

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – September 27, 2022

‘IGNITING CONNECTIONS’ Creating Regional Transit Opportunities for Southeast Manitoba

On Thursday, September 22, 2022, the RM of Piney and Eco-West Canada, who are working on a regional, collaborative approach to complete a needs assessment of transit service in southeast Manitoba (east of the Red River and south of the TransCanada Highway), hosted a meeting in Steinbach to formally launch the initiative. This was the beginning of a process in which critical feedback from community residents, businesses and leaders will form the basis for determining transit needs and possible solutions across a wide region covering over 17 municipalities and First Nation communities.

Having a focused regional transit strategy in place will **ignite connections** for residents of all ages and in particular the area’s vulnerable populations. Transportation supports the ability to age in one’s own community, attend medical appointments, go to work and school, do some shopping, gain access to services not available locally, and to socialize – or connect – with others. Ultimately, a solid and flexible transit strategy will enable our smaller communities to thrive. Access to affordable and sustainable transportation options is becoming increasingly important to address the rising senior and newly arrived immigrant populations and cost of fuel, while also investigating alternatives such as EVs and charging infrastructure.

“Public transportation isn’t only for people living in cities, it’s a service deserving of all Manitobans, both rural and urban. Improving public transit is about giving residents of Southeast Manitoba the freedom of equal access to social, health and economic opportunities that enhances our quality of life. “Igniting Connections” is a regional initiative that helps’ advance the many transportation goals and needs of residents throughout Southeast Manitoba. Municipalities, First Nations, Communities and our partners should be proud to be involved in such a monumental goal,” said Melanie Parent, councillor for the RM of Piney.

Community Outreach – We want to hear from you!

Project organizers will be visiting several communities this fall to gather their feedback, which will provide a more complete understanding of the region’s ridership profile and priorities. Topics such as “Where do you travel, why and how often?”, and “What are your barriers to efficient and effective transportation?” are just some areas of discussion that will be covered. Watch for the community outreach launch in your area via local news, websites and social media, and help “ignite connections” for yourself and your community.

“We believe quite strongly that transit and mobility are fundamental to the development of resilient and sustainable rural communities. However, we also understand how the barriers of place-based differences are a major challenge to overcome for rural communities wanting to transition to greener modes of transportation. Our partnership with the RM of Piney will enable us to collaboratively gain a better understanding of the regional barriers that exist and ensure that we are able to proceed with the eventual implementation of rural transit solutions, based on an informed decision-making process, that will hopefully provide universal access for all the region’s residents,” said Dany Robidoux, executive director of Eco-West Canada.

Working together towards regional solutions

The Southeast Regional Transportation Initiative will be supported by a collaborative partnership between key stakeholders and experts including TONS (Transportation Options Network for Seniors), the University of Manitoba - City Planning (Age Friendly Communities), municipal and First Nation leadership, local businesses, and Eco-West Canada and the RM of Piney as project leads.

The following communities attended the September 22nd meeting in Steinbach:
RM's of Taché, Ritchot, Ste-Anne, La Broquerie, Hanover, De Salaberry, Montcalm, Stuartburn, Reynolds, Piney and Ste-Anne (Town), St-Pierre-Jolys (Village) and Buffalo Point First Nation

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For more details about the Regional Transit Opportunity and Needs Assessment in southeast Manitoba, contact:

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