

# Community Transportation Dispatch

**The Challenge:** How might the Province develop a solution that allows community transportation operators to book and dispatch trips efficiently and effectively?



## Overview:

Community transportation provides rural Nova Scotians 250,000 rides each year and is an important enabler of the successful implementation of government strategies that include poverty reduction, accessibility legislation, cultural inclusion, and workforce strategy. In November 2020 OPIN was invited to design an approach that would meet the challenge and test a new way of co-designing and procuring solutions to complex government challenges. Partnering with Public Works and Procurement we engaged an inclusive range of users with selected vendors to design, test, and implement a dispatch and scheduling solution for NS Community Transportation Operators (CTOs). A successful solution must contribute to a reduced effort spent by CTOs on scheduling and route optimization, and an increase in transit productivity. Users identified seventeen critical success factors which used as core evaluation elements throughout the project.

## Approach:

### RFSQ (12 months)

Engaged subject experts and users to define and understand challenge and drafted procurement documents and collaboration agreements  
Followed procurement/co-design elements and timelines  
Evaluated short-list, ran Dialogue Day, selected successful vendors

### CO-DESIGN (4 months)

48 hours of project and vendor meetings  
Consistent project documents, schedule, discovery data files developed  
6 hours of vendor and stakeholder onboarding  
16 hours of vendor and stakeholder engagements  
16 hours of solution prototype evaluations  
Two solutions successfully co-designed

### PROCURE (4 months)

Choose procurement option, draft and post for successful vendors to bid  
Evaluate submissions. Select final solution

## Outcomes

- **Successful Solutions:** Two co-designed solutions tested and evaluated in real time with upfront issues addressed prior to procurement and implementation.
- **Multi-Sector Collaboration:** An inclusive, user designed and tested solutions that engaged partners from private sector, non-profits, networks, citizens, and three departments to work synchronistic with two different vendors.
- **Tested Process & Deliverables:** A new library of procurement and co-design documents, plans, evaluation and testing instructions and session designs for future project use and learning.
- **Innovation Partnerships:** A new RFSQ co-design process that was open, experimental, and pushed boundaries by merging rules of procurement and principles of design.

## Impact

- **Informed Decisions and Solution:** Pre-qualified vendors worked with users to create solution.
- **Inclusive Engagement:** Buy-in and active participation by diverse partners.
- **Transparent Approach:** All co-design elements openly shared and communicated.
- **Trust and Confidence:** Consistent experience of province's commitment and expertise.
- **Mindset Shifts:** Stakeholders owning new ideas, processes, technologies and change.
- **Strengthened Relationships:** Common ground and goals realized and valued.
- **Long-Term Strategic Value:** Responsive to our communities' current and future needs.

## Partnership

The Community Transportation Dispatch Project was led by the Outpost for Public Sector Innovation in partnership with Procurement. Together, we developed a new approach that integrated systemic design with procurement to co-create solutions with the client, stakeholders, and vendors to solve a decade-long problem that will support the growth of community transportation into the future.

The client, Public Works, had this to say about the impact of the project:  
"This approach showed us a realm of new possibilities. End-users were engaged in a very new way that contributed to their comfort and buy-in. The approach allowed for many different hands to get involved, while allowing the vendors to see the range of unique operational needs we have across Nova Scotia."