

**NIAGARA TRANSIT COMMISSION
AGENDA**

NTC 2-2022

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

3:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

To view live stream meeting proceedings, visit: niagararegion.ca/government/council

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT</u>	
3. <u>ADOPTION OF AGENDA</u>	
4. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
5. <u>ADOPTION OF MINUTES</u>	
5.1. <u>Niagara Transit Commission Minutes NTC 1-2022</u>	1 - 9
Tuesday, June 28, 2022	
6. <u>CLOSED SESSION</u>	
6.1. <u>Niagara Transit Commission - Closed Session Minutes</u>	
Closed Session Minutes NTC 1-2022, Tuesday, June 28, 2022	
6.2. <u>NTC 9-2022</u>	
A Matter respecting Personal Matters about Identifiable Individuals pursuant to s.239(2)(b) of the Municipal Act, and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report - Expressions of Interest - Niagara Transit Commission General Manager	
7. <u>BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION</u>	

8. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

8.1. NTC 7-2022 10 - 20
Harmonization of Transit Fares

8.2. NTC 8-2022 21 - 26
Onboard Technologies and Equipment Standardization

9. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

12. 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 COMMISSION
MINUTES**

NTC 1-2022

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Council Chamber/Video Conference

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

Board Members: N. Arsenault (Niagara-on-the-Lake), D. Cridland (Wainfleet), W. Fertich (Vice Chair)(Grimsby), Greenwood (Niagara Falls), G. Miller (St. Catharines), Olson (Pelham), Councillor Pachereva, W. Redekop (Fort Erie), W. Reilly (West Lincoln), W. Sendzik (Chair) (St. Catharines), M. Siscoe (St. Catharines), L. Van Vliet (Welland), T. Whalen (Thorold)

Board Members Present via Video Conference: C. Dabrowski (Niagara Falls), A. Desmarais (Port Colborne)

Ex-officio(Non-Voting) Members: J. Bradley (Regional Chair), R. Tripp (Chief Administrative Officer, Niagara Region)

Staff: S. Fraser, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services (via Video Conference), T. Harrison, Commissioner, Corporate Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office, H. Talbot, Financial & Special Projects Consultant, L. Tracey, Project Coordinator, GO Implementation Office

Others Present: M.E. Bench, Dentons LLP, External Legal Counsel (via Video Conference), J. Hagar, Human Resources Consultant, Transit, O. Poloni, KPMG, LLP (via Video Conference)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

The Regional Clerk advised the Commission that Section 5.8 of the Niagara Transit Commission By-law and the Municipal Act required the Board to adopt a procedural by-law to govern its proceedings and that it was necessary for the Board to pass a resolution to adopt the Region's Procedural By-law to govern its proceedings at this meeting. Therefore it was:

Moved by W. Sendzik
Seconded by B. Greenwood

That the Niagara Transit Commission **ADOPT** the Niagara Region's Procedural By-law to govern the proceedings of this meeting.

Carried

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

Regional Chair Bradley provided the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. SELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Regional Clerk advised that in accordance with By-law 2022-38, being a by-law to establish the Niagara Transit Commission as a Municipal Services Board, the term for the Board Chair and Vice Chair would be until the members' term on municipal or regional council ends or until January 23, 2023 whichever is first.

4.1 Call for Nominations for Board Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, called for nominations for the position of Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission.

Moved by W. Redekop
Seconded by W. Fertich

That Walter Sendzik **BE NOMINATED** as Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission.

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, called a second and third time for nominations for the position of Niagara Transit Commission Chair.

There being no further nominations it was:

Moved by M. Siscoe
Seconded by T. Whalen

That nominations for the position of Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission, **BE CLOSED**.

Carried

4.2 Voting for Board Chair

There being only one nominee for the position, the Regional Clerk announced that Walter Sendzik would be the Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission.

4.3 Call for Nominations for Board Vice Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission.

Moved by T. Whalen
Seconded by W. Sendzik

That Wayne Fertich **BE NOMINATED** as Vice Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission.

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, called a second and third time for nominations for the position of Niagara Transit Commission Vice Chair.

There being no further nominations it was:

Moved by W. Sendzik
Seconded by N. Arsenault

That nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission, **BE CLOSED**.

Carried

4.4 Voting for Board Vice Chair

There being only one nominee for the position, the Regional Clerk announced that Wayne Fertich would be the Vice Chair of the Niagara Transit Commission.

At this point in the meeting, Walter Sendzik assumed the Chair.

5. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Moved by G. Miller
Seconded by M. Siscoe

That NTC Agenda 1-2022, **BE ADOPTED**.

Carried

6. **PRESENTATIONS**

6.1 **The Road Ahead: Moving Transit Forward in Niagara**

Matt Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Project, provided information respecting The Road Ahead: Moving Transit Forward in Niagara. Topics of the presentation included:

- Role of the Niagara Transit Commission
- The Road to Today
- Transit in Niagara
- Opportunities and Challenges - Workplan

7. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

7.1 **NTC 5-2022**

Niagara Transit Commission Proposed Meeting Schedule

Moved by W. Reilly

Seconded by J.D. Pachereva

That Memorandum NTC 5-2022, dated June 28, 2022, respecting Niagara Transit Commission Proposed Meeting Schedule, **BE RECEIVED**; and

That the Niagara Transit Commission meetings **BE HELD** on Tuesdays at 3:00 p.m. on the following dates in 2022:

July 19, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 8, and December 13.

Carried

7.2 **NTC 1-2022**

Consideration and Approval of General Manager Job Description

There being no objection, the Board deferred consideration of this item until after closed session.

7.3 **NTC 6-2022**

Niagara Transit Commission Procedural By-law and Policy Considerations

Moved by W. Redekop

Seconded by N. Arsenault

That Memorandum NTC 6-2022, dated June 28, 2022, respecting Niagara Transit Commission Procedural By-law and Policy Considerations, **BE RECEIVED**; and

That the Niagara Transit Commission **ADOPT** the following policies, procedures or by-laws of the Niagara Region; namely, Accountability and Transparency, Execution of Documents, Delegation of Authority, Inventory Procedures, Disposal of Surplus Assets, Employee Travel and Expense Policy, Accounts Receivable, Cost Allocation, Hiring of Employees; Employee ID and Dress Code; Performance Management, Flexible Work Arrangements; Attendance Support Program, Video Surveillance, Commencement of Litigation, Media Relations, Emergency Building Closures; and Procedural by-law, with such amendments as may be necessary to make them applicable to the Board, until such time as the Board establishes such policies and procedures as the Board determines may be appropriate.

Carried

8. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There were no consent items for information.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

10. CLOSED SESSION

Moved by B. Greenwood

Seconded by T. Whalen

That this Board **DO NOW MOVE** into closed session for the purposes of receiving information of a confidential nature respecting:

A matter of potential employee negotiations and related discussions that may disclose personal information regarding identifiable individuals, pursuant to s.239(2)(b) and (d) of the Municipal Act, and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report - General Manager Role

A matter of potential employee negotiations, and related discussions that may disclose personal information regarding identifiable individuals, pursuant to s.239(2)(b) and (d) of the Municipal Act, 2001 and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report – Niagara Transit Commission – KPMG Proposed Organizational Structure

Carried

The Board resolved into closed session at 6:08 p.m.

11. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

The Board reconvened in open session at 7:21 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

Board Members: N. Arsenault (Niagara-on-the-Lake), D. Cridland (Wainfleet), W. Fertich (Vice Chair)(Grimsby), Greenwood (Niagara Falls), G. Miller (St. Catharines), Olson (Pelham), JD Pachereva, W. Redekop (Fort Erie), W. Reilly (West Lincoln), W. Sendzik (Chair) (St. Catharines), M. Siscoe (St. Catharines), L. Van Vliet (Welland), T. Whalen (Thorold)

Ex-officio(Non-Voting) Members: R. Tripp (Chief Administrative Officer, Niagara Region)

Staff: S. Fraser, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, T. Harrison, Commissioner, Corporate Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office, L. Tracey, Project Coordinator, GO Implementation Office, B. Zvaniga, Commissioner, Public Works

Others Present: M.E. Bench, Dentons LLP, External Legal Counsel (via Video Conference), J. Hagar, Human Resources Consultant, Transit, O. Poloni, KPMG, LLP (via Video Conference)

11.1 Confidential NTC 2-2022

A matter of potential employee negotiations and related discussions that may disclose personal information regarding identifiable individuals, pursuant to s. 239(2)(b) and (d) of the Municipal Act, and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report - General Manager Role

Moved by J.D. Pachereva
Seconded by M. Siscoe

That Confidential Report NTC 2-2022, dated June 28, 2022, respecting A matter of potential employee negotiations and related discussions that may disclose personal information regarding identifiable individuals, pursuant to s.239 (2)(b) and (d) of the Municipal Act, and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report - General Manager Role, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

11.2 Confidential NTC 4-2022

A matter of potential employee negotiations, and related discussions that may disclose personal information regarding identifiable individuals, pursuant to s.239 (2)(b) and (d) of the Municipal Act, 2001 and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report – Niagara Transit Commission – KPMG Proposed Organizational Structure

Moved by W. Olson
Seconded by L. Van Vliet

That Confidential Report NTC 4-2022, dated June 28, 2022, respecting A matter of potential employee negotiations, and related discussions that may disclose personal information regarding identifiable individuals, pursuant to s.239 (2)(b) and (d) of the Municipal Act, 2001 and is properly conveyed to the Board in a confidential report – Niagara Transit Commission – KPMG Proposed Organizational Structure, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

7. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

7.2 NTC 1-2022

Consideration and Approval of General Manager Job Description

Moved by M. Siscoe
Seconded by N. Arsenault

That Report NTC 1-2022 dated June 28, 2022, respecting Consideration and Approval of General Manager Job Description, **BE RECEIVED**; and

That the Niagara Transit Commission General Manager Job Description attached as Appendix 1 to Report NTC 1-2022, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

12. ADDITIONAL ITEM FOR CONSIDERATION

12.1 NTC 3-2022

Niagara Transit Commission Shared Services

Oscar Poloni, KPMG LLP, provide information respecting Review of Corporate and Administrative Support Services. Topics of the presentation included:

- Introduction
- Jurisdictional Review
- Option Analysis
- Option Evaluation
- Proposed Organizational Structure

Moved by M. Siscoe
Seconded by T. Whalen

That Report NTC 3-2022, dated June 28, 2022, respecting Niagara Transit Commission Shared Services, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Regional Clerk **CONTINUE** to support the NTC Board in the conduct of its meetings and other legislative obligations identified in Report NTC 3-2022;
2. That the implementation of the Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) Peoplesoft **CONTINUE**; and
3. That the Transit Commission Steering Committee **SECURE** insurance coverage, pension, and employee assistance programs on behalf of the NTC.

Carried

13. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Walter Sendzik
Chair, Niagara Transit Commission

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Subject: Harmonization of Transit Fares

Report to: Niagara Transit Commission Board

Report date: Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Recommendations

1. That the Niagara Transit Commission **APPROVE** the harmonized fare structure and associated fare policies outlined in this report.
2. That report NTC-7 2022 **BE FORWARDED** to Niagara Region with the request that the transit fare structure identified in this report be included in the Regional Fees & Charges by-law to be effective January 1, 2023.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Niagara Transit Commission (NTC) approval of a harmonized fare structure and associated fare policies for implementation on January 1, 2023.
- This harmonization is required as the current transit fares, products, and policies in place across the existing systems in Niagara are not completely aligned.
- Aligning fares for January 1, 2023 will reduce potential rider confusion and support the implementation of a common fare payment technology as referenced in the companion report NTC-8 2022 (Onboard Technologies and Equipment Standardization).
- This report is being brought to the NTC board at this time as the updated fare structure is required to develop the NTC's 2023 operating budget and must be reflected in Niagara Region's 2023 Fees & Charges By-law.
- The fare structure recommended in this report maintains the current different fares for inter-municipal and intra-municipal (local) trips. The move to a single, region-wide flat fare for all trips is anticipated in approximately 2025, given the potential (and currently unknown) impacts on revenue, and is consistent with the financial strategy outlined during the triple-majority process.

Financial Considerations

The recommended fare structure is based on the average of existing local fare products, with the exception of the low-income pass, which is recommended to be the lowest current fare. This results in some existing transit fare products at the local level going up, and some going down. At both the inter-municipal and local level, the recommended fare structure reflects the addition of previously unoffered fare products such as a daily pass and a low-income pass. These new fare products are being added because they were previously offered at either the local or inter-municipal level and are being recommended to continue under the proposed harmonized fare structure to be implemented January 1, 2023 under the NTC.

Appendix 1 shows that there is an estimated total revenue loss of approximately \$91,000 or 0.16% of the estimated 2022 consolidated transit budget resulting from the move to the harmonized fare structure and the introduction of the additional fare categories at both the local and inter-municipal level. It is anticipated that the revenue loss associated with the fare harmonization would be mitigated in 2023 through increasing ridership as demand returns to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Analysis

Background

The Niagara Transit Service Delivery and Governance Strategy (Dillon Report) and the Niagara Transit Governance Study (NTGS) both identified the shortfalls of the current overall fare system(s) and recommended that a harmonization of fare structures, policies and the fare payment technology platform be undertaken.

The current transit systems in Niagara today vary in terms of fare prices, types of passes, concessions offered, and other associated policies. Examples of these variations include:

- Fares for local monthly passes range from \$80 to \$92.
- Some systems offer free rides to children under 12, where others offer free rides to children under five and charge discounted fares to children between 5-12.
- Some systems offer low-income transit passes, 10-ride, one-day, or other similar passes that are not offered by all systems.

Arriving at a harmonized fare structure and eliminating these variations is a key enabler to meeting the goal of providing a connected and integrated transit system in Niagara.

A harmonized structure will reduce rider confusion by providing one fare structure and one set of policies for all Niagara, and allow for the same fare media to be branded and sold to NTC customers for access to the entire consolidated system. Under one system, differentiated fares are no longer necessary or appropriate, as consistency and unification of policies will be critical to riders.

The proposed harmonized structure further aligns with recent work undertaken by a collective of Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) transit agencies to establish fare age category and cost uniformity. Moving Niagara towards the standards previously set by this group will support Niagara residents who are making inter-regional trips by ensuring they are eligible for similar concessions across Ontario, as well as any future opportunities for co-fare agreements with peer transit organizations such as Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) in Hamilton or GO Transit, as rider categories will already be aligned.

Significant work has been done by the Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group (IMTWG) in anticipation of the opportunity to harmonize fares. The companion report NTC-8 2022 (Onboard Technologies and Equipment Standardization) outlines the strategy for the implementation of a common farebox platform that will facilitate implementation of the fare structure recommended by this report.

Harmonized Transit Fare Structure

The harmonization of transit fares in Niagara requires a two-step process: first aligning the various fare categories that exist between the current transit providers; and subsequently establishing a new single fare rate for that category.

The consolidation of fare categories standardizes the fare age categories across Niagara, as well as reconciles differences in the types of passes (i.e. cash, day passes, 10-ride passes).

The fares recommended in Table 1 are based on the average of existing transit fares in Niagara, with the exception of the low-income pass which is based on the (current) lowest monthly price of \$65 (Niagara Falls) rather than the average price of \$71.

This approach to harmonization was recommended as it results in a the most limited impact to the anticipated 2023 NTC operating budget, as well as the least impact to the fares currently being charged to Niagara’s transit riders today.

Table 1 - Niagara Transit Commission Harmonized Fare Summary

Fare Category	Intra-municipal (local) Fares January 1, 2023	Inter-municipal Fares January 1, 2023
Cash Fare - Adults (18-64)	\$ 3.00	\$ 6.00
Cash Fare - Seniors (65+)	\$ 3.00	\$ 5.00
Cash Fare - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	\$ 3.00	\$ 5.00
Cash Fare - 5 and Under	Free	Free
Cash Fare - 6 to 12	Free	Free
Day Pass	\$ 7.25	\$ 14.50
Fort Erie to Niagara Falls Link Service – Cash Fare	n/a	\$ 6.00
Port Colborne to Welland Link Service - Cash Fare	n/a	\$ 6.00
10 Ride Card - Adults (18-64)	\$ 26.50	\$ 45.00
10 Ride Card - Seniors (65+)	\$ 22.00	\$ 40.00
10 Ride Card - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	\$ 23.00	\$ 40.00
Monthly Pass - Adults (18-64)	\$ 85.50	\$ 160.00
Monthly Pass - Seniors (65+)	\$ 63.00	\$ 130.00
Monthly Pass - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	\$ 66.75	\$ 130.00
Monthly Pass - Low Income	\$ 65.00	\$ 122.00
Two ride Cards - Adults (18-64)	Do not offer	Do not offer
Two ride Cards - Seniors (65+)	Do not offer	Do not offer
Two ride Cards - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	Do not offer	Do not offer
Family Pass	Do not offer	Do not offer
Semester Pass	Do not offer	Do not offer

Appendix 1 – Niagara Transit Commission Fare Harmonization Strategy – provides a full comparison of the existing fare rates and categories, and how they relate to the proposed fare structure outlined above.

Under the proposed strategy:

- The separate fare categories for intra-municipal (local) fares and inter-municipal fares are maintained. The financial strategy approved in the triple majority process projected the elimination of the existing two-fare structure that differentiates between inter-municipal trips and intra-municipal trips would be considered by the NTC as part of the 2025 budget process. This is further discussed in the Alternatives Reviewed section.
- Selected fare categories (i.e. those specific to only one municipality today) will be consolidated into broader categories, including:
 - Family Pass – reflecting the move to full free transit for all children under 12 and expanded eligibility for youth concessions;
 - Semester Pass – given expanded eligibility for youth concessions and the future anticipated discussions regarding post-secondary U-Passes.
 - Separate Link Service fares – consolidating costs for all inter-municipal services, eliminating discrepancies.
 - Two Ride Cards – only currently offered for inter-municipal trips and recommended to not be provided versus be expanded to local trips.
- Fare categories that were previously offered for only one of intra-municipal (local) or inter-municipal trips will be expanded to both trip types, such as a low-income pass and 10-ride cards.

Fare Policies

The fare structure above will be supported by the harmonization of associated fare policies that outline eligibility criteria for concessions, transfer policies, and other considerations.

The policies outlined below are those directly related to the implementation of the fare structure. Additional policies related to fares but that would not impact the structure

itself, such as fare collection and enforcement policies, will be determined by the General Manager once hired.

- **Low-Income Transit Pass:** the majority of local municipalities currently provide a low-income transit pass for residents who require financial assistance to achieve mobility. This program will be expanded region-wide as part of the harmonized structure, and now be available for both local and inter-municipal trips.

Specific eligibility criteria for low-income transit passes and the associated application process will be determined by the General Manager once hired. It is anticipated that eligibility will be closely tied to registrants of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), which is the current criteria used by the St. Catharines Transit Commission and Welland Transit.

- **Specialized Transit:** the eligibility criteria for specialized transit is governed by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) and as such, is already harmonized across Niagara's transit providers. The current application-based process for both local specialized transit services as well as inter-municipal services offered by Niagara Specialized Transit will remain in place.
- **Seniors Rate:** eligibility will be for persons 65+, with proof of age being required on request. This is consistent with the current policies of all existing Niagara transit systems.
- **Youth Rate:** eligibility will be youth between ages of 13-17, or with valid secondary school identification. This recommendation harmonizes the different types of youth and student passes currently provided across Niagara, as well as the upper age limit of eligibility, which currently ranges between 17-19 years old.
- **Transfer Policy:** Transfers will be issued for 2 hours from the time of the original boarding for the completion of a one-way trip. This transfer window is consistent with peer transit agencies such as Hamilton, Durham, and Toronto and will harmonize transfer windows for the current systems that range between 1-2 hours.

Providing a longer transfer window supports the ability of riders to link trips together, where transfer times may be extended during connections. It also supports the practice of 'trip-chaining' where riders can make mid-trip stops before continuing on

their one-way journey without paying an additional fare. Facilitating these trips can be a significant factor in encouraging transit usage.

In addition to the policies outlined above, the following passengers will not be charged a fare:

- **Children Under 12:** it is recommended that existing child exemptions be harmonized so that all children under 12 years old are not charged a transit fare. This will apply to both children travelling alone, as well as those accompanied by an adult. This policy also aligns with GO Transit and many other GTHA transit agencies, who provide similar fare exemptions.
- **CNIB Foundation (Formerly Canadian National Institute for the Blind):** Persons (and support persons) carrying a CNIB identification card.
- **First Responders:** police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services paramedics, while on duty.
- **NTC Employees:** active and retired employees of the NTC (including their predecessor transit agencies) presenting a valid issued pass will be exempt from paying transit fares. This is a grandfathering of existing policies in-place with the municipalities, is included in collective agreements, and is common in the industry.
- **Support Persons:** Niagara's transit providers have previously developed a Universal Support Persons pass that complies with AODA and allows one support person to ride free of charge along with a valid fare paying customer who, because of their disability, requires assistance while travelling on public transit.
- **Active Duty Military and Veterans:** any Canadian active duty military personnel or persons presenting a Canada Armed Forces Veteran's Service Card.

Implementation

Achieving the implementation of the harmonized fare structure requires that Niagara Region's Fees and Charges by-law be updated to reflect the new fare levels and new

fare categories. As the Region's User Fee By-law will not be updated until February 2023 due to the municipal election an amended By-law will be presented to Council in Q3 of 2022 to reflect the Transit fees effective January 1, 2023. In addition, the proposed fares will be used as an input to the 2023 operating budget for the NTC.

The companion report NTC 8-2022 (Onboard Technologies and Equipment Standardization) outlines the objective to move all existing systems toward a common farebox technology. This is a critical step in ensuring the implementation of the harmonized fare strategy outlined in this report, as the updated on-vehicle technology is required to support one common fare pass that includes valid transfers for all systems/routes at launch.

There is some risk associated with having the local alignment complete for January 1, 2023. The readiness is dependant upon farebox procurement and installation for the Niagara Falls fleet and delivery time for fare media. Current timelines from suppliers indicate the system will be ready for January 1, 2023.

Alternatives Reviewed

Four primary alternatives were considered in the development of the fare structures and policies recommended in this report:

- **Increase highest local fare** - The option to move all fares to the highest local fare in each category was reviewed. This option would see an increase in fare revenue of \$270,000. This option was not recommended as there would be significant increases to certain fare categories and an overall increase of 5% with no change to service.
- **Reduce lowest local fare** - The option to move all fares to the lowest local fare in each category was reviewed. This option would see a decrease in fare revenue of \$233,000. This option was not recommended due to the budgetary impact.
- **Move to one region-wide flat fare during transition** – The financial strategy advanced during the triple-majority process anticipated that the implementation of a single, region-wide flat fare (i.e. removing the separate fare for inter-municipal trips) would occur in 2025. This timeframe was recommended as it supported the principle that the NTC not make significant changes during transition, it would allow the NTC

to negotiate future U-Pass agreements (which have a significant impact on fare revenue) in advance of this fare change, to allow ongoing impacts on transit ridership from COVID-19 to be understood, and allow direction to be provided by the senior leadership team of the NTC.

The NTC could consider advancing this timeline and seek to implement one flat fare for the launch of the NTC on January 1, 2023. LNTC-C 3-2021 estimated this impact at \$2.6M, which would have a significant impact on the NTC's operating budget and is therefore is not being recommended.

- **Defer consideration until the General Manager is on-boarded** – The NTC could elect to defer approval of harmonization until the GM is hired and in place later in 2022. This approach is not recommended as the Region's fees and charges by-law must be updated at this time to support implementation of the harmonized strategy by January 1, 2023.
- **Seniors Exemption** - It should also be noted that during the triple majority process, the City of Niagara Falls formally requested that the NTC consider a policy to exempt seniors (65+) from transit fares. This report and the accompanying initial fare structure does not attempt to make policy recommendations on fare categories such as U-Pass rates, single fare implementation, or seniors exemptions which in any way have substantive financial impacts for Day 1/Year 1 NTC revenue projections which deviate from the approved financial strategy. This does not however, preclude the NTC from consideration of this fare category consideration at a future date.

Other Pertinent Reports

NTC 8-2022	Onboard Technologies and Equipment Standardization
LNTC 3-2021	Niagara Transit Governance - Revised Strategies Reflecting Phase 1 Municipal Consultation

Prepared by:

Eric Gillespie
Chair, Operations Working Group
Transit Commission Steering Committee

Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng.
Chair, Transit Commission Steering
Committee

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer, Niagara Region
Niagara Transit Commission Board Member – Ex-Officio

This report was prepared by the Transit Commission Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Commissioner of Public Works and is comprised of extensive senior Regional staff (Commissioner and Director levels).

Appendices

Appendix 1 Niagara Transit Commission Fare Harmonization Strategy

Current Fare Price

Fare Category	Niagara Falls	St. Catharines	Welland	Fort Erie	Average Local Intra-municipal	Niagara Region	Total Estimated Fare Revenue Based on 2022 Fares	Recommended January 1, 2023 Price - Local Intra-municipal	Recommended January 1, 2023 Price - Inter-municipal	Total Estimated Fare Revenue Based on Recommended 2023 Fares	Increase / (Decrease) to Niagara Transit Commission Budget
Cash Fare - Adults (18-64)	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 2,573,754	\$ 3.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 2,602,314	\$ 28,560
Cash Fare - Seniors (65+)	\$ 2.75	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.94	\$ 5.00	\$ 287,131	\$ 3.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 292,813	\$ 5,682
Cash Fare - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	\$ 2.75	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.94	\$ 5.00	\$ 100,923	\$ 3.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 102,317	\$ 1,395
Cash Fare - 5 and Under	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.50	\$ -	\$ 0.38	\$ -	\$ -	Free	Free	\$ -	\$ -
Cash Fare - 6 to 12	\$ 1.75	\$ -	\$ 1.50	\$ -	\$ 0.81	\$ -	\$ -	Free	Free	\$ -	\$ -
Day Pass	\$ 7.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.25	n/a	\$ 37,723	\$ 7.25	\$ 14.50	\$ 53,570	\$ 15,847
Fort Erie to Niagara Falls Link Service - Cash Fare - Adults (18-64), Youth (13-17), Seniors (65+)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 3.50	\$ 18,001	n/a	\$ 6.00	\$ 30,858	\$ 12,858
Port Colborne to Welland Link Service - Cash Fare - Adults (18-64), Youth (13-17), Seniors (65+)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 4.00	\$ 30,000	n/a	\$ 6.00	\$ 45,000	\$ 15,000
10 Ride Card - Adults (18-64)	\$ 28.00	\$ 26.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 27.00	\$ 26.50	\$ 45.00	\$ 1,258,968	\$ 26.50	\$ 45.00	\$ 1,227,395	\$ (31,574)
10 Ride Card - Seniors (65+)	\$ 25.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 21.00	\$ 22.50	\$ 22.13	\$ 40.00	\$ 296,399	\$ 22.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 310,804	\$ 14,405
10 Ride Card - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	\$ 25.00	\$ 22.50	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.50	\$ 23.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 102,466	\$ 23.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 143,776	\$ 41,311
Monthly Pass - Adults (18-64)	\$ 80.00	\$ 92.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 85.50	\$ 160.00	\$ 2,912,532	\$ 85.50	\$ 160.00	\$ 2,315,910	\$ (596,622)
Monthly Pass - Seniors (65+)	\$ 65.00	\$ 57.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 63.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 467,669	\$ 63.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 479,127	\$ 11,458
Monthly Pass - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	\$ 65.00	\$ 62.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 66.75	\$ 130.00	\$ 215,485	\$ 66.75	\$ 130.00	\$ 420,882	\$ 205,397
Monthly Pass - Low Income	\$ 65.00	\$ 72.00	\$ 76.00	n/a	\$ 71.00	n/a	\$ 249,840	\$ 65.00	\$ 122.00	\$ 469,550	\$ 219,710
Two ride Cards - Adults (18-64)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 12.00	\$ 34,560	Do not offer	Do not offer	\$ -	\$ (34,560)
Two ride Cards - Seniors (65+)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 10.00	\$ 360	Do not offer	Do not offer	\$ -	\$ (360)
Two ride Cards - Youth (13-17 or Secondary School ID)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$ 10.00	\$ -	Do not offer	Do not offer	\$ -	\$ -
Family Pass	n/a	\$ 8.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 8.00	n/a	\$ -	Do not offer	Do not offer	\$ -	\$ -
Semester Pass	\$ 275.00	\$ 290.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 282.50	n/a	\$ -	Do not offer	Do not offer	\$ -	\$ -
							\$ 8,585,810			\$ 8,494,315	\$ (91,494)

Subject: Onboard Technologies and Equipment Standardization

Report to: Niagara Transit Commission Board

Report date: Tuesday, July 19, 2022

Recommendations

1. That the Niagara Transit Commission **ENDORSE** unifying onboard technologies including Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), camera and farebox equipment by transit agencies amalgamating into the new regional transit service effective January 1, 2023.
2. That Report NTC 8-2022 **BE FORWARDED** to the Clerks of the City of Niagara Falls, the City of St. Catharines, and the City of Welland for consideration in the procurement of common ITS technology systems as outlined in this report.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Niagara Transit Commission (NTC) endorsement for the alignment of conventional system on-board cameras, ITS equipment and fareboxes.
- Currently, onboard technologies owned and operated by Niagara Region Transit, Niagara Falls Transit Services, St. Catharines Transit Commission (SCTC), Welland Transit and Fort Erie Transit are not aligned to the point of being able to share information or take fares in a model of having one transit service provider in Niagara.
- Chief Administrative Officers and procurement agents in existing transit agencies have requested that the NTC confirm they want to proceed with one camera system, aligned ITS systems, and a standard farebox across the new service and that the systems to be procured or recommended unanimously by current transit agencies represent standardization, best value and efficiency going forward as the NTC.
- NTC endorsement of this foundational principle is anticipated to be the basis upon which municipal reports to further enable alignment of equipment where single sourcing required by Niagara Region Transit, SCTC, and/or Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, and Welland Councils in 2022 will proceed.
- All of these projects will be considered 'in flight' (per the terms of the Municipal Transfer Agreements), and are previously funded by local area municipalities (LAMs), SCTC, and Niagara Region through their individual capital budgets and/or

Investing in Infrastructure Canada Program (ICIP) projects, with the exception of an additional \$1.1M in forecasted capital costs required for Niagara Falls which will be applied for funding through the ICIP stream later this year.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct costs to the Niagara Transit Commission in endorsing this initiative. LAMs, Niagara Region, and the SCTC had budgeted to complete these projects and wish to do so prior to or in concert with the new service launch based on priority. Indirect or resulting costs may be incurred by not having systems aligned by the launch date of January 1, 2023. This is addressed further under Alternatives Reviewed. A summary of the previously approved and funded capital costs are as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 – Farebox and Camera Standardization Capital Costs

Transit System	Farebox Standardization Gross Capital Request	Camera Systems Gross Capital Request
Niagara Falls*	\$1,100,000	\$990,000
SCTC	\$3,990,000	\$1,450,570
Welland	\$78,100	\$147,000
Niagara Region	\$1,355,750	\$783,725
Total	\$6,523,850	\$3,371,295

*Niagara Falls forecasts the need for additional capital budget of approximately \$1.1M in excess of their previously approved project budget for farebox standardization. Niagara Falls city staff intend to apply for an ICIP application to fund the balance of this project sometime later this year.

Staff at the agencies who are requesting this endorsement from the NTC have been acquiring quotations by vendors to meet tight timelines for installations and implementations. All expenditures would meet the budgetary constraints of their approved project funding. No incremental operating budget implications are anticipated to result from these capital investments.

Analysis

Farebox Alignment

After January 1, 2023, one type of fare card media (pass) will be branded and sold to riders to be rolled out for the new service. The existing fareboxes on the larger conventional systems do not take consistent types of media now. If the fareboxes are not aligned there will be no way to have one pass product for the ridership or valid transfers for all systems/routes at launch.

Currently there are two types of fareboxes used in Niagara by the larger systems. Niagara Falls Transit Services (NFTS) has the outlier equipment that was identified to be replaced in 2019 in a staff report to its Council. ICIP funding was applied for and received by Niagara Falls and Niagara Region to upgrade fare equipment on buses operated by NFTS.

Fare technology (Masabi readers were introduced to the Linking Niagara Transit Committee in Report LNTC-C 6-2021) were purchased for the system by all transit partners. The 'reader' was piloted by SCTC and was bought by the partners to initiate contactless or 'mobile' payment across all systems (including OnDemand and paratransit services). Work on this project is still ongoing and should align that function by the end of this year. Masabi is working towards a 'tap' function for debit and credit as well that will fully modernize the fare payment method across the system.

In looking for alternates to a farebox purchase by NFTS, staff investigated the functionality of Masabi to meet all requirements. Masabi readers could accept a single pass product but the vendor has indicated that delivery on physical passes could take up to a year and that an additional module would have to be purchased to add this function to the equipment and software. This does not meet the need or the timeline required to be fully cross-functional on the three largest systems for January 1, 2023.

Also, enabling the Masabi readers to read the new one-system passes on Day 1 will not meet the need for aligning reporting on cash fares, issuing transfers to riders across Niagara, mining ridership data, allowing for secure vaulting of cash across all sites or measuring key performance indicators for the system.

It is the Transit Commission Steering Committee Operations Working Group's recommendation that using City of Niagara Falls and Niagara Region-approved (and funded) ICIP funds to complete a replacement of fareboxes on buses operated by the

NFTS to the standard GFI system (sold by Garival of Laval, QC) currently on St Catharines and Welland transit, is now required if the new service is to be immediately functional and successful.

It is currently anticipated the TransitFare system in place with Fort Erie Transit is compatible with the harmonized system. Technical work is ongoing to verify this assumption. Fort Erie Transit riders paying a cash fare will need to be provided paper transfers to board regional routes.

In addition to the alignment of fare box technology, successful implementation requires that a harmonized fare schedule be established that brings together the currently different fare categories and levels across Niagara. Companion report NTC 7-2020 discusses a recommended strategy.

Camera & ITS Systems

Currently, all three conventional transit agencies have a project budget to purchase (NFTS and WT) or replace (SCTC) camera systems onboard their existing 2022 fleets. All 40' and 60' conventional NOVA buses purchased by all transit agencies in Niagara, through a joint procurement arrangement with Metrolinx, include a Safe Fleet (SEON) camera system as standard equipment optionally prewired by the manufacturer. Any buses ordered in 2022 for Niagara systems and/or to be purchased by the NTC under these agreements up to the end of 2023 would be equipped with a SEON system.

Further, SEON is already onboard the majority of buses in the region and the software contract arrangements are already established and can be expanded.

NFTS issued an RFP for camera systems earlier in 2022. Subsequent to the establishment of the NTC, the project was cancelled. Aligning camera systems across Niagara is now the focus of this project.

Work is also underway to coordinate ITS Systems such as modems and support systems onboard NRT and Welland's new OnDemand systems, as well as on support vehicles. These vehicles rely on Clever Devices (the standard ITS system across the services) for communication and monitoring. Discussions about various dispatch systems, apps for online ride booking etc. continue to be discussed as systems start to align where possible by Day 1 for launch of the new service and in the near future.

The shared use and alignment of farebox technologies, ITS systems and onboard cameras by an amalgamated transit agency enhances the overall functionality of a system expected to look and feel like 'one transit' as of January 1, 2023.

The safety and security of staff and riders, provision of real time or online route and schedule information for riders, the ability to conduct data and ridership analysis and execute 'back of house' operations successfully counts on sites and their fleets being able to share and access information in real time. In any model where a dispatch function is provided or on-road supervision is required, these systems being synchronous is key.

Should standardization not be endorsed or achieved, the underperformance of the new service at the farebox and in operations could negatively affect the first-impression or reputation of the NTC system as an amalgamated version of prior agencies. Any lack of alignment would further constrain the ability of the NTC to gather and report on metrics such as ridership, boardings, and transfers. In an effort to mitigate risk of delay for Day 1, early discussions with Garival have ensured that delivery, installation and training on the replacement fareboxes can be accommodated in 2022, but a decision is required immediately to ensure this timeline can be met.

Next Steps

Should NTC endorse the recommendation to move to common technology as outlined in this report, the immediate next step would be for NFTA to request from their Council to initiate the project utilizing the City's existing ICIP funds. Should NF Council approve this direction (based on the NTC's position to go in this direction laid out in this report), City staff, in partnership with the Operations WG, would notify MTO of the intent to reapply for a new ICIP project to fully fund all farebox related costs at Niagara Falls, and proceed with acquisition of the new replacement Garival fareboxes.

Alternatives Reviewed

The Niagara Transit Commission may choose not to endorse the intended alignment of onboard technologies. The results of this misalignment on January 1 would result in a number of challenges both front-facing and back of house.

Without an alignment of technologies, riders would face a number of negative impacts such as confusion over payment amounts, methods, and types (cash vs. tap cards); the inability to move to a single fare media pass, the inability for seamless transfers,

potential safety and security concerns (i.e. cameras available and enabled on some buses but not others), stop announcement system limitations, and subsequent potential impacts to the supporting trip planning applications such as Goggle and/or Transit.

Operationally, choosing not to proceed with aligned technology creates significant challenges to the NTC in aligning reporting on cash fares, issuing transfers to riders, mining ridership data, allowing for secure vaulting of cash, measuring key performance indicators, potential for non-compliant health and safety policy (i.e. cameras available on some fleet but not others), as well as potential for scheduling and route planning errors, incompatibility of fare processing, and undetermined but inevitable financial impacts required to patchwork the different systems together.

Other Pertinent Reports

LNTC-C 6-2021 Common Transit Fare Technology Solution

NTC 7-2022 Harmonization of Transit Fares

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Niagara Transit Commission Board Member – Ex-Officio

This report was prepared by the Transit Commission Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Commissioner of Public Works and is comprised of extensive senior Regional staff (Commissioner and Director levels).