



Lethbridge Transit

Fixed route operation with 40 vehicles.

Solution

Passenger Information Systems for fixed route; Notifications for paratransit

Problem/Challenge

- Need to track both fixed route and paratransit vehicles
- Improve boarding and reduce late cancellations

Result

- Increased ridership

How Paratransit and Fixed Route Come Together

Abby Slovack

The City of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada is home to a diverse collection of transit users. The city and its transit system transport a large amount of college-aged students as well as serve an aging population. Transit planner, Abby Slovack oversees the technology purchasing and planning to determine what services are most needed by LT's ridership. Funding issues are also a major part of her daily work. Much of the funding she has sought has been for the purchase of ITS fixed route software as well as paratransit software solutions.

They were looking to find a balance between ease-of-use for dispatchers and staff, and at the same time, ensuring the IT side would run smoothly. They decided upon TripSpark's complete ITS solution for fixed route and demand response. ITS completely transformed their entire operation.

“We don’t have to pull drivers away from their job to ask questions. It definitely helps.”

Fixed Route Software Success

Abby notes, “The shift encouraged every member of the operation to work more efficiently and perform their jobs better.” Drivers, in particular found that using in-vehicle MDTs (Ranger units) allowed them to focus more on their primary tasks of driving and offering a higher level of customer service. The Ranger serves as a simple, single point of logon to the entire, integrated system. Rather than having to be constantly monitoring multiple activities, the Ranger operates automatically. In fact, drivers themselves were able to help make adjustments to schedules in order to develop more efficient routes. Abby found that having the ability to monitor buses in real time as well as playback the day’s events eliminates the guesswork out of reviewing and resolving schedule adherence issues.

Why TripSpark Was the Vendor of Choice

To put it simply: integration. Abby explains that having a single-vendor approach to their entire transit system means that all Fixed and Paratransit software and hardware integrate with the scheduling and routing software. Had they attempted to cobble together a complete system using multiple vendors, integration (e.g.: downtown signs) would not have been possible.

Ultimately, an end-to-end solution will allow

Customer complaints began to drop. As did wait times at bus stops. Information systems like downtown signs and the MyRide website, both convey accurate information to riders. Drivers are no longer tasked with answering questions, which allows them to get on their routes quicker.

Bradley McLeod, the Development Services System Analyst for Lethbridge Transit claims there is an estimated 400% increase in traffic to their website.

See how easy LT’s MyRide site is to use by visiting it here: myride.lethbridge.ca.

“We’ve seen a 2.5% increase in ridership on our public transit.”

“We saw the value in a single vendor for both fixed route and paratransit.”

LT to grow and add on new technologies as needed over the coming years. And of course, all existing and future technologies are more likely to integrate and work.

An Integrated Information Solution

The web-based, passenger information system allows riders to access schedules, locate buses or nearby stops and plan trips incredibly easily from any web-enabled device or telephone. Abby says that riders love and there has been a major increase in site traffic to their website.

Added Value of Paratransit Software

Before implementing a solution, LT dealt with a lot of paper work. Manifests were printed out daily. Riders called in late to cancel their trips. Drivers and vehicles were hard to locate. “We really had no idea where they were without calling them on the radio,” says Abby.

The paratransit software system helps to ensure that all drivers are functioning at their peak efficiency. Abby’s team can monitor vehicle locations with precision in order to

Why a Notification System?

“We wanted to reduce late cancelations and address our no-show rate,” says Abby. It’s a difficult task to individually contact riders. And waiting even 10 minutes at the curb during winter months creates an uncomfortable and unsafe experience for riders. Now they can alert riders the day before or moments before their vehicle is scheduled to arrive. Loading times have improved since drivers and riders are coordinated. The notification systems bridges the communication gap.

Bradley McLeod says that the tracking and reporting of cancelations and accuracy of data



Abby Slovack, Lethbridge Transit Testimonial

establish accurate ETAs. LT is now able to offer same-day bookings, which has also contributed to the increase in ridership. But what really helps LT’s operation is the notification system and the self-service, trip portal.

“We got such fantastic feedback about MyRide. Our customers were saying: Yay, I can’t believe this is here... this’ll be awesome!”

have greatly improved. Because they can now monitor no shows and late cancelations, they can better plan their routes and schedules.

“Now riders have more control over their transit experience.”

Added Value from the Passenger Portal

An online tool for booking, canceling and managing trips gives yet another option to riders. Since the booking office is only open 7:30-3:30 each day, it made it difficult for riders to book trips at their convenience. Without having to hire new staff, LT can now offer online booking that operates 24/7. However, the system also has other advantages. Caregivers, family members, receptionists from a care facility, etc. can book trips on behalf of its clients or patients.



The Result of an Integrated ITS System

“Year to date, paratransit ridership is up by 5.17%,” boasts Abby. “And public transit ridership is up by 2.5%.” IT work has been alleviated because all the components are supported by a single vendor with a single point of contact for customer care. The compliments keep rolling in for Abby and her team and we couldn’t be happier.

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