



AGENDA ITEM

City of Lacombe

Connex Bus Replacement Capital Funding Request

August 8, 2019

BACKGROUND

The City of Lacombe has submitted a request for capital funding for the replacement of one of the City's Connex para-transit buses. Lacombe Connex provides transportation services in and around Lacombe. The service is owned by the City of Lacombe and operated by the Lacombe and District FCSS.

The service serves seniors and those with mobility issues and provides transportation for school, medical appointments, shopping and other purposes. Currently, Lacombe Connex's single trip service extends as far west as Gull Lake and as far east as Clive. Medical appointment transportation services have been provided to residents in Mirror, Alix and Bentley areas.

Lacombe Connex operates two paratransit buses and one paratransit van. The request from the City is for funding to replace its oldest bus which has been in service since 2011. The County most recently provided funding towards the replacement of the other Connex bus in 2017.

The City is seeking \$27,233 which is 30% of the net cost of the new bus (purchase price less trade in and private donations). The previous contribution provided by the County in 2017 was \$29,700 or 30% of the \$99,000 cost.

ANALYSIS

Lacombe Connex single trip service serves areas in the County albeit at a slightly higher per trip rate. Rates correspond to distance regardless of whether they are a city or rural user. All users pay the same for medical appointments (\$50 per round trip) or out of area trips (\$50 per hour). User fees in general are not sufficient to cover the operating costs of the service. The County provides an operating grant of \$4,000 towards the Connex bus system with the bulk of the operating deficit being covered by the City. Other bus services do exist in the County; however, this is the only service currently applying for funding.

Included in the information provided by the City is a summary of ridership for 2018. The bulk of trips are categorized as general with trips for Wolf Creek Schools, and dialysis rounding out the top 3. Trips from/to the County have been



separated from general ridership numbers and are a small portion of the overall ridership figures.

The City includes all of the units in its annual 10-year capital plan and has allocated specific funding toward their replacement. The City also relies on the trade in value and other smaller donations to fund the replacement of these units. The current request from the City is line with a similar request in 2017. The County approved funding for that request and used funding from the County's recreation capital assistance reserve. These requests are considered on a case by case basis as there is no policy covering paratransit services.

This is the last of the three units to be replaced over the past 4 years. The next replacement is not scheduled until 2024.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve the funding request up to \$27,233 and fund from the County's Recreation Capital Assistance Reserve.
2. Deny the request.
3. Approve an alternative level of support.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

This request is not in the 2019 County operating budget. Should Council support this request, funding would be supported from the County's Recreation Capital Assistance Reserve.

The projected year end balance of the reserve, including projects approved to date is \$3,441,966.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Section 3 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) states the purposes of a municipality are: 1) to provide good government, 2) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality, and 3) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.
2. Section 180(1) of the MGA states that Council may act only by resolution or bylaw.

3. Section 248(1)(a) of the MGA states that a municipality may only make an expenditure that is included in an operating budget, interim operating budget or capital budget unless otherwise authorized by Council.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The following elements of the County's Strategic Plan are relevant to this issue:

Our Vision: "An attractive, balanced and progressive community".

Our Mission: "To build a safe and vibrant community through leadership, innovation and the development of healthy relationships".

Key Principles: 1) "Fair and Objective in our decisions and in how we treat individuals", and 2) "Accountability for our decisions and for our actions".

Recreation Strategy: A. Pursue more recreational opportunities

Key Success Measures:

- Sustainability: "Current services are maintainable and provide benefits for the future, while minimizing negative impacts on the community",
- Stakeholder Satisfaction: "Healthy relationships with neighbouring municipalities, communities and our citizens."

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the following resolution:

That Lacombe County Council contribute up to \$27,233 toward the Lacombe Connex Bus Replacement Project, and

Furthermore, that this contribution be funded from the County's Recreation Capital Assistance Reserve.

PREPARED BY: Michael Minchin, Director of Corporate Services



REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager

