

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA LINKING NIAGARA TRANSIT COMMITTEE AGENDA

LNTC 1-2021 Wednesday, March 31, 2021 2:00 p.m.

Meeting will be held by electronic participation only

Due to efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 and to protect all individuals, the Council Chamber at Regional Headquarters will not be open to the public to attend Committee meetings until further notice. To view live stream meeting proceedings, visit: niagararegion.ca/government/council

Pages

- 1. CALL TO ORDER
- 2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST
- 3. SELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR
 - 3.1. Call for Nominations for Committee Chair
 - 3.2. Motion to Close Nominations for Committee Chair
 - 3.3. Voting for the Position of Committee Chair
 - 3.4. Call for Nominations for Committee Vice-Chair
 - 3.5. Motion to Close Nominations for Committee Vice-Chair
 - 3.6. Voting for the Position of Committee Vice-Chair
- 4. PRESENTATIONS
- 5. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>
- 6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

7.1. LNTC-C 1-2021 1 - 25

Niagara Transit Governance – Detailed Phase 1 Consultation Summary

A presentation will precede discussion of this item.

7.2. LNTC 4-2020 26 - 29

Linking Niagara Transit Committee Meeting Minutes - November 25, 2020

8. OTHER BUSINESS

9. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

If you require any accommodations for a disability in order to attend or participate in meetings or events, please contact the Accessibility Advisor at 905-980-6000 ext. 3252 (office), 289-929-8376 (cellphone) or accessibility@niagararegion.ca (email).

Niagara Transit Governance

Phase 1 Consultation Results and Recommended Next Steps

Linking Niagara Transit Committee

March 31, 2021

Scott Fraser, Transportation Lead – GO Implementation Office



Niagara Transit Governance

Phase 1 Consultation Results and Recommended Next Steps
Linking Niagara Transit Committee

March 31, 2021





Overview















Phase 1 Roadshow Themes

Phase 1 Roadshow completed Jan. – early Mar.

- LNTC directed roadshow to be complete by Feb
 28
- Engagement focused on consultation and receiving feedback
- Covering LAM staff reports proved very valuable
- Clear themes and areas for improvement emerged









Themes – Financial Strategy

Proposed Model

Single Regional Tax Levy

Transfer of Transition, Local, and Regional Costs

Shared Access to Existing Transit Assets via Cummings Principle Redistribution based on Property Assessment

Municipal Levy Eliminated in 5 years

Feedback

- Need to propose alternatives to a levy based on property value assessment
- Municipalities need demonstrated value for added investment
- Funding should be tied to services residents can expect to receive
- Additional detail required on service expansion costs
- Consider future impacts of move to a single regional fare
- A desire for ability to "top up" or add extra or enhanced services





Themes – Board Composition

Proposed Model



5 Political Members

- 1 Niagara Falls
- 1 St. Catharines
- 1 Welland
- 2 Other Niagara LAMs



4 Public Members

Feedback

- Request for the formation of a 'Municipal Transit Transition Group'
- Consideration should be given to representation by geographical area such as 'Niagara West' or 'Niagara South'
- Requests for full-time or permanent representation
- Representation should be proportional to ridership, population, or assets being transferred
- Municipalities are being asked to contribute financially without consistent representation





Themes – Service Planning



Feedback

- Request for a detailed service plan including existing scope of service, future service, service growth, and link to ridership growth.
- Current municipal transit expansion plans and priorities should be reflected
- Baseline minimum service level commitment should be indefinite, rather than for 5 years.
- A year other than 2021 should be selected as the baseline given COVID impacts.
- That service levels in individual municipalities be maintained





Themes – Additional Feedback

Capital Asset Transfer

- Application of Cummings Principle
- Municipal Transfer Agreements
- Facilities currently shared with other municipal operations

Niagara Region Transit On-Demand

- Future of the Pilot Program
- Role of On-Demand model in Consolidation

Complementary Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development Strategies
- Anticipated environmental/social benefits
- Transportation Master Plans

Human Resources and Labour Relations

 Consideration and costs of union negotiations should be incorporated

*Welland feedback still pending – anticipated April 2021





Governance Steering Committee





Governance Steering Committee

Identified Need

- Phase 1 roadshow completed review input received and chart the process forward
- A number of strategic decisions are required to guide the work to triple-majority
- Additional resources required to support deliverables
- Broaden/enhance collaboration and engagement to ensure success



Proposed Approach

- Creation of a expanded Governance Steering Committee (GSC) to provide executive leadership in each municipality
- The GSC would expand the existing CAO Working Group to include all CAOs + additional members and viewpoints
- Core mandate would be addressing and resolving major themes for success in achieving triple-majority
- A series of CAO-led workshops would review feedback received and propose solutions that have broad support across Niagara





Governance Steering Committee



Governance Steering Committee

Workshop Series



Financial Strategy











Terms of Reference Governance Steering Committee

Mandate

Working under the direction of the LNTC, the Governance Steering Committee (GSC) will have overall executive-level responsibility for advancing the workplan to and subsequently securing the triplemajority vote required for transit consolidation in Niagara.

Deliverables

- Recommend a revised financial model best suited to meeting the Guiding Principles and incorporating Phase 1 consultation feedback
- Develop a broad service plan vision to guide future expansion
- Develop a revised model for the composition of the Commission's Board based on a formula or rationale and incorporating Phase 1 feedback
- Develop and guide execution of stakeholder, political and public engagement strategies

Membership

Chair: LAM CAO

- All Niagara CAOs
- NR Treasurer
- Director GO Implementation

Consultation

- Mayors
- ITNC Chair







Workshop 1 Financial Strategy

- Develop and evaluate a series of alternative financial models
- Recommend a revised financial model best suited to meeting the Guiding Principles and is reflective of Phase 1 consultation feedback

Optional Attendees: Area Treasurers

Workshop 2 Board Composition

 Develop a revised model for the composition of the Commission's Board based on leading practice, formula or rationale that addresses Phase 1 consultation feedback

Additional Attendees: Governance SME







Workshop 3 Operations and Service Planning

- Develop a broad service plan vision for the new transit commission, incorporating:
 - Existing LAM transit expansion plans
 - Emerging service delivery models such as ondemand transit
 - Framework for standardization of service levels
 - Harmonization of accessible and conventional services
 - Integration with existing + future GO service
 - Aspirational growth opportunities (i.e. from Dillon Report / NTGS)

Optional Attendees: LAM Transit Managers

Workshop 4 Communications and Engagement

- Develop a broad external stakeholder and public engagement strategy that identifies who, when and how engagement occurs
- Develop and guide executive and political level Media Relations Strategy
- Determine timing for Triple Majority

Optional Attendees: Communications SMEs

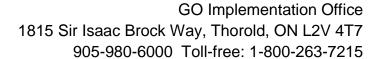




Discussion









MEMORANDUM

LNTC-C 1-2021

Subject: Niagara Transit Governance – Detailed Phase 1 Consultation Summary

Date: March 31, 2021

To: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

From: Scott Fraser, P.Eng., Transportation Lead - GO Implementation Office

In October 2020 the Linking Niagara Transit Committee (LNTC) considered *LNTC-C 4-2020 – Niagara Transit Governance Study*, adopting recommendations in support of the Full Commission as the preferred governance model, and requested the 12 local area municipalities (LAMs) consider the presented governance and financial models and provide feedback prior to February 28, 2021.

The purpose of this memorandum is to detail the feedback received from the LAMs throughout this consultation phase. Presentations were made to each Council by the Project Team, supported by the Study consultants through Q1 2021; with formal feedback received from 11 municipalities to date. Following the Project Team presentation to its Council February 9, feedback from the City of Welland is anticipated to be provided in April 2021 and once received, will be incorporated to the process and reported back to the next LNTC upon receipt under separate memo.

As detailed in the parallel presentation, a series of clear themes emerged from the consultation focused on financial strategy, board composition, and future service levels.

This feedback will be used by the expanded Transit Governance Steering Committee as a primary input to the development of revised financial and governance models as well as additional supporting deliverables in advance of a future triple-majority approval.

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

Scott Fraser, P.Eng.

Transportation Lead | GO Implementation Office

Appendix 1 Niagara Transit Governance – Detailed Phase 1 Consultation Summary

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received
Fort Erie	Council adopted staff recommendations from <u>IS-04-2021</u> , providing support-in-principle for the Commission, requesting Niagara Region further refine the governance and financial models in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report and in advance of the initiation of the triple-majority process in Q2 2021.
	Primary areas of feedback included the need for an alternative funding model to a levy based on property value assessment, a request for a permanent representative from Fort Erie on the Commission board, and that existing service levels be maintained indefinitely. Additional specific concerns identified in the staff report include the need to update financial baseline reporting to 2021, sources of transition cost funding, impact of COVID-19, and treatment of reserves.
	Discussion at Council referenced how peer jurisdictions have approached financing their transit systems, what a "go it alone" approach for Fort Erie may look like, the opportunity to work with senior levels of government, and the need for the Region to better analyze what municipalities are willing to support.
Grimsby	Council adopted staff recommendations from CAO 21-03, providing support-in-principle for the Commission, taking into account that Niagara Region will commit to and address; a. That Grimsby's current service levels are maintained and improved upon; and b. That the proposed financial model be amended to address concerns presented by the Town of Grimsby; and c. That Region Council consider geographical areas, such as Niagara West, when selecting two (2) additional Councillors for the Full Commission
	Consistent with the feedback provided by the recommendations adopted, discussion at Council centred on the ongoing NRT On-Demand pilot program and future opportunities for transit services in Grimsby, including integration with the GO network, and the need to consider alternatives to the property assessment based financial strategy.

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received	
Lincoln	Council adopted staff recommendations from AD-02-21, providing support-in-principle for the Commission, taking into account that Niagara Region will commit to and address; a. That the Town of Lincoln service levels are maintained and improved upon; b. That the proposed financial model be amended to address concerns presented by the Town of Lincoln; and c. That Regional Council consider geographical areas, such as Niagara West, when selecting two additional Councillors for the Full Commission. In addition to the primary areas of feedback identified in the adopted recommendations, discussion at Council also included how transit would support future growth in Lincoln, the ongoing NRT On-Demand Pilot, and the anticipated timing of return to pre-COVID-19 transit ridership levels.	
Niagara Falls	Council jointly considered the presentation from Region staff and the Niagara Falls staff report CAO-2021-01 , supporting a motion to a endorse, in principle, the Full Commission as the recommended governance model for the consolidation of Niagara's public transit system and to further consider the option of offering free or reduced fares for seniors as part of [the] transition process. Feedback was also received regarding the need to reconsider 2021 as the baseline year for operational service levels, given ridership impacts from COVID-19.	

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received	
Niagara-on-	Council adopted staff recommendations from CAO-21-002, providing support-in-principle for the	
the-Lake	Commission, taking into account that Niagara Region will commit to:	
	 maintaining and improving upon the current service levels provided to the Town of Niagara-on- the-Lake; 	
	 amending the proposed financial model to address concerns identified by the Town of Niagara-on- the-Lake; 	
	 considering geographical areas when selecting two (2) additional Councillors for the Full Commission. 	
	Further feedback centred on the critical role transit plays in supporting economic development and tourism in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the appropriate point in time for potential integration of WEGO with the	
	Commission, and the role of the Cummings Principle in asset transfer.	

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received	
Pelham	Council considered staff report 202-0044-Recreation, and adopted a revised resolution, with the following items pertaining to the NTGS: • BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report #2021-0044, Considerations for Service Provision Arising from Region of Niagara's Transit Governance Report, for information. • BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council for the Town of Pelham does not support the full Transit Commission Model as presented by the Region of Niagara in Report LNTC-C-04/2020 as the Town of Pelham will not be sufficiently represented on the Commission Board as it pertains to governance of the Commission, and that the Region of Niagara be so advised. • BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional levy as proposed, based on MPAC assessment which does not take into consideration population size or ridership, and that an approximately 500% increase to the Town of Pelham is not acceptable, and is not supported by the Council for the Town of Pelham. • BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council for the Town of Pelham directs Town staff to enter into negotiations with Regional Niagara staff as it pertains to the level of service, including but not limited to the response time for required service. Council further directed Town staff to undertake negotiations with the Region pertaining to the extension of the ongoing NRT On-Demand pilot and to provide a future update to Council. Consistent with the feedback provided via the revised resolution, discussion at Pelham Council focused primarily on the property assessment-based financial model and the proposed composition of the Commission Board; with additional discussion on the anticipated timing of return to pre-COVID-19 transit ridership levels and alternative micro-transit service delivery models such as those used in Calgary and Innisfil.	

Feedback Received
Council adopted staff recommendations from report 2021-39, providing support-in-principle for the Commission, taking into account that Niagara Region will commit to and address: a. That the City of Port Colborne service levels set out in the report Transit Enhancement Opportunity (Report 2021-15) dated January 11, 2021 are maintained and improved upon; b. That the proposed financial model be amended to address concerns presented by the City of Port Colborne; and c. That Regional Council consider geographical areas, such as Niagara South, when selecting two additional Councillors for the Full Commission. The aspirational role of transit in the future growth of Port Colborne was discussed, including the enhanced ability for residents to facilitate working-from-home and commuting arrangements the GTA via the GO network. A request was made to further examine the option for municipalities to purchase enhanced transit services as part of the revised financial model.

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received
St. Catharines	Council considered staff report <u>CAO-007-2021</u> and adopted amended recommendations, providing support-in-principle for the Commission, and further:
	 Thatstaff [forward the] report, including comments detailed by the St. Catharines Transit Commission in Appendix 3, to the Region and requests the additional information identified in [the] report be received prior to the approval of a new Intermunicipal Transit System and operating model;
	 [Requesting] the formation of a Municipal Transit Transition Group that includes the CAOs of St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Niagara Region and Welland, the St. Catharines Transit General Manager and any other transit staff or senior staff members required in order to develop draft Municipal Transfer Agreements that include (but are not limited to) the following: Rider fare structure
	 Service plan detail including improvement guarantees Asset transfer agreements
	 Growth forecasting model, including expansion costs and revenue opportunities; and That prior totriple majority and receiving a complete package of information of the impact of the proposal, that Engage STC be utilized to receive public feedback.
	Areas of feedback identified through the staff report, commentary provided by the St. Catharines Transit Commission via Appendix 3, and discussion at Council included:
	 need for additional detail in areas such as financial strategy and service plan prior to future decision points;
	 proposed composition of the Board and concern that St. Catharines would be underrepresented; transfer of 2012 First Street Louth facility (current SCTC garage) and a request that it revert to the City should it not be used for transit purposes in the future;
	 additional information regarding the financial strategy, including service enhancement costs, facility expansion costs, investment levels required to achieve aspirational growth targets, and revenue impacts arising from a single regional fare;
	 a service plan detailing existing future service expansion, including integration with the forthcoming St. Catharines Transportation Master Plan update;

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received
St. Catharines (Cont'd)	 anticipated timing of return to pre-COVID-19 transit ridership levels and applicability of provincial Safe Restart funding; required consolidation of Union labour agreements; need to consider an alternative to 2021 as the baseline year for operational service levels, given ridership impacts from COVID-19; and alternative governance structures to the presented Commission model.
Thorold	Council adopted staff recommendations from report PWCS2021-13 , providing support-in-principle for the Commission, with final approval subject to the satisfactory resolution of the following conditions: a) Clarification of the City's required contribution during transition and beyond; and b) Confirmation that the Service Plan will maintain existing service and include service expansion to the high growth areas of the community as identified in the Thorold Transportation Master Plan (June 2020).
	Consistent with the recommendations adopted by Council, discussion primarily focused on the future service models that would best benefit Thorold, including consideration of the Rolling Meadows development and the potential expansion of on-demand services to historically under- or un-served areas such as Allanburg and Port Robinson. Council further discussed the process for engagement with Brock University and associated financial contributions.
Wainfleet	Council considered, but did not support, Resolution No. C-2021-014, derived from the motion contained in Appendix 1 to LNTC-C 4-2020. Discussion at Council centred on the proposed assessment-based financial model and it's significant impact on the residents of Wainfleet, and the future role of (and need for) transit in rural municipalities such as Wainfleet through enhancement of on-demand services such as the NRT On-Demand pilot.

Jurisdiction	Feedback Received
Welland	Council received the presentation from the Project Team Feb. 9. Feedback from the City of Welland by way of report is anticipated to be received in April 2021.
West Lincoln	Council considered, but did not support, the motion contained in Appendix 1 to LNTC-C 4-2020.
	A series of concerns and a record of questions raised by Council were included in the <u>official minutes</u> from the January, 25, 2021 meeting. These topics included the impacts to West Lincoln residents arising from the proposed assessment-based financial model, the limited time transit has been provided in West Lincoln (via the NRT On-Demand pilot), and making decisions with impacts beyond the current term of Council.
Niagara Region	Subsequent to the endorsement-in-principle for a Full Commission provided through LNTC-C 4-2020, Regional Council further adopted staff recommendations from PW 9-2021: 1. That the assessment of expected impacts to Regional services arising from the consolidation of transit services in Niagara BE RECEIVED; and
	2. That staff BE DIRECTED to consider and incorporate these impacts as part of the updated transition plan to be returned in a final report to Regional Council for triple-majority consideration of transit consolidation.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA LINKING NIAGARA TRANSIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

LNTC 4-2020

Wednesday, November 25, 2020 Council Chamber/Video Conference Regional Headquarters, Campbell West 1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

Committee Members Chamber:

M. Siscoe (Municipal Councillor - St. Catharines) (Committee Present in the Council Chair), M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office

Committee Members Present via Video Conference:

Campion (Mayor - Welland), Redekop (Mayor - Fort Erie), Sendzik (Mayor - St. Catharines), Fertich (Regional Councillor), Ip (Regional Councillor), G. Miller (Municipal Councillor - St. Catharines), L. Van Vliet (Municipal Councillor - Welland) (Committee Vice-Chair), S. Chemnitz, Chief Administrative Officer (St. Catharines), K. Todd, Chief Administrative Officer (City of Niagara Falls), S. Zorbas, Interim Chief Administrative Officer (City of Welland)

Absent/Regrets:

C. Dabrowski (Municipal Councillor - Niagara Falls), R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer (Niagara Region)

Staff Present in the Council Chamber:

S. Fraser, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office, S. Guglielmi, Technology Support Analyst, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, H. Talbot, Financial & Special Projects Consultant

Staff Present via Video Conference: M. Evely, Legislative Coordinator, R. Salewytsch, Transit Service Planning Coordinator, L. Tracey, Project Coordinator, GO Implementation, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

Others Present via Video Conference: M. Gilbert, Amalgamated Transit Union, E. Gillespie, Left Turn Right Turn, Y. Grinspun, Left Turn Right Turn, S. Kosh, Niagara College, M. Lattavo, Left Turn Right Turn, V. Malvaso, Niagara College, B. McIlhone, Optimus SBR, G. Morrison, St. Catharines Transit, T. Price, Niagara College, R. Rehan, Brock University Student Union, D. Stuart, Niagara Falls Transit.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair M. Siscoe called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

2. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>

There were no delegations.

5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>

5.1 <u>LNTC-C 7-2020</u>

2021 Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group – Linking Niagara Transit Committee Workplan

Moved by Councillor Fertich Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That Correspondence Item LNTC-C 7-2020, being a memorandum from M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office, dated November 25, 2020, respecting 2021 Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group – Linking Niagara Transit Committee Workplan, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

 That the Linking Niagara Transit Committee ENDORSE the Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group's 2021 workplan as outlined in Report LNTC-C 7-2020.

Carried

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

6.1 <u>LNTC-C 6-2020</u>

Councillor Information Request: Niagara Transit Governance Study - Local Area Municipality Engagement

Moved by G. Miller Seconded by L. Van Vliet

That Correspondence Item LNTC-C 6-2020, being a memorandum from S. Fraser, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office, dated November 25, 2020, respecting Councillor Information Request: Niagara Transit Governance Study – Local Area Municipality Engagement, **BE RECEIVED** and **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

The following friendly **amendment** was accepted by the Committee Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion:

That Correspondence Item LNTC-C 6-2020, being a memorandum from S. Fraser, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office, dated November 25, 2020, respecting Councillor Information Request: Niagara Transit Governance Study – Local Area Municipality Engagement, **BE RECEIVED** and **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities; and

That staff BE DIRECTED to reach out to the local area municipalities to arrange to present to their Council when the Niagara Transit Governance Study is being considered.

The Committee Chair called the vote on the motion, as amended, and declared it,

Carried

6.2 <u>LNTC-C 8-2020</u>

Councillor Information Request: Niagara Transit Governance Study – Local Area Municipality Presentation

Moved by Councillor Sendzik Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That Correspondence Item LNTC-C 8-2020, being a memorandum from S. Fraser, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office, dated November 25, 2020, respecting Councillor Information Request: Niagara Transit Governance Study – Local Area Municipality Presentation, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

6.3 <u>LNTC 3-2020</u>

Linking Niagara Transit Committee Minutes - October 21, 2020

Moved by Councillor G. Miller Seconded by Councillor Campion

That Report LNTC 3-2020, being the minutes of the Linking Niagara Transit Committee meeting held on October 21, 2020, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

Linking Niagara Transit Committee Open Session Minutes LNTC 4-2020 November 25, 2020 Page 4

7. OTHER	BUSINESS
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There were no items of other business.

8. <u>NEXT MEETING</u>

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.

Mat Siscoe	Mark Evely
Committee Chair	Legislative Coordinator
Ann-Marie Norio	
Regional Clerk	