



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
LINKING NIAGARA TRANSIT COMMITTEE
AGENDA

LNTC 1-2020

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

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>	
3.1 <u>Specialized Transit Study - Final Report and Recommendations</u>	1 - 18
Steve Wilkes, IBI Group	
4. <u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
5. <u>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</u>	
5.1 <u>LNTC-C 2-2020</u>	19 - 27
Specialized Transit Study Report	
6. <u>CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>	
6.1 <u>LNTC-C 1-2020</u>	28 - 32
Fare Technology Update	
6.2 <u>LNTC-C 3-2020</u>	33 - 36
Accessibility Advisory Committee Endorsement of Niagara Specialized Transit Draft Report	

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Additional LNTC Meetings

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 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).

Specialized Transit in Niagara

Recommendations *A Way Forward*

January 2020



**MOVING
TRANSIT
FORWARD**

CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE TO MORE POSSIBILITIES

Niagara  Region

Today's Agenda

- Recap:
 - Guiding Principles
 - *Imagine Possibilities* – Opportunities
- Recommendations – *A Way Forward*
- Financial Plan
- Implementation Plan
- Next Steps

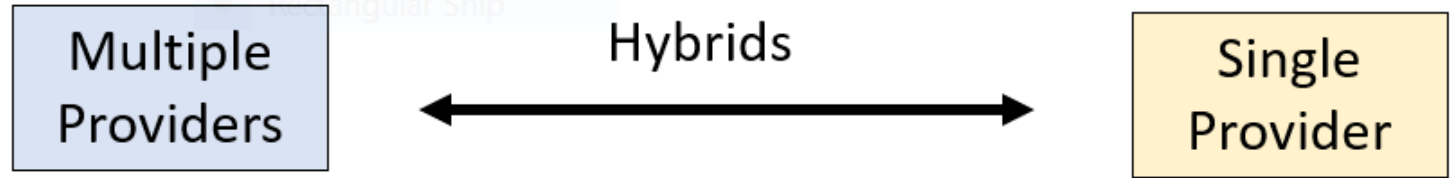
Guiding Principles – *An Eye on the Future*

A Preferred Approach Designed To:

- **Preserve the integrity** of the Region's specialized transit services for those with no alternative
 - **Maximize benefits from investments** made in accessible fixed route transit & provide flexible mobility options
 - **Compliance with AODA** (& universal design)
 - **Be fiscally responsible and accountable**
- Maximize use of existing resources
 - Increase efficiencies in service delivery
 - Enhance the customer experience
 - Leverage use of technology

Imagine Possibilities – Opportunities

Delivery Models



Models – to address core functional areas:

1. Eligibility & Certification
2. Trip Reservation & Scheduling
3. Dispatch/Trip Management
4. Service Delivery

Recommendations – Eligibility and 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.

DRAFT – for discussion

Page 1 of 5

NIAGARA SPECIALIZED TRANSIT APPLICATION FORM

Specialized Transit is a pre-booked, shared-ride, origin to destination service for persons with a permanent or temporary physical disability and/or intellectual challenge/cognitive disability.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call

<insert contact>

<insert phone number>

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE SPECIALIZED TRANSIT PROGRAM:

- Please return the completed application to <insert agency - TBD>.
- <insert agency - TBD> will notify you of your eligibility. If we require additional information, you may be requested to come in for an interview and/or an in-person assessment to provide us with more information about your disability and the reason(s) you require this service.
- All information on this application form will be kept confidential.
- Failure to completely fill out the application will delay the application process.

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

1. Name: _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)
2. Address: _____
(Apt) (Street)

(City or Town) (Postal Code)
3. Daytime Phone: () _____ Evening Phone: () _____
TTY/TDD Number: () _____ (For Hearing Impaired)
4. Date of Birth: _____
YY/MM/DD

Niagara Specialized Transit Application Form



MOVING
TRANSIT
FORWARD

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Recommendations – Eligibility and Certification (cont.)

4. In-person assessments be introduced as part of this process.
5. Applicant has option of including validation by a health care professional.

Application form has two parts: Part A - completed by all applicants. Then - one of two options:

1. Send in completed Part A; applicant required to attend an interview and in-person assessment.

Or

2. Have health care professional complete Part B, submit both Parts A and B for review and based on the information provided, applicant may be required to attend an interview and in-person assessment.

Recommendations – Eligibility and Certification (cont.)

6. Applicant's certification reflect categories of:
unconditional, temporary, and conditional (trip-by-trip).

7. Re-certification every 5-years

Unconditional: disability prevents use of conventional transit

Temporary: temporary disability

Conditional: disability where environmental or physical barriers limit their ability to consistently use conventional transit

May be denied requests to persons who have temporary or conditional eligibility if conventional transit is accessible and the person has the ability to use it.

Recommendations – Reservations & 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.

Recommendations – 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
- Cancellations and no-shows
- Scheduling windows
- Fare policy

Advance discussions focused on community collaboratives (e.g., Niagara Health)

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

Recommendations – Service Delivery

1. Core specialized transit services – comparable to level of service as currently provided by the aggregate of the municipal and regional specialized transit providers.
2. Use of supplemental taxis and/or transportation network companies (TNCs) - during times of day, days of week, areas of service, or ‘overflow’ capacity (when the deployment of hourly service would not meet prescribed performance metrics).
3. Supplemental services, as described above, be used to accommodate future travel demand/expansion of specialized transit services.

Supplemental services to be contracted on a per trip bases and hence, only pay for services consumed and may include subsidized same-day service.

Recommendations – Greater Link/Integration with Fixed-Route Transit Services

1. Apply *conditional/trip-by-trip* eligibility

Conditional - where conditions can be determined (e.g., seasonal, climate/weather, topography, accessible paths of travel, proximity of trip origin/destination to fixed-route service, transit hubs, etc.).

2. Develop incentives and policies to address travel/mobility demand management strategies

Strategies include: travel/mobility training, fare policy, trip discovery/planning capabilities, etc.

Recommendations – Same-Day Pilot Program

1. Through partnerships with taxi and/or transportation network companies (TNCs) provide subsidized, app-based (including trip request, tracking, and mobile payment) trips to specialized transit registrants.
 - Establish parameters including maximum per trip subsidy/distance and use of fare policy to influence travel behaviour.
 - For those who may not have a Smart device and/or the unbanked, ensure the provision of a call-centre and ability for trip payment by alternate means.

Recommendations – Technology

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

Growth Strategy / Financial Plan

Two scenarios:

1. Status Quo
2. Interventions

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2031</u>
% increase – <u>trips</u> :	4.3%	12.3%	20.8%

Interventions:

<u>Year:</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>2031</u>
% trips – fixed-route:	3%	6%	10%
% trips - supplemental:	20%	25%	30%

Growth Strategy / Financial Plan

OPERATING COST SUMMARY			2018	Cost Per Trip					
				2021		2026		2031	
				Status Quo	Interventions	Status Quo	Interventions	Status Quo	Interventions
Business-as-Usual	Municipal/ Regional		\$49.71	\$51.35	\$46.08	\$55.39	\$47.79	\$57.53	\$47.77
				3.3%	-7.3%	11.4%	-3.9%	15.7%	-3.9%
High Growth	Municipal/ Regional		\$49.71	\$51.80	\$46.44	\$55.89	\$48.17	\$58.04	\$48.13
				4.2%	-6.6%	12.4%	-3.1%	16.8%	-3.2%

Implementation Plan

Within context of *Transit Governance Study*

Near-Term (0 - 2 years)

- Harmonizing application form
- Centralized eligibility & certification process
- Development of policies, procedures, and performance metrics
- Centralized scheduling
- Expanded use of supplemental services
- Same-Day Pilot Program

Mid-Term (2 - 5 years)

- Technology – real-time info., self-serve capabilities, cashless payment
- Greater integration with fixed-route transit

Key Contacts



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Steve Wilks – Project Manager
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A background network diagram consisting of dark grey circular nodes connected by thin grey lines, forming a complex web. The top half of the image has a dark grey background, while the bottom half is a solid teal color.

MOVING TRANSIT FORWARD



January 2020

CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE TO MORE POSSIBILITIES

Subject: Specialized Transit Study Report

Report to: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

Report date: Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the recommendations of the Specialized Transit in Niagara Region study **BE ENDORSED**; and
2. That a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the local area municipalities.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the Specialized Transit in Niagara Region study (IBI Group, 2020).
- The *Niagara Transit Governance and Service Strategy, 2017* by Dillon Consulting (Dillon Report) identified the need to undertake a further study to develop a strategy on specialized transit services within the larger governance framework of consolidated Regional transit services.
- The Inter-Municipal Transit (IMT) Service Implementation Strategy (LNTC 21-2018) endorsed this study as a key workplan item.
- This Study has been headed by a project team consisting of staff from the Inter-municipal Transit Working Group (IMTWG).
- The results of this study will serve as an input to the Transit Governance Study currently underway.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial impacts arising out of this report, however there will be financial impacts in carrying forward these recommendations. Staff will bring forward an update report once the recommendations contained in this report are resolved for further direction from LNTC.

Analysis

Study Team

The team was composed of staff members from St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland, Niagara Region, and Fort Erie transit systems.

Stakeholder Consultation

Extensive stakeholder consultation was carried out as part of this Study including:

- Public Information Centres (PICs) – Two rounds of PICs, each involving two separate PICs were held. Round 1 was held upon completion of the exiting conditions and the common industry practices. Round 2 was held to get public feedback on the recommended approach. In total over 50 people attended these events.
- Surveys – Surveys were carried out using online and paper based methods. The paper-based survey was distributed to riders in specialized transit vehicles operated by Niagara Region and area municipalities. Additionally, off-board survey forms were distributed to the attendees of the Round 1 PICs, and through the area municipalities. In total 250 surveys were returned.
- Focus Group Meetings were held with Niagara Health and Community Organizations, Niagara Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), the IMTWG, the LNTC, Niagara Region Seniors Services, and First Nations.

The public and stakeholder consultation, plus the review of peer transit systems and a review of specialized transit in Niagara informed the key recommendations of the study. In late 2019, it was identified that there was a need for additional consultation with the AAC. Staff completed this consultation on January 7th, 2020 and the AAC approved the recommendations of the report. Niagara Region staff have committed to ongoing consultation with the AAC on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the study.

The goals of this Study were to:

1. Review the specialized transit systems in Niagara;
2. Project ridership demand;
3. Develop financial forecasts; and,
4. Recommend service enhancements for specialized transit.

These goals were achieved through the following research, data collection and interpretation, and community consultation.

Baseline information on existing municipal specialized transit services was developed using: the operating data trends for Niagara Specialized Transit, Niagara Falls Chair-A-Van, St. Catharines Para Transit, WellTrans, Fort Erie Accessible Transit (FAST), Pelham Specialized Transit, and Niagara-on-the-Lake Accessible Transit Service; and a scan of the private and not-for-profit service providers.

Future specialized transit ridership demand was developed using a comprehensive demand forecast. Projected ridership was then used to estimate the future operating and capital costs.

A review of Niagara Specialized Transit operations was conducted to identify the current challenges with the system and provide recommendations on how to improve existing service. The key findings of this review are:

- Riders have a favourable view of drivers and staff
- Difficulty booking trips—including need to call multiple agencies (municipal & regional travel)
- Poor on-time performance or rides do not show up
- Excessive travel times
- Inconsistent eligibility criteria and processes
- Residents of communities without specialized transit (i.e. West Niagara) feel disadvantaged in terms of equity and access

These key findings as well as a review of the specialized transit systems for peer systems (Durham Region Transit, Grand River Transit, and York Region Transit) and technological trends in specialized transit inform the recommendations outlined below.

The project team established guiding principles to help develop the key recommendations. These principles were:

- **Preserve the integrity** of the Region's specialized transit services for those with no alternative
- **Maximize the benefits from investments** made in accessible fixed route transit and provide flexible mobility options
- **Compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** and principles of universal design
- **Be fiscally responsible and accountable**

The guiding principles were coupled with the objectives of maximizing use of existing resources, increasing efficiency in service delivery, enhancing the customer experience,

and leveraging use of technology to improve future services to create recommendations for change that do not compromise service to the ridership.

Key Recommendations

The key recommendations are grouped into six areas and are as follows:

1. Eligibility & Certification of Riders

- Process be centralized under a single entity
- A single application form be used by all specialized transit operators in the region
- Digital application form available to applicants with the ability to complete and submit on-line
- Remove the requirement for validation by a health care professional and in-person assessments be introduced as part of this process
- Applicant's certification reflect categories of: *unconditional, temporary, and conditional (trip-by-trip)*
- Re-certification every five years for all applicants

2. Trip Reservation & Scheduling

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

3. Development of Policies, Procedures, and Performance Metrics

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

4. Service Delivery (Dispatch and Trip Management)

- Core specialized transit services to be provided by, and to a level of service as currently provided by the aggregate of the municipal and regional specialized transit providers
- 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
- Use supplemental services, as described above, to accommodate future travel demand/expansion of specialized transit services

5. 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:

- 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.)
- 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.

6. Next-Generation Mobility

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

- Introduce a Specialized Transit Same-Day Pilot Program through partnerships with taxi and/or transportation network companies (TNCs)
- Technology enhancement 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
 - Introduction of mobile (cashless) payment

Recommendations have been outlined under short-term (0 to 2 years), and medium-term (2 to 5 years).

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

It is worth noting that the Specialized Transit in Niagara Region report (IBI 2020) and its recommendations will serve as an input to the Transit Governance Study currently being undertaken by Optimus SBR under the direction of a CAO Working Group consisting of municipal CAO's.

Alternatives Reviewed

The specialized transit travel demand forecast was developed to inform the future operating and capital needs with the growth projected under the Business as Usual (BAU), and High Growth scenarios. These forecasts project specialized transit clients and trips for the two scenarios for the years 2018 (Base), 2021, 2026, and 2031.

Order of Magnitude financial impacts were assessed under the same two service delivery scenarios:

BAU Scenario	Business as Usual—No change in how service is delivered
Intervention Scenario	Interventions/ Alternate Delivery Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accommodating an increasing number of trips on accessible fixed-route transit services • greater use of supplemental (taxis or transportation network company) services to accommodate trip requests when the deployment of regular service would not meet prescribed performance metrics or to provide 'overflow' capability • accommodating future service expansion with the use of supplemental service providers

Table 1 and Table 2 demonstrate the order of magnitude with respect to operating cost impacts under the two scenarios described above.

As shown in Table 1 under a BAU scenario, the ridership grows by 20% to 2031 however, the operating cost grows by 38%. In the event of high growth scenario the ridership grows by 40% but operating cost increases by 61%. The exponential growth in operating cost under a high growth scenario could be unsustainable, therefore, alternatives should be examined to determine if there are solutions for containing operating costs while ridership increases.

Table 1: Operating Costs – BAU Scenario					
	Base Year		Medium Growth		High Growth
	2018	2021	2026	2031	2031
Specialized Transit Trips	124,700	129,900	139,200	149,500	174,100
Growth over Base		4%	12%	20%	40%
Net Operating Cost	\$5,667,000	\$6,082,000	\$7,012,000	\$7,811,000	\$9,142,000
Variance over Base		7%	24%	38%	61%

Table 2 shows how specific interventions can result in a reduction in the net operating cost due to increasing number of trips being delivered through alternative methods such as increased integration with conventional transit and use of technology enabled Transportation network companies (TNCs) and taxi-cabs. Under the Intervention Scenario, the actual impact to Specialized Transit is reduced. Ridership growth to 2031 only increases by 8% and net operating costs are partially offset resulting in a lower variance over base by 2031 because ridership is shifted to conventional transit in the range of 4%-12% and 30-40% of the ridership also shifts to TNCs or taxis.

Table 2: Operating Costs – Intervention Scenario				
	Base Year	Medium Growth		
	2018	2021	2026	2031
Specialized Transit Trips Alternative Delivery¹		4,400	9,900	15,300
Specialized Transit Trips	124,700	126,600	132,100	136,700
Growth over Base		1%	6%	10%
Net Operating Cost	\$5,667,000	\$5,348,000	\$5,769,000	\$5,953,000
Variance over Base		(6%)	2%	5%
1 Estimated trips to be delivered through alternative means (Taxis & TNCs)				

Table 3 shows the aggregated 10 Year Capital Forecasts based on their fleet replacement and expansion projections by major municipal transit service providers (St. Catharines Transit, Niagara Falls Transit, and Welland Transit) under the BAU Scenario. It is assumed the fleet requirements would still apply under the Intervention Scenario to form part of the core operations with the growth in demand handled through an alternative delivery framework. Specialized transit scheduling software was identified as a short term need under the Intervention Scenario and included in the forecasts.

Table 3: Specialized Transit Capital Costs				
	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	10 Year Total
	2020-2021	2022-2024	2025-2028	
# Vehicles	9	8	8	25
Vehicle Cost	\$1,620,000	\$1,325,000	\$1,610,000	\$4,555,000
Technology Costs (Scheduling Software)	\$400,000			\$400,000
Total	\$2,020,000	\$1,325,000	\$1,610,000	\$4,955,000

Continuing with business as usual was considered as an alternative, however this would result in a missed opportunity to optimize the current specialized transit services in light of jurisdictional barriers and recent technological changes. Additionally, the service cost increases due to the future ridership demand would not be sustainable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

- Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Objective 3.1: Advancing Regional Transit and GO Rail Services

Advance and advocate for Niagara's effort towards integrated and efficient conventional, specialized and higher order transit, enabling seamless and connective travel for all people throughout Niagara, the Hamilton area and the Greater Toronto area.

Other Pertinent Reports

LNTC-C 5-2019	Specialized Transit Study Update
LNTC-C 12-2019	Transit Governance Study Update
LNTC-C 9-2018	Niagara Specialized Transit Review Terms of Reference

Prepared by:

Robert Salewytch
Program Manager Transit Services
Public Works

Recommended and Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting, Chief Administrative Officer /
Commissioner of Public Works

This report was prepared in consultation with Adam Arbour - St. Catharines Transit Commission, Sue Wheeler and Carla Stout - Niagara Falls Transit, Alicia Moore - Welland Transit, Jennifer Pennell-Ajie - Fort Erie Transit, Steve Murphy, Accessibility Coordinator, and reviewed by Heather Talbot - Corporate Services Finance, and Matt Robinson – Director GO Implementation.

Subject: Fare Technology Update

Report to: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

Report date: Wednesday, January 29, 2020

Recommendations

That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to update LNTC on the common transit fare technology that was identified by the Inter-municipal Transit Working Group (IMTWG) in its 2018-19 workplan.
- The Niagara Transit Service Delivery and Governance Strategy (Dillon 2017), identified the shortfalls of the overall fare systems currently being used, and recommended that harmonizing the fare structure as well as payment technology would serve as a key enabler to a more connective and integrated transit system in Niagara.
- St. Catharines Transit Commission implemented mobile ticketing in April 2019 and IMTWG staff believe this technology should be pursued, in the future, as the preferable and the most cost-effective solution for integrated fare technology in Niagara.
- The IMTWG has unanimously determined that strategically delaying the implementation of new fare technology hardware will help to streamline the process and avoid duplication of effort and costs in advance of a governance decision.

Financial Considerations

While there are no direct financial impacts associated with this report, the overall common fare strategy and fare technology strategies do contain a number of financial implications for each of the transit agencies in Niagara. The following considerations reflect the rationale for delaying a recommended strategy and quantifying the financial impacts until a future date:

- Masabi as the Technology Vendor: As detailed in the analysis section of this report, the IMTWG has two options for using Masabi as its mobile ticketing solution. The

first would be to procure existing third party hardware and the second would be to wait until Masabi's in-house hardware (which is available in late 2020). The cost of the in-house solution is estimated at roughly 40% of the cost of the existing third party option, therefore delaying acquisition until this hardware is available would be financially prudent.

- **Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) Approvals:** This joint grant program between federal, provincial and municipal governments aims to provide funding for the improvement of public transit systems across Ontario. The program only requires a 27% contribution from the local municipality and, is therefore, an extremely cost effective way to enhance the transit system. Niagara's transit providers submitted applications in Q2 of 2019 and funding approvals are currently pending. If Niagara was to proceed with the fare technology upgrade prior to those approvals, the transit providers would be required to bear the full costs of implementation as payments cannot be made retroactively for completed projects.
- **Procurement:** When the time comes to procure the hardware as discussed in this report, the IMTWG will investigate the potential benefits of a joint procurement effort versus individual purchases.
- **Governance Review:** With the Transit Governance Study pending completion in April 2020, the financial landscape of transit in Niagara could be significantly altered after the recommendations of the study. This financial uncertainty combined with the other factors above make strategically delaying the implementation of new fare technology a practical decision from a financial perspective.

Analysis

St. Catharines Transit Commission implemented mobile ticketing in April 2019 using a vendor already partnered and integrated with Transit, the existing route/schedule information app used in Niagara (and around the world). This implementation was done without the purchase of validation hardware for the vehicles and at present, relies on bus operators visually validating the mobile tickets. To date, the launch of mobile ticketing in St. Catharines has been a success and has seen the customer adoption rate steadily increase from 2.1% in April 2019 to 12.5% in December 2019.

St. Catharines Transit Commission will be testing validation hardware to be used with their mobile ticketing in early 2020. The purchase of validation hardware for every vehicle in Niagara is the next step that need to be taken in fare technology in order to launch mobile ticketing region-wide, across all transit properties. Validation hardware also comes with other customer benefits such as being able to implement account-based ticketing. Account-based ticketing (ABT) is a ticketless way of allowing people to travel on public transit. In an ABT environment, passengers can use what they have in their pocket to travel, whether it be a contactless bank card, QR code paper ticket, mobile device or a smart wearable device. The payment will link with their account and ensure the passenger is charged the best fare.

Staff has determined that it is prudent to strategically delay the implementation of mobile ticketing and the associated validation hardware until the end of 2020 (or possibly early 2021) for three main reasons:

- 1) Technology – St. Catharines Transit Commission’s current mobile ticketing provider (Masabi) has recently developed an in-house validation hardware solution. This hardware and the associated ABT will likely not be available until the end of 2020. This next generation hardware is going to cost significantly less than any of the hardware currently available from third party vendors and will increase efficiency by reducing reliance on those external vendors to push software and firmware updates to the hardware. Ensuring that each Niagara transit property is utilizing the same hardware streamlines any backend processes by avoiding the need to integrate across different platforms.
- 2) Governance – The outcome of the Transit Governance Study could greatly impact the way mobile ticketing is launched in Niagara. The IMTWG recognizes that the current governance structure consisting of multiple providers would require the development of an app which will require passengers to choose which Niagara transit system they want to purchase a ticket from, however, this process may radically change in the short-term and make the app obsolete. A change in governance will result in the need to develop a completely brand-new app with added timer, cost and service impacts. In addition, the cost of developing an app that can accommodate the complex business rules surrounding current separate fare revenues is significant, thus exacerbating the wastage should it become obsolete in the near term. If the proposed timeline on a possible governance change was not as imminent (April 2020), it may be worth

pursuing this now and developing another new app in a few years time; however that is not the case.

- 3) Funding – In 2019, each municipality with transit service developed a fare technology related application for the Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program (ICIP) with the expectation that the funding would be announced later that year. Based on the collective experience of the IMTWG, the evaluations of those applications are still underway and approvals are not expected for another two - three months at the earliest.

It should also be noted that the mobile ticketing and ABT solution proposed by St. Catharines Transit Commission's mobile ticketing provider has been discussed with PRESTO, the fare payment agency responsible for Metrolinx's GO Transit and UP Express systems. The IMTWG has engaged with PRESTO to this effect, and there is a willingness from PRESTO to examine potential partnerships with Niagara municipalities on a pilot fare payment program with the St. Catharines Transit Commission's current supplier. This may lead to an integrated ticketing experience with PRESTO transit systems, providing a seamless customer experience between local, Regional and GO Transit.

Alternatives Reviewed

The alternative considered was implementing mobile ticketing throughout the Niagara Region in Q2 with visual validation only. The issue with this alternative is that should the LNTC recommend a new governance option, all of the resources and efforts put into the app development will need to be redeveloped and duplicated. A governance change will result in a completely brand-new app needing to be developed again with considerable cost, time and service impacts.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Objective 3.1: Advancing Regional Transit and GO Rail Services

Advance and advocate for Niagara's effort towards integrated and efficient conventional, specialized and higher order transit, enabling seamless and connective travel for all people throughout Niagara, the Hamilton area and the Greater Toronto area.

Other Pertinent Reports

LNTC-C 10-2019 Fare Harmonization and Implementation Strategy

Prepared by:

Robert Salewytch
Program Manager Transit Services
Public Works

Recommend and Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer /
Commissioner of Public Works

This report was prepared in consultation with the IMTWG; Rob Salewytch, Program Manager - Transit Services, and reviewed by Heather Talbot, Financial & Special Projects Consultant and Matt Robinson, Director GO Implementation Office

MEMORANDUM

LNTC-C 3-2020

Subject: Accessibility Advisory Committee Endorsement of Niagara Specialized Transit Draft Report

Date: January 29, 2020

To: Linking Niagara Transit Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

The Accessibility Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on January 7, 2020, passed the following resolution respecting the Niagara Specialized Transit Report Draft Report:

3.1 Specialized Transit in Niagara

Moved by D. Whipple

Seconded by I. Greaves

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee **ENDORSE** the Niagara Region Specialized Transit Draft Report.

Carried

A copy of the minutes of the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting held on Tuesday, January 7, 2020, is attached to this memorandum.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION**

**AAC 01-2020
Tuesday, January 7, 2020
Committee Room 4
Niagara Region Headquarters
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold ON**

Committee: Councillor Ip (Chair), I. Greaves, L. Hay, T. Hore, B. Kon, H. Matthews, V. Sparling, D. Whipple (Vice-Chair)

Absent/Regrets: G. Eden, C. Peddle, C. Theal

Staff: K. Lotimer, Legislative Coordinator, T. McClellan, Building Services Manager, Community Services, C. Mustard, Real Estate Coordinator, S. Murphy, Accessibility Advisor, C. Perreault, Web Communications Coordinator, M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Project, K. Whittard, Clinical Team Manager, Public Health

Others Present: M. Ferrusi, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, T. Morden, Niagara Regional Police, M.J. Wszynski, Niagara Centre for Independent Living

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Ip called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Specialized Transit in Niagara

Steve Wilks, Project Manager, IBI Group, through a conference call, provided information respecting Specialized Transit in Niagara - Recommendations - A Way Forward. Topics of the presentation included:

- Recap
 - Guiding Principles
 - Imagine Possibilities - Opportunities
- Recommendations - A Way Forward
- Implementation Plan
- Draft Specialized Transit Application Form
- Next Steps

Moved by D. Whipple
Seconded by I. Greaves

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee **ENDORSE** the Niagara Region
Specialized Transit Draft Report.

Carried

4. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

There were no items for consideration.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by T. Hore
Seconded by L. Hay

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

AAC 04-2019
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 17, 2019

AAC 05-2019
Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2019

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Next Scheduled Meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee

Councillor Ip reminded Committee members that this meeting was called by the Committee Chair and was not a regularly scheduled meeting. She advised that as the next meeting was scheduled to be held in three weeks and there were insufficient agenda items; Committee members should consider cancelling the meeting scheduled for January 28, 2020.

Moved by D. Whipple
Seconded by H. Matthews

That the Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, **BE CANCELLED**.

Carried

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in Committee Room 4.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Councillor Ip
Committee Chair

Kelly Lotimer
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk