

# Specialized Transit in Niagara

Study Update



June 2019



MOVING  
TRANSIT  
FORWARD

CONNECTING MORE PEOPLE TO MORE POSSIBILITIES

Niagara  Region

# Presentation Outline

- Study Objectives & Work Plan
- Specialized Transit in Niagara Region – Existing Conditions
- *What We Heard* – Stakeholder Consultation & Survey Results
- Key Issues & Challenges
- *Imagine Possibilities* – Opportunities
- Guiding Principles
- Considerations/Next Steps – *An Eye on the Future*

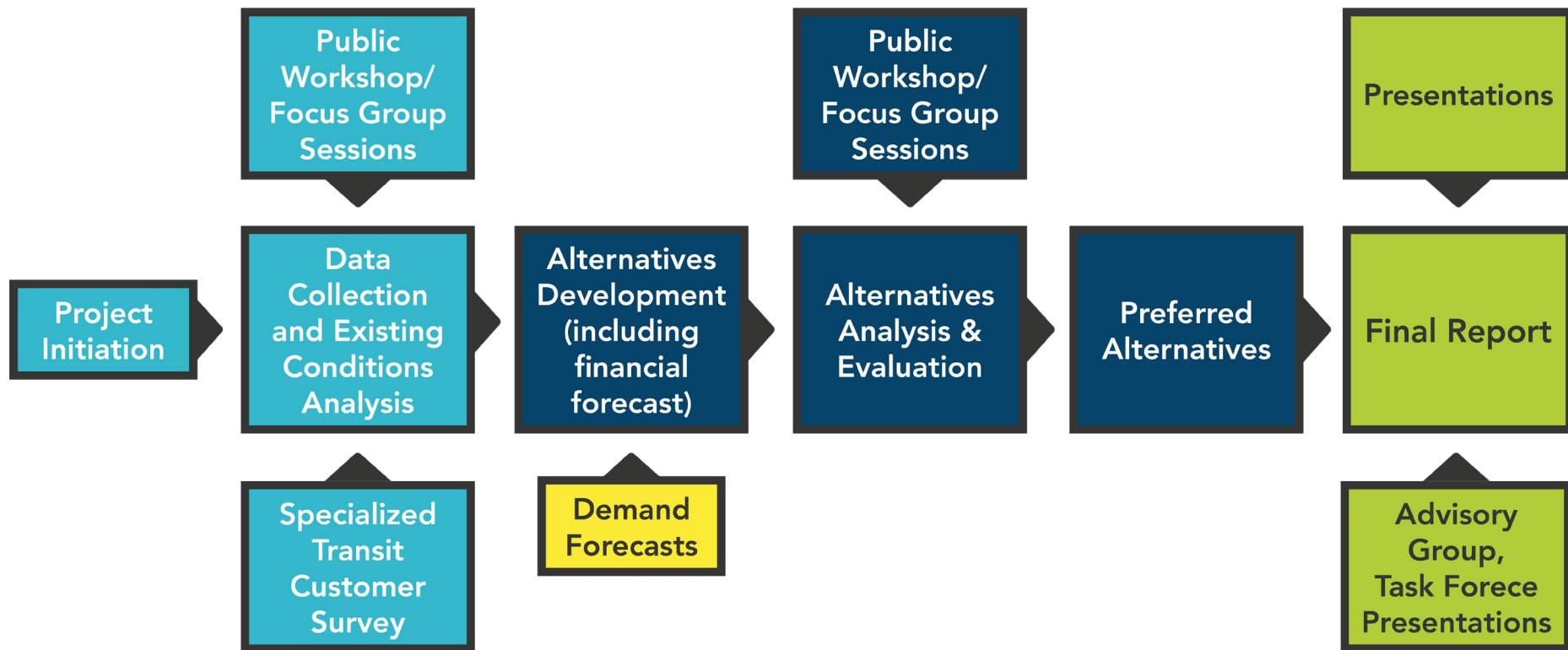
# Study Objectives

- Opportunities to maximize use of existing resources
- Increase efficiencies in service delivery through policy review and development
- Project future specialized transit travel demand
- Develop options to best meet community's mobility needs - *Action Plan*



DEMAND	Trip Generation Rates	RIDERSHIP ESTIMATES
PEOPLE		TRIPS

# Work Plan



# Specialized Transit in Niagara Region

- Total Operating Cost: \$5.27m
- 3,435 registrants
- Cost/Trip: \$45.17
- Total Trips: 105,800
- Cost/Capita: \$11.68
- Trips/Capita: 0.236

Service	Population Served	# Registrants	Total Trips	Operating Cost	Cost/Trip	Operating Cost/Capita	Trips/Capita
Niagara Region (NST)	447,900	1,153	30,100	\$2.37m	\$78.96	\$5.31	0.067
Niagara Falls (Chair-A-Van)	88,100	734	24,900	\$.76m	\$30.67	\$8.66	0.283
Fort Erie (FAST)	30,700	182	8,000	\$.30m	\$37.83	\$9.87	0.261
St. Catharines (Paratransit)	151,900	1,117	30,200	\$1.44m	\$46.76	\$9.30	0.199
Welland (WellTrans)	52,300	249	12,600	\$.40m	\$32.08	\$7.88	0.241
TOTAL		3,435	105,800	\$5.27m	\$45.17	\$11.68	0.236

# Outreach & Consultation

- An online and paper customer survey
  - Public Information Centres in Welland and St. Catharines;
  - Discussion groups - Accessibility Advisory Committee & other key stakeholders (community organizations)
  - A focus group session - Niagara Health Services
- 250 completed surveys
  - Approx. 45 attendees at PICs

# What We Heard

- ✓ Favourable view of drivers & staff
- x Difficulty booking a trip – tedious including need to call multiple agencies (municipal & regional travel)
- x Poor on time performance (or don't show up)
- x Excessive travel times
- x Inconsistent eligibility criteria & processes
- x Residents of communities without specialized transit (West Niagara) – feel disadvantaged
- x Accessible fixed route may not be an option if no accessible path of travel

# What We Heard (cont.)

## Most Requested Improvements

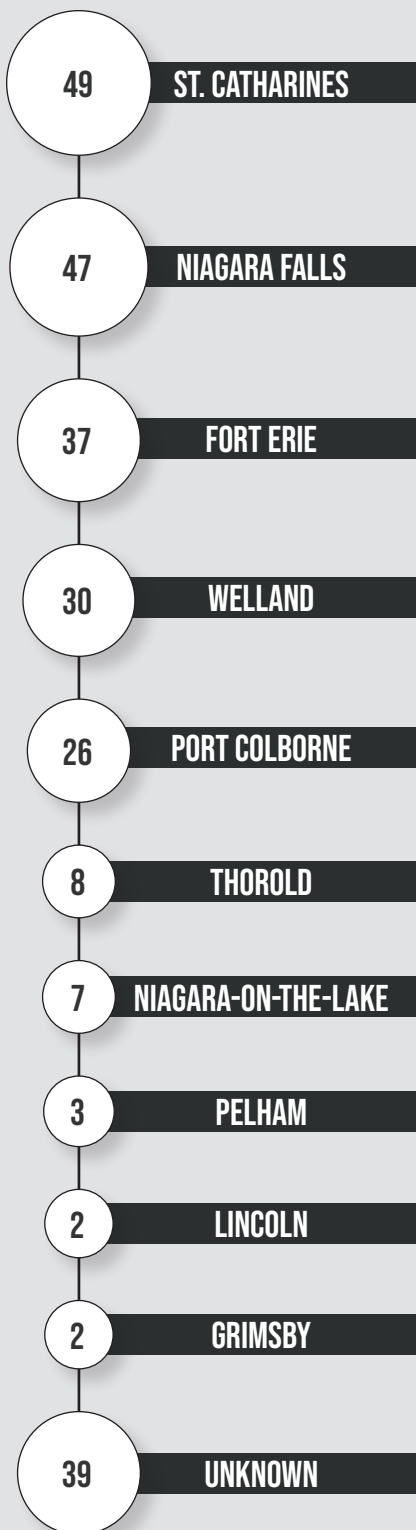
- ✓ Online trip booking and payment
- ✓ Extended service hours
- ✓ Phone alert upon vehicle arrival
- ✓ Alternative service delivery – e-hailing/same day service (may be prepared to pay premium fare)



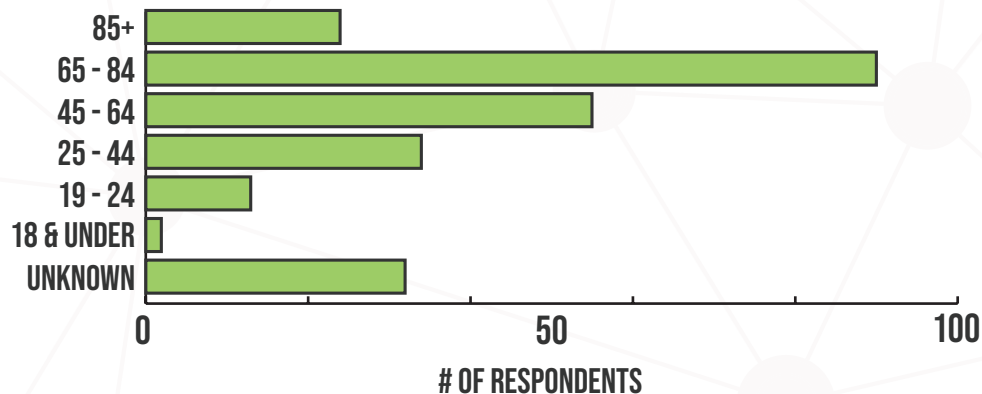
# WHAT WE HEARD



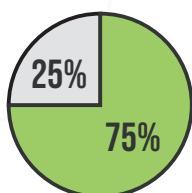
## WHO RESPONDED?



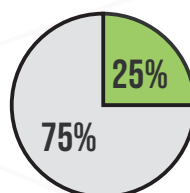
## AGE OF RESPONDENTS



### MOBILITY DEVICES



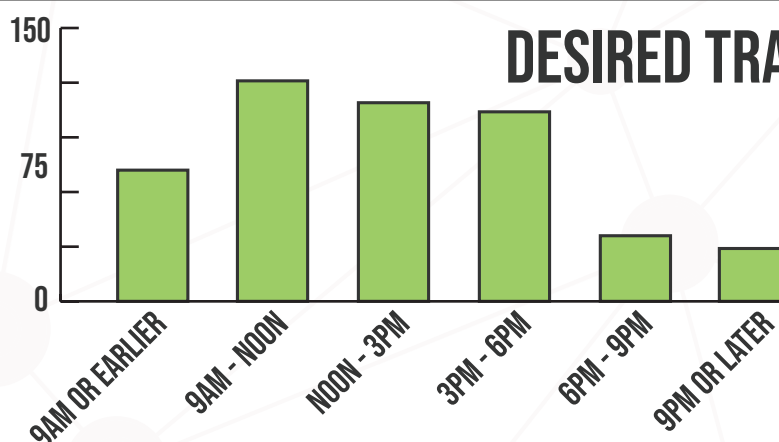
### SUPPORT PERSONS



## RESPONDENT NEEDS



## DESIRED TRAVEL TIMES



### MOST COMPLIMENTS



DRIVERS  
AND STAFF

### MOST COMPLAINTS



DIFFICULTY  
BOOKING  
TRANSIT TRIPS

### MOST REQUESTED IMPROVEMENTS



- ONLINE TRIP BOOKING AND PAYMENT SERVICES
- EXTENDED SERVICE HOURS
- PHONE ALERTS UPON TRANSIT VEHICLE ARRIVAL

# Challenges & Opportunities

- Effectively manage demographics / travel demand
- Address governance, program administration & trip management considerations to address:
  - Increasing costs
  - Program & fiscal accountability
  - Service & scheduling efficiencies (enhancements)
- Address range of functional disabilities
- Address compliance with AODA
- First/last 'mile' connections
- Integration with conventional transit
- Alternative delivery solutions – NextGen Mobility

**Shared ride  
public transit  
for those  
unable to use  
accessible  
fixed route  
transit**



**STATUS QUO IS NOT SUSTAINABLE**

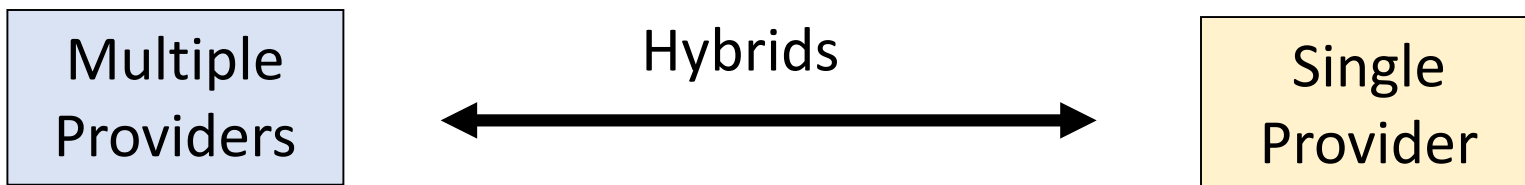
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**Niagara Region**

# *Imagine Possibilities* – Opportunities

## Alternate Delivery Models



Models – to address core functional areas:

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

# *Opportunities* - IMTWG Mtg. – Key Outcomes

## **Eligibility & Certification**

- Centralized
- Application available on-line/web portal
- Consideration of use of In-person assessment & periodic re-certification

## **Reservations**

- Centralized (One-Call / One-Click)

## **Scheduling** (route optimization, allocation of resources)

- Extension of the reservation process

# IMTWG Mtg. – Key Outcomes (cont.)

## Service Delivery (Dispatch / Trip Management)

- Core service – buses & vans and/or use of supplemental services
- Explore alternate scenarios:
  - Multiple “service areas” – Municipal boundaries? Zones?
  - Demand management strategies – prescribed availability of service (days of week, times of day, etc.)

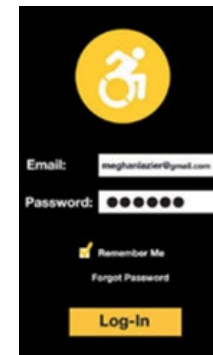
## Next-Gen Mobility / Leverage Technology

- **Supplemental services** – taxis, TNCs, microtransit
  - Address peaking, late evenings & weekends
  - e-Hailing (same day) service

# IMTWG Mtg. – Key Outcomes (cont.)

## ■ Technology

- Computerized scheduling & dispatch (route optimization)
- Real-time passenger information, IVR – broadcast vehicle arrivals
- Self-service: App +/- web portal – registration, trip planning, reservations, confirmations, cancellations
- Mobile payment (advanced fare systems)



## ■ Greater link/integration with fixed-route transit services

- Extent may meet mobility needs – current & future?
- Incentives & policies address demand/ mobility management opportunities?



# 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**

Shared ride public transit for those unable to use accessible fixed route transit

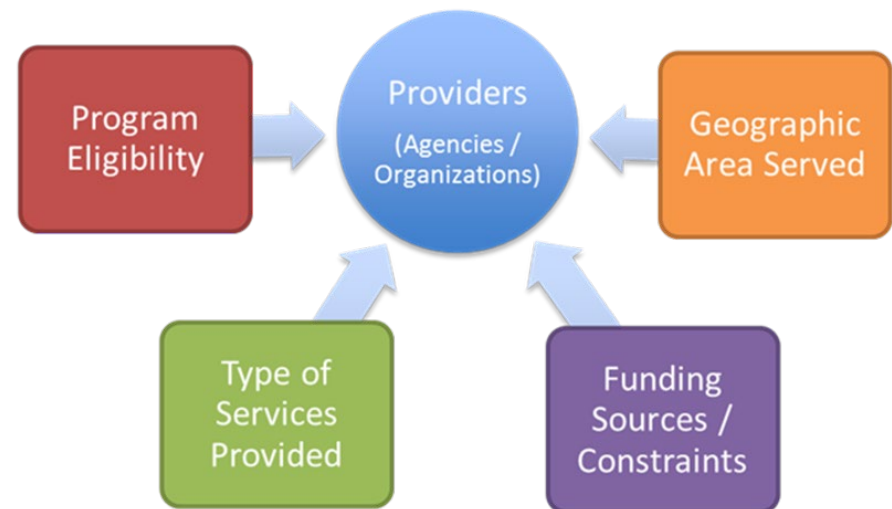
- Maximize use of existing resources
- Increase efficiencies in service delivery
- Enhance the customer experience
- Leverage use of technology

# Considerations - *An Eye on the Future*

- Governance
- Eligibility & Certification
- Operations
- Reservations, Scheduling, Dispatch/Trip Management
- Service Standards
- Service Delivery
- Dedicated/Non-Dedicated
- Cost Allocation Strategies
- Fare Policy
- Technology

- Status Quo Model
- Consolidated Model
- Hybrid Model

## Travel Demand Forecasts





Specialized  
Transit in  
Niagara

# MOVING TRANSIT FORWARD

Thank  
You

June 2019

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# Key Contacts



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