



**SOU'WEST NOVA TRANSIT  
ASSOCIATION (SWNT)  
BUSINESS PLAN 2012-2013**

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## Description of Operations

**Sou'West Nova Transit Association (SWNT)** is a community-based, non-profit, rural transportation society. This organization was established by local residents to provide low-cost, door-to-door, pre-booked transportation on a dial-a-ride model for residents of Shelburne County who would most benefit from this service. Specifically this includes seniors and those facing medical, mobility, or economic challenges. Priority will be placed on providing access to essential services such as medical appointments, grocery stores, and the food bank.

It is the intention of SWNT to provide transportation services which do not now exist in Shelburne County and not to interfere with services already in place.

SWNT considers its activities will occur in three distinct areas:

### **Volunteer Driver Program**

SWNT will establish the volunteer driver program by recruiting, training and scheduling volunteer drivers operating their own vehicles. Rides will be scheduled after a resident calls our office at least twenty-four hours in advance. The resident will be picked up at their home, transported to the requested destination, provided personal assistance, and returned to their home.

Drivers will not be paid wages or salaries, but will receive reimbursement for fuel and meals. Reimbursement will be equal to the rate set by the province of Nova Scotia. They will be scheduled and supervised by the SWNT coordinator located in our ground floor office at the Old Courthouse Annex at 2401 Highway 3 in Barrington. Each driver must pass an RCMP criminal record check, a check for any record of abuse, be able to demonstrate an acceptable summary driving record, operate a vehicle which has passed the mandatory provincial inspection, have clearance from their insurance company to participate, and have had a successful interview with members of the SWNT board.

### **SWNT Bus Service**

SWNT will operate a wheelchair accessible bus capable of carrying fourteen passengers. The bus service will be for residents who can be grouped for trips to clinics, shopping, and specific medical needs such as kidney dialysis. This service will require a driver with a class 1 to 4 license. A lift at the rear of the bus will provide access for residents in wheelchairs, and by lifting some of the seats, three wheelchairs can be locked into place. The bus is a 2007 Ford E450 Diesel, modified by Giardin of Quebec. It was bought new and has been in operation with Transport de Clare. Full maintenance and repair records have been made available to SWNT. The bus has been licensed and inspected regularly by the provincial Utility and Review Board.

SWNT has purchased and insured this bus, and has applied to the Utility and Review Board for licensing. We believe that until there are enough requests for bus use by residents, it should be rented to county organizations for day trips as a charter service, with a driver provided by SWNT (see below).

### **Charter Service**

The SWNT bus constitutes a resource for Shelburne County communities, and as such will be made available on a charter basis to community-based organizations. The bus must be driven by a SWNT driver.

## Fare Structure

A fare structure using two Zones will be established for the pilot project period, and then refined and evaluated. The Zones will be divided east and west.

- **Zone I:** Charlesville at the western edge to Clyde River at the eastern edge.
- **Zone II:** Clyde River at the western edge to Granite Village at the eastern edge.

*As a matter of policy no resident will be denied transportation through SWNT due to inability to pay.*

<b>Sou'West Nova Transit Zones and Fares – Volunteer Driver Program</b>			
<b>Zone 1 (Western)</b> Clyde - Charlesville		<b>Zone 2 (Eastern)</b> Clyde – Granite Village	
Zone within zone - \$10 round-trip Within two zones - \$15 round-trip			
FARES ARE PER INDIVIDUAL RIDER INSIDE OF ZONE			
Zone 1 – Yarmouth	\$60 round-trip	Zone 2 – Yarmouth	\$75 round-trip
Zone 1 – Bridgewater	\$75 round-trip	Zone 2 – Bridgewater	\$60 round-trip
Travel outside of zones - \$0.50 per km			
FARES ARE PER VEHICLE OUTSIDE OF ZONE (and will be split among multiple riders)			

*\* prices subject to revision*

<b>Sou'West Nova Transit Zones and Fares – Bus (Regular Service)</b>
All travel: \$1.00/km per passenger
Wait time: \$12.00 per hour
Attendants ride free

<b>Sou'West Nova Transit Zones and Fares – Bus (Charter Service)</b>
All travel: \$1.00 per km per group
Wait time: \$12.00 per hour

*\* prices subject to revision as approved by the Utility and Review Board*

## Policies and Procedures

A number of policies and procedures have been developed and approved by the SWNTA Board. These documents will be available to the public on the SWNTA website. Hard copies of relevant policies will be provided to volunteer drivers and the SWNTA's bus driver in case passengers request copies. New clients must review and sign the Privacy Policy as it includes the "*Client Consent to Sou'West Nova Transit's Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information*" form.

- Volunteer Driver Vehicle Usage Policy
- Employee and Volunteer Conduct Policy
- General Service Complaint Policy
- Abuse Policy
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Privacy Policy
- Human Resource Policies

In 2012/13, Policies and procedures will be established to address:

- Driver performance
- Roles and responsibilities
- Fare Assistance Policy
- Bus Driver Handbook

## Advertising and Marketing Plan

The advertising and marketing plan for 2012/13 will include the following:

### Media and advertising

1. Press releases (various): SWNTA will issue various press releases, as required. For example, a press release will be issued to announce the launch of service once operations are ready to commence.
2. Social media Promotions: SWNTA will continue to update and enhance its Facebook page to promote the service and recruit volunteers.
3. The Coast Guard (local newspaper): SWNTA will approach the Coast Guard to encourage the paper to write articles on our services. SWNTA will also purchase advertising space to announce the launch of our services and periodically afterwards.
4. Local radio (CKBW and CJLS): SWNTA plans to purchase radio ad space to promote the launch of the service 1-2 weeks prior to the launch.
5. Lobster Bay Shopper (local flyer): SWNTA will purchase ad space to announce the launch of our services and periodically afterwards.

### Promotional items

1. Promotional materials: SWNTA will re-produce various promotional materials (magnets, pens) to be provided to volunteer drivers and bus driver as well as handed out by supporting local businesses and at info tables, presentations.
2. Direct mailing: SWNTA will conduct one direct mailing to every home in Shelburne County (7544 total)
3. Brochures and posters: SWNTA will continue to print brochures, brochures and posters to assist in promoting services at information sessions and other outreach events. Marketing materials are attached to this report as Appendix B.

### Outreach

1. Municipal units: SWNTA will continue to reach out to all municipal units through discussions and presentations to Council on our services.
2. Churches and community groups: SWNTA will continue to reach out to churches and community groups to promote our services.

## **Transition from Pre-Implementation to Pilot Project and Full Operations**

### **Pilot Project**

A pilot project will be conducted to test fare structure, zoning, procedures and solicit feedback from drivers and volunteers. The project will last 6 months, starting Sept 1 and continuing until Feb 28 to determine feasibility of services, fare structure, demand and other parameters needed to assess the financial sustainability of the service and the feasibility of proposed operations.

### **Full Operations**

The results of the pilot project will be used to design and implement the full operations starting April 1, 2013 and a strategic planning process will be undertaken in 2012-2013 to plan for full operations. A sustainable funding model will also be designed based on the results of the pilot project taking into consideration affordability of fares, costs of operation, available funding sources and feedback from volunteers and riders.