



City of Selkirk
Community Services & Transit
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Municipal Excellence Award submission

Name of Municipality: City of Selkirk

Date implemented: May 30, 2011

Type of municipal project: Transportation – Selkirk Transit

The City of Selkirk, with its modest population of 9,800 possesses many of the features of a larger urban centre including manufacturing, two hospitals, a new power centre corridor, recreation complex, and a downtown area along the scenic Red River. No conventional transit was available. As development expanded away from the downtown, the lack of transit created numerous challenges for the more vulnerable residents to access jobs, goods and services, and for businesses to attract employees. The community was car dependant and proactive change was needed today to prepare for the future. The challenge was to build on years of community consultations and take the next steps – a Transit Feasibility Study, culminating with the launch of the conventional transit service in May 30, 2010.

Championed by Councillor Duane Nicol and Chris Carter, Director of Economic and Community Development, the City of Selkirk retained an experienced consultant to build on the years of community consultation and work with the Selkirk Transit Task Force. Several Transit Task Force group meetings were undertaken with stakeholders representing the public, businesses, municipal staff, and a separate council focus group. The objectives were to educate the community and council, develop a single transit route that met community priorities and enable a passenger to travel anywhere in the city within 30 minutes, and to recommend a realistic and affordable 5-year expansion plan. An innovative business plan was adopted, establishing a unique partnership between the City of Selkirk and the non-profit Selkirk & District Handi-Bus organization. This partnership created the framework for a unique cost-effective business model whereby Handi-Bus remained a non-profit organization yet runs the day-to-day Transit service on behalf of the City, and cost-sharing in staff and office expenses.

To introduce and promote Selkirk Transit, free bus service was offered during the first five weeks of operation. Transit now carries an average of 470 passengers per week. In 2012 we transported 20,050 passengers.

In February 2012, a customer survey revealed:

- 31% are up to 30 years old, 29% are 55+
- 43% take the bus 4 or more times per week
- 63% have an annual income of \$20,000 or less
- 88% are satisfied or very satisfied with the service

Real estate advertisers now list proximity to public transit while apartment developers have approached the city to invest millions in new buildings, claiming that public transit was a draw for them. Selkirk Transit is now entrenched as a municipal service.

Given Selkirk's focus on community development, Transit is not only operated by a non-profit, community organization but Selkirk Transit contracts bus stop maintenance with Interlake Employments Services, a non-profit agency supporting those with cognitive disabilities to find and keep employment.

Selkirk Transit is recognized as both an economic development tool and social equity investment.

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