

Municipal Governments and Sustainable Communities:
A BEST PRACTICES GUIDE 2002
(Excerpts related to Sustainable Transportation)

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Sustainable Community Awards

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SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Improving Transit Ridership and Transit Means to Accommodate Growth

Population: 351,646

SUMMARY

Large cities typically experience the challenge the City of Brampton faced in the mid-1990s. As subdivisions grow, transit services are not implemented fast enough to give new residents the choice of using transit. As a result, many people decide to purchase a second car. Brampton's proactive approach introduced transit routes to new subdivisions as early as possible. Brampton Transit staff participated in the road network development of all new subdivisions, and had input into subdivision plans on features, such as the location of bus stops and pedestrian walkways. Subdivision agreements include a requirement to phase in development so that transit servicing can be provided in an affordable manner, and roads are wide enough and have appropriate turnaround areas for buses. The result has been a 40 per cent increase in ridership between 1996 and 2000, double the percentage of population growth for the same period.

BACKGROUND

In 1998, the City of Brampton adopted "The Four Cornerstones of Brampton," a strategic plan for the community that includes a commitment to an efficient transportation network. The city's specific goals for public transit are to:

- increase ridership on the Brampton Transit system;
- ensure a funding stream for the capital and operating requirements of Brampton Transit sufficient to maintain its position as the most efficient transit system in the Greater Toronto Area; and
- integrate Brampton Transit with GO Transit and other municipal transit systems.

Before adopting the strategic plan, however, several other factors helped the city develop a new focus on public transit. In 1995, the transit department was moved from the community services department to public works. Before the move, the transit department, parks and recreation, and the fire department had all competed for budget revenues. Moving transit to public works meant that all transportation matters were now planned within one department. "All of a



sudden, competition became a non-issue. The roads budget is huge and transit became a component of that," said Director of Transit Glen Marshall.

Another factor favouring public transit was a transportation study performed in 1995-1996 showing that, even if all roads planned for Brampton were built to capacity, the modal share (share of riders carried by different transport modes) for transit would need to be 25 per cent to avoid significant congestion.



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Between 1989 and 1996, transit ridership had declined by 12 per cent in Brampton. "The significant decline started in 1992. By 1996, there were about 4.9 million riders, down from about 5.5 million in 1992," said Mr. Marshall. "I would attribute that decline to the recession, which caused higher unemployment, fewer recreational trips and discretionary shopping trips." During this time, the Province of Ontario had also removed public transit subsidies. Mr. Marshall applauds council's stance to push for improved public transit in the face of these challenges. "It would have been understood if less emphasis or a status quo approach had been applied," he said. "Council, however, recognized transit's importance in a growing city and saw that expansion was the only alternative."

Brampton's older neighbourhoods were already well served by public transit, so council and transit staff decided that the emphasis should be placed on capturing new riders in new subdivisions. Many residents who move into the Brampton area come from densely populated areas with a good level of public transit. "As a result their expectations are pretty high, so we want to be in new subdivisions early so that residents don't have to find alternative transportation," said Mr. Marshall.

Beginning in 1996, therefore, transit staff began to participate fully in road network development for subdivisions.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In many municipalities, transit routes are planned and implemented well after a new subdivision is built. This practice leaves many residents with little choice but the private car as their primary means of travel, exacerbating



CITY OF BRAMPTON, ONTARIO

traffic congestion and gridlock, and deteriorating air quality. Even after transit service is introduced, the car habit may be so ingrained that residents will often not switch to transit. Brampton has avoided this scenario in many of its new subdivisions by implementing a proactive approach.

Brampton requires that transit be phased in and roads appropriately constructed for bus routes in all new subdivisions. “Sometimes we’re in there early and we’ll get held up by construction vehicles,” said Mr. Marshall. “But it’s better to be early and suffer the inconvenience, knowing that it’s an evolving process.”

Before any new development is approved, transit staff reviews the plans, makes recommendations on transit routes, bus stop pads and pedestrian walkways, and is actively involved in the overall transportation planning process. This participation involves driving through subdivisions as they are being built to determine the most appropriate routes. “We want to avoid surprising new residents when a bus route appears on their street, or a bus stop pad is on their boulevard,” said Mr. Marshall.

Transit routes are usually operating in Brampton’s new subdivisions within one year of development or within two to four months of residents moving in. Usually, new residents are without service or the service is some distance away for only a short period of time.

“Providing service to a new subdivision early is mostly based on common sense,” said Mr. Marshall. “Our goal is to have transit thoroughly planned in advance so that new home purchasers, when viewing plans of the subdivision in the sales office, can view where transit will be supplied and then purchase their homes accordingly.”

The community of Springdale is a case in point. This large development northeast of Brampton will eventually house 70,000 residents. With only one developer and the early intervention of transit staff, “it was phased perfectly from a transit perspective as there were no competing interests,” said Mr. Marshall. Staff pushed for the construction of mid-collector streets, rather than the looped streets the developer preferred, to lessen congestion on arterial roads and allow the appropriate space for transit routes. In this way, Brampton is actually creating the demand for transit because it provides an immediate and attractive transportation alternative.

The new transit planning procedure also allows Brampton to monitor and manage land use designations and zoning so that transit use is supported and traffic congestion is reduced, making more efficient use of its staff and operating costs. “Transit has proven to be a viable option when the appropriate emphasis is placed on it,” said Mr. Marshall.

Adding new routes into the subdivisions has, of course, resulted in the need for more buses. Twenty-one new buses are scheduled to arrive in September 2002, part of a procurement plan that calls for buying 195 more buses over the next 10 years—105 for growth and 90 for replacement. The bigger bus fleet will improve the current bus-to-population ratio from one bus per 2,950 residents to one bus per 1,979 residents by 2011.

“I’ve been here for 17 years and never used to get calls for transit service,” Mr. Marshall explained. With so much development in this growing municipality, Brampton Transit is now receiving calls from residents in other communities asking for more or new transit service. “It’s a sign that transit is desired and needed,” he added.

RESULTS

- Brampton’s original target was a 65 per cent return on investment. By carefully planning transit infrastructure as subdivisions are built, the city’s cost recovery has increased from 62 per cent in 1996 to 74 per cent in 2000.
- Ridership grew by over 40 per cent between 1996 and 2000, double the increase in Brampton’s population and double the national transit ridership increases for the same period.
- Net operating costs decreased from 98¢ per passenger in 1996 to 62¢ per passenger by 2000.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The project was well timed to coincide with a growing economy and significant development growth in Brampton. Had the city not been proactive in bringing public transit to the new subdivisions, it would have been left in a “catch up” position.
- New subdivisions must be planned from the beginning to be transit friendly, and operating standards, clear objectives and good planning are the keys to operating an efficient public transit service.



RELATED AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

Brampton is now developing a transportation and transit master plan. “Senior staff and council need, at this stage of our development, a larger picture of the ultimate relationship between roads and transit,” said Mr. Marshall. The master plan will bring in a modelling system that will require ongoing measurement of traffic volumes and the modal share.

Transit staff continues to work with adjacent municipalities, the City of Toronto in particular, to supply cross-boundary service. Brampton is also moving toward a seamless service between municipalities using smart card technology.

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Mississauga Transit—GO Shuttle Service—Cooksville Station

Population: 612,925

SUMMARY

A deceptively simple approach to transit service brought big results to the City of Mississauga. Using a 21-seat shuttle bus, passengers are driven from Cooksville to the GO Rail station so that parking requirements, traffic congestion and air pollution are reduced. Although there is a transit service to the GO Rail station, it was not convenient enough to attract many riders. What began as a six-month pilot program is now a permanent travel option, with about 900 residents using the service every week. Seventy-seven per cent of the new riders used to drive to the station or were dropped off by another driver. Based on these initial ridership reports, the city has estimated that 67 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year have been avoided.

BACKGROUND

In November 1999, Mississauga Transit presented a report to the general committee of the city, outlining the shuttle service concept. As part of the city's strategic plan to be an environmentally responsible community and to set the direction for long-term growth and development, Mississauga Transit wanted to introduce a customized door-to-door shuttle service to its clients in the Cooksville community. The existing transit service used arterial roads only and was not as convenient for residents who lived some distance away. Introducing smaller, air-conditioned buses onto local streets was not only a more attractive option for residents, it was more cost-effective than adding another large transit route. The city accepted Mississauga Transit's report and the shuttle service concept.

The shuttle service complements the city's smog response plan, introduced in 1999, which includes 36 air quality action plans. The city has also been recording its contribution toward greenhouse gas reduction since 1990, and has partnered with the City of Toronto in the 20/20 The Way to Clean Air pilot program launched in January 2002. The program encourages residents to reduce home energy use and the amount of

driving done alone by 20 per cent. Mississauga has also been a participant in FCM's Partners for Climate Protection since 1998.

Owing to the city's strong commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the program encountered no policy or procedural barriers. In fact, "all city councillors supported the community busing concept," said Bill Cunningham, director of Mississauga Transit. "Each station we looked at (before one was chosen) was in a different ward and each councillor hoped that their ward would get the service."

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Transit staff distributed 5,100 surveys to customers at three stations, and achieved a 50 per cent return rate. The Cooksville GO Rail station was identified as having the highest potential for a successful launch of the service, and was chosen for the pilot based on the existing level of transit service, the number of potential users, and how well the route design could maximize area coverage.

Once the initial survey was complete, transit staff contacted the Cooksville respondents by telephone. The addresses of those who responded positively to this type of service were plotted on a map. The goal for the trip time from the rider's door to the GO Rail station was between 15 and 20 minutes. This time constraint, together with the catchment area based on the plotted addresses, helped determine the preferred route.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The Cooksville GO shuttle service began in late March 2001 as a six-month trial, with the buses running during peak morning and afternoon periods. The mini-buses, each seating 21 people, are much better accepted for use on local streets than regular-sized buses. Since only two mini-buses were made available for the pilot, it was impossible to meet every train at the Cooksville GO Rail station. Based on the survey responses, the most popular train times were chosen so that the bus could meet three trains in the morning and four in the afternoon.

Monday to Friday, passengers are picked up at or near their front door in the morning and guaranteed a maximum 20-minute travel time to the GO Rail station. In the afternoon, the process is reversed, with passengers dropped



near their home. Passengers show their GO Rail ticket to the driver and add 50 cents to the fare box. Since the service started in late March, ridership numbers for April 2001 were the first indication of how the service was doing. In its first month, 1,715 passengers had used the service.

Mississauga Transit's direct contact with potential riders meant that Cooksville residents were fully aware of the shuttle service and began to use it immediately.

Bus drivers have been helpful in delivering the service. "They ensured that they met the schedule and gave people information during the initial few weeks," said Mr. Cunningham. He said that the service works well because it is highly customized to people's needs. "It proves that people will use transit if good service is offered."

The service generates 60 per cent of revenue from the fare box, compared to the average of 65 per cent for the entire transit system. "We are losing money, but one of the points that councillors have made is that it's an investment in the community," said Mr. Cunningham. "We're providing good transit and there are social and environmental spin-off benefits that aren't as easily quantifiable."

As of May 2002, the service was running at 60 per cent capacity, so there is room for improvement. Terry Dubois, Mississauga Transit's marketing manager, explained that the service was not advertised during the six-month trial period. "We were concerned that advertising might attract an increased ridership that we could not accommodate with only two buses." But once full capacity is reached, Mississauga Transit plans to add more mini-buses, pending budget approval.

Mississauga Transit presented the results of the pilot program to the Ontario Community Transportation Association in April 2002 to encourage transit managers in other communities to introduce similar services. "Traditional transit planning, where you assign buses to an arterial road and you hope that people will take the bus, just doesn't work anymore," said Mr. Cunningham. "We have to do a better job."

RESULTS

- As of May 2002 about 3,200 people in the Cooksville area were using the GO shuttle service.
- Customer surveys found that 100 per cent are satisfied with the service, and that about three-quarters of them used to drive or were dropped off at the Cooksville GO Rail station. The shuttle service has effectively eliminated approximately 600 car trips.
- Based on the survey responses of September 2001, Mississauga Transit has estimated that the use of the GO shuttle service instead of cars has reduced carbon dioxide emissions by about 67 tonnes per year.
- The customer base grew quickly by word-of-mouth and direct contact with community residents. No advertising or marketing campaigns were undertaken.
- City council has approved the permanent continuation of the service.
- GO Transit and Mississauga Transit are now partners in joint advertising to promote local transit to and from GO Rail stations. "It benefits them as well if we can reduce the demand for parking at the stations and get more people using transit," said Mr. Cunningham.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Contacting potential customers directly through surveys and by telephone was essential in designing the service to meet their needs.
- This project demonstrates that there is a market for high-quality transit services and that the success of the GO Shuttle service can be duplicated elsewhere.
- Since ridership increased by word-of-mouth from satisfied customers, marketing needs to be stronger and ongoing. "Ridership has levelled off and we need to keep the momentum," said Mr. Cunningham.

RELATED AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

Mr. Cunningham expects that the GO Shuttle service will soon be introduced to the other two stations, Meadowvale and Clarkson, identified in Mississauga Transit's initial survey. Meadowvale will begin receiving a shuttle service in fall 2002. Service to Clarkson will be recommended in the 2003 budget.



Based on future budget dollars and appropriate vehicles, the service may expand to other areas as well. Mississauga Transit plans to recommend that council introduce this type of service in other communities.

Ridership had levelled off by May 2002. Marketing and surveys of both customers and the shuttle bus drivers will occur in fall 2002 to see how the service can be improved. “Now that we know we can carry additional capacity and now that the pilot is part of our regular service, an advertising program can be developed to encourage increased ridership,” said Mr. Dubois.

PARTNERS

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FLEET

Fuel Sense Program

Population: 937,845

SUMMARY

The Fuel Sense Program targeted 1,000 municipal employees who had logged the highest fuel consumption in the City of Edmonton's vehicles. In the 10 months of the program, employees were trained to drive for better fuel efficiency. Drivers first took voluntary training that included handbooks and on-road instruction, and were then re-tested to see if these techniques were improving fuel efficiency. The Fuel Sense Program was also incorporated into Edmonton Transit's operator training program. The city's original goal of reducing overall corporate fuel usage by five to 10 per cent was met and exceeded. By the end of 2001, fuel consumption was down 10 to 20 per cent for the 10-month period, translating into savings of \$175,000.

BACKGROUND

As part of its commitment to FCM's Partners for Climate Protection, Edmonton city council approved a greenhouse gas emissions reduction plan that aimed to reduce emissions from municipal operations by 20 per cent by 2008. Municipal operations account for three per cent of the total emissions within city boundaries.

In December 1999, the city's office of the environment helped create CO₂RE, a group comprised of industrial firms, other businesses, institutions and environmental organizations, to develop an emissions reduction plan for the community sector. In January 2002, with input from over 50 local groups, CO₂RE completed a community-wide strategy to combat climate change and improve energy efficiency. One of its key recommendations was to improve the efficiency of the city's municipal fleet vehicles by modifying driving practices and implementing training programs.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

In March 2001, shortly before CO₂RE released its recommendations, the city implemented Fuel Sense, a program that educates its fleet drivers on energy-efficient driving techniques. "Council encourages anything that is seen as doing the environment a favour," said Bryan Payne,



CITY OF EDMONTON, ALBERTA

supervisor of fleet safety. "We made a strategic decision to involve council and senior management in the program from the beginning so that word came down from the top. This was a big catalyst to get the drivers on side."



Fuel Sense differed from the city's previous driver education program in one important way. Rather than being solely a classroom program, employees practice the new driving techniques on a closed course. According to Mr. Payne, the practical aspect gives the program greater value and longer-term savings.

In 2000, fuel prices increased by 40 per cent. Since that trend was expected to continue, the city predicted a major budget deficit for its vehicle operations. "The old program wasn't as successful as it could have been, largely because we didn't get enough return on our investment," said Mr. Payne. "Fuel prices were quite low at that time so the financial incentive was lower."

The program's budget and plan were approved in October 2000. An instructor was hired and trained in the new approaches to driving, and on-board computers were installed in the training vehicles to monitor performance.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

In the Fuel Sense Program, drivers attend a four-hour training session—two hours in the classroom and two hours of on-road instruction. The program's objectives include:

- reducing overall fuel use by five to 10 per cent in the first year;
- fuel cost reductions through reduced consumption;
- reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions as drivers apply the techniques to both work and personal driving;
- encouraging wider use of the Fuel Sense techniques and an improved defensive driver training program; and
- increasing awareness of the environmental impact of greenhouse gases.



CITY OF EDMONTON, ALBERTA

In the classroom session, employees learn that as vehicle speed and revolutions per minute (RPM) of the engine rise, fuel efficiency falls. They also learn about the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment, and the potential dollar savings to be realized through efficient driving techniques.

During the on-road instruction, employees test their knowledge and practices on a 10-kilometre closed course. A pre-test establishes a benchmark of performance for each driver. Then individualized coaching and a follow-up driving test are conducted with the trainer. “We teach proactive driving rather than reactive,” said Mr. Payne. “City drivers have a number of routes they routinely drive, so our message is to get their vehicle up to the speed limit and drive with a knowledge of what’s happening around them. For example, we teach them that traffic lights are timed and if they drive outside of that window they’ll miss the timing.”

All of the drivers are re-tested to determine what skills they have retained. Drivers were initially re-tested 90 days after they had completed the training, but the city has decided to extend that period. The second test is now done a year after a driver completes the program, which provides more longevity to the campaign and keeps awareness alive.

Feedback has been positive—95 per cent of drivers rate the training as excellent. For many drivers, using efficient driving techniques is a much more relaxed way to cover their routes. “It proves that there’s always something new to learn. The best drivers always realize the impact they potentially have behind the wheel and never fail for a second to remember that safe driving is important,” said Mr. Payne.

Two test vehicles are equipped with on-board computers, one of which captures RPM and speed information. “There is a direct correlation between that and fuel efficiency,” said Mr. Payne. “Drivers who maintain a consistent RPM tend to be more productive than those that are on and off the throttle constantly.” The other computer is connected to a fuel flow gauge, and the trainer compares fuel consumption for each driver before and after the training.

Fuel consumption is measured in three ways, the main one being a comparison of monthly and yearly historical fuel consumption data. This type of data provides better information than a time-based formula because some vehicles (snow plows, for example) sit idle for several months. The forecast of fuel costs based on current fuel prices is also measured against actual costs. Finally, the re-test of drivers allows for a comparison of litres of fuel used per 100 kilometres driven.

Weather conditions are also factored in. The Fuel Sense trainer drives the course regularly and re-drives it when the weather changes, then factors in any changed conditions when a fleet driver’s re-test results are examined.

On-board computers have been installed in a number of municipal trucks. “Part of our commitment is to reinvest in on-board technology,” said Mr. Payne. “We’re working toward a one-system communication tool and a standards committee is examining potential opportunities for global positioning systems and black boxes and how to ‘marry up’ all that equipment.” The city’s snow removal vehicles, for example, use automated vehicle locators and global positioning systems. The trucks are dispatched and tracked, and if one stops for an unusual length of time it sends up a red flag. This system also helps to investigate any complaints the city receives from residents.

Fuel savings pay for the Fuel Sense Program. “The city is always looking for ways to save money,” said Mr. Payne. “There was another fuel increase last year and we were able to deflect a large percentage of the increase through the savings of the drivers.”

Mr. Payne says the success of Fuel Sense rests on its practical component. “Maximum efficiency occurs when you capitalize on the vehicle’s momentum. The program is based on simple techniques, but it was bringing it together the way we have that makes the program successful. The bottom line is achievable by anyone.”



RESULTS

- 700 drivers have been trained as of March 2002, with savings estimated at \$175,000. As more drivers are trained, a simple extrapolation of the numbers indicates that annual fleet cost savings could be well over half a million dollars.
- Fuel consumption savings have consistently remained between 10 and 20 per cent, regardless of the type of vehicle, and despite the fact that the total number of kilometres driven had increased due to greater service demands.
- Fuel volumes consumed per kilometre dropped by approximately 5.5 per cent, a gain in fuel efficiency of 1.8 litres per 100 kilometres.
- An estimated 310 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions were avoided in the program's first year of operation.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Communicating results regularly to drivers and council is critical. The need to provide follow-up information and keep communication lines open is recognized.
- The program is relatively easy to transfer to other types of vehicle operations, such as those of Edmonton Transit or private industry.
- There were some initial problems with the on-board computers. Greater effort should have been made to ensure that computers were working properly since they are essential to measure results.

RELATED AND FUTURE INITIATIVES

The city has arranged with Natural Resources Canada to help develop an urban transit fuel-efficient training program based on the Fuel Sense experience.

Fuel Sense may be used as a model for a "train the trainer" program in private corporations that already have driver training programs in place.

The fleet safety unit and Edmonton Transit have prepared a manual and training regime for Edmonton Transit operators. Transit buses are already hooked up to maintenance computers, allowing all the required data to be captured from existing on-board equipment. Fuel consumption, speed, time spent in top gear and other parameters can be accessed via a laptop computer, and the driver can be informed immediately.

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**SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORTATION**

**CITY OF NEW
WESTMINSTER,
BRITISH COLUMBIA (pop.
55,000)**

*Green Linkages in New
Westminster: Cross-town Greenway*

and Sapperton Landing Park

Because of its proximity to the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), the City of New Westminister's roads carry a high proportion of the GVRD's traffic. To reduce automobile trips, the city wanted to encourage more bicycle use. In partnership with the GVRD, the city improved the links along its greenway and Sapperton Landing Park. Sidewalks were widened, and curb extensions, traffic circles and multi-use trails were constructed. A tidal channel in the centre of the park was designed to accommodate young salmon, and native plant species were introduced to stabilize the soil and provide wildlife habitat. As funds become available, the city plans to build an integrated network of greenways that will connect all residents to businesses, schools, and places of work and recreation.

**Contacts: Pat Connolly, Director of Engineering, and Mary Pynenburg, Director of Planning, (604) 527-4532
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK, ONTARIO
(pop. 792,150)**

*On the Move Toward Sustainable Transportation
(York Region Transportation Master Plan)*

The Regional Municipality of York is making the shift toward sustainable urban transportation standards with the release of its 30-year transportation master plan. In January 2001, all five regional transit authorities were amalgamated into York Region Transit. Within a year of amalgamation, the transit fleet had expanded by 20 per cent and ridership had increased 7.3 per cent. The region has set a target of having one-third of rush hour commuters using transit in major travel corridors of the region. By subsidizing 50 per cent of transit fares for all regional employees to travel to work, the region has shown its own commitment to this goal. It will soon choose a private company as a partner in providing a rapid transit service.

Contact: Tom Apparao, Manager, Transportation Planning, (877) 464-9675

Award Submissions

**RESORT MUNICIPALITY OF WHISTLER,
BRITISH COLUMBIA (pop. 10,000)**

The Whistler Way! Rideshare Program

Although many commuters between Squamish and Whistler have created informal carpools, there was a need for efficient commuter transportation for employees within the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW). The RMOW partnered with BC Transit and the Jack Bell Foundation to develop The Whistler Way! rideshare program. The program was modified to operate seven days a week to address the needs of service industry employees who do not work traditional nine-to-five schedules. In the first three months, 27 passengers used vanpools and carpools, avoiding trips by 23 private vehicles, each of which had been travelling over 100 kilometres per workday. The program is just one component of the RMOW's transportation demand management program, and fills a niche that provides Whistler residents and employees with an affordable transportation option.

**Contact: Emma Dal Santo, Transportation Demand Management Coordinator, (604) 935-8197
TOWN OF MARKHAM, ONTARIO (pop. 217,000)**

The Great Transportation Debate

The Town of Markham tested public support for light rail technology versus bus rapid transit in an imaginative new way. The Great Transportation Debate, held October 15, 2002, was a lively forum with a celebrity moderator and a theatrical twist. Professional actors performed the opening sketch and the entire operation was overseen by professional stage and lighting managers. Of the 230 people who attended, 100 used wireless remotes to record their opinions and answers, which were then immediately displayed on computers during the debate. Half the group supported funding a rapid transit system, be it bus or light rail, and two-thirds supported the idea of a public-private partnership to finance the system. Marketing tactics before the debate included targeted direct mail and e-mail invitations, radio and television interviews, and an on-line chat with the mayor.

Contact: Mary-Frances Turner, Commissioner, (905) 477-7000

FLEET**CITY OF REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN (pop. 190,400)*****Natural Gas Vehicle Program***

Beginning in 1994, the City of Regina began converting many of its fleet vehicles to burn a mixture of natural gas and gasoline. The city had already purchased a natural gas fueling station in 1993. When SaskEnergy (Saskatchewan's natural gas distribution utility) built a fueling station in 2001, thereby providing an additional fueling station for the city's fleet, the city's resolve to buy dedicated compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles grew stronger. At first, the use of CNG had been optional, leaving drivers to choose which fuel to use. But this voluntary system did not bring the desired results. Now, each vehicle is monitored to ensure that the required percentage of CNG is used. In addition, since January 2002, each municipal division that uses fleet vehicles is charged directly for fuel costs, giving it the opportunity to save budget dollars if it uses CNG instead of gasoline. The city's "dual fuel" fleet consumes 89 per cent natural gas, an increase of nine per cent over its initial target, and has saved annual fuel costs of approximately \$62,000.

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