

Specialized Transit in Niagara



September 2019

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Niagara  Region

Specialized Transit Study Scope

Established
Municipal
Specialized
Transit
Systems



Transit systems (hybrid)

- Lincoln Transit (U-Linc)
- Niagara-on-the-Lake Transit
- Pelham Transit

Transit systems
under contract

- Thorold
- Port Colborne

No transit service

- Grimsby
- West Lincoln
- Wainfleet

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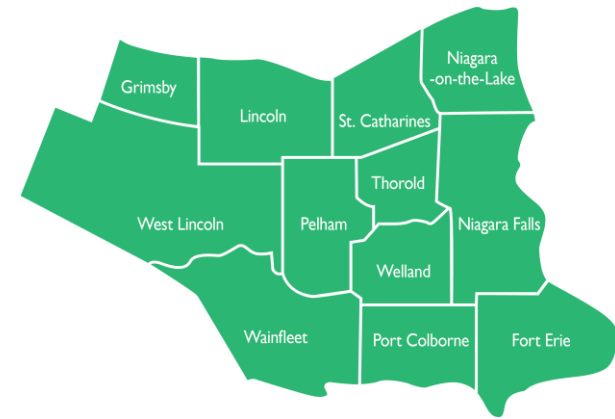
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Presentation Outline

- Work Plan – Status/Update
- Specialized Transit in Niagara Region – Existing Conditions
- *What We Heard* – Stakeholder Consultation & Survey Results
- Travel Demand Estimates
- Key Issues & Challenges
- *Imagine Possibilities* – Opportunities
- Guiding Principles
- Concepts - A Preferred Approach - *An Eye on the Future*

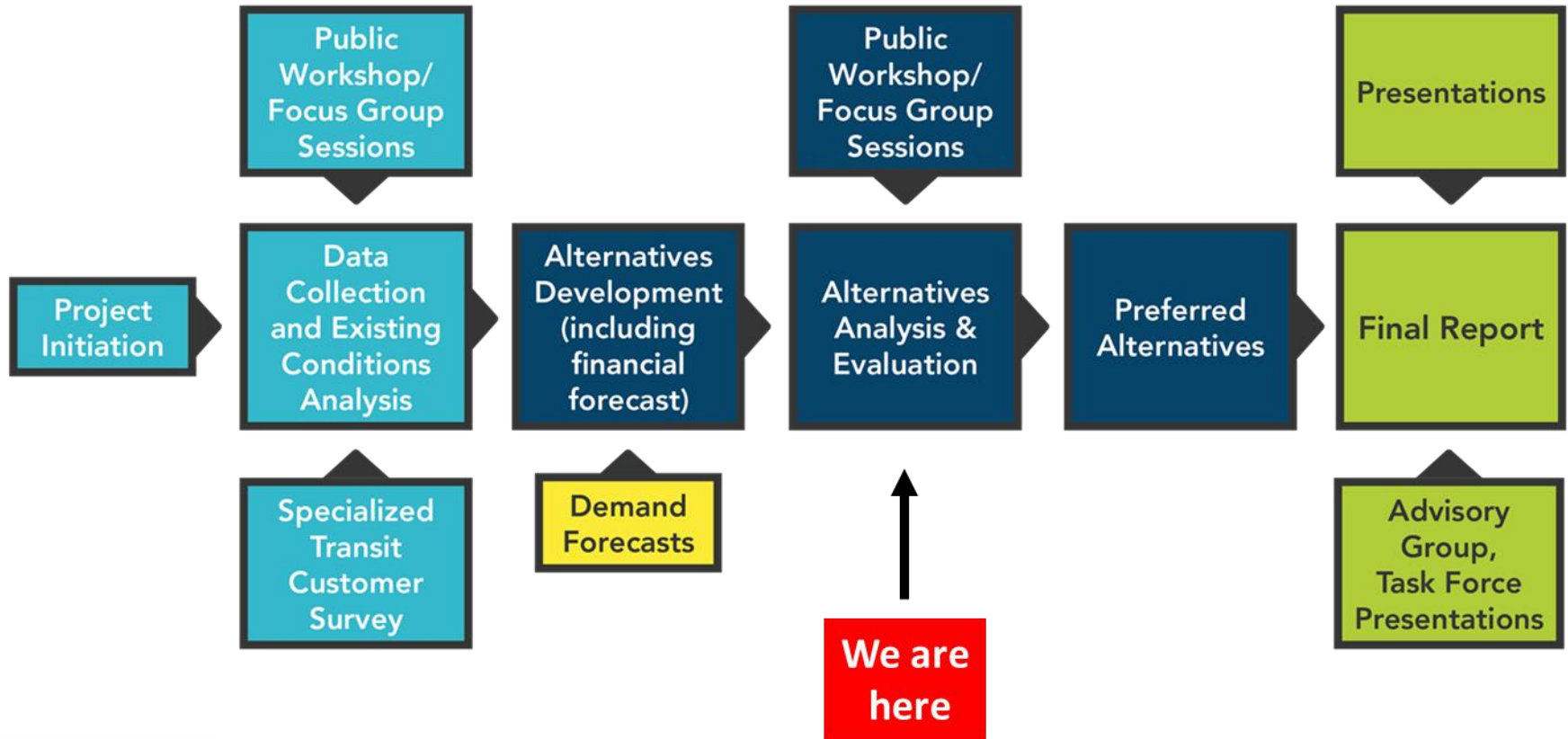


Study Objectives

- 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*



Work Plan



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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	447,900	3,435	105,800	\$5.27m	\$45.17	\$11.68	0.236

Outreach & Consultation

- **Customer Survey** - online and paper, 250 completed surveys
- **Public Information Centres** - Welland and St. Catharines, approx. 45 attendees;
- **Discussion Groups** - Accessibility Advisory Committee & other key stakeholders (community organizations)
- **Focus Group Session** - Niagara Health Services

What We Heard

- Favourable view of drivers & staff
- Difficulty booking a trip – tedious including need to call multiple agencies (municipal & regional travel)
- Poor on time performance (or don't show up)
- Excessive travel times
- Inconsistent eligibility criteria & processes
- Residents of communities without specialized transit (West Niagara) – feel disadvantaged

What We Heard (cont.)

- Need for accessible paths of travel to use accessible fixed route transit

Most Requested Improvements

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

Forecasting Future Demand

- Provides a baseline for planning for future needs
- Need to know overall specialized transit demand and origins/destinations of trips
- Forecasts span years 2021 – 2031

Forecasting Approach

Current Context

- Shifting demand from locals to NST
- About 40% of trips are for dialysis and medical

Drivers of Change

- Aging & disability in Niagara Region
- Location of healthcare facilities

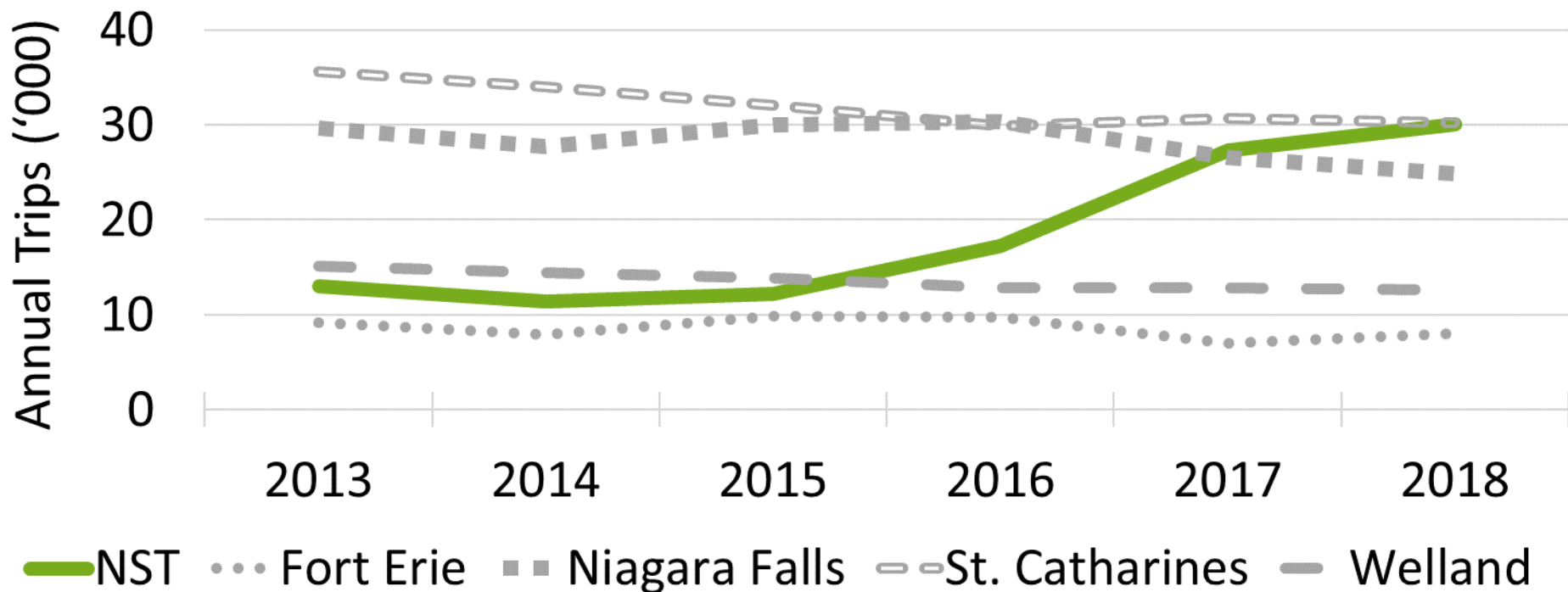
Future Demand

- Business-as-usual forecast
- High-growth forecast with higher rate of disability

Current Context

- Total demand up 3%, in line with population growth
- 14% of trips are for dialysis, over half of that on NST

Specialized Transit Trips, 2013-2018



Drivers of Change

Aging Population

- One in four residents will be over 65yrs by 2031

Rising Medical Needs

- 20% rise in residents with severe disability by 2031¹
- 25% rise in Region's dialysis needs by 2028²

Facility Locations

- South Niagara Hospital will shift healthcare facilities to Niagara Falls in 2026

Future Demand (BAU Case)

- Total demand hits 130,000 in 2021, 150,000 by 2031
- Inter-municipal trips grow to 27% of demand

	2018	2031	Percentage Change
Regional Trips	30,000	40,100	34%
Trips by Municipal Agencies	71,700	83,500	16%
Trips by Other Organizations	22,600	26,300	16%
Total Trips	124,000	149,900	21%

Future Demand (High Growth)

- Double growth rate of pop. with disability to 2.8% p.a.
- 12% more trips in 2026, 20% more by 2031 vs BAU

	2018	2031	Percentage Change
Regional Trips	30,000	48,000	60%
Trips by Municipal Agencies	71,700	100,000	40%
Trips by Other Organizations	22,600	31,600	40%
Total Trips	124,000	179,600	45%

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



Our goal is to provide shared ride public transit for those unable to use accessible fixed route transit

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Guiding Principles – *An Eye on the Future*

A Preferred Approach Designed To:

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

Our goal is to provide shared ride public transit for those unable to use accessible fixed route transit

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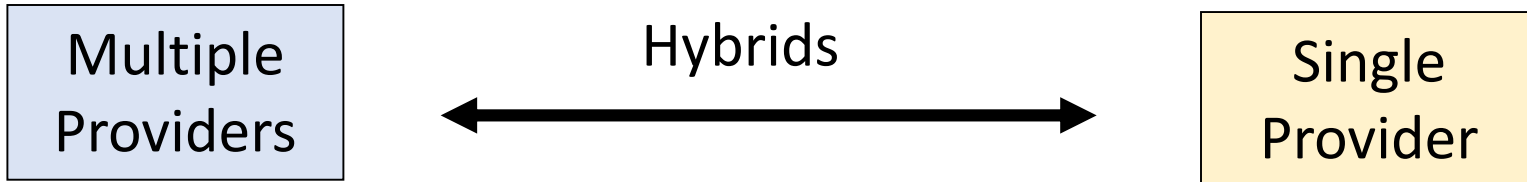
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Imagine Possibilities – Opportunities

Delivery Models



Models – to address core functional areas:

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

Concepts – *A Preferred Approach*

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

Concepts – *A Preferred Approach*

Service Delivery (Dispatch / Trip Management)

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

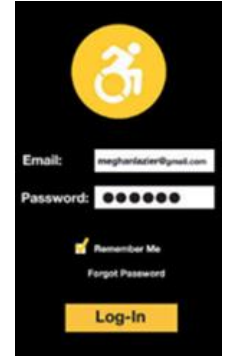
Next-Gen Mobility / Leverage Technology

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

Concepts – *A Preferred Approach*

■ 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?



Next Steps

- Based on input received and analysis, translate *Preferred Approach* into **Recommendations**
- Assess potential impact on demand of operational & service delivery *interventions*
- Develop financial forecasts
- Draft & Final Report – November/December 2019

Key Contacts



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A network diagram background consisting of a series of interconnected nodes and lines, creating a mesh-like structure. The nodes are represented by small circles, and the lines are thin, light-colored lines connecting the nodes. The overall appearance is that of a complex, interconnected network.

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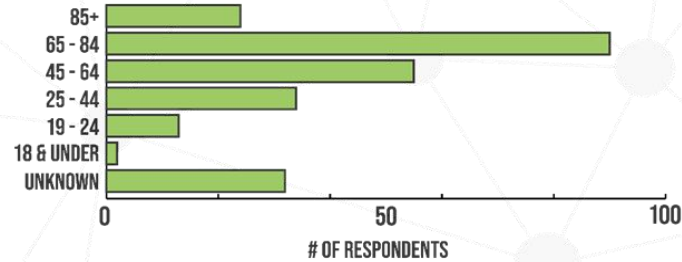
WHAT WE HEARD



WHO RESPONDED?



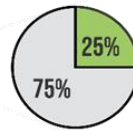
AGE OF RESPONDENTS



MOBILITY DEVICES



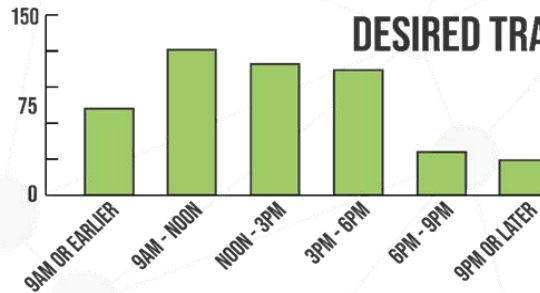
SUPPORT PERSONS



RESPONDENT NEEDS

Legend:
■ REQUIRED BY RESPONDENTS
■ NOT REQUIRED BY RESPONDENTS

DESIRED TRAVEL TIMES



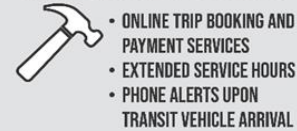
MOST COMPLIMENTS



MOST COMPLAINTS



MOST REQUESTED IMPROVEMENTS



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