

Niagara Specialized Transit Timeline

Public Works Committee
PW 53-2020

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A background graphic featuring a network of interconnected nodes and lines, resembling a molecular or digital structure. The nodes are represented by dark grey circles of varying sizes, connected by thin, light grey lines. The overall pattern is more dense on the left side and fades towards the right. The background is a solid dark grey.

MOVING TRANSIT FORWARD

CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE TO MORE POSSIBILITIES

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Niagara  **Region**

Niagara Specialized Transit (NST)

- Hours of Operation – 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday
- Shared-ride, pre-booked subset of Niagara Region's transit services designed to provide inter-municipal transportation options to those riders who may require additional levels of accommodation
- The service was created at a time before conventional transit vehicles were mandated to have accessibility features such as wheelchair ramps/lifts, priority seating, and audio/visual announcement systems

Service Levels – Statistics

Details	2019 Budget	2019 Actual	2018 Actual	Var \$ 2019A vs 2019B FAV/(UNFAV)	Var % 2019A vs 2019B FAV/(UNFAV)	Explanation
# of Trips	31,200	28,680	30,057	(2,520)	(8%)	Renegotiated contract terms
Operator Payments	\$2,212,918	\$1,987,695	\$2,627,753	\$225,223	10%	
Fare Revenue	\$(132,600)	\$(120,670)	\$(151,123)	\$(11,930)	(9%)	
Net Expense	\$2,080,318	\$1,867,024	\$2,476,630	\$213,294	10%	

NST Timeline – 2006 - 2015

2006-2015

- Service Delivered by The Red Cross
 - Fleet owned and maintained by Niagara Region

2015

- Contract awarded to The BTS Network after competitive bid process (RFP)
 - Fleet owned and maintained by Service Provider

NST Timeline - 2017-2018

- Changes in AODA (i.e. fare parity, operating hours = conventional transit) lead to significant ridership growth (PW 51-2017)
- As a direct result, NST operating budget grew substantially year over year to accommodate spike in ridership
- Program still ran over-budget despite increases/program changes
- High Trip Threshold provision from Agreement met – triggering renegotiation (PW 40-2018)
- NST Operational Review + Specialized Transit Study began as part of Niagara Transit Governance Review (LNTC 9-2018)

NST Timeline - 2019

- Amending Agreement Authorized by Council (PW 40-2019)
 - New terms provide greater control and oversight thus resolving the budget crisis
 - Two-year agreement with option to extend four times (1 year per extension)
 - Strategically intended to align contract termination with future (potential) governance transition
- Specialized Transit Study recommends service improvements (PW 39-2019)
 - Remove need for applications
 - Allow same day booking
 - Enable online booking and payment
 - Co-mingling of riders (specialized and conventional)
- NRT OnDemand authorized by Council (PW 60-2019)

NST Timeline - 2020

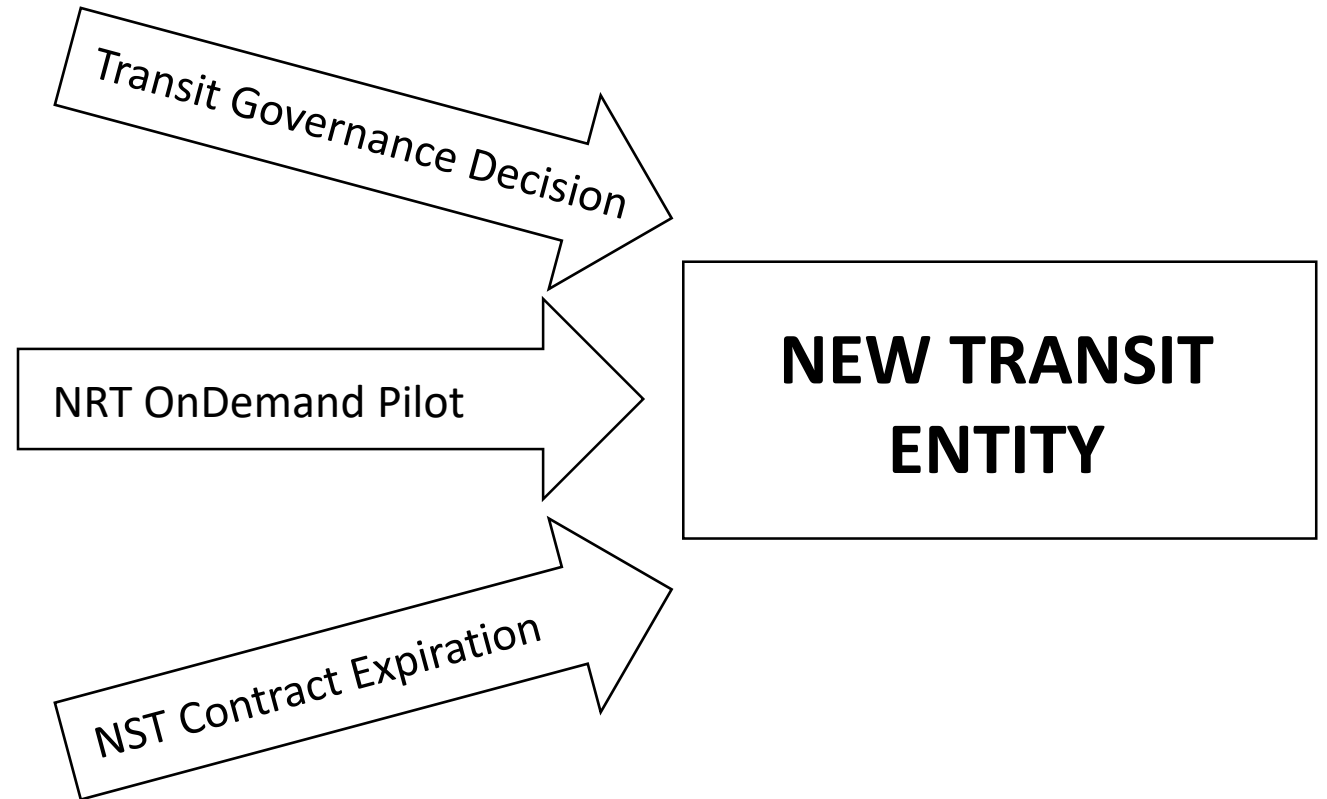
- COVID-19
 - Delays Niagara Transit Governance Study decision to 2021
 - Delays launch of NRT OnDemand from April to August
 - Delays implementation of fare payment technology to 2021
- NRT OnDemand Pilot launches August 17
 - Service includes recommendations from Specialized Transit Study
 - Service expansion into Niagara-on-the-Lake launches November 23

Creating Social & Transit Equity

- NRT OnDemand Pilot testing co-mingling of riders (mobility challenged and conventional users on the same service)
- Accessibility advocates long desire co-mingling to break down social and equity barriers
- Early NRT OnDemand results showing significant positive results
- If successful, would eliminate need for separate specialized division
- Vision is to enable a single service to meet social, financial and rider experience expectations employing a fully accessible fleet, booked and paid for with web-based, customizable profiles, using on-demand, co-mingled service delivery for all rural or underserved areas of Niagara

Achieving Strategic Alignment

Renew NST Amending Agreement per terms previously approved (PW 40-2019 & PW 53-2020) to allow transit governance decision/ transition, NRT OnDemand pilot and NST contract expiry to strategically align



Questions?

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