



FUNDY REGIONAL SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2026

FundyRegion.ca

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

V1. DRAFT

APRIL 2026

Prepared by.

TAKE  **CONSULTING**

In partnership with



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Project purpose and process

The purpose of the project is to deliver a region-wide community and public transportation plan that provides a proposed approach to community public transportation options within the Fundy Regional Service Area that responds to the unique community public transportation needs and opportunities as well as socio-demographic trends and geographic features in a collaborative and coordinated manner. Furthermore, the intent is to establish buy-in to new potential community public transportation approaches and solutions amongst the various levels of government.

The following figure is the current project schedule highlighting specific project tasks and milestones.

Weeks (from notice to proceed)	3/16	3/23	3/30	4/6	4/13	4/20	4/27	5/4	5/11	5/18	5/25	6/1	6/8	6/15	6/22	6/29	7/6	7/13	7/20	7/27	8/3	8/10	8/17	8/24	8/31	9/7
Task 0. Project Management	K																									
Task 1. Background and Market Review																										
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Round 1: Introducing & Framing																										
Round 2: Informing & Gathering																										
Round 3: Assessing & Collaborating																										
Round 4: Concluding & Communicating																										
Task 7. Public Relations Strategy																										

Engagement foundations

1 Approach

A strong engagement approach is influenced by a number of factors including readiness, time available, capacity and current state of buy-in. Our approach focuses on identifying those opportunities while also addressing potential challenges and barriers.

This approach is rooted in nurturing relationships and providing open, timely opportunities for participation, which significantly increases the likelihood of public acceptance and adoption upon project completion. Our methods build upon engagement efforts undertaken by the RSC for previous projects while exploring new and innovative opportunities.

2 Commitments


- + Audience-Centric: Concentrating on community needs and preferences to ensure relevance.*
- + Data-Informed: Leveraging insights to tailor engagement strategies effectively.*
- + Accessible: providing a range of options that are not only physically accessible but provides options and alternatives to people to support their preferred method of engagement with the goal of providing a comfortable and safe space to participate.*
- + Adaptive: monitoring and managing engagement to understand what works and what does not and if needed adapting the program to address concerns or new opportunities for outreach and involvement.*
- + Clear: provide consistent and effective communication throughout the duration of the project which makes both the process and well as the outcomes clear to those who are trying to participate and shares sufficient information to support involvement.*
- + Equitable: tailoring engagement tools and tactics to those who have historically experiences systemic barriers to participation.*

Engagement approach

The Communication and Engagement Plan also adheres to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) process and standards, promoting best practices for effective public interactions and relationship building.

The IAP2 framework, designed to be understandable, creative, collaborative, and accessible, recognizes diverse interest holder engagement levels, delineating five potential levels of involvement: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. It recognizes that not all audiences will have the same “level” of engagement and that transparency and documentation are key to buy-in

It commits to utilizing an approach that considers the needs, interests, understanding and commitment of various audiences to help determine the most appropriate means of communicating and engaging along with robust evaluation and management.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Audiences and stakeholder overview

Prior to recommending and confirming engagement tactics it is important to identify the audiences that are intended to be engaged and communicated with. The audiences reflect overarching “groups” as opposed to specific individuals. Each group has their own level of experience, understanding and comfort with the topic that is being addressed which will have considerable impact on the way in which they approach the project.

The audiences are not intended to provide specific details about the representatives from each group. Those details have been identified through the development of the project contact list which will be completed by the consultant team in partnership with RSC staff. Information provided in the contact list will include:

- + Audience contact details: name, email, and phone number.*
- + Individual requirements for each interest holder, such as preferred methods of contact (where appropriate).*
- + Specific interests of interest holders in the project (where gathered).*
- + Contributions from interest holders on a phase-by-phase basis and input provided.*

It is important to recognize that audiences and individuals can change their opinions over the course of a project. Audience monitoring and management will be key to the plan and process.

Based on the information contained within the RFP and the proposed approach identified within the proposal submission, we have prepared the following audience summary and overview which is presented on the following slide.

Audience analysis

Audiences	Needs	Assessment	IAP2 Level
Members of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Champions for the work - desire for more transit + Consideration of rural and suburban variation in resident perspectives and needs + Segment of the population that think transit is a waste of money (not just limited to transit) - need for understanding and behaviour change (demonstrate benefit) + Localized concerns regarding traffic and traffic impacts (e.g. bridge) + Distrust regarding local people versus people from "outside" 	Degree of Understanding Low to moderate Degree of Influence Low	Inform Consult
Transit Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + SJ transit; Urban-Rural Rides; Maritime Bus (across Atlantic Canada - operator) 	Degree of Understanding Moderate to high Degree of Influence Moderate	Inform Consult Involve
Agencies / Interest Holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + YMCA newcomers centre (limitations around places to work and relative to housing - access to suburban and rural areas) + Students UNB SJ, NBCC + Hospital + Airport + Envision SJ (economic agency) + Other large employers e.g. Irving - major economic expansion + Port SJ (growth - significant) 	Degree of Understanding Low to moderate Degree of Influence Moderate	Inform Consult
Transportation Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Could be stronger but lacking expertise and understanding around the topic + Need to understand the "why" + Some experts and professionals on the committee with a strong chair (combination of staff and elected officials) + Open to a special workshop style session 	Degree of Understanding Moderate to High Degree of Influence Moderate	Inform Consult Involve
Community Development Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Overlap with mandate of the committee and members + Strong advocates for the work - cross section of individuals who work in community development + Not for profit representation + UNB housing capacity 	Degree of Understanding Low to moderate Degree of Influence Moderate	Inform Consult Involve

Audience analysis

Audiences	Needs	Assessment	IAP2 Level
FRSC Core Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Representatives from the FRSC core project team including representatives from a range of departments such as communications</i> 	<p><i>Degree of Understanding</i> Moderate to high <i>Degree of Influence</i> High</p>	<p><i>Inform</i> <i>Consult</i> <i>Collaborate</i></p>
FRSC Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Potential concerns regarding expenditures but if the public is seeing the value and public buy-in supports then there could be a shift</i> + <i>Economic development benefits and opportunities as the focus (education)</i> + <i>Regional representation on the board with financial decision making</i> 	<p><i>Degree of Understanding</i> Low to moderate <i>Degree of Influence</i> High</p>	<p><i>Inform</i> <i>Empower</i></p>
Local Government (CAO) & Rural District Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Missing expertise and understanding (e.g. transportation planning and traffic engineering)</i> + <i>Similar to the above in terms of educating around the "why"</i> + <i>Can get a bit more technical - not a formal committee but can be leveraged to build capacity and buy-in at the "local" level - providing more access and information</i> + <i>Direct line of communication and advice through the CAOs (mayors)</i> 	<p><i>Degree of Understanding</i> Low to moderate <i>Degree of Influence</i> High</p>	<p><i>Inform</i> <i>Empower</i></p>

Engagement goals and objectives

Objectives

- + *Identify and confirm potential gaps and opportunities for improvement related to existing service across all potential transit providers and those who utilize the system;*
- + *Gather input on and acceptance of potential recommended service concepts for the unique communities to inform service concept finalization and confirmation;*
- + *Provide opportunities for education and awareness about current transit offerings and planning approaches to transit provision to better communicate change to community members; and*
- + *Inform the identification of recommendation priorities as well as opportunities to support implementation including partnership strategies and implementation considerations.*

Round based Engagement Purpose

The engagement objectives have been organized into three “rounds” of outreach which are intended to achieve the following:

1. *Round 1 – Introducing & Framing: to introduce the project to the various audiences and to determine if there are any changes to amendments to the approach based on engagement preferences or protocols.*
2. *Round 2 – Informing & Gathering: to gather information about needs and opportunities to inform potential strategies and solutions.*
3. *Round 3 – Assessing & Collaborating: to help assess the applicability and feasibility of service concepts and delivery options with focus on identifying priorities and implementation considerations.*
4. *Round 4 – Concluding & Communicating: to close the loop on the project informing audiences of how their input was used and how the final product / outcomes were developed. It provides a point of conclusion as well as clarity around next steps.*

Engagement strategy

The goal of the engagement strategy is to weave the engagement rounds (of which there are four) into the various technical stages of the project. The intent is to use the engagement rounds to both inform and confirm outcomes / outputs of the project. The following is an overview each round of engagement, and the tactics identified.

	Round 1 Introducing & Framing	Round 2 Informing & Gathering	Round 3 Assessing & Collaborating	Round 4 Concluding & Communicating
Original Scope of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage preparation + Notification and letters of introduction + Social media launch and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage updates + Online survey launch + Local government staff working session + Board of directors workshop + FRSC transportation committee workshop + Community Pop-ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage updates + Interactive online mapping tool + Local government staff working session x2 + FRSC transportation committee workshop + Community engagement session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage updates + Local government staff working session + FRSC transportation committee workshop + Board of directors presentation
Adapted Scope of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + FRSC Transportation Committee Presentation + Board of Directors Presentation (led by Via) + Webpage Preparation and Promotion + Notifications & Letters of Introduction + CAO outreach (led by FRSC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage updates + Combined Committee Working Session (Transportation & Development) + Board of Directors Workshop (potentially inviting CAOs) + Community Pop-ups + Local Council Presentations (led by FRSC) + CAO outreach (led by FRSC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage updates + Interactive online mapping tool/survey + Combined Committee Working Session + CAO Committee Meeting + Community Engagement Session (for members of the public) + Local Council Presentations (led by FRSC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Webpage updates + Combined Committee Working Session + CAO Committee Meeting + Board of Directors Presentation + Local Council Presentations (led by FRSC)

Engagement tactic details

The engagement tactics will be planned in more detail leading up to the various activities, with the following assumed.

	Committee Meetings	Webpage & Survey	Community Pop-ups	Workshop / Working Sessions	Presentation
Format	Select number of meetings held in-person and virtually Includes presentation followed by facilitated discussion around key topics	Consistent with the preferred format of the FRSC including key project information, milestones, FAQ, contact information, engagement sources	Informal but engaging sessions as an open house style or point in place measures with display materials and interactive activities to solicit input from members of the public	Facilitated style sessions with either a small group (working session) on a focused topic or broad group (workshop) with rang of topics. Discussions and activities are facilitated following a presentation of information	Isolated presentations with the purpose of sharing information to audiences
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Coordination through necessary staff + Agenda + Presentation + Pre-work materials (as available) + Summary of input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Relevant background documents + Project maps and resources + Publicly available deliverables + Interactive online engagement tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Notice of public session + Display boards + Supporting presentation materials + Promotional materials + Summary of engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Detailed facilitator agenda + Short Agenda + Facilitator activities + Presentation + Summary of input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Presentation materials and any other supporting materials necessary
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Virtual opportunities available + AODA compliant materials + Alternate forms as requested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + AODA compliance for web-based content and materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Selection of accessible sites + Dates / times flexible + Online option + AODA compliant materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Selection of accessible site + AODA compliant materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + AODA compliant presentation + Alternate forms as needed
Timelines	Consistent with the timeline of the committee(s), specifically transportation Maximum 2 hours	To be launched at project initiation and maintained over the course of the project updated at major project milestones	Pop-up location details to be confirmed but will include geographic diversity. Sessions are to be held for 2-3 hours on site	Workshops will be 2 hours and will likely be in-person but may also be a virtual or hybrid format for geographic access	Timeline of the presentations will be dictated by the preferred format of the group such as the Board of Directors

Engagement Strategy Adaptations

- + *A strong desire for buy-in has been identified by the FRSC which is being challenged by timeline and the degree of engagement identified within the strategy*
- + *Currently, the audiences that are the most under-served in the strategy include:*
 - + *Transit Providers*
 - + *Interest Holders*
 - + *Broader geography of community member outreach*
 - + *Local councils and decision makers*
- + *Opportunities for outreach integration could include:*
 - + *Targeted outreach and promotion of virtual engagement opportunities*
 - + *Webinar sessions*
 - + *Travelling presentation sessions to local councillors*
 - + *Local community partnerships and promotion with supporting materials*

Communication tactics

In addition to the proposed engagement that are planned to be implemented as part of the project, there will also need to be ongoing communication and outreach. The following is an overview of the proposed methods of communication that will be used to notify, encourage and inform audiences.



Dedicated Project Webpage

- + Development and regular updates on the FRSC's webpage through a dedicated project page.
- + Dynamic updates align with technical and engagement milestones.
- + Incorporate "calls to action" for new and existing participants.



Engagement Documentation

- + Engagement summaries and infographic documentation of input received.
- + Demonstrate how input informs the project process.
- + Include recordings and phase-specific documentation on the project page.



Notifications and Announcements

- + Use traditional publications and the project page for major milestones.
- + Notify about commencement and completion of project tasks and engagement opportunities.



Social Media

- + Utilize existing corporate accounts for messaging.
- + Coordinate with FRSC communication staff for message development and dissemination.



Targeted Invitations

- + Communication with committees through approved channels.
- + Letters of invitation to various audiences including those with more direct impacts on project outcomes.
- + Direct emails from as preliminary outreach, supplemented by phone outreach as needed.



Engagement in Key Locations

- + Utilize QR codes along trail routes to connect users to project-related content and interactive engagement tools.
- + Position probing questions near QR codes to enhance user interaction and collect valuable feedback.

Project FAQ

An FAQ is an effective tool which can be used to dispel some of the unknowns and share some of the key project considerations with audiences. It is recommended that this FAQ be used as part of the dedicated project webpage.

What is a community and public transportation plan?

It is a region-wide strategy designed to map out community-specific needs and design integrated, accessible, and affordable mobility options. The plan will identify gaps in existing services and recommend service delivery models, such as fixed-route buses, intercity shuttles, and demand-response services, to create a phased implementation roadmap.

Why is FRSC creating a community and public transportation plan?

In 2023, the Government of New Brunswick expanded the mandate of Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) to include the responsibility for regional transportation. The FRSC is committed to responsible service delivery and has heard directly from member communities about the need for expanded transportation options. The FRSC is creating this plan to help transition the region away from a siloed municipal approach and toward a coordinated system that improves regional connectivity, supports economic development, and provides equitable access for all residents.

Who is this project for?

The project is for the 130,000 residents of the Fundy Region, spanning approximately 5,000 square kilometers. This includes urban, suburban, and rural communities such as Saint John, Quispamsis, Rothesay, Hampton, Grand Bay-Westfield, Fundy-St. Martins, and the Fundy Rural District. It specifically aims to increase mobility for vulnerable populations, including seniors, youth, and low-income individuals by providing more reliable ways to access healthcare, employment, and essential services. Service recommendations will prioritize areas outside of the Saint John Transit service area.

How can I provide input or get involved in this project?

There will be lots of opportunities for public engagement throughout this process, including visiting us at a pop-up event, providing feedback online, or attending a community engagement session. Please visit our dedicated project webpage [URL to be updated] for the most up to date list of opportunities.

Project FAQ (cont.)

An FAQ is an effective tool which can be used to dispel some of the unknowns and share some of the key project considerations with audiences. It is recommended that this FAQ be used as part of the dedicated project webpage.

When will implementation happen?

The project follows a phased timeline starting in 2026:

- **Planning Phase:** Analysis and service design are scheduled to take place between March and August 2026, with consideration for FY 27 budgeting taking place starting in August 2026.
- **Demonstration Projects:** Short-term projects to test concepts may be identified during this process to gather data for future service. These may launch as soon as Summer 2026.
- **Large-Scale Pilot:** A multi-year regional transit pilot is targeted to begin following completion of the plan and approval of the 2027 budget.

How is the project being funded?

This project is funded through a combination of federal and provincial funding. The Department of Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada approved in principle up to \$50,000 (50% of the project) through the Rural Transit Solutions Fund (RTSF). This agreement required a minimum 40% contribution from the provincial government.

Where can I find more information about the Regional Public Transportation Plan?

Residents can find regular updates, project milestones, and FAQ details on the dedicated project webpage hosted on the Fundy Regional Service Commission website at www.FundyRegion.ca. Information will also be shared through traditional publications, social media updates, and at local government council meetings.

Implementation

Implementation refers to the engagement tactics which will be undertaken. A detailed schedule has been prepared along with the plan.

Round	Tactic	Timeline (subject to change)
1	FRSC Transportation Committee Presentation	April 1, 2026
	Board of Directors Presentation (led by Via)	April 23, 2026
	Webpage Preparation and Promotion	April 2026
	Notifications & Letters of Introduction	Late April / Early May 2026
	CAO outreach (led by FRSC)	Late April / Early May 2026
2	Community Pop-ups	Week of June 8, 2026
	CAO outreach (led by FRSC)	Week of June 8, 2026
	Board of Directors Workshop (potentially inviting CAOs)	Week of June 25, 2026
	Combined Committee Working Session (Transportation & Development)	Late June 2026
	Local Council Presentations (led by FRSC)	Late June 2026
3	Interactive online mapping tool/survey general public engagement	July 2026
	Combined Committee Working Session	July 2026
	CAO Committee Meeting	July 2026
	Community Engagement Session (for members of the public)	July 2026
	Local Council Presentations (led by FRSC)	July 2026
4	Combined Committee Working Session	August 2026
	CAO Committee Meeting	August 2026
	Board of Directors Presentation	August 2026
	Local Council Presentations (led by FRSC)	August 2026

Roles and responsibilities

The following has been assumed regarding the roles and responsibilities to support the execution of the engagement plan.

Promotion / outreach

- + *The project manager from FRSC and Via + Take Consulting will be the spokes people for the project along with the engagement lead.*
- + *FRSC will be responsible for setting up the project page and maintaining the content with input provided by the consultant team.*
- + *The existing social media accounts will be used to promote the project with the consultant team providing content to the FRSC staff for update.*
- + *FRSC staff will help to promote the study over the course of the assignment using promotional materials.*
- + *Transportation committee, local government representatives and local interest groups will be encouraged to share information and activities.*

Communication

- + *All communication with members of the public and stakeholders should be forwarded to Gal Kramer and Kate Whitfield.*
- + *Via and Take will be responsible for communicating with the study contact list when planning consultation / engagement sessions – primary method of communication will be via email followed by phone calls.*
- + *Gal Kramer will be responsible for forwarding technical information and comments to the FRSC's project manager who will be responsible for distributing the information to the appropriate staff member.*

Coordination

- + *FRSC and consultant team will work together to determine the preferred date and time for all in-person engagement sessions.*
- + *FRSC staff will be responsible for identifying potential additional events where the community and public transportation plan could be promoted.*
- + *The consultant team will lead the development of engagement materials with FRSC confirming final content.*
- + *The consultant team will be responsible for the documentation of engagement milestones and input received over the course of the project.*
- + *Summaries of input will be coordinated and provided at major project milestones.*

Evaluation

Evaluation is used to assess the effectiveness of the various engagement and communication activities and efforts that are undertaken as part of the project. Where needed, efforts will be taken to adapt the engagement efforts to respond to input or feedback received on the effectiveness of the tactic.

Objective	Methodology	Evaluation
Collect Input on Priorities and Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Survey + Public Consultation Sessions + Presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Engagement Metrics: Tracking participation rates, demographic data of participants, and qualitative feedback to assess the breadth and depth of engagement.</i> + <i>Measuring the diversity of the interest holder groups reached compared to the community demographic profile.</i> + <i>Analyzing the feedback to identify common themes and priorities.</i> + <i>Evaluate the extent to which the input reflects a comprehensive cross-section of community perspectives.</i>
Inform Baseline Technical Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Workshops + Interviews + Documentation Review + Feedback Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Maintain detailed log of feedback received and how they inform parts of the technical work.</i> + <i>Use the feedback loop identified in the work plan (recurring meetings and Draft to Final review periods) where initial findings/developments are presented back to interest holders for further refinement.</i> + <i>Document changes in the project specifications based on interest holder input to trace how community feedback shapes the project.</i>
Track and Confirm Project Progress and Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Regular Update Meetings + Feedback Implementation Review (decision log) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + <i>Maintain detailed logs of decisions made throughout the project, including how and why interest holder feedback influenced these decisions.</i> + <i>Conducting periodic reviews with Project Team at key milestones to make sure deliverables align with the feedbacks gathered in round 1.</i>