

A major thrust was taken to improve transportation for handicapped people in Regina, Saskatoon, Estevan, Yorkton, Swift Current, Prince Albert, Rosetown, Moose Jaw and Wynyard. The department pays 75% of the cost to buy special buses and 50% of the operating deficit. Operations are managed by local officials.

A telebus service in Regina offers door-to-door service within individual zones and door-to-connection with scheduled line service for trips between zones. Recently, the department was involved in a cost-share program with the federal government, the town of Battleford, and the city of North Battleford, to integrate a shared taxi system with a fixed bus line system. This two-year demonstration project could have far reaching implications for other smaller Saskatchewan centres. The shared taxi system is more flexible than a conventional bus system and more economical than only a shared taxi service. Special vehicles will also provide convenient services for handicapped people.

In 1978-79, a rural transit assistance program was established to allow small rural communities to plan and manage local transportation services to regional centres or to established bus routes. The program is aimed at communities with a population of 200 or more, but smaller communities will be eligible for service if they are on a proposed route. Three projects were operating in 1979 and 41 communities are eligible; 19 others with population under 200 are on proposed routes.

Two categories of public bus services operate in Saskatchewan. One is the scheduled bus service operated on a self-financing basis by major carriers. The other is scheduled service for small communities managed by local community officials and supported by the provincial government; financial support includes payment of the total deficit incurred by the operations. When the service reaches full extent, about 20,000 Saskatchewan residents will have public bus transportation for the first time.

Alberta. In 1974 Alberta announced an urban transportation assistance policy with \$400 million committed to cities for urban roadway and public transit research, planning and development over a six-year period. Programs included: research and development, transit capital assistance, transit operating deficit subsidies, arterial roadways capital assistance, major continuous roadway corridors and rail relocation studies.

Rapid economic growth in Alberta cities necessitated a review of the original program. In January 1979, the province announced a new program package with about \$750 million in urban transportation assistance committed to the cities for a six-year period which began in April 1979.

The 10-point program included: \$9 million for transit and roadway research and development projects, including demonstration projects; \$16 million for transportation system management projects intended to make full use of roadways; \$250 million in public transit capital assistance; \$207 million in arterial roadway capital assistance; \$150 million for the continued construction of one major continuous roadway corridor in each city; \$45 million for railway and highway separation structures; \$63 million on a per capita basis to the cities toward the operation of transportation services for senior citizens, disabled and handicapped persons; and \$12 million toward maintaining primary provincial highway routes in cities. Three short-term projects involve rail relocation, urban highway and street route signs, and the equitable distribution of federal urban transportation assistance to the province for rail relocation and railway and highway separation structures.

The basic objective of the new urban transportation assistance package is to improve the quality of life in the cities by reducing traffic problems. The programs are intended to facilitate and improve the provincial transportation system in the cities to service and interconnect with the provincial highway system. The level of assistance of the 10 programs is to be reviewed with the cities every two years to ensure that the programs meet the province's urban transportation objectives.

British Columbia. Administration of public transit services was reorganized in 1978-79 through the creation of the Urban Transit Authority, a Crown corporation, to ensure a uniform provincial policy for planning and funding urban transit programs. The authority provides financial, policy and planning direction, and assists local governments throughout the province through agreements covering provision of services. A financial agreement is made annually to cost-share these services with the local governments.