



Draft Final Report

Transit Feasibility Study - A Proposed Public Transit Strategy



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by

September, 2013

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1 Introduction

The Municipality of Victoria County, located in Cape Breton Island, is an area of spectacular beauty. It is a large county but with a small population of some 7,100 people. The population is largely located along the Cabot Trail with the two communities of Ingonish in the northern part of the County and Baddeck in the south serving as the primary centres of commerce, health care and education. The nearest major urban area is the community of Sydney some 100 kilometres to the east.

As part of its “Age Friendly” strategic planning process which looked into healthy, active aging aspects of Victoria County, the Municipality met with community members across the county. Age-Friendly means affordable housing, accessible transportation and opportunities for residents as they age. However, the focus of the planning process was not just on seniors but all residents and ensuring their needs are taken into consideration in County policies. Through that process and community consultations the issue of transportation was raised, specifically, the need for an affordable, reliable and available transportation service in support of the County’s “age-friendly” objective.

As a result, the Municipality, with funding support from the Province of Nova Scotia, decided to undertake this *transit feasibility* study.

Developing suitable and viable public transportation service options in the County will be a challenge given the size of the County, the low population and the dispersed settlement areas. Formal public transit service in the County or the island of Cape Breton itself, apart from services in Sydney and surrounding area within the Regional Municipality of Cape Breton, have not been present for many years. There are, however, a number of examples of public transit services operating in rural/regional areas both within the province of Nova Scotia as well as in other parts of Canada and the United States.

Clearly, determining the demand and potential use (ridership) of any public transit service will be critical to both identifying suitable public transportation solutions but also to determining the viability and costs associated with the service. The twin pillars of ridership and cost to both users and the municipality are important as to whether a service to be feasible or not.

Input to this study will include work undertaken in 2009 and more recent communication consultations pertaining to the need for a transit service as well as a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process in support of defining the needs, potential ridership and transit service options to be undertaken as part of this process.

The potential benefits of a public transit service at a broad level are many and varied. Aside from the environmental perspective, it can help the Municipality and its communities achieve strategic goals, serve to connect the various communities, provide access to employment and social programs and provide greater accessibility for segments of the population whose ability to use a car is limited by health, age, income or choice. In addition, the introduction of a transit service is often viewed as a sign of a successful community and can have an important economic influence by reinforcing the area’s identity. However, any decision to establish a transit service, in whatever form or forms it may take, must be supported by sound technical analysis and an operational and financial feasibility assessment of what would work best backed by examples of what works and what does not work in other comparable communities. In the final analysis, a decision as to whether a transit service is “feasible” is likely to be determined on the basis of cost and benefit – how much will it cost, who will benefit from it and how much will it be used?

This study is intended to answer these key issues and questions by assessing the needs, quantifying the potential demand, exploring service options including routes and service levels,

determining how a service would be delivered or operated, determining the operating and capital costs required to support and sustain the service over a minimum five year period, and the infrastructure and municipal oversight including governance, staffing and management structure required to support the service. An important step in the process will be to consult with local stakeholders within the residential and business communities to understand and define needs, potential use and to obtain feedback on potential service options.

Our approach and work plan outlined below is designed to fully address each of these issues and questions and to provide the Municipality and other stakeholders with the necessary information, analysis, conclusions and recommendations as to the feasibility and practicality of introducing a transit service within the Municipality so that Council can make an informed decision whether or not to introduce a public transit service.

1.1 Study Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate the transportation needs of County residents and to determine if some form of public transit service is feasible and on what basis.

The overall objectives of the study are to answer the key questions of cost and benefit by defining who would use it, what the level of use might be, exploring service options, examining how a service would be delivered, the infrastructure and municipal oversight required to support the service and the benefits to the community. Specifically, the study's key objectives are:

- To assess the feasibility of introducing a public transit service within the municipality based on the needs and demand for a such as service and the key origin and destinations;
- Who would use the service and the potential level of ridership;
- To identify and evaluate public transportation service options and the type of transit service, or services, that are most suitable for the residents of the municipality;
- The level of service (frequency, days, hours), costs, revenues, sources of funding, method operation/service delivery and related operational issues for the service options;
- Consideration of the service delivery options for either a municipally owned and operated service or a private/public partnership; and
- The most suitable organizational and governance structure to oversee the service; and
- To make recommendations to Municipal Council on a way forward to address the identified needs.

In this study, "public transit" and "public transportation" are inter-changeable and refer to the potential range of services that could be introduced to meet residents' needs.

1.2 Study Approach

The approach and work plan for this study has involved the following activities designed to fully address each of this issues and to provide County Council and stakeholders with the necessary information and assessment as to the feasibility and practicality of introducing a public transit service in the local area and thereby to make an informed decision whether or not to introduce a transit service:

- Research and analysis of population demographics and future population and growth trends as well as any identified changes in development patterns;

- A peer review of transit services in similar-sized communities to provide the context for judging ridership potential, operations options and costs for a service in the County;
- Meetings with stakeholders including County staff, members of the public and business leaders to measure and evaluate the need for a transit service;
- Meetings and telephone discussions with key businesses and local transportation providers to discuss current services and the potential benefits of a transit service;
- Development of an on-line web survey (paper versions also distributed); and
- Use of the Municipality's website for on-line surveys to receive comments and input from the general public.

An important step in the process has been consultation with stakeholders. Although the Age Friendly strategic planning process included consultation, a more focussed level of consultation was undertaken in this study and, importantly, in the four key geographic areas of the County to explore needs, potential use and obtain feedback on potential service options. Meetings with County staff were held to finalize the study work plan, understand the local issues and to identify information requirements and sources. In addition, a tour of the main geographic areas of the County was undertaken in order to understand the community's characteristics and to gain an appreciation of the opportunities and challenges.

Also included in the work plan is a review of the socio-economic characteristics of the County, identification of primary travel patterns, major origin and destination points and a review of existing transportation services. Finally, a range of alternative approaches to providing a public transit service for potential application in Victoria County have been identified together with an analysis of demand, costs and a discussion of governance, organizational and staffing, administrative and legal issues pertaining to the establishment of a transit service.

This study concludes by recommending that the County consider taking a leadership role to co-ordinate the transportation needs of its residents and to promote the collaborative use of existing resources to meet the diverse needs of its residents as well as consider augmenting those resources over time.

2 Background and Community Context

The following section provides an overview of the Municipality of the County of Victoria, its residents and a summary of existing transportation services and service providers, both public and private, in the area.

2.1 Community Profile

The County of Victoria was created in 1851 when the former Cape Breton County was subdivided in two parts. There are several distinctive geographic regions in the county: north of Smokey Mountain, south of Smokey Mountain, St. Ann's Bay, Boularderie Island, Baddeck, Middle River and the Washabuck Peninsula. The county is 2,768 square kilometers in size, 80% of which is covered by forest, the remainder by water. It also contains the eastern half of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park, as well as the Cabot Trail which are important tourist attractions and destinations for travellers worldwide. As well, the highlands of the county are being developed as recreational (hiking and skiing) areas as well as the location of wind turbines for power generation.

The county is administered by an elected council which is incorporated as the Municipality of the County of Victoria. The county is governed by eight councillors and a warden. A Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for the administration and management of the County. The seat of government, or municipal offices, is located in the shire town and largest municipality of the village of Baddeck located on Bras d'Or Lake.

Historically, the economy of the County was based on its abundant natural resources, fishing and forestry, as well as manufacturing. However, with the decline of the fishery over the past 25 years, the economy is dominated by the service industries. Today, over 70% of the workforce is employed in the service industry with less than 20% in natural resources and 10% in manufacturing.

South of Smokey In the Baddeck area, there are several service small industries, light manufacturing, tourist accommodations (hotels), a hospital (the Victoria County Memorial Hospital) and a seniors/extended care facility (Alderwood).

North of Smokey, in Ingonish and further north to the Neil's Harbour, Dingwall and Bay St. Lawrence areas, the population is rural in nature and clustered along the Cabot Trail highway on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Employment is primarily based on the fishery with a fish processing plant in Glen Haven adjacent to Neil's Harbour employing approximately 100 people, and tourism. In Neil's Harbour, there is a regional health centre, hospital and extended care and nursing home. The County is working with the Province to establish a seniors' home in the area. Notably, there are no full-time medical services such as dental, eye and chiropractic, in either Baddeck or Ingonish/Neil's Harbour. People requiring these services must travel to Sydney.

In the Iona and Boularderie areas, these are largely residential in character with some seasonal residences and tourism-related services including the Highland Village Museum. Adjacent to the Museum, there is a seniors' residence, the Highlands Heights Inn. There are no local medical, health care or seniors services. There is a public school and a high school although enrolment is declining and there are concerns about the future of the high school.

Highway 105 passes through the south of the County, connecting Baddeck towards Sydney in Cape Breton County. The Cabot Trail follows the coast along the eastern edge of the County, connecting Baddeck and Ingonish. The Cabot Trail also extends from an interchange west of Baddeck, out of the County and towards the western coast of Cape Breton.

A portion of the rail line that connects the northern coast of Nova Scotia (Pictou and Antigonish Counties) with Sydney and Cape Breton County passes through the southern edge of Victoria County, along Bras d'Or Lake, from Estmere to Iona. Currently, only freight traffic operates on this portion of rail (which includes the longest railroad bridge in the province, the Grand Narrows Bridge), although Via Rail operated a weekly passenger train from 2000 to 2004.

There is also a network of scenic bicycle trails along the coast of the County, used for recreational travel.

2.2 Population and Demographics

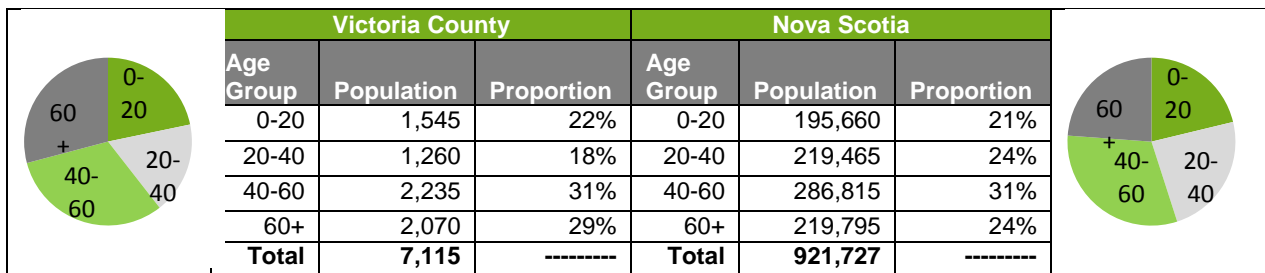
The County's demographic patterns in terms of population, density, age distribution, workplace participation, work industry, and auto ownership influence findings about transit viability as well as the need for transit services.

Population and Age

Victoria County occupies approximately 5% of the land area of Nova Scotia, but accounts for less than 1% of the provincial population. Accordingly, the County has a population density of 2.5 individuals per square kilometre, compared to the total provincial population density of 17.4.

Victoria County has a high proportion of residents over the age of 60 and a relatively low proportion of the population is between the ages of 20 and 40, as compared to the provincial average age distribution. Exhibit 2-1 compares the distribution of population across age groups in Victoria County with the provincial distribution.

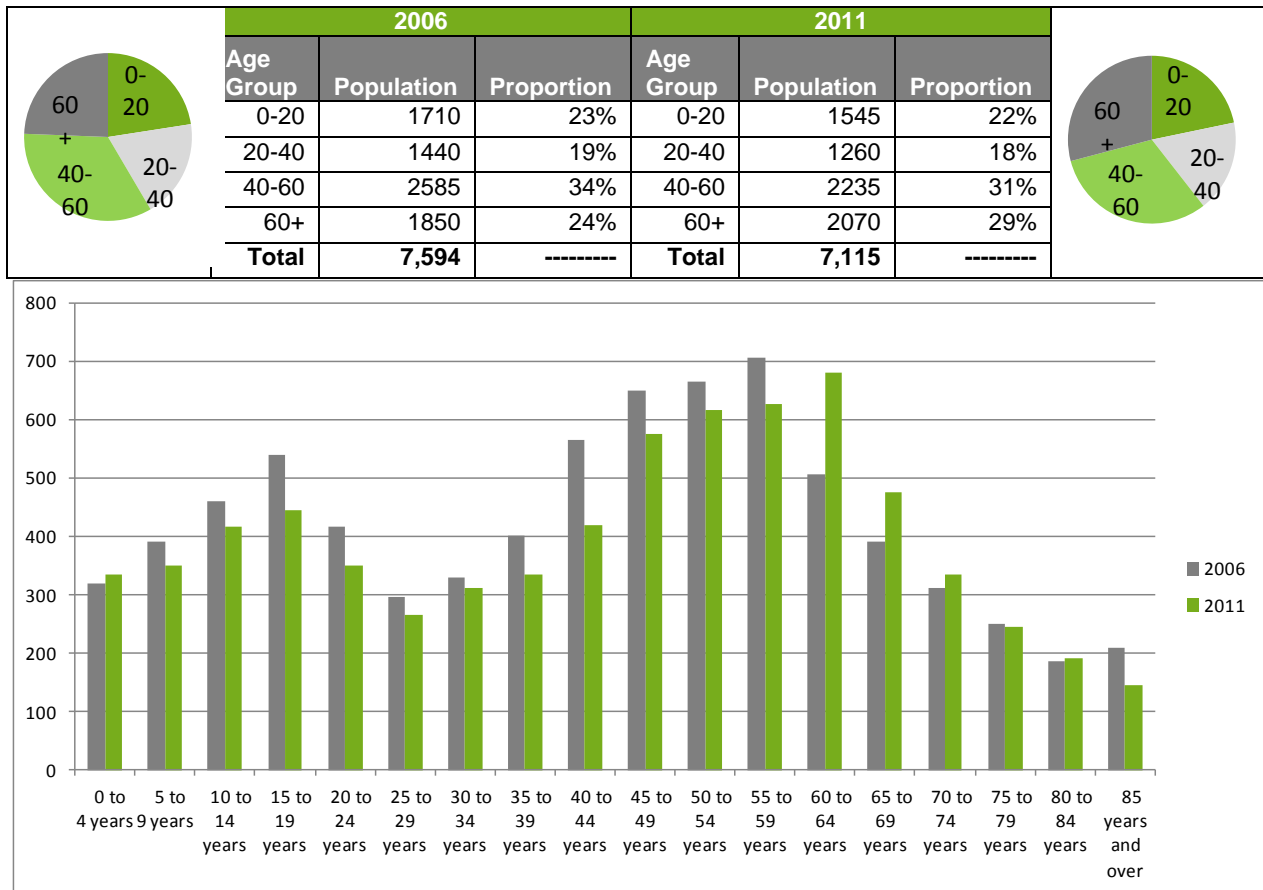
Exhibit 2-1: Age Distribution: Victoria County vs Nova Scotia



Between the 2006 and 2011 census, the population of Victoria County declined by approximately 6%. The population of the county has been declining consistently since before 2006 also; in 1996 the County's population was 8,482 as compared to only 7,115 in the 2011 census. Population decline presents challenges to the viability of many public services including any organized transportation strategies.

Moreover, the population below the age of 60 declined by over 12%, with a large increase in the population over 60. The pattern of an aging population over these five years is contrasted by a slight increase in births – the population of children below the age of 5 was 5% higher in 2011 compared to 2006. Exhibit 2-2 shows the decline in population between 2006 and 2011 as well as the shift toward an aging demographic.

Exhibit 2-2: Age Distribution: 2006 vs 2011



According to the Statistics Canada Health Profile conducted in January 2013, 41% of the adult and teen population in Cape Breton reported that they at least sometimes encounter limitations to participating in activities due to a physical or mental health condition. This is compared to the national average of 28% of respondents reporting limitations due to a health problem which lasts at least 6 months.

The declining, aging population suggests an increase in the need for public transit services in the County, despite the low population density. In addition, the high incidence of residents reporting functional limitations due to a health condition indicates that organized transportation acting as a social service would be beneficial in this region.

Population Density

The population density varies spatially throughout the County, with areas of higher density in the vicinity of Ingonish and Baddeck. The more densely populated areas indicate the places which would be most likely to support transit as well as the likely origins and destinations of trips. Exhibit 2-3 shows a map of population density in each census dissemination area in the County; each dot represents 14 individuals. In large dissemination areas that contain both coastal and inland portions, the population is likely to be concentrated along the coast in reality.

Exhibit 2-3: Population Density in Victoria County

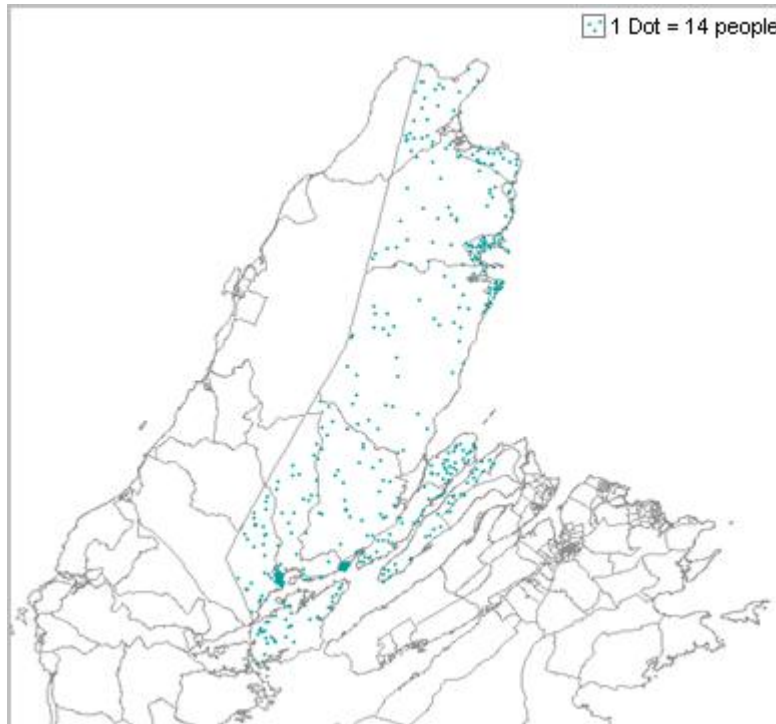


Exhibit 2-4 supports the population density map by listing population by settlement or region. While the towns of Baddeck and Ingonish show higher population densities than the majority of the County, many residents do not live in either town – instead living in other areas along the coast or along the inland portion of the Cabot Trail.

Exhibit 2-4: Population Distribution by Settlement/Region

Settlement/Region	Population
Ingonish	857
Aspy Bay and Northern Mainland	1,350
Baddeck	769
Wagmatcook	518
Central Mainland	562
Iona (island)	502
Boularderie (island and peninsula)	1,200
Southern Mainland (except for Baddeck, Wagmatcook)	1,357
Total	7,115

Workforce Participation

In Victoria County, 63% of the population aged 15 or over have completed some type of postsecondary degree, certificate, or apprenticeship, indicating a level of education slightly below the provincial average (where 70% have completed some further education after high school). Since postsecondary education can act as an indicator of workplace preparedness, this observation can be related to labour force activity in the County. Victoria County has a higher proportion of individuals who are unemployed or not participating in the labour force than the provincial average. The unemployment rate in Victoria County was 24.6, compared to the Nova

Scotia unemployment rate of 10.0. The unemployment may be correlated to the lower incidence of postsecondary education or job availability, while the low rate of labour force participation is partially due to the high proportion of retirees.

Mode of Travel to Work

The travel modes chosen for transportation to work among residents of Victoria County also reflect the observed geographic and demographic patterns. A smaller proportion of trips to work use public transit (2%) compared to the provincial average (7%). This observation is explained by the sparse population density in the County as well as the limited access to transit possibilities on the way to workplaces. Residents of the County are more likely to travel to work in a car as a passenger than others in Nova Scotia (14% of work trips compared to 8% provincially). This may be due to the fact that residents are likely to have common work destinations with other members of their households – for example, residents of the Baddeck area are likely to work in Sydney and residents in the north may work in one of a few natural-resource based facilities. The high incidence of passenger travel suggests that there may be an opportunity for group travel modes such as local transit or ride sharing.

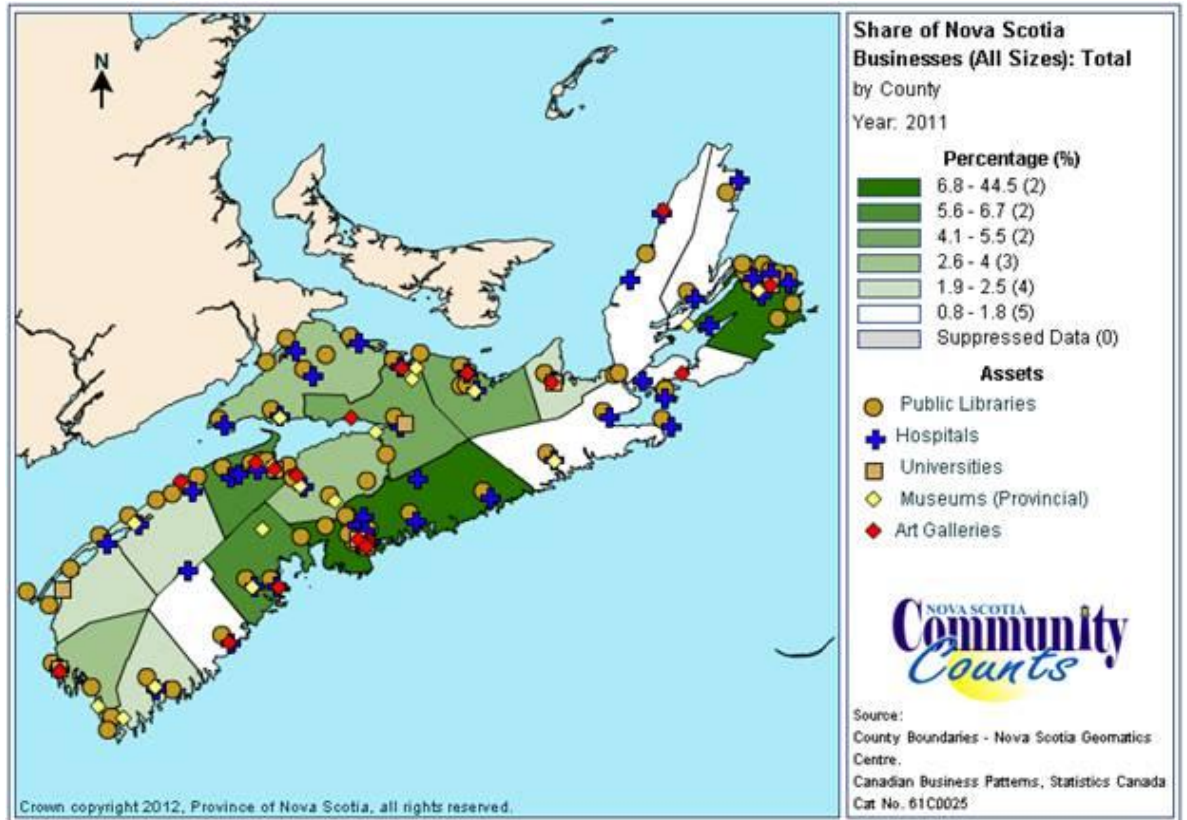
Motivated by the large distances in the area, driving is the dominant mode of transportation, representing 76% of work commute trips.

Occupation and Industry

Among the variety of occupation categories present in the area, the dominant groups are: Sales and service, Natural resources and agriculture, Trades, transport and equipment operators, and Business, finance and administration - combined representing 68% of the jobs of Victoria County residents. Nearly half of the employed residents of the County work in one of these four industries: Accommodation and food services, Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, Health care and social assistance, and Retail trade. These industries are consistent with the existence of natural resources and tourism in the region, as well as with the aging demographic.

In order to estimate the destinations of work trips originating in Victoria County, the geographic distribution of jobs in industries common among County residents was investigated. Many Agricultural/Resource jobs, Retail Trade jobs, and 'Other Services' jobs are located in either the Sydney or Halifax regions of the province. This geographic pattern is also observed in the distribution of jobs in all industries across the province; this suggests that work trips from the County may travel to Sydney or in the southwest direction. However, Truro is a 2.5 hour drive from Baddeck (compared to 1 hour to Sydney) supporting the suggestion that Sydney is the more viable workplace option for Victoria County residents. Moreover, many social institutions such as libraries, hospitals, and cultural institutions, which are likely to be the destinations of work trips and non-work trips, are located in Sydney, supporting the hypothesis that many trips originating in Victoria County would travel to Sydney. Also, 13 bus routes exist in the Sydney area - indicating a precedent of transit viability in Cape Breton. Exhibit 2-5 demonstrates the regional influence of Sydney by showing that many social institutions as well as a high proportion of the province's business are located there.

Exhibit 2-5: Map of Nova Scotia Business and Social Institutions



Auto ownership

The 2009 Canadian Vehicle Survey Summary Report from National Resources Canada informs some observations on auto ownership and vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) in Nova Scotia as compared to elsewhere in Canada. This source indicates that Nova Scotia has a lower than average auto ownership per household (1.37 compared to the national average of 1.47 – lower than all provinces except for Quebec) and that vehicle ownership rates increased in most other provinces between 2000 and 2009 but did not grow in Nova Scotia. This suggests a lower cultural tendency toward auto ownership than in other parts of Canada and potentially a larger need for transit. However, Nova Scotia has the highest average VKT (per car/station wagon) of all provinces. The study suggests that this is partially attributed to the large area and low population density of the Halifax region. The low auto ownership per household combined with the large distances travelled per passenger vehicle (many trips and/or long trips) suggests that many households may benefit from viable transit options. These provincial trends suggest that even residents of rural areas in Nova Scotia may be more likely to need and use transit than those in similar rural areas in other provinces.

Summary

The foregoing demographic and labour observations have implications for public transit needs in the County. Overall, Victoria County has a relatively small, sparsely distributed and steadily declining population with a high and growing proportion of individuals over the age of 60. The County also has a higher than average rate of persons with disabilities and health issues as well as a high unemployment rate and a larger than usual proportion of work trips using the auto passenger mode. These factors indicate a potential need for some form of transportation service

to provide mobility to the aging population and to enhance work opportunities for those who may have limited access to other transportation modes. Despite the challenges of providing transportation service in an area with a sparse and declining population, there is a social need for access, particularly to those with health concerns living in isolated locations.

2.3 Existing Public Transit Services

Available public transportation services in the county is limited, consisting of two taxis operations, one in Baddeck and one in Ingonish, and an intercity bus service.

Taxi Services

In Baddeck, G&W Taxi which is based in Wagmatcook, a First Nations community 10 kilometres west of Baddeck, provides local and long distance taxi and parcel delivery service. The company has two vehicles (a car and a van) and operates 7 days a week, generally 9 am to 11 pm with later hours on Fridays and Saturdays. Their main business is medical – delivering patients to medical appointments within Victoria County but also outside the county to Sydney and other destinations. They also pick up and deliver parcels between the County and Sydney.

Typical fares are \$5.00 for local trips within Baddeck; \$20.00 for return trips within Baddeck/Big Baddeck and \$80.00 for a return trip to Sydney including two hours of shopping.

The operator of G&W taxi, Gerald Witzell, was interviewed and explained the scope of their service and indicated that he was intending to expand service and wanted to add a third driver. He also indicated that he felt there was a latent demand for a taxi service both for local trips as well as trips to Sydney but acknowledged that there was a need for greater awareness of their service. Expansion of the service and handling more trips would depend, of course, on finding additional drivers and adding further vehicles, which Mr. Witzell indicated he was interested in pursuing.

In Ingonish, a new taxi service, Ingo Cab, commenced operating in 2012 on a seasonal (spring, summer, fall) basis. The operator, Darrell Hardy, was interviewed as part of the Focus Group meeting with residents and businesses representatives in the area and provided further insight into the operation. The service was resumed in the spring of 2013 and he is intending to expand and operate the service year-round. Ingo Cabs has three cars, one of which is a 7 passenger van, and three drivers and operates generally Monday to Saturday mornings to midnight with limited hours on Sundays. They provide local trips for \$5.00 each way but are raising that fare to \$8.00. Pick-up and delivery of food and beverages are also handled at a rate of \$7.00. They have also provided service to the Sydney airport at a cost of \$175.00 each way considering the time required to travel to and from Sydney (4 hours). Their busiest times are Friday evenings and Saturdays. Mr. Hardy noted that weather conditions such as ice, snow and fog, are an issue for year-round operation. Overall, he believes there is the potential to expand business in the area although the distances involved to include service to Neil's Harbour and beyond are a challenge. As in Baddeck, he is finding it difficult to find additional drivers.

It is to be noted that there is no taxi by-law in Victoria County which helps foster the operation of local taxi services suited to the needs of the area. There is a taxi by-law in Sydney (Cape Breton Regional Municipality).

Intercity Bus Service

The only intercity bus service in the county is a daily intercity bus service through the southern portion of the county operated as part of a Sydney-Halifax route by Maritime Bus, a member of the Coach Atlantic Group of transportation companies. This service was introduced in 2011 after the previous operator, Acadien Coach Lines, ceased operations in 2010. Maritime Bus currently

operates one trip each way Monday to Thursday and on Saturdays, southbound in the morning and northbound in the evening, with an additional trip on Fridays and Saturdays. There is a bus stop within Baddeck as well as at other locations along Highway 105. The route schedule is oriented towards trips to Halifax. As a result, the service is not suited to providing county residents with a daily return trip to Sydney.

Mr. Michael Cassidy, President of Maritime Bus, was interviewed by telephone and he advised that while ridership on the route is satisfactory and has been improving, they have no plans to introduce any additional service at this time. He noted that they would require a commitment of 30 to 35 users per day with a monthly financial commitment of \$425.00 per person to justify the service.

Maritime Bus and several other companies (Ambassatours, Atlantic B&N, Acadia Tours, Carabin's & Transoverland), all based in Sydney, provide charter bus and tour services in Cape Breton and Victoria County.

School Transportation Service

Apart from the above two services, the Cape Breton County School Board has a school bus operation and maintenance yard located in Baddeck. Some 40 school buses are assigned to this facility although school transportation service is trending downward reflecting the changing demographics of the county and, particularly, the declining birth rate. In any event, due to regulatory, licensing, legal and insurance reasons, the school buses are not available for general use as a transportation resource for the general public.

2.4 Other Transportation Resources

The seniors and extended care facility in Baddeck, Alderwood, has an 18-passenger bus which it uses to take residents for tours or day trips to various destinations as well as for medical trips into Sydney. The vehicle sees limited use. Alderwood does allow the vehicle to be used periodically, at no charge, by various groups. The bus is approximately 15 years old and is maintained by Alderwood through a local truck dealership. Alderwood is considering replacing the bus with a new vehicle and fund-raising has commenced. The estimated cost for a replacement vehicle is \$80,000 to \$90,000.

The Inverary Inn and Resort in Baddeck provides a transportation service for their clientele for various day tours and outings for recreational activities. The Inn has three vehicles, two 15-passenger vans and a mini-van, which are driven by qualified people retained by the Inn. The owner, Mr. Scott MacAulay, is interested in collaborating with other groups and share the use of the vehicles they have.

Aside from the above vehicle resources, there are charter and tour coach operators and shuttle bus services in the Cape Breton area, such as Gina's and Going R Way, which are available to provide connections into Sydney from Victoria County and south to Port Hawkesbury, Truro and Halifax. However, these operators are based in either Sydney or Halifax and utilizing these services for local trips or trips out of Victoria County is not convenient and involves a premium charge which increases the cost of using these services.

3 Analysis of Transportation Needs

This section provides an analysis of the transportation needs of county residents as well as travel patterns, frequency of travel and potential market for a public transit service or some form of transportation service in the county with an indication of potential users, trip purpose and travel patterns. The analysis is based on Statistics Canada 2011 data, the web-survey conducted for this study and the results of consultations with stakeholders.

As noted in the analysis of population and demographic trends in section 2, it is clear that there are significant challenges facing the county and its residents in terms of transportation needs today which will only increase over the next five to ten years. These challenges are three-fold:

- An aging population;
- A declining population; and
- Limited and declining resources.

The aging and declining population characteristics directly affect the latter issue of limited resources, in terms of people available and able to drive a vehicle, and reinforce the need for some form of an overall transportation strategy within the county to address the growing trend of isolation.

As the population ages and declines, unless trends change, there will be an acute need for some form of transportation services as an alternative to existing transportation resources. The key finding from research and discussion with stakeholders is that, today, residents either drive their own vehicles or rely on family members or friends to take them to work, to shop, to medical appointments or to social activities. As the population ages, the number and percentage of residents unable to drive, and thereby the availability of a personal transportation resource, will decline. This trend underscores the need for some form of alternative, or replacement, transportation resource.

3.1 Stakeholder Consultation

An important part of assessing the need for a public transportation service was to consult with community stakeholders as well as to visit the various parts of the county. Stakeholders include residents, business and community leaders (members of Council). Focus group and individual meetings with these people were held to discuss views and the need for a public transportation service. These meetings were supplemented by a web-based survey that residents were invited to complete and submit. Hard copies of the survey were available at the County offices.

The following section provides a summary of the consultation.

Focus Groups

Focus group meetings were held in Baddeck and Ingonish. These meetings were supplemented by individual meetings and telephone discussions with community representatives and members of Council.

The focus group meeting in Baddeck was attended by eight community representatives, two members of Council and County staff. In Ingonish, six people attended including the local Councillor. The discussions provided valuable input to assessing the issues surrounding the transportation needs and trends in the area and, in turn, the potential need and benefit of some form of a public transportation service. As part of the meetings, an overview of the purpose and issues being addressed in the study were reviewed as well as a perspective on the potential transportation service alternatives and cost parameters for any service.

The focus group participants were asked to describe their organization, their perspective on transportation needs and provide answers to the questions – Is there a need for a transit service, who would a transit service benefit, and where would people travel?

The following is a summary of the input received and conclusions from the meetings:

- The key areas that a transportation service should serve include each of the geographic areas of the County with the ability to take local trips and trips into Sydney for work, medical, education and social purposes. There was also an indication of a need to travel south to Truro, the Halifax International airport and Halifax;
- A transportation service would provide mobility for people who are becoming increasingly isolated such as the elderly and those who do not have access to a car;
- The key benefits of a transportation service would be to provide access to shopping, health care services, jobs and education opportunities outside of Victoria County;
- A transportation service could provide access to recreational/social in Sydney;
- A transportation service would provide aging residents with an alternative to driving as well as to owning and operating a car;
- Although of a lower priority, it was felt that a transportation service might increase the attractiveness of Victoria County to prospective new residents and businesses as well as to allow existing residents to remain within the county.

Participants commented on the possible cost to use a transportation service and agreed that the fare would depend on distance but that any form of local service should be no more than \$5.00. It was recognized that a regular, fixed route style service may not be practical but rather some form of regular weekly to specific locations would be more appropriate. Suggestions for this type of service included weekly shopping or medical trips into Sydney and between parts of the County (north of Smokey and south of Smokey) to provide access to services within the county.

With regard to a cost to support any form of service, participants did recognize that there may need to be some financial investment by the County and taxpayers but the level of investment was a concern and should be sustainable.

Interviews with Members of Council and Businessmen

In addition to the focus group meeting, meetings were held with five members of Council, local businessmen in Baddeck and Ingonish and representatives of the two taxi operators. The purpose of the meetings was to identify key issues pertaining to the need for a transportation service and expectations for the outcome of this study.

All persons interviewed concurred that the priority need for any form of transportation service was to provide an alternative to continuing reliance on the automobile and to counter the effect of increasing isolation due to limited transportation resources. Trip priorities included shopping, access to medical appointments and health care services both within the county but also in Sydney. Members of Council and the local businessmen each acknowledged the limited transportation resources in the county today and expressed a preference for some form of a collaborative arrangement to share resources. They also expressed a preference for keeping any sort of service affordable.

In addition to specific meetings with stakeholders, the consultant toured each of the five key areas of the county independently and then individually with the local member of Council to Iona, Boularderie Island, Baddeck, Ingonish, Neil's Harbour, Bay St. Lawrence, Dingwall and Meat

Cove. As part of these visits, several meetings were held with local residents to again gain insight into local issues and transportation needs.

Taxi Operators

Separate meetings were held with the Taxi operators in Baddeck and Ingonish to discuss the services they provide, the primary trips served and their view of the potential market for their services. Both taxi services are relatively new – the service in Baddeck commenced in approximately 2010 while the service in Ingonish began on a trial basis for six months in 2012 and resumed in the spring of 2013 with the intention of providing the service year-round.

Both operators shared the same view that there is a potential market for their services although there is a need for greater awareness and promotion of their service. Both operators also indicated a desire to expand their service to serve both local as well as longer distance trips subject to adding additional drivers. There was also a willingness to collaborate with the County to better meet local needs.

3.2 Survey

A survey to assess travel needs and patterns, and attitudes toward a potential transportation service, or services, in the Municipality of Victoria County was developed. The information is useful for gauging the need for, acceptance and potential ridership of any new public transportation service. The public was invited to complete the survey in paper format (hard copy), made available at the municipal office in Baddeck, and online via a link on the municipal website (users were directed to an online survey service, Survey Monkey). The survey was available for approximately a month and a half between June 26, 2013 and August 12, 2013.

A total of 140 surveys were started online or returned on paper. Of these 140, there were 100 completed responses, 7 partial surveys (provided some answers, but did not complete the survey through the last question), and 33 incomplete surveys (did not provide answers beyond demographics).

Respondent Profile

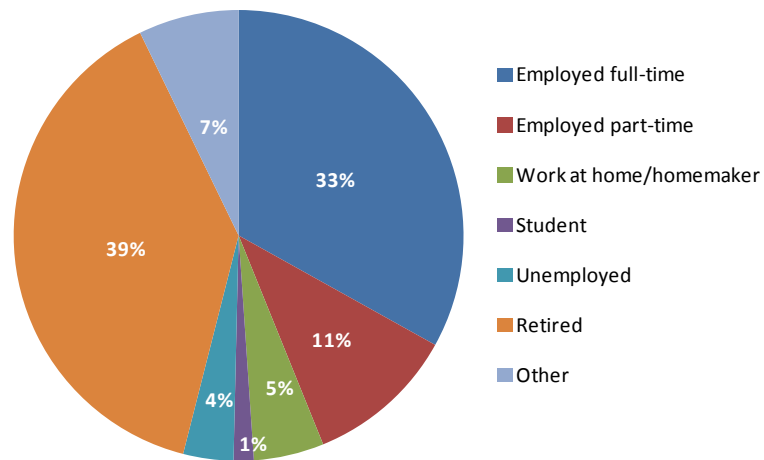
The survey yielded a wide cross-section of residents throughout the municipality. In terms of the profile of respondents:

- A slight majority of respondents were female (55%).
- A large proportion of the respondents were over the age of 50, with equal representation from the “50 to 64” (36%) and “Over 65 years old” age cohorts (36%).
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents have a driver’s license.
- About a third of respondents reside in Baddeck (36%), with other places of residence including North Shore (11%), Iona (9%) and Middle River (7%). Most respondents (90.7%) said they live at this place of residence year round.

Employment Profile

A total of 139 respondents provided their employment status, summarized in Exhibit 3-1. Retirees made up the largest proportion of respondents (39%), while a third of the respondents (33%) are employed full time (includes one respondent who is a full time seasonal worker).

Exhibit 3-1: Employment Status of Survey Respondents



Travel Characteristics

Respondents were asked about their travel patterns and to indicate the frequency, destination and transportation mode for 5 different trip purposes: work, school, shopping, medical and social.

Work Trips

Of the 58 respondents who indicated they travel for work, almost half (48%, or 28 respondents) work in Baddeck. Travel within Baddeck (work and reside) is the most popular origin-destination pair. The number of work trips to Baddeck is higher when including respondents who noted Baddeck as one of multiple work destinations across Victoria County. Most work trips are made by car on a daily and/or weekday basis. Only 5 respondents specifically noted travelling to work as a passenger/carpool/ride, while only 3 respondents walk.

School Trips

Only 13 respondents remarked making school trips, with the majority (8, or 61.5%) going to Baddeck on a daily or weekday basis. School trips are primarily made by car (either drive myself or driven by parent/adult) or school bus. A few respondents recorded school-related activities as part of their travel patterns.

Shopping Trips

Half of respondents specifically noted Baddeck (54 out of 107) as their destination area for shopping trips; however, many respondents also noted going to Sydney / North Sydney for shopping. Shopping trips to Baddeck are on a more frequent basis (about 1 to 3 times a week), while those to Sydney / North Sydney are made on a monthly basis, noting the availability of larger or big box stores in the area. Most respondents drive themselves, although some respondents carpool or ride as a passenger.

Some respondents noted they combine trip purposes and make shopping trips/errands, particularly to Sydney / North Sydney, after work or in combination with medical or social trips.

Medical Trips

More than half of respondents (44 out of 76) specifically noted Baddeck as their destination area for medical trips. Many respondents, including some who also go to Baddeck, said they travel to Sydney / North for medical appointments. Answers about frequency of medical trips were generally 1 to 2 times a year or “as necessary”, with only a few respondents going once or twice a month. Most respondents drive themselves or drive a relative to medical appointments, although some respondents carpool or ride as a passenger.

As noted above, combining trips is common and respondents take advantage of driving or getting a ride to medical trips to also go shopping/run errands or socialize.

Social Trips

Social trips were one of the most diverse in terms of answers about frequency, destination and mode of travel. Many respondents gave multiple destinations throughout the municipality for social trips, with Baddeck being the most popular destination area. Other common destinations noted by respondents were Ingonish, North Shore and Sydney / North Sydney. Frequency of trips varied, with most being 1 to 3 times a week (42 out of 80) while the next large proportion being on the weekends. Most respondents drive themselves, although some respondents carpool or ride as a passenger.

Other social-related trip purposes given by respondents include volunteer work, local functions or events, and recreation (e.g. piano lessons, swim, family visit).

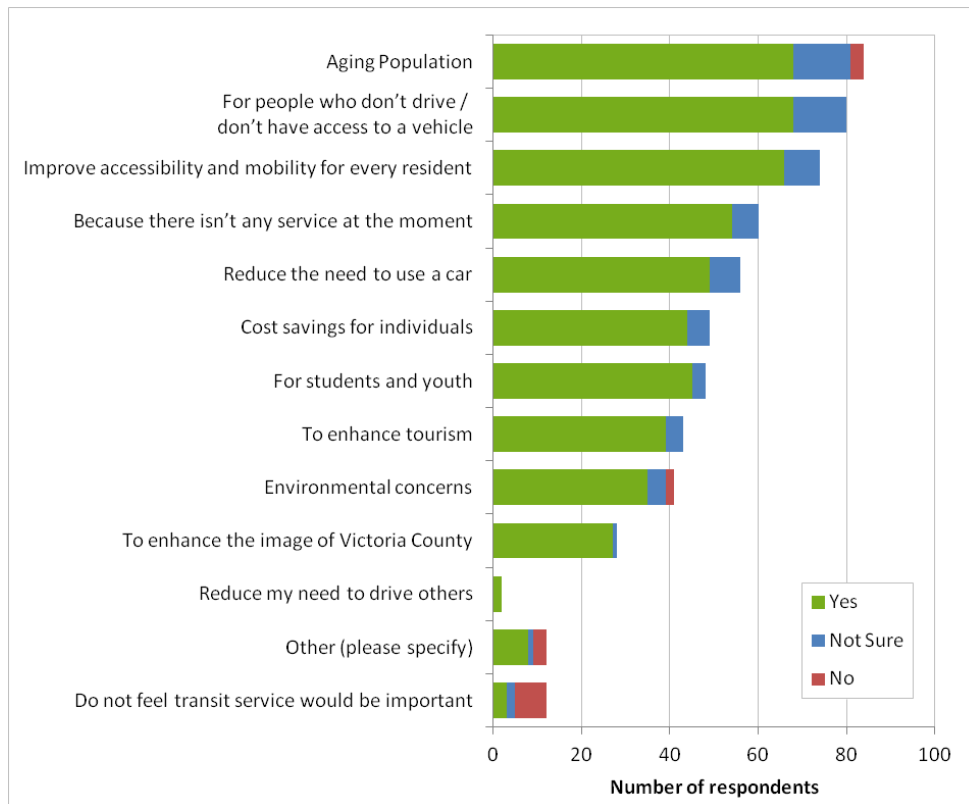
Auto Access

Almost all respondents (92%) have access to a car. Of those who do not have access to an automobile (9 respondents), two thirds depend on a family or friend to drive them when they need to go somewhere while the other third walk.

Attitude Towards Potential Transit Service

Respondents were asked if they feel there is a need for a form of public transportation service in Victoria County. Out of 106 respondents, 76% said “Yes”, 16% were “Not sure” and 8% said “No”. Respondents were also asked to provide some reasons why they do or do not feel that providing a transit service would be important for Victoria County. As summarized in Exhibit 3-2, enhanced mobility, particularly for seniors and those unable to drive for themselves, is the primary reasons for needing a transit service in Victoria County. High costs were cited by a number of respondents who do not feel transit is needed and provide an “Other” answer.

Exhibit 3-2: Attitude Towards Potential Transit Service



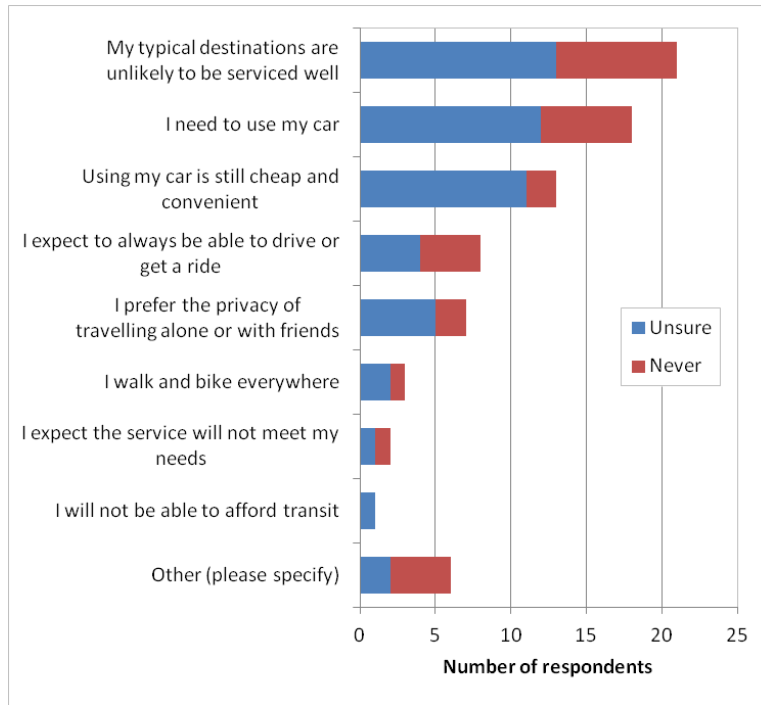
Potential Transit Usage

Respondents were asked how likely they would use a public transit service if it were available and convenient to them. About a third (31%) said they would be “very likely” to use the system, while an additional 18% said “Likely” and 33% were “Unsure”. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents would “Never” use transit.

Unsure or Never Transit Users

Where respondents answered “unsure” or “never” (n=52) to their potential use of transit, they were also asked to provide some reasoning. These answers are summarized in Exhibit 3-3. These respondents believe that their destinations will not be well served by transit and/or need or prefer their vehicle.

Exhibit 3-3: Reasons for Not Using Local Transit Service



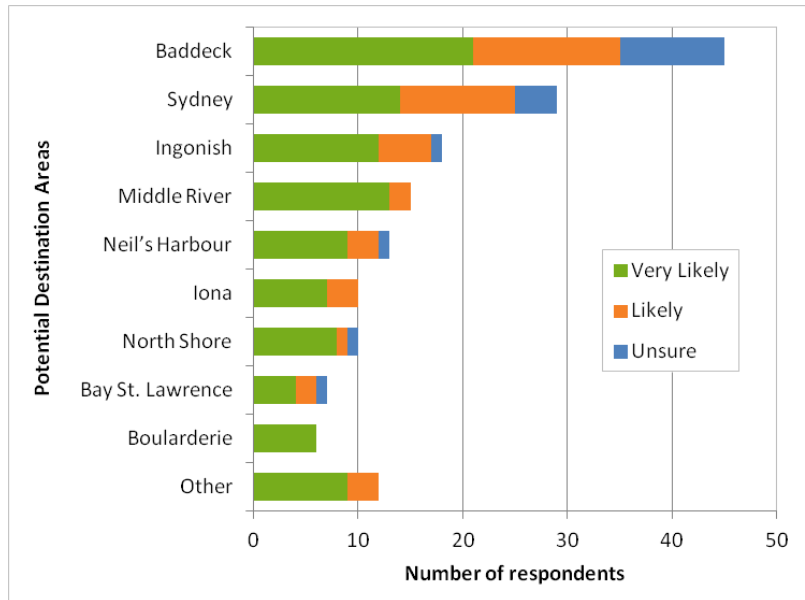
Likely and Very Likely Users

Respondents who answered that they would be “very likely”, “likely” and “unsure” (n=85) to use transit were asked further regarding potential destinations as summarized in Exhibit 3-4. Almost half of the respondents say they would use a transit service that served the Baddeck area. Although it was not among the provided choices in the survey, many respondents noted they would use the service to travel to Sydney / North Sydney (respondents selected “Other” and wrote in the blank space provided; answers not counted within “Other”).

The majority (89%) of respondents who are likely or unsure they would use a transit service have access to a vehicle, and most travel to their destinations by car for various trip purposes.

Six (6) respondents cited having special needs that would prevent them from using a regular public transit vehicle; primary need was mobility (3), while others stated visual / sight (1), mobility and sight (1) and “tools and equipment” (1). Interestingly, half of these respondents said they would “very likely” use a public transit service, while the other half were “unsure”.

Exhibit 3-4: What destinations would you take transit to?

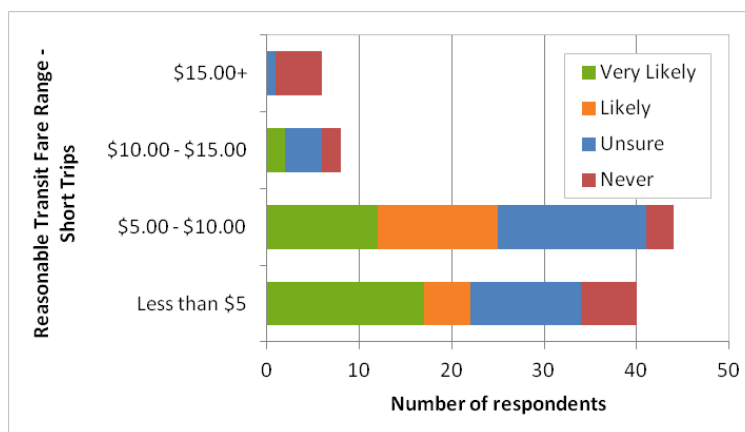


Transit Fares

All respondents were asked what they thought would be a reasonable transit fare if their travel needs previously cited were met. Respondents were asked to provide a range of cost for both short trips and long trips.

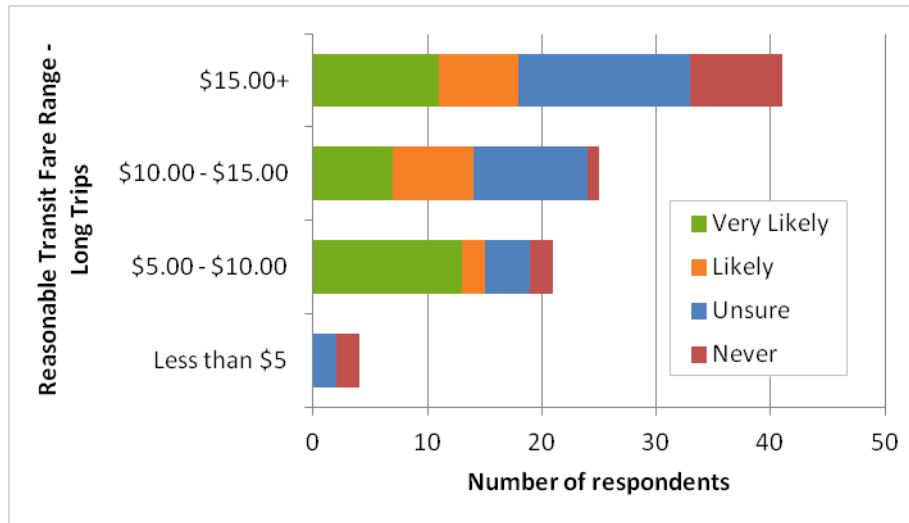
For shorter trips (Exhibit 3-5), half of 98 respondents indicated a transit fare between \$5.00 and \$10.00 would be reasonable, while another large proportion (40) said a reasonable fare would be less than \$5.00. Exhibit 3-5 shows those likely to use a transit service prefer lower fares (below \$10.00), while reasonable fares for those that indicated they would never use a transit service varied significantly.

Exhibit 3-5: Reasonable Transit Fare for Shorter Trips



As illustrated in Exhibit 3-6, half of the 91 respondents indicated a reasonable transit for long trips would be greater than \$15.00. However, there was a greater variety among the range of reasonable fares and how likely the respondent would use a transit service, compared to answers for short trips. Likely users (those indicating “very likely” and “likely”) noted fares should be greater than \$5.00, but split almost evenly among the other fare ranges.

Exhibit 3-6: Reasonable Transit Fare for Longer Trips



Implications of Survey Results

In general, the results of the survey demonstrate a general desire for the introduction of a transit service, particularly in the Baddeck area and to/from the Sydney / North Sydney. Although most respondents currently drive themselves to their destination, many expressed a transit service would be convenient to reduce their travel needs, particularly driving others (family and friends), and to serve an aging population.

It should be noted that as a self-selecting survey, these results may not reflect the attitudes of the community-at-large. However, the results do represent the attitudes of people in the community most likely to use a transit service.

3.3 Conclusions

Based on the comments and information received from the interviews and meetings with stakeholders and the surveys, the transportation needs of county residents are as follows:

- **Key markets/users** – seniors, people with disabilities
- **Trip purposes** – medical/health, shopping, work, education
- Primary travel patterns and destinations:
 - North of Smokey (Ingonish/Neil’s Harbour) to South of Smokey (Baddeck)
 - Ingonish to Neil’s Harbour/Dingwall
 - Baddeck to Sydney
 - North of Smokey to Sydney
- **Frequency of trips:**
 - Medical – infrequent
 - Shopping – daily and weekly
 - Work – daily
 - Education – daily

- Social – daily and weekly

Residents and stakeholders also indicated an interest in trips south from Victoria County to New Glasgow, Truro, the Halifax International airport and Halifax/Dartmouth for work, education and health/medical appointments. The frequency of these trips varies from monthly or once or twice a year.

Based on the survey results and stakeholder consultations, the priority transportation, destination and frequency needs are:

- Medical, shopping and social trips locally (within the separate north and south sectors of the county), daily and weekly;
- Medical and shopping trips between the north and south sectors of the county weekly or monthly; and
- Medical and shopping trips to Sydney, weekly or monthly.

It should be noted that medical trips are generally infrequent on an individual basis but are a priority in view of their importance from a healthcare standpoint.

4 Case Studies/Peer Review

This section provides a case study of public transit services in other jurisdictions and similar settings to Victoria County which can be considered as peers, or comparators, for a potential service in the County.

4.1 Peer Systems

While every municipality or area has its own unique characteristics and dynamics case studies, or “peer reviews”, provide a perspective to understand what is occurring in the other municipalities and an opportunity to learn from their experience as a basis for understanding what could be provided in Victoria County and the potential ridership and costs. The public transit services reviewed are: Kings Transit, Colchester Transit Cooperative Limited, Strait Area Transit, Transport de Clare and Trans-County Transportation Society.

1. Kings Transit Authority, Kings County

Transit service in the Annapolis Valley began in 1981 with the establishment of the Kings Transit Authority to provide service between Wolfville and Kentville. Service has since been extended to Greenwood, Bridgetown, Annapolis Royal, Weymouth, Digby, Hantsport, and Brooklyn. These communities are connected by eight routes, all running along the Highway 1 corridor on an hourly or bi-hourly basis. The service is highly successful considering the regional role it plays in an area of relatively low population density. The partnership formed between the municipalities in providing the service provides efficiencies and cost savings while maintaining a high level of service that would otherwise not be attainable individually.

The Kings Transit Authority (KTA) was established to operate public transit in the Annapolis Valley and was formed under a funding and governance agreement between the County of Kings and the towns of Berwick, Kentville, and Wolfville. The KTA is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of elected Councillors from the funding municipalities which share the net cost of the service and make contributions to the capital equipment reserves. The share is calculated based on census population.

Service to areas outside the founding municipalities of the KTA, such as to Annapolis and Digby, are contracted to the Authority on a 100 percent cost recovery basis. As a result, these municipalities do not have decision-making ability on the KTA's Board of Directors.

Kings Transit has 14 vehicles and 28 employees. Ridership totalled some 392,000 in 2011 with a total operating cost of \$3,000,000 and fare and other revenues of \$1,300,000. The net cost of \$1.7 million is provided by the partnering municipalities.

The agency has recently had issues related to the level of service and costs and there have been internal conflicts pertaining to how the service operates.

Lessons learned – the agency and the transit services depend heavily on the cooperation and on-going funding commitments by each of the municipal units. It does not receive funding from the province as it operates a fixed route service. Clear expectations of what level of service and associated costs are required to operate the service must be in place.

Website – www.kingstransit.ns.ca

2. Colchester Transit Cooperative Limited (CTCL), Truro/Colchester

Based in Truro, this non-profit company operates on a demand-responsive, subscription basis and is open to all residents within Truro and most parts of the County of Colchester. Service is offered between 7:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday. The company has three vehicles and employs 5 full-time and part-time people. An approximate 10,000 trips were taken in 2010. It

relies on a significant grant from the Provincial government for its annual operating and capital needs. Fares are based on distance with a minimum trip cost of \$4.00 to \$4.50 for up to 5 km. Although the company can offer trips to points within Colchester County and beyond, these are not actively pursued as they reduce the number of customers who can be served locally. CTCL receives a grant from the Province under its Accessible Transit Assistance Program initiative. The manager/dispatcher is on salary and the drivers are paid on any hourly basis.

Lessons Learned – CTCL had an annual operating budget of approximately \$130,000 in 2011 of which it received approximately \$80,000 from the province through CTAP grants. The municipal units (Truro and Colchester) contribute a minimal amount of funding (< \$10,000 annually) to the operation. If it wasn't for the provincial funding, CTCL would not be able to survive unless the municipal units provided replacement funding.

Website – www.ctcl.ca

3. ABLE-Transit Wheel Chair Bus

ABLE-Transit is a specialized transit service that operates in the Town and the immediate communities in the County surrounding the Town. It is described as a fully accessible, door-to-door transit service for the elderly and persons with disabilities. Service is provided by a fleet of one vehicle and operates on weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and no weekend service is provided. Similar to many specialized transit systems across the country, Able-Transit requires that users register before use and meet eligibility requirements. The service is supported by local bingo activities. There are no fares and ridership statistics are not available.

Lessons Learned – ABLE-Transit provides a very limited service to qualified users. It is wholly dependent on charitable donations. If this revenue source declines, the service will be similarly affected.

Contact – dcscstruro@eastlink.ca

4. Strait Area Transit, Port Hawkesbury

This transit system, located in the Town of Port Hawkesbury, serves the Counties of Inverness and Richmond and the Town of Port Hawkesbury and has been in operation since 2008. Total population served is approximately 7,000. Originally, the service included both a scheduled, fixed route linking as well as a demand-response (dial-a-bus) operation. The agency encountered financial difficulties in early 2013 and service was temporarily discontinued but resumed in June on a reduced scale; only the demand-response service is currently being provided. The fixed route had operated 4 return trips each day (morning, noon and late afternoon) Monday to Friday. The demand-response service is offered from 6:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. A total of 12,000 trips were taken on the service in 2012.

Originally, the agency offered charter services as well as a courier service which delivered auto parts and hospital supplies locally and prescriptions and groceries to residents. However, these services and related revenues represented a very small revenue source primarily because they did not have the marketing and promotion budget to advertise this service.

SAT is organized as a non-profit agency with a board of 9 directors and has a manager/dispatcher and, currently, 2 part-time drivers. Prior to spring 2013, SAT had a manager, and office assistant/dispatcher and three full-time drivers. The manager/dispatcher is on salary. The drivers are paid approximately \$12.00 per hour. They have 4 vehicles (two 17 to 24 passenger buses and two vans) in their fleet. The operating budget had been approximately \$350,000 annually with fare revenues representing approximately 20% of that total, or \$70,000 but each have been reduced to approximately half that amount. Provincial (CTAP, and NS Trip Grants) accounted for an additional \$25,000 to \$30,000. The three municipal units matched the provincial CTAP grant of some \$11,000-12,000. SAT also originally received a wage subsidy for their employees although this source was discontinued. Capital for vehicles came from the

province's ATAP program with donations covering the remaining costs. The buses cost approximately \$75,000 and the vans \$30,000. The vehicles were maintained under a special arrangement by the local school board who charged SAT for the cost of parts and a very nominal amount for labour. As the provincial and other grants came to an end, SAT began to incur an annual operating deficit which resulted in the agency having to cease operations earlier this year and then resume with a reduced level of service.

Lessons Learned – based on a telephone interview with Jessica Ferrell, she indicated that the service began operation largely on the strength of provincial grants and expectation that they would continue. While the municipal units were supportive of the transit service (and still are), they are unable to fund the full net cost of the service. In retrospect, the agency should have been more realistic as to the actual cost to operate and sustain the service recognizing the limited financial resources available beyond the original provincial grants.

Website/Facebook page – www.facebook.com/straitareatransit

5. Transport de Clare, Digby County

Formed in 1996, Transport de Clare Society is a non-profit charitable agency providing transit service in the Municipality of Clare, Digby County, the Town of Digby and Town of Weymouth. It provides a demand-response (door to door) service five days-a-week between the hours of 8am and 5pm. The Society serves a population of approximately 18,000 and handles 19,000 trips annually. TdeCS has 3 buses, 2 vans and 4 cars. There is a manager who is a volunteer, a paid dispatcher and drivers who are paid on the basis of \$0.40 per kilometre rather than a set hourly rate.

Its primary client market is seniors and those with disabilities. Clare has recently investigated the introduction of a fixed route along Highway 1 and 101 and commuter service to Yarmouth and Digby but has not pursued these for financial reasons.

TdeCS has an annual operating budget of approximately \$200,000. Fares total approximately \$100,000 based on an individual trip rate of \$15.00. The Society receives annual funding of \$14,000 from the Province through CTAP and similar funding from the municipalities. Donations by various community groups represent the balance of the operating budget. Capital for vehicles comes from the province up to \$50,000 with the remainder raised by donations. The recent extension to Weymouth is funded 100% by the municipality of Weymouth.

Lessons Learned – must have a “strong advocate or champion” to ensure the continued viability of a transit service. Need to rely on donations, extensive use of volunteers and minimizing costs to be sustainable. Do not consider a fixed schedule route service as this is expensive and not attractive to seniors and people with disabilities.

Website – www.transportdeclare.ca

6. Trans-County Transportation Society, Annapolis County and Kings County

T-CTS is a non-profit association formed in 1999 and provides door-to-door transportation service in the counties of Annapolis and Kings. The population served is approximately 33,000. Primary trip purposes include health appointments, grocery shopping, education and social visits and their primary client are persons with disabilities and seniors. The agency has 12 vehicles and 12 employees (a general manager, an administrative assistant and 10 drivers). The general manager and assistant are on salary while the drivers are paid between \$10 and \$16 for hours worked. There is a board of 10 directors who are all volunteers and they contribute to the promotion and management of the service.

A total of 26,000 trips were carried on the service in 2012 with some 7,500 hours of service provided. Service is provided seven days a week, from approximately 7am to late evening according to demand. The annual operating budget is \$430,000 of which fares account for 70%

(\$280,000). Fares begin at \$10.00 for local trips. There is a zone system such that longer trips have a higher fare. All trips are pre-booked and all vehicles are equipped to handle wheelchairs and scooters. Fares are developed by the board and approved by the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board. All vehicles are subject to the URB inspection process.

The provincial CTAP program contributes approximately \$60,000 annually towards the operating cost while the two counties contribute approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 each annually. TTS has arrangements with several agencies including Victorian Order of Nurses, Adult Assistance and the Provincial Ministry of Health to assist in funding the balance of the operating costs. The purchase of vehicles is funded by the province and charitable donations.

Lessons Learned – The T-CTS general manager highly recommends that any new transit service “walks before it runs” – start small, build clientele and demonstrate need, then progress from there. TTS had originally started “big” but ran into serious financial issues. Essentially, it was bankrupt in 2004 and had to reduce services and aggressively seek out sponsorships.

4.2 Summary and Lessons Learned

There are several small and medium size transit operations in the province of Nova Scotia. Six of these agencies have been profiled ranging from the (relatively) large Kings Transit service to the small Strait Area Transit service. Kings Transit services are fixed route, scheduled while the remaining agencies provide demand-response, or on-demand, pre-booked services. They have a high reliance on volunteers and pay employees minimum salaries. While Kings Transit serves a number of municipalities and urban areas as well as low density, rural areas between the municipalities it serves, all of the remaining agencies serve small, low population communities and rural areas. Ridership levels range from a high of 392,000 for Kings Transit to between 10,000 (TdeC, SAT) and 26,000 for T-CTS with population ranging from 7,000 (SAT) to 42,000 (Kings Transit).

Based on interviews with three of the six agencies (Transport de Clare, T-CTS and SAT), the over-riding advice from their lessons learned is that any transit service in a small, low density and rural area should be demand-response but should also start small. Ridership potentials range from 10,000 trips annually in for the service in Truro/Colchester to 392,000 for Kings Transit.

Exhibit 4-1 presents a summary of the key findings from this case study/peer review.

Exhibit 4-1: Peer Review/Case Study Transit System Summary

LOCATION	POPULATION	ANNUAL TRIPS	OPERATING COST	REVENUE FARES	MUNICIPAL COST	OTHER REVENUES*
Clare	18,000	19,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$16,000	\$84,000
CTCL	33,000	10,000	\$130,000	\$50,000	\$10,000	\$70,000
SAT***	7,000	12,000**	\$350,000**	\$70,000**	\$22,000	\$111,000
T-CTS	33,000	26,000	\$430,000	\$290,000	\$35,000	\$105,000
Kings	42,000	392,000	\$3,000,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,700,000	-

*Includes CTAP funding

**2012 estimates. Now reduced due to lower levels of service

***Service ran a deficit

5 Transit Demand Estimates

5.1 Basis for Estimating Transit Demand

Estimating the potential demand or use of any transportation service is not an exact science. It is highly conjectural and is influenced by a wide range of variables including trip purpose, origin and destination, the level of service offered (days and hours of operation and the frequency of the service), the style of the service offered (fixed route or demand response), and the directness and travel time of the service. Generally, the more service offered (days, hours, frequency) the higher the ridership, but there are limits and those limits are governed by the following factors:

- population (number of people served by the service);
- demographics (seniors travel less often than youth or people age 25 to 45);
- employment (people employed travel more often than those under-employed);
- density (transit use is higher in more densely populated areas);
- origin-destination links (multiple and dispersed origin-destinations are difficult to serve effectively with transit);
- income levels (people with lower incomes tend to use transit more)
- availability of the alternative transportation resources such as the car (higher car ownership levels result in less transit use); and
- trip purposes (health trips are less frequent than work, school or social trips).

Responses to surveys, while helpful, are only an indication, not a guarantee, of use. As a result, estimating the potential number of trips that might be taken on any transit service is best based on the demonstrated experience in similar jurisdictions with similar services. These estimates are then based on the “modal split percentage” (share of all transportation trips served by transit) or on the basis of rides per capita (total transit trips divided by the population served).

Modal share percentage for transit can be as high as 25%, 30% or higher in large urban areas with excellent transit service. In most medium and smaller cities, the percentage varies from 3 to 6. In Halifax it is 6% to 7% while in Sydney with its smaller population and lower levels of transit service, the transit modal share is approximately 0.6%. For the small municipalities included in the Peer Review, the modal split would be very small. In Clare County, for example, it is approximately 0.1%.

On the basis of rides per capita, this value can range widely with rates as high as 200 in large cities like Toronto to 50 or 60 in cities like London (ON) and Halifax. In Sydney, the rate is 4.5.

Using the population and ridership data from Exhibit 4.1 in the foregoing section, the rides per capita for the transit systems are:

Transport de Clare	– 1.05
Colchester T Cooperative Limited	– 0.3
Strait Area Transit	– 1.7*
Trans-County Transportation Society	– 0.79
Kings Transit	– 9.3

The average riders per capita for the smaller services (excluding Kings Transit) is 0.96.

Service levels influence transit ridership as noted earlier. For this reason, Kings Transit has a higher level of ridership compared to the other smaller transit services. Similarly, Strait Area

Transit has a higher ridership level compared to CTCL, Transport de Clare or T-CTS because it had been providing both a fixed route as well as a demand-response service. It should be noted, as discussed above, that the ridership levels for Strait Area Transit will be lower both for 2013 and in future due to the interruption in service and the subsequent significant reductions in service levels.

5.2 Ridership Estimate for Victoria County

Based on the results of the stakeholder feedback and survey results, the demographics and geography of Victoria County, and considering the transit service experience in jurisdictions with comparable characteristics to those of Victoria County such as those reviewed above, **the maximum ridership potential in Victoria County is likely to be in the range of 0.3 to 1.7 rides per capita, or 2,130 to 12,070 trips, per year. At an average of 0.96, the estimate ridership would be 6,830 trips per year.** This would equate to approximately **23 trips per day** for a service operating Monday to Saturday. The level of transit use (ridership), as noted earlier, is highly dependent on a range of factors, particularly service levels, and therefore the ridership level could be higher if a higher level of transit service was provided.

Distributed by the three main geographic areas of the county, the above ridership estimates would be distributed as follows.

Exhibit 5-1: Estimated Ridership by Area of County

AREA	POPULATION	ESTIMATED ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (0.3 – 1.7)	ESTIMATED AVERAGE ANNUAL RIDERSHIP (0.96)	DAILY RIDERSHIP
North of Smokey:				
Ignonish/Aspy Bay/Northern Mainland	2,207	662 – 3,752	2,119	7.1
South of Smokey:				
Baddeck/Wagmatcook/Central Mainland	1,849	555 – 3,143	1,775	5.9
Iona/Boularderie/Southern Mainland	3,059	918 – 5,200	2,937	9.8
Total	7,115	2,134 – 12,096	6,830	22.8

Based on population distribution within the county, the Iona/Boularderie/Southern Mainland area would collectively have the highest ridership potential followed by the area North of Smokey while the Baddeck area would have the lowest. The estimated daily ridership, of course, could be lower if a lower (less frequent, fewer number of days) level of service is offered.

6 Transit Service Considerations

The following section reviews the range of public transit services that can be considered together with a review of methods of operation, funding sources, regulatory and administrative considerations and governance and organizational approaches for operating and managing a public transit service.

6.1 Description of Transit Service Options

Transit Service Categories

A public transit service can bridge a wide range of concepts from the sharing of a vehicle to a formal fixed route, scheduled service. Overall, transit services fall into two different categories:

Conventional Transit – this service is designed to meet the broad needs of the general public and is the common service found in most municipalities with a public transit service such as in Halifax, Sydney, Kings County and Moncton. It can consist of fixed routes or a demand-response (dial-a-bus) style service as warranted by the size of the community, the area served and population; and

Specialized Transit – this service is designed specifically to meet the needs of people with disabilities and, where applicable, those who are unable to use the regular (conventional) transit service. Vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lifts and securement devices and the driver's provide assistance in boarding or alighting unless the user has an attendant. The service is typically operated on a "demand" basis. An example of a specialized transit service is the Handi-Trans in Cape Breton/Sydney or the Access-A-Bus in Halifax.

Most municipalities operate separate conventional and specialized transit services although the smallest municipalities may operate either a combined conventional and specialized transit service or simply a specialized transit service.

Transit Service Designs

There are several alternative ways in which a transit service that can be provided. These are:

- **Fixed route:** this is the most common form of public transit service consisting of fixed routes and fixed schedules. Includes not only local route service but express and commuter services.

Comment - Service can be operated with vans or small, medium or large buses. The frequency of service can vary by time of day and day of the week and can apply in all but very low density, dispersed population areas.

- **Demand-response:** Also called "Dial-a-Ride", this service essentially operates according to the demand for the service with no fixed route. Vehicles would be available to pick up or drop off users as the demand warrants. Customers would book trips by calling in advance of their travel time. If there are no "customers", the vehicle would not operate. Vans or small buses can be used.

Comment - This is the type of service requires a person to receive and arrange the trip bookings much like a taxi. The vehicle driver could handle this responsibility. This service is commonly used for specialized transit for persons with disabilities.

- **Subsidized Shared-Ride Taxi:** Under this concept, a taxi firm would be contracted to provide a service at a reduced or set fare, paid by the user, for pre-approved trips and by individuals within a specified service area or along a specified route. The

municipality could compensate the taxi firm for the difference in the set fare and actual trip cost based on the terms of the contract. This service concept is typically utilized to meet transportation needs in low demand areas or to offer service to elderly or disabled individuals.

Comment – To control usage and costs, a formalized contract would be established with a specific taxi operator incorporating a set fare, or fares, and rate of compensation to the taxi company. Costs would be controlled by restricting service eligibility or the type of trips covered by the arrangement although this would considerably limit the usefulness of the service and ridership.

- **Van/Carpool:** An arrangement in which a group of passengers share the use and cost of a car or van to travel to and from pre-arranged destinations together. The vehicle is owned by one person. The passengers contribute to its cost of operation.

Comment - Typically, the municipality or relevant local agency provides the means to coordinate travel plans and to link the users using a central telephone information line or website and other information sources.

Except for Kings Transit, the small transit services reviewed in this report use the demand-response type of service delivery. This service is also particularly suited to serving people with mobility and other disabilities.

Transit Service Alternatives

As alternatives to the foregoing transit services, the following options could be considered:

1. Work with (contract with) Maritime Bus to add a trip each day to Sydney through Baddeck and other parts of the county along Highway 105. Based on discussions with Maritime Bus, the cost to provide each additional trip could be in the range of \$15,000 per month (35 users x \$425 each);
2. Purchase and supply a van to an organized group(s);
3. Encourage a non-profit group to provide service;
4. Promote local taxi operators and assist them to expand their service. This approach would require a level of commitment from the taxi operators to provide and maintain their service. The municipality could assist residents with the cost of using the service through the provision, sale or subsidizing of the cost to use the service through taxi chit program.

Of these four options, the last one has the best potential for use in Victoria County in view of the existence of two taxi operators in the two primary geographic areas of the county.

Methods for Operating a Transit Service

Either of the foregoing services can be operated directly by the municipality or a transit agency with municipal/agency employees or by a private company or a non-profit agency (typically for specialized transit) under a contract with the municipality or transit agency. Under the latter approach, the terms and conditions would be defined in a formal contract between the operator and the municipality or agency. The selection of an operator would typically be determined through the standard procurement process.

The person used to provide the service under any scenario could be employed or could be volunteers. Clearly, the use of volunteers, even if provided with an honorarium, would be the least costly approach.

6.2 Cost Implications

A fixed route, scheduled service is the most expensive in terms of capital investment and on-going operating costs as it involves a commitment to providing a service at set times. It also requires a long-term/multi-year commitment for success in order to convince people to change their travel habits. As experienced by Strait Area Transit, the cost to provide the fixed route service exceeded the available funding and has been discontinued.

A demand-response service is the next most-expensive although the cost can be varied according the method of service delivery (volunteers or paid employees) and level of service (days and hours and frequency).

In any event, either of these services have the highest legal and regulatory (URB) requirements to implement as they represent “formal” transit services.

The least costly approach is to limit the financial commitments associated with staff, vehicles and other supporting infrastructure. This can be achieved through a fully volunteer effort such as van or car-pooling or building upon the resources of existing transportation service providers such as the taxi operators.

6.3 Funding Sources

The primary funding sources to recover costs associated with a transit service are **fares** and **municipal investment**. If the organization established to operate the transit service is non-profit, then it can solicit and receive **donations**. Other potential revenue sources can be realized from **advertising** on vehicles or shelters and benches at bus stops. However, these sources have limited potential in small jurisdictions or with demand-response services.

Fares

In small transit services, fares paid by users account for a low percentage of overall operating costs, often in the range of 25% to 30%. Transit fares typically are in the range of \$2.50 to \$3.00 per trip with higher fares (up to \$4.00, \$5.00) for premium services. Inter-city highway bus services charge on the basis of distance. For example, a trip from Baddeck to Sydney is \$20.25 one way, or \$34.43 return while a trip to Halifax is \$107.95 return.

However, in many of the small jurisdictions with a limited and specialized service, the fares per trip are higher such as \$5.00 per local trip and \$15.00 to \$25.00 for longer trips. These higher fares are necessary in view of the limited other funding sources from the local municipalities available to these agencies.

For a service in Victoria County, stakeholders indicated that a fare of \$5.00 for short trips are a fare of \$10.00 to \$15.00 for longer trips was acceptable.

Municipal Investment

Public investment, or financial support, is important and necessary for municipal transit services to fund the difference between operating costs and user fares in view of the broad social, mobility and economic benefits public transit means to a city and its residents. This investment is required in order to keep fares at a reasonable level in competition with automobile use and other influences. In small to medium size cities, the municipal investment can range from \$20.00 to \$60.00 per capita or higher. In larger cities, the investment per capita could be as high as \$180.00 (Ottawa, Montreal). In Sydney, it is approximately \$28.00; Kingsville, \$32.00; Halifax, \$114.

Province of Nova Scotia

There are no funding sources available to support the operating and capital costs of a conventional, fixed-route transit service with the province beyond the local property tax assessment. The province does have programs to support Not-For-Profit, rural-based, accessible transit services under its Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) and Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP).

Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP)

The Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) provides supportive funding to establish and operate “community-based inclusive transportation” services, particularly in low population density communities in Nova Scotia. The Program defines these services as: “services that respond to the unmet needs of all persons who have a transportation disadvantage”. It is up to each community to determine these needs. The main restriction on this program is that it is targeted to rural and semi-rural areas of Nova Scotia with a population density at or below 0.15 persons per acre, or approximately 37 persons per square kilometre. Victoria County would be eligible.

The program provides one-time funding of up to \$15,000 to assist in the start-up work for new community transportation programs, including needs assessments, business planning, and organizational development. Operational grants of up to \$1.60 per capita would be provided, based upon service levels. For Victoria County, this would equate to \$11,200 annually.

Capital funding in the CTAP program is coordinated through the Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP), detailed below. The program is administered through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP)

The Accessible Transportation Assistance Program (ATAP) provides funding to improve the accessibility of transportation services by providing capital grant assistance for the purchase of new or used accessible vehicles. Eligible recipients include non-profit community groups, some private sector providers, and more importantly in the perspective of this study, municipal public transit services provided by the municipality or under contract to a private operator.

The grant provides up to 50% of the cost of accessible vehicles to a maximum of \$50,000 for new or \$10,000 for used vehicles. New, used, or retrofitted vehicles must accommodate wheelchairs and ambulatory clients with other disabilities.

Vehicles approved for funding must be used to provide door-to-door (demand-response) service. As a result, fixed-route transit service would not be eligible for this funding unless a door-to-door service is part of the service delivery design. Also, preferred funding is provided to organizations already receiving Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) funds.

Applications for the ATAP program are received on an annual basis with the deadline in May. The program is administered through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Federal Gas Tax

The federal government, through a federal-provincial agreement, does provide five cents of the federal tax collected on gasoline and diesel fuel to the provinces for distribution to the municipalities and for use on infrastructure and transportation-related projects. The municipalities determine their priorities for utilizing the federal gas tax funding which could include public transit. However, the fund can only be used for capital items such as the purchase of buses, installation of stops, shelters and other related capital items.

Victoria County receives federal gas tax funds which are currently allocated to various infrastructure projects. These funds could be re-directed to include transit-related capital items such as the purchase of a vehicle.

Health Care

As highlighted in the stakeholder consultation and transit demand sections above, a key requirement for residents is transportation to medical appointments. There are also opportunities through the provision of good supporting transportation services to keep people in their homes longer compared to placing them in extended care facilities or senior complexes which have provincial funding implications over the longer term. As a result, there may be resources within the provincial Department of Health and Wellness to provide funding for transportation services. This potential would have to be pursued at the political level.

6.4 Resource Requirements

As noted earlier, the county has limited resources in the area of transportation – the only services available, apart from school transportation, are two taxi operators, one in Baddeck, the other centered in Ingonish.

Similarly, vehicles suitable for public transit use are limited. There is an 18-passenger bus owned by Alderwood and several vans by the Inverary Inn in Baddeck. Other than these, there are no other identified public transit vehicles in the county beyond the vehicles operated by the taxi companies. The buses owned by the Cape Breton School District are not available for general public transportation use.

If any form of a formal transit service were to be introduced, the agency providing the service either a private company or the County, would need to obtain suitable vehicles.

To be successful, any initiative or program including public transit, needs a “Champion” to be the leader, advocate for the service and ensure that it flourishes.

Similarly, any program or service requires staff to implement and manage it. A formal transit service will require a manager, or coordinator, along with staff to operate and maintain the vehicles, promote the service and answer customer enquiries.

6.5 Insurance

Any formal public transit service operated either directly by the municipality or a private operator, or any vehicle owned and operated on behalf of the municipality must carry full liability insurance. Current levels can be as much as \$5 million or higher.

6.6 Regulatory Considerations

Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board

Transit services in Nova Scotia, either fixed route or demand-response, and whether operated by private firms with or without financial support from a municipality or operated by a municipality, are subject to oversight by the NSURB. The degree of oversight is extensive. For example, approval would be required from the NSURB to establish routes and fares and could include capital expenditures for the purchase of vehicles and other infrastructure.

The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (URB) also has overall responsibility for the inspection and mechanical certification of any vehicles used for the transportation of the public for remuneration.

Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

This department has jurisdiction over provincial roads within the County. As such, approval would be required from the department for the installation of bus stops and shelters or other transit-related infrastructure (benches, terminals) on or adjacent to provincial roads. This would not likely apply for a demand-response service where formal infrastructure installations do not normally occur.

6.7 Governance/Organization Options

Authority to Operate a Public Transit Service

Public transit is a provincial responsibility which has been, in turn, assigned to the municipalities in all provinces. Thus, the municipality has the authority to operate a municipal transit service either directly or indirectly and to regulate its operation within its municipal boundaries, if it chooses to do so. In turn, subject to the authority of the URB, the municipality has the authority to make decisions related to:

- Defining, planning, managing and controlling the service including determining the level of service (hours, frequency of service);
- Setting of fares and financially investing in the service;
- Acquiring or installing the necessary infrastructure (vehicles, stops, shelters, property, buildings); and
- Entering into agreements or contracts for the operation of the service as necessary.

Based on municipal practice and law, a suitable By-Law would need to be passed by County Council in order to implement a formal public transit service. These understandings and conditions should be confirmed by the County's solicitor prior to pursuing this option.

Governance and Operational Alternatives

There are several alternative governance structures for over-seeing or operating a public transit service. As the service area is within the County and as the County is a single tier municipality rather than multi-jurisdictional, the governance options are relatively straight-forward. The optional approaches are:

- Direct Municipal Control - the County would have direct involvement as well as responsibility for developing policy, managing and delivering the transit service. The service could be operated directly by County employees or by a private operator through an operating contract.
- Separate Agency – the municipality can create a stand-alone agency to manage and operate the transit service. Depending on the terms of reference for the agency, it would likely require approval of the Province.
- Non-Profit Organization – there are a variety of non-profit organizations, both incorporated and unincorporated, which could be set up to oversee and operate a transit service. The primary advantage of a non-profit organization is its ability to solicit and receive donations and the related tax advantages.
- Private Sector – the transit service could be operated by a private firm without involvement by the Municipality. However, without some level of financial support,

particularly from government, a transit service operated wholly by a private company is not feasible which is why there is no such service today.

The majority of transit services across Canada are governed as departments of the municipality and responsible directly to Council. In some jurisdictions, the service may be operated by a private company under contract to the municipality.

In some jurisdictions, or in the case of a region or multiple municipalities, separate agencies have been created, such as a board or commission, but ultimately responsibility rests with the municipal through the budgeting process if public funds are used.

In smaller systems, particularly in Nova Scotia, the service is operated by a non-profit, incorporated agency.

7 Conclusions

Based on the research undertaken in foregoing sections of this report, the following are the key conclusions regarding the analysis of the need for a public transit service in Victoria County, and options for providing a service:

1. The County is relatively **large** and has a **small population** located in three distinct areas – north of Smokey; central mainland/Baddeck; and lower mainland/Iona/Boularderie Island.
2. Population densities are very low, averaging 2.5 people per square kilometre. Even if the un-populated areas of the County (ie. the Highlands) were excluded, the density would only increase to approximately 5.0. In comparison, the density for all of Cape Breton is 13.1; for Clare County in southwest Nova Scotia is 9.8. **The low density in Victoria County makes it difficult to justify any form of formal or regular transit service.**
3. The population has a high average age and is declining. Over the next 5 years and beyond, these trends are projected to continue. The effect of these statistics does emphasize a growing need to provide alternative transportation services to counter increasing isolation as well as the trend toward fewer people being able to drive. Further, the declining and aging population means that there are increasingly **limited resources for transportation purposes** both in terms of family and friends.
4. **Transportation resources** in Victoria County **are limited to three potential sources** – two taxi operators, one each in Baddeck and Ingonish/Neil's Harbour; Alderwood Extended Care which has one 18-passenger bus, and the Inverary Inn which has several vans. The Alderwood and Inverary vehicles are for private, not public use, and therefore they would have limited potential use. The Cape Breton School Board has school buses stationed locally in Baddeck but their vehicles are not available for use by the general public.
5. With the low density but also dispersed population and dispersed location of settlements and long distances involved, any form of a **formal transit service would be expensive to provide**. In the alternative, it underlines the **need to provide area-specific, locally-based solutions** to meet transportation needs.
6. Transportation **trip purposes** vary by area within the County with **shopping and social trips** being important but localized with social, education and work trips to Sydney being more prominent south of Smokey. **Medical trips**, while important, are **not frequent** and vary from periodic trips to the local facilities in Baddeck and Neil's Harbour to specialized trips to medical centres in Sydney. Education, social and work trips are more frequent with Sydney being a key destination for people living South of Smokey.
7. The County has a higher than the national average percentage of **persons with disabilities** which is likely to increase as the population ages. This group is an important segment of the population who **need assistance with transportation**.
8. The transportation **destinations and needs are different between the north** (of Smokey) **and south** areas of the County. North of Smokey, transportation destinations are more localized. South of Smokey, they are both localized as well as linked to Sydney for work, medial and education puposes. North of Smokey, trips to Sydney are less frequent.

9. Based on peer review/case studies of transit services in similar jurisdictions within the province, the **estimated demand (ridership) for transit services** within the County is between **2,134 and 12,096 trips annually**, or between 7 and 40 trips per day, 42 to 240 trips per week. The estimated **average would be 6,830 trips annually, or 23 per day/115 per week**. These values include all trip purposes and could vary according to the type and level of service provided. However, these trips are distributed across the whole of the County.
10. Transit services are primarily **funded** from user fees (fares) and municipal investment and, in the case of non-profit agencies, donations. Stakeholders indicated that a fare of \$5.00 was acceptable for local trips while a fare of \$10.00 to \$15.00 was acceptable for longer trips.
11. Formal transit services can have a net municipal cost of \$30 to \$40 per capita. Services operated by non-profit agencies in the province receive \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually from the municipalities they serve. Provincial funding is available through CTAP annually for demand-response services only on the basis of \$1.60 per capita annually. Capital funding for up to 50% of the cost of vehicles is available through the Province's ATAP.
12. Feedback from stakeholders and analysis of the demographics of the County indicates that there is a need for some form of transportation service as an alternative to continued reliance on the private automobile and family and friends for key segments of the population.
13. Based on analysis of the potential demand for a transit service, trip purposes, the experience in the peer jurisdictions and the characteristics of the county, **a formal, daily, scheduled, fixed route, transit service would not be appropriate in Victoria County**. Instead, a **demand-response style service**, based on demand and using small vehicles, **may be suitable**. However, the service offered would need to be responsive to local conditions and trip demand.
14. Transit services can be operated by the municipality, either directly or through a contract with a private company, or by an agency created by the municipality, or a non-profit incorporated organization.

8 Is a Public Transit Service Feasible?

The analysis of the county's population, demographics, stakeholder feedback and assessment of transportation resources, it is clear that some form of transportation service or arrangement, as an alternative to the use of the private automobile, is needed to meet the existing, and increasing, needs of the population, primarily seniors, persons with disabilities and those with limited or no access to an automobile.

A formal fixed route, scheduled transit service would not be feasible in view of the anticipated low level of ridership and the significant fixed cost to implement and operate such as service. Similarly, a formal, demand-response service would also be difficult to implement even in selected parts of the county although it can have a lower cost structure than a fixed route service. It would still require a core resource of staff and volunteers as well as vehicles to ensure the success of the service. Considering the large area of the county, at least three separate services may be required to effectively serve the localized, as well as longer distance, travel needs of residents. The resulting combined costs would still be significant which could be difficult to offset from fares or other revenue sources, even donations. The financial resources for operations from the province are limited, potentially a total of \$11,200 annually and would only apply to demand-response services. These conditions would leave the County potentially at risk to providing financial support to offset the cost of operation. The experience in the peer review/case studies indicates that the municipal cost to support a formal transit service could be over \$100,000 annually. This is not desirable particularly for a new program where the projected use is low. This is the situation which occurred with Strait Area Transit recently as well as Trans-County Transportation in its early days of operation.

Therefore, the lesson learned is that any transportation service initiated should be tailored to the characteristics and specific needs of county residents, should start small and should be affordable and sustainable. As evidenced by the experience in other jurisdictions, some level of financial support beyond fares paid by users will be required but it will need to be within the financial capacity of residents. Accordingly, any transportation service would need to be carefully designed to maximize its benefits and to be sustainable over the longer term.

Conceptually, the most appropriate type of transportation service ("program" or "initiative") should be a demand-based service in order to respond to the specific, priority needs of residents using existing resources in terms of personal automobiles and the taxi services in Baddeck and Ingonish, and be collaborative to meet the primary needs of county residents. This approach would avoid any legal or licensing issues related for formalized "public" services.

From a governance or "agency lead" standpoint, in view of the limited organized resources within the county (for example, there are few service clubs or services such as Red Cross), the Municipality is best-positioned to take a lead role, as it has with the initiation of this study, to further pursue the implementation of a transportation service in the county.

What might a transportation initiative look like? The following section outlines a proposed transportation strategy.

8.1 Transportation Service Strategy for Victoria County

Based on the experience of Victoria County's peers and the conclusions regarding the need and demand for some form of alternative transportation service, as well as the sensitivities to financial capacity of the County, the proposed public transit strategy for the County should have the following key principles:

In the short term -

- Start small and gradually augment the service as demand warrants and resources permit.
- It should be based initially on collaboration between residents to use private transportation resources (private automobiles) and promote ride-sharing to meet specific trip needs such as shopping, social and medical appointments.
- Support the use of the local taxi services through promotion and incentive programs, such as financial assistance for low income residents.
- Target local trips and longer distance to Sydney on pre-arranged dates for specific purposes – medical, shopping – emphasize health needs

The role of the Municipality would be as the lead agency and central resource centre for promoting the taxi and Maritime Bus transportation services but also to promote ride-sharing amongst residents. This would be done through the establishment of a “transportation, ride-sharing” website and communications network. The Municipality would hire, or designate an existing employee, to be the “transportation coordinator” whose role would be to not only develop the ride-sharing model but also to monitor success and develop additional transportation resources as well as to implement a program to support and encourage use of the local taxi services. Included in the ride-sharing model could be use of the Alderwood and Inverary Inn vehicles to assist in meeting trip needs.

Future options could include:

- Contracting with the taxi companies to provide specific trips – health, education, work both locally or to Sydney where the trips cannot be met through ride-sharing amongst residents.
- Contract with Maritime Bus to add a trip to/from Sydney to permit return daily trips.

Over time, the transportation service could expand and be formalized with the establishment of a non-profit agency that could acquire vehicles and employ personnel based on demonstrated need and success with the initial “rider-sharing” model. A formalized service and agency could also meet the needs, for example, of Alderwood and the Inverary Inn, through the use of “public” vehicles.

9 Recommendations

It is recommended that the County of Victoria:

1. Receive this report;
2. Support, in principle, the need for a transportation initiative within the county subject to the preparation of a business plan;
3. Proceed to prepare a business plan for establishing a transportation initiative within the county;
4. Apply for additional funding from the Province of Nova Scotia through the ATAP fund to prepare the business plan.