

Public Need Indicators & Sound Economic Conditions Factors

Who is this Reference Sheet for?

This reference sheet is written for applicants who are applying for:

- a new or amended Passenger Directed Vehicle Authorization licence;
- a new Inter-City Bus Authorization through the regular process.
- an amended Inter-City Bus Authorization licence to add routes or route points.

It is not for applicants applying for a: licence transfer; Transportation Network Service Authorization; an Inter-city Bus Authorization through the simplified process; or inter-city bus route or route point eliminations or reductions.

A. Introduction

In deciding whether or not to approve an application the Board must be satisfied that there is a public need for the service an applicant is proposing to provide and that approval of the application will promote sound economic conditions in the passenger transportation business in B.C.

A. Public Need

The Board expects applicants to include factual and objective public need indicators in their application packages. The Board also expects applicants to analyze these indicators to explain how they show public need for their proposed service. Applicants should compile public need information and include it in their application. The Board generally does not accept unsolicited information from potential supporters of an application.

Examples of public need indicators are listed below. This list is not exhaustive and applicants may include other information that they consider shows public need.

Examples of Public Need Indicators

- **User Support Statements** These are documents such as letters or e-mails written by people who would either use the new transportation service themselves or who would refer the service to others or book the service for passengers. User support statements should have the following:
 - why, when and how often the writer needs the proposed service in the area or areas you want to serve;
 - whether the writer uses any other similar services now and, if so, how often and how long do they wait for a vehicle;
 - why the writer would use a new service instead of those that are available; and
 - the writer's name, signature and contact information.

Note: You must tell people who give you support statements that their letters or e-mails may be treated as a public document as part of the Passenger Transportation Board's licence application process.

- **Signed Contracts** or agreements to enter into a contract to provide a transportation service
- **Information about other similar services** in your proposed area. The Board will want factual evidence about other services, not your opinion or rumors you have heard.
- **Operational Data** Taxis applying for more vehicles must provide operational data as outlined in Reference Sheet 16 and its taxi data spreadsheets. Other applicants applying for more vehicles should also include historical operational data that shows operational trends, such as vehicle use or bookings. Data submitted should be summarized and explained. Reams of information, such as monthly bookings may not be helpful. The Board has produced two optional limousine data spreadsheets that outlines the type of information for which the board is looking.

The Board requires operational data from licensees with a Passenger Directed Vehicle Authorization or a Transportation Network Services Authorization. Data must be provided at regular intervals. As this information becomes widely available in communities or regions, the Board will use it in making decisions on public need.

- **Information on Population Trends, Community Plans and the Economy** You should explain how this information shows a need for more taxi service. The Board may consider population statistics when reviewing public need. However, the Board does not usually rely on “taxi to population” ratios to determine need as other factors may affect need for a new service. Such factors include the size of an area, public transportation options, existence of transportation hubs and vehicle usage.

You must include the source, including URLs, and date of any references or statistics you put in your application. You should include the most up-to-date information available.

- **Surveys** The focus of the survey should be on public need (as opposed to preference) for your services. The Board is also interested in why, when and how often respondents use the type of service for which you are applying. The Board will want to know that the survey is valid and reliable. You should tell the Board:
 - how the survey was developed,
 - who conducted the survey, and
 - when, where and how the survey was conducted.

You should also provide a summary of the survey results.

- **Social Media** This evidence must be meaningful and capable of being tested and verified. Quantity does not necessarily equate to relevancy or reliability. Its inclusion must meet the requirements set out in the Board’s Operational Policy II.5 (Social Media).
- **Other Material** You may have other information, such as petitions or form letters, that you think demonstrates public need for your service. However, the Board may not give as much consideration or weight to petitions and form letters as it does to information from individuals who give specific information about their use of the type of service for which you are applying.
- **Information from Local Governments or Community Organizations** The Board may receive information on transportation services from first nation councils/nations, town council, tourist boards or other community organizations. The Board may consider this information as part of the application materials, especially if it is detailed information. The Board would share any negative information with you and give you a chance to respond.

Engaged Carriers

If a person is applying to be an engaged carrier to a licensee with an inter-city bus authorization or passenger directed vehicle authorization, then the Board may accept a letter from the licensee who wants to engage the applicant as evidence of public need.

B. Sound Economic Conditions Factors

In deciding an application, the Board must consider whether approval would promote sound economic conditions in the transportation business in BC. The Board strives to balance public need for available, accessible and reliable commercial passenger transportation services with overall industry viability and competitiveness. The Board considers this issue from a wide-ranging perspective, which includes consideration of harm to other industry participants. It is the Board's view that, generally, speaking, the economic interests of the transportation business overall weigh more heavily than the economic and financial interests of any applicant or submitter.

Your application should show that you understand the transportation services in your area. You need to show the Board that your competitors are not meeting the needs of the community. Or that the existing market has grown and is able to absorb more services. This must be done with factual information. Some of the information collected for public need may be relevant. Information on competing services is available on the Board [operators webpage](#). The Board may refer to this information when reviewing your application.

Some factors that the Board may look at in considering whether adding a new service, vehicles or inter-city bus would promote sound economic conditions in the passenger transportation industry are:

- Decreases in other transportation services (e.g. a company has gone out of business or is not using all of its vehicles);
- A new service would add value to public (e.g. accessible or eco-friendly vehicles; enhanced bus routes);
- The market is able to absorb more competition;
- Other operators are not responding to current market needs; and
- Impact on traffic congestion.

Reference Sheet 20: Public Need Indicators & Sound Economic Conditions Factors

- In determining public need and sound economic conditions, the Board may also consider any records, information and reports that it considers relevant to an application, including records, information and reports it obtains or obtained or produces¹.

¹ Applicants will be able to see and comment on information that the Board uses or produces.