

April 24, 2025

Chair and Council
Region of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON
L2V 4T7

Dear Chair Bradley and Council,

I am pleased to present the General Manager's Annual Report for Niagara Transit for 2024. This annual report reflects our achievements and the challenges we faced in our second year of operation, as well as providing key performance indicators (KPIs) we measure our service by.

Additionally, I have also provided the 2025 Q1 statistics from our commingled services, as we will be providing this data to our Board, Regional Council, and local municipalities on an ongoing basis moving forward. The improvements in our commingled metrics reflect the intensive work staff have done with our contractor and the changes that were implemented at the beginning of 2025.

Lastly, our Board and Regional Council made a significant investment in the new Customer Experience department in 2024. I have included the report on that department that was provided to our Board at their April meeting, which provides an update on the rollout of that department and the positive impact it is having for our riders and our organization.

Thank you for your ongoing support of transit. Together we're continuing to create a truly connected, barrier free Niagara.

Sincerely,



Carla Stout
General Manager, Niagara Transit



Niagara
Transit

General Manager's 2024 Annual Report

General Manager's Message

On behalf of Niagara Transit, I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual General Manager's Report. This report is a snapshot of our successes and challenges throughout the year. It provides insight into where we've been and where we're going, in 2025 and beyond.

We would not be where we are today without the many individuals that have contributed, and continue to contribute, their talent, hard work, dedication and passion to make transit in Niagara a truly connected network that serves our ridership and the broader community. Our board, our staff and our ridership have all contributed to how far we have come in such a short period of time. I want to make special mention of our operators and front-line staff who keep our wheels turning on a daily basis. Your dedication and professionalism are never taken for granted.

Everything we do at Niagara Transit is guided by our core values and foundational pillars.

Service Excellence Safety Customer Focus
Affordability Employee Success

In 2024 we made significant strides in all these areas and will make even more in 2025.

Our on-time performance (OTP) led our industry peers, our ridership continued to significantly outpace our budget, we launched our new brand, made improvements to our customer service hours, replaced the 'Red Line' and made other service improvements to our conventional and microtransit services.

As we move into our third year, I am excited by what the future holds for transit in Niagara. This year we will complete our master plan that will modernize our operations and lay out the path for where we are headed for the next ten years. We are reshaping our specialized transit service to meet the needs of our most vulnerable riders. We are harmonizing fares across the system and introducing the Transit Benefit Pass to make transit affordable for those in our community who receive Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program assistance.

Thank you for your continued commitment to transit in Niagara. Our service truly makes a difference to our ridership and the Niagara community. It is an exciting time to be a part of Niagara Transit! We're just getting started!

Sincerely,



Carla Stout, DPA, General Manager





2024 Board of Directors

Chair Mayor Mathew Siscoe	St. Catharines
Vice-Chair Mayor Wayne Redekop	Fort Erie
Councillor Reg Freake	Grimsby
Councillor J.D. Pachereva	Lincoln
Councillor Joyce Morocco	Niagara Falls
Councillor Maria Mavridis	Niagara-on-the-Lake
Councillor Wayne Olson	Pelham
Councillor Eric Beauregard	Port Colborne
Councillor Dawn Dodge	St. Catharines
Councillor Caleb Ratzlaff	St. Catharines
Councillor Anthony Longo	Thorold
Councillor Wayne Cambell	Niagara Falls
Mayor Brian Grant	Wainfleet
Councillor Leo VanVliet	Welland
Councillor William Reilly	West Lincoln

In memory of Wayne Campbell



Niagara Transit is deeply saddened by the passing of Niagara Falls local councillor, Wayne Campbell. Councillor Campbell was a valued Niagara Transit Commission Board member since its inception, and his dedication to our community will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and the community during this difficult time.



In 2024 the Niagara Transit Board adopted our mission, vision and values. They will guide Niagara Transit now and in the future in all our decision making and planning processes.

Mission

Providing safe, reliable, and sustainable transit service in Niagara.

Vision

Working together towards a more connected region.

Purpose

Helping every person in Niagara experience independence, freedom, and a sense of discovery.

Values

Service Excellence

Safety

Customer Focus

Affordability

Employee Success

2024 Highlights

Service Excellence

Strong Service Delivery and OTP on our Conventional Service!

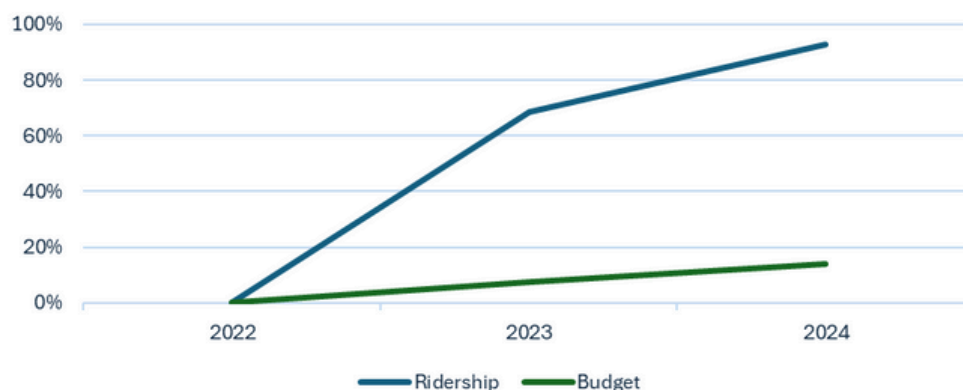
We are proud to have nearly 100% service delivery and 83% on-time performance (OTP) in 2024 on our conventional routes. The average OTP for peer transit services in Ontario is 79%. We are taking delivery of new conventional buses and specialized vehicles in 2025 and expect even greater performance!



Ridership Continues to Outpace Budget

Ridership has seen drastic increases since Niagara Transit was amalgamated in 2022. We have met this demand by harnessing the efficiencies we have found through the amalgamation process. This has been achieved while contending with having to create new reserves, address inflationary pressures, provide enhanced customer service and absorb the cost of standing up a new organization. While this is an exceptional achievement, there is now minimal room for greater efficiencies. To make further improvements to service, like the standardization of service hours and adding intermunicipal Sunday and holiday service, greater investment will be required. As demand continues to grow, we don't want to leave riders behind.

Ridership increase vs Budget increase since Amalgamation

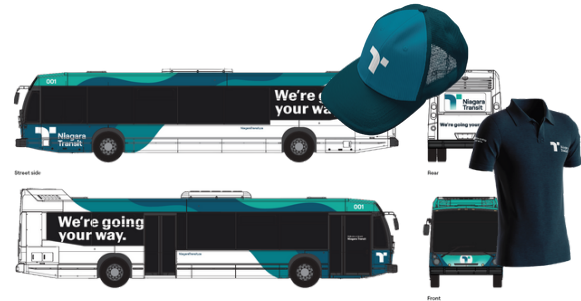


Service Excellence

cont'd

New Niagara Transit Brand Launched!

In 2024 we completed and launched the new Niagara Transit brand! We are transitioning all our previously separate fleets to the new brand over time to unify the service and manage costs responsibly. You will also begin to see our brand on our on-street signage and bus shelters we have assumed from Pattison Outdoor.

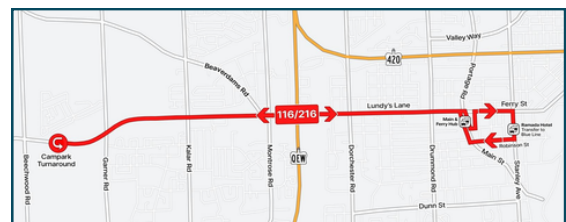


New Specialized Operator Training

After assuming Niagara Falls' Chair-a-Van service in 2024 we developed and delivered a 3-day training program to all operators that provide specialized service. Training included safe vehicle operation, best practices for loading and unloading ambulatory and non-ambulatory passengers, mobility device securement, review of AODA Customer Service Standards, visiting frequently accessed locations in the City, and how to assist passengers with mobility, visual, speech, and developmental/psychological impairments.

Replacing the WEGO Service

This year the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) took over what was previously WEGO. To maintain service for local transit riders in Niagara Falls we replaced the former 'Red Line' with the 116/216 route, maintaining its connection to the NPC's 'Blue Line' at Stanley Avenue in the tourism core. We continue to support the NPC's operations with transit expertise.



Safety

Onboard Camera Installation

Camera installations on our full fleet were completed in 2024. All fixed route buses and specialized vehicles were upgraded to 8 or 9 camera full digital IP systems including over the air updates along with wireless video download requests. All of our non-revenue (operations and maintenance) vehicles were also equipped with single front facing camera systems.

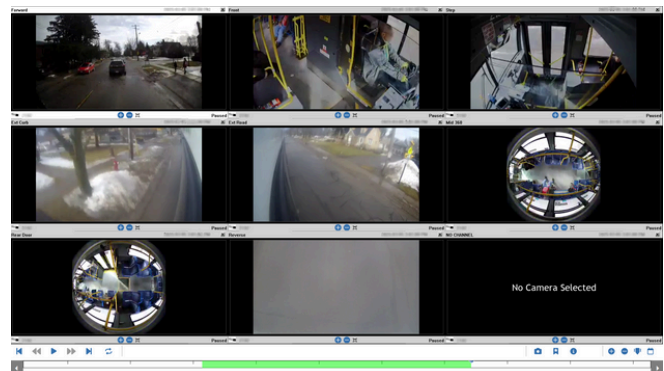


Niagara Riders Feel Safe

We consistently monitor rider safety and gather their feedback. In 2024 over 90% of riders reported feeling safe taking Niagara Transit. As a benchmark, the average among Canadian transit systems is 86%. Rider safety is a top priority and we will continue to focus on it in 2025.

Implemented Video Surveillance Policy

Niagara Transit implemented our video surveillance policy this year. The policy creates system design guidelines, notice of use requirements, and access and recording procedures. It ensures riders feel safe and staff have clear procedures to follow when dealing with surveillance of our fleet and facilities.



Customer Focus

Customer Experience Department

The new Customer Experience Department rollout was completed in 2024. Thirteen dedicated customer service representatives were introduced to improve accountability, communications and customer support. The introduction of this service saw a 229% increase in trip booking calls and 191% increase in general customer service inquiries!



Introduced a New Client & Community Coordinator

Since September, our Client & Community Coordinator has engaged with the Niagara community and met with seniors groups, not-for-profit organizations, student groups and public organizations to educate residents about transit and gather feedback to help make service improvements.

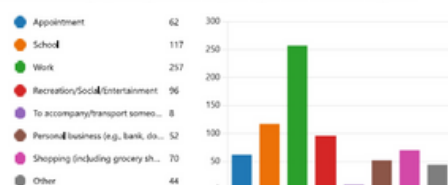
Began Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Meetings

In 2024 our Public Advisory Committee began meeting and developing their workplan. The committee has a member from each local municipality in Niagara and several system stakeholders. Staff attended all PAC meetings to gather feedback and engage in discussions with the committee regarding transit services.



External Survey

What is the main purpose of your most frequent trip? Please select one response.



In 2024 we conducted a survey of transit riders and non-transit riders to gather feedback. We had more than 700 responses, with close to 75% riders and 25% non-riders. This information is highly valuable to inform what we do moving forward on things like rider communications, demand planning, transit funding, and service improvements.

Affordability

Strong Budget Performance

Niagara Transit had a strong budget performance in 2024. This was due in part to higher than anticipated UPASS and fare revenue, unbudgeted supplemental tax revenue, and savings on things like the commingled contract and fuel prices. The end of the year saw a significant surplus that allowed us to transfer funds to much needed reserves.



Consolidated Niagara Falls and Welland Operations

Welland staff shifted operations to the Niagara Falls garage in 2024. Having a single location for all south operations staff will ensure more efficient fleet maintenance and consistent access to transit leadership and dispatch staff for operators. It has also allowed for a repurposing of the Welland location into an interim training facility.

ZETF Application

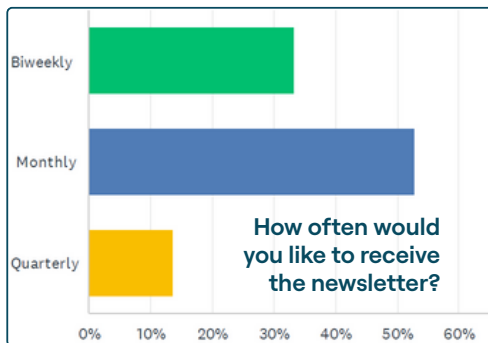
The transit industry is moving away from fossil fuels and towards zero-emission vehicles. To ensure we are providing the best value for Niagara taxpayers we are looking to take advantage of federal and provincial programs including the federal government's Zero Emission Transit Fund, which we applied for this year. This fund will assist with our capital requirements to purchase new, zero-emission vehicles.



Employee Success

New Bus Operator Recruitment Model

To expedite the hiring process for applicants and maximize staff time we have moved to a new “recruitment day” model. This allows the interview and testing process to be completed for 40-50 pre-screened, invited candidates over a two-day period that would have previously taken weeks to complete.



Internal Communications Survey

In 2024 we conducted a fulsome communications survey with all Niagara Transit employees to help shape the development of the new employee newsletter and forthcoming intranet. The results will help us build these tools to best connect and inform all NT staff.

Job Analysis & Evaluation

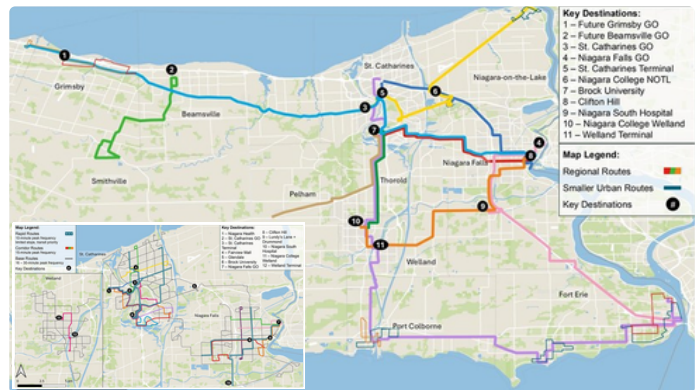
We worked with a 3rd party to conduct job analysis and evaluation of all non-unionized roles. This standardizes our job descriptions within the organization and provides role clarity for our teams, helping to align the roles to our organizational objectives.



What's Next in 2025?

Niagara's First Transit Master Plan

In 2025 we will finalize the first ever Transit Master Plan for Niagara. This plan will guide how we move forward to improve and invest to keep people moving over the next 10 years. It's scheduled to be finalized in the fall of this year.



A New Approach for Commingled Microtransit

In 2024 we rolled out the commingling of our microtransit services; including all formerly contracted ondemand and specialized services.

In 2025 we will continue to refine service to ensure AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) compliance and provide reliable transportation for the most vulnerable in our community. It is an important step in creating a truly connected, barrier free Niagara.

Transit Benefit Pass

For the first time in Niagara we will be launching the Transit Benefit Pass. This low-cost, monthly pass will support those receiving Ontario Works assistance, the Ontario Disability Support Program, or those meeting a low-income threshold. It will make transit available to nearly 50,000 more Niagara residents! We have partnered with Niagara Region's Social Assistance Services office to administer the program and to mitigate the cost to the taxpayer.



What's Next in 2025?

cont'd

Fare Harmonization

Niagara Transit's fares will be harmonized for all trips at \$3.50 beginning on July 1, 2025! This is an important step to make trips across the region affordable for riders and to prepare for future connections to the GO network and other transit providers in the Greater Golden Horsehoe.



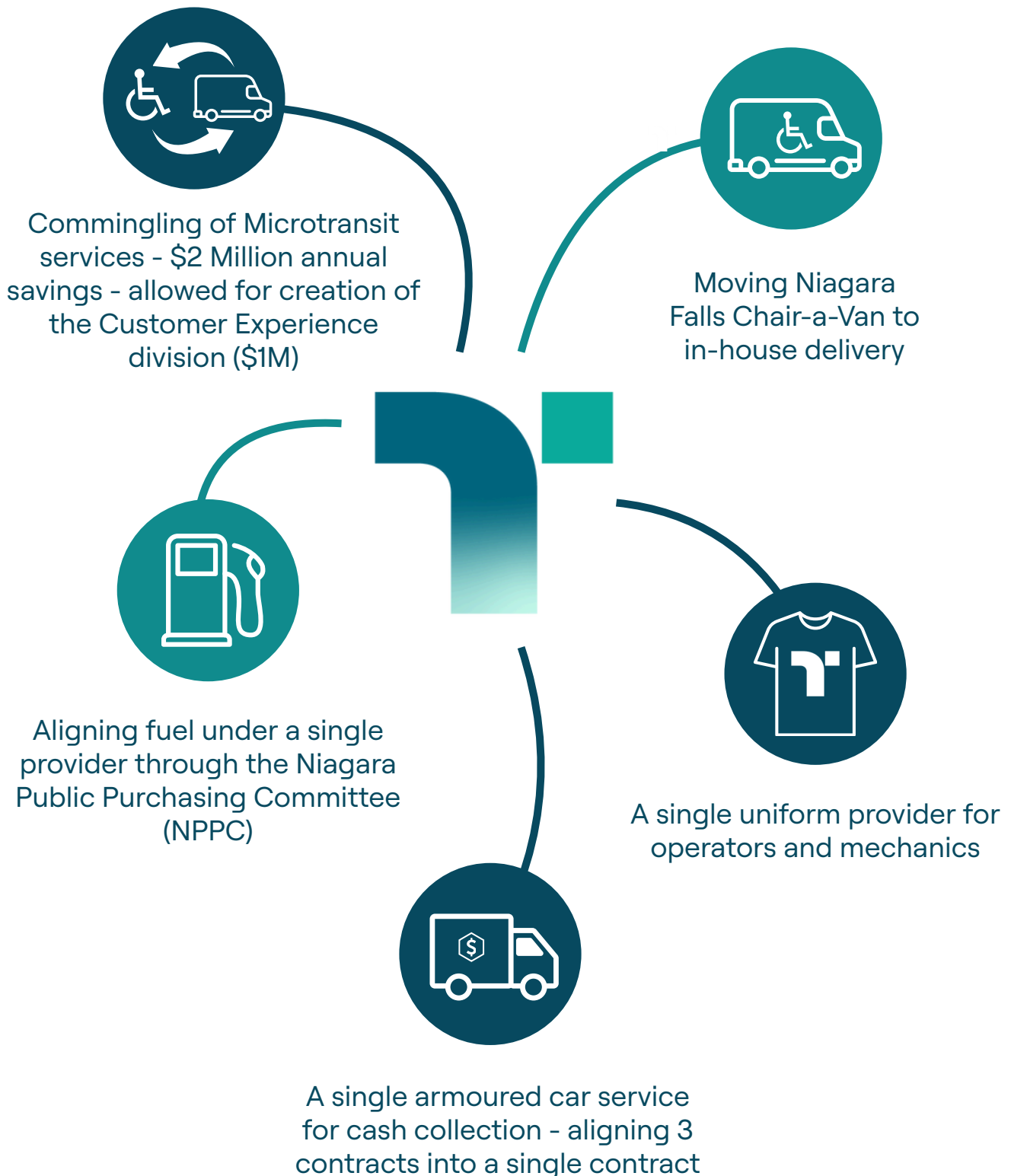
New Buses and Specialized Vehicles Arriving

While many gains in service can be achieved through planning, there is no substitute for a reliable fleet that's size matches the demand for transit in our community. In 2025 we will be taking delivery of a number of new vehicles, both conventional and specialized, to replace our oldest and most challenging assets from a maintenance perspective. This will improve on-time performance (OTP) and reduce maintenance costs which have been heavy since Niagara Transit was formed. They will also display our great new brand, unifying it over time across the fleet!

The background of the entire page is a photograph of the front of a blue Niagara Transit bus. The bus is facing forward, and its windshield shows the number '5302' and the license plate '129-4BH'. The text 'NIAGARA TRANSIT' is visible on the destination sign above the windshield. The bus is parked on a street, and the background is slightly blurred. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

2024 Key Performance Indicators

2024 Efficiencies Highlights



2024 KPI's

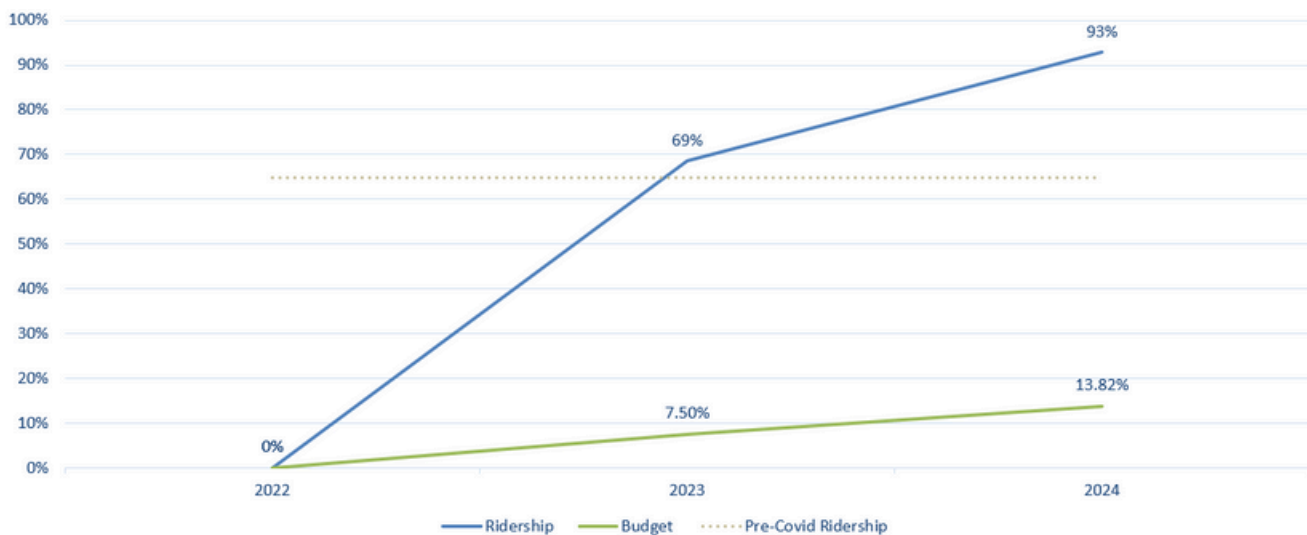
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Reliable and Consistent On-Time Conventional Service

Nearly **100%** service delivery.

On-Time Performance of 83%
vs. 79% industry peer average

Ridership Increase vs Budget Increase Since Amalgamation



	2022	2023	2024
Ridership	5.6 million	9.5 million	10.9 million
Cost per Ride	\$8.06	\$5.57	\$5.22
Cost per Ride (excluding Capital Reserve)		\$5.34	\$5.02

(Blended rate for all transit services)

2024 KPI's

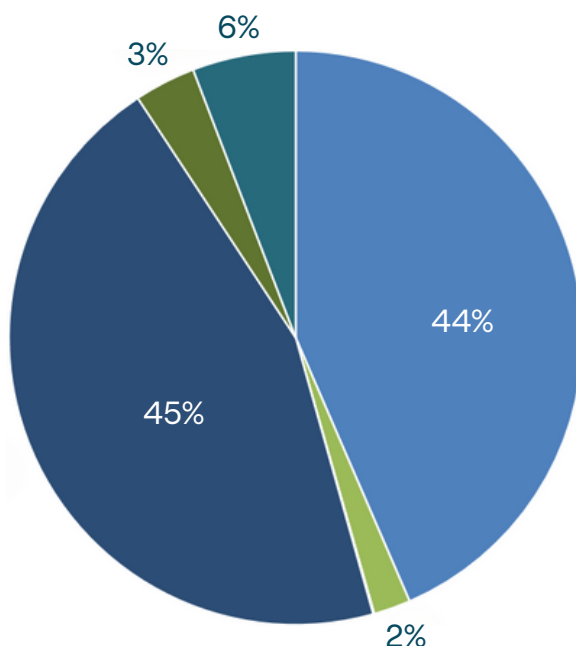
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Niagara Transit Snapshot

Number of Local Routes	88
Number of IMT Routes	11
2024 Staff *	451
Number of 40' buses	151
Number of 60' buses	14
Average age of 40' and 60' bus	8
Number of specialized transit buses	23
Average age of specialized buses	6
Number of support vehicles	40

*2024 Budgeted Full Time Equivalent staff including temporary staff

Who Rides Our System?



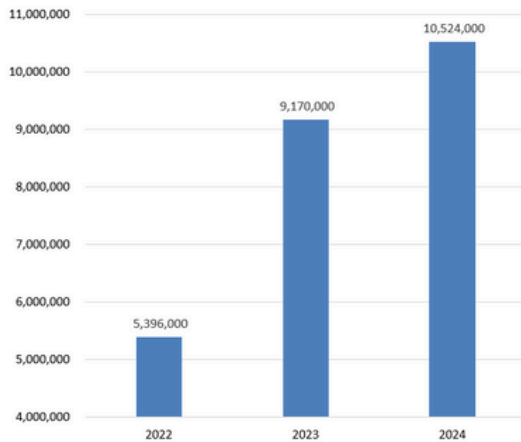
Classification	Definition
Adult	18+
Child	Under 12
Youth	13 to 17
Senior	65+
Post Secondary	Brock & Niagara College

Adult ■ Post-secondary Student ■
 Senior ■ Youth ■ Child ■

2024 KPI's

cont'd

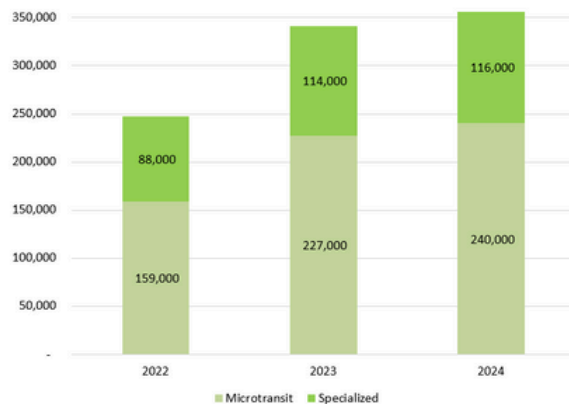
Conventional Ridership



	Ridership Per Revenue Vehicle Hour	Revenue Vehicle Hours Per Capita
2022 Prov. Avg ¹	16.7	1.2
2023 Prov. Avg ¹	21.7	1.2
2023 NTC Conventional	21.4	1.1
2024 NTC Conventional	23.0	1.1

¹Provincial Average is based on Canadian Urban Transit Association Data. Comparing similar sized Transit Agencies (pop. 100k to 750k), which may or may not include Microtransit

Specialized and Microtransit Ridership



	Specialized Transit		Microtransit
	Ridership Per Revenue Vehicle Hour	Revenue Vehicle Hours Per Capita	Ridership Per Revenue Vehicle Hour ***
2022 Prov. Avg ¹	1.9	0.2	n/a
2023 Prov. Avg ¹	2.3	0.2	n/a
2023 NTC	1.7 ²	0.1 ²	2.8
2024 NTC	1.8	0.1	2.9

¹Provincial Average is based on Canadian Urban Transit Association Data Comparing similar sized Transit Agencies (pop. 100k to 750k)

²Revised

	Specialized & Microtransit
Average Time on Vehicle ¹	19 mins
Average Distance per Trip	9.64 km
Average Wait Time *	5.75 mins

¹From July 1, 2024 onward

2024 KPI's

cont'd

Social Media



Visits	20.7K	416%	2.9K	284%
Follows	723	244%	537	-
Interactions	4.1K	542%	678	100%
Clicks	992	629%	49	100%
Reach	86K	390%	13.6K	414%

Website

Active Users	259K	416%
New Users	255K	244%
Sessions	486K+	542%
Page Views	1.2M	629%
Avg. Engagement	1m 54s	390%



General Manager's 2024 Annual Report

Overall NT+ Service Metrics - 2025 (Q1)

Number of Passengers

94,330

Number of Trips

83,628

Number of Accessible Trips

12,989

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

1,239

Average Direct Distance (km)

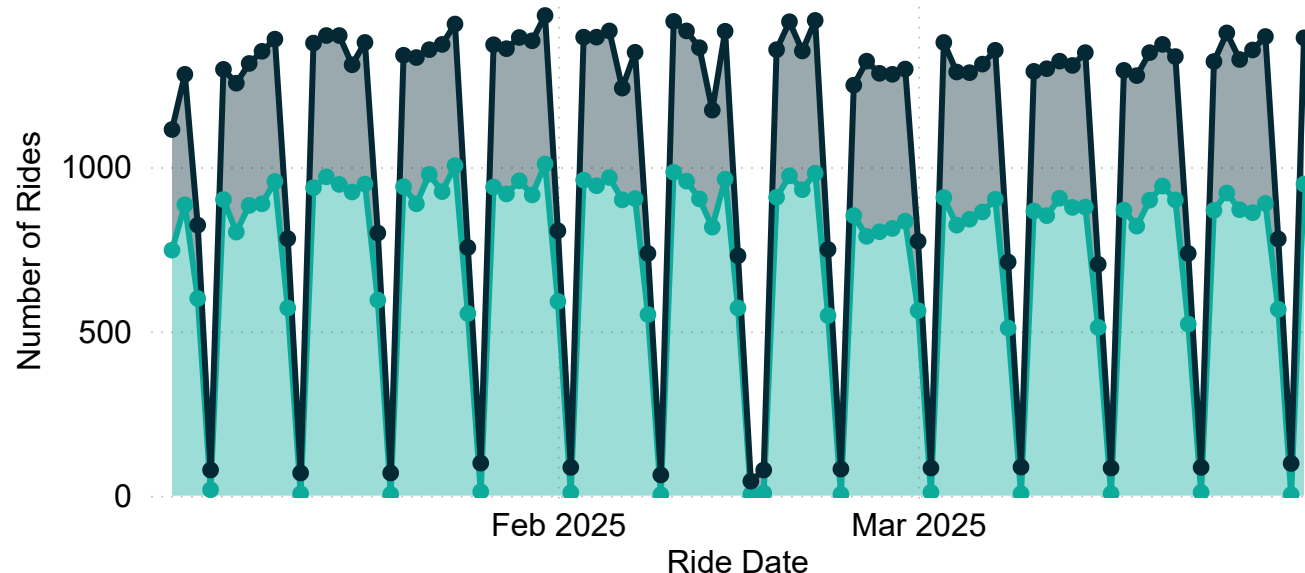
8.78

Average Time On-Board (min)

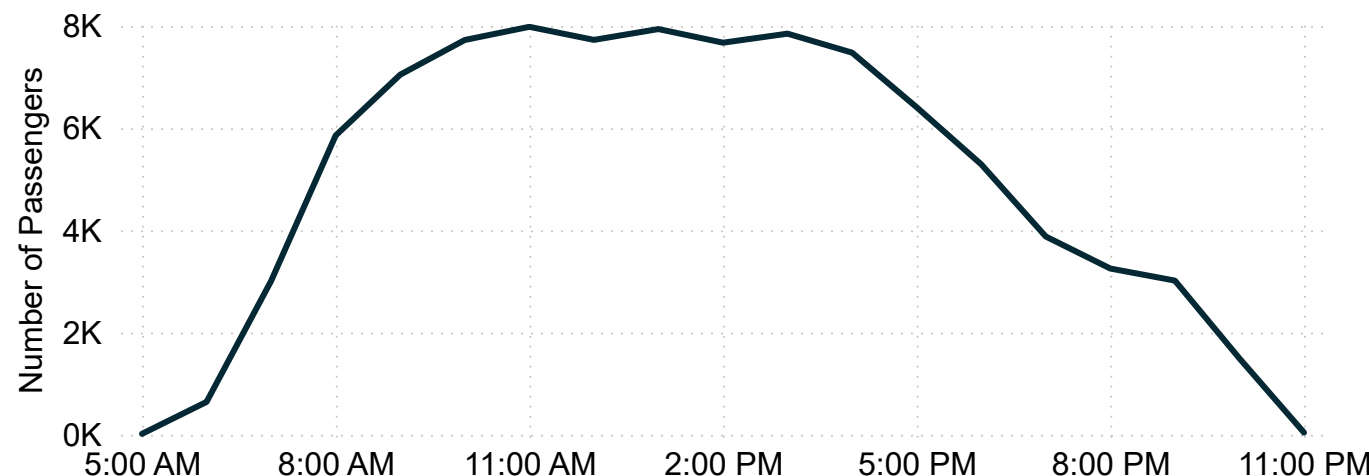
17.27

Daily Ridership

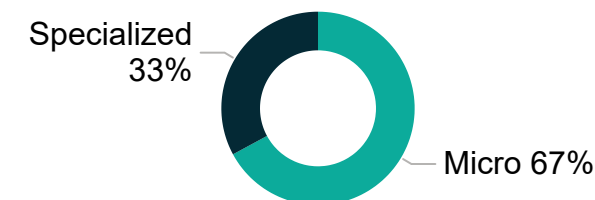
● Micro ● Specialized



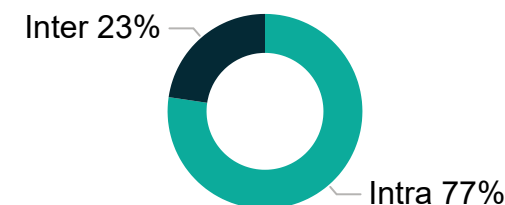
Peak Hours



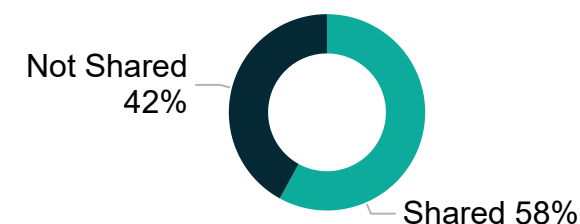
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	2934	10826	13760
App	34580	31190	65770
Subscription	1	4097	4098
Total	37515	46113	83628

Overall NT+ In-House Service Metrics - 2025 (Q1)

Number of Passengers

23,474

Number of Trips

20,175

Number of Accessible Trips

8,284

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

109

Average Direct Distance (km)

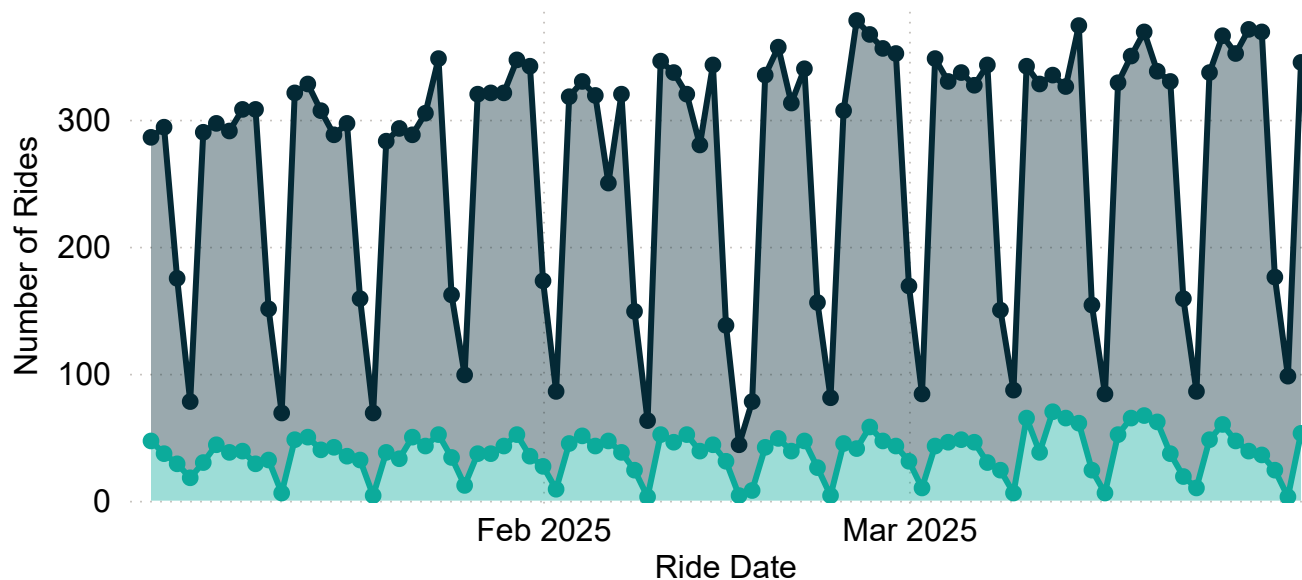
4.66

Average Time On-Board (min)

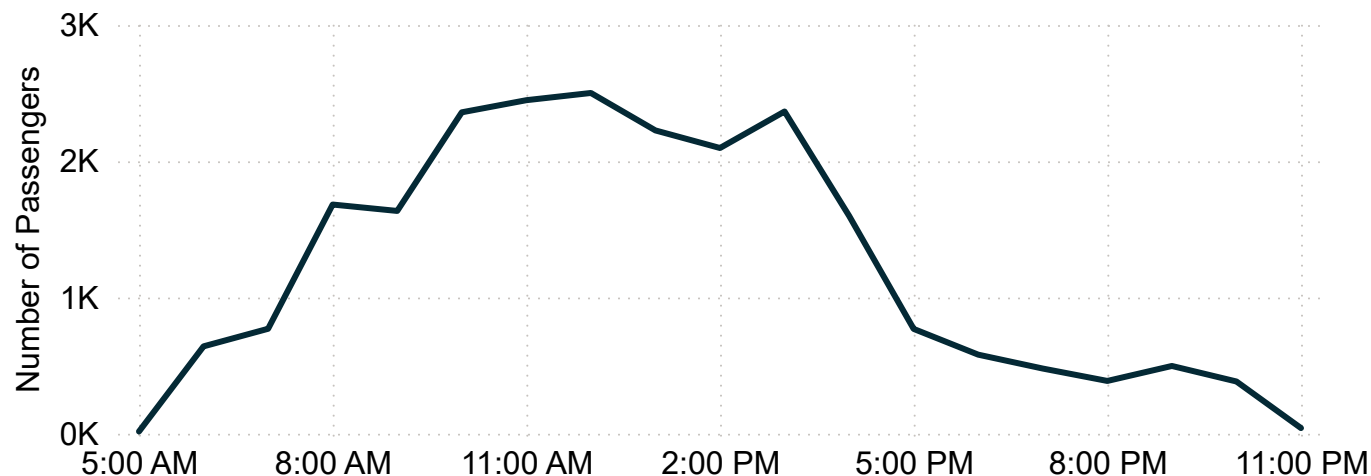
16.79

Daily Ridership

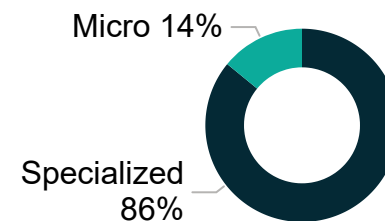
● Micro ● Specialized



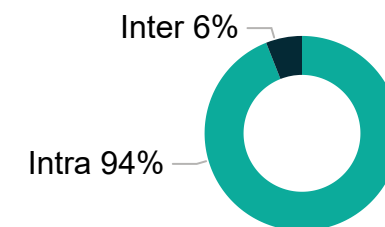
Peak Hours



Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	1164	6983	8147
App	3148	7752	10900
Subscription		1128	1128
Total	4312	15863	20175

Overall NT+ In-House 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Niagara Falls

Number of Passengers

6,406

Number of Trips

5,602

Number of Accessible Trips

1,981

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

(Blank)

Average Direct Distance (km)

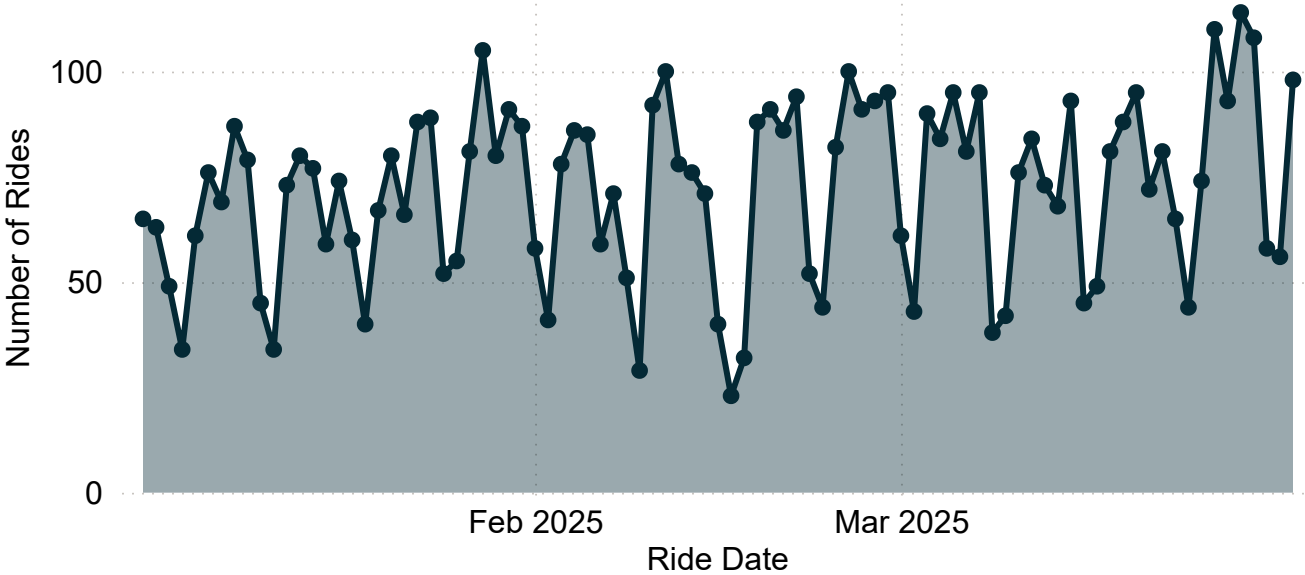
4.55

Average Time On-Board (min)

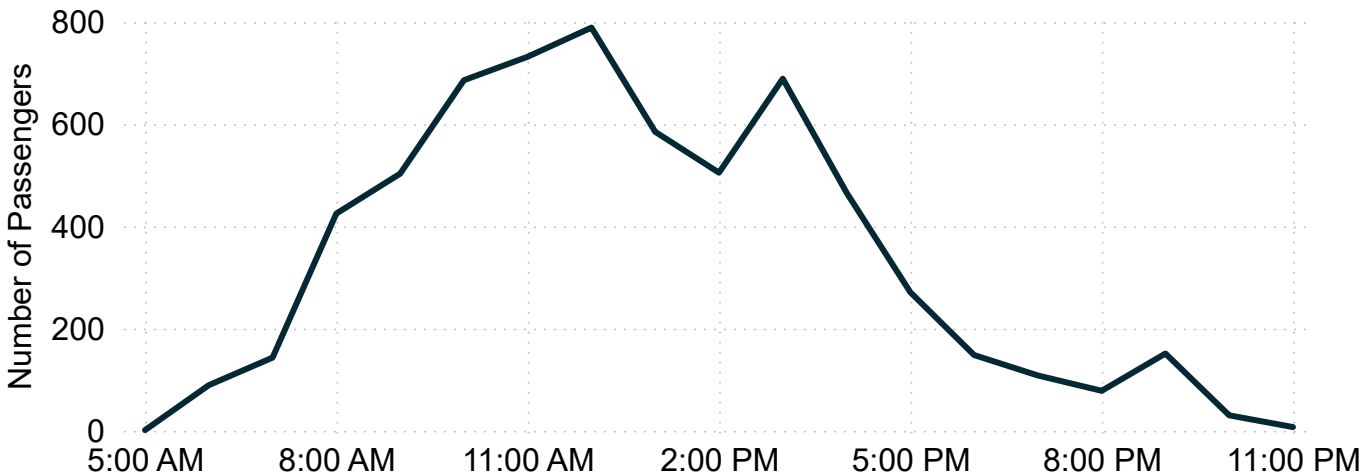
16.91

Daily Ridership

● Specialized



Peak Hours



Service Type

Specialized 100%



Trip Type

Intra 100%



Trip Utilization

Shared 47%

Not Shared 53%



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	514	2119	2633
App	442	1400	1842
Subscription		1127	1127
Total	956	4646	5602

Overall NT+ In-House 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - St. Catharines

CL-C 32 2025
NTC-C 14-2025
April 15, 2025
Appendix 1

Number of Passengers

9,402

Number of Trips

7,702

Number of Accessible Trips

3,733

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

(Blank)

Average Direct Distance (km)

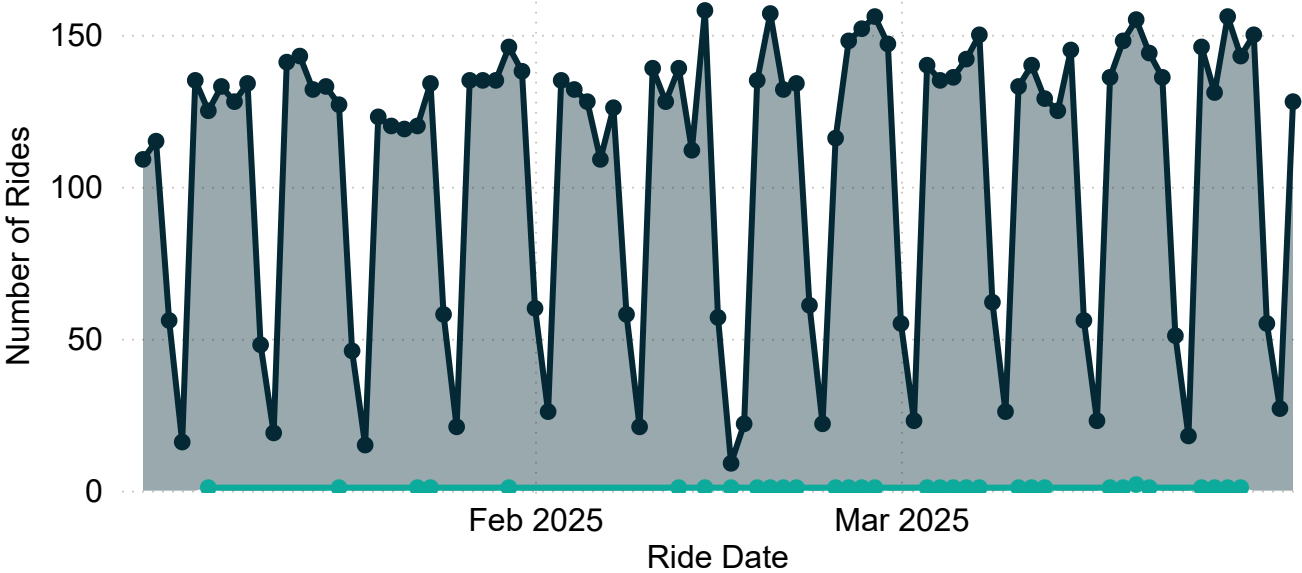
4.63

Average Time On-Board (min)

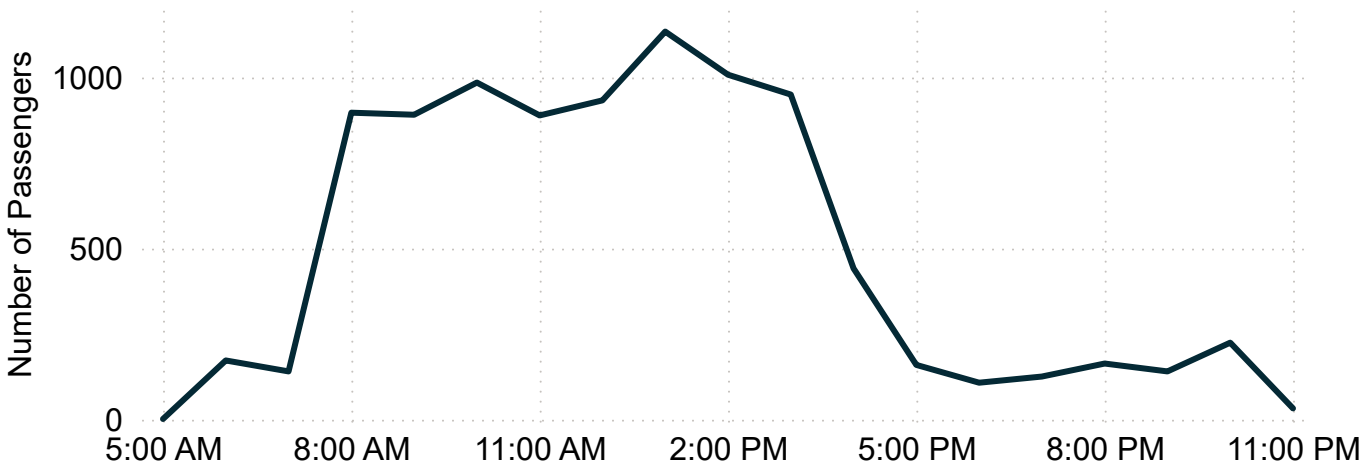
17.30

Daily Ridership

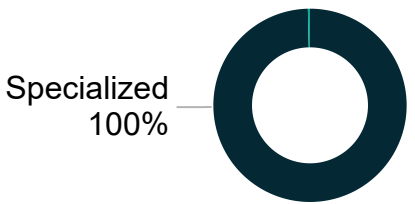
● Micro ● Specialized



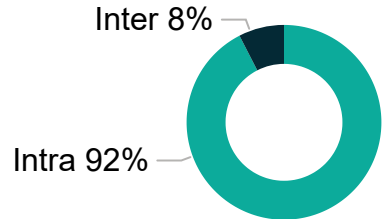
Peak Hours



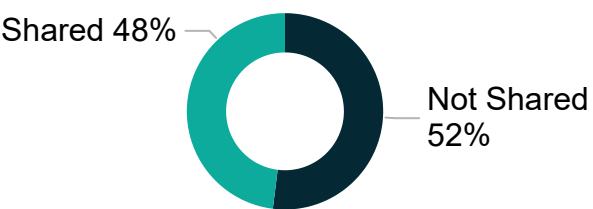
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	378	2815	3193
App	713	3795	4508
Subscription		1	1
Total	1091	6611	7702

Overall NT+ In-House 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Thorold

Number of Passengers

700

Number of Trips

624

Number of Accessible
Trips

445

Number of Micro Trips with
an Accessibility Device

(Blank)

Average Direct Distance
(km)

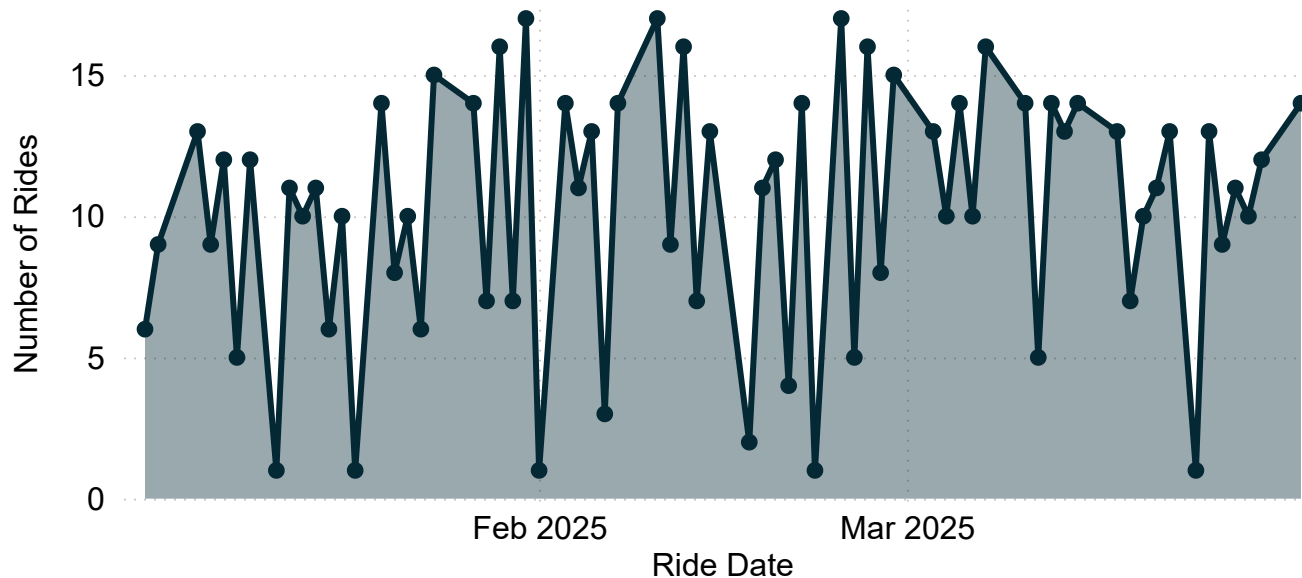
7.73

Average Time On-Board
(min)

22.15

Daily Ridership

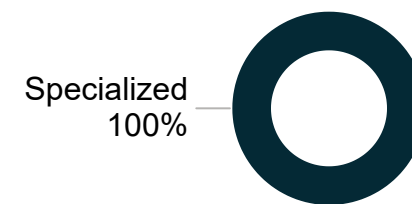
● Specialized



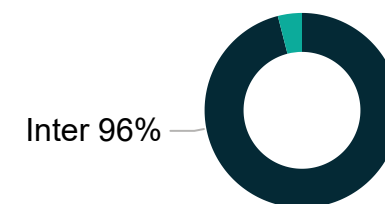
Peak Hours



Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	29	152	181
App	33	410	443
Total	62	562	624

Overall NT+ In-House 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Welland

Number of Passengers

6,954

Number of Trips

6,236

Number of Accessible Trips

2,125

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

109

Average Direct Distance (km)

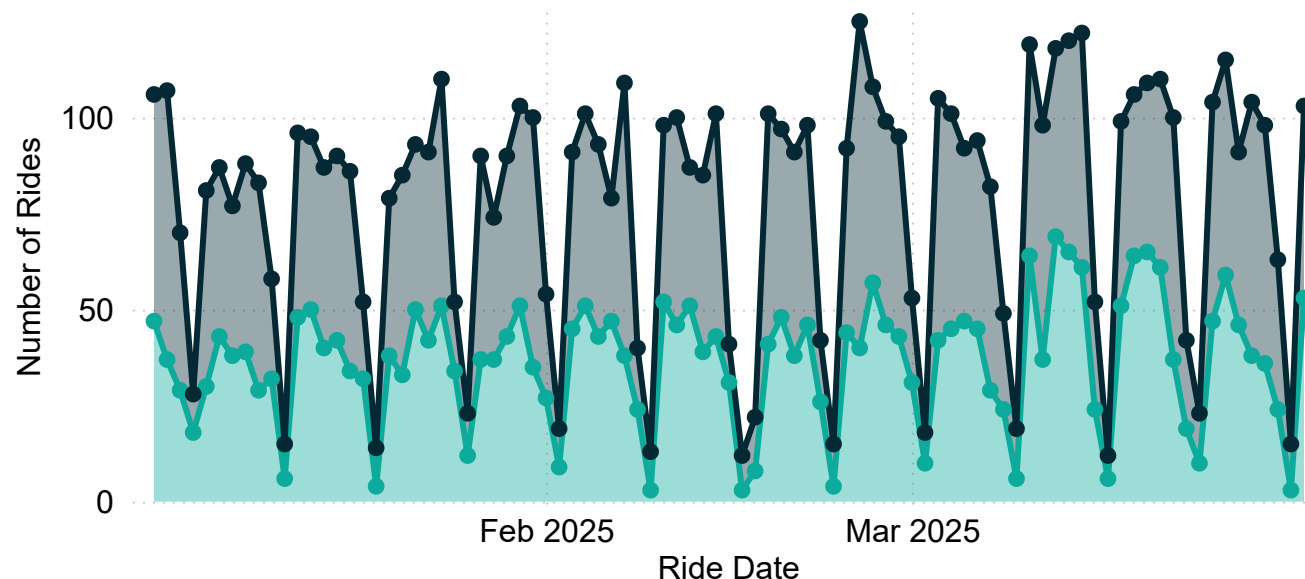
4.49

Average Time On-Board (min)

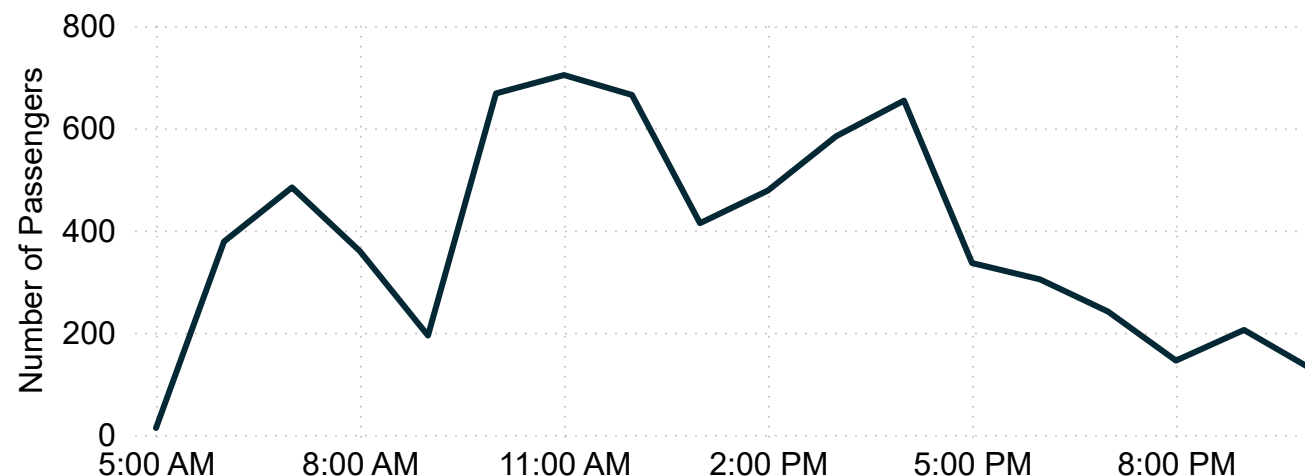
15.51

Daily Ridership

● Micro ● Specialized



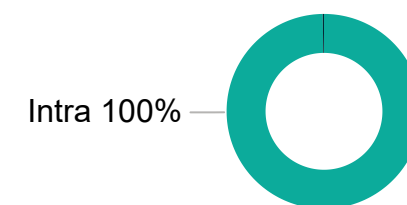
Peak Hours



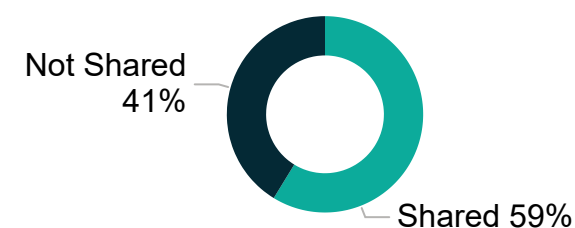
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	243	1891	2134
App	1959	2143	4102
Total	2202	4034	6236

Overall NT+ (Contract) Voyago Service Metrics - 2025 (Q1)

Number of Passengers

70,856

Number of Trips

63,453

Number of Accessible Trips

4,705

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

1,130

Average Direct Distance (km)

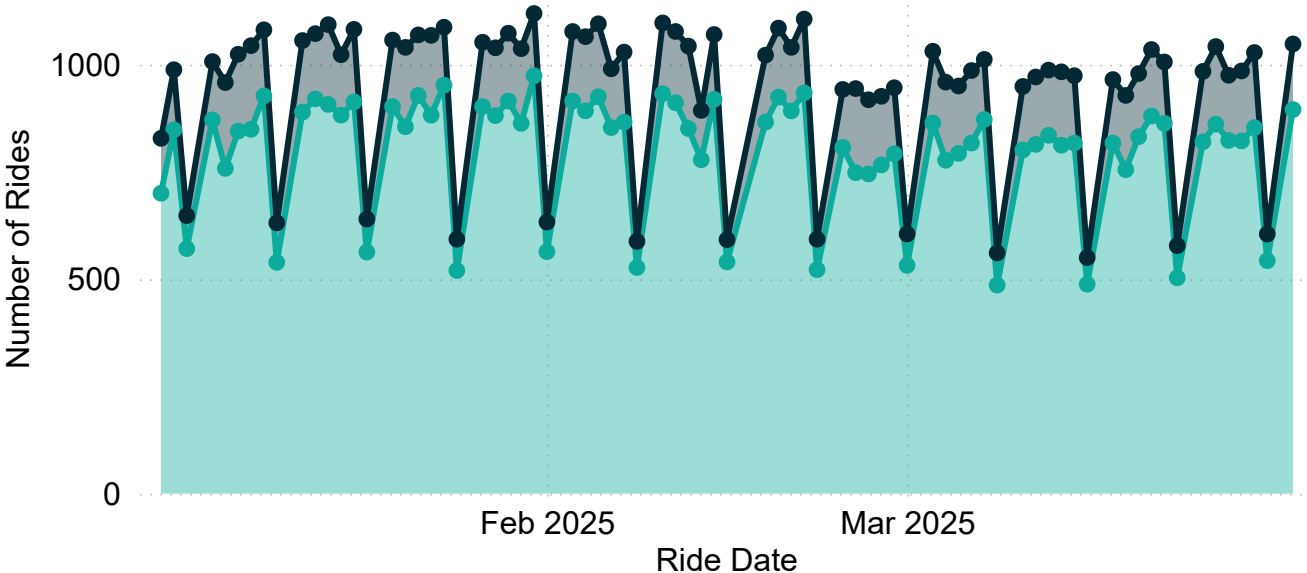
10.10

Average Time On-Board (min)

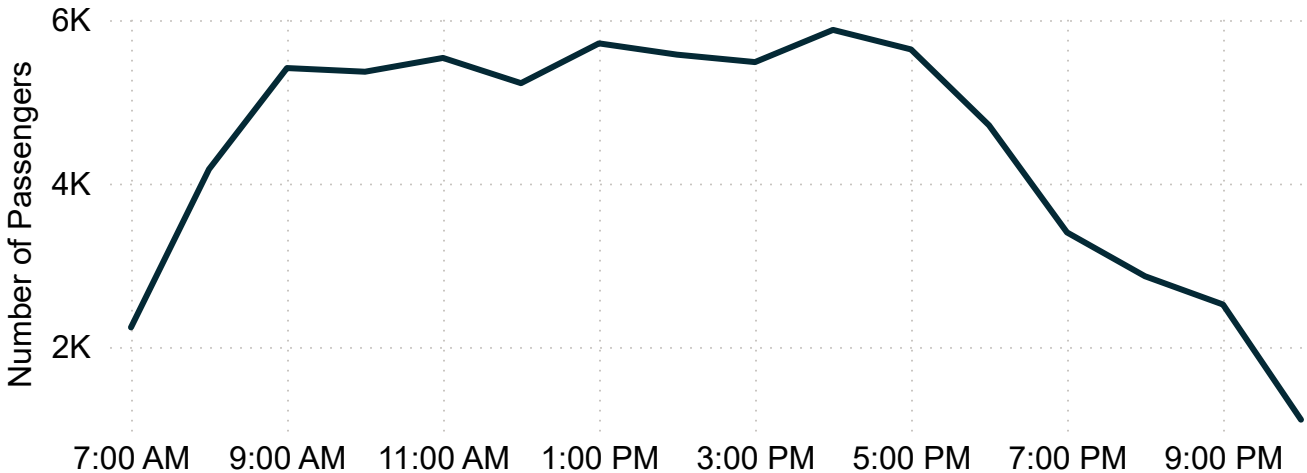
17.42

Daily Ridership

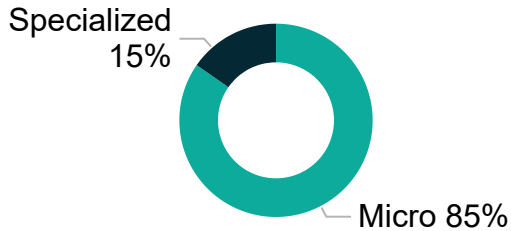
● Micro ● Specialized



Peak Hours



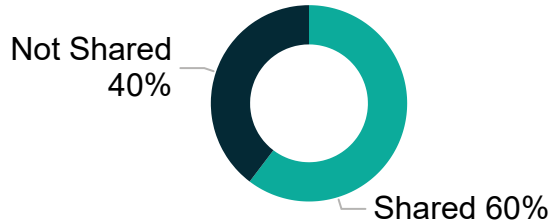
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	1770	3843	5613
App	31432	23438	54870
Subscription	1	2969	2970
Total	33203	30250	63453

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Fort Erie

Number of Passengers

25,389

Number of Trips

21,732

Number of Accessible Trips

930

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

491

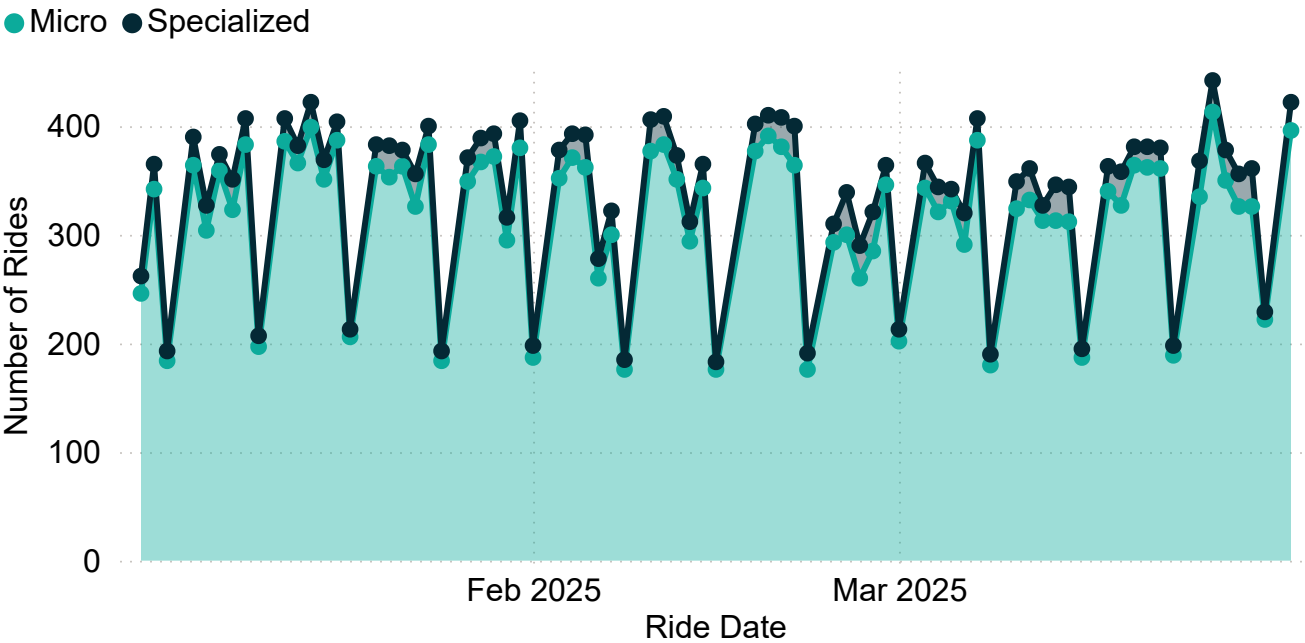
Average Direct Distance (km)

7.06

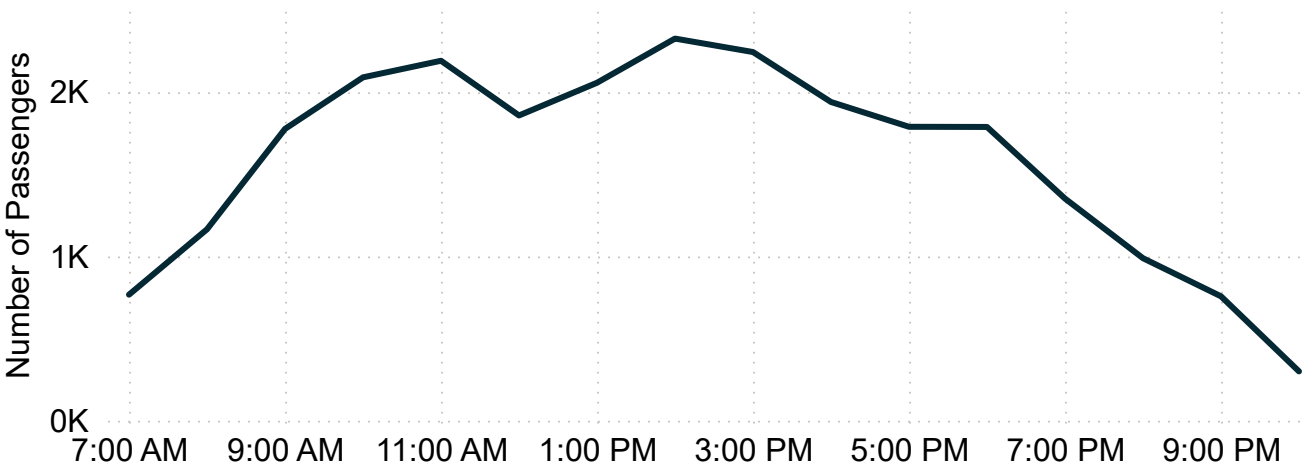
Average Time On-Board (min)

13.98

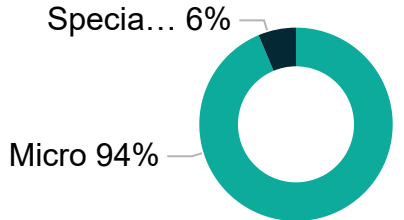
Daily Ridership



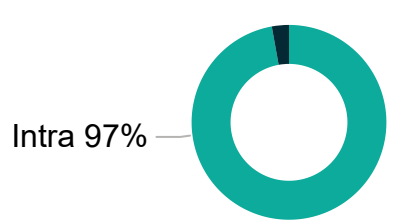
Peak Hours



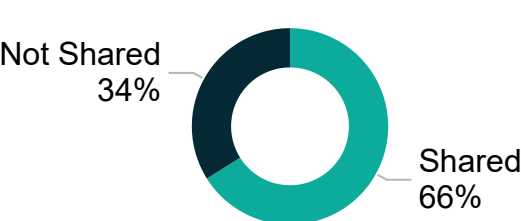
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	963	960	1923
App	13525	5775	19300
Subscription		509	509
Total	14488	7244	21732

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Grimsby

Number of Passengers

6,266

Number of Trips

5,910

Number of Accessible Trips

184

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

95

Average Direct Distance (km)

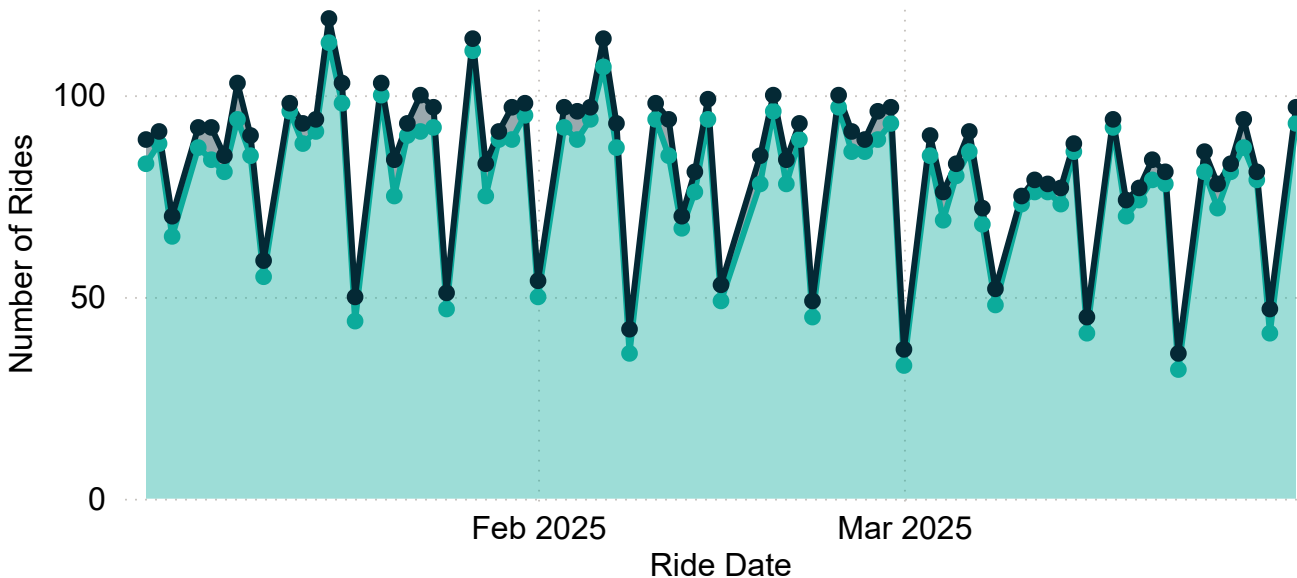
10.29

Average Time On-Board (min)

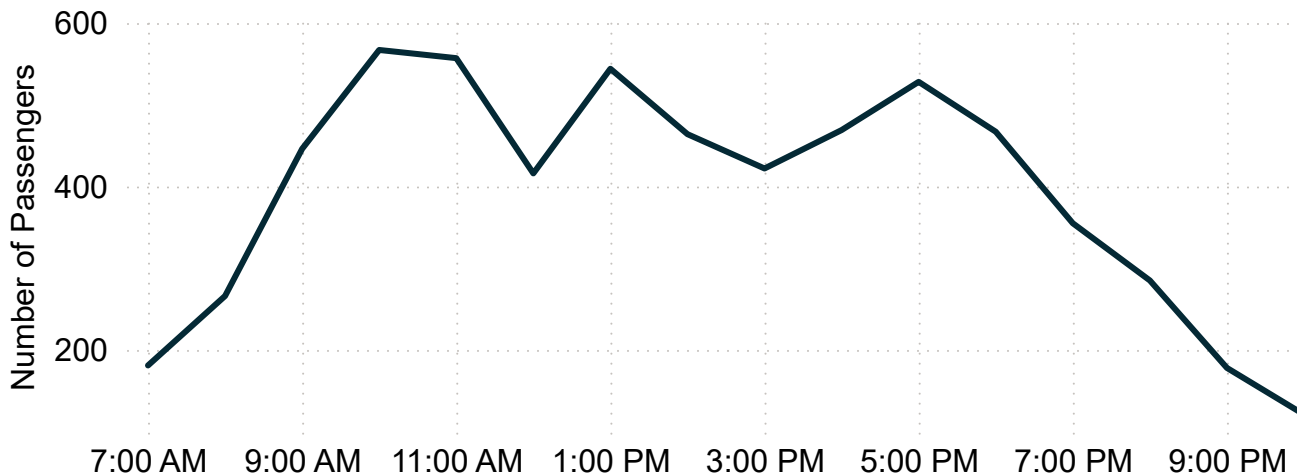
16.26

Daily Ridership

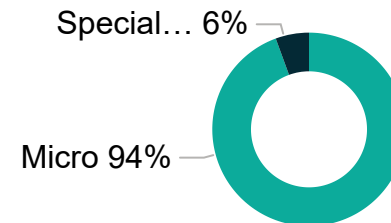
● Micro ● Specialized



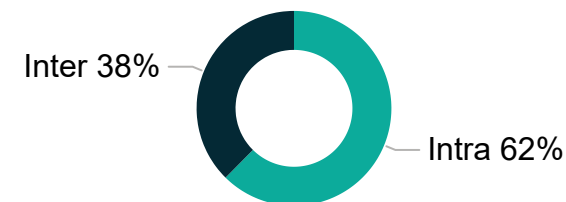
Peak Hours



Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	177	186	363
App	2743	2630	5373
Subscription		174	174
Total	2920	2990	5910

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Lincoln

Number of Passengers

6,914

Number of Trips

6,474

Number of Accessible Trips

266

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

171

Average Direct Distance (km)

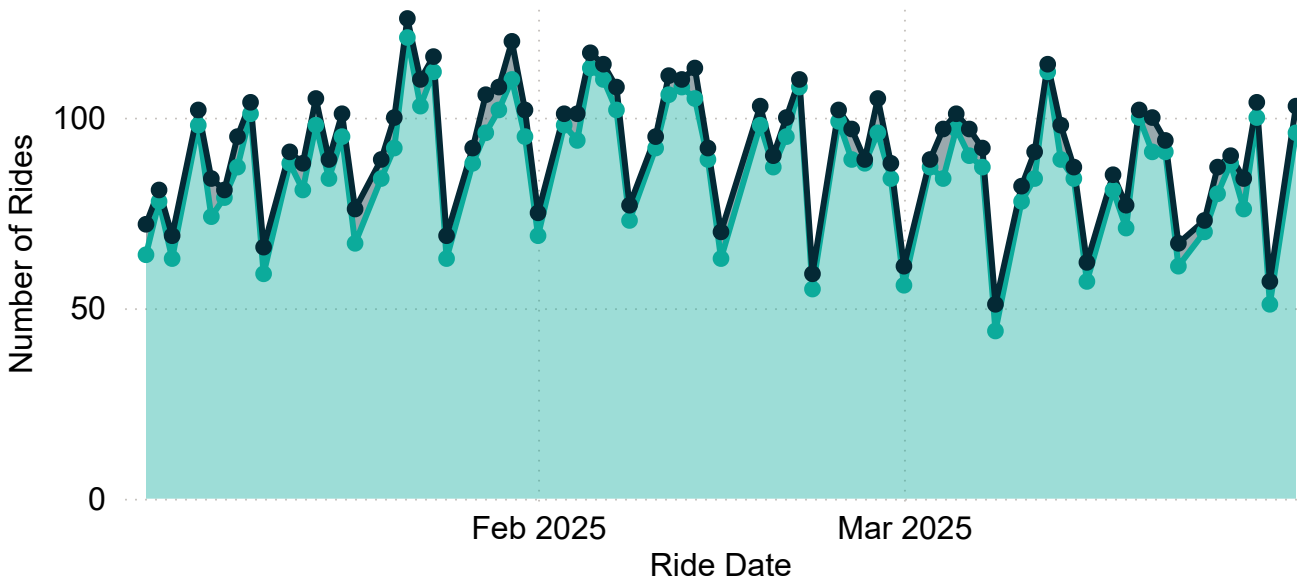
11.96

Average Time On-Board (min)

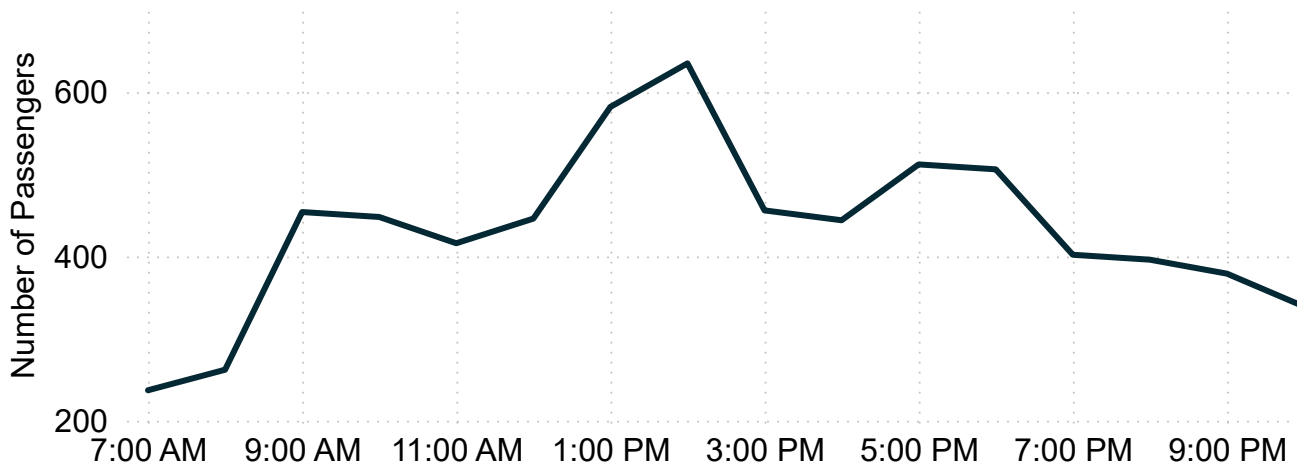
18.27

Daily Ridership

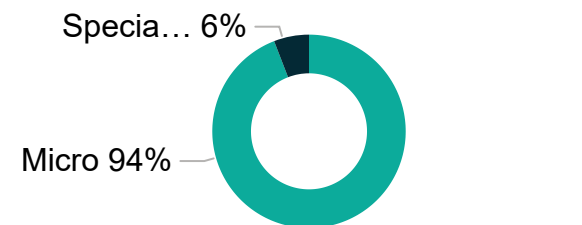
● Micro ● Specialized



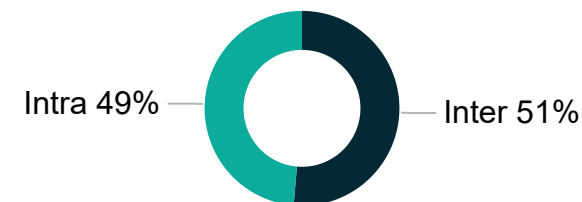
Peak Hours



Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	116	150	266
App	2979	3095	6074
Subscription		134	134
Total	3095	3379	6474

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Niagara Falls

Number of Passengers

2,179

Number of Trips

1,925

Number of Accessible Trips

680

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

2

Average Direct Distance (km)

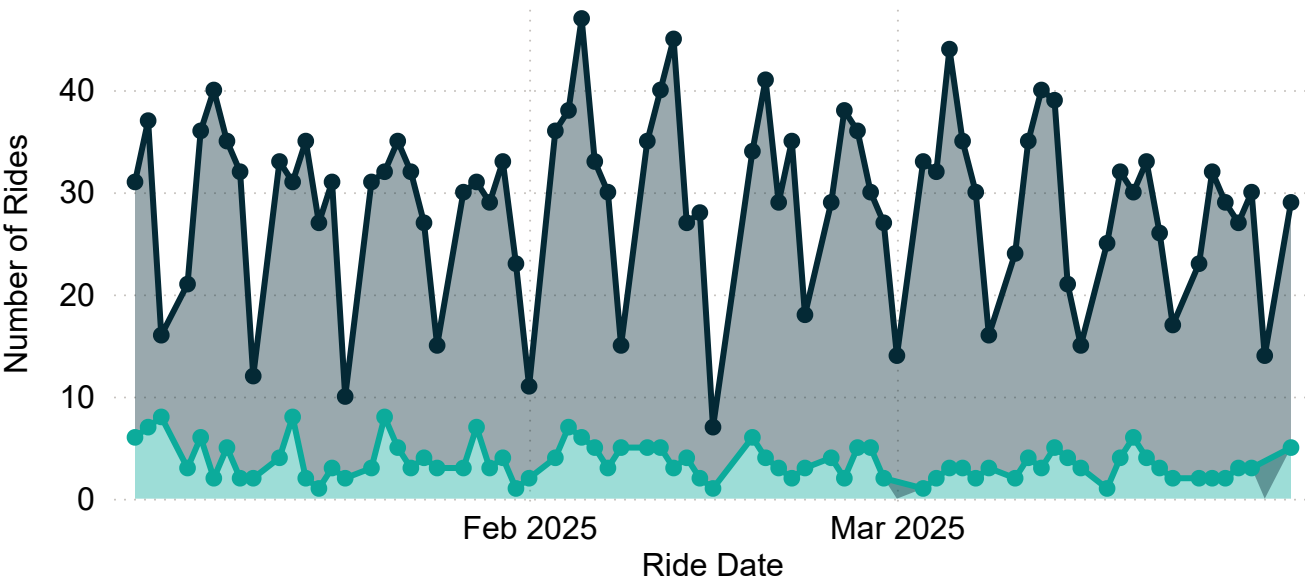
20.30

Average Time On-Board (min)

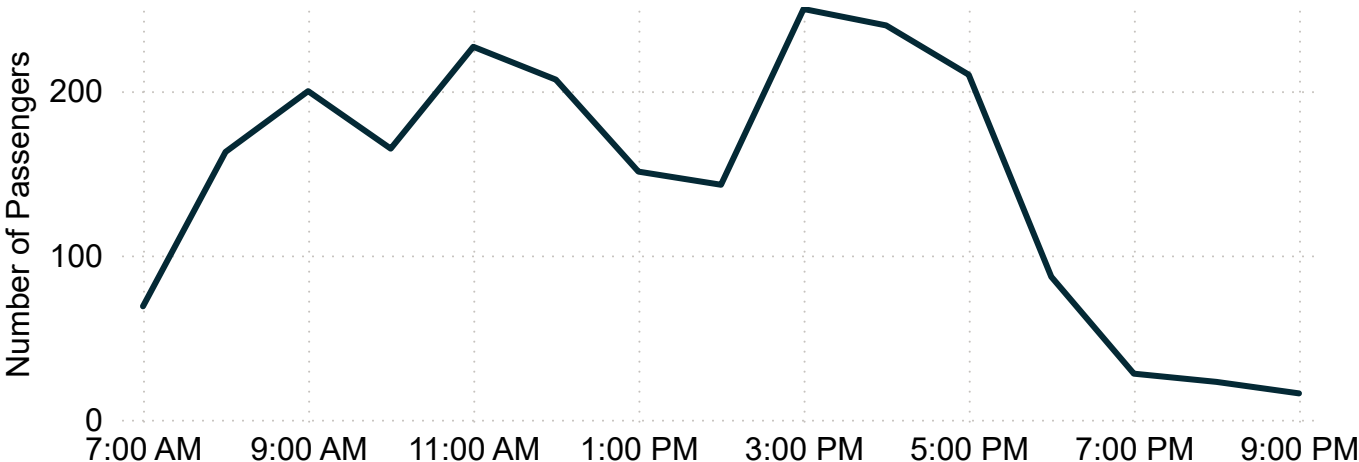
33.30

Daily Ridership

● Micro ● Specialized



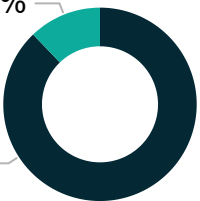
Peak Hours



Service Type

Micro 12%

Specialized 88%



Trip Type

Inter 100%



Trip Utilization

Not Shared 47%

Shared 53%



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	62	596	658
App	123	642	765
Subscription		502	502
Total	185	1740	1925

Power BI Desktop

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Niagara-on-the-Lake

Number of Passengers

15,736

Number of Trips

14,549

Number of Accessible Trips

332

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

214

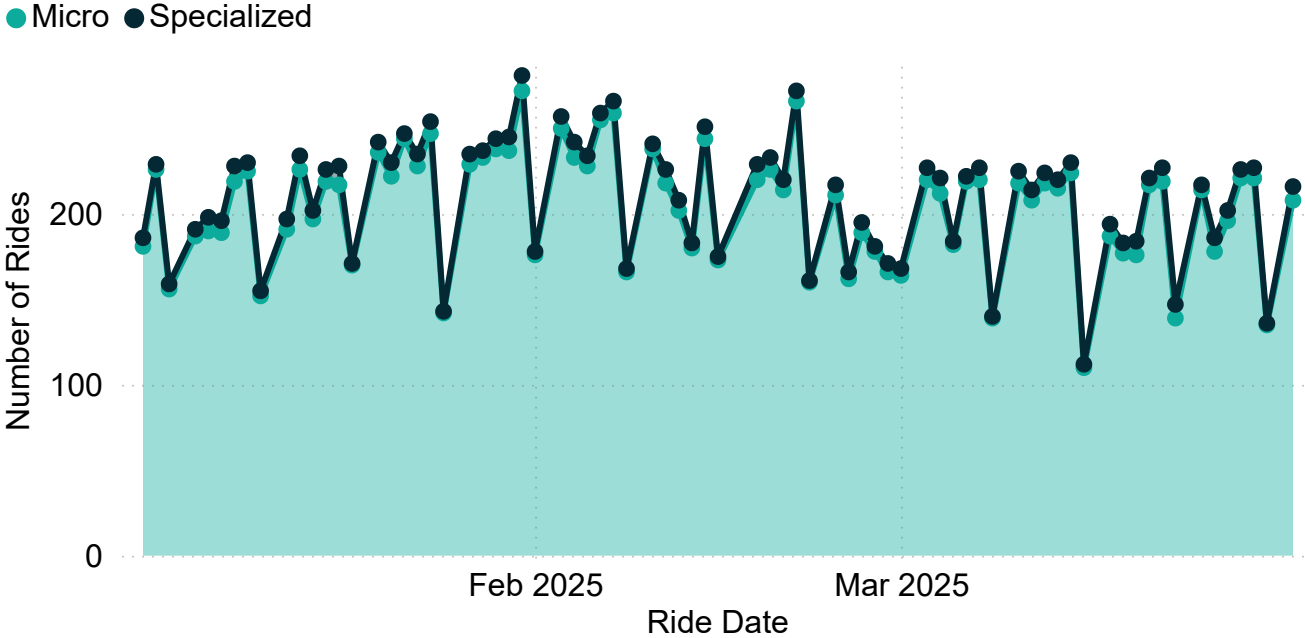
Average Direct Distance (km)

7.42

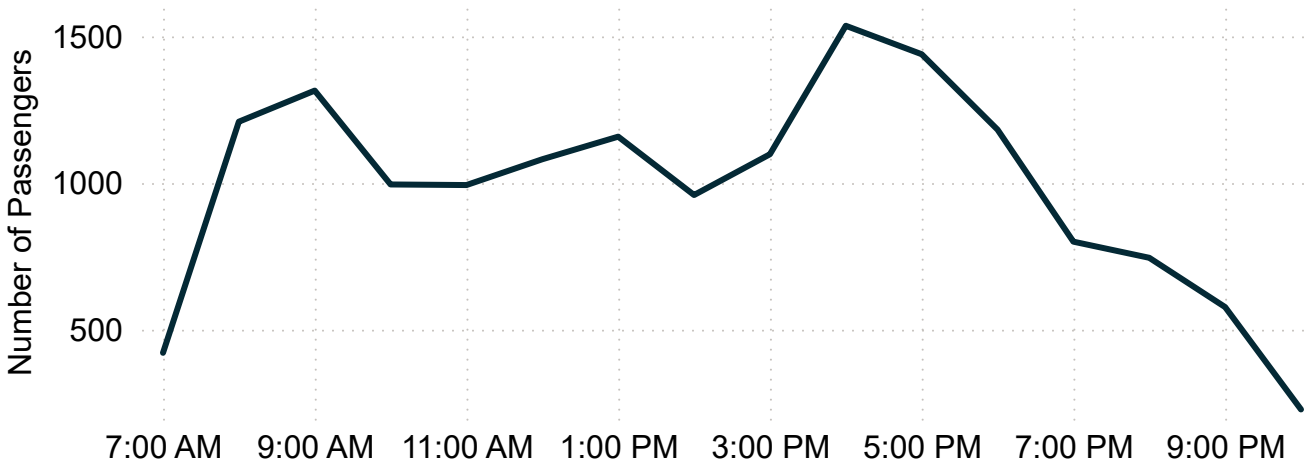
Average Time On-Board (min)

14.69

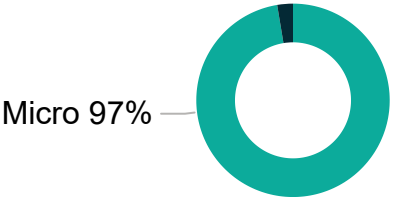
Daily Ridership



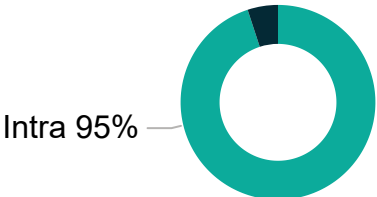
Peak Hours



Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	118	112	230
App	8910	5300	14210
Subscription		109	109
Total	9028	5521	14549

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Pelham

Number of Passengers

1,520

Number of Trips

1,458

Number of Accessible Trips

210

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

79

Average Direct Distance (km)

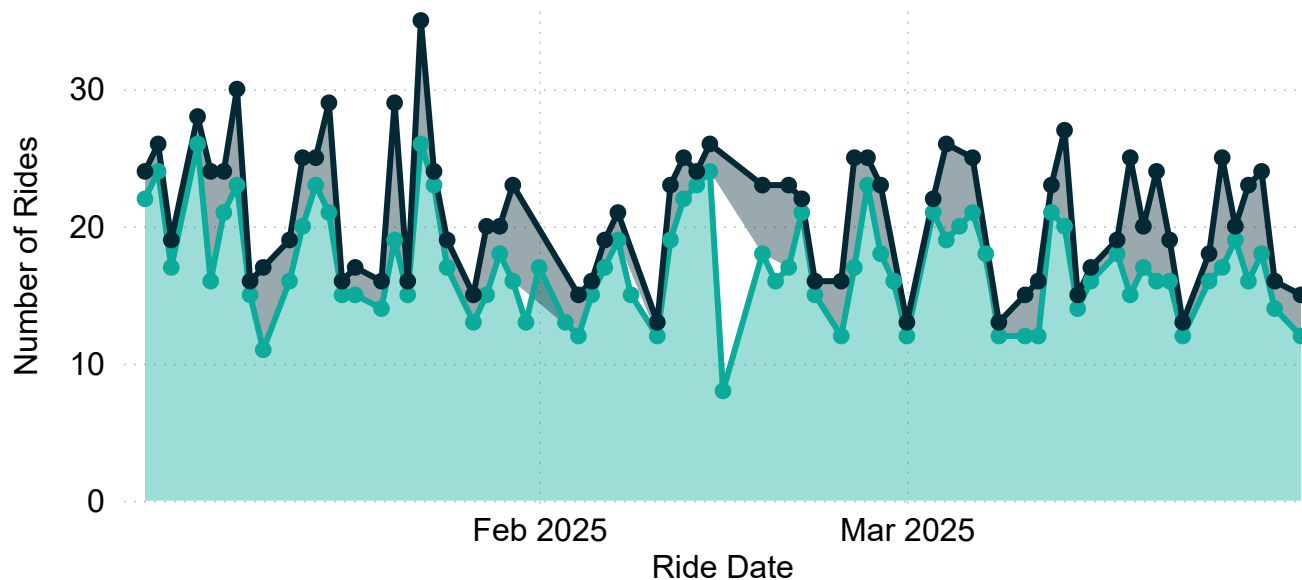
11.03

Average Time On-Board (min)

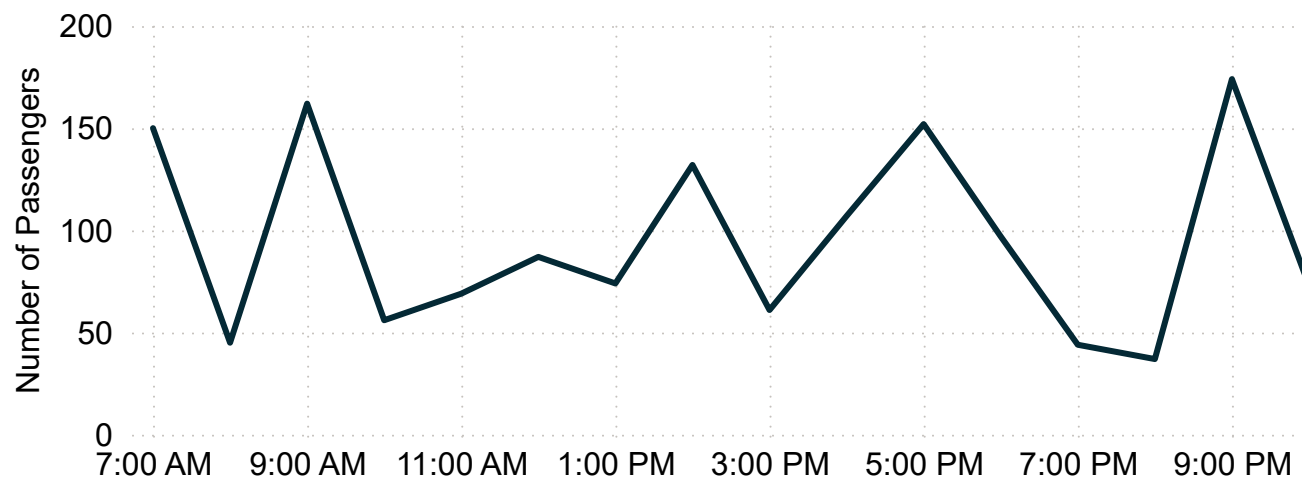
18.14

Daily Ridership

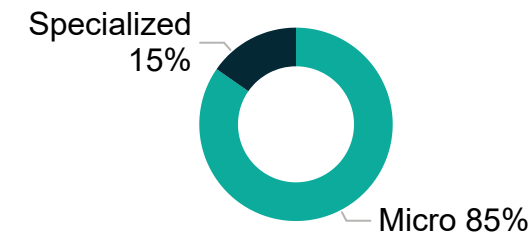
● Micro ● Specialized



Peak Hours



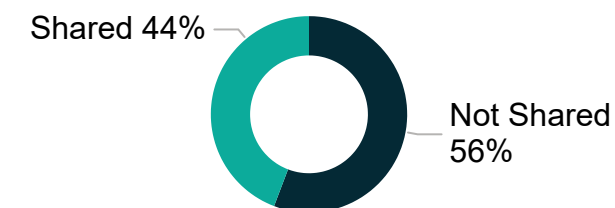
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Subscription		97	97
App	506	666	1172
Agent	45	144	189
Total	551	907	1458

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Port Colborne

Number of Passengers

3,750

Number of Trips

3,157

Number of Accessible
Trips

205

Number of Micro Trips with
an Accessibility Device

38

Average Direct Distance
(km)

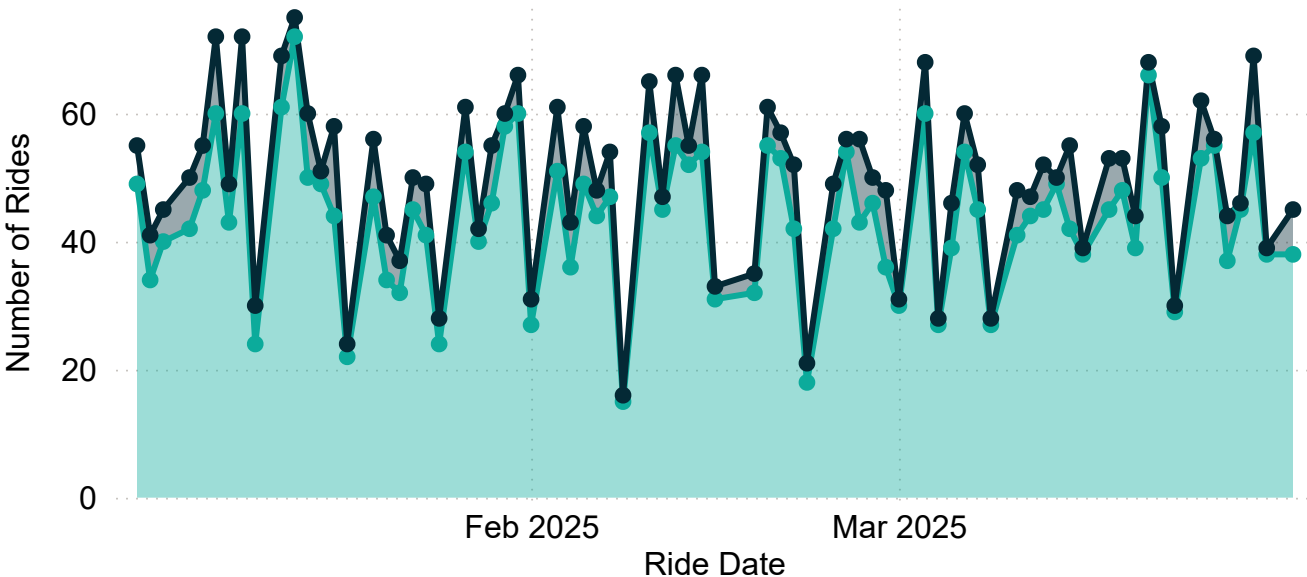
6.62

Average Time On-Board
(min)

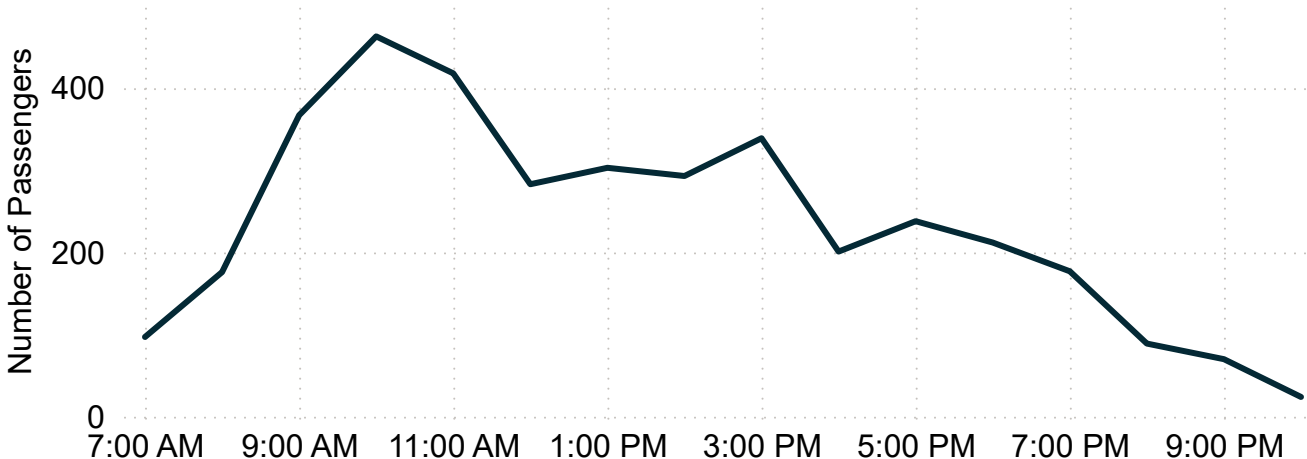
13.19

Daily Ridership

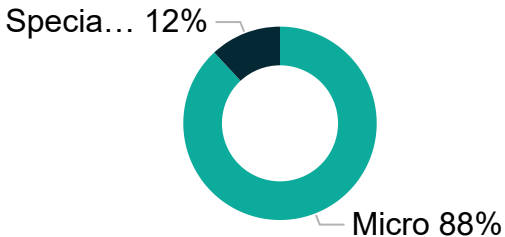
● Micro ● Specialized



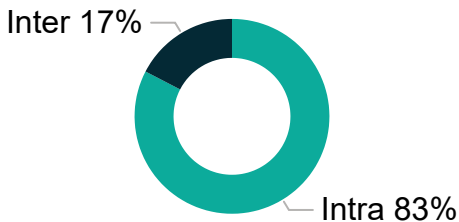
Peak Hours



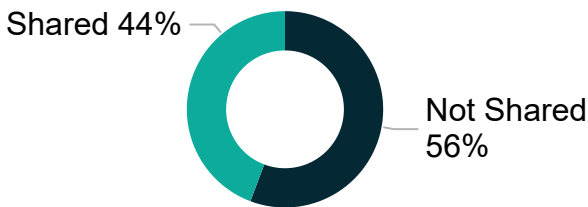
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	106	247	353
App	1609	982	2591
Subscription		213	213
Total	1715	1442	3157

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - St. Catharines

Number of Passengers

4,509

Number of Trips

4,112

Number of Accessible Trips

813

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

14

Average Direct Distance (km)

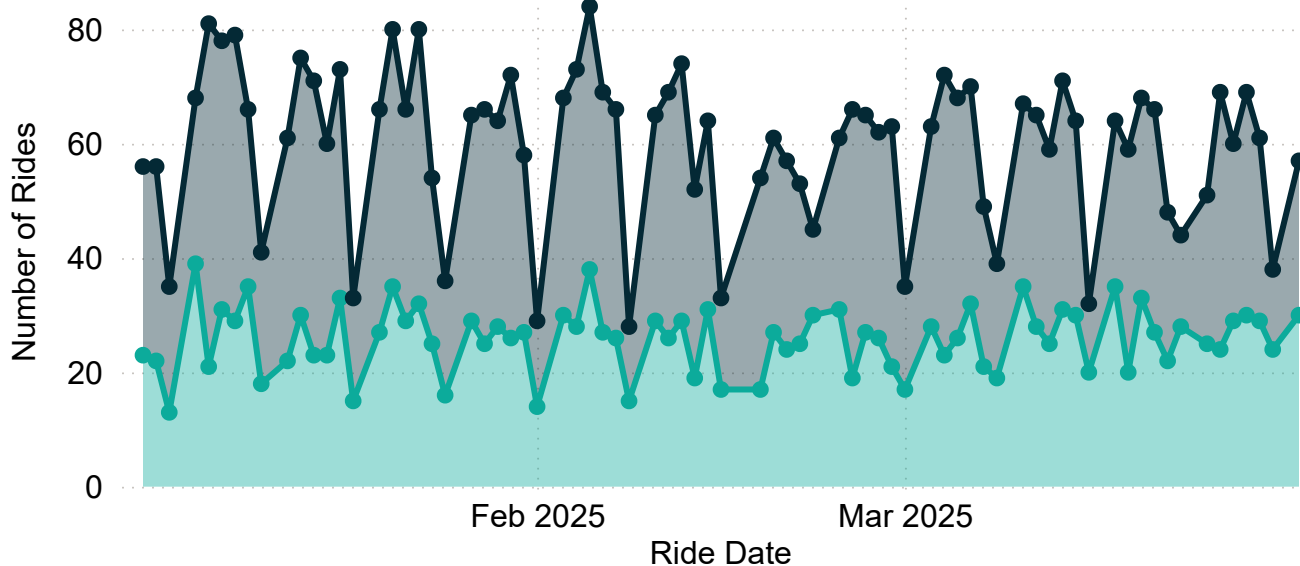
21.32

Average Time On-Board (min)

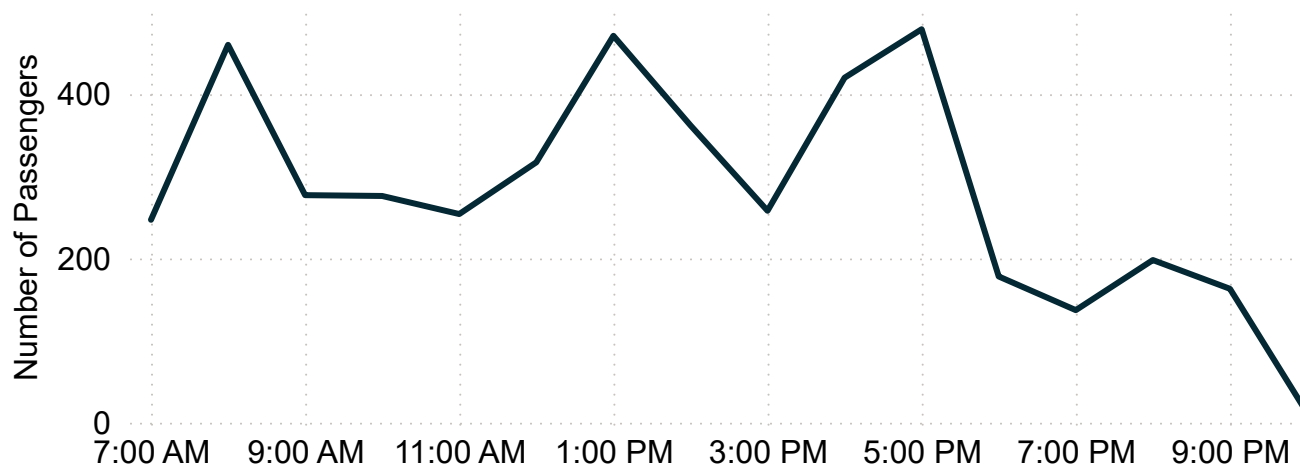
29.74

Daily Ridership

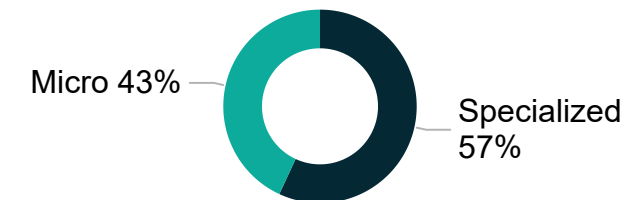
● Micro ● Specialized



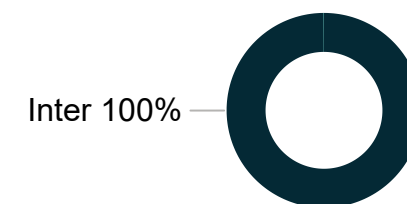
Peak Hours



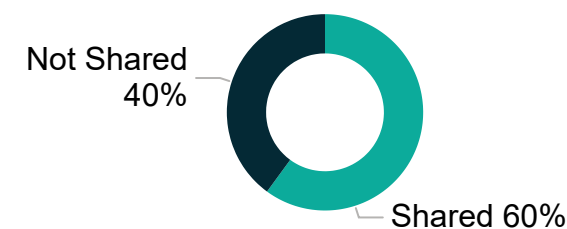
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	98	710	808
App	525	2295	2820
Subscription		484	484
Total	623	3489	4112

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Thorold

Number of Passengers

1,101

Number of Trips

907

Number of Accessible Trips

379

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

(Blank)

Average Direct Distance (km)

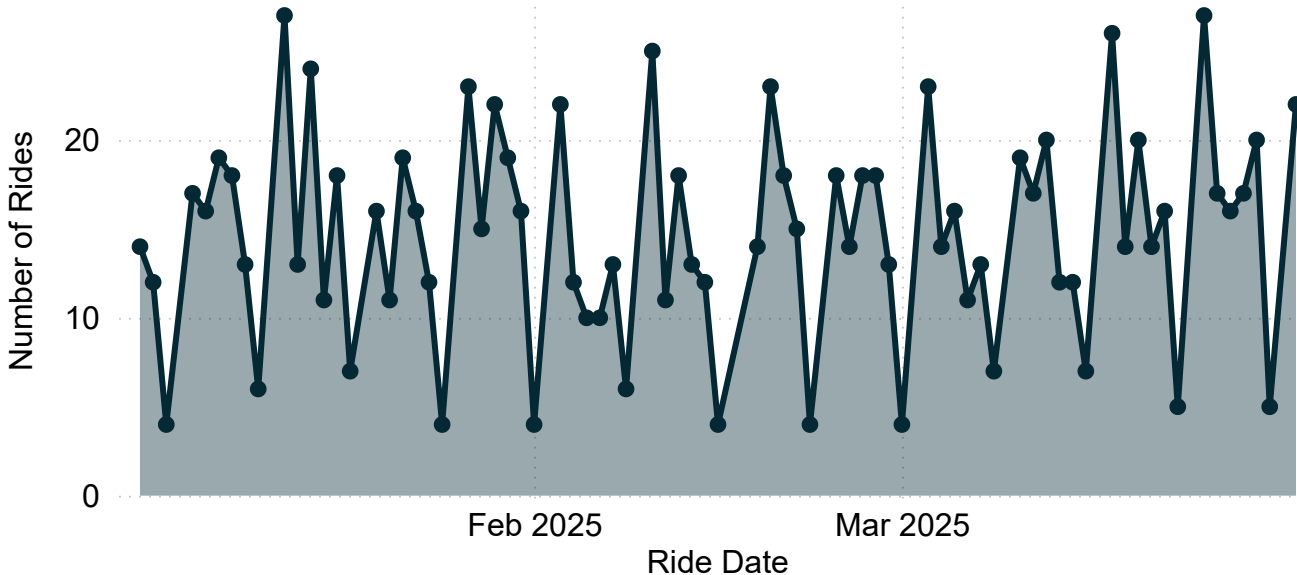
10.77

Average Time On-Board (min)

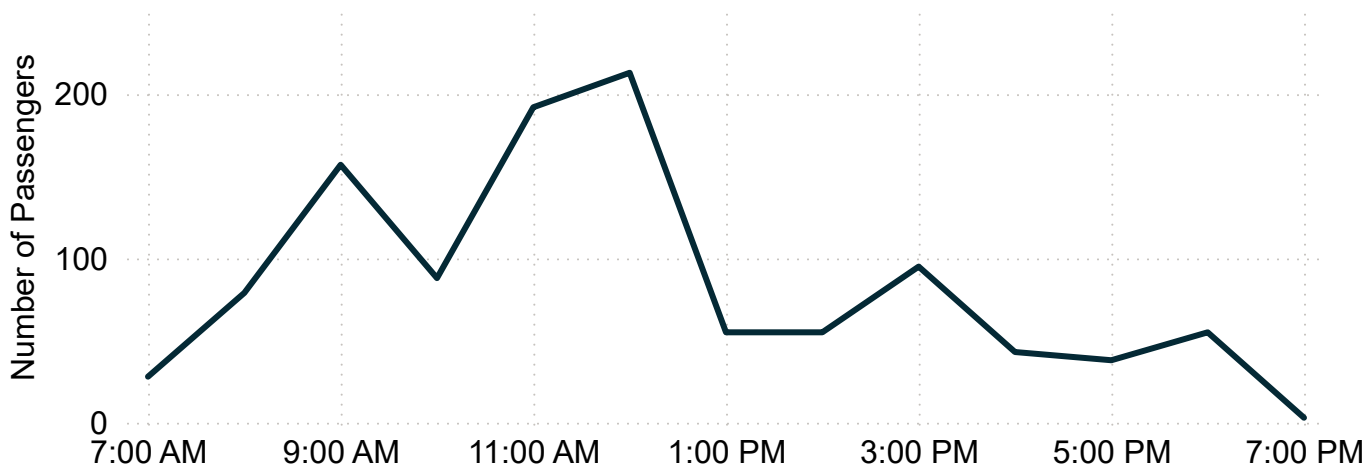
21.70

Daily Ridership

● Specialized



Peak Hours



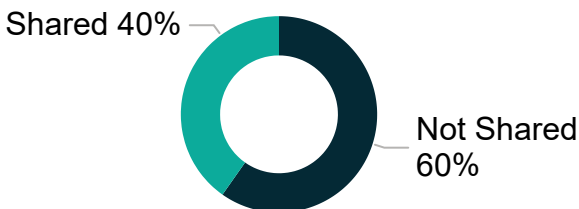
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	22	299	321
App	29	431	460
Subscription		126	126
Total	51	856	907

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Wainfleet

Number of Passengers

225

Number of Trips

219

Number of Accessible Trips

17

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

2

Average Direct Distance (km)

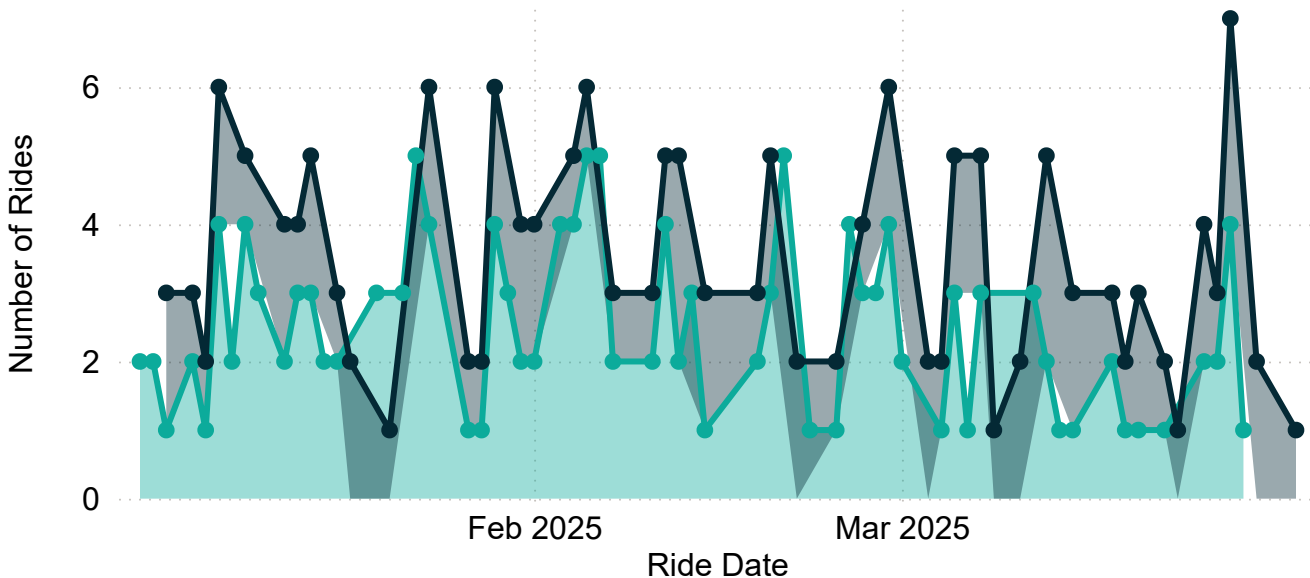
20.72

Average Time On-Board (min)

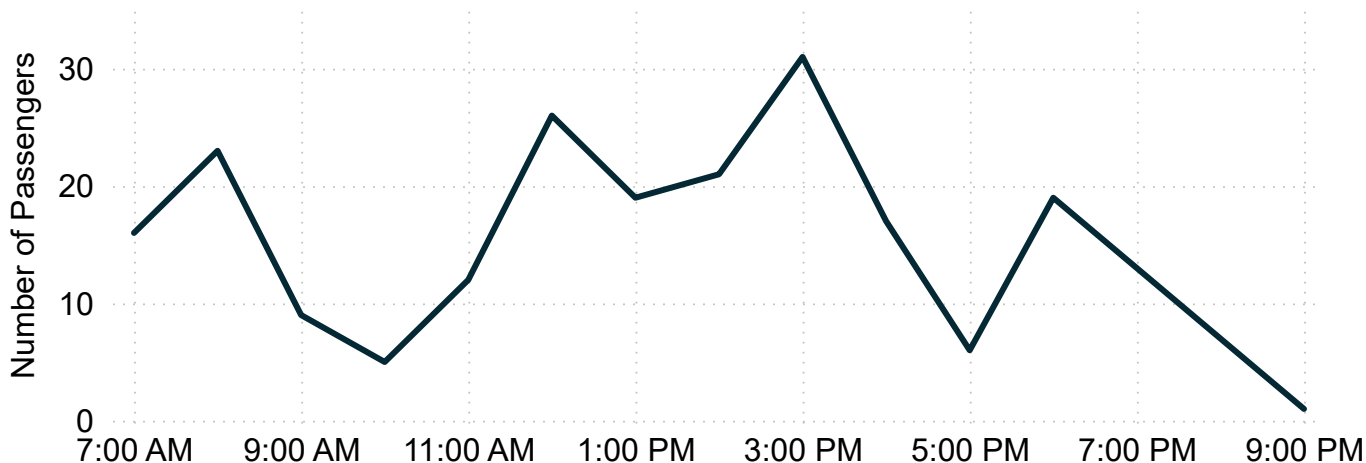
25.99

Daily Ridership

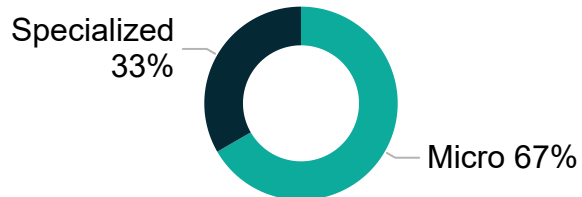
● Micro ● Specialized



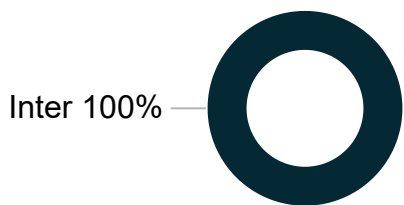
Peak Hours



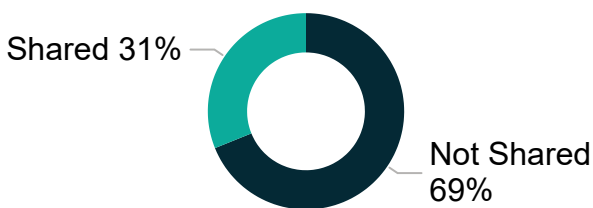
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	4	36	
App	39	138	177
Subscription		2	2
Total	43	176	219

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - Welland

Number of Passengers

2,407

Number of Trips

2,204

Number of Accessible
Trips

651

Number of Micro Trips with
an Accessibility Device

4

Average Direct Distance
(km)

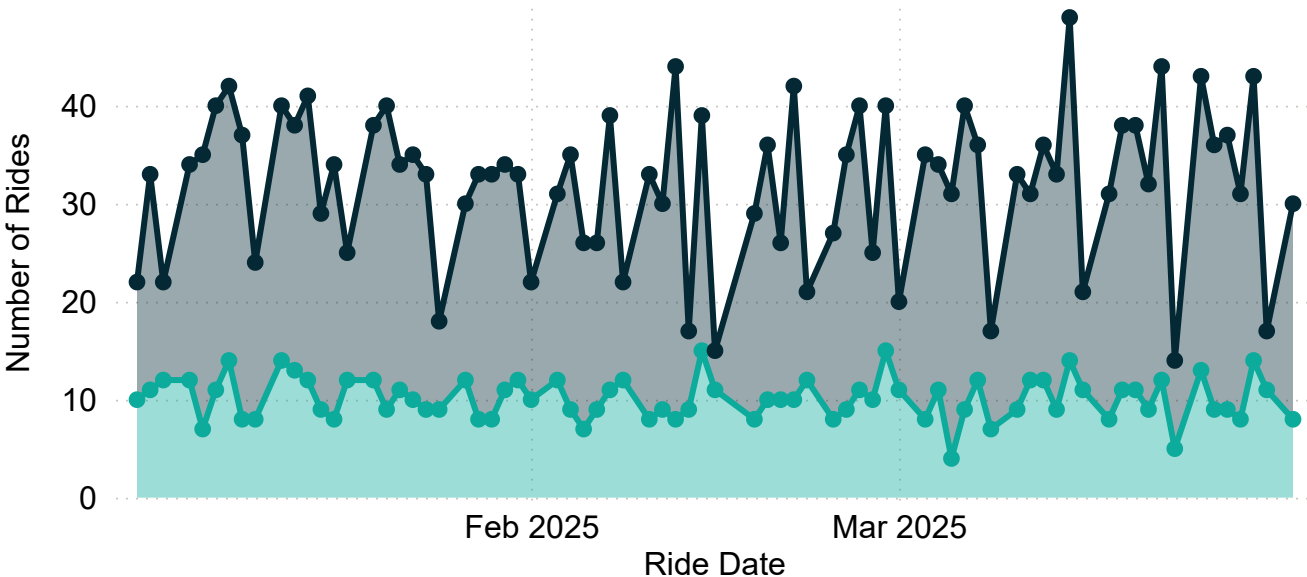
20.32

Average Time On-Board
(min)

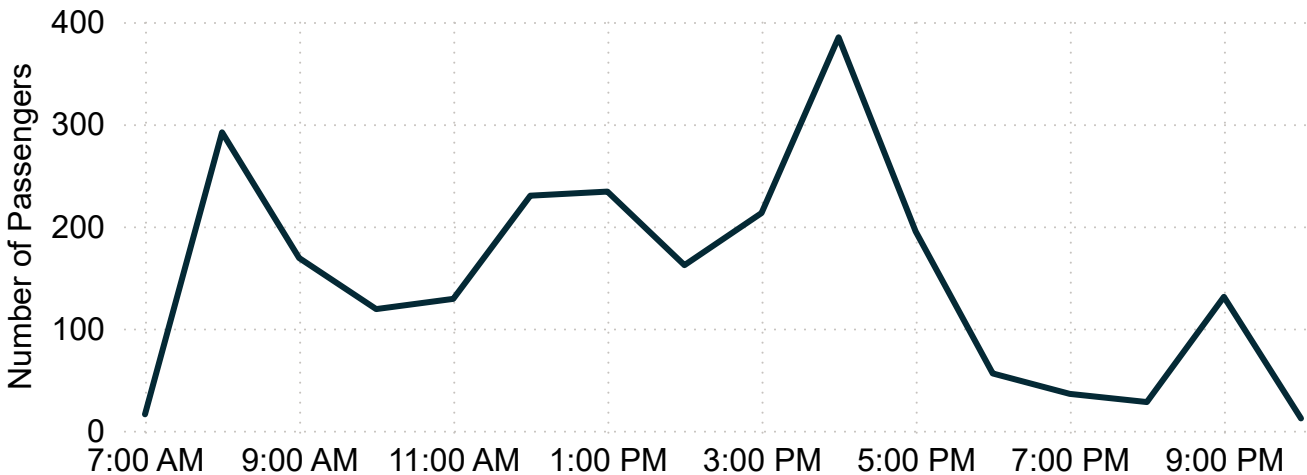
31.66

Daily Ridership

● Micro ● Specialized



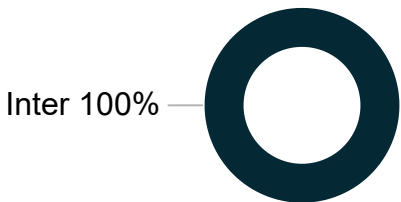
Peak Hours



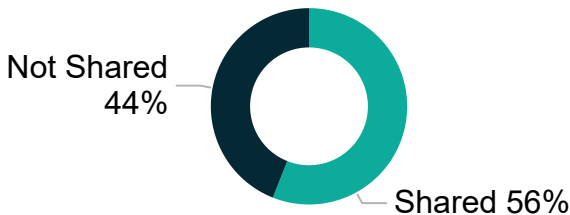
Service Type



Trip Type



Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	45	370	415
App	217	965	1182
Subscription	1	606	607
Total	263	1941	2204

NT+ (Contract) Voyago 2025 (Q1) Service Metrics - West Lincoln

Number of Passengers

819

Number of Trips

773

Number of Accessible Trips

29

Number of Micro Trips with an Accessibility Device

20

Average Direct Distance (km)

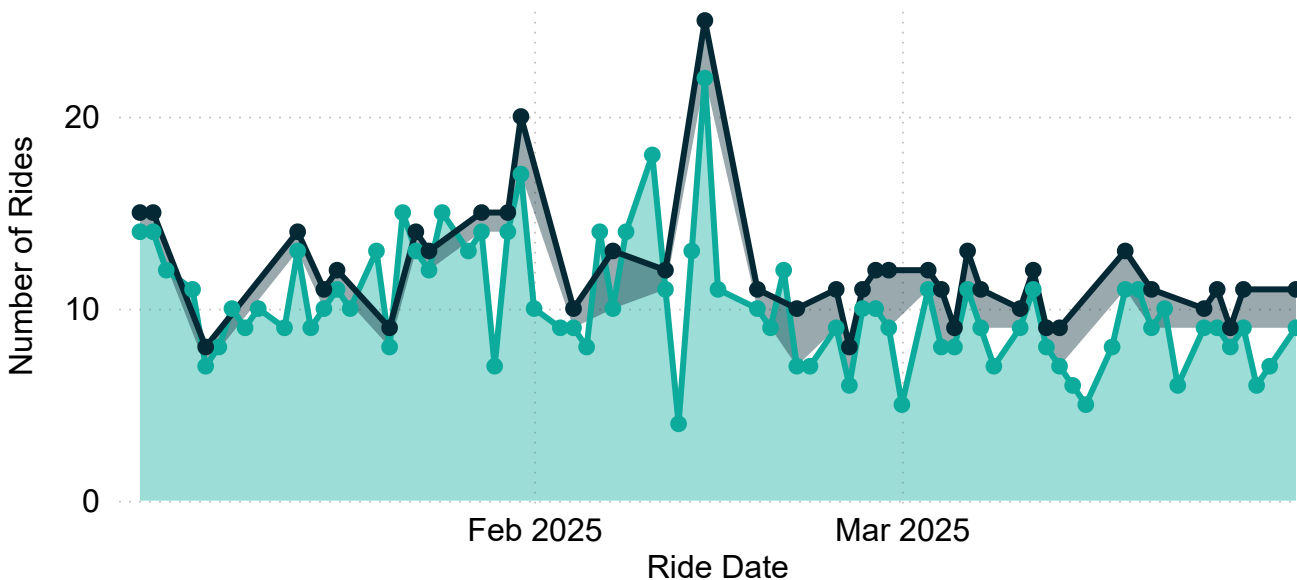
21.31

Average Time On-Board (min)

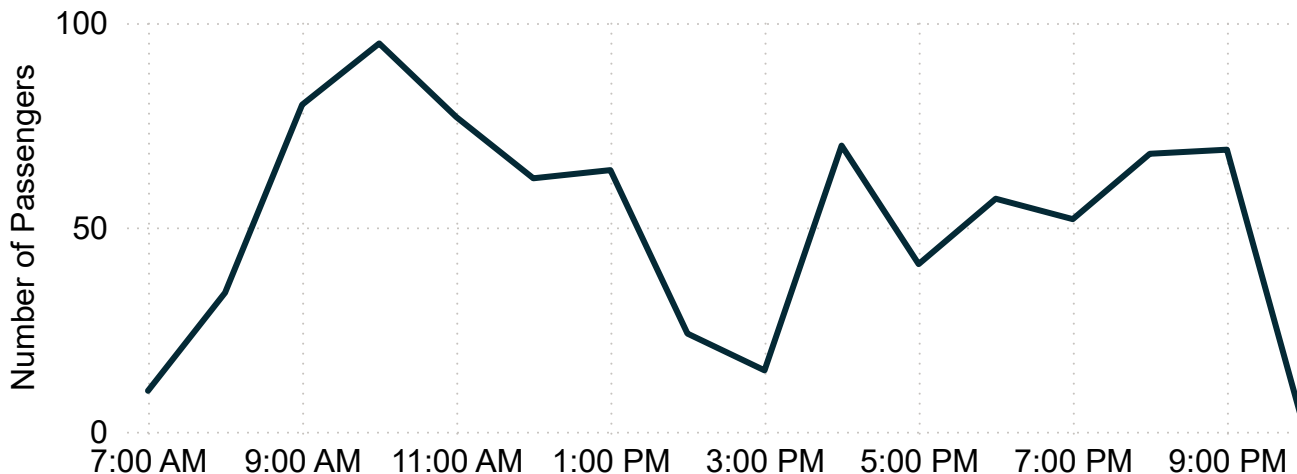
28.33

Daily Ridership

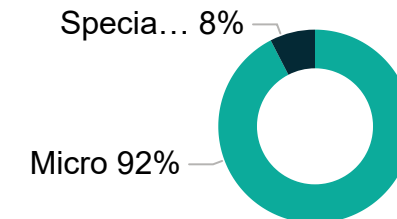
● Micro ● Specialized



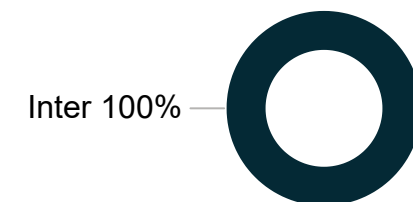
Peak Hours



Service Type



Trip Type



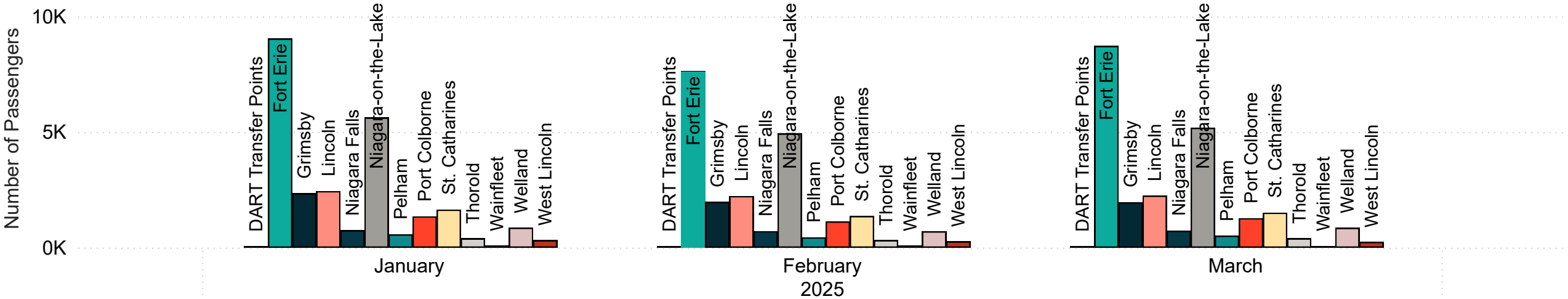
Trip Utilization



Booking Method	Day Of	Pre-Booked	Total
Agent	10	12	22
App	226	512	738
Subscription		13	13
Total	236	537	773

Overall NT+ (Contract) Voyago Trip Origin Metrics - 2025 (Q1)

Ridership By Trip Origin



Origin Municipality	DART Transfer Points	Fort Erie	Grimsby	Lincoln	Niagara Falls	Niagara-on-the-Lake	Pelham	Port Colborne	St. Catharines	Thorold	Wainfleet	Welland	West Lincoln	Total
DART Transfer Points		5	1		8	1			18	1		7		41
Fort Erie	5	24670			200	3		125	133	33		220		25389
Grimsby	1		3910	1070	13	1	29	33	871	9	4	46	279	6266
Lincoln			1147	3362	17	36	32	31	1768	25	5	249	242	6914
Niagara Falls	9	152	12	23		351	1	20	912	137	13	549		2179
Niagara-on-the-Lake	1	2	1	40	457	14942	20		221	43		9		15736
Pelham			39	27	7	20	498	30	282	19	14	576	8	1520
Port Colborne		100	22	5	25		28	3098	24	5	78	342	23	3750
St. Catharines	19	116	829	1378	880	268	227	28	2	283	15	326	138	4509
Thorold	1	32	16	25	141	65	18	5	323	402		65	8	1101
Wainfleet				4	13		21	53	15	1		108	10	225
Welland	8	234	10	277	507	8	514	331	340	62	68		48	2407
West Lincoln			270	279	1		17	4	141	31	18	58		819
Total	44	25311	6257	6490	2269	15695	1405	3758	5050	1051	215	2555	756	70856

- **Agent Booking Method** - Rides that are booked by phoning in and speaking with a customer service representative
- **App Booking Method** - Rides that are booked by using the Niagara Transit Plus application on a mobile device
- **Average Direct Distance** - The average distance in kilometres it would take to drive directly from origin to destination without any stops
- **Average Time On-Board** - The average time a passenger is spending on-board the vehicle
- **Day of Booking Type** - Rides that are booked on the same day of use
- **Inter Trip Type** - Rides that travel from one municipality to another, crossing municipal boundaries
- **Intra Trip Type** - Rides that stay within the municipal boundary in which the trip originated
- **Micro Daily Ridership** - Number of passengers taking micro transit trips per day
- **Micro Service Type** - Number of trips that are using the micro transit service
- **Number of Accessible** - Number of trips that are using either the micro or specialized transit service that are accessible, where the passenger is using a mobility device
- **Number of Micro Trips with Accessible Device** - Number of trips using the micro transit service that are accessible, where the passenger is using a mobility device
- **Number of Passengers** - Total number of passengers that have completed trips
- **Number of Trips** - Total number of trips being completed
- **Peak Hours** - Hours of the day that have the highest demand for ridership
- **Pre-Book Booking Type** - Rides that are booked in advance of the requested trip day
- **Specialized Daily Ridership** - Number of passengers taking specialized transit trips per day
- **Specialized Service Type** - Number of trips that are using the specialized transit service
- **Subscription Booking Method** - Trips that are booked once and happen on a recurring schedule ie. trips to dialysis

MEMORANDUM

NTC-C 15-2025

Subject: Customer Experience Department – Roll Out Update

Date: April 15, 2025

To: Niagara Transit Commission

From: Edward Zahra, Deputy General Manager, Customer Experience

This memorandum provides an update on the progress and developments within the Customer Experience (CX) Department since its inception in May 2024, following the Board's approval of the department's creation as outlined in Board Report NTC 8-2024. Over the past year, the CX Department has undertaken significant initiatives to enhance customer service delivery, improve accessibility, and integrate innovative technology solutions to create a seamless and efficient transit experience for all riders.

The establishment of the CX Department was a key element of the Niagara Transit Commission's strategic move to consolidate customer service functions for all transit services, including specialty services, into one integrated department. As referenced in Report NTC 8-2024, this decision aligned with the consolidation of five independent micro-transit contracts and the assumption of all dispatch and customer support services, positioning the CX Department to serve 100% of transit riders effectively. This strategic alignment has provided a foundation for improving service standards, enhancing customer interactions, and driving overall organizational efficiency.

While this past year has included numerous achievements, it is important to acknowledge that the CX Department has also faced and continues to manage a variety of challenges. The formation of a resolute CX team has afforded Niagara Transit the opportunity to address these issues head-on, with devoted staff members working collaboratively to identify solutions, enhance processes, and deliver improved service outcomes. The team's focus, expertise, and dedication have been instrumental in navigating challenges with demand and delivery while ensuring customers experience minimal disruption. Their tireless efforts have been critical in driving positive change across the organization, and their ability to adapt has proven invaluable to Niagara Transit's longer-term success.

Frontline agents have consistently gone above and beyond, ensuring that customer inquiries are addressed efficiently, often managing higher than predicted call volumes

with professionalism and care. Their role in maintaining a high standard of customer engagement has been key in fostering public trust and satisfaction. Our dispatchers have seamlessly adapted to new roles and responsibilities following their relocation, improving on-the-ground support for operators and customers alike. Their ability to coordinate real-time problem-solving has enhanced service reliability and strengthened communication between us and our riders.

Administrative staff have contributed invaluable insights, streamlining processes to ensure data collection, reporting, and communication are both accurate and effective. Their behind-the-scenes efforts have been instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition during this period of change. Staff have also played a vital role in training and mentoring new hires, ensuring that the expanded department continues to meet high performance standards while maintaining a strong focus on customer experience.

Beyond their operational roles, staff members have taken ownership of service improvements, contributing ideas and innovations that have enhanced the transit experience for riders. The culture of collaboration and customer-first thinking within the CX Department has empowered employees to take initiative, anticipate service needs, and proactively address customer concerns. This collective effort has been fundamental in establishing a more responsive and efficient transit network.

Extended Customer Service Hours

As outlined in Report NTC 8-2024, one of the most impactful changes implemented this past year has been the extension of customer service operating hours across all three conventional service terminal or hub locations: St. Catharines (STC), Welland (WEL), and Niagara Falls (NF). Since October 1, 2024, the customer service hours are as follows:

St. Catharines and Welland Terminals

Monday to Saturday –	6 a.m. – 11 p.m.
Sunday/Holiday –	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Niagara Falls Hub

Monday to Saturday –	7 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Sunday/Holiday –	10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Previously, limited-service hours created challenges for customers seeking assistance outside of regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday). With the expanded hours, customers now have access to services on weekends and holidays, providing greater flexibility for purchasing ride cards, passes, and accessing live support. These enhancements ensure our availability aligns with transit operations; meaning customers can now receive assistance when they need it.

This change has been particularly beneficial for individuals who rely on transit for work and school, as well as seniors and persons with disabilities who require additional support. The expanded hours have increased opportunities for direct engagement with customers, allowing staff to provide real-time assistance, resolve issues more effectively, and collect valuable feedback to further refine service delivery. The response from the public has been overwhelmingly positive, with many riders expressing appreciation for the increased access and improved response times. Staff dedication, even amidst the challenges, has been vital in ensuring this expansion was successful. Employees demonstrated exceptional flexibility in adapting to the new schedule, often stepping in to provide additional coverage during peak periods or while training new team members. Their commitment was essential and enabled the department to maintain consistent and reliable service throughout this operational change.

Customer-Focused Service

The CX Department's expansion included the addition of thirteen (13) permanent full-time positions to support enhanced customer service and booking functions. This staffing increase was critical to assuming customer service duties previously managed by multiple contracted providers. By bringing these services in-house, we have improved accountability, communications, and customer support. To our riders, every trip (on any vehicle) is a trip on Niagara Transit, and we own that.

As part of our continued efforts to monitor and enhance the customer experience, a comparative analysis was conducted on call centre activity between two reporting periods: October 18, 2023, to February 29, 2024, and October 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025. The data, summarized in the table below, reflects notable year-over-year trends that speak to both the increasing demand for customer support and the operational pressures that accompany such growth.

Specialty	October 18, 2023* – February 29, 2024	October 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025	Year 1 vs. Year 2
Calls Received	12,852	42,252	228.76%
Calls Answered	11,437	32,603	185.07%
Average wait time	0:01:24	0:02:37	86.90%
Customer Service	October 18, 2023 – February 29, 2024	October 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025	Year 1 vs. Year 2
Calls Received	5,750	10,995	191.22%
Calls Answered	5,251	10,287	195.91%
Average wait time	0:00:26	0:00:11	-57.69%
PSR** Received	53	275	518.87%
PSR** Resolved	48	206	429.17%

*Data for Specialty Services was not actively captured until October 18, 2023

**PSR (Public Service Request) is the database where customer feedback is captured, disseminated to the appropriate department for response (if applicable), and analyzed for KPI awareness and trends.

While the overall responsiveness of the team has improved in absolute terms, this increased volume has impacted on service efficiency. The average wait time for callers grew from one minute and twenty-four seconds (1:24) to two minutes and thirty-seven (2:37) seconds for Specialty Services; a change that reflects the strain on available resources during peak periods. Although the team has worked diligently to manage the rising volume, the increased wait time underscores the need for a review of staffing levels, scheduling strategies, and potential technology enhancements to better manage queue times moving forward.

Focusing specifically on the Customer Service department, the number of calls received nearly doubled, from 5,750 to 10,995, and the number of calls answered increased from 5,251 to 10,287, reflecting a 95.9% growth. This level of responsiveness highlights the importance of continuing to build capacity and refine our customer support model to ensure we maintain and elevate service standards as engagement continues to grow.

These trends suggest growing public engagement and reliance on the department as a whole. However, extended wait-times indicate an area for operational enhancement to ensure we maintain high service standards.

Accessibility

All public agencies in Ontario are required in provincial legislation to provide and publish a Multi Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). The NTC's MYAP project was launched in parallel with the NTC's Master Plan. This coordinated effort represents our commitment to enhancing accessibility and ensuring that transit services meet the needs of all residents and visitors of Niagara, while aligning with provincial accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The MYAP is structured into two phases, each designed to address specific aspects of accessibility for transit. These phases are critical to creating an equitable, inclusive, and barrier-free transit experience across the entire Niagara region. As we continue to prioritize accessibility in all facets of our operations, the MYAP will guide our actions and decisions in shaping the future of specialized transit services.

The first phase of the MYAP focused on revising the eligibility criteria and the process for accessing specialized transit services. We sought to ensure that NTC's eligibility criteria for specialized transit were consistent with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) as well as best practices used by other transit agencies across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and throughout the province. This alignment ensures that our riders experience a consistent and fair process when accessing specialized transit services, regardless of their location within Ontario.

The second and final phase of the MYAP focuses on conducting a comprehensive accessibility needs assessment for specialized transit within the Niagara Transit system. This phase involves gathering data, engaging with community stakeholders again, and identifying areas where our transit system may have barriers that limit access for persons with disabilities or other mobility challenges. We will assess the current state of accessibility on all routes, including the physical infrastructure and service delivery. This assessment will identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Based on the results of the accessibility needs assessment, Phase Two will culminate in a comprehensive strategy aimed at eliminating barriers to accessibility in the Niagara Transit system, with a focus on mid to long-term, sustainable solutions to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, can fully utilize our transit services.

Brand and Marketing Initiatives

In 2024, Niagara Transit, in partnership with HDR Inc., launched an initiative to create a single cohesive identity. Approved by the Board (NTC 16-2024), and Regional Council (CL-C 58-2024) in July 2024, the new brand replaces the legacy transit service brands, unifying transit service across the region, and aims to shape public perception and experience of Niagara Transit.

Developed with community input, the brand's new visual identity features a distinctive "NT" icon and vibrant colour palette, symbolizing the region's connective and iconic waterways. This unified brand, along with our new tagline, "We're going your way," serves as a powerful symbol of our dedication to connecting people with essential destinations throughout Niagara, reinforcing our commitment to customer-centric service. It creates a unified, professional identity, ensuring consistency across all communication channels, signage, vehicles, and customer touchpoints, positioning Niagara Transit as a forward-thinking and customer-focused transit provider.

The new Niagara Transit brand strategically enhances community connection for residents and visitors alike. It builds trust and reliability with its consistent use of its logo and colours, welcoming tone and engaging visuals, ensuring materials are easy to understand. It also helps attract new riders by creating a more inviting and approachable public image, encouraging greater transit adoption. This allows for more effective marketing and outreach efforts, supporting increased ridership and public engagement.

Beyond its external impact, the new Niagara Transit brand cultivates a strong internal culture, fostering staff pride and alignment with organizational values. By promoting Niagara Transit's mission, vision, and values, the brand instills employees with a shared sense identity, reinforcing the vital role each person has in delivering high-quality transit services to the community. The brand guidelines highlight clear, helpful communication and an optimistic tone, contributing to a more positive, supportive work environment, and frontline interactions. This fosters a more cohesive and motivated workforce, invested in upholding the standards and reputation of Niagara Transit and enhances frontline interactions.

Niagara Transit has begun a phased rollout of the Niagara Transit brand that will continue over the coming months. This approach allows us to strategically manage costs while ensuring a smooth transition. Key items, such as digital assets and core marketing materials, have been updated, followed by physical signage and other assets

as they reach their natural replacement cycles. This approach minimizes waste and aligns with our commitment to affordability while allowing us to prioritize updates based on impact and necessity.

Growing Online Presence

In 2024, a key priority for the communications team was to update our online and digital customer experience tools to provide easy access to information, ensuring accuracy, timeliness, and clarity for all users. Tangible improvements were made on our website including updates to our route and schedule presentation, the addition of more detailed route maps, and access to policy documents, making essential information more readily available. Beyond simply disseminating information, our website serves as a central hub for analytics tracking, providing invaluable insights into user behaviour and service utilization. This data-driven approach allows us to continuously optimize our online presence and service delivery, ensuring we meet the changing needs of our community in a rapidly evolving digital space.

Niagara Transit's use of social media has cultivated a thriving online community and improved real-time communication with our riders. As a result, our social media presence has surpassed 750 followers on Facebook, 1,300 on X (formerly Twitter), and 700 on Instagram.

By seamlessly integrating website management, analytics, and social media strategy, we have been able to significantly enhance our communication, engagement and service delivery. This includes the introduction of a tool to deliver real-time service delay and detour updates, drastically improving trip planning capabilities and reducing rider frustration.

Community Engagement Initiatives

As part of our commitment to improving transit accessibility and awareness, we hired a Client and Community Coordinator who started on September 3, 2024. This role has been instrumental in fostering connections with community partners, agencies, and organizations across the region. Since onboarding, the coordinator has actively participated in a range of outreach events, including post-secondary welcome weeks, seniors' fairs, healthcare and social service meetings, and municipal engagement sessions. These efforts have strengthened Niagara Transit's presence in diverse communities, ensuring transit information is accessible to a broad audience.

The addition of the Client and Community Coordinator role has significantly enhanced Niagara Transit's ability to build relationships and foster trust within the communities we serve. While this position is embedded in the Customer Experience department, its benefits extend across the entire organization. The coordinator actively promotes transit initiatives, ensuring that residents and organizations understand available services, route changes, and upcoming projects.

By engaging with seniors, students, service providers, and marginalized communities, the coordinator helps ensure that Niagara Transit is accessible and responsive to diverse needs. Direct feedback gathered through community interactions informs service planning, helping shape transit policies and improve service delivery. Through collaboration with community organizations, businesses, and advocacy groups, Niagara Transit strengthens its role as a key mobility partner in the region.

Additionally, the Coordinator's outreach supports the implementation of the Transit Master Plan by aligning community expectations with operational realities, ensuring long-term sustainability and growth. The role continues to be instrumental in reinforcing Niagara Transit's commitment to being an accessible, dependable, and community-driven service.

AI Integration and Advancements

The CX Department has made significant progress towards integrating AI technology integration into our CX toolbox, moving towards the deployment of innovative solutions to enhance customer service delivery. The CX team has developed several AI pilot projects and is working internally with IT, Planning & Performance and legal to ensure best practices are established for AI use, including compliance with key privacy legislation and appropriate risk mitigation prior to launch. Riders will be provided further information ahead of deployment.

The AI-Driven Inquiry Management Agent, now ready for deployment, is designed to receive customer inquiries, log them into the customer relations management (CRM) software, and route issues to the appropriate department. By automating these routine tasks, frontline staff can dedicate more time to resolving complex issues, providing higher-quality customer support and enable them to focus on improving customer outcomes.

Another major breakthrough on our AI front has been the implementation of the AI-Enabled Dispatch Agent, which will be integrated into the Interactive Voice Response

(IVR) phone system. This system ensures that customers are promptly directed to the correct department without experiencing long wait times. With 24/7 availability, customers can access immediate assistance, at any time, through the agent, eliminating the frustration of waiting in traditional call queues.

We are also in the final stages of developing an AI-Based Customer Information Agent. Once launched, this agent will provide real-time answers to general transit inquiries via voice and text (chatbot). Customers will be able to obtain information on fares, operating hours, and other essential details any time they wish. This innovation is expected to dramatically reduce repetitive inquiries while improving the speed and accuracy of customer information delivery; all while further enhancing Niagara Transit's accessibility initiative of being barrier free. The AI-driven responses are designed to learn from customer interactions, improving accuracy and relevance over time.

Perhaps the most groundbreaking innovation is the AI-Powered Wayfinding Agent, albeit, currently still in development. This system, the first of its kind in North America, will provide real-time route information for the entire NTC network. Once fully implemented, riders will have access to dynamic navigation support, helping them plan their trips more efficiently through conversation over the phone. By integrating GPS tracking and mapping technologies, we will enable customers to receive up-to-date directions, transfer points, and estimated travel times, significantly improving transit accessibility and convenience.

The adoption of AI in customer service and transit operations can seem daunting, as it represents a significant shift in how services are delivered. Concerns about job displacement, reliance on automation, and the learning curve associated with new technology are understandable. However, AI is not here to replace human workers, it is here to enhance their capabilities, streamline operations, and improve our customer's experience. By embracing and integrating AI thoughtfully and strategically, we can create a smarter, more responsive, and customer-focused transit system while ensuring that employees are empowered and efficiently deployed rather than displaced. Listed below are key benefits we expect to realize.

Enhanced Customer Experience:

The AI agents will provide 24/7 availability, ensuring customers have immediate access to assistance, information, wayfinding, and issue resolution without delay.

Operational Efficiency:

Automation reduces the burden of repetitive tasks, allowing staff to focus on complex concerns requiring human intervention, improving overall service quality.

Cost Savings:

Streamlining inquiries and call handling minimizes the need for additional staffing resources during peak periods, enhancing resource allocation.

Data-Driven Improvements:

The AI agents' integration with CRM and call systems will generate valuable data insights, allowing us to track customer trends, measure agent performance, and refine our services.

Augmentation, Not Replacement:

These AI solutions are designed to support staff, not replace them. By removing tedious tasks, employees can dedicate more time to delivering high-value interactions that improve customer outcomes.

The ongoing enhancements in branding, communication, and community engagement reflect Niagara Transit's commitment to delivering exceptional service and fostering meaningful connections with our riders. We will continue leveraging these initiatives to enhance customer experience, drive ridership growth, and improve overall service delivery.

Moving forward, we remain committed to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that Niagara Transit continues to meet the evolving needs of our community. By leveraging the experience, skills, and dedication of our CX team, we are confident in our ability to overcome challenges and further elevate service standards both through efficiency and technologies.

Respectfully submitted and signed by



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