



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
LINKING NIAGARA TRANSIT COMMITTEE
AGENDA

LNTC 7-2019

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

2:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON

	Pages
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER</u>	
2. <u>DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST</u>	
3. <u>PRESENTATIONS</u>	
4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	
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5.2 <u>LNTC-C 16-2019</u>	2 - 6
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Specialized Transit Study - Update	

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

9. **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).

MEMORANDUM

LNTC-C 15-2019

Subject: 2020 Linking Niagara Transit Committee Meeting Dates

Date: November 20, 2019

To: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

The following is list of proposed dates in 2020 that have been identified to hold meetings of the Linking Niagara Transit Committee:

January 29, 2020

April 1, 2020

May 27, 2020

July 29, 2020

September 23, 2020

November 25, 2020

A resolution of Committee is required to approve the meeting dates. Suggested wording is as follows:

That the Linking Niagara Transit Committee meetings **BE HELD** on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m. on the following dates in 2020:

January 29, April 1, May 27, July 29, September 23 and November 25.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

MEMORANDUM

LNTC-C 16-2019

Subject: Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group / Linking Niagara Transit Committee 2019 Work Plan Update

Date: November 20, 2019

To: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

From: Matt Robinson, Director GO Implementation Office

This memo provides a detailed update on the Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group (IMTWG) / Linking Niagara Transit Committee (LNTC) 2019 work plan, as well as forecasting the key initiatives proposed for the first half of 2020.

The IMTWG, under the direction of the LNTC, has advanced a number of critical elements related to the implementation of the recommendations based in the *Niagara Transit Service Delivery and Governance Strategy, 2017* (Dillon Report).

Over the last two (2) years, the IMTWG has been consistently and methodically working to improve the transit customer service experience in Niagara with all efforts aimed toward enabling a fully integrated system.

The following are achievements from the 2018 IMTWG/LNTC work plan:

- Standardized, on-bus customer service policies across all four large transit systems effective April 1, 2018
- Established a single digital mobile platform – Transit App – effective March 1, 2018. All Niagara transit systems' routes are now uploaded, enabling riders to find route, schedule and bus information, including a promotional campaign
- 'Moving Transit Forward' promotional campaign on all Niagara Region Transit (NRT) buses (interior and exterior) and on local buses (interior) effective May 2018 aimed at raising public awareness to transit integration activities
- Consolidated all after-hours customer service call handling to a single external provider across all four major systems
- Completed comprehensive Provincial Gas Tax analysis and advocacy engagement with MTO on route rationalization and impacts to local providers
- Finalized a multi-year extension of NRT operations in partnership with the Transit Service Providers to take operations through December 2020
- Finalized the NRT U-Pass agreement summer 2018
- Rationalization of two post-secondary charter routes with existing inter-municipal routes including service enhancements effective September 2018

- Fort Erie and Port Colborne NRT Link route service enhancements effective September 2018

With these achievements in 2018, the 2019 IMTWG/LNTC work plan has been similarly ambitious, with significant operational focus for service enhancements, predicated on the multi-year service plan outlined in LNTC-C-22 2018. It is critical to note that these IMT service expansions would not have been possible without the exceptional planning, engagement and commitment from the local transit operators – particularly Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland. Without their partnership, NRT would not have reached a historical peak of 135,000 service hours in 2019. Their leadership, service planning, scheduling, bus operators/drivers, mechanics and customer service representatives have been instrumental in enabling the network to grow as it has in such rapid, exponential growth over the course of the last two years.

Building on the customer focused successes achieved in 2018, the following are highlights from the 2019 IMTWG/LNTC work plan achievements:

- Developed a common fare strategy/structure, including financial analysis for any required Council approvals (necessary precursor work to enabling a common fare technology). This structure has been endorsed by the St. Catharines Transit Commission and Niagara Falls Council (subject to full buy in from all transit parties)
- Completed the Specialized Transit in Niagara Study which examined ridership, demand projections, a scan of jurisdictional comparators and industry best practices, along with operating improvements to feed into the Transit Governance Study
- Implemented a Universal Support Person Pass common to all Niagara transit systems effective September 2019 to enable those with mobility limitations to travel with an approved support person with valid identification
- Streamlined all data inputs and established a process to ensure all trip planning tools including Google trip planner, Triplinx, Transit App have up-to-date and accurate information
- Secured 2019-2020 U-Pass agreements with Niagara College and Brock University Student Unions
- Real-time bus tracking via the Transit App on all Niagara Region Transit (NRT), Niagara Falls Transit and St. Catharines Transit fleet now fully enabled (Welland to be completed winter 2019/2020)
- Based on historic Regional Council investments in NRT via a separate levy of 1.4% which enabled significant service enhancements on NRT mainline routes effective September 2019:
 - Nearly all NRT mainline routes now 30 minute (or better) peak headways
 - Added express routes for routes 70A/75A and 60A/65A to post-secondary campuses of Niagara College and Brock University

- Working with Pelham Transit, added connection to Pelham's Meridian Community Centre via 70A/75A
- Procured, in partnership with our municipal operators, 14 new buses to meet the NRT fleet requirements for recent service enhancements, ensuring the utilization of the reduced operating rate
- Uploaded Port Colborne and Fort Erie Link routes and eliminated the SCT #26 – removing the last of the duplication of IMT routes in the system. All IMT routes are now operated under the (non-exclusive) jurisdiction of NRT
- Submitted consolidated Niagara feedback to MTO Provincial Gas Tax Program consultations based on comprehensive 2018 financial and local impact analysis
- Secured recommendation for on-demand transit expansion model for West Niagara
- Through a competitive procurement process, launched the Niagara Transit Governance Study, securing Optimus SBR and Left Turn, Right Turn (LTRT) as lead consultants for the study.

The IMTWG has been unwavering in its commitment to improving integration and customer service improvements for transit in Niagara over the last two years. As a result, there are numerous and significant enhancements, expansions and integration of policy and technology which have laid a strong foundation for the governance work that commenced in late 2019 and is being led by the CAO Transit Governance Working Group.

Given the magnitude of analysis, engagement and consultation required for the governance study, the IMTWG recommends its work plan focus on the following for 2020, subject to LNTC approval:

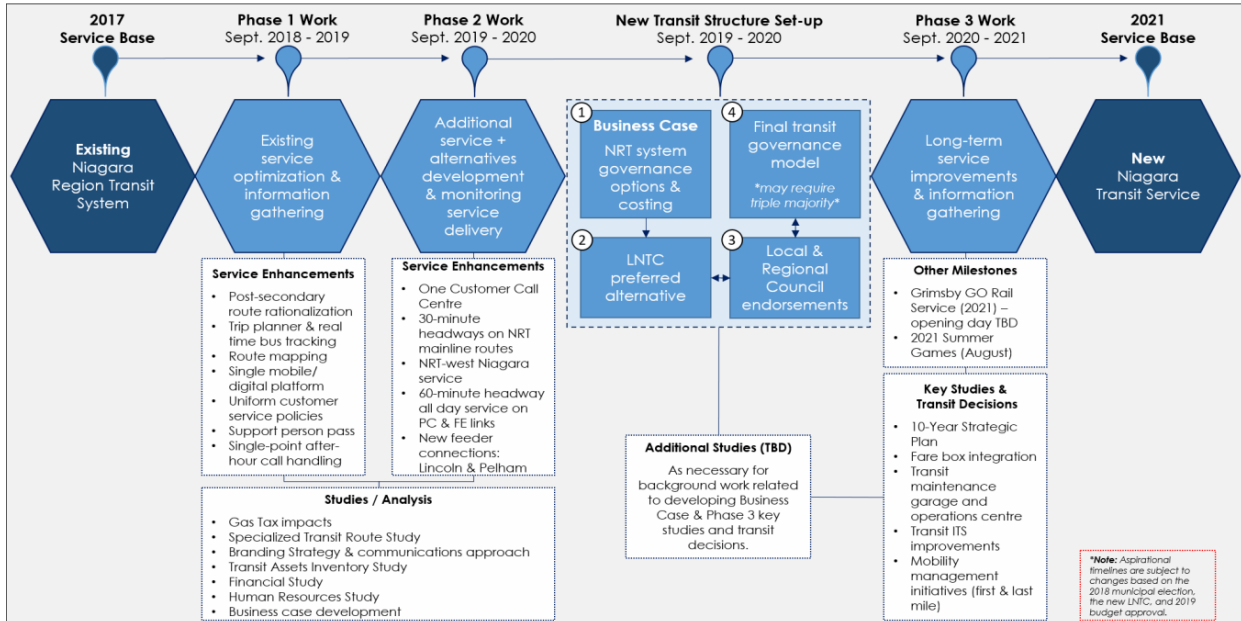
OPERATIONAL

- Introduce NRT West Niagara service (operational Q2 2020) – subject to 2020 operations budget approval
- Determine preferred fare integration solutions – structure and technology (Q3 2020)
- System capital planning for 2021 – NRT and local services (Q2 2020)
- Review the need to extend the NRT Service Operating Agreement beyond its term of December 31, 2020 (subject to the Niagara Transit Governance Study)

GOVERNANCE

- Complete Niagara Transit Governance Study further to LNTC-C-21-22-23 -2018 outlined below in Figure 1 (Q2 2020)

Figure 1 – IMT Service Implementation and Governance Guiding Framework



Niagara’s 12 municipalities, through the IMTWG and under the direction of the LNTC, are working closely to ensure a seamless and integrated system that incorporates the core systems (St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Niagara Region) with the smaller feeder systems (Fort Erie, Lincoln, Pelham, Port Colborne, Niagara-on-the-Lake) in a highly collaborative partnership.

Many of these initiatives are led, supported and driven by members of the IMTWG, with significant leadership from Niagara’s Transit Operators and Transit CAOs. Through this continued leadership and collaboration, transit in Niagara Region will continue on its transformational path towards giving residents true freedom when choosing their mode of transportation and ultimately reducing the dependence on single occupancy vehicle trips.

The terms of reference for the Linking Niagara Transit Committee include the responsibility of the committee to direct/oversee the work of the Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group. If the Committee supports the IMTWG’s 2020 work plan as presented in this memorandum, the following resolution may be put forward:

That the Linking Niagara Transit Committee **ENDORSE** the Inter-Municipal Transit Working Group’s 2020 Work plan.

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

Matt Robinson
Director, GO Implementation Office
Chair, IMTWG

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
LINKING NIAGARA TRANSIT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**LNTC 6-2019
Wednesday, October 23, 2019
Council Chamber
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee: Campion (Mayor – Welland), Fertich (Regional Councillor), Ip (Regional Councillor), W. Redekop (Regional Councillor), G. Miller (Municipal Councillor – St. Catharines), M. Siscoe (Municipal Councillor - St. Catharines), L. Van Vliet (Municipal Councillor – Welland), S. Chemnitz, Chief Administrative Officer (St. Catharines), G. Long, Chief Administrative Officer (City of Welland), M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office, K. Todd, Chief Administrative Officer (City of Niagara Falls), R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer (Niagara Region)

Absent/Regrets: Sendzik (Mayor – St. Catharines), C. Dabrowski (Municipal Councillor – Niagara Falls)

Staff: J. Alcock, Project Coordinator, GO Implementation Office, M. Greenfield, Program Financial Analyst, C. Lam, Program Financial Analyst, K. Ranjan, Transportation Lead GO Implementation Office, R. Salewytch, Program Manager, Transit Services, H. Talbot, Financial & Special Projects Consultant, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk

Others Present: G. Morrison, St. Catharines Transit, D. Stuart, Welland Transit

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair M. Siscoe called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

3.1 Transit Governance Review - Project Scope and Milestones

Arminda Dumpierrez and Yuval Grinspun, Optimus SBR + Left Turn Right Turn, provided information respecting Transit Governance Review: Project Scope and Milestones. Topics of the presentation included:

- About Optimus SBR and Left Turn Right Turn (LTRT)
- Project Context
- Project Mission and Success
- Project Team
- Project Outcomes
- Proposed Timelines

3.2 West Niagara On Demand Expansion Options

Rob Salewytch, Program Manager, Transit Services, provided information respecting West Niagara On-Demand Expansion Options. Topics of the presentation included:

- Background
- Fixed-Route versus On-Demand
- Why Via? Via's Global Presence: Via, ViaVan and Partners
- Via in Canada
- Reports and Shared Data
- Niagara Feasibility Study
- Overview of Simulations
- Inter-municipal Scenarios and Additional Opportunities
- Next Steps

4. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no items for consideration.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by G. Miller
Seconded by Councillor Ip

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

LNTC 3-2019
Linking Niagara Transit Committee Minutes May 29, 2019

LNTC 5-2019
Linking Niagara Transit Committee Minutes September 25, 2019

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Niagara Specialized Transit Drivers

Matt Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office, advised concerns had been raised respecting Niagara Specialized Transit (NST) drivers not being paid. He stated Niagara Region's authority to review this matter is limited within the contract with the third party provider, however staff have had open discussions with the provider related to these concerns. Mr. Robinson noted that no NST drivers have lost their jobs as a result of this matter and the Region is meeting all of its contractual obligations with the provider.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 2 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Regional Headquarters.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

M. Siscoe
Committee Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

MEMORANDUM

LNTC-C 17-2019

Subject: Specialized Transit Study - Update

Date: Wednesday, November 20, 2019

To: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

From: Kumar Ranjan, Transportation Lead, GO Implementation Office

The Specialized Transit Study (the Study) is nearing completion and draft recommendations are outlined below for Committee's reference. Staff intends to bring forward the Study report early in 2020 following additional consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to positively shape these recommendations for the implementation phase. The need for additional consultation was identified following comments from AAC members after the draft recommendations were presented at the November 14, 2019 AAC meeting.

One of the key concerns of the AAC relates to the eligibility and certification process which recommends an in-person assessment. In order to assess potential impacts versus benefits, a draft implementation plan would need to be detailed. Both staff and AAC members recognize the need for fulsome consultation in the development of the draft implementation plan.

Support from the AAC for the recommendations of the Study is critical. As such, the AAC has been engaged as a key stakeholder with a September presentation to the Committee prior to bringing forward the draft recommendations. In light of recent comments related to the final recommendations, staff intends to engage with the Accessibility Advisory Committee Working Group (AACWG) to review and shape the recommendations followed by a presentation to the AAC in January 2020 before bringing the final recommendation to the LNTC for consideration.

With these Study recommendations feeding into the Transit Governance Study currently underway, staff will engage with the AACWG in late November or early December and will seek to secure an AAC meeting in early January to receive their endorsement.

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

Kumar Ranjan,
Transportation Lead,
GO Implementation Office

Specialized Transit in Niagara Region

The draft recommendations are as follows:

I. Eligibility & Certification

1. Process be centralized under a single entity.
2. A single application form be used by all specialized transit operators.
3. Application form - available on-line and ability to complete & submit.
4. Remove the requirement for validation by a health care professional.
5. In-person assessments be introduced as part of this process.
6. Applicant's certification reflect categories of: *unconditional, temporary, and conditional (trip-by-trip)*.
7. Re-certification every 5-years

II. Trip Reservation & Scheduling

1. The reservations/trip request and scheduling functions be centralized under a single entity.
2. Enable registrants to make reservations/trip requests by telephone, app and/or web-portal (*One-Call/One-Click* capability).
3. Scheduling (route optimization, allocation of resources) to use state-of-the-art, commercially available software with a robust scheduling algorithm.

III. Development of Policies, Procedures, and Performance Metrics

1. Governing entity develop a robust set of policies, procedures and performance metrics. Policies and procedures to include but not be restricted to:
 - Advance booking requirements
 - Scheduling windows
 - Cancellations and no-shows
 - Fare policy
2. Advance discussions focused on community collaboration (e.g., Niagara Health)

3. Performance metrics to reflect industry norms regarding key performance indicators (KPIs) including requirements for service monitoring, contract compliance and CUTA reporting.

IV. Service Delivery (Dispatch and Trip Management)

1. Core specialized transit services to be provided by, and to a level of service at least equal to that as currently provided by the aggregate of the municipal and regional specialized transit providers.
2. Supplement existing core services by the use of taxis and/or transportation network companies (TNCs) to accommodate trip requests during times of day, days of week, or areas of service, when the deployment of hourly service would not meet prescribed performance metrics or to provide 'overflow' capability.
3. Use supplemental services, as described above, to accommodate future travel demand/expansion of specialized transit services.

V. Greater Link/Integration with Fixed-Route Transit Services

Recognizing that specialized transit is shared ride public transit for those unable to use accessible fixed route transit, and with an eye on a greater link or integration with accessible fixed-route transit, the following are recommendations:

1. Apply conditional (trip-by-trip) eligibility whereby for specialized transit registrants categorized as 'conditional' and where conditions can be determined (e.g., seasonal, climate/weather, topography, accessible paths of travel, proximity of trip origin/destination to fixed-route service, etc.).
2. Develop incentives and policies to address travel/mobility demand management strategies that may include but not be restricted to: travel/mobility training, fare policy, trip discovery/planning capabilities, etc.

VI. Next-Generation Mobility

The following next-generation mobility (operations, service delivery, and technology) strategies be advanced:

1. Introduce a Same-Day Service pilot for Specialized Transit through partnerships with taxi and/or transportation network companies (TNCs)
2. Technology enhancements that include:

- Real-time passenger information including the broadcast (text message or telephone call) of vehicle arrivals.
 - Self-service capabilities through an app and/or web portal to address registration, trip planning, reservations, confirmations and cancellations.
3. Mobile (cashless) payment.

Implementation Plan within the context of Transit Governance Study

Short-Term (0 to 2 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harmonizing application form• Centralized eligibility & certification process• Development of policies, procedures, and performance metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Centralized scheduling• Expanded use of supplemental services• Same-Day Pilot Program
Medium-Term (2 to 5 years)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technology – real-time info., self-serve capabilities, cashless payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater integration with fixed-route transit