

Alberta committed approximately \$400 million in urban transportation assistance to its cities between 1974 and 1984. The Alberta transportation department initiated a number of six-year programs in 1974, providing assistance to Alberta cities. Included were: research assistance totalling \$9.6 million for studies on public transportation, inter-urban transportation and demonstration projects, among others; public transit capital assistance totalling nearly \$97.56 million; deficit subsidies for operating public transit systems, expected to total approximately \$22 million over six years; and railway relocation study assistance funds, added in 1975, equal to 50% of the federal government's contributions to approved railway relocation study projects.

A new assistance program initiated in 1977 and expected to continue until 1984 is providing, as the initial input of funds, a minimum of \$160 million to assist Alberta cities in planning and constructing one major continuous roadway through each city. The first two projects under construction in Edmonton and Calgary, the first cities eligible, were scheduled to be completed by 1984.

Studies assisted by the research program include a major surface transportation noise attenuation study at a cost of over \$400,000 involving evaluations of social, psychological and technological effects and ways to reduce roadway noise. Another major project assisted was an in-service evaluation of articulated buses by the cities of Edmonton and Calgary. This project, the first of its kind in North America, was expected to cost in excess of \$300,000 over the two-year term of the tests. In all, some 30 projects, including most of Alberta's cities, were assisted.

British Columbia. The transit services division of the municipal affairs and housing ministry provides mobility for BC residents and a cost-effective and environmentally sound way of transporting people in larger urban areas, by providing bus and other transit services in conjunction with local governments, in areas not served by BC Hydro. It provides for future growth of travel in major metropolitan areas and aids in community development by planning and implementing various forms of advanced transit. These include the Burrard Inlet Ferries as well as proposed light rapid transit and commuter rail services. It aids in the development of government policy on public transportation by providing technical data and analysis on needs, ways of providing for needs and on general industry development.

The division emphasizes: the inter-relationship between transit and urban land use; use of an interdisciplinary team for administering transit service, including engineers, economists, town planners, management specialists, geographers and architects; and multi-modal approach to public transit, employing diesel buses, trolley buses, taxi services, light rapid transit, commuter rail and marine passenger services.

In 1977 the Burrard Inlet ferries began operation. This water-borne rapid transit system linked the Lonsdale corridor of North Vancouver with the downtown area of Vancouver. With vessels that resemble floating subway cars, it enabled people to make the 1.75 nautical mile crossing in 10 minutes, and used the first automated self-service fare system in Canada.

The Sea-Bus, with a capital cost of \$36.9 million, was designed to provide an alternative to new bridge expenditures for handling peak-hour traffic. It can move the increasing peak transit loads at a lower operating cost than buses. In addition, having a major transit hub in the Lonsdale Quay is expected to help revitalize the lower end of Lonsdale. Sea-Buses dock at the Granville waterfront station on the Vancouver side, a transport facility based around the Canadian Pacific Railway station. As part of its Sea-Bus program, the ministry helped refurbish this historic building and construct a pedestrian connection from the station to Granville Plaza and Granville Mall.

The Sea-Buses are fully co-ordinated with the bus service. Where the ferry offered a travel time advantage, bus services to downtown Vancouver were re-routed to the North Vancouver terminal, with an annual saving of \$1.6 million. Where buses had the advantage, they continued in use and some new bus routes were installed. A ridership target was a short term goal for evaluating the Sea-Buses' early performance: 7,500 patrons were expected for a typical weekday. In winter actual levels range from 8,000 to 10,000 and in summer 12,000 to 15,000, many of them tourists.