



Niagara Transit Commission

Review of Corporate and Administrative Support Services

Final Report

April 21, 2022

Redacted



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Our review was limited to, and our recommendations are based on, the procedures conducted. The scope of our engagement was, by design, limited and therefore the observations and recommendations should be in the context of the procedures performed. In this capacity, we are not acting as external auditors and, accordingly, our work does not constitute an audit, examination, attestation, or specified procedures engagement in the nature of that conducted by external auditors on financial statements or other information and does not result in the expression of an opinion.

This report may include or make reference to future oriented financial information. Readers are cautioned that since these financial projections are based on assumptions regarding future events, actual results will vary from the information presented even if the hypotheses occur, and the variations may be material.

Pursuant to the terms of our engagement, it is understood and agreed that all decisions in connection with the implementation of advice and recommended opportunities as provided by KPMG during the course of this engagement shall be the responsibility of, and made by, the Region. KPMG has not and will not perform management functions or make management decisions for the Region.

Comments in this report are not intended, nor should they be interpreted, to be legal advice or opinion.

KPMG has no present or contemplated interest in the Region nor are we an insider or associate of the Region and its management team. Accordingly, we believe we are independent of the Region and are acting objectively.



Introduction

A. Background to the review

The Regional Municipality of Niagara (the “Region”), in conjunction with ten local area municipalities (“LAMs”), has approved the establishment of a local board that will consolidate the delivery of transit services into a single organization. The use of a transit commission is intended to provide a range of benefits to riders, including but not limited to the delivery of transit in a more integrated and seamless service and greater consistency in terms of route schedules and operating hours. At the same time, a consolidated approach to service delivery is intended to achieve operating efficiencies through the realization of economies of scale and the elimination of duplication within the multiple transit systems in the Region, providing the potential for greater value for money and increased capacity for strategy development, planning and analysis and the delivery of additional services.

Currently, conventional transit services are delivered by ten LAMs, with the City of Niagara Falls (“Niagara Falls”), the City of St. Catharines (“St. Catharines”) and the City of Welland (“Welland”) (collectively the “Current Transit Providers”) providing transit services directly through the use of municipal personnel and other resources¹. Both Niagara Falls and Welland have structured transit services as municipal departments, while St. Catharines has established an independent transit commission. The remaining LAMs, as well as the Region, provide transit services either through (i) contractual arrangements with other municipalities or third party service provided.

Direct Delivery	Inter-Municipal Agreements	Third Party Service Providers	No Conventional Transit Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niagara Falls St. Catharines Welland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Region (contracts with Niagara Falls, St. Catharines and Welland for inter-municipal routes) City of Thorold (contracts with St. Catharines) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Lincoln Town of Fort Erie Town of Pelham Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake City of Port Colborne Town of Grimsby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Township of Wainfleet Township of West Lincoln

¹ Pursuant to the terms of our engagement, we have limited our analysis to the Current Transit Providers as the level of corporate and administrative support services required for the delivery of transit through third party arrangements is considered to be limited.

Introduction

In connection with the establishment of the Niagara Transit Commission (the “Commission”), the Region has retained KPMG LLP (“KPMG”) to undertake an analysis of potential options for the delivery of corporate and administrative services to the Commission, which includes:

- An evaluation as the assignment of responsibility for service delivery between the Region (through shared service arrangements) and the Commission (i.e. directly delivery) in order to identify a preferred model for service delivery;
- The development of a suggested organizational structure that reflects the allocation of responsibility for service delivery;
- An analysis of the financial implications of the suggested organizational structure and service delivery model; and
- Potential courses of action that could be considered by the Region and LAMs in connection with the implementation of the proposed organizational structure and service delivery model.

While the suggested courses of action identified through our review are intended to assist with the establishment of the Commission, we understand that the ultimate responsibility for establishing the organizational structure of the Commission will be the responsibility of its Governance Board and executive leadership, which have yet to be established. As a result, the ultimate structure of the Commission may vary from the model outlined in our report.

Current State Overview

A. Corporate and administrative services defined

For the purposes of our review, we have considered the following functions to be included within the definition of corporate and administrative support services:

Personnel	Financial	Information Technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment Employee relations Employee programs Timekeeping Payroll, pension and benefits Compensation planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transaction processing (revenue and expenditure) Budgeting Financial reporting (internal and external) Audit (internal and external) Asset management planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational systems and technology (e.g. scheduling and time keeping systems, farebox system, automated vehicle locating/monitoring systems) Backbone systems and technology (e.g. PeopleSoft ERP, cybersecurity systems, Office 365, data centre) User help desk support

Maintenance	Corporate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fleet maintenance Facilities maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement Legal Insurance and risk management Communications Corporate secretariat and administration

Current State Overview

B. Current structure of transit services

Included as Appendix A are organizational charts for each of the Current Transit Providers which depict lines of reporting, staffing levels and an indication of the nature of job functions. As noted in the organizational charts and as summarized below, the levels of staffing and internal capacities are reflective of the overall size of the transit operations.

	Region	Welland	Niagara Falls	St. Catharines	Total
Conventional transit ridership	1,065,933	649,720	2,590,032	5,078,779	9,384,464
Revenue vehicles (conventional only)	21	18	45	73	157
Total staff ³	3	55	105	203	367
Staffing levels for selected corporate and administrative support functions:					
• Human resources (includes payroll)	—	—	—	2	2
• Finance	— ⁴	1	1	3	5
• Information technology	—	—	2	1	3
• Fleet maintenance	—	4	25	26	55
• Facilities maintenance	—	—	—	1	1
• Communications	—	—	—	1	1
• Planning and analysis	1	—	—	2	3

With the exception of St. Catharines, corporate and administrative functions for transit services appear to be delivered predominantly by municipal resources with the exception of fleet maintenance and some aspects of information technology (operational systems such as scheduling and time keeping systems, farebox system, automated vehicle locating/monitoring systems).

³ Staffing levels are derived from the Operational and Jurisdictional Findings Report dated March 25, 2020 prepared by Optimus SBR. In certain instance, variances were identified between the report, staffing levels listed in the organizational charts and staff listings provided by the Current Transit Providers. However, we do not consider this variances to be material to our review.

⁴ While the Region has assigned a Program Financial Specialist to transit on a full-time basis, we understand that this individual is primarily responsible for project-based analysis and advice (e.g. transit consolidation, GO Transit Initiatives) as opposed to supporting the Region's delivery of transit services.

Jurisdictional Review



As part of our review, we have undertaken a review of the organizational structures and staffing for selected transit commissions, the purpose of which was to determine:

- Approaches adopted by other organization delivery of corporate and administrative support services, specifically whether delivered by the commissions respective municipa
- Organizational structures used by the selected trans commissions, which could provide insight potential models that could be adopted
- Indicators as to the number of staff required Commission following the consolidation services in Niagara

Transit Commission	Annual Ridership (2019)
1. Transit Windsor	8,430,749
2. London Transit Commission	24,599,655
3. Hamilton Street Railway Company	21,659,817
4. Durham Region Transit	11,083,538
5. St. John's	3,277,811

Jurisdictional Review

Key themes from the jurisdictional review include the following:

1. There appear to be three models for the delivery of transit services adopted by the comparator organizations:
 - **Fully stand-alone transit commissions (London, St. John's).** In these instances, the transit commissions are responsible for the full range of governance and operating activities associated with transit. While there is some coordination between the transit commissions and their respective municipalities (e.g. adherence to municipal procurement policies, coordination on asset management and capital financing), the commissions utilize their own resources for corporate and administrative support services.
 - **Hybrid transit commissions (Durham).** Similar to St. Catharines, Durham Transit has adopted a model whereby the commission is responsible for fleet maintenance, with finance, facilities maintenance and information technology services partially undertaken by the commission. Based on our review of the commission's organizational chart and budget, it appears that other corporate support services, including human resources, legal and planning are undertaken by the Region of Durham.
 - **Shell transit commissions (Windsor, Hamilton).** In these instances, transit commissions are effectively shell corporations, with municipal staff responsible for the delivery of transit services on behalf of the commission. For example, the Hamilton Street Railway Company retains ownership of transit vehicles but has no staff, while Windsor Transit is structured as a component of the City's Infrastructure Services department.
2. Regardless of the model adopted, there appears to be a degree of commonality in that certain functions, particularly fleet maintenance, facilities maintenance, finance and information technology either (i) embedded within the transit function (which may reside within the municipality as opposed to the commission); or (ii) provided by the City through teams that are exclusively dedicated to transit. Based on our discussions with representatives of the transit commissions included in our analysis, we understand that this reflects both:
 - The importance of these functions to service delivery for transit, with fleet maintenance, scheduling, dispatch and the operation of key systems (e.g. fare box systems) cited as critical elements for maintaining scheduled transit service. In the case of the Hamilton, we understand that fleet maintenance was previously provided by the City's fleet maintenance function but was transferred to transit due to concerns over service levels; and
 - The degree of complexity associated with aspects of transit operations, specifically with respect to provisions for bus operators under the collective bargaining agreements with the Amalgamated Transit Union that impact scheduling, timekeeping and payroll processing.

With the exception of those services that have the potential to directly impact service delivery, and other than the stand-alone transit commissions, corporate and administrative support services such as legal, procurement and human resources are generally delivered through a shared arrangement with the respective municipality.

Jurisdictional Review

3. From an organizational design perspective, the current organizational structures of Niagara Falls and St. Catharines are generally consistent with the transit commissions selected for the jurisdictional review, with separate functional units established for operations and maintenance, and in the case of St. Catharines financial services.
4. In addition, staffing levels for corporate and administrative support services appear to be generally consistent with the selected comparator transit authorities. With respect to finance, the staffing complement of the combined Current Transit Providers is arguably more reflective of a standalone transit commission as opposed to an integrated finance function.

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Option Analysis

For the purposes of our review, we have identified three potential options that could be considered by the Region for the delivery of corporate and administrative support services by the Commission:

- **Option 1 – Full Integration.** Similar to the so-called shell transit commissions, this option would involve the Region delivering all corporate and administrative support services to the Commission. Additionally, this model considers that the Region would not establish dedicated teams for the Commission but rather would fully integrate the Commission's requirements into the Region's existing corporate and administrative support functions.
- **Option 2 – Hybrid Service Delivery.** Under this option, corporate and administrative support services would be shared between the Region and the Commission, based on the following considerations:
 - Services that are considered to be critical to the delivery of transit services would be delivered by dedicated resources, either (1) staff employed directly by the Commission; and (2) dedicated teams within the Region. Services are considered to be critical in nature if a limitation on their delivery has the potential to disrupt transit services and may include:
 - Services that are delivered at a different level/schedule than the Region and as such, require resources at different times than otherwise available through the Region; and/or
 - Services that are inherently unique or complicated due to the nature of transit services and as such, require specific knowledge and/or expertise.
 - Other corporate and administrative support services that would be delivered by the Region through a shared service arrangement. These services would generally include services that are common to the Region and do not require a different level of knowledge, skill set or resource availability.
- **Option 3 – Full Stand-Alone.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for all corporate and administrative support services, with linkages to the Region to coordinate activities and matters of common interest⁵.

For the purposes of our report, we have evaluated the potential options on a service-by-service basis.

⁵ Examples of matters of common interest would include administration of Provincial Gas Tax funding (which would be received by the Region and flowed to the Commission) and strategies for the use of debt that could potentially impact the Region's debt capacity limits.

Option Analysis

Our evaluation of each of the potential options is based on the following considerations:

- **Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?** Transit services are arguably recognized as a customer-facing essential service given their importance on transporting individuals for employment, education and other purposes in an affordable manner. Accordingly, service delivery models should attempt to minimize potential disruptions in service delivery – for example, key operating technologies and systems such as scheduling software and farebox systems are seen as critical to ensure adherence to transit schedules, thereby requiring an appropriate level of resources and priority assigned to these services. We understand that the issues of resource availability and responsiveness are seen as particularly important for transit services given the scheduled operating hours (e.g. weekends, before and after regular business hours).
- **Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?** As noted in the jurisdictional review, different approaches have been adopted for the delivery of corporate and administrative support services that, with the exception of standalone commissions, involve a sharing of responsibilities with their respective municipality. The different approaches to allocating responsibilities for corporate and administrative support services can provide an indicator as potential options that can be employed by the Commission.
- **Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commissions?** The Region has already established approaches to service delivery for both internal departments and outside agencies (e.g. Niagara Regional Police Service), providing another indicator of potential best practices.
- **Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?** While the direct delivery of corporate and administrative services would allow the Commission to control service levels and in doing so, ensure alignment with a focus on customer service, to the extent that the Commission does not possess a critical mass for certain functions (e.g. in-house legal counsel), the cost of a direct delivery model may be higher than a more cost efficient strategy of sharing resources with the Region. We believe this is particularly relevant for services that are not transactional in nature or which are not consistently and frequently required to support transit services.

For each of the options identified, we have considered the extent to which the option addresses the above-noted considerations, based on the following rating scale:

● Most effective in meeting the consideration ◐ Partially effective in meeting the consideration ○ Least effective in meeting the consideration

The results of our evaluation, and the suggested service delivery model for corporate and administrative support services, are provided in the following chapters.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Human Resources



Human Resources

A. Overview of the service

Human resources encompasses a range of personnel-related activities and services, including but not limited to:

- Staff recruitment
- Collective bargaining agreement negotiation
- Employee relations
- Employee records and administration
- Human resources management systems
- Employee timekeeping
- Payroll processing
- Pension and benefits administration
- Employee training and development
- Personnel and performance management
- Occupational health and safety
- Compensation planning for non-unionized personnel (management and non-management)
- Personnel policy development and administration
- Attendance and disability management
- Employee assistance program

B. Current approach to service delivery

Based on the organizational charts and other information provided by the Current Transit Providers, there appears to be a reliance on the respective municipalities for human resources, with only St. Catharines having human resource positions and payroll positions identified.

C. Jurisdictional review results

The results of the jurisdictional review indicate that with the exception of standalone transit commissions, the respective municipalities provide support to transit for human resources functions. While transit functions are generally responsible for training, scheduling, recruitment and timekeeping, services that are less transactional in nature and/or common to the municipality are generally undertaken by the municipality and not the transit function.

D. Regional approach to service delivery

We understand that the Region's human resources services are delivered through the following models:

- Timekeeping is the responsibility of operational departments, with the Region's human resources function providing support for time and attendance encoding;
- Payroll processing is undertaken through a centralized team within the human resources function, including payroll processing for the Niagara Regional Police Service ("NRPS");
- Other services are the responsibility of the Region's human resources function, working in conjunction with individual Regional departments. We understand that the NRPS is responsible for human resource services other than payroll processing, although they will request assistance from the Region with respect to specific issues or initiatives.

Human Resources

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect to human resources services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s human resources function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with most services provided by the human resources functions. Consistent with other departments, the Commission would have responsibility for timekeeping.
- **Option 2 – Hybrid service delivery.** Under this option, the responsibility for human resources would be divided between the Commission and the Region based on the nature of the service provided. This option envisions that the Commission would be responsible for those aspects of human resources that are considered to be critical to the ongoing operation of transit services and/or which have a degree of complexity due to the provisions of the ATU collective bargaining agreement. Other human resources services would be provided through the Region’s human resources function. A suggested allocation of responsibility for human resources under this option (which reflects the current state review, the results of the jurisdictional review and discussions with Regional representatives) is provided below.

Commission Responsibilities	Region Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruitment • Collective bargaining agreement negotiation • Employee relations • Employee timekeeping • Employee training and development • Personnel and performance management • Occupational health and safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee records and administration • Human resources management systems • Payroll processing • Pension and benefits administration • Compensation planning for non-unionized personnel (management and non-management) • Personnel policy development and administration • Employee assistance program • Attendance management • Disability management

- **Option 3 – Standalone human resources function.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for all aspects of human resources management, including the development of duplicate services (e.g. employee assistance programs, human resource management systems).

As summarized on the following page, Option 2, which involves a shared approach to service delivery, is identified as the preferred model for human resources given the anticipated level of human resources required as a result of the complexities of transit services.

Human Resources

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 2 Shared Responsibility	Option 3 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Human resources management is viewed as a critical component of service delivery for transit given the high degree of reliance on bus operators and transit personnel. We understand that the administration of the provisions of the ATU collective bargaining agreements requires a specific understanding of and experience with transit operations. Options 2 and 3 assign responsibility for recruitment and employee relations, as well as other activities influenced by the collective bargaining agreements, with the Commission, thereby providing a linkage between operations and human resources.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	The results of the jurisdictional review indicate a range of service delivery models for human resources, ranging from a relatively high degree of reliance on the municipality for human resources to a fully standalone model whereby all services are delivered by the commission. Each of the identified options has elements that are consistent with other transit providers and as such, have been ranked as being partially effective in meeting the consideration.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Option 1 is most consistent with the Region's approach to the delivery of human resources services to Regional departments, which reflects a centralized approach for services except for timekeeping. Option 2 is considered to be generally consistent with the approach to human resources for the NRPS, although this involves a higher degree of reliance on the Region for corporate-level human resources.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Given the Commission's level of staff and the complexities associated with the ATU collective bargaining agreement, we anticipate that the Region would be required to increase the level of human resources staff to accommodate the Commission's needs. As such, Option 1 and 2 are considered to result in the same level of incremental staffing and costs. Option 3, however, is expected to result in duplication of corporate-level human resource capabilities, resulting in an overall increase in the cost of human resource services. In addition, the potential exists under Option 3 for the Commission to adopted personnel-related strategies (including compensation levels and benefits coverage) that are inconsistent with the Region, resulting in future cost increases.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Finance

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Finance

A. Overview of the service

Financial services encompasses a range of activities, including but not limited to:

- Accounts payable processing
- Revenue transaction processing
- Budgeting
- Internal financial reporting
- External financial reporting
- Financial analysis
- Internal audit
- External audit
- Asset management planning

B. Current approach to service delivery

Based on the organizational charts and other information provided, differences existing with respect to embedded finance capacity within each of the Current Transit Providers., with St. Catharines having the most developed finance function with two employees.

C. Jurisdictional review results

The results of the jurisdictional review indicate that transit functions have some financial capabilities either within the organization or through dedicated teams that are assigned to transit by the respective municipality.

D. Regional approach to service delivery

We understand that the Region has adopted a centralized approach for financial services that includes:

- Centralized transaction processing for revenues and expenditures which incorporates technologies to achieve operating efficiencies (e.g. the use of optical character recognition to automate accounts payable processing);
- Program Finance Specialists (“PFS”) that are dedicated to functional departments within the Region and provide management-level support for budgeting, financial reporting and financial analysis; and
- Functional units for asset management planning and internal audit that provide services across the Region.

Finance

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect to financial services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s finance function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with all financial services provided by the Region. Specifically:
 - The Region would integrate disbursement and revenue transaction processing into its finance function;
 - The Region would assign a dedicated PFS to transit;
 - Asset management planning would be provided by the Region’s asset management planning function; and
 - Audit services would be provided through the Region’s internal audit function and external audit contract.
- **Option 2 – Hybrid service delivery.** Under this option, the responsibility for financial services would be divided between the Commission and the Region based on the nature of the service provided. Under this option envisions that the Commission would be responsible for transaction processing and financial analysis and reporting, while the Region would provide asset management planning and audit services.
- **Option 3 – Standalone finance function.** This option reflects the responsibility of all finance activities within the Commission, with some coordination between the Commission and Region on elements of common interest such as debt financing and Provincial Gas Tax.

As summarized on the following page, Option 1, which involves the Region providing financial services to the Commission, is identified as the preferred model for financial services given the ability to achieve economies of scale with respect to transaction processing and ensuring consistency between financial strategies and decision-making between the Commission and the Region.

Finance

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 2 Shared Responsibility	Option 3 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	●	●	●	Under all options, it is anticipated that the Commission will have access to requisite skills sets for financial analysis, either through a Commission employee or a dedicated PFS. In addition, transaction processing under any option is not expected to be a constraint on the Commission's operations given (1) the presence of dedicated resources under Option 2 and 3; and (2) the current operating efficiencies of the Region's transaction processing function.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	◐	◐	◐	Similar to human resources, the results of the jurisdictional review indicate a range of service delivery models for financial services, with some organizations having relatively limited financial capacities (instead relying on their respective municipalities) to fully standalone models whereby all financial services are delivered by the commission. Each of the identified options has elements that are consistent with other transit providers and as such, have been ranked as being partially effective in meeting the consideration.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	●	○	●	Options 1 and 3 are consistent with the Region's delivery of financial services to Regional departments and the NRPS, respectively and as such, both are considered to be consistent with the Region's existing delivery model for financial services.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	●	○	○	Under Options 2 and 3, the Commission would be responsible for the majority or all finance functions, reducing the ability to achieve economies of scale due to the absence of integration into the Region as well as the need to establish duplicate systems and processes. In addition, the absence of a linkage between the Commission and Region with respect to financial decision-making and policy development could potentially result in inconsistencies with respect to debt financing, fare setting, new initiatives and other key financial strategies, resulting in potential escalations of costs for transit services.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Information Technology

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Information Technology

A. Overview of the service

For the purposes of our review, we have delineated information technology services for transit into three categories:

- Operational systems and technology (e.g. scheduling and time keeping systems, farebox system, automated vehicle locating/monitoring systems). This element of the Commission's information technology infrastructure is considered essential to the delivery of transit services;
- Backbone systems and technology (e.g. PeopleSoft ERP, cybersecurity systems, Office 365, data centre), which are necessary to support the corporate and administrative requirements of the Commission; and
- User help desk support.

B. Current approach to service delivery

The organizational charts and other information provided by the Current Transit Providers identifies a limited number of positions associated with information technology, which we understand are predominantly involved in operational systems and technology.

C. Jurisdictional review results

Similar to human resources, the results of the jurisdictional review indicate that with the exception of standalone transit commissions, the majority of transit organizations have some internal resources for the maintenance of operational systems and technology, with their respective municipalities providing support for backbone systems and technology. Based on discussions with representatives of the comparator organizations, we understand the use of in-house resources for the maintenance and support of operational systems and technology is reflective of their importance to the delivery of transit services and the need for immediate responsiveness in the event of a technology issue.

D. Regional approach to service delivery

While the responsibility for information technology services within the Region rests with its Information Technology function, we understand that certain departments that have significant operational systems and technology (e.g. SCADA for water and wastewater services, maintenance management systems for transportation and water and wastewater) are responsible for daily support and administration of these services.

The degree of integration and resource sharing of information technology services with outside boards and commissions is relatively limited. While the NRPS utilizes the Region's PeopleSoft ERP system for finance and human resources, there are no other shared services with respect to information technology.

Information Technology

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect to human resources services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s information technology function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with all information technology requirements and services (including both operational and backbone systems and technology) provided the Region’s information technology function.
- **Option 2 – Hybrid service delivery.** This option considers an allocation of information technology requirements between the Commission and the Region that is similar to other departments with significant operational systems and technologies (e.g. water and wastewater, transportation) whereby (1) the Commission would be responsible for the administration and maintenance of operational systems and technology; and (2) the Region’s information technology function would be responsible for backbone systems and technology and user help desk responsibilities.

Commission Responsibilities		Region Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling software • Driver management and timekeeping system • Planning system • Automated stop announcement system • CAD/AVL system • Automated vehicle monitoring system • Automatic passenger counters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit radio system • On-board CCTV system • Farebox system • Paratransit scheduling software • Paratransit AVL system • Other operational systems and technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERP (finance and human resources) • Cybersecurity systems • Desktop technologies and applications • Data centre/servers/SANs • Data analytics • Administrative peripherals • User help desk • Other corporate backbone systems and technologies

- **Option 2 – Standalone information technology function.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for all aspects of information technology services, including operating systems and technology as well as corporate information technology services. Similar to the arrangement for the NRPS, we have assumed that the Commission would utilize the Region’s PeopleSoft ERP system for finance and human resources under this model.

As summarized on the following page, Option 2, which involves a hybrid approach to service delivery that distinguishes between operational and backbone requirements, is identified as the preferred model for information technology services as it provides a direct connection between the Commission’s operational systems and technology and the delivery of transit services while at the same time maximizing the efficiency of shared backbone systems and technology.

Information Technology

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 2 Hybrid Service Delivery	Option 3 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Service delivery for transit is highly reliant on operating systems and technology and as such, options with resources dedicated to the maintenance and operation of these systems (Options 2 and 3) have been ranked as being fully effective in meeting this consideration. The absence of dedicated personnel under Option 1 has the potential to adversely impact service delivery in the event of a system outage.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	The results of the jurisdictional review indicate that all transit organizations surveyed have some form of information technology capabilities dedicated exclusively to transit, whether in a hybrid delivery model (Option 2) or standalone model (Option 3).
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	The Region's current approach to the delivery of information technology services for Regional departments with significant operational systems involves a hybrid approach that is similar to Option 2 whereby responsibility for the day-to-day operation and administration of operational systems rests with the functional department, with the Region's information technology function responsible for all other services. With respect to the NRPS, the Region has adopted a standalone model that is consistent with Option 3.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Option 1 and 2 are expected to result in the similar resource requirements as both options provide for the sharing of backbone infrastructure and services within the Region, resulting in the realization of economies of scale. Under a standalone model (Option 3), the Commission would be required to establish its own backbone infrastructure and services, resulting in a duplication of efforts and costs where commonality exists with the Region.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Fleet Maintenance



Fleet Maintenance

A. Overview of the service

Fleet maintenance involves a range of maintenance services undertaken on the transit fleet (and other vehicles), including but not limited to preventative and periodic maintenance and servicing activities, repairs (including body work) and bus cleaning.

B. Current approach to service delivery

Based on the organizational charts and other information provided by the Current Transit Providers, fleet maintenance appears to be undertaken through dedicated teams that are either (1) embedded within either the transit department (Niagara Falls and Welland); or (2) employees of the commission (St. Catharines), with limited interaction apparent with their respective municipalities.

C. Jurisdictional review results

The results of the jurisdictional review indicate that fleet maintenance is provided directly by transit operations (either through a dedicated team within the transit function or through the standalone commission), with no examples of fleet maintenance integrated within the municipality's fleet maintenance function. While we understand that Hamilton had previously had an integrated model whereby the transit fleet was serviced by the municipality's fleet maintenance function, this model was discontinued due to concerns over service levels and the responsiveness of fleet maintenance to transit's needs.

D. Regional approach to service delivery

The Region currently maintains a fleet maintenance function within Transportation Services that is responsible for the purchasing, maintenance and replacement functions of the Region's fleet for operating units that utilize vehicles and moveable equipment. We understand that fleet maintenance functions are not currently provided by the Region to the NRPS.

Fleet Maintenance

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect to fleet maintenance services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s fleet maintenance function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with the transit fleet considered to be part of the overall Regional fleet.
- **Option 2 – Dedicated Regional team.** Under this option, the Region would be responsible for the maintenance of the transit fleet; however, the Region would establish a dedicated maintenance and servicing team for transit vehicles as opposed to integrating the transit fleet into the Region’s fleet.
- **Option 3 – Standalone fleet maintenance function.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for fleet maintenance activities through its own employees.

Please note that the adoption of a hybrid model, which would involve the separation of fleet maintenance between the Region and the Commission, was considered to be impractical given the nature of the transit fleet and was therefore excluded from our analysis.

As summarized on the following page, Option 3 – with the Commission directly responsible for fleet maintenance activities through its own resources – is identified as the preferred model for fleet maintenance activities given its consistency with other transit organizations and the importance of fleet maintenance on the delivery of transit service.

Fleet Maintenance

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 2 Dedicated Regional Team	Option 3 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Commission responsibility has been identified as the highest rated option as this ensures a direct line of oversight and responsibility for fleet maintenance, which is considered to be essential to avoiding disruptions in transit service and ensuring sufficient resources to meet the operational requirements for transit services.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	As noted earlier, all of the comparators included in the jurisdictional review embed fleet maintenance into transit (either the municipal department or commission).
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Fleet maintenance functions for outside boards and commissions are typically delivered by these organizations, as opposed to the Region's fleet maintenance function. While the Region does provide fleet maintenance for internal departments through a centralized approach, we note that the size of the Commission's fleet (157 vehicles) may make an integrated approach to fleet management problematic.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Regardless of the option identified, the size of the Commission's fleet will require a level of staff that is consistent with that currently employed by the Current Transit Providers. As such, the cost of the different options is considered to be the same.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Facilities Maintenance



Facilities Maintenance

A. Overview of the service

Facilities maintenance involves general cleaning and custodial services, as well as minor repairs to transit facilities, including maintenance garages and terminals.

B. Current approach to service delivery

Based on the information provided, there appear to be differences in the approaches adopted by the Current Transit providers with respect to facilities maintenance, with Niagara Falls relying on the municipality for facilities maintenance while St. Catharines has a caretaker position identified in their organizational chart. We also note that some job descriptions for maintenance personnel list custodial functions within the scope of work for the position.

C. Jurisdictional review results

The results of the jurisdictional review indicate that facilities maintenance is generally provide directly by transit operations (either through a dedicated team within the transit function or through the standalone commission), the exception being Hamilton which relies on the municipality for facilities maintenance.

D. Regional approach to service delivery

The Region currently provides facilities maintenance on an integrated basis to all Regional departments (including public works yards) as well as the NRPS. We note, however, that the Region currently budgets for dedicated staff for facilities maintenance functions for the NRPS and Regional Headquarters, with a pooled staffing model adopted for facilities maintenance of other facilities.

Facilities Maintenance

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect to facilities maintenance services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s facilities maintenance function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with transit facilities maintained by the Region’s facilities maintenance function. This option is consistent with the current approach to facilities maintenance adopted by Niagara Falls.
- **Option 2 – Standalone facilities maintenance function.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for facilities maintenance activities through its own employees. This option is consistent with the approach adopted by St. Catharines.

Please note that the adoption of a hybrid model, which would involve the separation of transit facilities between the Region and the Commission, was not considered given the limited number of transit facilities and was therefore excluded from our analysis.

As summarized on the following page, Option 2 – with the Commission directly responsible for facilities maintenance activities through its own resources – is identified as the preferred model for facilities management given its consistency with other transit providers and the ability to align facilities management with the operational requirements of the Commission.

Facilities Maintenance

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 3 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Commission responsibility has been identified as the highest rated option as this ensures a direct line of oversight and responsibility for facilities maintenance, including custodial services over customer service areas. This also provides the opportunity for facilities maintenance resources to be aligned with the operating schedule for transit facilities, including the need for 24-hour responsiveness for fleet maintenance facilities.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	As noted earlier, only one of the comparators included in the jurisdictional review rely on their respective municipality for facilities maintenance service, with the other comparators having their dedicated facilities maintenance resources.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	The Region is currently responsible for facilities maintenance functions for all departments and the NRPS through an integrated facilities maintenance function. We note, however, that the Region has budgeted dedicated staff for the NRPS, which is consistent with the Commission having a dedicated team for facilities maintenance.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Given the custodial and facilities maintenance requirements associated with the Commission's maintenance facilities and transit terminals, incremental staffing will be required regardless of the option identified and as such, the costs associated with either option are considered to be consistent.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Procurement

Redacted



Procurement

A. Overview of the service

Procurement assists with the purchasing of goods and services and inventory management through the issuance of purchase orders, requests for tenders and requests for proposal. Inventory management, including the replenishment of parts and other stores, is considered to be an operational responsibility that will rest within the Commission.

B. Current approach to service delivery

Based on our review of the documentation provided, we have not identified dedicated resources for procurement within the Current Transit Providers. Rather, we understand that procurement is either provided by their respective municipality or is undertaken by staff as part of their general responsibilities.

C. Jurisdictional review results

The results of the jurisdictional review indicate that procurement resources may be present within standalone transit commissions, with commissions that are structured as either hybrid or shell commissions tend to rely on their respective municipalities for procurement. As part of the jurisdictional review, a dedicated procurement resource for transit was identified as preferred in order to ensure the timely procurement of goods and services necessary for the delivery of transit services.

D. Regional approach to service delivery

Procurement services for Regional departments are currently provided on a centralized basis, with the procurement and strategic acquisitions function responsible for the purchasing of goods and through the issuance of purchase orders and the management of request for proposals, tenders and other competitive procurement processes.

Procurement

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect to facilities maintenance services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s procurement function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with purchasing undertaken by the Region’s procurement function. This option is consistent with the current approach adopted by the Current Transit Providers and the majority of organizations included in the jurisdictional review.
- **Option 2 – Standalone procurement function.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for managing its own procurement activities in accordance with the Region’s procurement policies.

Please note that the adoption of a hybrid model, which would involve the separation of procurement between the Region and the Commission, was not considered given the commonalities between operating and capital procurement.

As summarized on the following page, Option 1 – with the Region directly responsible for procurement activities through its own resources – is identified as the preferred model for procurement given the consistency of this model with the Region’s approach to procurement for other departments and the NRPS.

Procurement

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 2 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Commission responsibility has been identified as the highest rated option as this ensures a direct connection between procurement and operations, avoiding the potential redirection of procurement resources to other priorities and supporting consistency with respect to parts supplies necessary for fleet maintenance.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	The results of the jurisdictional review have identified only one instance where procurement resources are embedded within transit, with the other organizations relying on their respective municipalities for procurement services.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>		The Region provides procurement on a centralized basis for departments and the NRPS.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	The incremental costs associated with either option are considered to be consistent given the expectation that additional resources would be required in the event that the Region's procurement function is tasked with managing procurement on behalf of the Commission. In addition, we understand that the Commission will be required to adhere to the Region's procurement policies (including approval thresholds and the no PO/no pay requirement) and, when combined with other integrated services, the potential for cost escalations under Option 2 are expected to be reduced.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Communications



Communications

A. Overview of the service

For the purposes of our review, communications is considered to include the development and dissemination of printed, electronic and other forms of communication for internal and external purposes, which may include social meeting postings, notices of route changes and internal staff messaging.

B. Current approach to service delivery

We note that St. Catharines currently has a designated communications specialist for transit services.

C. Jurisdictional review results

Based on the results of the jurisdictional review, we note that communications services are either provided through:

- Communications staff embedded within the transit organization (London);
- Communications staff within the municipal communications function but dedicated exclusively to transit (Hamilton); or
- Communications staff within the municipal communications function that provide support to transit services and other departments (Durham, Windsor).

D. Regional approach to service delivery

The Region's strategic communications and public affairs function develops communications strategies on behalf of all Regional departments except for public health, which maintains its own communication function. We understand that the NRPS maintains its own communications function independent of the Region.

Communications

E. Potential options for consideration

For the purposes of our evaluation, we have considered the following options with respect communications services:

- **Option 1 – Full integration with the Region’s communication function.** Under this option, the Commission would be treated as an operating department of the Region, with communications services provided by the Region’s communications and public affairs function.
- **Option 2 – Standalone communication function.** Under this option, the Commission would be responsible for managing its own communications activities.

As summarized on the following page, Option 2 – with the Commission directly responsible for communications activities through its own resources – is identified as the preferred model for communications given the results of the jurisdictional review (which indicate that preference for dedicated communications resources) and the ability to directly link communications activities with the Commission’s operations through the proposed model.

Communications

	Option 1 Regional Responsibility	Option 2 Commission Responsibility	Comments
Does the proposed service delivery model support a focus on customer service for transit?	●	●	While reliance on the Region's communications and public affairs function would provide communications resources and capacity to the Commission, the potential risk of competition for staff resources may arise given the overall level of demand within the Region for communications.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with common practice as identified through the jurisdictional review?	●	●	The results of the jurisdictional review have identified an equal number of instances where communications are provided (1) by dedicated/embedded resources; and (2) by municipal communications resources that are not exclusively assigned to transit. As such, both options are considered to be consistent with the results of the jurisdictional review.
Is the proposed service delivery model aligned with the Region's approach to service delivery with internal departments and outside boards and commission?	●	●	While the majority of Regional departments rely on the Region's communications and public affairs function, Public Health and the NRPS maintain their own communications function.
Does the proposed service delivery model maximize cost efficiencies for transit services?	●	●	The incremental costs associated with either option are considered to be consistent given the expectation that additional resources would be required to meet the communications needs of the Commission.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Legal, Insurance and Risk Management



Legal, Insurance and Risk Management

Based on the results of the jurisdictional review, we did not identify any instances where transit organizations (including standalone transit commissions) maintained in-house legal counsel, which we believe reflects (1) the absence of legal activity at a level that would support an in-house legal counsel specifically for transit; (2) the ability to rely on in-house legal counsel within their respective municipality; and/or (3) the reliance on insurers and/or external legal counsel for legal and risk management services. This is similar to the Current Transit Providers, none of which have identified in-house legal counsel within their transit functions.

With the Region, legal and court services provides a broad scope of advice and support to the Region's functional units and NRPS (as well as the former Niagara Regional Housing) on a wide range of matters, including but not limited to litigation, insurable and non-insurable claims, risk management, real estate, contracts and litigation. Legal services utilizes in-house counsel primarily for the management of claims against the Region, the review of all documents to be executed by the Chair, Clerk, CAO or Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer or which require financial securities or proof of insurance as required by the Region's Document Execution By-Law, the review of Council reports supporting resolutions that require agreements that require review by legal services and ad hoc advice to Region departments on a variety of legal matters. External legal counsel is most often used for non-insurable claims and for specialized legal services (e.g. labour law), although Region lawyers are assigned to these files in a monitoring capacity and to facilitate the provision of information and the retention of corporate knowledge.

The delivery of legal and risk management services through the Region's legal services (including external legal counsel where appropriate) is identified as the preferred model given:

- The absence of in-house legal counsel in any of the transit organizations including in the jurisdictional review;
- The relative size of the transit commission, which likely precludes in-house legal counsel from a cost perspective;
- The consistency of the integrated approach with the NRPS.

Similar, we suggest that the Commission's insurance be managed through the Region as a means of ensuring a consistent approach to coverage and claims management. In addition, the Region's involvement in the delivery of certain services to the Commission may have implications from an insurance perspective that support an integrated approach to insurance management. For example, cybersecurity coverage for the Commission will be determined in large part by the Region's involvement in backbone systems and technology.



Niagara Transit Commission

Evaluation of Service Delivery Options

Corporate Secretariat Services



Corporate Secretariat Services

Based on our discussions with the Region, we understand that various administrative requirements associated with municipalities will also be applicable to the Commission, including but not limited to:

- The requirement to provide notices for meetings of the Board of Directors;
- Making minutes of meetings publicly available;
- Provincial legislation relating to freedom of information requests (Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act); and
- Provincial legislation relating to the accessibility of publicly available information (e.g. WCAG 2.0 standards).

Given the consistency of these services with the Region, the delivery of corporate secretariat services through the Regional Clerk function has been identified as the preferred service delivery model. However, for certain administrative functions (e.g. minutes of board meetings), clerical staff employed by the Commission could provide this function.



Niagara Transit Commission

Overall Conclusions

Redacted



Overall Conclusions

We have summarized below the suggested responsibilities for corporate and administrative support services based on the results of our analysis. The allocation of responsibilities reflects the general principles outlined earlier in our report:

- The Commission having responsibility for those services that are considered to be critical to the delivery of transit services; and
- The Region having responsibility for those services that are common to the Region and do not require a different level of knowledge, skill set or resource availability and/or are more cost efficient to deliver through a shared deliver model.

Category	Service	Region (Integrated Delivery)	Region (Dedicated Resource)	Commission
Human Resources	Staff recruitment			✓
	Collective bargaining agreement negotiation			✓
	Employee relations			✓
	Employee timekeeping			✓
	Employee training and development			✓
	Personnel and performance management			✓
	Occupational health and safety	✓		
	Attendance and disability management	✓		
	Employee records and administration	✓		
	Human resources management systems	✓		
	Payroll processing	✓		
	Pension and benefits administration	✓		

Overall Conclusions

Category	Service	Region (Integrated Delivery)	Region (Dedicated Resource)	Commission
Human Resources (continued)	Compensation planning for non-unionized personnel (management and non-management)	✓		
	Personnel policy development and administration	✓		
	Employee assistance program	✓		
Finance	Accounts payable processing	✓		
	Revenue transaction processing	✓		
	Budgeting		✓	
	Internal financial reporting		✓	
	External financial reporting		✓	
	Financial analysis		✓	
	Internal audit	✓		
	External audit	✓		
	Asset management planning	✓		
Information Technology	Scheduling software			✓
	Driver management and timekeeping system			✓
	Planning system			✓
	Automated stop announcement system			✓

Overall Conclusions

Category	Service	Region (Integrated Delivery)	Region (Dedicated Resource)	Commission
Information Technology (continued)	CAD/AVL system			✓
	Automated vehicle monitoring system			✓
	Automatic passenger counters			✓
	Transit radio system			✓
	On-board CCTV system			✓
	Farebox system			✓
	Paratransit scheduling software			✓
	Paratransit AVL system			✓
	Other operational systems and technologies			✓
	ERP (finance and human resources)	✓		
	Cybersecurity systems	✓		
	Desktop technologies and applications	✓		
	Data centre/servers/SANs	✓		
	Data analytics	✓		
	Administrative peripherals	✓		
	User help desk	✓		
	Other corporate backbone systems and technologies	✓		

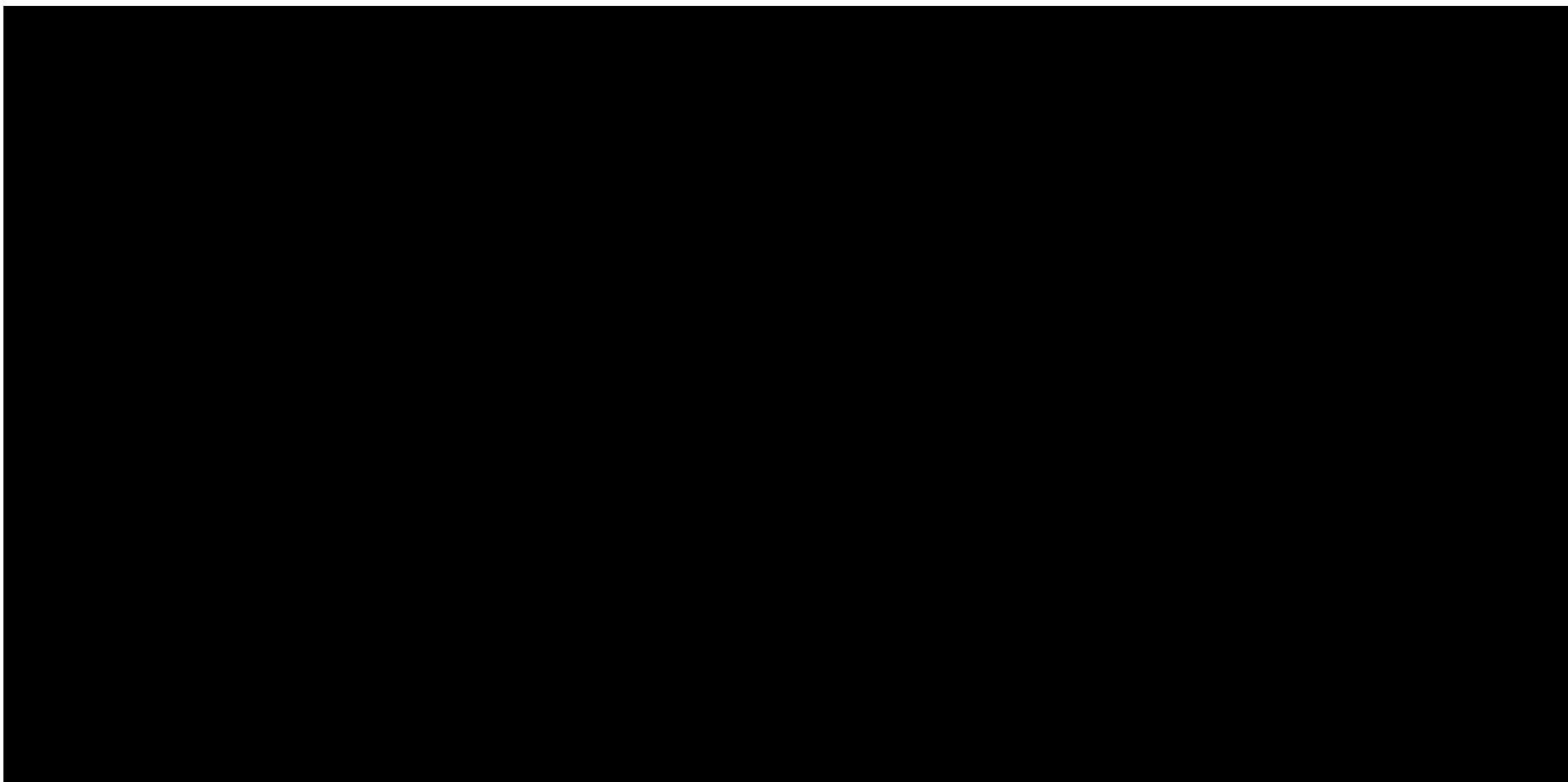
Overall Conclusions

Category	Service	Region (Integrated Delivery)	Region (Dedicated Resource)	Commission
Maintenance Activities	Fleet maintenance			✓
	Facilities maintenance			✓
Other	Procurement	✓		
	Legal	✓		
	Communications			✓
	Corporate secretariat	✓		

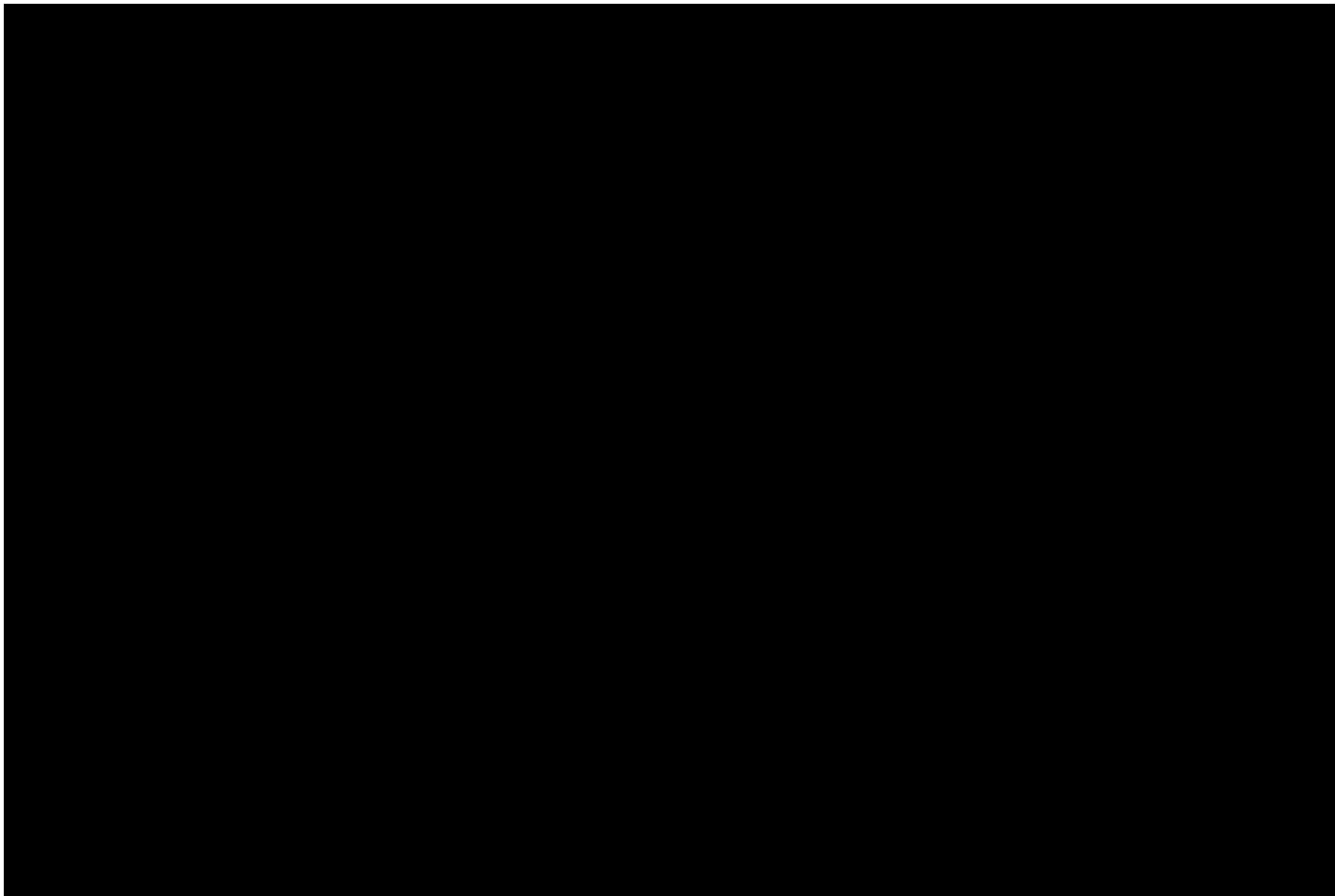
Overall Conclusions

While we understand that the organizational structure of the Commission will be determined by its senior leadership and may evolve in response to changes in transit services, we have suggested an organizational structure that reflects both the proposed model for corporate and administrative services as well as organizational structures adopted by commissions included in the jurisdictional review.

Overall Conclusions



Overall Conclusions





Niagara Transit Commission

Appendix A Organizational Charts

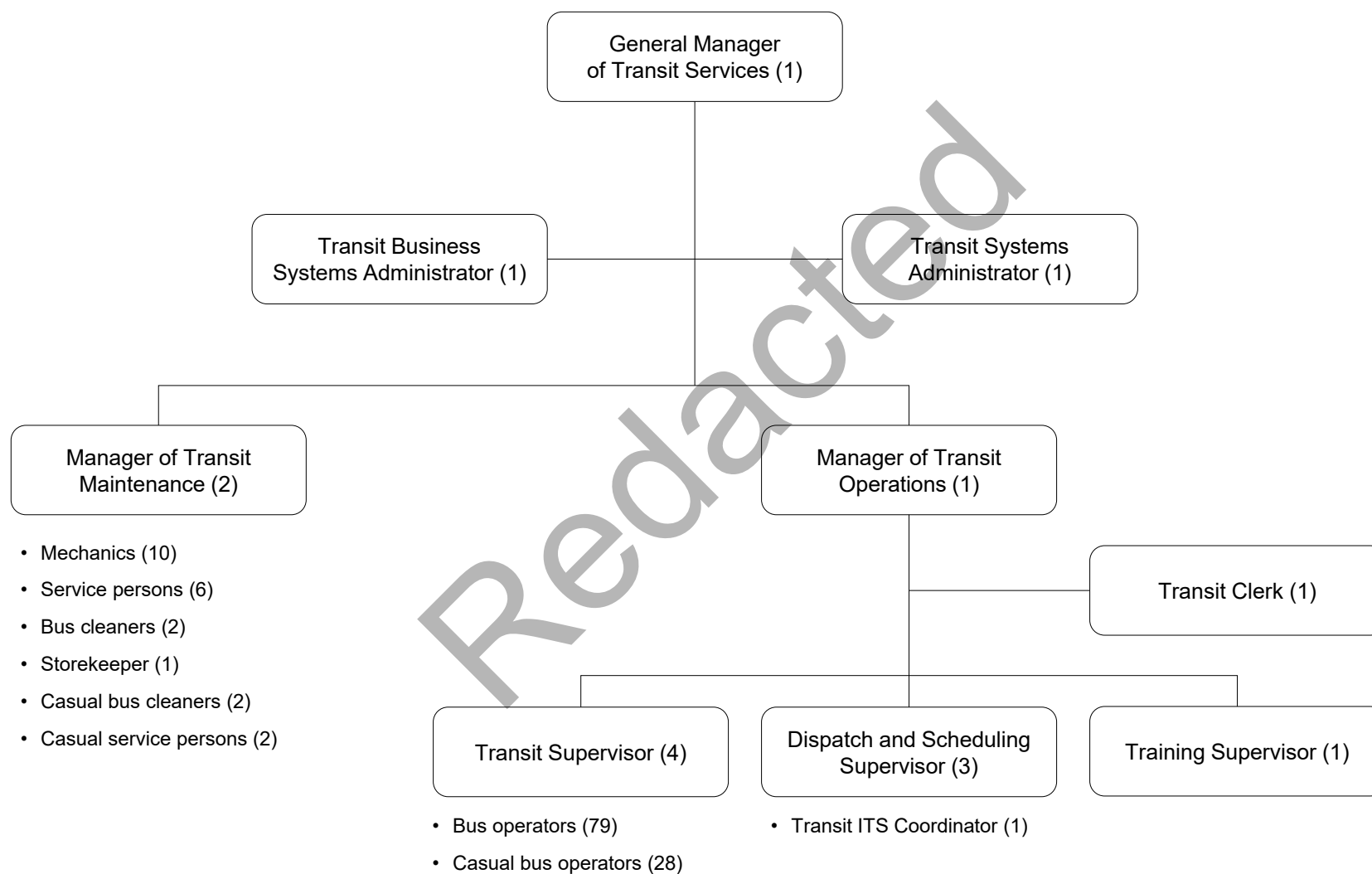
City of Niagara Falls

St. Catharines Transit Commission

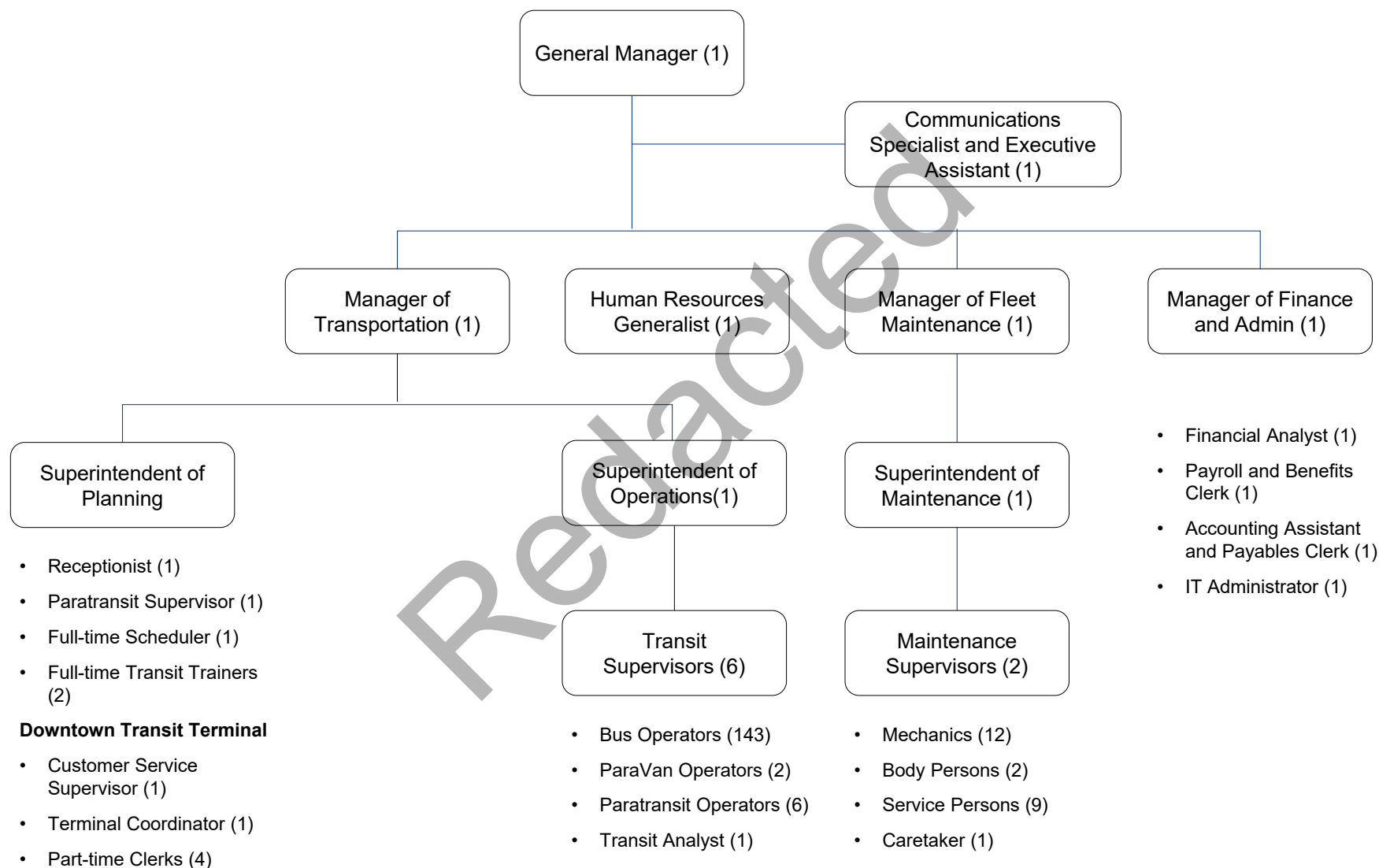
City of Welland



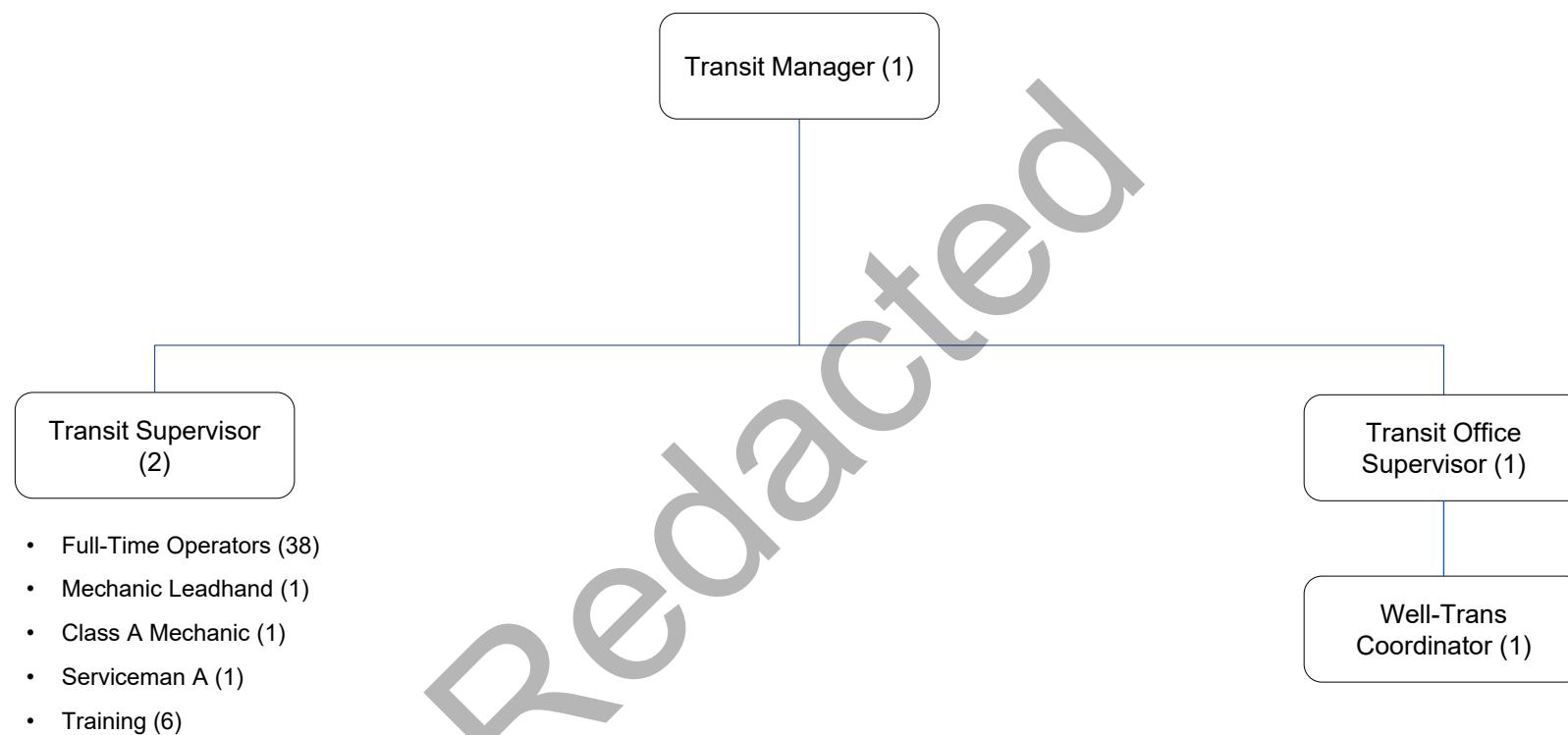
Current State - City of Niagara Falls



Current Organizational Structure - City of St. Catharines



Current State - City of Welland





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