
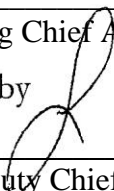


Item No. 3
Halifax Regional Council
November 9, 2010
Committee of the Whole
November 30, 2010
December 7, 2010
January 11, 2011

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by 

Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by 

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: October 20, 2010

SUBJECT: Access-a-Bus Strategic Plan

ORIGIN

This report originates from staff.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council approve in principle the Access-a-Bus Strategic Plan and direct staff to use the plan on a go-forward basis as guidance in the planning and operation of the Access-a-Bus system.

BACKGROUND

On February 9, 2010, Regional Council approved in principle the Metro Transit Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan. This plan provides a roadmap to aid staff in improving the Conventional transit system over the next five years. During the process of completing this study, staff identified a need to conduct a similar analysis for the Access-a-Bus and Ferry systems. On December 8, 2009, Regional Council approved an increase to the contract with consulting firm IBI Group to complete these studies.

DISCUSSION

The final report for the Access-a-Bus Strategic Plan is attached to this report. The report is broken down into five key areas;

- Profile of Existing Access-a-Bus Operations;
- Travel Demand Analysis;
- Stakeholder Consultation;
- Recommendations; and
- Five-Year Financial Plan.

The recommendations in the report are broken into two categories: *Service Structure and Operations*, and *Eligibility and Certification*. The eligibility and certification recommendations each address a particular decision point/question on the existing and future processes used at Access-a-Bus in these areas. These recommendations are summarized below:

Service Structure and Operations

- It is recommended that Access-a-Bus operate the same hours of service by day of week as that of adjacent conventional transit services. Access-a-Bus service boundaries shall be within 1,000m of a bus stop (consistent with the buffer for local transit taxation);
- Comply by July 2011;
- It is recommended that Access-a-Bus booking requirement shall be 48 hours (2 days) in advance (and up to seven days);
- Comply by July 2011;
- It is recommended that Access-a-Bus booking requirement shall be 24 hours (1 day) in advance (and up to seven days);
- Comply by July 2012;
- It is recommended that Metro Transit develop the on-line capability to accept passengers' trip confirmations and cancellations;
- Comply by July 2012;

- It is recommended that Access-a-Bus introduce the use of a 30 minute scheduling window;
- Comply by July 2011;
- It is recommended that scheduling be done in real time (with trip confirmations done at time of trip booking);
- Comply by July 2011;
- Metro Transit officials enter into discussion with local taxi companies to gauge the level of interest in the provision of supplemental service for Access-a-Bus;
- Comply by January 2011;
- Metro Transit officials draft a procurement instrument and performance based contract for the use of supplemental taxis. The contract documents will address qualitative considerations of driver training, sensitivity training, vehicle quality, performance monitoring, reporting, etc.;
- Comply by July 2011;
- Access-a-Bus shall not charge for a fare for personal care attendants (as certified by amended application process);
- Comply by January 2011; and
- It is recommended that Metro Transit encourage the voluntary use of accessible fixed route services (bus and ferries) for those Access-a-Bus registrants able to use (possibly for some of their trips, some of the time) by providing referral and information dissemination services relating to travel training and in-house capabilities to provide trip planning;
- Comply by July 2011.

Eligibility and Certification

- Question #1: Should current registrants be granted automatic eligibility rather than requiring all registrants to undergo a recertification process?
- Recommendation #1: Existing registrants will be “grandfathered” however all registrants will be requested to complete the application form in order for Metro Transit to develop and maintain a comprehensive client database. The recertification process should be completed within a one-year period;
- Begin re-registration/certification by January 2011;
- Question #2: Should the eligibility process continue to be limited to paper applications as opposed to incorporating an in-person interview?
- Recommendation #2: Implement the use of a more detailed application form.
- Implement amended application form in January 2011.

- Question #3: If a form of in-person assessment is selected, should all applicants (or those being recertified) be required to come in for the assessment rather than allowing some to be certified through a paper process?
- A more comprehensive paper application process will preclude the requirement for all applicants to come in for an in-person interview or assessment. If there is additional information about the applicant’s disability and how it affects their use of Metro Transit’s accessible fixed route transit services, an applicant may be requested to attend an in-person interview.

The Plan also recommends a series of service standards. These standards will provide staff with a tool to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the Access-a-Bus system, similar to the standards that were adopted for the conventional system as part of the Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan. The plan recommends that Access-a-Bus incorporate service standard measures in the Monthly Service Report by January 2011.

It should be noted that as with conventional transit service standards, some standards will require time and system improvements as proposed in the Plan to achieve and will not be reached immediately. The recommended service standards are shown below.

Proposed Access-a-Bus Service Standards

Service Characteristic	Recommended Service Standard
<p>Trip Coverage/Trip Denials</p> <p>An unaccommodated trip is when Access-a-Bus cannot schedule a trip within one hour before or one hour after the desired time of pick-up. A trip is denied if pick-up cannot be accommodated within this time window or if the customer does not have the flexibility to travel at another time.</p>	<p>The Access-a-Bus program shall accommodate 100% of all trips requested within the urban transit service area, by eligible registrants.</p>
<p>Span of Service</p>	<p>Access-a-Bus services will operate hours of service and days of the week comparable to the conventional service.</p>
<p>On-time Performance</p>	<p>All vehicles shall arrive at the pick-up points no earlier than 15 minutes before and no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time, 95% of the time.</p>
<p>Cancellations & No Shows</p>	<p>The objective is to have no more than 8% of the scheduled trips cancelled by the passenger up to one hour before the pick-up, and to have no more than 2% no shows within 5 minutes of the scheduled pick-up time window.</p>
<p>Complaints</p>	<p>The objective is to keep complaints to an absolute minimum but not to exceed 1 complaint per 1,000 passenger trips on average on an annual basis.</p>

Service Characteristic	Recommended Service Standard
Service Utilization Standards	The vehicles dedicated to the Access-a-Bus service should achieve a minimum utilization or productivity level of 2.5 passengers per revenue hour on a daily basis on average.
Cost Recovery Targets	A minimum cost recovery of 6% based on an Access-a-Bus fare identical to the regular adult cash fare on the conventional fixed route services.

The report provides a five-year financial plan for Access-a-Bus based on two scenarios. The first scenario includes the use of Accessible Taxes, the second does not. The five-year financial plan is summarized below:

Access-a-Bus Five-Year Financial Plan Summary

	Scenario 1 With Supplemental Tax	Scenario 2 No Tax
Net Operating Cost	11.9% increase \$4.29m - \$4.77m	31.9% increase \$4.29m - \$5.66m
Net Cost / Trip	11.8% decrease \$26.84 - \$23.68	4.7% increase \$26.84 - \$28.10
Net Cost / Capita	6.5% increase \$11.15 - \$11.87	26.4% increase \$11.15 - \$14.09
Vehicle Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes 1 additional AAB vehicle in 2015 (expansion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes 2 additional AAB vehicles in each of 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (expansion)
Additional Staff Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes 1 additional Scheduler in 2011 	Assumes additional staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Scheduler in 2011 • 2 Schedulers/Dispatchers in 2014 • 1 Supervisor in 2013

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Much of the costs of implementing these recommendations are incorporated in the 2010/11 capital and operating budgets of Metro Transit. All recommendations in the plan that have additional budget implications will be brought forward in future annual budgets for consideration by Regional Council.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was held in two stages for this project. In the first stage, the consultant and staff solicited input on aspects of the Access-a-Bus system that worked well and those areas that could use improvement. This stage consisted of two evening public consultation sessions, meetings with stakeholder groups, and meetings with Metro Transit's Accessible Transit Advisory Committee (ATAC) and Eligibility Criteria Advisory Team (ECAT).

In the second stage, the consultant and staff presented draft concepts and solicited feedback on the concepts. This feedback informed the final recommendations from the consultant. This stage consisted of two evening public consultation sessions, meetings with stakeholder groups, and meetings with Metro Transit's ATAC. Many members of the ECAT are also members of the ATAC; as such a second separate meeting was not held with the ECAT but any members of ECAT were invited to attend the ATAC or stakeholder consultation sessions.

ALTERNATIVES

There are no recommended alternatives.

ATTACHMENTS

Access-a-Bus Strategic Plan Final Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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Access-A-Bus Strategic Plan



Final Report
September 2010

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APPENDIX A: Draft Access-a-Bus Application Form

APPENDIX B: Specialized Transit Peer Review Data

1. INTRODUCTION

The delivery of specialized public transport such as that provided by Metro Transit's Access-a-Bus creates strategic planning challenges and financial pressures. When coupled with the requirements of Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and the Disabled Persons Commission (a partnership to move forward in the protection and promotion of human rights with disabled persons in Nova Scotia), these challenges are unprecedented. The issue before the Region is to develop a plan to deliver public transit services to people with a disability that satisfies community requirements and expectations in a cost-effective manner.

The objective for the Region in the near term includes the effective delivery of Access-a-Bus (AAB) and to accommodate the growing demand for public transit services by people with disabilities. To address this challenge, Metro Transit continues to develop an increasingly close relationship between accessible conventional transit services and the delivery of Access-a-Bus specialized transit service.

The review of Access-a-Bus found that specialized transit in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) faces several challenges - growing demand, changing community expectations, demand for regional service (with trip requests from former County areas, for example), accessible conventional/fixed-route transit services, and increasing costs - that present challenges in the delivery of specialized transit services.

In light of these challenges, the review proposes a set of recommendations that would result in enhancements to the delivery of specialized transit service in the Region, modeled on industry best practices and regulatory trends. *At its heart, the recommended service model would ensure the continued compliance with Human Rights, as they evolve in the province, while simultaneously implementing demand management strategies to preserve the Access-a-Bus service for those who truly need it and shifting some trips to more cost-effective transportation services.*

1.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAM

This 5-Year Service Plan has been designed to achieve several key objectives, specifically:

- Set strategic direction for improvements to specialized transit services over the next 5 years;
- Identify opportunities and obligations of the Region in cost-effectively meeting the mobility requirements of the Region's elderly and disability communities including a more integrated approach with the accessible fixed-route, Metro Transit services;
- Review existing Access-a-Bus policies, procedures, operations and organization to ensure the delivery of efficient, effective and fiscally responsible service delivery in compliance with the Province's Human Rights Commission; and
- Provide estimates of future demand for Access-a-Bus services and assess the implications of growth and increasing demand on operational and capital budgets.

Existing Access-a-Bus specialized transit services provide tremendous benefits to people with disabilities, but because of increasing demands and high costs, it is important that the service be provided with maximum efficiency. Improving cost efficiencies requires the review of current processes, and implementation of other creative and innovative solutions to best respond to emerging specialized transit needs over the next five years. To this end current issues and financial realities have been addressed, including:

- Is the best service being provided, given the financial and operational resources available?
- How does Metro Transit service latent and increasing demands for Access-a-Bus, given fiscal and budgetary limitations?
- What efficiencies may be gained through enhancements to administrative and operating processes including eligibility and certification, advance booking, trip purpose policy, etc.?
- What is the most effective manner of providing specialized transit services given the differences in needs for persons with different functional disabilities and the range of service delivery options available?
- To what extent can the future accessible conventional transit services meet the mobility needs of persons with disabilities?
- What initiatives and policies can be implemented to promote the use of lower cost options, while providing quality service to customers?
- What opportunities exist to potentially coordinate, through a community collaborative effort, the operation and funding of transportation services for persons with a disability?

These issues and study objectives are subsequently translated into work program, which included:

- Data collection: (primary and secondary);
 - Profile of Access-a-Bus services
 - Census data / Transport Canada's TransAccess database
 - Operating and demographic data from the Region
- Development of travel demand forecasts;
- A series of stakeholder consultations including the public, Access-a-Bus customers, agencies/organizations representing the Region's elderly and disabled populations, HRM's Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) and Metro Transit officials/staff including operations staff and operators; and the Eligibility Criteria Advisory Team (ECAT).
- A review of existing Access-a-Bus operating policies, service characteristics and budgets, and reservation, scheduling and trip management processes; and
- Development and analysis of alternate service strategies and related implementation.

1.2 MOBILITY VISION – A WAY FORWARD

Through multiple initiatives addressing quality of life considerations, the Region ensures a healthy, connected, supportive environment for its residents. It is within this spirit that the following *guiding principals* provide the foundation for the recommended Access-a-Bus service plan strategies:

Universal access including an accessible infrastructure;

Flexible mobility options with a cost-effective mix of accessible shared-ride, public transportation services; and

Maximize the utility and investment in accessible conventional transit (mobility management strategies) to encourage a shift from specialized to conventional public transit.

These guiding principals recognize the requirement for an accessible infrastructure including a commitment to the future procurement of accessible, low-floor transit buses.

As a transit provider, Metro Transit has facilitated a more integrated approach between accessible conventional transit services and specialized (Access-a-Bus) transit services. Transit has created a user friendly, accessible conventional transit service that may provide additional mobility options for many AAB/specialized transit service registrants. An accessible public transit system provides a higher degree of trip making flexibility and facilitates greater travel spontaneity and independence. A truly accessible transit system can become the preferred choice for many people with a disability.

In order to fully implement an effective 5-Year Service (Mobility) Plan, Metro Transit must build on its current successes in developing a corporate and community culture that recognizes and supports the strategic, social and economic benefits of a Mobility Plan. This culture must be fully accepted and supported by the Region as well as Access-a-Bus management and frontline staff. The longer term vision is to move towards the concept of *universal access* to conventional public transit services. While preserving the integrity of Access-a-Bus specialized transit services for those with no alternatives, universal access to conventional transit services requires the need to address ancillary considerations including an accessible infrastructure, streetscape, audible signals, etc.

2. PROFILE OF EXISTING ACCESS-A-BUS OPERATIONS

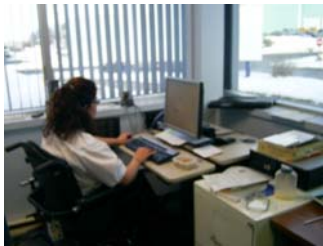
Metro Transit operates two public transit services, the conventional system (bus and ferries) and Access-a-Bus, the specialized system. The conventional system operates fixed-route services throughout the Region with thirty-three of its fifty-eight routes designated as fully wheelchair accessible as of August 2010. Two ferry routes also provide wheelchair accessible service. Access-a-Bus provides door-to-door, advanced booked, specialized transit service to passengers unable to access the conventional system due to a physical disability. These two systems complement each other to ultimately provide an accessible public transit system.

2.1 Key Statistics

Access-a-Bus serves a population of 373,000 with a service area of 250 square kilometres, Access-a-Bus serves approximately 1,690 registrants. The number of registrants represents less than .5 percent of the service area population. In 2009, Access-a-Bus accommodated 115,000 trips.

The 2009 Access-a-Bus net annual operating budget was \$3.6 million. The operating subsidy is provided completely by the Region.

The following provides key Access-a-Bus operating characteristics:



- Advanced booked, door-to-door transportation
- 1,690 registrants (2009) (+ 500 / year)
- Persons with disability (cognitive and/or physical)
 - Application process: validated by health care professional
- Book 1 week in advance – 48 hrs confirmed
- Operates: 6:00am – 1:00am, 7 days/week, 365 days/year
- Fare: \$2.25 one-way trip
 - 10/\$18.00, Metro Pass \$70.00
 - children & seniors: \$1.50, 10/\$13.00, Metro Pass \$52.00
 - free transfers to/from accessible bus or ferry
- 115,000 trips/year (2009)
 - 4.5% unscheduled, 20.8% cancelled, <1% no shows
- 24 vehicles
 - Approx. 51,000 annual revenue hours
- Service performance: 2.3 trips/hour
- Operating expense (2009): \$3.6m
 - approx. \$30./trip

2.1.1 ACCESS-A-BUS PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO POPULATION GROUP SPECIALIZED TRANSIT SERVICES

Appendix B presents 2008 operating characteristics and data for a select number of peer specialized transit services as well as the Population Group1 (>150,000) summary for general comparison. Based on 2008 operating data, salient observations include:

- Access-a-Bus' cost per passenger is 39% less than the Population Group average. However, this calculation is based on the reported data. The actual current cost per passenger of \$28.94 is 18% greater than the Population Group average.
- The Region's investment in specialized transit as measured as the cost per capita, of \$9.60 is close to one-half that of the Population Group average of \$19.01.
- The number of Access-a-Bus registrants per capita is 65% less than the Population Group average.
- Access-a-Bus averages close to 5,750 annual trips per peak hour vehicle compared with the Population Group average of 7,100 annual trips per peak hour vehicle (as measured by the number of peak hour vehicles and total annual trips), suggesting an overall system productivity of close to 20% less than peer agencies.
- The number of trips per capita is on par with peer agencies.

In short, while not significant differences in cost per trip measures (virtually all peer agencies realize cost efficiencies with the use of non-dedicated/supplemental taxi services) it is apparent that there exists opportunity for additional scheduling enhancements and improvement in system productivity.

2.2 Functional Areas

Access-a-Bus (AAB) provides advance booked, door-to-door services provided by Metro Transit who also owns the vehicles and employs the operators. AAB services are provided at the same fare as the conventional system and operate similar hours of service.

There are four main functional areas in the delivery of specialized transit service. They are as follows:

- Funding and Oversight
- Eligibility and Registration
- Reservation and Scheduling
- Service Delivery

The following sections describe each functional area as it pertains to Metro Transit.

2.2.1 PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

Reporting to Metro Transit's General Manager through the Manager of Service Delivery, the Accessible Transit Manager oversees administrative and operations staff including AAB schedulers, dispatchers and operators.

HRM's Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC) provides advisory input to public policy and operational considerations for both conventional and specialized transit services. In late 2007 the Eligibility Criteria Advisory Team (ECAT) was formed with a mandate to review AAB's eligibility criteria and application procedure and provide recommendations to Metro Transit regarding any proposed changes.

ATAC had appointed a subcommittee to address amendments to AAB eligibility and certification processes.

2.2.2 ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

2.2.2.1 Eligibility

The role of Access-a-Bus in providing door-to-door specialized transit means that it requires a significantly higher subsidy to provide an equal level of mobility. As such, to be responsible to the integrity of service, eligibility requirements are put in place to ensure that people using the service have a true need for it.

Virtually every specialized transit service across North America incorporates some type of eligibility criteria and registration process before a person can become a registered customer.

Current Access-a-Bus eligibility criteria provides for a range of eligibility status reflecting the applicants ability (or inability) to use conventional fixed route transit service. Eligibility criteria *conditions* include: permanent; temporary; seasonal; and conditional. Criteria for eligibility *determination* include:

- Require use of a wheelchair or scooter (users of scooters must transfer to a regular seat).
- Unable to step or down 35 centimeter (13 inch) step unassisted.
- Unable to walk 175 meters (574 feet) outside, unassisted (one city block).
- Have 20/200 vision or less (legally blind).
- Unable to utilize the conventional transit service due to a cognitive or physical disability, (use of the low-floor buses is permitted).
- Unable to communicate orally or through sign language; this inability must be associated with another significant inability.

2.2.2.2 Registration Process

A relatively simple registration process is in place at Metro Transit for admittance into the Access-a-Bus program. The applicant must submit an application form to Metro Transit, which includes a section to be completed by a physician. Applicants who are denied registration may request a review of the application by the Appeals Sub-Committee of the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee.

Approximately 50 applications are received monthly by Metro Transit and are processed by AAB administrative/operations staff.

Registered users who are ambulatory must reapply every three years. Those who use a wheelchair or are visually impaired must reregister every five years.

2.2.3 RESERVATION AND SCHEDULING

Like most specialized transit systems, Access-a-Bus requires advanced booking for all trips taken by its registered users. In addition, subscription trip bookings are allowed for trips that are taken on

a regular basis. The following section outlines the reservation guidelines and scheduling process undertaken by Access-a-Bus in the provision of service to its customers.

2.2.3.1 Reservations

There are two main streams of reservations or trip requests for Access-a-Bus services.

- **Subscription trips**, which are trips that are made at least three times a week (to the same destination), at the same time and day, such as work, education or medical trips. AAB registrants working variable shifts are also eligible for subscription trip status provided the shift schedule is consistent and easily understood.
- **Advance booked trips**, booked on a first-come, first-served basis typically require booking or trip request one-week in advance and will be confirmed two days prior to the trip date.

Dispatchers also note that there are a number of open ended trip requests, where the customer asks when the service is available, particularly for discretionary trips, instead of requesting a specific time.

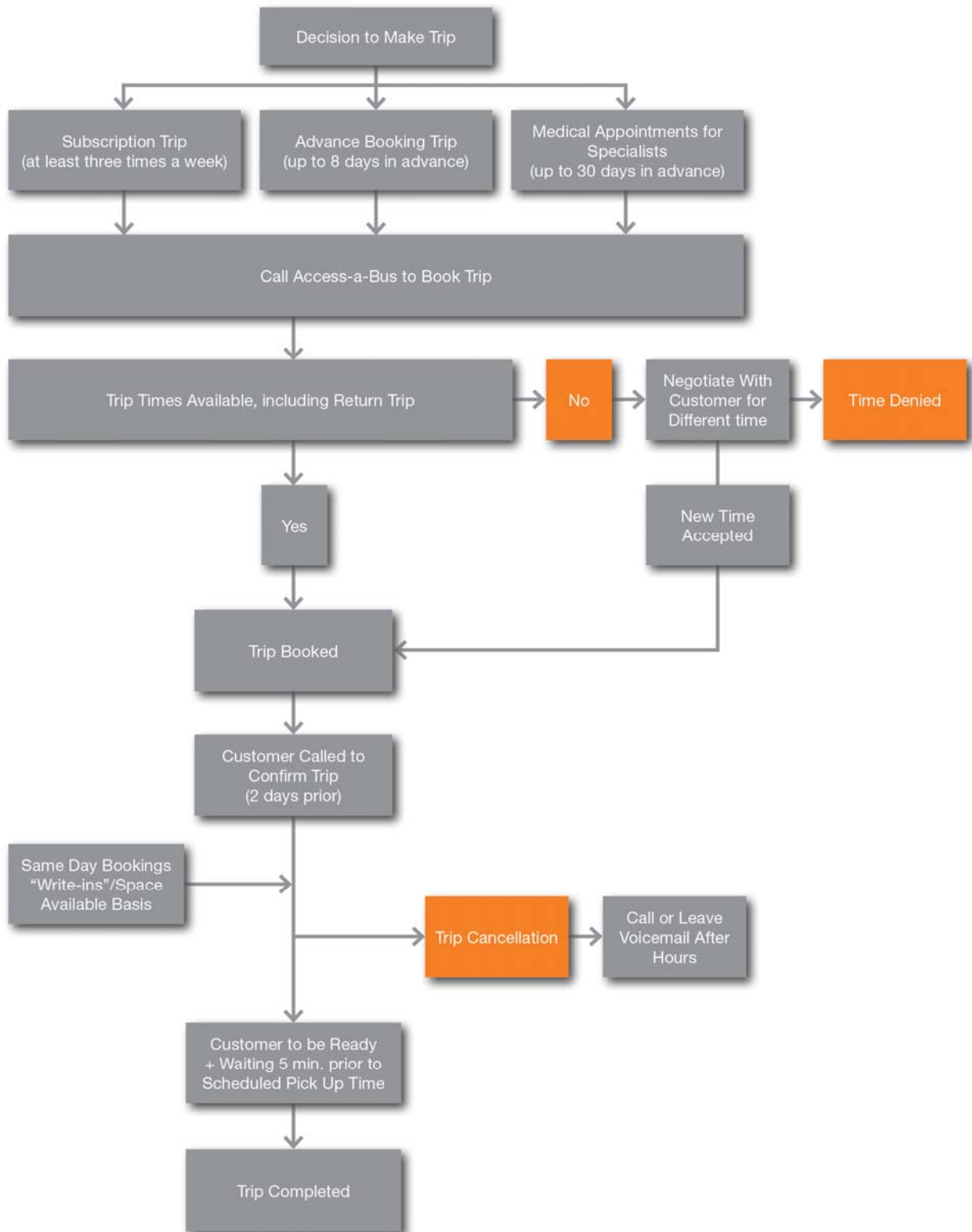
Trip cancellations are made by phone, either with a dispatcher during business hours, or left on voicemail outside of business hours.

Staff reports that no-shows and same-day cancellations are problematic given that they consume unproductive service hours. Current data suggest that these number close to twenty-one percent of all trip requests. No-shows account for less than one percent of trip requests. Unaccommodated or trip denials represent 4.5 percent of trip requests. Combined (unaccommodated, cancelled and no-shows), these numbers represent more than twenty-six percent of system capacity or demand or close to 30,500 trips.

Passengers receive a letter from the Manager if they have a pattern of no-shows or near-term cancellations. Cancellations received at least one day in advance are less problematic as staff is able to effectively insert trips in available times.

The trip booking process is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1 Access-a-Bus Trip Booking Process

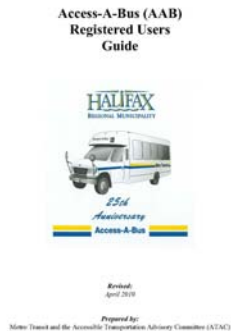


2.2.3.2 Scheduling

Trips are scheduled with the assistance of the Trapeze scheduling system, which has the ability to automatically allocate trips based on the characteristics input by the scheduler/dispatcher, such as desired departure or arrival times and location of trips. These attributes, combined with pre-set constants for road conditions, bridge access, and travel times, help to generate schedules, determine trip availability and ensure that there is sufficient time and logic to the run sheets given to the operators. It appears, based on discussion with staff and observations of processes that the capabilities of the software scheduling tool are not being used to their fullest potential in the development or building of efficient trip schedules. They are largely built manually.

Additional administrative burden is employed in the conduct of trip confirmations – customers phoned two days prior to trip date. Specific trip pick-up times are given to the passenger. Passengers are requested to be ready five minutes prior to pick-up time¹. Operators do not wait at all past the pick-up time; the trip is marked as a no-show.

2.2.4 CUSTOMER SERVICE



Metro Transit has prepared a comprehensive *Access-a-Bus Registered Users Guide* (revised, April 2010) which clearly articulates program policies, procedures, driver responsibilities and expectations of customer behaviour.

The front line of Access-a-Bus customer service is its operators and extends to the dispatchers and other staff members. Many customers and stakeholders indicated they are satisfied with the current level of customer service.

"I want to close by saying that Access-a-Bus is a fabulous service and that clients of the Dartmouth Stroke Support Club have found the drivers to be courteous, patient and highly professional"

Although this gold standard of service is exemplary, the operator's primary duty is to transport their customers from point A to point B (to and from inside the first set of accessible doors), and added tasks could delay operations and expose the system to potential liability. Moving forward, there should be an emphasis on clarifying the definition of the operator's responsibilities – providing passenger assistance in boarding and alighting to and from the first set of accessible doors.

Based on interviews with MT/AAB staff, the current method of service delivery is efficient and effective; however, there are concerns expressed that growing demand, trip distance, and traffic conditions are making it difficult to accommodate all trips in a timely manner. However, with minor changes to the schedule, such as the changing of pick up sequences, dispatch and operators are able to coordinate to ensure that they stay on-time. It is reported that under ordinary circumstances, almost all trips are accommodated on-time and trip times rarely exceed one-hour. The ability of the operators to maintain their schedule is a key strength of the service today and stretches the overall efficiency of the system.

¹ Common in the paratransit or specialized transit industry is the use of scheduling windows. For example, trip times provided to customers are provided within a thirty minute window, plus or minus fifteen minutes of the trip time. This provides flexibility to the schedule and to operating conditions.

2.3 Access-a-Bus Fleet

There are currently twenty-five, Ford purpose-built vehicles in the Access-a-Bus fleet, including a typical spare vehicle ratio of sixteen percent or four vehicles. The age and configuration (to accommodate wheelchairs and seated passengers) of the fleet range as follows:

Unit #	# of wheelchair (wc) / ambulatory spaces	Year
347 – 355 (6 vehicles)	5 wc / 4 amb	2003
356 – 360 (5 vehicles)	5 wc / 4 amb	2005
361 – 370 (10 vehicles)	4 wc / 4 amb	2007
371 – 374 (4 vehicles)	4 wc / 4 amb	2009

2.4 Access-a-Bus Service Standards

For Metro Transit's conventional transit services, a robust series of service standards was approved by Halifax Regional Council as part of the Five-Year Strategic Operations Plan. These fixed route service standards *“are intended to build upon the strong foundation established within today's transit system and to take Metro Transit to the next level in terms of ridership, modes share, service guidelines and performance measurement of customer satisfaction”*.

Virtually no such service standards exist for Metro Transit's Access-a-Bus service. The only exception is the following, as presented in the AAB Users Guide:

“Access-a-Bus, whenever possible will try to ensure that no passenger spends more than one hour travel time on a one-way trip within communities of Halifax and Dartmouth or one and one-half hours from the community of Bedford and former County areas.”

There does not appear to be any formal monitoring of this service standard.

Chapter 5: *Recommendations – A Way Forward* presents a series of recommended service standards for Access-a-Bus services.

3. TRAVEL DEMAND

Changing demographics (i.e., aging population), growth in population through migration, and changes in settlement patterns certainly affect the demand for transit, whether it be conventional or specialized transit services. These changes are, however, usually anticipated and, as such, are generally included in the HRM population projections used in this demand analysis. The projections from 2011 to 2021 take into account things such as an aging population. There are however, issues that are not as easy to project, and are almost impossible to include in a transportation demand model. These issues are usually more socio/political in nature and affect the need and use of many kinds of transportation services. They include, but are not limited to:

- Trends towards community-based living;
- Expansion of adult day programs;
- Health care restructuring;
- Social policy framework; and
- Changes to service standards and other operational policies.

Recent research commissioned by AARP (formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons) suggests that the boomer generation, the first wave of which will be 65 years of age in 2011, will typically be “healthier” than that of previous generations. With greater expectations for mobility, this somewhat more affluent boomer generation will be a product of a more health conscious age group, while experiencing medical advances unprecedented in medical history. Future directions suggest the incidence of disability with aging will not escalate at the same rate that we have seen over the past quarter century. The increase in older adults does not necessarily indicate a proportionate need for the current mix of transit services. As the “baby boom” generation ages, the older adult population will generally:

- Be healthier and more physically fit
- Have a higher level of education
- Have a higher disposable income
- Be less transit dependent with greater automobile ownership/access
- Be living independently
- Have a wider range of lifestyle preferences and higher mobility expectations

The following section profiles travel demand and trip rates specific to the transportation disabled populations in the Region and Access-a-Bus services. Data sources include: *Employment, Population and Housing Projections – Halifax Regional Municipality: An Update*. Prepared by: Altus Group Economic Consulting, July 28, 2009. Interestingly, this report’s 2026 population projections by age cohort, observes that persons aged 75+ will have the largest share of the Region’s population. Complementing the population and projection figures was the use of additional data sources focusing on the incidence of disability and transport disabled specifically. Data specific to the incidence of disability is from Statistics Canada’s 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) and to a lesser extent, the *TransAccess*TM database (based on Statistics Canada’s Health and Activity Limitation survey); and the *Age-Friendly Cities Project – Halifax Site*, A Project of the World Health Organization (WHO), Summary Report, March 2007.

3.1 TRAVEL DEMAND AND TRIP RATES

This section profiles travel demand and trip rates specific to the transportation disabled populations in the Region and Access-a-Bus services.

One objective of this study was to develop demand estimates and travel trip rates for persons with disabilities. This data is to be used for transportation modelling and the development of operational and service delivery solutions to meet these demands.

Exhibit 3.1 profiles the travel demand for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. The calculations use national incident rates for disabilities to estimate the future number of persons with disabilities in The Region. The exhibit also illustrates the potential increase in demand for Access-a-Bus service. The table assumes marginal increases in the trip request rate from 2009 levels. As the population grows, the demand for Access-a-Bus service will naturally increase. There is reason to believe the request rate may also increase due to a larger proportion of seniors in the community.

It is important to note that these calculations are based on recognized trip rates and comparisons of levels of service of communities of greater than 200,000 populations.

Exhibit 3.1: Access-a-Bus Travel Demand

Year	Region Population	# of Transportation Disabled People ²	# of Access-a-Bus Registrants	Access-a-Bus Trips
2011	385,255	15,410	2,350	160,000
2016	406,305	18,280	3,200	212,000
2021	425,060	21,250	5,000	290,000

Further these projections assumes various demand management strategies are implemented to ensure alternate mobility options for the Region's elderly and disability communities and for HRM to ensure the provision of quality Access-a-Bus services for registrants unable to use other options. In the absence of such interventions, specialized transit operations have experienced growth upwards of 10 percent a year or a doubling of travel demand in an eight year span.

² Transportation Disabled People is based on a self-declaration of some functional limitation that makes it difficult to use or unable to use fixed route transit services.

4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

An integral component of this Access-a-Bus review and preparation of a 5-Year Service Plan for Specialized Transit was seeking input from key stakeholders.

Input was sought through a number of sources including:

- A series of Stakeholder Consultations including the public, Access-a-Bus customers, agencies/organizations representing the Region's elderly and disabled populations, HRM's Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (ATAC); and the Eligibility Criteria Advisory Team (ECAT). Multiple public meetings and focus group discussions having taken place throughout the study process specifically in February and May, 2010. Focus group participants included representatives from key agencies and organizations including the Dartmouth Stroke Support Club, Regional Residential Services Society (RRSS), Prescott Group, Anchor Industries Society, IWK Health Centre, MS Society, CDHA - Renal Program, New Leaf Enterprises, Arborstone/Shannex, and the Provincial Services for Persons with Disabilities Program.
- Solicitation of written comments from members of the community; and
- Meetings with Metro Transit/Access-a-Bus officials/staff including operations staff.

These consultative sessions were designed to solicit input from the community and other stakeholders. Topics of discussion included: conceptual service alternatives/approaches, trip making characteristics, demand management strategies, and general perceptions about service quality.

Much of the discussion with and comments received from both consumers as well as representatives of agencies and organizations representing older adults and the disability community focused on eligibility, trip purpose restrictions and other operating concerns. It is important to note that there was much praise for the quality of Access-a-Bus service, staff and operators. Further, operations staff are clearly proficient in their responsibilities and have established a favourable rapport with many of Access-a-Bus customers contributing to many who are satisfied with AAB's customer service.

A summary of comments follows.

a) ELIGIBILITY:

- Preference for a 'functional' limitation criteria rather than the present "physical" definition.
- Refer to the functional need and not the medical 'label'.
- May need to be more restrictive to ensure those with no alternatives will always be able to get a Access-a-Bus trip
- Need to reflect the "safety" aspect especially for persons with a visual impairment

b) SERVICE

- Extended hours for expanded evening and weekend service
- Stricter policies for 'no-shows' and same day cancellations / recognition of the negative impact these have on service delivery

- Reduce the advance booking time and provide some same day service to enable more spontaneous travel.
- c) TAXIS
- Need to explore the possibility of using taxis as part of the Access-a-Bus program. Taxis could be good and it may generate a demand for accessible taxis in the Region.
- d) GENERAL COMMENTS
- Community program agency staff time is excessive in researching and coordinating client transportation.
 - Access to medical appointments is problematic for a number of reasons:
 - Difficult to make same day bookings (spontaneous travel);
 - Lengthy travel times (on-vehicle times) for persons whose stamina may be limited;
 - Sometimes don't know what time will be finished at the doctor and don't know what time to book a return trip.
 - Access-a-Bus customers report that greater numbers of trip requests are denied and some do not attempt to make trip requests especially during some times of day or days of week.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS – A WAY FORWARD

The following section presents a series of recommendations designed to:

- Preserve the integrity of Access-a-Bus services for those persons with a disability who are unable to use accessible conventional transit;
- Maximize the utility of current and future investments made by the Region in accessible conventional transit and accompanying infrastructure;
- Provide flexible mobility options with a cost-effective mix of accessible shared-ride public transportation services;
- Recognize the legislative guidelines of the Province's Human Rights Commission and Disability Rights Commission; and
- Be fiscally responsible and accountable.

Access-a-Bus specialized transportation services provide an invaluable service for the Regions' elderly and disability communities. It remains imperative that there exists, however, nondiscriminatory access to accessible conventional services, where available, with Access-a-Bus acting as a "safety net" for people who cannot use the conventional transit services. Philosophically, specialized transportation is not intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation for individuals with disabilities but simply a system that can provide individuals with disabilities the same public transportation service opportunities everyone else gets.

5.1 SERVICE STRUCTURE & OPERATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 ACCESS-A-BUS OPERATIONS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

5.1.1.1 Area and Hours of Service

Access-a-Bus specialized transit is shared ride public transit requiring an equitable approach between Metro Transit's conventional or fixed route (and ferry) services and specialized, Access-a-Bus service shall migrate to the same area of service and hours of service by day of week as that of adjacent conventional transit services. Logistically, wherever and whenever conventional transit operates; Access-a-Bus service shall be available to customers whose trip origin and destination are within the same catchment area as fixed route transit services. The "same catchment area" would reflect route by route considerations with AAB operating within 1,000m of that route. For example, if there is no evening service on a specific conventional transit route, then AAB need not provide evening service in an area up to 1,000m of that route alignment.

It is recommended that Access-a-Bus shall operate the same hours of service by day of week as that of adjacent conventional transit services. Access-a-Bus service boundaries shall be within 1,000m of a bus stop (consistent with the buffer for local transit taxation).

Comply by July 2011

5.1.1.2 Trip Booking/Advance Booking and Scheduling Requirements

A trip booking requirement of 24 hours in advance (and up to seven days) will contribute to maximizing productivity without a degradation of service quality and an anticipated impact on

significantly reducing the current trip cancellation rate. The user defined³ parameters in the Trapeze scheduling software algorithm can be amended to reflect marginal increases in maximize travel times in order to foster greater ridesharing. Recognizing the need for both additional staff (as presented in the 5-Year Financial Plans – Section 6) and additional staff training/familiarity with the capabilities of the scheduling software application, a reduction in the advance booking requirement shall be phased in, as recommended below.

It is recommended that Access-a-Bus booking requirement shall be 48 hours (2 days) in advance (and up to seven days).

Comply by July 2011

It is recommended that Access-a-Bus booking requirement shall be 24 hours (1 day) in advance (and up to seven days).

Comply by July 2012

It is recommended that Metro Transit develop the on-line capability to accept passengers' trip confirmations and cancellations.

Comply by July 2012

It is important to incorporate additional flexibility in the scheduling of passenger trip requests through the use of scheduling windows. For example, trip times provided to customers are provided within a thirty minute window, plus or minus fifteen minutes of the trip time. This provides flexibility to the schedule and to operating conditions. While common in the specialized transit industry, some AAB customers may perceive this as an inconvenience. It is however imperative to accommodate growth in demand, eliminate trip denials and provide the added customer convenience resulting from a significant reduction in advance booking requirements. Further, as is also common in the industry, scheduling shall be done in real time (per the capabilities of the Trapeze scheduling software). This means that not only will there be a significant reduction in administrative burden in staff not having to call passengers back to confirm trip requests but customers will be told of their pick-up window at the time of making their trip request.

It is recommended that Access-a-Bus introduce the use of a 30 minute scheduling window.

Comply by July 2011

It is recommended that scheduling be done in real time (with trip confirmations done at time of trip booking)

Comply by July 2011

5.1.2 INCORPORATE THE USE OF SUPPLEMENTAL TAXIS

Access-a-Bus service expansion specifically during low-demand times of day or lower trip density areas should be done with the use of supplemental taxi contracts. The use of taxis brings financial advantages as well as flexibility to utilize this transportation resource on an as needed basis to address peaking characteristics in demand. It will also foster a working relationship with the Region's taxi industry and provide the ability of the industry to make a possible business case for the procurement of accessible taxis. This would be of benefit to the entire community whether used in an Access-a-Bus contract or not. The only caveat is the need to address the regulatory regime of the taxi industry. It is imperative that qualitative considerations be addressed in the policing of the

³ The Trapeze scheduling software incorporates several parameters that can be adjusted by the user agency to reflect local operating conditions. These include travel time, dwell time, physical/geographic barriers, etc.

industry including assurances of quality of vehicles and driver training including sensitivity awareness in the handling of persons with a disability.

Metro Transit officials enter into discussion with local taxi companies to gauge the level of interest in the provision of supplemental service for Access-a-Bus.

Comply by January 2011

Metro Transit officials draft a procurement instrument and performance based contract for the use of supplemental taxis. The contract documents will address qualitative considerations of driver training, sensitivity training, vehicle quality, performance monitoring, reporting, etc.

Comply by July 2011

5.1.2.1 Fare Policy – Personal Care Attendant

It is important to differentiate between a person care attendant and a companion. The former, required for the passenger to complete the trip and an extension of their travel needs, not unlike the use of a mobility aid or service animal.

Access-a-Bus shall not charge for a fare for personal care attendants (as certified by amended application process).

Comply by January 2011

5.1.3 INTEGRATION WITH CONVENTIONAL TRANSIT

It is recommended that Metro Transit encourage the voluntary use of accessible fixed route services (bus and ferries) for those Access-a-Bus registrants able to use (possibly for some of their trips, some of the time) by providing referral and information dissemination services relating to travel training and in-house capabilities to provide trip planning.

Comply by July 2011

5.2 ELIGIBILITY & CERTIFICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Access-a-Bus eligibility and certification processes provides for the initial opportunity to ensure that AAB is provided to those who cannot use accessible conventional transit services. *A key goal ought to be that of integration and ensure that persons with disabilities can use public transportation without encountering unnecessary barriers.*

5.2.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Region's specialized AAB transit services are shared-ride public transportation for those persons unable to use an accessible public transportation system, not for those who find it more difficult or are reluctant or unwilling to use an accessible public transportation system. Similarly, it is important to determine an applicant's need for an attendant including the need for such attendant care to function independently in the community as opposed to only for the purposes of transportation on Access-a-Bus.

It is therefore critical that Access-a-Bus services are reserved for those having no other public transportation option. Given the move towards a fully accessible conventional transit fleet, more people will be able to access these services.

Recognizing the broad range of disabilities, including how a person's functional disability may affect their ability to use conventional transit services, the amended application form reflects three categories of specialized service:

- Category I: Persons unable to board ride or disembark independently from a conventional or community bus vehicle, even if accessible.
- Category II: Persons with a temporary disability.
- Category III: Persons whose specific disability, or disability plus environmental barriers (e.g. distance, terrain, weather), prevents them from getting to the boarding location or from the disembarking location of a conventional transit vehicle.

It is important to recognize the transport needs of persons with a cognitive disability or mental illness where functional limitations may be less straightforward to assess. The application form drafted as part of this project reflects the requirements of those with a non-physical functional limitation and reflects the transit trip cycle of getting to a bus, waiting for a bus, boarding a bus, and being able to function independently in the community. A copy is included as Appendix A.

While a variation on the proposals put forward by the *Eligibility Criteria Advisory Team* (ECAT), this recommended approach to eligibility and certification as well as an amended application form complements/builds upon the tremendous work of ECAT.

5.2.2 CERTIFICATION

Certification is the process by which applicants confirm that the functional disability information conveyed in their application form is true and accurate. As discussed above, Access-a-Bus service eligibility will be based on a functional, rather than medical model. Persons are not qualified or disqualified on the basis of a specific diagnosis or disability. An individual will be certified as eligible if there is any part of the conventional transportation system which cannot be used or navigated by that individual because of a functional disability. Alternate approaches to certify an applicant's eligibility range from self-certification to having a doctor sign applications forms. The most common approach appears to include the latter but ought to include any medical practitioner including occupational therapists. Further, certification ought to include a process whereby applicants, specifically Category II and III eligible persons, are encouraged to participate in a travel or mobility training program. Various incentives may be provided ranging from travel training participants including free travel vouchers for use on conventional transit to frequent user (of conventional transit) programs when participants may accumulate points redeemable for free travel or other rewards.

5.2.3 APPLICATION PROCESS

The following provides a framework for a series of recommendations for an amended eligibility and certification process requiring:

- An update of all client data; and
- A revised paper application providing significantly more information relating to functional limitations.

In addition to the certification process related recommendations, a number of administrative related recommendations have been made. These address processes, roles and responsibilities. The

comments *in favour* and *comments against* are based on discussions during stakeholder consultation.

Issue #1: Should current registrants be granted automatic eligibility rather than requiring all registrants to undergo a recertification process?

Stakeholder Comments in Favour	Stakeholder Comments Against
“Grandfathering” (automatic eligibility for current registrants) would be administratively simpler	Unfair to future applicants who would have to undergo a more comprehensive application process. Also unfair to current registrants who either choose to use Access-a-Bus infrequently or are unable to use Access-a-Bus more frequently but are unable to due to capacity constraints
Less likely to encounter community opposition	Access-a-Bus needs to maintain an accurate client database. Client data will be required for any automation of the booking scheduling functions.
A proportion of the applicants would probably be found eligible anyway	As registrations continue to grow, the capacity of the system to provide an adequate level of service will become increasingly constrained

Recommendation #1: Existing registrants will be “grandfathered” however all registrants will be requested to complete the application form in order for Metro Transit to develop and maintain a comprehensive client database. The recertification process should be completed within a one-year period.

Begin re-registration/certification by January 2011

Issue #2: Should the eligibility process continue to be limited to paper applications as opposed to incorporating an in-person interview?

Stakeholder Comments in Favour	Stakeholder Comments Against
Process is familiar	Paper applications provide very limited information to make accurate determinations
Less expensive to implement in short-term	Useful follow-up with professionals to verify certification can be just as time-consuming to staff as an in-person interview
Politically (potentially) less challenging to grassroots community as process won’t appear to be significantly changed	Agency does not have the opportunity to inform applicants about other services and to accurately determine candidacy for mobility training
Possibly easier to administer	Increased accuracy will result in far greater cost savings that could be used to enhance service to those who truly need it
In-person assessments can be intimidating to some applicants, particularly seniors or those with depression	

Recommendation #2: Implement the use of a more detailed application form.

Implement amended application form in January 2011.

Issue #3: If a form of in-person assessment is selected, should all applicants (or those being recertified) be required to come in for the assessment rather than allowing some to be certified through a paper process?

Stakeholder Comments in Favour	Stakeholder Comments Against
Requiring all current registrants to come in is more equitable and avoids getting into arguments of why one person's application is more clearly eligible than another's	Some individuals have disabilities, which will always prevent them from riding conventional transit. Why put them through the bother of an in-person assessment?
Allows everybody to hear about other transportation/transit services available to them	Universal in-person assessments is more costly (at least in the short term) than selective interviews
Access-a-Bus eligibility is so valuable that it is not too much to expect an individual to come in for one interview	It would lengthen the process of recertification to have everyone come in
If the person is unable to come in for an interview, how will they be able to use Access-a-Bus service if they are found eligible?	

Recommendation #3: A more comprehensive paper application process will preclude the requirement for all applicants to come in for an in-person interview or assessment. If additional information about the applicants disability and how it affects their use of Metro Transit's accessible fixed route transit services, an applicant may be requested to attend an in-person interview.

5.3 ACCESS-A-BUS SERVICE STANDARDS

The following are recommended service standards for the Access-a-Bus program.

Service Characteristic	Recommended Service Standard
<p>Trip Coverage/Trip Denials</p> <p>An unaccommodated trip is when Access-a-Bus cannot schedule a trip within one hour before or one hour after the desired time of pick-up. A trip is denied if pick-up cannot be accommodated within this time window or if the customer does not have the flexibility to travel at another time.</p>	The Access-a-Bus program shall accommodate 100% of all trips requested within the urban transit service area, by eligible registrants.
Span of Service	Access-a-Bus services will operate hours of service and days of the week comparable to the conventional service.
On-time Performance	All vehicles shall arrive at the pick-up points no earlier than 15 minutes before and no later than 15 minutes after

Service Characteristic	Recommended Service Standard
	the scheduled pick-up time, 95% of the time.
Cancellations & No Shows	The objective is to have no more than 8% of the scheduled trips cancelled by the passenger up to one hour before the pick-up, and to have no more than 2% no shows within 5 minutes of the scheduled pick-up time window.
Complaints	The objective is to keep complaints to an absolute minimum but not to exceed 1 complaint per 1,000 passenger trips on average on an annual basis.
Service Utilization Standards	The vehicles dedicated to the Access-a-Bus service should achieve a minimum utilization or productivity level of 2.5 passengers per revenue hour on a daily basis on average.
Cost Recovery Targets	A minimum cost recovery of 6% based on an Access-a-Bus fare identical to the regular adult cash fare on the conventional fixed route services.

Access-a-Bus incorporate service standard measures in the Monthly Service Report.

Comply by January 2011

6. ACCESS-A-BUS SPECIALIZED TRANSIT 5-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

Exhibits 6.1 and 6.2 present two scenarios for the 5-year financial plan. Exhibit 6.1 represents a recommended approach using non-dedicated, supplemental taxis as part of the delivery framework. Conversely, Exhibit 6.2 represents a 5-year financial plan operated solely with Metro Transit provided AAB vehicles.

Common to both scenarios is a projected increase in the total number of trips of 75 percent from the current level to 2015.

The following table presents a comparison of salient characteristics of the two scenarios and represents the percentage change from 2011 to 2015. It is recommended that non-dedicated, supplemental taxi service be implemented in 2012.

	Scenario 1 With Supplemental Taxis	Scenario 2 No Taxis
Net Operating Cost	11.9% increase \$4.29m - \$4.77m	31.9% increase \$4.29m - \$5.66m
Net Cost / Trip	11.8% decrease \$26.84 - \$23.68	4.7% increase \$26.84 - \$28.10
Net Cost / Capita	6.5% increase \$11.15 - \$11.87	26.4% increase \$11.15 - \$14.09
Vehicle Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes 1 additional AAB vehicle in 2015 (expansion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes 2 additional AAB vehicles in each of 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (expansion)
Additional Staff Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumes 1 additional Scheduler in 2011 	Assumes additional staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Scheduler in 2011 2 Schedulers/Dispatchers in 2014 1 Supervisor in 2013

Exhibit 6.1: 5-Year Financial Plan – with supplemental taxis

Access-a-Bus: 5-Year Financial Plan 2011-2015

Assumes interventions within a framework of demand management

	Base	Five Year Projections				
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
HRM Population	381,045	385,255	389,465	393,675	397,885	402,095
Vehicles (Access-a-Bus)	24	30	30	30	30	31
Staff Resources						
Schedulers	1	2	2	2	2	2
Schedulers/Dispatchers	3	3	3	3	3	3
Disptachers	3	3	3	3	3	3
Supervisors	1	1	1	1	1	1
Revenue Vehicle Hours	51,000	63,750	63,750	63,750	63,750	65,900
Access-a-Bus Registrants	1,690	1,940	2,195	2,450	2,700	2,950
Passenger Trips	115,000	160,000	170,400	180,800	191,200	201,600
Trips on Access-a-Bus	115,000	160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000	165,350
Passengers / Hour	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Trips on Supplemental Taxi	-	0	10,400	20,800	31,200	36,250
% Trips / Access-a-Bus	100%	100%	94%	88%	84%	82%
% Trips / Supplemental Taxi	0%	0%	6%	12%	16%	18%
Passenger Revenue	\$ 180,000	\$250,400	\$266,675	\$282,950	\$299,230	\$315,500
Operating Cost						
Transportation						
Access-a-Bus	\$ 3,740,000	\$ 4,545,000	\$ 4,545,000	\$ 4,545,000	\$ 4,545,000	\$ 4,545,000
Cost/Hr	\$ 73.33	\$ 71.29	\$ 71.29	\$ 71.29	\$ 71.29	\$ 68.97
Taxi Contract	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 156,000	\$ 312,000	\$ 468,000	\$ 543,750
Total Operating Cost	\$ 3,740,000	\$ 4,545,000	\$ 4,701,000	\$ 4,857,000	\$ 5,013,000	\$ 5,088,750
Total Cost / Passenger	\$ 32.52	\$ 28.41	\$ 27.59	\$ 26.86	\$ 26.22	\$ 25.24
Net Operating Cost	\$ 3,560,000	\$ 4,294,600	\$ 4,434,325	\$ 4,574,050	\$ 4,713,770	\$ 4,773,250
Net Cost / Passenger	\$ 30.96	\$ 26.84	\$ 26.02	\$ 25.30	\$ 24.65	\$ 23.68
Net Cost / Capita	\$ 9.34	\$ 11.15	\$ 11.39	\$ 11.62	\$ 11.85	\$ 11.87
Revenue / Cost	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Capital Expenditures						
Vehicle Expansion						\$ 82,350
Replacement Vehicles				\$ 823,530		
Number of Expansion Vehicles						1
Number of Replacement Vehicles				10		

Exhibit 6.2: 5-Year Financial Plan – no supplemental taxis

Access-a-Bus: 5-Year Financial Plan 2011-2015 -- NO SUPPLEMENTAL TAXIS

Assumes interventions within a framework of demand management

	Base	Five Year Projections				
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
HRM Population	381,045	385,255	389,465	393,675	397,885	402,095
Vehicles (Access-a-Bus)	24	30	32	34	36	38
Staff Resources						
Schedulers	1	2	2	2	2	3
Schedulers/Dispatchers	3	3	3	3	5	5
Disptachers	3	3	3	3	3	3
Supervisors	1	1	1	2	2	2
Revenue Vehicle Hours	51,000	63,750	68,800	73,100	77,400	81,700
Access-a-Bus Registrants	1,690	1,940	2,195	2,450	2,700	2,950
Passenger Trips	115,000	160,000	170,400	180,800	191,200	201,600
Trips on Access-a-Bus	115,000	160,000	170,400	180,800	191,200	201,600
Passengers / Hour	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Trips on Supplemental Taxi	-	0	0	0	0	0
Total Trips	115,000	160,000	170,400	180,800	191,200	201,600
% Trips / Access-a-Bus	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Trips / Supplemental Taxi	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Passenger Revenue	\$ 180,000	\$250,400	\$266,675	\$282,950	\$299,230	\$315,500
Total Operating Cost	\$ 3,740,000	\$ 4,545,000	\$ 4,857,000	\$ 5,224,000	\$ 5,624,000	\$ 5,981,000
Total Cost / Passenger	\$ 32.52	\$ 28.41	\$ 28.50	\$ 28.89	\$ 29.41	\$ 29.67
Net Operating Cost	\$ 3,560,000	\$ 4,294,600	\$ 4,590,325	\$ 4,941,050	\$ 5,324,770	\$ 5,665,500
Net Cost / Passenger	\$ 30.96	\$ 26.84	\$ 26.94	\$ 27.33	\$ 27.85	\$ 28.10
Net Cost / Capita	\$ 9.34	\$ 11.15	\$ 11.79	\$ 12.55	\$ 13.38	\$ 14.09
Revenue / Cost	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Capital Expenditures						
Vehicle Expansion		\$ 164,700	\$ 164,700	\$ 164,700	\$ 164,700	\$ 164,700
Replacement Vehicles			\$ 823,530			
Number of Expansion Vehicles		2	2	2	2	2
Number of Replacement Vehicles			10			

APPENDIX A
DRAFT ACCESS-A-BUS APPLICATION FORM



Access-a-Bus service is intended for those persons who, due to a functional limitation, cannot board, ride or disembark from a fixed-route Metro Transit bus or ferry.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call *Access-a-Bus* at:
(902) 490-6681

HOW TO APPLY FOR ACCESS-A-BUS SERVICE:

- Fill out Part A of this application.
- Take or send the application (Parts A and B) to your health care professional to have Part B completed. Both Part A and Part B must be completed in order for your application to be considered.
- Return the completed application (Parts A and B) to *Access-a-Bus*.
- *Access-a-Bus* will notify you of your eligibility. If we require additional information, you may be requested to come in for an interview to provide us with more information about your disability and how it affects your use of Metro Transit’s accessible fixed-route transit and ferry services.
- If you have not been notified within 30 days of submitting your application, please call us.
- All information on this application form will be kept confidential.
- **Failure to completely fill out the application will delay the application process.**

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

1. **Name:** _____
 (Last) (First) (Middle)

2. **Address:** _____
 (Apt) (Street)

 (City or Town) (Postal Code)

3. **Daytime Phone:** () _____ **Evening Phone:** () _____
TTY/TDD Number: () _____ (For Hearing Impaired)

4. **Date of Birth:** _____
 YY /MM /DD

5. In case of an emergency, please notify (eg. family, friend, neighbour):

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone Number(s): () _____

Check one box only:

6. A. I can always get to and from a bus stop.

B. I can never get to and from a bus stop.

C. I can get to and from a bus stop only if (circle all that apply):

1. I have an attendant with me
2. I need to travel less than ___ meters to or from the bus stop
3. I am familiar with the area
4. I receive travel training for the stops I use
5. There are curb cuts along the route to the stop
6. There is a sidewalk
7. The ground is level or only slightly inclined
8. The path is free of ice, snow or debris
9. Other _____

Check one box only:

7. A. I can generally wait outside at a bus stop.

B. I cannot wait outside at a bus stop.

C. I can wait outside at a bus stop only if (circle all that apply):

1. There is a bench
2. There is a shelter
3. The wait is no longer than _____ minutes
4. Other _____

8. Will you use any of the following when you ride *Access-a-Bus*? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual wheelchair | <input type="checkbox"/> Guide dog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Powered wheelchair | <input type="checkbox"/> Cane |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oxygen bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> White cane |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Powered scooter | <input type="checkbox"/> Prosthesis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walker | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications Board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Crutches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Regarding the use of accessible Metro Transit fixed route buses and ferries. Check one box only:

- 9. A. I can independently recognize my destination and leave the vehicle/vessel.
- B. I cannot independently recognize my destination and leave the vehicle/vessel.
- C. I can recognize my destination and leave the vehicle only if:
(Circle all that apply):
 - 1. I receive travel training
 - 2. The driver announces my stop
 - 3. Other _____

10. I can ride a Metro Transit fixed route bus or ferry only if (check all that apply):

- I have an attendant with me
- I am familiar with the route
- I have received travel training
- Every bus on my route is accessible
- A seat is available
- Other _____

11. Do you require an attendant when you travel?

- Yes
- No

If you use a wheelchair or scooter, please answer questions 12. A. and 12. B.

12. Can you transfer to a car without assistance?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

13. How does your disability affect your ability to use Metro Transit? (Please provide any information that you feel would help.)

14. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information given above is correct and I authorize the health care professional named in Part B to provide information to *Access-a-Bus*. If *Access-a-Bus* receives new information regarding a change in my functional ability, my eligibility status may be reviewed and changed.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____
YY/MM/DD

15. If you are not the applicant, but have completed this application on the applicant’s behalf, you must provide the following information:

Your name: _____

Address:

Daytime Phone Number: () _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above is correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
YY/MM/DD

When you have completed Part A, take or mail Parts A and B to your health care professional.

When Part B has also been completed, mail parts A and B to:

Access-a-Bus registration
Metro Transit
150 Thornhill Drive,
Dartmouth, NS
B3B 1S3

PART B: FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL TO COMPLETE

Metro Transit’s Access-a-Bus service is intended for those persons who, due to a functional limitation, cannot board, ride or disembark from a Metro Transit fixed-route transit bus or ferry.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS:

1. The applicant (or representative) has completed Part A. Please read Part A in its entirety.
2. In completing Part B, please follow the listed criteria.
3. You may be contacted if any questions remain.
4. The application must be filled out COMPLETELY or it will not be processed.

Please be certain to base your evaluation solely upon the applicant’s ability to use accessible fixed-route transit service.

1. **I have read Part A in its entirety.** Yes [] No []

2. **I agree with the information in Part A.** Yes [] No []

If NO, please explain:

3. **Condition causing disability:** _____

4. **Severity:** mild [] moderate [] severe [] profound []

5. **Expected duration of disability:**

[] **Temporary:** Expected duration until _____/_____/_____
YY MM DD

[] **Permanent:** Conditions with no expectation of improvement.

6. **Is (are) there any other effect(s) of the disability that *Access-a-Bus* should be aware of?**
(Please type or print)

7. **I hereby certify that the above information is true.**

Signature: _____ Date: _____
YY/ MM /DD

Print Name / Stamp: _____

Street Address: _____

City or Town: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone Number: () _____

License/Certification Number: _____

Profession (check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Licensed physician | <input type="checkbox"/> Nurse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Licensed physical therapist | <input type="checkbox"/> Licensed optometrist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Certified rehabilitation specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Certified psychologist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registered occupational therapist | |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

Please return this application to the person seeking *Access-a-Bus* certification, or with the person’s permission, forward it directly to *Access-a-Bus*.

Access-a-Bus registration
Metro Transit
150 Thornhill Drive
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1S3

APPENDIX B
SPECIALIZED TRANSIT PEER REVIEW DATA



Specialized Transit Peer Review Data

Draft

March 2010



Introduction

IBI Group has been engaged to conduct the Access-a-Bus Review. The purpose of this working paper is to present operating data of peer specialized transit services to be used as a benchmark for the performance of Metro Transit's Access-a-Bus service.

The following document summarizes operating data from the 2008 Canadian Urban Transit Association's (CUTA) *Specialized Transit Services Fact Book*.

The *Fact Book* contains operating statistics collected from over 60 CUTA member transit systems which provide transit services for persons with disabilities. It covers 2007 and 2008, although this review focuses on the more recent 2008 data.

This document compares the key operating characteristics (such as number of trips, revenue vehicle kilometres, and total operating expenses) from Metro Transit's Access-a-Bus service (as reported to CUTA) to the specialized transit services of 12 similarly sized cities, as well as the Population Group 1 (cities with a service area population greater than 150,000) summary from the 2008 *Fact Book*.

CUTA Definitions

Dedicated Service – Service provided in vehicles exclusively dedicated to the transport of persons with disabilities (e.g. vans, small buses). This service can be provided internally or under contract.

Non-Dedicated Service (e.g. taxis) – Service available to persons with disabilities provided by non-exclusive vehicles, typically taxis under contract.

Operating Data provides vehicle kilometres (revenue and total) and vehicle hours (revenue and total) for Dedicated Service, and total vehicle kilometres and hours for Non-Dedicated Service. Revenue vehicle kilometres (or hours) exclude deadheading, maintenance, training, charter travel, and non-dedicated services.

Passenger Data includes eligible riders who used dedicated and/or non-dedicated (taxi) specialized transit service, as well as attendants/companions and other non-paying riders. A passenger trip is defined as a one-way trip from origin to destination. Passengers who request round-trip (two-way) service are counted twice. Passenger trips that are being delivered for free by volunteer services should NOT be counted in the annual passenger statistics.

Trip Types

- Subscription/Pre-booked – Regular pre-scheduled trips with no call-in requirements for daily work-trips or regular pre-booked trips (e.g. regular medical trips).
- Reservations – Trips not taken regularly and requiring an advance call-in. Minimum and maximum early notice call-in times vary between municipalities, but minimum notice is typically 24 hours.
- On-Demand/Day of Trip – Trips requested the same day as the trip is made, and accommodated as feasible.

Financial Data – This document concentrates on total operating expenses, operating revenue, and net costs.

- Total Operating Expenses – Includes administration expenses, internal operations expenses for dedicated services, contract expenses for dedicated services, contract expenses for non-dedicated/taxi services, expenses for the taxi scrip/fare reimbursement program, internal maintenance expenses, and fuel expenses.
- Operating Revenue consists of passenger revenue and other operating revenue.
 - Passenger Revenue – Fares received from dedicated and/or non-dedicated service.
 - Other Operating Revenue – Charters, bank interest, tax rebates, etc.
- Net Costs – Total operating expenses minus operating revenue.

Vehicle Data details the number of vehicles (total and in the peak) operating the dedicated service. Vehicles used by volunteer services should NOT be considered as revenue vehicles and must not be included in the revenue vehicle statistics.

Performance Indicators are calculated as follows:

- Cost/Passenger = Total Operating Expenses/Total Passengers.
- Cost/Capita = Total Operating Expenses/Population Served.
- Passengers/Capita = Total Passengers/Population Served.
- Registrants/Capita = Registrants/Population Served.
- Passengers/Registrant = Total Passengers/Registrants.

Table 1: Halifax, BC Municipal Systems – London

City	Halifax	BC Municipal Systems	Durham Region	Hamilton	Laval	London
Population Served	372,858	586,700	611,900	513,000	386,324	359,100
Registrants	1,569	19,574	2,948	12,153	4,308	3,498
Service Operator	Access-A-Bus	6 transit systems	Durham Region Transit	Accessible Transportation Services	Société de transport de Laval	London Community Transportation Brokerage
Operating Data						
<i>Rev Veh Km – Ded Ser</i>	1,074,522	2,327,657	933,872	4,127,875	1,257,430	-
<i>Tot Veh Km – Ded Ser</i>	1,074,522	2,327,657	983,023	4,127,875	1,257,430	-
<i>Rev Veh Hr – Ded Ser</i>	50,972	100,005	45,754	186,378	44,314	74,300
<i>Tot Veh Hr – Ded Ser</i>	50,972	100,005	48,230	186,378	44,314	74,300
<i>Tot Veh Km – Non-Ded Ser</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Tot Veh Hr – Non-Ded Ser</i>	-	-	-	-	-	8,300
Passenger Data						
<i>Dedicated Service</i>	223,807	378,548	100,544	422,208	131,318	187,859
<i>Non-Dedicated Service</i>	-	69,674	32,311	237,815	178,986	22,448
<i>Total Passengers</i>	223,807	448,222	132,855	660,023	310,304	210,307
<i>% Subscription/Pre-booked</i>	-	72%	60%	39%	64%	40%
<i>% Reservation</i>	-	28%	35%	25%	36%	51%
<i>% On Demand/Day of Trip</i>	-	-	5%	36%	-	9%

City	Halifax	BC Municipal Systems	Durham Region	Hamilton	Laval	London
Vehicle Data						
<i>Total Dedicated Vehicles</i>	24	68	30	86	16	27
<i>Peak Dedicated Vehicles</i>	20	58	23	73	15	27
<i>Accessible Taxis</i>	-	7	-	-	-	-
Financial Data						
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	\$3,328,300	\$6,433,955	\$4,472,146	\$14,525,284	\$5,806,129	\$3,145,440
<i>Passenger Revenue</i>	\$148,700	\$775,386	\$321,824	\$1,774,528	\$747,236	\$349,992
<i>Other Operating Revenue</i>	-	\$229,650	\$21,903	\$46,081	\$449,455	-
<i>Net Cost</i>	\$3,179,600	\$5,428,920	\$4,128,419	\$12,704,675	\$4,609,438	\$2,795,448
Performance Indicators						
<i>Cost/Passenger</i>	\$14.87	\$14.35	\$33.66	\$22.01	\$18.71	\$14.96
<i>Cost/Capita</i>	\$8.93	\$10.97	\$7.31	\$28.31	\$15.03	\$8.76
<i>Passengers/Capita</i>	0.6003	0.7640	0.2171	1.2866	0.8032	0.5857
<i>Registrants/Capita</i>	0.0042	0.0334	0.0048	0.0237	0.0112	0.0097
<i>Passengers/Registrant</i>	142.64	22.90	45.07	54.31	72.03	60.12

Table 2: Longueuil – Winnipeg, plus Population Group 1

City	Longueuil	Québec	Saskatoon	Victoria	Waterloo Region – Urban	Windsor	Winnipeg	Population Group 1
Population Served	388,210	507,985	209,400	349,613	482,700	233,687	633,800	18,219,683
Registrants	2,555	6,527	3,699	11,635	6,030	2,914	9,880	232,836
Service Operator	RTL	Service de transport adapté de la Capitale	Saskatoon Access Transit	Victoria Regional Transit handyDART	GRT MobilityPLUS (Urban Service Area)	Handi-Transit	Handi-Transit	29 transit systems
Operating Data								
<i>Rev Veh Km – Ded Ser</i>	988,236	803,894	836,061	2,438,045	1,093,498	311,339	-	60,206,476
<i>Tot Veh Km – Ded Ser</i>	988,236	803,894	836,061	2,438,045	1,115,358	459,043	-	62,982,997
<i>Rev Veh Hr – Ded Ser</i>	49,773	41,762	40,840	114,040	53,687	20,799	280,627	3,762,625
<i>Tot Veh Hr – Ded Ser</i>	49,773	41,762	45,725	114,040	59,652	20,799	280,627	3,893,145
<i>Tot Veh Km – Non-Ded Ser</i>	-	2,052,123	-	-	-	-	-	10,699,697
<i>Tot Veh Hr – Non-Ded Ser</i>	-	98,358	-	-	-	-	-	375,347
Passenger Data								
<i>Dedicated Service</i>	120,052	96,447	118,229	284,651	132,790	53,631	532,919	9,260,098
<i>Non-Dedicated Service</i>	198,563	451,084	1,927	94,209	123,739	-	11,931	4,907,268
<i>Total Passengers</i>	318,615	547,531	120,156	378,860	256,529	53,631	544,850	14,167,366

City	Longueuil	Québec	Saskatoon	Victoria	Waterloo Region – Urban	Windsor	Winnipeg	Population Group 1
<i>% Subscription/Pre-booked</i>	69%	63%	21%	49%	49%	42%	23%	53%
<i>% Reservation</i>	31%	37%	44%	48%	51%	56%	74%	42%
<i>% On Demand/Day of Trip</i>	-	-	35%	3%	-	2%	3%	5%
Vehicle Data								
<i>Total Dedicated Vehicles</i>	20	34	23	52	27	12	74	1,927
<i>Peak Dedicated Vehicles</i>	19	25	17	50	24	11	84*	1,697
<i>Accessible Taxis</i>	2	11	-	-	7	-	-	363
Financial Data								
<i>Total Operating Expenses</i>	\$4,814,228	\$9,770,417	\$2,693,738	\$6,781,826	\$6,695,717	\$1,107,488	\$8,806,359	\$346,344,470
<i>Passenger Revenue</i>	\$942,206	\$1,078,497	\$172,498	\$328,445	\$488,511	\$196,320	\$1,055,085	\$24,465,186
<i>Other Operating Revenue</i>	-	\$53,576	-	-	\$272,995	\$366	\$26,338	\$2,926,876
<i>Net Cost</i>	\$3,872,022	\$8,638,344	\$2,521,240	\$6,453,381	\$5,934,211	\$910,802	\$7,724,936	\$318,952,408
Performance Indicators								
<i>Cost/Passenger</i>	\$15.11	\$17.84	\$22.42	\$17.90	\$26.10	\$20.65	\$16.16	\$24.45
<i>Cost/Capita</i>	\$12.40	\$19.23	\$12.86	\$19.40	\$13.87	\$4.74	\$13.89	\$19.01
<i>Passengers/Capita</i>	0.8207	1.0779	0.5738	1.0837	0.5315	0.2295	0.8597	0.7776
<i>Registrants/Capita</i>	0.0066	0.0129	0.0177	0.0333	0.0125	0.0125	0.0156	0.0128
<i>Passengers/Registrant</i>	124.70	83.89	32.48	32.56	42.54	18.40	55.15	60.85

*Winnipeg's Handi-Transit has higher "peak" than "total" vehicles, which is unusual. The manager explains that their services are contracted out, adding hourly cars in winter to handle increased service demand. All contracts are paid hourly, but they have one "flat rate" contract with a taxi company for overflow and pay per trip. When the demand starts to rise in the winter, they create "runs" for a cab and pay the hourly rate. Typically, it is about 10 cars. This unique setup works well for Handi-Transit

because the taxi company prefers hourly when they can get it, as they don't have to schedule the trips (Handi-Transit produces the schedule), whereas they do have to do all the scheduling for "flat rate" trips. Also, drivers are more willing to do the work if they get some guaranteed work on an hourly basis. The hourly rate works out to be less per trip than the flat rate, which benefits Handi-Transit's costs as well.