

Saskatoon Transit

2015 Annual Report



City of
Saskatoon

Transportation & Utilities Department

INTRODUCTION

Public Transit services in Saskatoon began on January 1, 1913 with the establishment of the Saskatoon Municipal Railway. Approximately 5,200 people used streetcars that first day of service. Over the years, the types of vehicles changed as did the name, eventually becoming Saskatoon Transit. In July 2004, the next big chapter started when Access Transit was established as the Demand Response section of Saskatoon Transit. Access Transit is meant to provide service to those who are unable to use regular transit with safety and dignity. In 2013, Saskatoon Transit celebrated 100 years of making connections within the community and continues to do so today.

In 2015, ridership was approximately 8.5 Million Fixed Route or Conventional Transit riders and 132,000 Demand Response or Access Transit trips. To provide that level of service, Saskatoon Transit used the following:

Terminals located at:

- Confederation Mall;
- Lawson Heights Mall;
- Centre Mall;
- Place Riel at the University of Saskatchewan;
- 23rd Street Transit Mall; and
- Market Mall.

A fleet of 184 buses:

- 158 Serving Fixed Route demands:
 - 142 conventional 40-foot diesel buses, of which there are still 39 High floor;
 - 10 articulating low floor 62-foot diesel buses;
 - 6 mid-sized low floor 26-foot diesel buses; and
- 26 mid-sized para transit diesel buses providing Access Transit Demand Response services.

A staff complement of 399 employees, working 365 days to provide service to the City of Saskatoon.

Conventional Transit is a Fixed Route service that operates 22 bus routes along approximately 276 kilometers of streets with 1,668 bus stops. During peak hours there are 100 buses on various routes throughout the city resulting in a spare ratio of 58%.

In 2015, Saskatoon Transit contracted MTB Transit solutions to perform structural refurbishments to 4 buses in its articulating fleet. 2016 will see the implementation of a component of the Fleet Renewal Strategy, that component being the refurbishment plan. Saskatoon Transit will begin the process of refurbishing ten buses in its conventional 40 foot fleet every year, with an expectation of extending the life of a bus by 6 to 9 years.



Access Transit is an accessible door-to-door Demand Response service operated for citizens who, by reason of a disability, are unable to use Conventional Transit with safety and/or dignity. Unlike Conventional Transit, Access Transit does not have predetermined routes so trip booking and scheduling decisions are strategically made to allow as many trips as possible, while staying within trip time and resource availability parameters. Trip booking requests are on a first-come-first-served basis and dependent on the present limited fleet size. Access Transit is equipped with 26 wheel chair lift buses. During peak hours there are 19 on the road resulting in a spare ratio of 36%.



OUR CUSTOMER

Customer Satisfaction and Complaints:

Our goal is to provide consistent, timely, friendly, and professional services to customers where they feel they have received valuable service that is fair and equitable.

The City of Saskatoon's 2015 Civic Services Survey results demonstrate that public transportation is important to residents of Saskatoon. A score of 10 means "excellent" and 5 means "average". The following chart tracks customer satisfaction for public transportation, buses and routes. Public satisfaction decreased by 0.4% between 2014 and 2015. Saskatoon Transit believes the underlying issues are increased traffic congestion and higher passenger loads during peak operating periods.

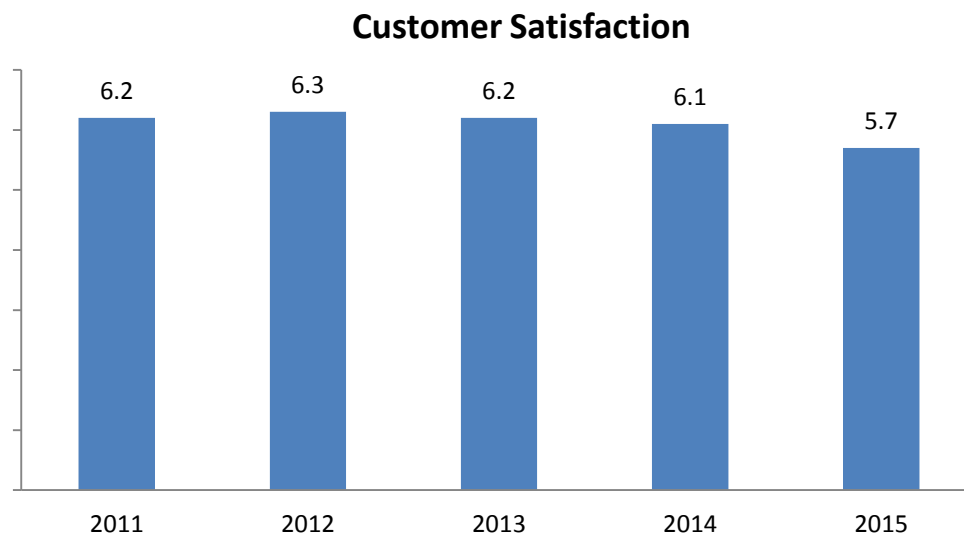


Figure 1: Customer Satisfaction

Saskatoon Transit received 982 complaints in 2015, which is 247 less than both 2013 and 2014. Overall complaints were primarily about operators and the buses arriving early, late, or driving by without stopping.

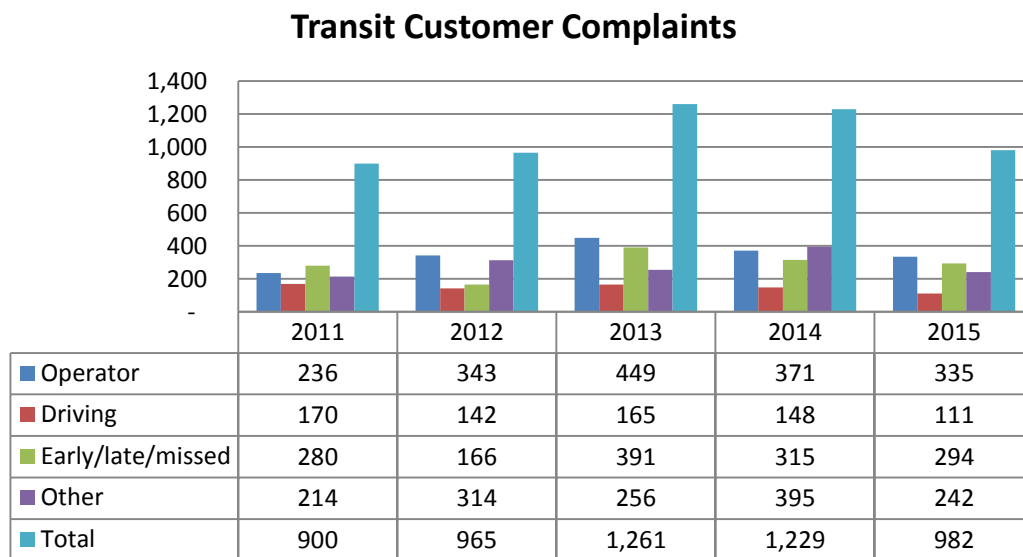


Figure 2: Transit Customer Complaints

In 2015, Saskatoon Transit received 52 commendations from the citizens which is 1 more than in 2014. The majority of Transit drivers provide excellent customer service, and complaints are dealt with directly with the individuals affected.

Transit Commendations

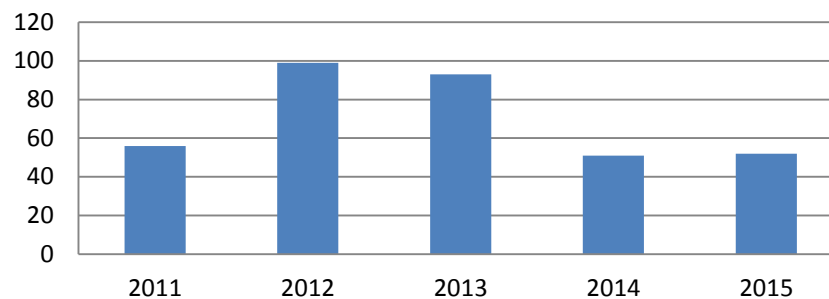


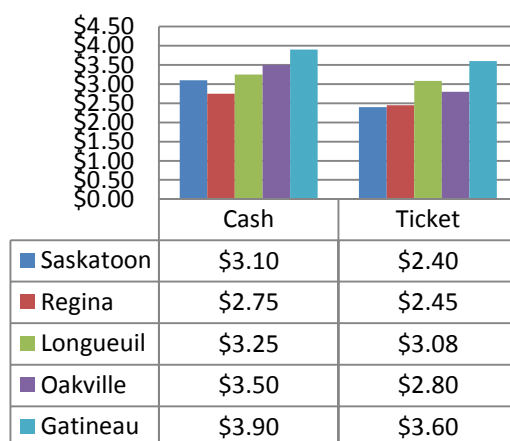
Figure 3: Transit Commendations

Competitive Fares:

Saskatoon Transit offers discounted fares for low-income residents, seniors, elementary, high school and post-secondary students. Fares accepted include cash, tickets or one of several passes that allow unlimited monthly rides (i.e. Adult Pass and High School Student Pass). Senior citizens may purchase passes for periods of one month, three months, six months and one year. Post-secondary students may purchase a semester pass that allows unlimited rides. All fare types are accepted on both Access Transit and Conventional Transit buses.

Adult fares on Saskatoon Transit are compared to other similar sized cities in the following charts. Of note - Regina does not have a senior monthly fare; they currently only offer semi-annual and annual senior passes.

2015 Adult Fares



2015 Monthly Passes

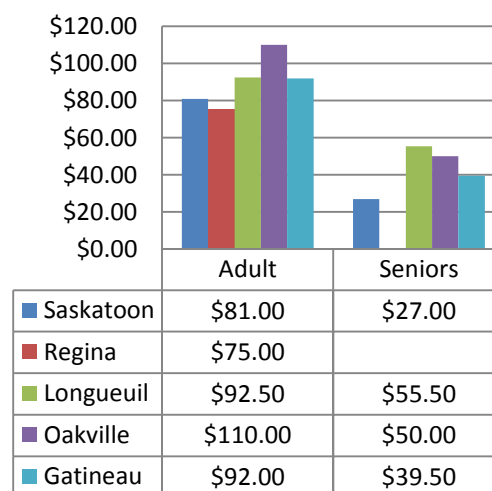


Figure 4: 2015 Adult Fares and Monthly Passes

Conventional Transit:

Between 2014 and 2015, ridership increased by 5.3% (using formula-based ridership) and 4.4% (using electronic ridership). Transit ridership is distributed between the following categories: seniors, cash/ticket, month/day pass, discounted pass, and post-secondary pass. Currently the top three categories of transit users include monthly/day pass (29%), post-secondary (22%), and discounted pass (16%).

2015 Ridership Distribution - Electronic Ridership

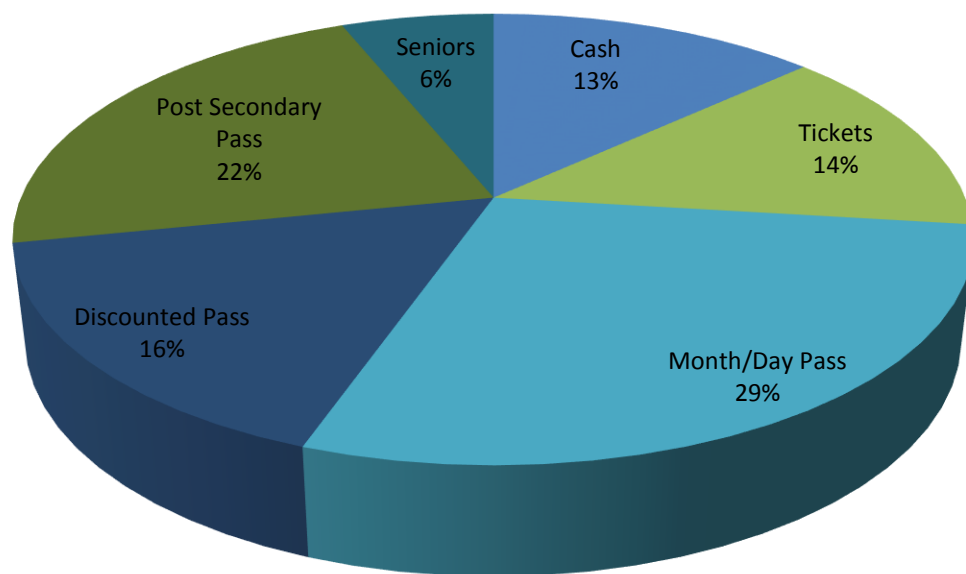


Figure 5: 2015 Ridership Distribution

Total Rides for 2015 are 8,573,054 which is an increase of 4.4% compared to 2014. Transit's formula based (calculated) ridership for 2015 was 12,216,188 which is 3,643,134 rides more than actual ridership information provided by the automated fare box system.

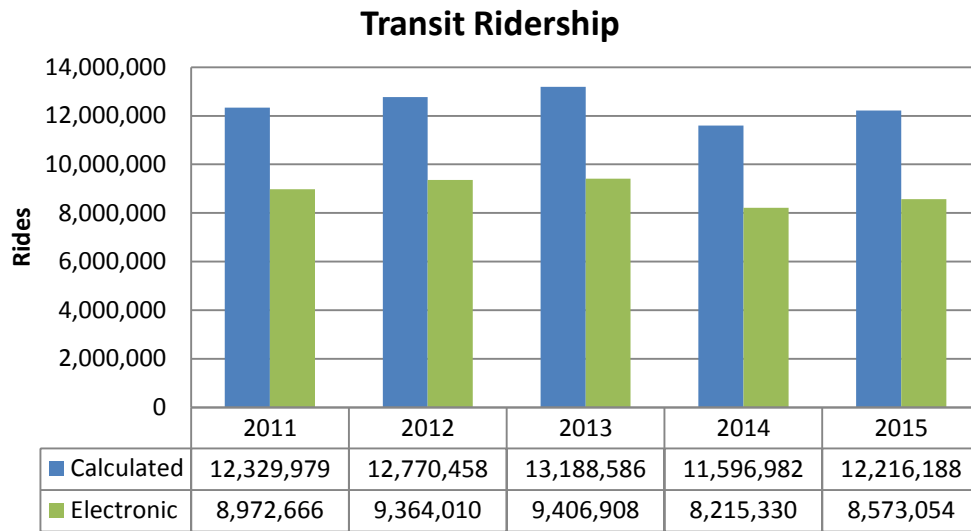


Figure 6: 5 Year Transit Ridership Trend

A recent report from the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) showed 2014 passengers per service hour of 41.50, 18.43, 34.49 and 15.12 respectively for Longueuil, Regina, Gatineau and Oakville (peer communities). Saskatoon Transit's passenger per service hour numbers for the 5 year period ending 2015 is shown below:

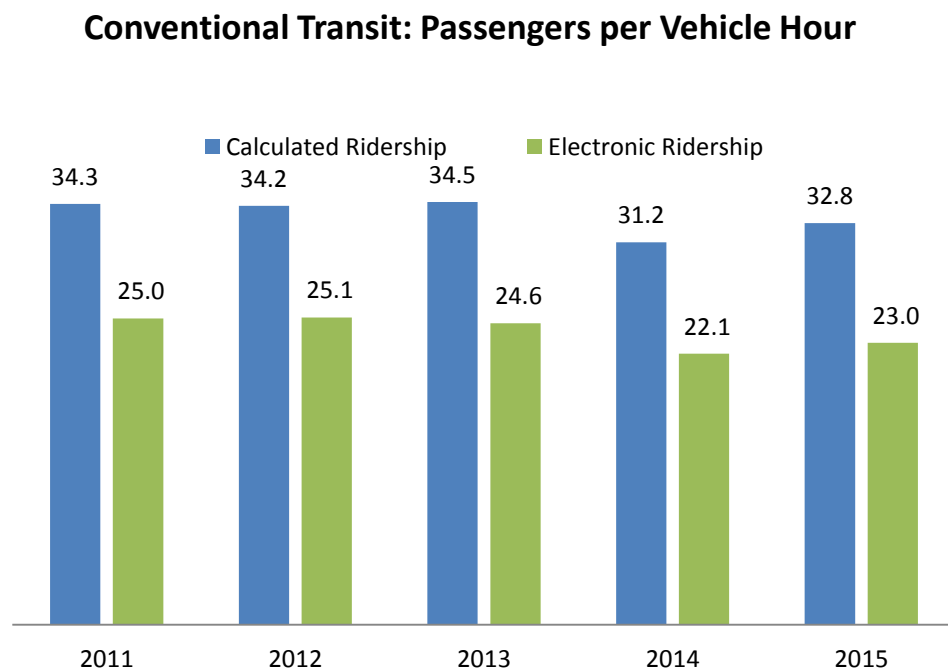
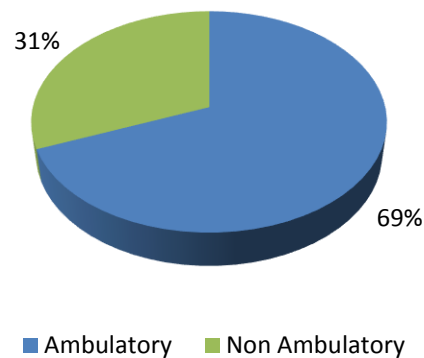


Figure 7: Passengers per Vehicle Hour

Transit will continue to focus on increasing ridership by providing strong customer service and providing a service that is safe, convenient, efficient and affordable. These initiatives support the Strategic Goal of Moving Around and the Growth Plan to 500,000. The intention is to provide Transit that is considered a viable option as part of the overall transportation network.



Access Transit:

There was an approximate 12% decrease in the number of registered active customers in 2015 over 2014. Some of this decrease could be attributed to a new registration process in conjunction with the new ride trainer program. This program allows for citizens that don't qualify for Access Transit to receive detailed instructions, and sometimes personal demonstrations, on how to use Conventional Transit. The goal is to ensure that Access Transit capacity is being utilized by the citizens who require the service while still promoting Conventional Transit service.

Access Transit categorizes its bookings into two groups: Ambulatory (customers who do not require a wheelchair or scooter for mobility), and Non-Ambulatory (customers who require a mobility device such as a wheelchair or scooter). The number of Ambulatory customer trips has been slowly increasing over the years and in 2015 we observed a 2% increase in Non-Ambulatory customer trips.

Access Transit Administration tracks the purpose for which customers use the service. Customer trip categories in 2015

Figure 8: Ambulatory vs Non-Ambulatory Ridership

were relatively the same as previous years, with the exception of day program trips. That number increased to 7% in 2015 from 4% in 2014, which is both significant and alarming. Access Transit attributes this mostly to Sherbrooke Nursing Home and the Saskatchewan Abilities Council relying on Access Transit for an increasing number of their Day Programs.

With current Capital and operating resources, Access Transit will not be able to continue absorbing increases of this type. This is one of the main reasons we are conducting a complete review of Access Transit to determine the best way forward when there is a 100% accessible fleet in 2018. The forecasted requirements for Access Transit services are increasing across the country as the population continues to age and rural users are increasingly relocating to the urban setting.

Trip By Purpose

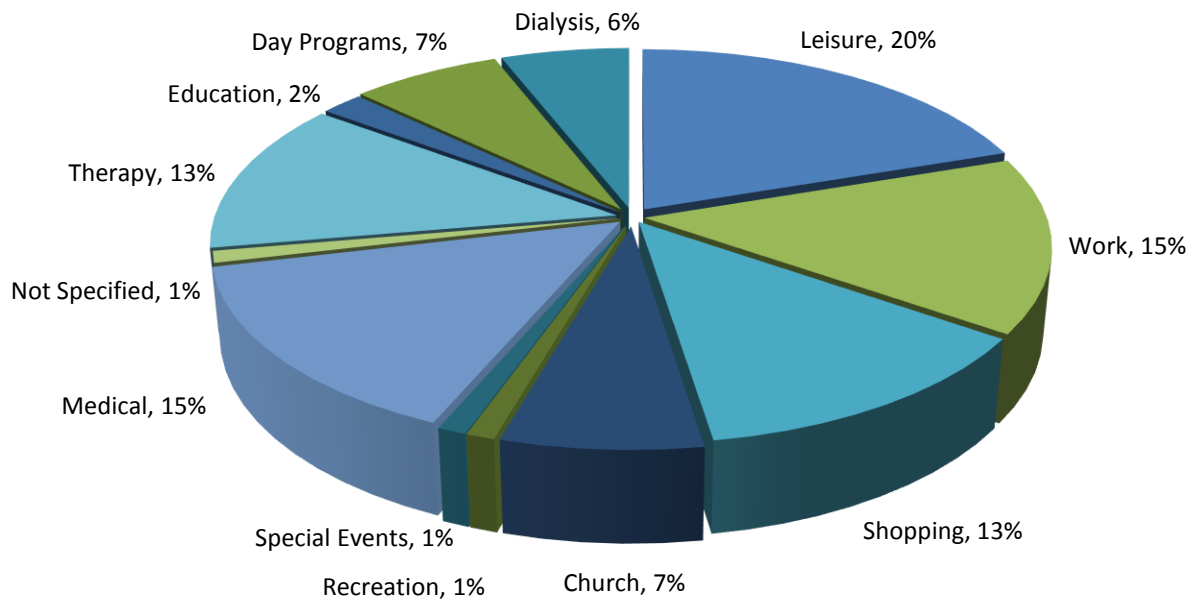


Figure 9: Access Trip by Purpose

A denial is a trip requested by a customer that cannot be accommodated. There are two types of denials: Customer Denials and Dispatch Denials. A Customer Denial is when a customer refuses the alternate trip time offered to them by a dispatcher, regardless of the proximity of time to the original request. A Dispatch Denial is a trip request that cannot be accommodated due to insufficient resources (insufficient run time or bus availability for that trip).

Trip Denials: Customer vs. Dispatch

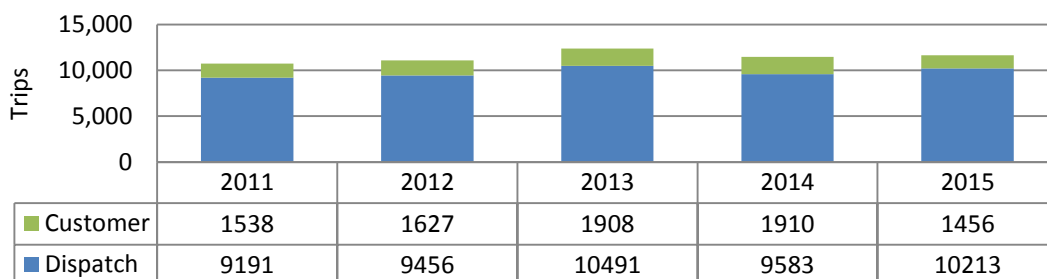


Figure 10: Access Trip Denials

The denial rate for 2015 was 9.16%, which is an increase of 0.96% over 2014. When comparing the average time frames for denials, there are subtle differences to be noted in the 9:00 am to 7:00 pm time frame. These fluctuations occur annually, however comparatively speaking; the 2015 denial time pattern is quite similar to 2014. To reduce denials, Access Transit will schedule and book the budgeted number of service hours according to the demand of the customers.

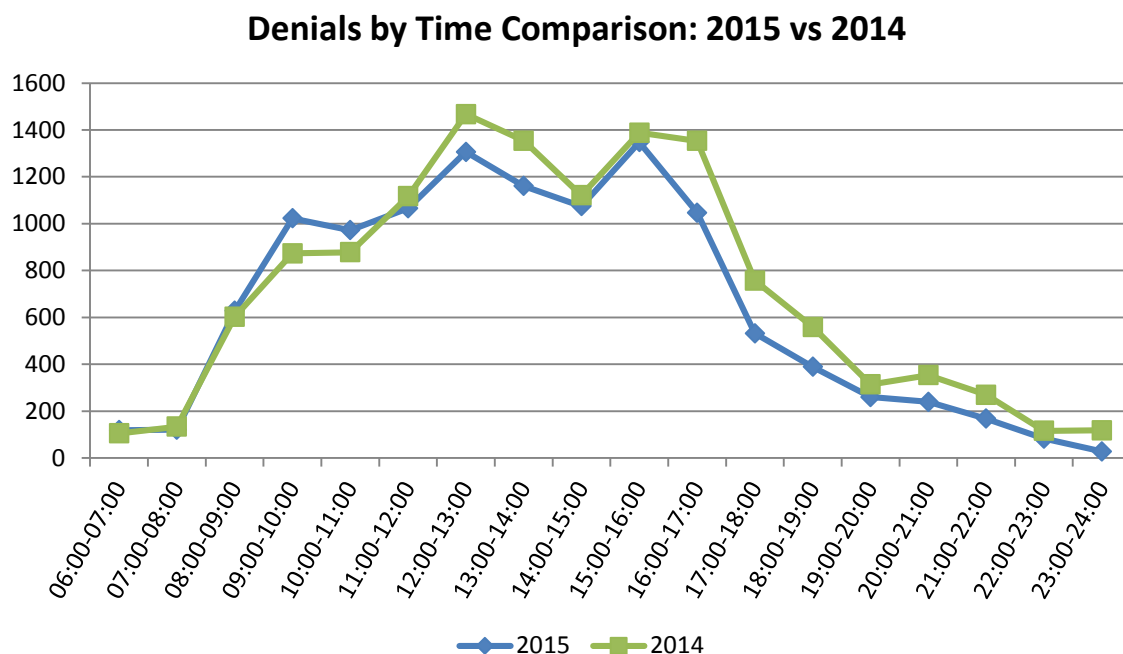


Figure 11: Denials by Time - 2014 vs 2015

Access Transit service demand is calculated by taking the sum of revenue trips (one-way trips from point A to B), plus the number of no-shows (customers who are absent at the pickup location when the bus arrives, thus wasting a trip). Therefore demand for service is the total amount of trips that could have been provided had all variables been optimal.

In 2015, the total service demand for Access Transit decreased by 2.5% (3,515 trips). Changes to the registration process as well as the relatively mild winter of 2015 are contributing factors in this demand decrease. Previously, Access Transit Annual Reports have shown that there is a direct correlation between harsh weather conditions and increased service demand.

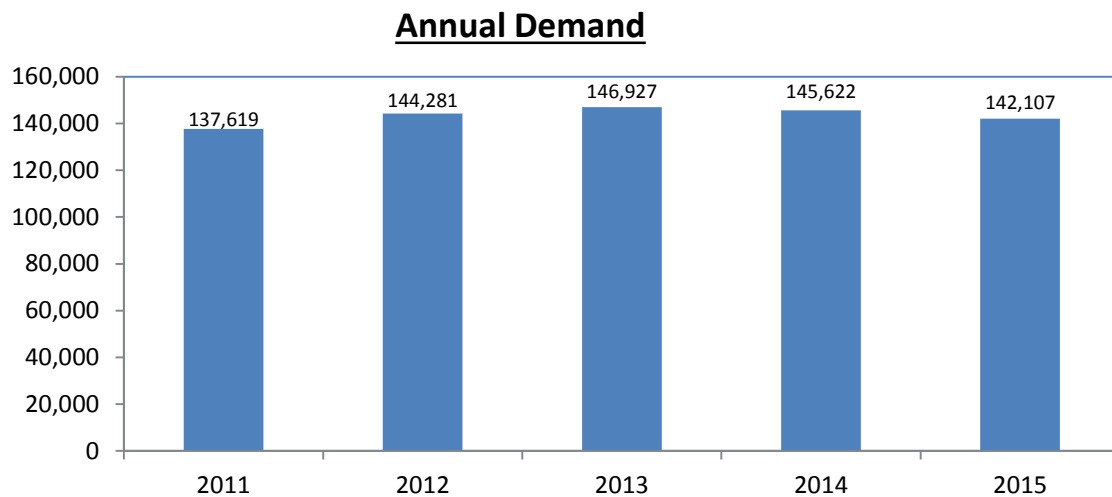


Figure 12: 5 Year Annual Demand Trends

Access Transit experienced a 2.8% decrease in revenue trips compared to 2014. As boundaries for the City of Saskatoon continue to increase so does the area Access Transit provides service to. This service area increase, an increase in traffic congestion and the static size of the fleet contribute negatively to the total amount of revenue trips that Access Transit is able to provide. This year Access Transit Administration has had to take the step of slowing down the travel speed of the scheduling and booking software system to make the travel times and schedule more realistic, based on the actual road experience.

Although productivity is still high, averaging 2.54 revenue trips per hour, this adjustment had the effect of reducing the revenue trips completed in 2015 by approximately 2.8% (3,659 trips) over 2014 numbers. Despite the various challenges Access Transit operators face on the road, they were still able to maintain an average of 91% on-time performance for 2015.

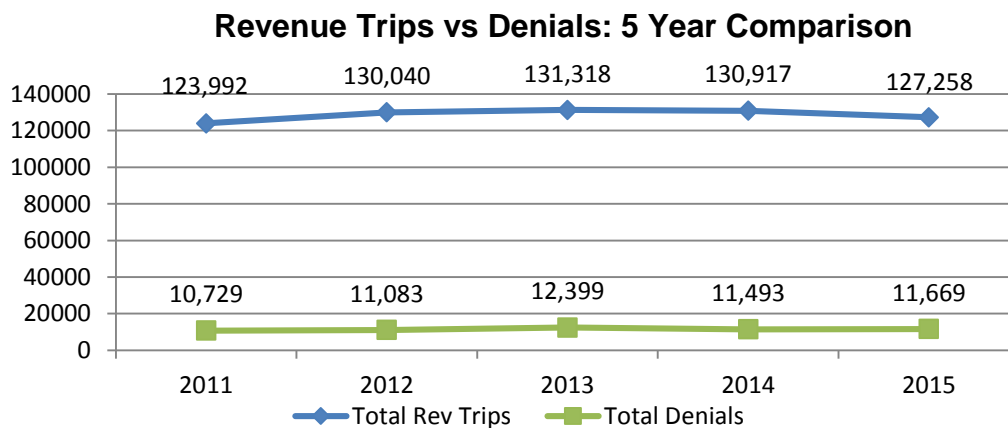


Figure 13: 5 Year Revenue Trips Vs Denials Comparison

Access Transit also provides service using an alternate delivery model. This alternate model calls upon the local Saskatoon taxi industry to assist with the provision of service, especially in the winter months when the demand for Access Transit service is the highest. Due to the finite capacity of the bus service the alternate service delivery model provides a flexible, cost effective tool to assist with seasonal demand fluctuations. There are however, limitations associated with this model. On occasion, when the demand for taxi service is also high, it can be just as challenging for Access Transit to acquire a taxi as it is for members of the general public. Access Transit used more taxis in 2015 than in the last 5 years in an effort to keep denials low and provide service for customers.

Monthly Taxi Use Comparison: 2015 vs 2014

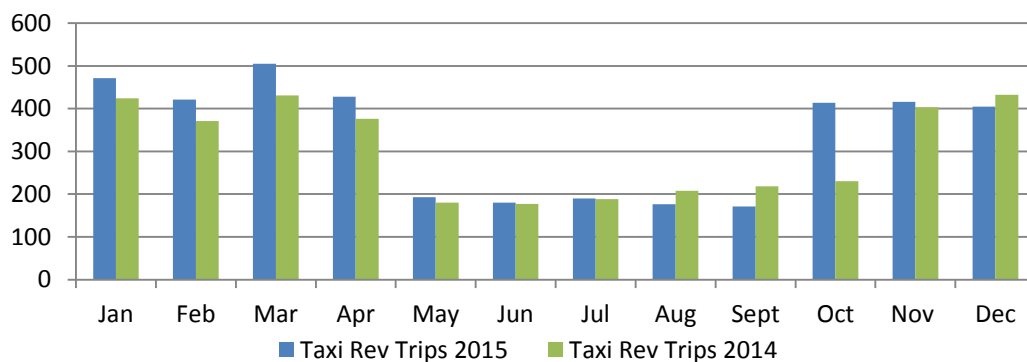


Figure 14: Monthly Taxi Use Comparison 2014 Vs 2015

OUR PEOPLE

Transit services are provided to the residents of Saskatoon 365 days per year. The Transit team is made up of a diverse and skilled group of people including operators, customer service staff, administration staff, dispatchers, booking and scheduling clerks, planners, payroll employees, mechanics, utility and servicemen, accountants, driver trainers, supervisors and managers. Transit's team also includes support from Human Resources to assist in administering collective bargaining/labour related issues, recruitment and health and safety programs in the workplace. Administration and Finance, Facilities division provides support with building maintenance and repairs. All levels and classifications of employees are passionate about delivering a quality transit service to the community on a daily basis.

Transit's employee complement increased by 0.76% or 3.0 employees between 2011 and 2015. In comparison, Conventional Transit service hours increased by 1,170 or 0.3% in that same time period and the population has increased by 12%. Access transit had no change to service hours.

Saskatoon Transit Employees (FTEs)

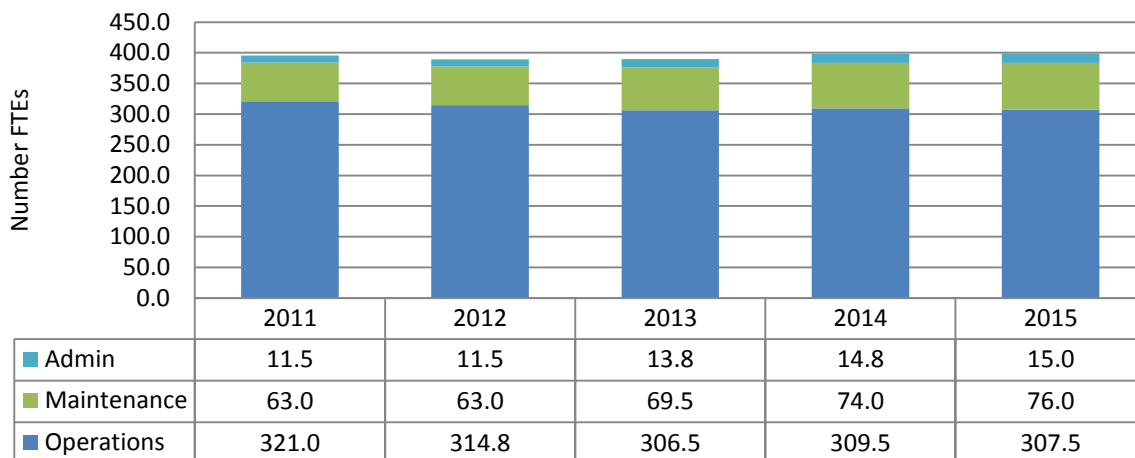


Figure 15: Saskatoon Transit FTEs

In 2015, Saskatoon Transit experienced 35 lost time incidents for a total of 800 lost time days. Lost time incident and lost time days have increased this year. Safety statistics are presented in the following charts, which show the lost time incidents and days by year as well as frequency rates (number of incidents or days per 200,000 hours worked).

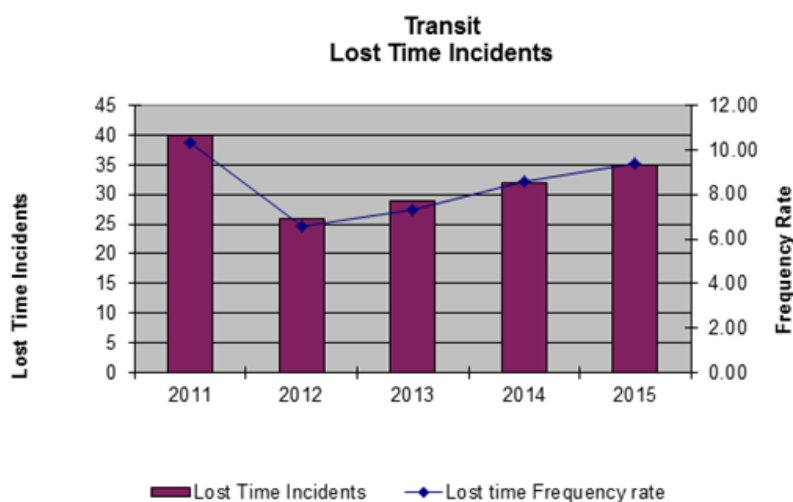


Figure 16: Lost Time Incidents

OUR FINANCES

In 2015, Saskatoon Transit's service line operating budget was \$44.8 million made up of \$40.1 million for Conventional Transit and \$4.7 million for Access Transit. The actual operating expenses for 2015 came in under budget at \$43.2 million. The savings of \$1.6 million (3.6%) on the operating expense were primarily related to a low fuel price and reduced fuel consumption due to a warmer winter.

The budgeted funding sources for Saskatoon Transit's service line were \$1.9 million through provincial funding for DCR Passes and Accessible Transit Grant and \$14.9 million from Fares and other revenue sources with the remainder made up through the city contribution. The 2015 actual funding received was under budget by \$1.6 million. The graphs below show a breakdown of Transit's 2015 funding sources:

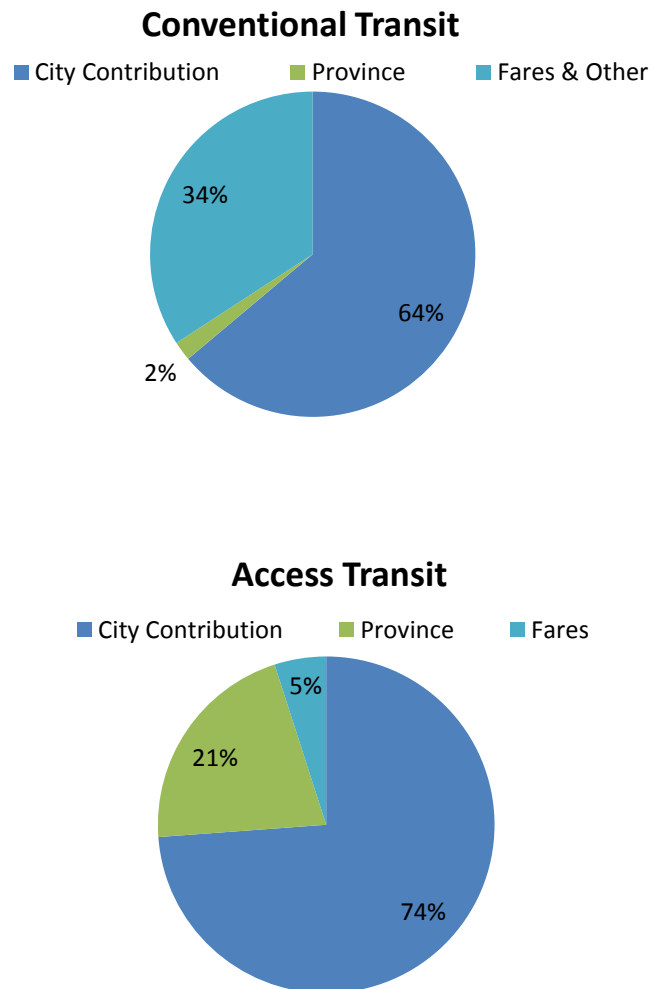


Figure 17: Contribution Rates

Conventional Transit's city contribution in 2014 was 67% while in 2015 the contribution decreased by 2.7%. Access Transit's city contribution was 73% in 2014 and in 2015 the contribution increased by 0.7%. A report from CUTA showed 2014 Conventional Transit City Contributions for peer cities as 58%, 67%, 58%, and 66% respectively for Longueuil, Regina, Gatineau and Oakville.

The \$1.6 million in operating savings for the Transit service line was offset by lower than budgeted funding of \$1.6 million. Therefore, 2015 actuals resulted in a variance of \$17,000 from budgeted city contribution to actuals. Below is the summary of operating budgets for both Conventional Transit and Access Transit:

2015 Conventional Transit Operating Budget

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>%</u>
Fare Revenue	\$13,378	\$12,072	\$(1,307)	-9.77%
Charter & Advertising	1,259	1,072	(187)	-14.85%
City Contribution	24,613	24,564	(49)	-0.20%
Province of Sask	855	745	(110)	-12.86%
Total Revenue	\$40,105	\$38,453	\$(1,652)	-4.12%
Transit Operations	\$20,427	\$19,705	\$722	-3.53%
Fuel, Lube & Oil	5,005	3,455	1,550	-30.96%
Transit Maintenance	7,189	7,964	(774)	10.77%
Building Maintenance	1,038	1,038	0	0.04%
City Hall Services	617	617	0	0.00%
General & admin	2,853	2,697	155	-5.45%
Capital (debt & reserve)	2,977	2,977	0	0.00%
Total expense	\$40,105	\$38,453	\$1,652	-4.12%
Return on Investment	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%

Figure 18: Conventional Transit Operating Budget

An aging fleet, and the additional maintenance required to maintain an aging fleet, have resulted in increased operating costs. Fuel prices provided significant savings that, fortunately, resulted in the Conventional Transit average cost-per-passenger decreasing from \$3.22 in 2014 to \$3.15 for 2015. The most recent CUTA fact book shows the 2014 transit average cost per passenger at \$4.50, \$4.84, \$6.40 and \$7.31 respectively for Longueuil, Regina, Gatineau and Oakville.

The cost per passenger is calculated by taking total operating expenses and dividing them by ridership. The graph below shows the average based on calculated and electronic ridership. At present CUTA statistics only show calculated results as not all properties have electronic fareboxes.

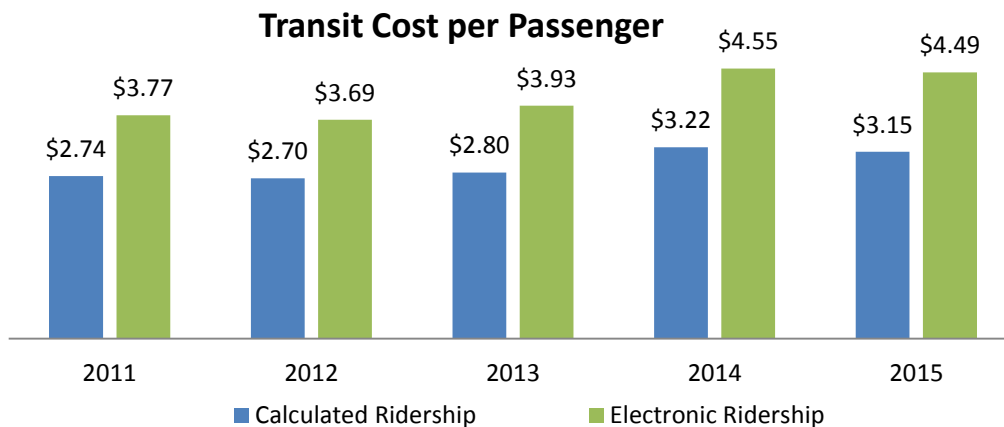


Figure 19: Transit Cost per Passenger

2015 Access Transit Operating Budget

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>%</u>
City Contribution	\$3,413	\$3,479	\$66	2%
Province of Sask grant	996	984	(11)	-1%
Fares	245	224	(22)	-9%
Total Revenue	\$4,654	\$4,687	\$33	1%
Salaries & payroll	\$3,206	\$3,397	(\$191)	6%
Fuel, lube, oil	348	221	127	-36%
AF -Facilities division	243	243	0	0%
Maintenance equip & radio	275	265	10	-4%
Debt cost	48	48	0	0%
Other expense	281	260	21	-7%
Transfer to reserves	253	253	0	0%
Total expense	\$4,654	\$4,687	(\$33)	1%
Return on Investment	\$0	\$0	\$0	

Figure 20: Access Transit Operating Budget

In 2015, the average cost per trip for Access Transit was \$36.83. Through the Provincial Transit Assistance for People with Disabilities Program, Access Transit receives an operating grant based on available funding and ridership data. The 2015 operating grant amounted to \$7.73 per trip such that the total cost per trip to the city was \$29.10. This cost is inclusive of all program expenditures and is calculated by dividing total expenditures by the total number of revenue trips less the operating grant.

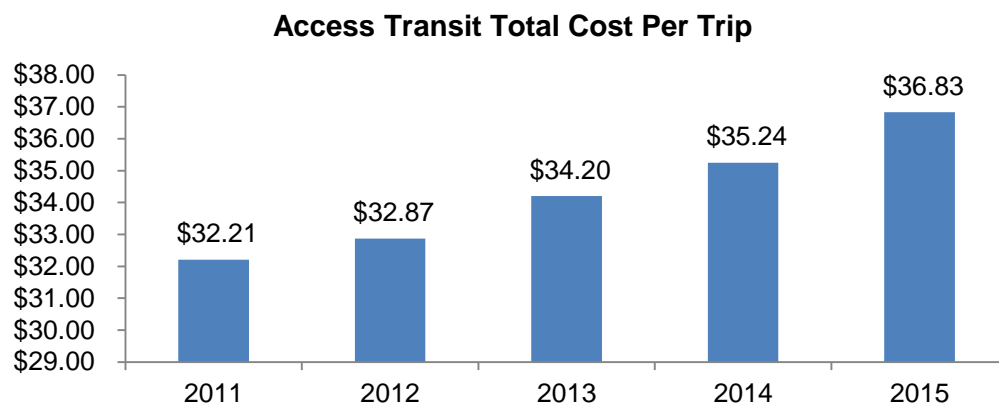


Figure 21: Access Transit Cost per Trip

OUR WORK – MOVING FORWARD

Conventional Transit

Meeting customer service expectations is integral to increasing ridership. To better fulfill these promises, Transit Operations is developing a continuous training program. Currently in the final stages of development and set to be implemented mid-2016, this program focuses on customer service delivery, situation de-escalation and driving for comfort and efficiency. The principles reinforced through this process will support the promises within the Passenger Pledge and provide Transit staff with the necessary tools to succeed.

Slated for 2017, Saskatoon Transit will conduct a complete review of the Access Transit model with a goal of better integration with Conventional Transit. As we move toward a 100% accessible fleet in 2018, this review will allow for a more efficient use of resources in providing coverage throughout Saskatoon.

Technology within the transit industry continues to provide opportunities for increased operational efficiencies, data analytics and customer tools. Saskatoon Transit is working with various vendors to improve its ability to report on performance measures as well as informational tools for customers. Products such as these allow administration to make more accurate service delivery

decisions while providing customers the ability to conveniently and reliably plan their trip.

Internal processes and standard operating procedures continue to be refined and developed at Saskatoon Transit. Ongoing operational reviews will aid in the consistency of the service we provide, as well as create opportunities to more effectively serve the citizens of Saskatoon.

Growth Plan to 500,000:

In April of 2016, the Growth Plan to 500,000 was approved in principle by City Council. Transit forms an integral, coordinated part of this plan, in addition to Transportation Networks, Corridor Growth and Core Bridges. Part of the plan involves creation of two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes over the next 30 – 40 years, the Blue Line (North-South) and the Red Line (East-West). The plan calls for increased funding for Capital equipment and Service hours to support higher ridership in the Saskatoon area.

8th street Initiative:

In an effort to better serve citizens and grow ridership, Saskatoon Transit is implementing a concept that reallocates resources in order to increase frequency along popular routes.

Using principles found in the Growth Plan to 500,000, and aiming to provide a demonstration of the possibilities for a BRT System, an initiative has been developed for the summer of 2016 to provide service at 7.5 minute frequencies along 8th Street during peak periods and 10 minute frequencies during the remainder of the weekday, with 30 minute frequencies during evenings, weekends, and statutory holidays.

Other bus routes that serve the 8th Street Corridor are being redesigned to increase service frequency along 8th Street and increase ridership to downtown. Ongoing initiatives will be rolled out in 2017 and 2018 for 22nd Street, Idylwyld and College Drive.

Relocation to the Civic Operations Centre:

The City of Saskatoon initiated a project to replace the current Caswell Hill bus barns with a new purpose built garage. The site of the new facility is called the Civic Operations Centre (COC) and is located on Valley Road near the current landfill. Eventually this site will have facilities for Public Works as well as other City departments, but at the moment only the transit facility and a snow storage site will be ready for occupancy in 2017. The garage will be the product of a Public Private Partnership, which will see the day-to-day operation of the facility itself managed by Cofely Services. The garage is capable of housing up to 224

Transit buses and will meet LEED certifications. Transit operations will be moving to the new location in the first quarter of 2017, and the change of location should be seamless to the public. It will, however, be a culture change for staff moving to this new facility, having everything under one roof, sorting out how buses are routed into service, as well as when/where seat changes are completed.

Customer Support and Engagement Section:

In late 2015, approval was given to create a new section within Saskatoon Transit to provide improved customer focus and a customer advocacy role. A section manager was hired at the beginning of 2016 who will transition the Customer Service, Planning and ITS groups from their current sections into the new section. Engagement is high on the agenda for this new manager and there will be some close coordination between this section and the Communications Division throughout 2016, and as we move into the new COC.

Passenger Pledge:

In an effort to better serve our customer base and improve the transit experience, Saskatoon Transit is developing customer commitments that will be a public pledge to the kind of service delivered to transit customers. The development of this passenger pledge will be based on the CUTA model which has become industry best practice. CUTA has developed training programs and initiatives that have supported the development of customer commitments, which Saskatoon Transit will be utilizing to enhance customer service. The development of the passenger pledge will start to address the strategic goal outlined in the five-year transit plan of changing attitudes around transit and increasing Saskatoon Transit ridership.

Access Transit:

The current Mobile Data Terminal (MDT's) system is 10 years old, and consists of a 7.5 inch screen, a separate onboard computer, and a modem on each Access Transit bus. Over the course of the second quarter of 2016, the MDTs will be replaced with Samsung Tablets. They are a self-contained unit that can be purchased, repaired, replaced, and/or upgraded locally at a considerably lower price. This change will save time, precious operating dollars, and eliminate dependency on vendor specific hardware.

Access Transit will also be working with IT and the vendor to install Interactive Voice Response (IVR) software into our Trapeze Pass software. IVR is a program that calls our customers, who have booked trips, the night before the actual trip to confirm it is still required and provides the customer with the opportunity to cancel the trip if not needed. The intent of this program is to reduce the amount of late cancellations and no-shows, which will in turn allow us to provide more revenue trips and utilize our resources more efficiently.

There will be public demonstrations of low floor bus service through our Ride Trainer project in late spring, summer, and early fall 2016, subject to more pleasant weather conditions. These on-site demonstrations will provide people in the community who are living with some type of disability the opportunity to learn more about low floor bus service and how it can be a great option or compliment to Access Transit, providing a wider range of travel options, thus promoting more spontaneity and an improved quality of life, in a calm, supportive learning environment.

Access Transit will be receiving four replacement buses in 2016. These new buses are the last diesel units available in the cutaway body style. From 2017 and beyond, the cutaway style of bus will only be available with gas engines. Access Transit will be conducting a review of the current service model and vehicles used in 2017 to determine if there are better/different alternatives. There are diesel accessible vans in the market segment; however, interior space is quite limited. 30 foot conventional platforms will also be looked at and there are smaller models currently in the process of getting certification for the North American market, hopefully in the later part of 2016. The Access Transit bus replacement options for 2017 will be very interesting and somewhat challenging.

Access Transit and Regina Paratransit provide similar services; however, the delivery models are quite different. Access Transit service provides lift van transportation that is all done in-house with some taxi augmentation while Regina Paratransit contracts out the operations and maintenance, similar to how it was done in Saskatoon prior to 2004.

Access Transit Administration, Regina Paratransit Administration, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission are currently working on a pilot project to track denials in a manner that is synonymous so that a true comparison can be made in order to work towards developing a provincial standard.

Access Transit is an extremely valuable, essential service for people living with disabilities in our community. This service would not be possible without the financial support of the City of Saskatoon, the Provincial Government and of course those who ride it every day, the customer. Access Transit Administration will continue to be diligent in financial stewardship, implementing new incentives and/or technology that will increase efficiency to improve our service for our customers.

With the current level of resources, Access Transit has peaked in terms of capacity. Although 2015 was a bit of an anomaly, it is expected that demand for Access Transit will increase in the coming years. As stated in previous Annual Reports, more resources (capital and operating) will be required to meet this demand. For the sake of comparison, Access Transit currently has 26 buses in the fleet, with 19 on the road during peak times. The population of Saskatoon is 262,900. The city of Regina has a population of 232,000 people, and they have

33 Paratransit buses, with 28 buses on the road during peak times. The current funding plan in place for Regina's Paratransit Service enables replacement of buses at, or around, 5 years of age. Access Transit is only able to replace buses at, or around, 7 - 10 years of age.

Employees are Access Transit's greatest resource. The dedication to customers and service they provide is both inspirational and unparalleled and it is because of them that Access Transit has been able to develop into the successful high-quality caring service it is.

IN CONCLUSION

Saskatoon Transit has had a challenging few years, highlighted by equipment, bargaining and personnel related issues. In 2015, a new leadership team was put in place with a main objective to move Saskatoon Transit past a number of these issues and rebuild relationships with employees, customers, and the City of Saskatoon in general. Saskatoon Transit currently provides the service that the City of Saskatoon mandates as part of the Official Community Plan, with some augmentation to provide peak hour frequency. The concept of coverage and frequency, as part of the same spectrum, was recently introduced through the Growth Plan to 500,000 as a concept that should be taken up by Saskatoon Transit in both service delivery and the planning of same when coordinating with Planning and Development and Transportation divisions.

Saskatoon Transit is committed to doing better! One of the primary aims is to connect our community by providing professional, reliable, safe and affordable mobility options.