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.
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.

Ultimately, an end-to-end solution will allow 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.

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...
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 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.

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

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

“We 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.