

The primary focus of *ASSIST* continues to be research and relationship building in support of creating innovative Service Development Plans for each community. Additionally, the last few months have seen in depth involvement in the construction of the technological backbone for the program. During this time some exciting new developments have produced new opportunities for the program to expand.

Service Development Plans

CARTSS will work with each willing community to create a Service Development Plan for their area which establishes a baseline of current operations, evaluates unmet needs, and guides local organizations in modifying existing services or creating new services. Ideally these plans will be coordinated with other nearby municipalities.

Progress:

- ✓ Continued to participate as part of the Chestermere Bus Committee.
- ✓ Met collectively with the FCSS offices of Banff, Canmore, and the MD of Big Horn.
- ✓ Continued to participate as part of the ElderNET Calgary Transportation Planning Table.

Next Steps:

- Chestermere – Continue to participate with the Chestermere Bus Committee to determine if the Town has other Specialized Transportation needs with which CARTSS can be of assistance.
- West Corridor – Continue working with the West Corridor FCSS offices to develop a Specialized Transportation Service Development Plan.
 - Invite Cochrane FCSS to initial discussions about Cochrane's Specialized Transportation needs.
 - Discuss the possibility of Cochrane being included in future West Corridor Service Development Plan discussions.
- Calgary – Continue to participate in the Work Plan of the ElderNET Calgary Transportation Planning Table.
- Other municipalities and service providers in CRP – All invitations to participate in the components of *ASSIST*, below, will also include offers for CARTSS to work with the Municipalities and/or Service Providers to create Service Development Plans.

Shuttle Service

Having a group of passengers traveling between locations at the same time provides economies of scale that make the service more affordable. With seniors and persons with disabilities it is important to also consider how they will get to and from the Shuttle stop.

www.AlbertaAssist.ca

Administrator



Funding Partners



Progress:

- ✓ *ASS/ST* is already saving municipalities money. Three municipalities were previously considering implementing a Shuttle Service. Due to the learning acquired during the operation of the Chestermere-Prince of Peace Shuttle, they have decided to explore other options first.

Next Steps:

- In light of the new provincial Green TRIP funding, CARTSS has been invited to participate in discussions regarding the potential Regional Bus, Rapid Bus and Commuter Rail Service. CARTSS is eager to explore how this plan may benefit seniors and persons with disabilities and compliment the *ASS/ST* program.

Single Point of Contact - Booking and Dispatch Contracts

At full implementation, the *ASS/ST* Call Centre will provide the following services

- Giving transportation information to seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Collecting detailed information about why the transportation options that are currently available do not work for some passengers in some situations.
- Gathering needs assessment information in order to suggest service options as part of Service Development Plans for each area.
- As well as coordinating booking and dispatch for service providers.

In addition, an interactive website will provide some of the same services and include a Members SharePoint Portal.

Progress:

- ✓ Toll free number for the Call Centre is active however, due to the previously stated concerns about call volumes, the number has only been released to clients of Big Hill Senior Citizen's Activities Society (BHSCAS).
- ✓ Beginning June 16, 2008 CARTSS began booking and dispatch services for BHSCAS, better known as the Cochrane Seniors Bus. During the slower summer months, CARTSS handled 124 incoming calls a month and made an equal number of outgoing calls to coordinate the vehicles and drivers. All of this activity resulted in 128 one way trips a month for passengers being provided by BHSCAS' volunteer drivers.

Next Steps:

- Rocky View Regional Handibus Society (RVRHS) has expressed interest in participating in *ASS/ST* as a Remote User of the booking and dispatch software. CARTSS will continue negotiations with RVRHS to reach a mutually agreeable data sharing agreement.
- Once RVRHS has signed a contract, CARTSS will approach other providers about booking and dispatch contracts, either through the Call Centre or as Remote Users.

Single Point of Contact – Trapeze Novus Software

A company called Trapeze has developed affordable booking and dispatch software suitable for smaller operations and is now working to make modifications to the software so it is more functional for the *ASS/ST* Call Centre. Other modifications will be necessary in the future and custom software may prove to be the only complete solution. New funding will need to be found for these developments.

Progress:

- ✓ Completed operational reviews on behalf of BHSCAS, CARTSS, and the theoretical Full Implementation of the ASS/ST program.
- ✓ Received some input from RVRHS on their operations.
- ✓ Participated in one week of software configuration with a Trapeze trainer onsite at CARTSS.
- ✓ Discovered many customizations will be needed before Novus Coordinated Transportation (CT) module is operational in a multiple provider environment.
- ✓ ASS/ST is a particularly challenging case with the variety of transportation modes that may be coordinated with the software, including Shuttles, Charters, Volunteer Driver Programs, Taxi Voucher Programs, Fixed Route and/or Flex Route, in addition to more traditional Demand/Handibus Service. However most of these can be booked and scheduled with Novus once the CT module is finished and a few essential customizations completed.
- ✓ Invited RVRHS to attend software configuration to give input on multiple provider functionality.
- ✓ Trapeze explored many map options to be included in Novus. CARTSS purchased the best map of Alberta available however 25% of the map is missing street information and must be manually geo-coded. Most of the missing information is in the rural areas.
- ✓ Decided on a mock 'Go Live' of Novus for September 2, 2008 – will continue with manual booking for BHSCAS and CARTSS while doing duplicate bookings in Novus to determine additional changes that may need to be made to the software.

Next Steps:

- Work with funders and providers to agree on consistent trip purposes and denied trip classifications in order to collect consistent data across the region with Novus.
- Continue negotiations with the CRP for use of the more complete and accurate Regional ROADNET Data.
- Official 'Go Live' of Novus may be able to happen before the CT Module is complete.
- 'Go Live' for RVRHS as a Remote User of Novus will happen after the completion of the CT Module scheduled for early October.

Single Point of Contact – SharePoint Members Portal**Progress:**

- ✓ Found a web designer with SharePoint experience willing to work within CARTSS' budget.
- ✓ Designer configured CARTSS' SharePoint server.
- ✓ Designer trained CARTSS' IT consultant to work with SharePoint.
- ✓ With direction from CARTSS, designer created the basic SharePoint portal structure.
- ✓ Designer and IT consultant determined how to create 'table based authentication' to allow member access to the server while maintaining CARTSS' security.
- ✓ SharePoint portal will soon be ready to accept CRP STC members as 'beta testers' and the CRP STC section of SharePoint will then have documents for review.

Next Steps:

- Final configuration of SharePoint portal.
- Creation of sections for groups currently working with CARTSS.
- Send member invitations to groups currently working with CARTSS.
- Send member invitations to other organizations which may be interested in working with CARTSS.

Single Point of Contact – Front End Website

Progress:

- ✓ Basic site structure is in place for www.AlbertaAssist.ca front end.
- ✓ The ASS/ST Transportation Coordinator spent months compiling extensive preliminary information on all transportation options for all municipalities, except Calgary. This includes wheelchair accessible and ambulatory options.
- ✓ Sample passenger pages will soon be ready for CRP STC members to review and comment on.
- ✓ The web designer has informed CARTSS that building the Specialized Transportation Needs Assessment for the website will be complicated, time consuming and costly. He suggests a survey site be used instead.

Next Steps:

- Content will continue to be added over the next couple of months.
- When completed, the CRP STC members will be asked for their input on the website.
- May need a web designer skilled in graphic arts to make the website more visually appealing.
- Transportation Service Providers, both for profit and not-for profit, will be mailed letters explaining the program and detailing the information about their organization that will be included on our website. After a short 'response time', the information will be posted on the website.
- Consider sending letters to all FCSS offices asking them to verify transportation options in their municipality.
- Create final Passenger pages for all municipalities, except Calgary.
- Research survey sites for collecting the Needs Assessment data.
- When the front end of the website is complete, a limited media launch will be held in Cochrane.

Brokerage Service

Many organizations have expressed that it is easier to get money for capital expenses than operating funds. Being able to 'rent out' the vehicles they have already purchased to other organizations might provide a source of operating funds.

Progress:

- ✓ Finally determined why some organizations had permission from their insurance companies to charter/'rent out' their vehicles while paying approximately \$10,000 a year less for insurance premiums.
- ✓ Having accessible vehicles available to rent would allow service providers to continue seamless operations in the event one of their vehicles is 'down' due to accident or mechanical failure, however lending a vehicle in these instances would cost CARTSS that same additional \$10,000 a year for insurance premiums.
- ✓ With the postponement of the potential Shuttle Service mentioned above, CARTSS' Sprinter van is sitting idle.

Next Steps:

- Create a document for the resource library clarifying the charter/'rent out' insurance issue.
- Work with Alberta Transportation to determine how the Operating Authority Certificate will be affected for an organization with a vehicle registered as a Private Bus who now wants to provide Charter Service to the public.
- Determine how the Sprinter can be put into use to benefit *ASSIST*.

Subsi-Ride

Funding for *ASSIST* includes \$20,000 for subsidizing specialized transportation rides for low income seniors and persons with disabilities who reside within the CRP.

Progress:

- ✓ CARTSS has observed Fair Calgary's progress in streamlining the subsidy process for various City of Calgary programs, including transportation.

Next Steps:

- Once the Members Area of www.AlbertaAssist.ca is completed, an invitation will be sent to all stakeholders to participate in joint subsidy policy formation online.

Advocacy

By representing 18 municipalities, one First Nation, and a number of different service providers, CARTSS may be in a better position to negotiate on behalf of *ASSIST* members with the Government of Alberta, as well as other organizations and companies.

Progress:

- ✓ In June CARTSS presented to Alberta Transportation's Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation. Many organizations from all across Alberta expressed interest and enthusiasm for the success of *ASSIST*.

Next Steps:

- Alberta Transportation has asked for CARTSS' input on the following;
 - Reviewing and critiquing their accessible transportation online directory
 - Creating a provincial report which is effective in persuading municipalities to fund Specialized Transportation
 - Examining the Alberta legislation that relates to volunteer drivers to determine if amendments are needed
 - And possibly becoming a member of the Advisory Committee

New Developments – ITNAmerica

ITNAmerica is a non-profit organization which has developed a model of seniors' transportation which is self sustaining, without public funding, within 5 years of an Affiliate being created in a new service area. More information is available at www.itnamerica.org.

Progress:

- ✓ CARTSS continues to meet with organizations attempting to raise funds for the development of an ITN*Canada* business plan.

Next Steps:

- Call ITNAmerica to check on the development of ITN*Lite* and discuss how ITN*Lite* will benefit smaller organizations and municipalities.

New Developments - Taxis**Progress:**

- ✓ CARTSS has received requests from municipalities and taxi companies to provide guidance on reasonable taxi bylaws, regional taxi standards, taxi voucher programs, and funding for accessible taxis.

Next Steps:

- When some of CARTSS' existing projects have been completed, CARTSS will begin researching these issues.

New Developments – Volunteer Driver Program**Progress:**

- ✓ While this was not part of the original business plan, the number one request received by CARTSS from organizations is for information, guidance and support for Volunteer Driver Programs.
- ✓ Two Volunteer Driver Programs have expressed their disappointment in not receiving adequate advice from students of the Law Departments of the U of C and U of A in regards to the very complex liability and insurance issues associated with Volunteer Drivers.
- ✓ CARTSS has met with many volunteer driving programs including some large and long running programs. Unfortunately each has a widely different process for managing the risks associated with volunteer drivers. Often these organizations hold contrary views on the 'right way' to manage the risk and more questions were raised than answered.
- ✓ Every insurance broker CARTSS has spoken with has a different opinion of the insurance necessary for a Volunteer Driver Program and/or personally for a Volunteer Driver.
- ✓ In addition to researching insurance and liability issues, CARTSS has begun pulling together resources for Volunteer Driver Programs including;
 - Sample Volunteer Driving Program handbooks
 - Sample Volunteer Driver screening tools
 - Sample Risk Management ideas from other parts of Canada
- ✓ Have begun to develop Alberta-specific Risk Management considerations.

Next Steps:

- Explore the possibility of working with students from the U of C Law Department in regards to the precedence of volunteer drivers being sued and the potential benefits and/or drawbacks of the SEF 6A (Permission to Carry Paying Passengers) Endorsement for volunteer drivers.
- Explore the possibility of developing a regional Volunteer Driver Program and find new funding for this additional component of ASS/ST. This funding would include the salary for a Volunteer Coordinator to complete the tasks CARTSS has begun as listed above.
- Work collectively with the FCSS offices of Banff, Canmore, and MD of Bighorn to possibly create a pilot Volunteer Driver Program.

New Developments – New Business Plan

Progress:

- ✓ After a year of research it has become apparent that the original business plan for the *ASS/ST* program offered some interesting theoretical Specialized Transportation solutions. However the reality of implementation is molding many of the potential options into a new form.
- ✓ As CARTSS continues to be seen as a Specialized Transportation resource, not only within the CRP but also throughout Alberta, the *ASS/ST* program has continued to expand with additional components.
- ✓ CARTSS has received requests to give presentations about the *ASS/ST* program to other Regional Planning groups.

Next Steps:

- Beginning in 2009, CARTSS will start creating a new business plan which more accurately reflects the new direction and scope of the *ASS/ST* program.