



## News Release – For Immediate Release Monday, March 25, 2019

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### Council Receives Update on County Connector Service

The end of February marked three months of operations for Phase One of the Rural Transportation Pilot Program.

Phase One started December 5 and includes the Clairmont and Sexsmith routes. The second phase, which began service February 4, travels to Hythe, Beaverlodge and Wembley. Initial ridership statistics indicate that community members have utilized both phases of the County Connector.

“So far we’ve received vocal support for the project along with valuable feedback from community members,” says Kathleen Turner, Family Community Support Services (FCSS) Director. “Although we have some consistent ridership, it’s too early to make any assumptions about the overall success of the two-year pilot project.”

Phase One of the County Connector, which launched December 5, provides services between Clairmont in the County of Grande Prairie, the Town of Sexsmith and City of Grande Prairie. Ridership from Clairmont has steadily increased, starting at 55 riders in December increasing to 103 in January and 129 in February. Ridership from Sexsmith started at 22 riders in December jumping to 61 in January and 48 in February.

Phase Two of the service launched February 4 and travels between Beaverlodge, Wembley and the City of Grande Prairie on Monday and Friday. On Wednesday the service extends to include Hythe. The first month of service for the second phase saw eight riders boarding in Hythe, 19 riders in Beaverlodge and 17 riders in Wembley.

The increase in riders of the public transit service has been steady. During the presentation, it was noted that other municipalities have reported that building ridership for a new transit system can take time.

The County, with support from the partnering municipalities, will be surveying riders and potential riders of the County Connector this summer for a better understanding of ridership patterns and potential enhancements to the service. In the meantime, feedback about the pilot project is encouraged and can be sent to County FCSS at [fcss@countygp.ab.ca](mailto:fcss@countygp.ab.ca) or 780-532-9727.

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