passengers, are limited in the number of passengers and there is no coordination of those wanting to travel. However, private vehicles are providing a valuable resource for those currently unable to travel to medical appointments or other

[12] https://carcosts.caa.ca/ Ownership costs include fuel, depreciation, maintenance, insurance, financing.

services on their own and there may be opportunities to improve the manner in which they are being engaged. Discussions with willing drivers could reveal coordination or supports required to improve service.

Private Vehicles

Pro: can operate door to door service, can be designed for unique needs of region, local solution, affordability uncertain but more likely with an additional passenger(s)or financial aid, currently only transit option available

Cons: not an option for multiple passengers, accessibility uncertainty, passengers generally have to find willing drivers, recruitment of drivers to use their own vehicles, uncertain volunteer availability and volunteer fatigue.

With the need for transportation support clearly expressed as part of community consultations, reliance on privately owned vehicles is not satisfying demand for travel needs. A **corporate owned** vehicle refers to an entity which owns a vehicle(s) and provides scheduling and operation of a transit service for a fee. A corporate entity may also be eligible for federal or provincial grants whereas privately owned vehicles are not eligible.

Corporate Vehicle

Pro: can operate door to door service, based on unique needs of region, local solution, affordability uncertain but more likely with adequate ridership, opportunity of social group outings, easier to request a ride at centralized location, ability to apply for grants.

Cons: high initial investment to purchase an appropriate vehicle, ownership and operational issues to establish a service, uncertainty in ridership, need available and trained drivers.

A.1 ONGOING VEHICLE CONSIDERATIONS

The type and use of a selected vehicle to satisfy service levels will influence driver and insurance requirements. A driver may be a volunteer or a paid driver. A car or minivan requires a regular class 5 driver's license whereas larger vehicles will require a class 4 license with an annual safety and an annual safety fitness certificate. With a bus charter or other hired transportation, a driver and applicable insurance is provided as part of the service.

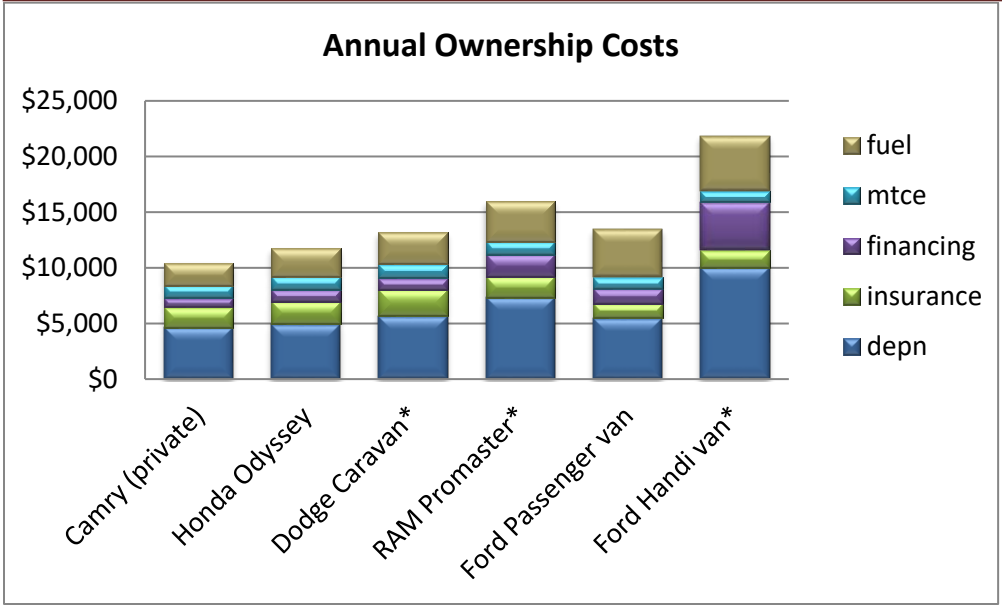
A.2 VEHICLE EVALUATION

To provide a consistent comparison, new vehicles were assumed driven 20,000 km per year 70% highway and 30% city driving over a 5-year operating period. Fuel is assumed to be $1.30 per litre over the entire period. Also included are estimated maintenance, insurance, depreciation and financing costs to reflect true ownership costs.

Depreciation reflects the decrease in value of a vehicle over a period of time. Generally, a vehicle will lose 40-50% of its original value over 5 years, but this is dependent on the model of the vehicle, its condition and mileage. To be a sustainable operation, this value represents the decreasing value or "used" value of a vehicle which needs to be accounted.

Ownership costs of corporate owned vehicles may range from approximately 59 cents per kilometre to $1.09 and is dependent on the same many factors as private vehicles. **Fares** will be based on ownership costs adjusted for provincial MDTP grant program, any other funding opportunities and the operating costs and fees of a transit service.

Fares - > based on shortfall between revenue and expenses
Revenue = funding opportunities + MDTP operating grant + fares
Operating Expenses = **ownership costs** + driver fees + admin costs (other operating costs/fees)
Ownership costs = fuel, maintenance, financing, insurance, depreciation



The vehicles used are representative for general evaluation purposes and based on operating and ridership assumptions.

- *Camry represents a compact vehicle privately owned.*
- *Honda Odyssey seats more and is often included on the best minivan list[13].*
- *Dodge Caravan is common to other Handi-Van services as an accessible vehicle that seats 4.*
- *RAM Promaster has flexible seating arrangements up to 10 and an accessible vehicle promoted by MoveMobility Inc.*
- *Ford Passenger van is a larger van seating 15, however requires a class 4 driver's license.*
- *Ford Handi van (bus style) is frequently used in other Handi-Van services and is an accessible vehicle which seats 14 and also requires a class 4 driver's license.*

Considering the longer distance requests, rather than shorter commutes in the communities, cost effectiveness of being able to take more passengers and the ability to accommodate mobility aids, a converted van is recommended.

<u>Recommended Community Van (with MDTP support)</u>

The RAM Promaster type vehicle is selected as a preferred size and configurability. It could seat 8-10 with adjustable seating configurations (without any COVID restrictions) and is well suited for mobility challenges with a low ramp for all passengers to enter and exit. An estimated combined fare could be $0.80 per kilometre assuming a non-profit operation with:

- Cost to purchase $85,000
- Cost of ownership on average for each of the next 5 years is $15,500

[13]https://www.motortrend.com/news/itsvantime-the-best-8-passenger-vans-for-2020/?galleryimageid=2272820

- MDTP eligible funding applied
- 20,000 annual km; 75% subject to fares
- Volunteer drivers and scheduling, no other associated fee
- an estimated individual fare based on $0.8 / km could be:
    - $58 with 3 passengers Sprague to Steinbach or $35 with 5 passengers
    - $29 with 3 passengers Woodridge to Steinbach or $18 with 5 passengers



The estimated recommended total fare of 80 cents per kilometre may allow some driver payments in the future but the ability to manage start-up of operations initially as it will take some time for people to become familiar with the use of the service and operations to adapt to passenger preferences. Once a rate is set, it may be difficult to increase. This analysis also assumes that there are no further restrictions or costs associated in the current pandemic environment or ongoing related costs. If only 10,000 km were achieved in the initial year with 8000 km applicable to fares, the operation could still manage financially.

B. ACCESSIBLE / HANDI TRANSIT MODEL

Accessible transit refers to the door-to-door transportation of seniors and those mobility disadvantaged. These transit vehicles are most often eligible for funding under the provincial government as the MDTP (details in Grants & Funding – Active Programs). Other provincial and federal grants often require their grant be dependent on already being a recipient of the MDTP grant.

In 2020, approximately 70% of rural municipalities in Manitoba have accessible transit service. Each jurisdiction has different protocols and cost for service, none are intended for urgent or emergency service.



According to the TONS toolkit: "Handi-van services are an important resource for older adults in rural communities throughout Manitoba, where few transportation options are available. These programs are often most financially precarious in the places where they are most needed. This includes geographically dispersed communities with small populations that are often economically disadvantaged." The same resource states that "Handi-van service success is shaped by the availability of drivers, hours of operation, rates charged to clients, the area serviced, and knowledge or ability of drivers and attendants to meet clients' needs."

However, TONS also states there is a growing concern around the sustainability of accessible van operations in Manitoba mostly due to lack of funding support, outdated models of service, transportation dead zones and underutilized vans. There is a lot of potential but some drastic changes and collaboration are needed.

The nearest accessible transit to the RM of Piney are in Vita, St Pierre and in Steinbach, although Steinbach said they limit the service to their residents. Some municipalities have more than one vehicle. There is often a smaller van and a larger 14-18 passenger van/bus with designated drivers. The smaller van can be rented by a driver unable to accommodate a mobility challenged passenger in their own

vehicle. One person in the survey identified that they borrowed a car to travel although it was not clear whether it was for their own use or to transport a mobility challenged passenger.

EVALUATION The evaluation is similar to corporate vehicles and must comply with MDTP guidelines including the need for a municipality to sponsor the program. The municipality may choose to operate a service or delegate the responsibility to another organization whether public or private.

For information on fares charged by community See Appendix 4 or the summary chart in Section XI other communities.

Pro: program requirement to operate door-to-door service, based on unique needs of region, local solution, provides grants with municipal support although grants do not provide for replacement vehicles, results in lower fares than without grant.

Cons: program specifies minimum requirements, relies on recruitment of drivers, operating logistics, municipal sponsor responsible for any operational losses, operator must follow guidelines including reporting, MDTP funding has not been updated in decades.

C. TAXI / VEHICLE FOR HIRE

In February 2018, the Taxi Act was replaced with the Vehicle for Hire Act (VFH) see Appendix 5. Taxis, Uber and Lyft are examples of vehicles for hire. A VFH is defined as seating capacity of 10 or fewer occupants used to transport a passenger in exchange for compensation where the vehicle is hired for a single trip and the passenger controls the route travelled or the destination. Winnipeg is the only municipality in Manitoba required to have VFH bylaws to regulate the industry.

Steinbach Taxi serves Steinbach, La Broquerie and Southeast Manitoba. Hello Taxi and Southman Taxi were found with an online search as was a Marchand taxi-based Facebook page. Based on quotes received in August 2020 to Steinbach Taxi and Hello Taxi Steinbach, cost is based on distance and time for a driver and without potential discounts available by negotiation:

- Woodridge to Steinbach (1 hr wait) and return is approximately $150 -200
- Vassar to Steinbach (1 hr wait) and return is approximately $225 - 400.



A local VFH is likely to be less expensive than one based in Steinbach to serve the RM of Piney, but it is unknown whether it would be considered affordable in this region. If a taxi service is started in the RM, the municipality has the option to identify bylaws under the Vehicle for Hire Act for fares and the operation.

A taxi option is suitable for a couple of passengers, however does not likely meet the needs for social outing requests.

Pro: Subject to availability with pre-booking, door to door service, no ownership costs (capital or insurance) or service to manage for a community, driver included and may be sustainable.

Con: generally high cost based on distance and time for driver, not suitable for more than a couple of passengers, affordability is uncertain of a for-profit operation, uncertainty in accessibility.

D. TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION to MATCH DRIVERS/PASSENGERS



There are various computer applications being developed which match drivers with those wanting a ride in various "APPS"; an application ride sharing platform. This technology solution can be faster than calling around to determine if someone is available and willing to provide a ride.

More details are in Appendix 6 Technology Solutions including the example of the use of Uber as subsidized transportation service by Innisfel, Ontario.

Pro: Subject to availability with pre-booking, door to door service, no ownership costs (capital or insurance) or service to manage for a community, driver included and may be sustainable.

Con: generally high cost based on distance and time for driver (if applicable), not intended for more than a couple of passengers, uncertainty in accessibility, affordability is uncertain of a for-profit operation but may have non-profit drivers travelling to the same destination.

E. CAR-SHARING

Car-sharing is a membership-based service where members receive an access key and an online account that allows them to book a vehicle, where they want it, when they want it. Winnipeg's PegCity Car Co-op, for example, has a two-way car-sharing service which means that users bring the car back to the same location when they are done with their booking. Note that a private contractor owns the vehicles and a driver is required to operate the vehicle. This is not a solution for those not able or wanting to drive, nor is this currently available in or near the RM.

This evaluation used information from Winnipeg's PegCity Car Co-op website as an example. If twice per month travel was 200 km, 4800 km per year, such as Vassar to Steinbach, then cost of this option works out to be 36 cents per kilometre ($1740 per year) based on Appendix 7 Car-sharing - PegCity Car Co-op, however, it relies on having a driver. Note this analysis is representative of a Winnipeg operation not in a rural area so costs could be different if an operation was available elsewhere.

Pro: Availability on demand potential, potentially lower annual cost to user for those willing to drive

Con: Not appropriate for non-driver, not currently available in RM of Piney, logistical issues to get to the car storage location in large RM, storage requirement, capital and ownership to be established.

F. BUS CHARTER

A charter generally refers to a vehicle hired to transport a group of people to a specific destination whether short or long distances. Charter vehicles can range from larger passenger vans to buses seating 16-56 passengers.

With the demise of Greyhound bus service to the RM in 2009, and the rest of western Canada in 2018 due to declines in ridership, a charter is an option for a larger number of passengers from this region. Residents noted the frequent use of the regular service previously provided by Greyhound and commented on its reliance to get to the larger urban centers. A summary of bus options in Manitoba are included in Appendix 8 for general information and cost comparison.

A number of private charters were contacted no local bus charters are in the region. Two of many bus charters in Winnipeg were selected to provide a general indicator of service and costs which rely on a

larger number of passengers to make trips affordable. Neither Borderland and Seine River School divisions operating in the RM of Piney is able to provide for charter service.

Charter Bus– costing

Two charter companies in Winnipeg were contacted in July 2020 for quotes. Charters can be accommodated on various types of buses and passenger vans; 48 passenger bus, mini coach for 21-35 passengers, limo bus up to 18 passengers, wheelchair accessible bus up to 20 passengers or other options ranging from 16-56 passengers.

The chart below displays the cost of a round trip by two different providers with 16 passengers to Steinbach or Winnipeg (Wpg). A trip to Steinbach included a 2 hour wait time; a trip to Winnipeg included an optional drop off in Steinbach and a 3 hour wait time in Winnipeg. The chart compares travel of Woodridge to Steinbach, Woodridge to Winnipeg, Vassar to Steinbach and Vassar to Winnipeg.

The blue and red bars represent each charter's total quote divided by an estimated number of passengers reflecting a range of costs depending on the charter company, the number of passengers booking together and the type of vehicle booked. *Note the costs listed above have not incorporated the cost of door-to-door service with additional time and mileage and are subject to change.* Since bus charters are based out of Winnipeg, costing is more favourable on a per km basis to go from the RM of Piney to Winnipeg than to Steinbach.

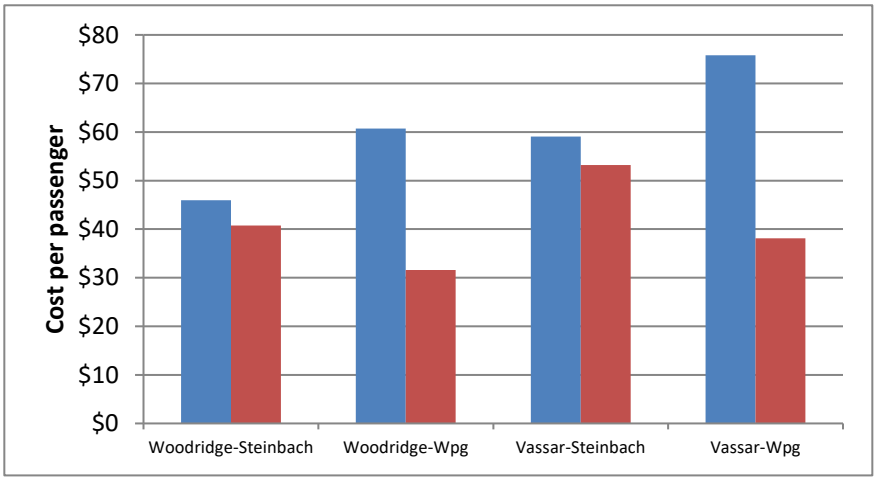


Figure 1 Bus Charter Sample

Bus Charter Evaluation

As no local charters are available, charters come from Winnipeg and thus with distance and time for a driver, costs may not be affordable unless there is a large group to make a trip cost effective for each passenger. Charters need to be reserved at least one week in advance (with cancellation notice of 1 week) and generally only pick up at one or two locations. With the population spread over a large land area and no central meeting place, nor the ability to get to a central place, this option may not be feasible other than a special planned trip with many passengers expected. Individual costs depend on the number of passengers with a predetermined bus cost. Trips to Winnipeg are generally lower per kilometre than to Steinbach, as drivers have to come from Winnipeg and thus may not charge for wait time while in Winnipeg.

Pro: no ownership costs (capital or insurance), driver included, sustainable, no service to manage, may assist with regional transportation issues when coordinated with other municipalities, offers accessible an option

Con: generally higher cost based but highly dependent on many passengers as service is from Winnipeg, need a coordinator to plan a trip(s), pre-booking at least a week in advance subject to availability, may incur cancellation fees, generally only 1 or 2 pickup locations.

XI OTHER COMMUNITIES

- Nearby regions
- Other areas in Canada

RESEARCH FINDS

*handi van service in 70% of Manitoba RMs
*MDTP funding requirements but each operates differently
*range of fares structures
*rural transportation issues across Canada and US
*financial support and partnerships required for start-up and sustainability
*substantial reliance on volunteers

A. NEARBY REGIONS

Available transit in other southeast Manitoba regions, their respective population, land density and the number of residents over the age of 60 in comparison to the RM of Piney are shown below as based on the most recent 2016 Stats Canada Census and accessible transit fares. Transit providers may have various rates available for different destinations or groups and those noted are intended as a representation which were obtained in the summer of 2020.

Nearby rural municipality information and availability of accessible transit

Rural Municipality	Population	% since 2011	Population density	Land sq km	**Age 60 & over**	Accessible Transit** per km cost + hourly driver (if applicable)
Piney	1725	0.3%	0.7	2433	**610**	None
Montcalm	1260	-3.7%	2.7	468	**270**	None
Reynolds	1338	4.1%	0.4	3573	**355**	These four RMs share transit
Whitemouth	1557	0.6%	2.2	701	**465**	Flat rates in town $6.50-$10 one way;
Lac du Bonnet	3121	6.5%	2.8	1101	**1170**	$0.8 loaded km for charter
Pinawa	1331	0.5%	1.6	2	**665**	
Stuartburn	1648	7.4%	1.4	1164	**435**	$5 < 10km town; 0.50 + $15/hr 3hr min
Emerson-Franklin	2537	4.0%	2.6	973	**640**	Emerson $0.5 + standby + meal; Franklin $0.5 loaded km
Morris	3047	1.6%	2.9	1038	**530**	$0.40 + $12/hr; medical $0.4 + $25 flat
DeSalaberry	3580	3.8%	5.3	671	**685**	$0.50 + $14/hr 3 hr min
St. Anne	5003	6.8%	10.5	478	**1110**	None
LaBroquerie	6076	16.9%	10.5	579	**625**	None
Steinbach (city)	14753	15.0%	1033.4	14	**3155**	$5 / person + $0.60 $5 in town; standby $6.25/15 min;
Hanover	15733	12.2%	21.2	742	**1710**	Transit by Grunthal Menno home
Other small RMs:						
Argyle	1025	-4.3%	1.3	770	**345**	$7.5 + $0.5

West Interlake	2162	-2.0%	1.3	1621	**730**	These two RMs share transit $0.8 includes driver fee
Grahamdale	1359	0.4%	0.6	2385	**445**	

** a comprehensive range of rates may not be shown for all services, see Appendix 4 for further details

Each operates their service somewhat different than other groups. Most operate Monday to Friday and need to be booked 24-48 hours in advance. Booking is often based on priority for medical appointments, work, personal business, social activities and shopping. None are to be used for emergency medical travel as an ambulance service as the drivers are not qualified first responders. The scheduler/dispatcher is often someone working with seniors such as the service to senior coordinator, a volunteer or part of the town or RM administration office. Many drivers are volunteers, some are compensated. The accessible vans are sponsored by a municipality as per MDTP guidelines and operated by a town or RM committee, service to seniors coordinator or a personal care home. Charters and non-senior trips are offered to aid financially, however, they may be bumped with requirements by seniors.

B. OTHER AREAS IN CANADA

The issue of how to provide and sustain rural transportation is evident across many jurisdictions in Canada with similar issues in the USA. Some operations are sustainable over a longer period and others are not. Many partners are required to initiate services and often rely heavily on volunteers. For more details see Appendix 9.

XII TRANSIT BUSINESS MODELS

- Provincial partnerships
- Market service planning
- Flexible delivery
- Provincial/municipal/local partnerships



RESEARCH FINDS

- Various business models identify "how" transit may operate
- Multiple partnerships and funding sources generally required
- Market segments may drive unique arrangements
- Potential to work with other Manitoba initiatives

Four primary methods to establish a transit business model: provincial partnerships, market service planning, flexible delivery or local partnerships. The first three are referenced in the "Developing Sustainable Transit Options in Small Communities" report by the Northern Alberta Development Council. The fourth is based on the "Accelerating Rural Transportation Options" in Ontario.

1. PROVINCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

The municipality could partner with other organizations in the province to contract for service delivery with a private company or non-profit society. The partner capitalizes on specialized skills

and economies of scale to provide planning, marketing and contract administration services, and arranges province-wide contracts for vehicle and fuel purchases.

- ❖ The RM/region is likely not large enough but the potential to partner with other rural municipalities to develop a service replacement to the Greyhound Bus service previously serving rural areas may be worth investigating.

2. MARKET SERVICE PLANNING

One way that smaller communities maximize ridership and stay ahead of rising costs is to focus on understanding and serving key market segments. For example, in 1999 a division of Maple Leaf Foods opened in Brandon, Manitoba, several kilometres outside the urban area. Maple Leaf workers were able to buy bus passes through payroll deduction, and Brandon Transit adjusts schedules as needed to meet unexpected variations in shift times. A recent initiative involves the Town of Niverville (45km south of Winnipeg) desire to create a loop with Winnipeg Transit to reach St Vital Mall.

- ❖ It is uncertain whether such a key market segment exists for this study.

3. FLEXIBLE DELIVERY – CONVENTIONAL SERVICES

More flexible, demand-responsive approaches including dial-a-ride are used by some systems (Medicine Hat Transit, AB) to provide service during off-peak hours, or to serve low-density or rural areas. Other communities partner with taxi companies to provide feeder services in outlying areas (Welland Transit, ON.). *"Dial-a-ride" is door to door, shared ride transportation system meaning you may share the bus with others travelling in the same general direction which generally operates as a feeder to transit service in outlying areas.*

- ❖ Distance to other communities with taxis or other transit is too far to pursue at this time but may become a consideration with regional transportation opportunities, if available.

4. PROVINCIAL /MUNICIPAL/LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Similar to item one above, but partnerships are with other municipalities, organizations, community groups or other interested parties. Options could be provincial or health care groups, retail stores, event organizers, senior groups, community organizations.

A number of organizations were found to be interested in rural transportation. TONS has both an urban and rural focus and is interested in regional approaches. They host a rural handi van Facebook group for networking and support. TONS is interested in a potential regional approach to coordinate accessible vans from various communities to more efficiently use services in the province. Eastman Region Immigration Partnerships in Steinbach is reviewing transportation initiatives in the province looking for regional opportunities. The Association of Manitoba Municipalities is another provincial organization that could be approached for transit support.

- ❖ The RM/region may be able to join other initiatives to increase the rural strength.
- ❖ There may be other nearby municipalities that have accessible transit which are not fully utilized as an opportunity to pursue.
- ❖ As Steinbach is a primary destination, Steinbach Chamber of Commerce, auto dealerships or retailers may be sought to provide support.
- ❖ Other potential support may be pursued with RM community organizations – Southern Health/East Borderland Health, community groups, local business, Piney Chamber of Commerce, Sunrise Corner

- ❖ The RM could be approached to provide support such as small relief incentives for drivers of private vehicles.

XIII TRANSIT OWNERSHIP MODELS

- Municipality
- City/town/village
- Community
- Seniors agency
- Health care
- Not for profit/For profit

RESEARCH FINDS

- Various ownership models of "who" will operate transit
- Operations oversight by Board
- Seniors involvement

Ownership of transit may be a municipality, city/town/village, community, senior group/agency, health care, personal care home, non-profit organization or for-profit organization.

In most cases, day-to-day operations are supervised by a manager or coordinator with the administration and financial aspects being overseen by a board or committee. In some cases, an advisory group assists with community outreach and planning. Transportation programs may employ both paid coordination staff and paid drivers with professional training. Three programs use a mixed model with both paid and volunteer drivers in order to meet the demand for their services within budget constraints.

In the Ontario report, Accelerating Rural Transportation: Ten Community Case Studies, ownership was varied:

- Four owned by the municipality but run by private contractor
- Three owned and operated by non-profit organizations
- One community collaboration
- One owned and operated by municipality
- One is a registered charity and government not for profit organization

Ownership options in the RM of Piney could be any of the Ontario examples described above. A municipality must sponsor to qualify for the provincial MDTP grant while Southern Health and/or the Housing Coop are potential options to be responsible for day-to-day operations. Oversight by a community board could include representatives from the RM of Piney, Southern Health, Housing Co-op as well as community centers and residents across the region.

XIV GRANTS & FUNDING

- 2020 Throne Speech funding potential
- FCM Advocacy
- Active Programs
- Fully Allocated Programs (see appendix 10)



RESEARCH FINDS

- Few grants available (MDTP grant & Gas Tax)
- *Spring 2021 – rural grant announced - not yet available*
- FCM advocates for federal engagement with rural
- 2020 Throne Speech hints at potential future transit grants
- Provincial and federal grants identified

The timing and availability of federal and provincial funding opportunities is often uncertain. Municipal funding sources are limited and transit must compete with other basic community needs for funds. To be prepared for the next opportunity a Transit Plan with strong demonstrated support and need can be an impetus to be successful to obtain funding.

The only grants available to support public transit funding as of Fall 2020 is the MDTP and the ongoing Gas Tax funding received by the municipality. The Gas Tax funding is eligible to support a number of initiatives within the municipality. A few other grants listed may be applicable depending on the goals of the transit plan. *SPRING 2021 The Rural Transit Solutions Fund is expected to be available to mitigate capital costs for rural and remote communities such as the RM of Piney.*



Current grant programs that are no longer taking applications and past grants are listed as information in Appendix 10 as examples of opportunities which could be made available again in the future considering the 2020 Throne Speech included references to public transit. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) also advocates for deeper federal engagement with rural Canada.

2020 Throne Speech Excerpts

A few statements from the 2020 Throne Speech related to transit are summarized below and could translate to public transit funding. High speed internet would also support transit through improved communications for safety, emergencies as well as operationally dispatch to driver information.

- To keep building strong communities, over the next two years the Government will also invest in all types of infrastructure, including public transit, energy efficient retrofits, clean energy, rural broadband, and affordable housing, particularly for Indigenous Peoples and northern communities.
- The Government will accelerate the connectivity timelines and ambitions of the Universal Broadband Fund to ensure that all Canadians, no matter where they live, have access to high-speed internet.
- Help deliver more transit and active transit options;
- And make zero-emissions vehicles more affordable while investing in more charging stations across the country.

There needs to be strong provincial support for areas that are disproportionately aging and losing population, he said. That support can no longer come from within the community because its losing taxpayers. (Richard Milgrom, University of Manitoba see Coop article)

Federal of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Advocacy

In January 2019, the federal government named Canada's first Minister of Rural Economic Development. Municipalities welcomed this encouraging response to FCM's advocacy for deeper federal engagement with rural Canada:

> "Support a range of rural mobility solutions… {including} Ensuring a new permanent transit funding mechanism includes a merit-based component to address challenges that can't be met by ridership-based allocations alone—including regional bus, para-transit and seniors shuttles services. (*See FCM's Modern public transit*.) Working with municipalities in the short term to address gaps in inter-city transportation services, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach."

ACTIVE PROGRAMS

A.1 PROVINCIAL Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program (MDTP)*Guideline excerpts

There are three types of grants available under this program.

1) ***Start-Up Grants*** **-** one-time basis of a new service during the initial operating period for $6,000;

2) ***Capital Grants*** **-** for the acquisition of capital assets on a 'one-time' basis to purchase a specific capital asset; will not be granted for the acquisition of replacement assets, will be 50% of the actual cost of the capital asset with a maximum grant of $10,000.

3) ***Operating Grants*** **-** to assist in annual operating costs of transportation service for the mobility disadvantaged. Grant is based on 37½% of the gross operating expenses to a maximum of $20,000 per year or $30,000 for communities who operate two vehicles.

General guidelines:

- Grants will only be made to the municipal government which agrees to sponsor a service.
- The community will be responsible for raising 62½% of the gross operating expenses.
- The service provided must be available to the community for a minimum of 40 hours within a seven-day period.
- Service will be provided to mobility disadvantaged persons visiting from any other community on the same basis as is offered to local residents.
- Service will be from the door of pickup to the door of destination. There will be no centralized pickup or drop off locations.

A.2 PROVINCIAL Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program (MDTP) *Regional Incentive Grant excerpts

Objective: The purpose of the Regional Incentive Grant is to address the challenges municipalities face in delivering handi-transit services to multiple communities, and to support municipalities that have the potential to expand their regional handi-transit service to other communities that are not currently served by a handi-transit service.

Regional Services – defined as providing handi-transit service to at least 2 communities (the whole community or parts thereof); Combined Population Base of at least 5,000 – handi-transit service must serve a combined minimum population base of at least 5,000.

A.3 FEDERAL Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program (MCIP) - *reduce emissions*

The Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is a five-year, $75 million program that provides funding, training and resources to help Canadian municipalities adapt to the impacts of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The MCIP was launched in February 2017 and is scheduled to end in 2021-2022.

A.4 FEDERAL Smart Cities Challenge (SCC) – *potential for transit app development*

The Smart Cities Challenge[14] is a pan-Canadian competition open to communities of all sizes, including municipalities, regional governments and Indigenous communities (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). The Challenge encourages communities to adopt a smart cities approach to improve the lives of their residents through innovation, data and connected technology. The Challenge was launched in November 2017 and is scheduled to end in 2027.

A.5 FEDERAL Gas Tax Fund (GTF)

The Gas Tax Fund provides municipalities with a permanent, predictable and indexed source of long-term funding, enabling construction and rehabilitation of core public infrastructure. It offers local communities the flexibility to make strategic investments across 18 different project categories, including roads and bridges, public transit, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, and recreational facilities. The Gas Tax Fund started in 2005-2006 and is ongoing.

A.6 FEDERAL Transit Fund – *details yet to be announced*

On February 10, 2021, the Prime Minister announced $14.9 billion for public transit projects through the Permanent Transit Fund. This announcement included a commitment to support the transit needs of Canada's rural, remote and small communities.

On March 29, 2021, Minister McKenna announced a $250 million investment in public transit to help communities to develop rural transit solutions that address the transit needs of Canadians living in rural, remote and small communities. But, there is no one-size-fits-all solution that will meet the diverse needs across Canada's rural and remote communities. This fund will support creative projects that address the unique needs of communities.

Developed with the goal of creating equity amongst communities across the country, this fund will be the first federal fund dedicated to rural transit. It will also support Canada's post-COVID recovery by creating jobs and building a more inclusive economy.

XV RECOMMENDATION / MOVING FORWARD

- Interim steps
- Purchase consideration
- Municipality support
- Promotion
- Future steps

RESEARCH FINDS

- Interim steps to improve immediate travel opportunities
- Community transit committee to tailor transit operation
- Determine municipal support options
- Consider future steps

[14] http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/cities-villes/index-eng.html

Providing affordable, sustainable transportation with travel to urban areas identified in the most recent community consultations is a challenge but not impossible. Partnerships must be forged between community organizations, residents and the municipality to collaborate and create innovative ideas.

Interim Steps – current travel

1) Continue use of private vehicles, especially vans for rideshare opportunities. Consider financial support.
2) Develop a list of drivers by community; 22 survey respondents identified a willingness to drive as a volunteer, with expenses or as a paid driver.
    a. Determine how to better engage drivers
    b. Determine how to share a list of drivers or coordinate drivers and passengers
3) Consider driver training for driver support and consistency of service
4) Educate public on cost of transportation
5) Raise awareness of personal mobility accounts ("get up & go" name suggestion) where people who no longer drive continue to invest money in their future transportation.
6) Pursue potential occasional use of handi vans with Stuartburn or St Pierre
7) Work with Southern Health/East Borderland Health and medical offices to further investigate opportunities such as virtual meetings and local service ability to potentially reduce longer travel needs *(many creative approaches may have been derived during COVID19)*
8) Discuss community options and ideas how to reduce longer distance travel needs especially for seniors to minimize travel costs and time

Consider purchase/operation of community rideshare van

(assuming end/reduced COVID19 health restrictions related to transportation)

9) Create community transit committee to include 4-6 residents (to include seniors as community ambassadors) from all areas of the municipality and 4-6 members of community organizations which may include representation from Southern Health, East Borderland Housing, Piney Chamber of Commerce, RM of Piney
    a. Investigate suitability to purchase a RAM Promaster 4 type vehicle that has configuration options to adjust the number of ambulatory and mobility seating arrangements.
    b. Determine whether a higher fare vs undertaking fundraising efforts and delay a purchase are supported by community and potential passengers
    c. Pursue other funding/sponsors and potential service arrangement – Southern Health/East Borderland Health, adult programs, churches, community centers, Steinbach Chamber of Commerce
    d. Cost of fares – per km (loaded) or trip based; fee schedules
        i. Consider bi-weekly scheduled trips to urban centers and varied destinations with weekly local availability

ii. Research applicability and potential cost of a monthly "transit pass" for non-refundable tax credits

e. Support parcel pick up/delivery for fee in conjunction with urban center travel
f. Operational logistics (including where would vehicle be housed, how to share in large physical RM, van use protocols, scheduling, payment of fares, driver and passenger profile information required)
g. Driver recruitment, pay expectations, incentives, training
h. Collaborate with other accessible van services
i. Support regional transit planning

10) Request municipality support as a sponsor for MDTP grants eligibility
11) Request small relief incentive potential for drivers of private vehicles
12) Provide municipality information on Vehicle for Hire Act and potential by laws

Municipality Support

13) Promote "charter" memberships for a fundraising and/or coop membership
14) Promote use of services with presentations, leaflets, one-on-one communication to optimize ride shares
15) Promote availability of charters to financially support community vehicle

Promote community vehicle

16) Promote parcel pick up/delivery with booked service to Steinbach and Winnipeg
17) Research additional requirements when travelling across the US Border for vehicle and passengers as these may change once the border reopens (closed since March 2020)
18) Monitor and support regional transportation developments; advocate to other government agencies
19) Monitor ongoing provincial and federal transit grant availability

Future Steps

20) With improved rural broadband, technology supported apps to match drivers and passengers could further facilitate ride share opportunities
21) After 2 years of operation, evaluate feasibility of additional smaller vehicle to support medical trips
22) Plan vehicle replacement after each 5 year period for reliability and maintenance considerations.

SUMMARY

Rural transportation services can strengthen communities by facilitating social connections, inclusiveness and independence. For others who do not own a car or unable to drive by choice or necessity and do not have access to public transit, being able to take part in daily life is a burden to arrange rides and/or financially limiting. Members of the community should be able to go for a wide variety of shopping needs, appointments, work or social activities. Providing a public transit option will alleviate the need to drive and promote safety when you are no longer able to drive or have the confidence to safety drive but have no other options.



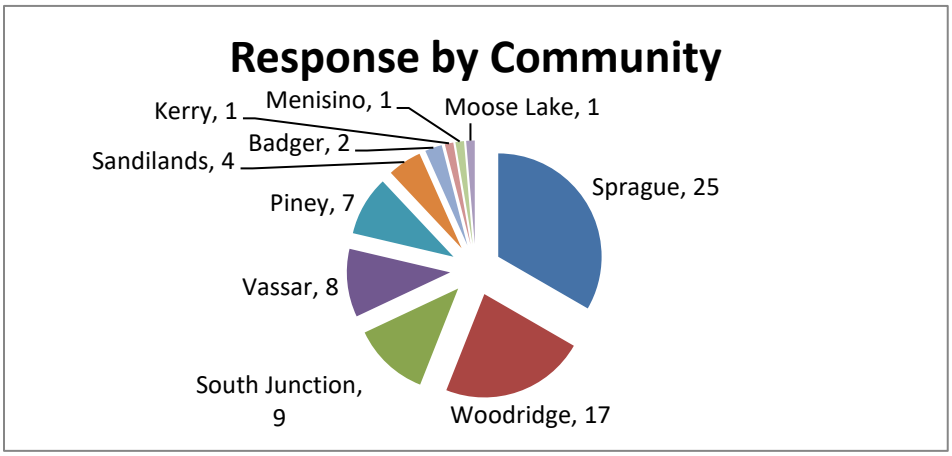
Transportation as a community inclusiveness initiative is part of developing healthy communities and allows residents of all ages to live in a rural area and to age in place within their communities. The primary challenges to implement transit is not only funding to have reasonably priced fares, but ridership, a vehicle and drivers; a sufficient number of passengers riding together in an appropriate type of vehicle with qualified and available drivers in an ongoing sustainable manner. Many logistical items will also need to be addressed from scheduling, vehicle maintenance, planning and other operational protocols.

Community and partner support will be paramount to create a sustainable transit operation tailored for this region than can not only be feasible but successful.

XVI APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1 TRANSIT SURVEY RESULTS

75 transportation surveys were submitted in September/October 2020 by 51% of those 60+ age and 43% in the 31-60 age range. The numbers of responses by community are shown below leading by Sprague and Woodridge:

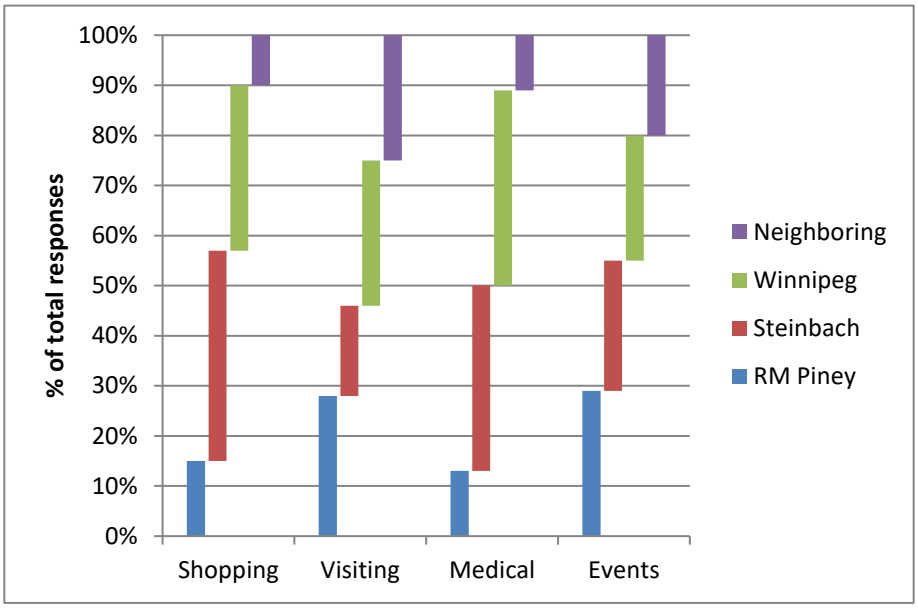


- 41% drive their own vehicle daily or 28% weekly with travel within the RM being most prevalent; 35% travel daily in the RM and 27% weekly.
  - Half as many responded going with friends and family as compared to using their own vehicle and less frequently.
  - Few travel by volunteers, carpool and none used Vita Handi transit.
- 35% of survey respondents make a trip to Steinbach weekly, 27% go monthly. Whereas 20% of survey respondents go to Winnipeg monthly and 51% sometimes.
- 48% would consider parcel pickup/delivery to Steinbach, 32% would not, 20% no answer.
- Two people would drive as a volunteer, ten with expenses paid and ten if provided a salary.
- The most important considerations for a transit plan are cost and schedule followed by availability and safety.
- The range of a round trip from a community to Steinbach varied considerably within each community itself. On average people are willing to pay 20 cents per kilometre. In comparison to a few other Manitoba accessible transit vans in the southeast, the charge is $14-15/hour for a driver plus 50-60 cents per kilometre, another charges 80 cents per kilometre.
- Comments supported the need for transit especially for seniors and those without access to a vehicle. Those that do not need the service currently know others that need it and would appreciate knowing the service is available when they are in need.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC TRANSIT DESTINATIONS

The results of the September public open houses in Piney, Sprague and Woodridge and the September/October survey yielded a multitude of destinations for potential public transit. The greatest need is for longer distance travel to urban areas rather than within communities for medical, shopping and services. Four primary destinations were listed as part of the survey; within the RM of Piney, neighboring RMs, Steinbach and Winnipeg. Other current and potential future destinations are listed below for medical, shopping and social outings.

Travel for medical purposes (doctor, specialists, dentist, pharmacy) was stated as Steinbach, Winnipeg, Vita, Ste. Anne, Morden (Boundary Trails), Altona (orthopaedic), Winkler (orthopaedic), Roseau USA.



Shopping and services range from office supplies, clothing, hardware, parts, groceries and restaurants to specifics such as lumber in Grunthal and a laundromat in Vita or banking or volunteering in Winnipeg. Shopping is primarily indicated in Steinbach, followed by Winnipeg.

In addition to those regions listed under medical, La Broquerie, Grunthal, Richot, Portage La Prairie and Warroad USA were also specifically mentioned as current travel locations.

Many social trip suggestions were made: Vassar pool, Buffalo Point beach, Zoo, Morden Dinosaur attraction, Whiteshell, Celebrations dinner theatre, restaurants, sporting events, casino, and spring greenhouse tour. Other transportation ideas were support for the congregate meal programs and RM events in addition to the potential for garage sale tours, Fall suppers, berry picking, and occasions when liquor is served as a safe ride home.

FREQUENCY OF DESTINATIONS BY PURPOSE

The survey listed six purposes to travel, including "other" and allowed multiple selections of the 4 destinations (within the RM, neighboring RM, Steinbach, Winnipeg). N= the number of times a purpose for travel was selected for a destination. Shopping was selected most often, followed by visiting, events and medical reasons. "Other" included medical elsewhere, volunteering, sports, funerals, church, restaurant, banking, museums, university, food bank, post office, car repairs and shuttle kids.

N	123	109	97	100	41	37	7
	Shopping	Visiting	Medical	Events	Other	Work	Education

In the graph below, shopping and medical is most frequent in Steinbach and Winnipeg. 35% of survey respondents make a trip to Steinbach weekly, 27% go monthly, while 20% go to Winnipeg monthly and 51% sometimes.

- 42% shop in Steinbach, 33% in Winnipeg while 15% do so in the RM
- Medical trips in Winnipeg and Steinbach account for 39% and 37% of total medical trips.

- 28% visit within the RM, 29% in Winnipeg followed by neighboring areas of 25% and Steinbach 17%.
- Event travel is fairly consistent among the 4 destinations.

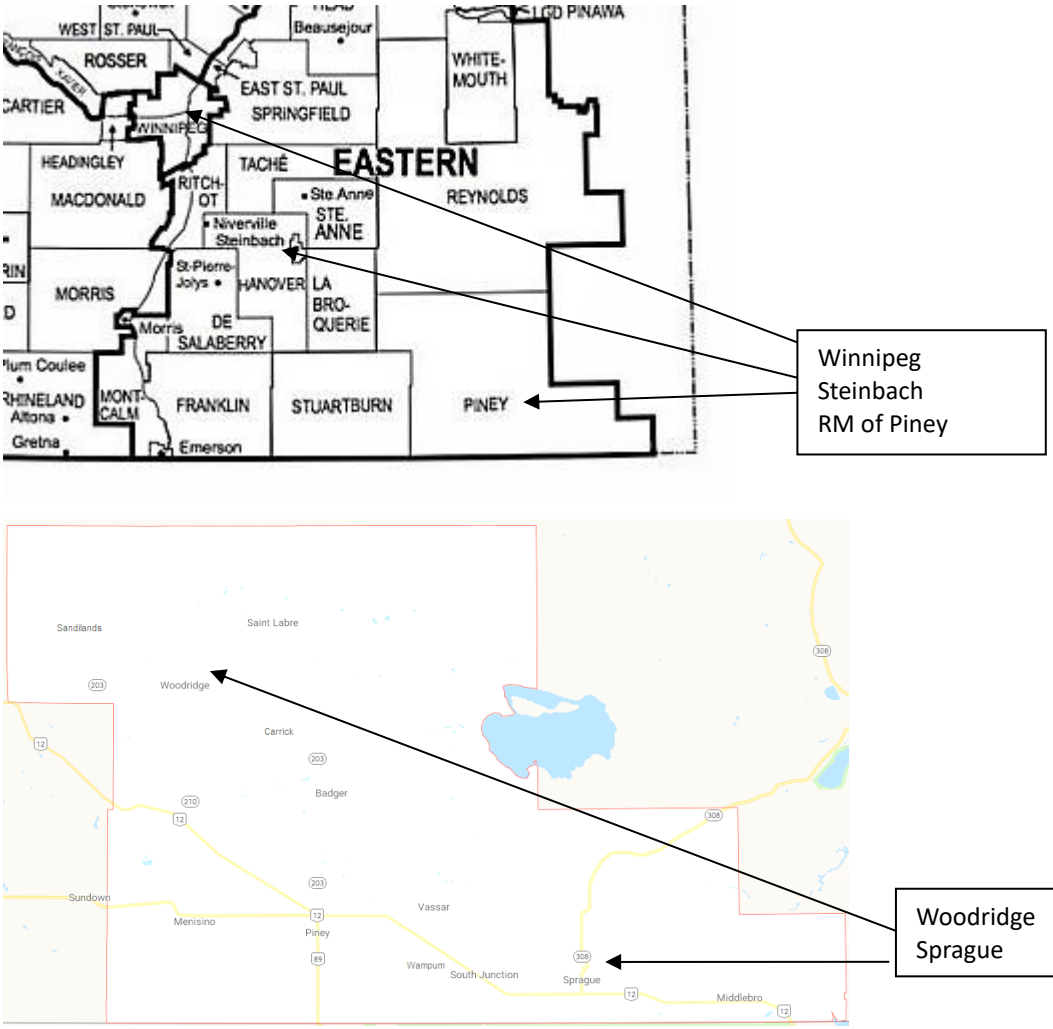
- 14 people (or 38%) noted work in the RM followed by half as many going to a neighboring RM, Steinbach or Winnipeg for work.
- Only 7 identified travel for education with 4 being within the RM, 1 in each of the other 3 areas.
- Other purposes were selected are fairly consistent between the RM of Piney, Steinbach and Winnipeg.

October 27, 2020

APPENDIX 2 ADDITIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

The RM of Piney provides a quiet rural lifestyle at the extreme southeast corner of Manitoba, along the Canada-US border. The paved provincial highway 12 runs east-west along the lower third of the RM and ends at the US border. To travel further east to Ontario would require travelling 100 km through the largely unpopulated boreal forest along a winding, partially paved and partially gravel road to reach the next major highway heading east, or an additional 100 km with a return north west to Steinbach.

There is no central community in the RM of Piney, although Sprague and Woodridge are more populated areas. Sprague is in the southeast of the RM near the US border and Woodridge is approximately 55 km northwest.



Provincial roads in the RM of Piney and communities

APPENDIX 3 PASSENGER VS OPERATOR EVALUATION PERSPECTIVES

	PASSENGER PERSPECTIVE	OPERATOR PERSPECTIVE
AFFORDABILITY	The fare riders are willing and able to pay for the service offered, likely subsidized.	Transit fares and funding opportunities adequately cover the cost of ongoing operations and expenses.
SUSTAINABILITY	Service will be provided for an indefinite period without fare increases.	Financial and operational ongoing viability. Appropriate business plans and support in place.
RELIABILITY	Predictable service to allow rides to be executed as planned.	Ability to maintain a safe operable vehicle, recruit trained drivers, provide consistent service, adhere to schedules.
AVAILABILITY	Ability to schedule for the time and destination required and available all year.	Ability to schedule vehicle and drivers to meet rider expectations for timeframes provided.
SAFETY	Rider feels secure with driver and vehicle. Ability to get in/out of vehicle. **Public health guidelines followed.	Vehicle maintained, appropriate size and type for ridership. Driver is confident operating the vehicle. Communications ability in vehicle. **Public health guidelines followed.
PREDICTABILITY	Provided cost of fare, schedule and policies in advance. Consistent level of service.	Code of conduct, policies & procedures communicated in advance to all involved.
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE	Vehicle available for pickup/drop off close to entrances.	Ability to arrive at location without interferences (such as snow, animals, locked gate). Passenger ready as scheduled.

***At the time of researching transit options, the COVID19 pandemic continues to challenge our daily lives in many respects from social distancing requirements, to working and schooling from home to increased costs with the need for frequent sanitizing, the shortage of goods and increasing costs. Some public transit services have continued with driver shields, increased cleaning protocols and reduced passenger capacity. It is unclear whether these actions and others may be long lasting changes. Public health guidelines must be followed for all health related issues which have included transportation.*

APPENDIX 4 NEARBY COMMUNITIES AND TRANSIT OPTIONS

(rate information as of Fall 2020)

RM of Stuartburn - There are two Handi-transit vans with priority to seniors and those disadvantaged. The van is also available to the RM of Emerson and RM of Piney, although according to the Transportation Survey, no one in the RM of Piney has used the service due to cost to come of mileage cost from Vita. The larger van requires a class 4 driver's license, while the other is a regular class 5. Other groups may be able to book but are subject to being bumped by priority usage.

Cost is $5 / person and $0.50 / km if more than 10 km or outside of the Vita area with your own driver. With an approved driver from their list, the smaller van or larger van is $15 / hour plus $0.50 / km with a 3 hr minimum. Mileage is based from Vita which is where the vans are located. Including an operating grant, a profit was realized in 2019, however as of July 2020, additional expenses are expected to be incurred with van repairs required.

It is expected that there are quite a number of commuters in the RM of Stuartburn that have made their own arrangements.

Buffalo Point – Although a van is part of a Children's First programming, there has been some expanded use with the Better Access to Groceries (B.A.G.) Program that brought fruits and vegetables to the communities in January – March 2020 during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, many residents have relied on their own vehicles or are able to make arrangements with family and friends.

Steinbach – Provides Handi Transit and taxi service. Handi transit service is provided for Steinbach residents, over 55 years old or mobility disadvantaged. The cost is $5 / person within city limits, additional rider(s) $5 / person, standby fee $6.26 per 15 minutes of waiting time and outside the city trips are charged $0.60 / km plus $5 / person.

Steinbach Taxi serves Steinbach, La Broquerie and Southeast Manitoba. Hello Taxi and Southman Taxi are also available. A phone call in August 2020 requested a round trip cost with quotes that ranged widely:

- Woodridge to Steinbach (1 hr wait) and return is approximately $150 -200
- Vassar to Steinbach (1 hr wait) and return is approximately $225 - 400.

RM of La Broquerie – La Broquerie Taxi is noted.

RM of Desalaberry – The Handi-Transit is designed to be utilized as a means of transporting the mobility disadvantaged, senior services and the general public to and from appointments. A minivan and large van are available. The Handi-Van drivers must be selected from the approved driver's list.

As per the posted rates, clients are responsible to find their own driver for the minivan and rates are posted to various towns and destinations. For example, within town limits $10, St. Malo to St Boniface Hospital is $60.

The large van in St Pierre can accommodate 18 passengers. Within municipal and village boundaries the fare is $5 / person with $0.50 / km starting when a passenger is picked up and is charged at $14 per hour with a three hour minimum. Other transports are listed as $150 flat fee or $0.60 / km after 200 km.

RM of Franklin-Emerson – Two vans serve the region, one in Dominion City and one in Emerson. The Franklin Handi van is for the use and enjoyment for senior citizens and disabled persons in the RM of Franklin. Within the town of Dominion, the charge is $5 per trip, otherwise $0.50 / loaded km.

The Emerson van is $5 under 11 km, standby $5 per 15 minutes after an hour. Outside Emerson $0.50 / km, standby $5 per 15 minutes after 1 hour and specified meal expenses for trips that go over a meal period.

RM of Montcalm - No transit found

RM of Reynolds, RM Whitemouth, Lac Du Bonnet, Pinawa
Four rural municipalities share Handi Transit service provided by Run by Two Rivers Services to Seniors - Town of Lac du Bonnet RM of Lac du Bonnet LGD of Pinawa RM of Alexander.

Fares reflect a flat rate within town limits $6.50 -$10.00 one way plus $0.80 /loaded km for charter or groups. A 14 passenger van is available for seniors 55 years and older or any individual with a mobility disadvantage, or who is hearing or visually impaired and is not able to operate a motor vehicle.

RM of St Anne – no handi transit

RM of Hanover – Handi transit is provided by Grunthal Menno Home.
The RM also advertises GoManitoba, a carpool matching tool and provided an enlarged parking at Tourand near highways 59 and 52.

RM of Morris – Handi transit is run by the Town and RM of Morris committee. There are three vehicles, a 12 passenger bus, a van and a SUV. Vehicles are also chartered by Family Services, Housing and kids workshops out of town. Fare is generally $0.40 per kilometre plus $12 per hour for a driver but varies in town for medical and shopping.

<u>Other similar sized RMs with low population to land density:</u>

RM of West Interlake- Handi transit started in 1959 and is run by a seniors support group L.I.F.E. There are three vehicles in use; a large Promaster van with rear wheelchair lift which they are also hoping to use with the hospital to enable stretcher service. The second vehicle is an older van used only for local trips and the third is a 14 seat class 4 in Eriksdale intended for charters that financially supports operations. Their estimated cost for a non-profit sustainable operation is $0.80/km and still looking to expand their operation.

A Vehicle for Hire is part of the feeder system to a highway bus travelling to Dauphin/The Pas, as the bus returns at night. Two more large vans are desired to the cover area as Steeprock is 1 hour away from the

central area of Ashern and Eriksdale. Vehicles are generally replaced every few years with high mileage accumulated. Lack of cell and internet coverage in the area was also mentioned as impediments to vehicle communications for safety and emergencies.

RM of Argyle – provides Handi transit with a 16 seat bus and a Dodge Caravan transportation service for personal and social service to seniors programs, kids programs, baseball team and charters. Cost is $7.50 plus $0.50 per km within the RM. The service is run by the RM with MDTP support for the past 5 years.

APPENDIX 5 LOCAL VEHICLES FOR HIRE

The Local Vehicles for Hire Act came into force on February 28, 2018. The Act gives Manitoba municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, the authority to licence and regulate vehicles-for-hire operating within their boundaries.
"Vehicle-for-hire by-law" means a by-law in respect of which a municipality has exercised the powers under section 3 and, as the case may be, The Municipal Act or The City of Winnipeg Charter.

By exercising the powers set out in the Act, a municipality may make by-laws regulating the vehicle-for-hire industry, including taxis, limousines, and vehicles hired through an online application, a digital network or platform or a website. Information must be collected and shared between MPI, the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and municipalities with vehicle-for-hire by-laws. "Vehicle for hire" means a vehicle:
(a) with a manufacturer's seating capacity originally designed for 10 or fewer occupants including the driver; and
(b) that is used to transport a passenger for compensation where
(i) the vehicle is hired for a single trip, and
(ii) the passenger controls the route travelled or the destination.

Local Vehicles-for-Hire

A vehicle-for-hire definition includes standard taxicabs, accessible taxis, executive cars, most limousines, and transportation network company vehicles. Vehicles designed to seat 11 or more occupants are classified as 'heavy vehicles' and are subject to the Safety Fitness Certificate Program administered by the Motor Carrier Division of Manitoba Infrastructure. Additional information on the Safety Fitness Certificate program may be found at: https://www.gov.mb.ca/mit/mcd/mcs/hvsi/faq.html.

As a Vehicle for Hire (VFH), insurance depends on when the vehicle will be used. There are four time bands identified to select – weekdays excluding rush hour, overnight, rush hour and weekends. The cost depends on how many time bands are selected. Selecting all four time bands rather than one time band is approximately $300 more for their insurance based on insurance quotes received in summer 2020. A VFH may also incur several other fees set by their owner, dispatcher and municipality.

Municipal Bylaws

The Local Vehicles for Hire Act provides Manitoba municipalities with a number of optional bylaw-making authorities as only the City of Winnipeg is required to have a vehicles-for-hire bylaw in place. Inter-municipal trips will be governed by any applicable bylaw of the municipality in which the trip originates, unless the municipalities in question have agreed otherwise.

A municipality may:
• determine the type and number of vehicle-for-hire licences issued;
• prohibit, control or limit the transfer of licences;
• establish requirements for persons who are engaged in the vehicle-for-hire business, including the character and fitness of an applicant or licence holder;
• prohibit anyone other than a specific class of licence holder from using taxi stands or accepting street hails;

- specify standards for vehicles and safety equipment;
- regulate fares, fees, and any additional charges;
- specify the type and amount of insurance that must be obtained by a licence holder, and;
- establish a Local Vehicles-for-Hire Commission.

APPENDIX 6 TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS

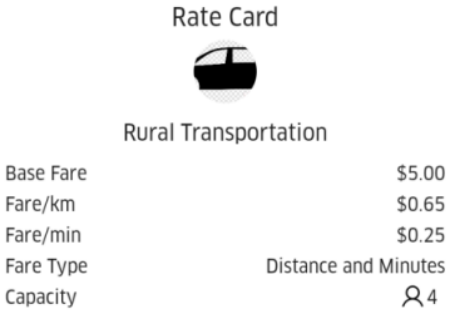


Technology supports refer to websites or mobile apps to connect drivers and passengers

There are various computer applications being developed which match drivers with those wanting a ride in various "APPS"; an application ride sharing platform. This technology solution can be faster than calling around to determine if someone is available and willing to provide a ride

It provides the advantage of being matched with someone who you didn't know was available, willing and able. There is no fee to users associated with the use of these "APPS", however a fee is associated with creating a custom site for the RM/region.

This option is for those drivers and passengers that have a computer, are able to connect to the internet and comfortable with technology. This may not be appropriate with some seniors and challenges with cell/internet service in the region. Unless a specific program is established and well-advertised with supports, there are likely no current opportunities to match those willing to drive and passengers. The issue of negotiation may again be required between individual driver and passenger.



- **WinRyde**[15] is an example of a ride sharing platform based out of Winnipeg. They also offer Rural as a service type. An example of the online rural rate card is shown. The average rate is about $1 per km.

- **Ridesharing** [16] is another ride sharing platform example for Winnipeg, throughout Canada and US.

  A driver posts a ride offer, the passenger books online, the driver and passenger communicate by phone or email. The driver and passenger meet for the ride share and during the ride the passenger provides a confirmation code. The driver confirms the ride with the code and cashes the money via an online method. https://www.ridesharing.com/index.aspx

- **GoManitoba.ca** is coordinated provincially by the Green Action Center, a non-profit, non-government organization. It is promoted for employers, organization and municipalities to set up a unique sub-site so the region would have its own. The system operates on the RideShark platform, a transportation tool (rideshare technology) that helps users find carpooling or single trip rides. User profiles are set up for drivers and passengers that may include credit card or banking information to automate payment. Maximum fares are calculated or drivers could list a lower amount. According to their website "We also

[15] https://winryde.ca/

[16] https://www.ridesharing.com/index.aspx

see municipalities trying to find sustainable commuting options in regions that are not dense enough to support public transportation."[17]

- **Uber** is a smartphone application for ridesharing that pre-calculates the fare, estimates a time of arrival, as well as offers the option to split the cost with additional riders; all while conveniently charging your credit or debit card when the ride is complete. Uber relies on drivers with personal vehicles to qualify and sign a contract that stipulates items such as commercial use insurance, clean driving record and never to have transported an animal due to possible passenger allergies.

  According to a January 19, 2018 article[18], Innisfel, Ontario partnered with Uber to provide subsidized transportation services. Innisfel with a population of approximately 36,566 reported cost savings as compared to public transit but concern was noted about relying on a private technology company paid by government to provide an essential service if unprofitable.

  > "Innisfil like many of the world's rural and small towns—doesn't have public transit, and residents need a car to get pretty much anywhere. Faced with mounting public pressure to find a solution, last year the town's administration decided to hire Uber to provide transportation for its residents instead of building a bus service.
  >
  > "Now, Innisfil's partnership with Uber has caught the attention of an even smaller Canadian town, turning one municipality's experiment into a potential trend."
  >
  > "Enderby, a town of 3,000 in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, is actively lobbying to bring ride hailing companies like Uber and Lyft—which are still illegal in BC—to the community."

  Note as of September 2020, ride hailing is operating in some parts of BC but not Enderby.

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[17] https://greenactioncentre.ca/healthy-travel/gomanitoba-answers-commuting-call-in-rural-manitoba/) https://www.rideshark.com/about/

[18] www.vice.com/en_us/article/kzn5gx/uber-says-small-town-public-transit-partnerships-are-critical-to-its-success-innisfil-enderby

APPENDIX 7 CAR-SHARING

The information below is based on the PegCity Car Co-Op website:

Carsharing is a membership based service that provides flexible transportation solutions. Members receive an access key and an online account that allows them to book a vehicle, where they want it, when they want it. Winnipeg's PegCity Car Co-op for example has a two-way carsharing service which means that users bring the car back to the same locations when they are done with their booking. Note that a private contractor owns the vehicles and a driver is required to operate the vehicle required.

To be a Peg City Car Co-op Member only costs the refundable share-price of $500, and you only pay for the service when you use it. On average, their members spend about $1200 a year on carsharing. All usage rates cover gas, insurance, parking and maintenance and they take care of winter tires and inevitable repairs or replacements.

For illustrative purposes two of PegCity available memberships options are as follows but they note additional fees may apply:

Casual $4.50 per month	PLUS	$7 / hr to a max of $56 per day
	PLUS	$0.38 / km for the first 50 km, $0.19 thereafter
Member $500 refundable share	PLUS	$5 hr to a max of $40 per day
	PLUS	$0.38 / km for the first 50 km, $0.19 thereafter

APPENDIX 8 BUS SERVICE IN MANITOBA

Note Winnipeg is a hub to travel within the province as well as national and international travel.

With the demise of Greyhound Bus service to the RM in 2009 and the rest of western Canada in 2018, a number of bus operators emerged. However, by April 2019 bus operators report strong competition on profitable routes while remote routes with lower numbers usually aren't served at all (By April 28, 2019 https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/greyhound-replacements-profit-western-routes-1.5114551).

A brief summary of Manitoba bus operations are noted below based on information provided on respective websites as of August 2020.

MAPLE BUS LINES operates on a schedule between Winnipeg and Thompson, Winnipeg and Swan River and will soon be offering Winnipeg to Cross Lake. They also provide charter services and freight shipping. They operate a 31 passenger shuttle and a 56 passenger luxury motor coach. No ticket costs were available as per July 24, 2020 search.

MAHIHKAN BUS SERVICE operates on a schedule from Winnipeg to Thompson and to Creighton. They also offer charters throughout North America and freight services. Their fleet of buses include a 55 passenger coach. This service is by the owners of Aseneskak Casino. The Kelsey Bus Lines 2014 division was sold and transferred to the new partnership and renamed to Mahihkan Bus Lines effective April 1, 2019.

For illustrative purposes, a 2.5 hour round trip between Winnipeg and Neepawa was priced at $35.05 for an adult, $28.39 for a senior (60+) and $31.55 for a student (15+). A 1 hour round trip between Winnipeg and Portage La Prairie was priced at $20.95 for an adult, $16.97 for a senior (60+) and $18.86 for a student (15+)*. Note that these were interim lengths for a longer scheduled segment.

WHITE OWL BUS LINES Discontinued the stop to Sandilands, St. Labre in September 2015. Previously there were agents in Marchand and Woodridge. Charters are listed to be still available on a 23 passenger bus; however no response was received from requests.

KASPER BUS SERVICE operates in Manitoba and Ontario. In Manitoba the scheduled service is to Sioux Lookout through Kenora. In addition to passengers, parcel service is also available which includes baggage and goods. A 2.5 hour trip from Winnipeg to Kenora, for example, was priced at $54.47 for an adult, $49.02 for a senior (65+) and $ for a 49.02 for a minor (12-18). *

* bus pricing was based on an August 2020 trip, mid-week, 2 days apart sought on July 24, 2020 for illustrative purposes and is subject to change.

CITY OF WINNIPEG Cash fare $3.00 for an adult, $2.50 for a senior/child. Fares cover approximately 44% of costs with the City of Winnipeg (34%) and the Province of Manitoba (22%) providing shortfall.

CITY OF BRANDON $1.50 for an adult, $1.25 for youth; $4.00 for Handi-transit.

APPENDIX 9 OTHER AREAS IN CANADA

The issue of how to provide and sustain rural transportation is evident across many jurisdictions in Canada with similar issues in the USA. A few brief examples are described below.

ONTARIO - A 2014 Ontario report, "Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions in Ontario", describes a number of transportation case studies. The Rural Overland Utility Transit (TROUT) is the closest to the RM of Piney with a land area of 3380 sq km and abundance of gravel roads and local geography which adds both time and expense to a service as compared to a more urban community.

It took many financial partners and contributors to assist with the development of TROUT. As it was entering their fifth year in 2014, it struggled with funding shortfalls and like other public transit it has to be subsidized to remain sustainable. Seventy percent of riders are 55 and older. It is owned by Care North Hastings charity. The charity helps clients to remain independent and stay in their homes by providing a support system and programs.

To service their population of 15,300 they have buses which service 8 municipalities and are now in their 5th year of operation and struggling with shortfalls. They support a triple bottom line approach of financial, social and economic to sustain their operations where professional drivers are also considered customer support workers and project coordinators.

NOVA SCOTIA – CUMBERLAND - Cumberland is a member of the rural transportation association (RTA) and operates with volunteer drivers since 2009. They depend on several funding partners – Nova Scotia provincial government, Amherst, municipality of Cumberland, United Way. An example of longer distance charges is a 1 ½ hr ride Amherst to Sussex NB cost is $100 (outside NS), Amherst to Truro 1 hr ride is $100.

ONTARIO – MEAFORD - Handi transit in Ontario's municipality of Meaford with a population of 10,000, the charge was $8 to larger community about ½ hr away. Their rural pilot program ended in 2018 with no update as of August 2020.

ONTARIO – OWEN SOUND In 2016, Grey County received $100,000 in funding[19] from the Ministry of Transportation to develop a strategy to coordinate rural transportation for residents. The cost of a ride with Movin'GB is $10 for round trips under 20km. Trips further than 20km have a flat rate of $0.45 per km. It focused on the most underserved area. The program ended in 2018 as no further funding was approved.

[19] https://www.grey.ca/programs-initiatives/coordinated-rural-transportation

APPENDIX 10 FULLY ALLOCATED OR CLOSED PROGRAMS

B.1 PROVINCIAL The Building Sustainable Communities grant helps build thriving sustainable communities that provide a high quality of life for Manitobans. The grant leverages investments in community development by local governments, non-profit organizations and others.

The program's January 15, 2020 intake is now closed and is no longer accepting applications.

B.2 FEDERAL Green Infrastructure Fund (GIF) – fully committed

The Green Infrastructure Fund supports environmental infrastructure projects that promote reduced greenhouse gas emissions, cleaner air, cleaner water and cleaner land. There are five eligible categories of investment: wastewater infrastructure, green energy generation infrastructure, green energy transmission infrastructure, solid waste infrastructure, and carbon transmission and storage infrastructure. By providing up to 50 percent federal funding on a cost-shared basis, the fund leverages additional investments from other partners. The Green Infrastructure Fund started in 2009-2010 and is schedule to end in 2021-2022.

- All funding available under this program has been committed

B.3 FEDERAL The New Building Canada Fund – Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component – Small Communities Fund represents 10 percent of the overall Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component funding envelope. This Sub-Program provides contribution funding for infrastructure projects in small communities with populations of 100,000 or less. The PTIC-SCF supports projects of national, regional and local significance that contribute to economic growth, a clean environment and stronger communities. Projects will allow people and goods to move more freely, increase the potential for innovation and economic development, and help to improve the environment and support stronger, safer communities. The PTIC-SCF started in 2014-2015 and is schedule to end in 2023-2024.

- No additional project proposals are being accepted under this program.

B.4 PROVINCIAL Small Communities Transportation Fund (2014/15 – 2018/19)

The Small Communities Transportation Fund (SCTF) is a new, application-based fund that will support rural Manitoba communities' investments in transit infrastructure projects, including purchase of handi-transit vehicles, and active transportation infrastructure. Funding is provided through the new Canada Manitoba Gas Tax Agreement.

A total of $1.0 million is available over five years (2014/15 - 2018/19) for eligible transit, handi-transit or active transportation projects undertaken across Manitoba. Annual funding of up to $200,000 will be available for allocation in each of the five years, starting in 2014.

B.5 FEDERAL Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF)

The Public Transit Infrastructure Fund provides short-term funding to help accelerate municipal investments to support the rehabilitation of transit systems, new capital projects, and planning and studies for future transit expansion to foster long-term transit plans. Eligible recipients include: provinces and territories; municipal or regional governments, established by provincial or territorial statute; or a transit agency or authority, established by a provincial, territorial, or local government. These

investments will help to improve commutes, cut air pollution, strengthen communities and grow Canada's economy. The Public Transit Infrastructure Fund started in 2016-2017 and is now scheduled to end in 2019-2020.

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