

Appendix A- Background of the On Demand Pilot

In June 2018, the City was approached by Innovation Saskatchewan regarding an innovation challenge to help solve a municipal problem for both Regina and Saskatoon. The problem statement and challenge were:

Alternative transit seekers in Regina and Saskatoon need a better way to meet their local transportation needs without necessarily driving a vehicle. They are deterred from using a vehicle for financial and/or environmental reasons. Unfortunately, today they perceive non-driving modes of transportation as unreliable and inconsistent, while they specifically lack trust in public transportation because they are on a tight schedule and the bus often is not. They are further frustrated by not being able to accurately track the bus to confirm its arrival time and its inability to access certain locations they need to go. They are often left driving themselves, carpooling, or reluctantly, using public transportation. Is there a technology solution that can help solve these challenges?

This challenge was posted for start-up technology companies from across Canada to come forward with proposed solutions. Through shortlisting and rigorous interview processes, both the City of Saskatoon and the City of Regina, as well as one representative from Economic Development Regina (EDR), declared Pantonium as the company most able to deliver a solution to the above described challenge as a provider of public transit software for on demand transit services.

Pantonium offers automated, optimized dispatching in real-time. The platform collects trip requests from riders via mobile applications, online and phone calls, then automatically schedules and routes those trips via a fully autonomous cloud-based system. The application allows additional service levels in low-demand areas, off-hour applications, on demand services and overall optimized trips. The software also optimizes fleet and dispatch functions by using algorithms and artificial intelligence.

The On Demand pilot started on August 31, 2020 in place of the Route 10 RCMP/Normanview route, running from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Monday through Saturday. This route was selected as it has the lowest ridership of evening routes. Instead of waiting for a bus that will come once every 60 minutes, customers have the ability to book a trip where a bus picks up the customer at a bus stop in the service area and takes them to any other bus stop in the service area. The service area for On Demand can be found in Appendix A. The area of the service was expanded in October as the program was able to efficiently accommodate all trips with capacity to provide more trip locations. A customer can book a trip in one of three ways:

- Phone a service agent to book a trip for the customer;
- Visit the website to book a trip online;
- Use the mobile app to book a trip.

The method of booking a trip is ultimately in the customer's in control for when they chose to take the bus, rather than relying on a schedule where the bus would come by once every 60 minutes.