

## Question for the Premier

### Background

Transportation in rural Manitoba is challenging if you don't drive. Since 1989, the Mobility Disadvantaged Program (MDTP) has provided "Handi-transit" services for eligible mobility disadvantaged persons. As the population ages, demand continues to grow. In FY 2013/14, MDTP funded Handi-van programs served 157 rural and northern municipalities. From 2009 to 2013 (five years), rural Handi-vans travelled 8,046,993 kms. while taking 803,576 trips; assisting eligible riders to: work, pursue their education, participate in adult day care and recreational activities, attend medical appointments and pursue daily living activities such as banking, shopping, etc.

Rural Handi- van operational costs have steadily increased but the contribution formula has not increased since the program's inception 26 years ago. The province covers 37.5 % **to a maximum of \$20.0 for programs with one vehicle and \$30.0 for more than one vehicle.** There is also a regional incentive grant of up to \$15.0. **MDTP guidelines specify that the community is responsible for raising the remaining 62.5% of the gross operating expenses.** I was very pleased to read about increased funding to Winnipeg Transit to "help keep fares low" but *for just a moment imagine Winnipeg Handi-transit having to hold an annual bake sale, or ticket raffle to contribute to the community share.*

The requirement for ongoing community fundraising in municipalities with a declining economic base (due to lost industry) may not be sustainable. However these communities often have a significant population of older adults that wish to age in place.

MDTP guidelines also recommend that 25% of program costs be covered by user fees. The increasing cost differential is also being borne by riders, the majority of which are on a fixed income. A senior in Swan River can expect to pay \$600.00 for round trip transportation to a medical appointment in Winnipeg.

There is currently no federal, or provincial funding for replacement vehicles.

Ontario recently announced a Community Transportation Grant Program for communities without a transportation system. It is not just seniors who are isolated due to a lack of affordable transportation options.

**Is your party prepared to:**

- **Review the existing funding formula and legislation that supports the MDTP?**
- **Provide additional funding for the MDTP program?**
- **Work with rural communities to create a Community transportation option?**

Prepared by P. McConnell, Coordinator

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