



# ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

2015-2025

Updated June 2023

Please note: this publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

## SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transit Services Division believes that everyone should get where they need to go. To do that, the Division is dedicated to providing the residents and visitors of the City of Thunder Bay two affordable and efficient services – Thunder Bay Transit (conventional) and Lift+ (specialized). Thunder Bay Transit has been in operation since 1892 and Lift+ Specialized Transit Service (formerly HAGI Transit) was transitioned to the Division January 1, 2014.

The introduction of the Integrated Regulation through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005 and the Transportation Standard in 2011 has brought accessibility to the forefront of the Division's services.

Thunder Bay was the first community in Ontario with over 100,000 population to have a fully accessible fleet of forty-nine low-floor buses. However, the claim of a fully accessible system means much more than the provision of an accessible fleet. Service levels, facility access, landing pads for bus ramps at bus stops and transfer hubs, connectivity to sidewalk infrastructure, shelters, signage, and access to information and technology all play a role in creating a barrier-free transit environment.

As the accessibility aspect of Thunder Bay's transportation services are improved, all residents and visitors will benefit. As travel needs continue to evolve and change, the Transit Services Division remains committed to:

- The continuous improvement of access to public transportation vehicles, facilities, and service for customers and employees with disabilities through the utilization of transit dedicated funds and the efficient use of tax dollars;
- Participation with the development and review of the City of Thunder Bay's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan;
- Accepting feedback regarding all aspects of the services year-round;
- The provision of high quality accessible services to all passengers and the public; and
- Providing the community with annual updates.

In addition to providing updates on activity to remove accessibility barriers, this report includes discussion regarding 2013-2025 accessibility plan initiatives that form part of Transit Services' business planning process. Linking accessibility plan initiatives to the business planning process provides the mechanism to chart progress in identifying and removing existing barriers, safeguarding against new barriers being created and ensuring gains are sustainable.

## SECTION 2 - SERVICE PROFILES

### Conventional Transit Service – Thunder Bay Transit – 2022 Service Profile

<b>Type of service</b>	Fixed Route-interlined – five transfer hubs
<b>Service area</b>	Urban Service Area within City limits
<b>Hours of service</b>	
Monday to Saturday	6:00 am to 11:00 Pm
Sunday/Holiday	8:00 am to 11:00 pm
<b>Annual passenger trips</b>	3,055,883
<b>Annual service hours</b>	126,746
<b>Annual kilometers</b>	2,762,554
<b>Number of routes</b>	17
<b>Fleet</b>	48 low-floor accessible buses

### Specialized Transit Service – Lift Plus – 2022 Service Profile

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

<b>Type of service</b>	Shared Ride – Door to Door – Booked in advance
	Registrants are able to book trips up to seven days in advance. Trips, with the exception of subscription trips, are awarded on a first come first served basis. There is no guarantee of trip availability.
<b>Hours of service</b>	
Monday to Saturday	6:00 am to 11:00 pm
Sunday/Holiday	8:00 am to 11:00 pm
<b>Active Registrants</b>	1,350
<b>Annual passenger trips</b>	46,259
<b>Annual service hours</b>	26,230
<b>Annual kilometres</b>	438,896
<b>Fleet make</b>	27 para-transit vans
<b>Other Features</b>	Taxi Scrip is available for active Lift+ registrants. Taxi Scrip coupons provide a discount for taxi service in the City.

## **SECTION 3 – ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVES**

### **Accessible Fleet**

In 1990, Transit Services began to formulate and plan its first moves to becoming an accessible conventional transit service. The first kneeling feature buses were purchased in 1992. In 1994, the first low-floor buses were placed into service, with the total fleet of 48 buses accessible by March 2007.

All new vehicles include the following accessible enhancements - brightly coloured on-vehicle grab rails; hand rails; stanchions; high-contrast electronic destination signs; lowered stop request cords or buttons; and priority seating is available to persons with disabilities.

All specialized transit buses are 100% accessible. Under the Community Services Department – Asset Management Division conventional and specialized buses have a detailed fleet maintenance and replacement schedule.

### **Accessible Facilities**

Transit facilities and terminals are designed to be barrier-free, with electric access doors, low counters, and large print information, with the main transit office completing a major renovation in 2014.

### **Technology Implementation**

Transit Services has deployed various Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies ranging from passenger information systems to an Automated Voice Announcement system installed on the entire fleet of buses, which provides audio announcements of all bus stops in the system in compliance with the standard for stop announcements.

Current Conventional Transit Technologies also include:

- Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) – to provide real time vehicle location for the fleet which is accessible through the Nextlift.ca;
- Two (2) on-board TFT passenger (one forward and one rear facing) displaying the next five (5) stop locations;
- On-board audio-visual stop announcements (AVA);
- A teleride system providing customers with telephone based bus arrival time;
- A transit trip planning system through GoogleMaps;
- On-board video surveillance security system;
- An Automated Passenger Counter (APC) on board each vehicle;
- Electronic fareboxes that automatically validate and process coins, bills and tickets for fare collection; and
- Electronic passenger information signs have been installed at the Water Street terminal, Intercity Mall, TBRHSC, Confederation College and Lakehead University to display bus departure times. The signs are also equipped with a push button to enable audible read out of the sign.

The many benefits to be realized in deploying ITS strategies include:

- improved safety and security;
- enhanced data availability;
- improved dispatching and operations;
- reduced operating costs;
- better passenger information, making transit more attractive; and
- better schedule adherence and on-time performance.

### **Bus Stop Upgrade Program**

Through the Municipal Accessibility Audit performed in 2013, a Bus Stop Accessibility Guideline was established in order to be proactive in bus stop enhancements prior to the AODA Build Standards being released. The Plan included public consultation and best practices of the industry. Future investments in bus stops will follow the guideline to better serve the needs of the accessible community.

Transit stops are on a schedule to be refurbished to meet the Guidelines including but not limited to – improved pedestrian infrastructure connections, solid surface landing pads, and curb cuts. A detailed stop inventory was conducted in 2016.

Examples of other major accessible stop upgrades to date have included:

- Algoma & Bay
- Golf Links & Crystal
- May & Cameron
- Algoma & Cornwall
- Golf Links & Fairbank
- May & Dease
- Algoma & Pearl
- Golf Links & Harbour Expressway
- May & Leith
- Arthur & Brown
- Golf Links & Medical Clinic
- May & Northern
- Arthur & Edward
- Golf Links & Oliver
- May & Ogden
- Arthur & Euclid
- Golf Links & Ridgecrest
- May & Southern
- Arthur & Ford

- Golf Links & Riviera
- Memorial & Intercity Mall
- Arthur & Mountdale
- Golf Links & Sunrise
- Miles & Courthouse
- Arthur & Victoria Inn
- High & Queen
- Pioneer & Woodcrest
- Castlegreen & 100s Block
- Hodder & Arundel
- Ravenwood & Beverly
- Edward & Churchill
- Hudson & Toledo
- Red River & Faculty of Law
- Edward & Donald
- Hudson Heights Apartments
- Sprague & Brock
- Edward & Victoria
- John & Banning
- Superiorview Office
- Fort William & Central
- John & Balmoral
- Thunder Bay Airport
- Fort William & Transit Office
- Mary & Georgina
- Windsor & Junot
- Fort William Clinic
- Mary & Neebing
- Winnipeg & Lisgar
- Golf Links & Anten
- May & Bethune

## **SECTION 4 – AODA & THE IASR**

### **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) became law on June 13, 2005. Under this landmark legislation, the government of Ontario has developed mandatory accessibility standards that identifies, removes, and prevents barriers for people with disabilities.

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) –191-11**

On July 1, 2011, Regulation 191-11 came into effect, setting in place the related standard standards dealing with Transportation, Employment, and Information & Communications under the AODA. The timelines associated with the standards, as provided by Regulation, called for immediate compliance in some cases; as well a number of standards had compliance dates of December 2011. Each of the aforementioned standards is discussed in greater detail below, including the approach Transit Services employed for compliance.

Transit Services, directly or indirectly, participates in standard development and review.

### **IASR – Standards for Compliance July 2011**

#### **Standard 35 – Non Functioning Equipment**

A detailed review of Standard 35 indicated that current Transit Services practices are consistent and compliant with the standards therein. This is also addressed in Standard 43 and Section 8 of this plan. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### **Standard 39 – Transition of Existing Contracts**

Transit Services did not have any outstanding contracts for the purchase of conveyances at the time of the Regulation becoming in force, and as such, is in compliance with this standard.

#### **Standard 40 – Transition of Existing Vehicles**

Transit Services does not have a retrofit program for older vehicles, and as such, is in compliance with this standard.

#### **Standard 46 – Fares**

The standards set out in Standard 46 are consistent with Transit Service's fare policies as at July 1, 2011. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### **Standard 48 – Storage of Mobility Aids**

None of the vehicles in the Division's conventional fleet have a designated area where mobility aids or assistive devices could be stored. As such, equipment of this nature remains in the possession of the customer during travel on conventional services. There is no fee associated with transportation of such equipment. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 52 – On-board Announcements

Thunder Bay Transit's technology provides for the automatic announcement and visual display of each stop along the route on all buses. For further information with respect to procedures during equipment failure, please refer to Section 8. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 68 – Origin to Destination Services

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

Lift+ provides a door-to-door, shared ride service. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

### **IASR – Standards for Compliance January 2012**

#### Standard 34 – Availability of Information on Accessibility Equipment, etc.

Accessibility information is available to all individuals via the Transit Services website. This includes information about capacity for accessibility equipment, priority seating areas, and information about the accessibility of terminals. Information can be made available to individuals in a different format upon request. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 44 – General Responsibilities

Conventional transportation service providers shall:

- a) deploy lifting devices, or ramps upon the request of a person with a disability;
- b) ensure that adequate time is provided to persons with disabilities to safely board, be secured and alight transportation vehicles and that assistance be provided, upon request, for these activities;
- c) assist with safe and careful storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices used by persons with disabilities; and
- d) allow a person with a disability to travel with an assistive device.

Conventional transportation service providers shall, upon request, make information on the matters referred to above available in an accessible format. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 47 – Transit Stops

Conventional transportation service providers, in respect to transportation vehicles to which this standard applies, shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to board or alight a transportation vehicle at the closest available safe location, as determined by the operator, that is not an official stop, if the official stop is not accessible and the safe location is along the same transit route. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.



#### Standard 49 – Courtesy Seating

All conventional buses within Transit Services fleet have designated priority and courtesy seating. Information relevant to the seating areas has been made available to the public. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 74 – Companions and Children (Specialized)

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

Companions and children can accompany a registrant, if a seat is available, and must be booked at the time of booking. Passengers requiring child safety seats, must provide their own on specialized transit vehicles. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

### **IASR – Standards for Compliance January 2013**

#### Standard 36 – Duties of Municipalities, General

Any municipality that provides conventional transportation services shall consult with its municipal accessible advisory committee, the public and persons with disabilities in the development of accessible design criteria to be considered in the construction, renovation or replacement of bus stops and shelters. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 41 – Accessibility Plans, Conventional Transportation Services

Conventional transportation service providers shall identify the process for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback. Every conventional transportation service provider shall annually hold at least one public meeting involving persons with disabilities to ensure that they have an opportunity to participate in a review of the accessibility plan and that they are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the accessibility plan. If the provider of conventional transportation services also provides specialized transportation services, the transportation service provider shall address both types of transportation services in its accessibility plan.

Transit Service's process for evaluating and taking action on customer feedback is described in Section 5. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 42 – Accessibility Plans, Specialized Transportation Services

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

Specialized transportation service providers shall, in their accessibility plans identify the process for estimating the demand for specialized transportation services and develop steps to reduce wait times for specialized transportation services. Transit Service's process for estimating demand for specialized services and reducing wait times are described in Sections 6 and 7 respectively. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 43 – Accessibility Plans, Conventional and Specialized Transportation Services

Conventional transportation service providers and specialized transportation service providers shall, in their accessibility plans, describe their procedures for dealing with accessibility equipment failures on their respective types of vehicles. Transit Services procedures to address equipment failures are described in Section 8 of this document. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 45 – Alternative accessible method of transportation

This standard does not apply where specialized transportation services are provided by a specialized transportation service provider in the same jurisdiction where the conventional transportation service provider provides transportation services.

#### Standard 50 – Service Disruptions

When a route or scheduled service is temporarily changed or on detour and known in advance, the information is posted on Transit Service's website, nextlift.ca, and communicated through Transit's social media accounts. For immediate detours, the bus operator is responsible for announcing and ensuring all onboard customers are aware of the detour. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standards 53 – 63

All Standards pertain to Reg. 629 on Accessible 40' Transit Buses. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 66 – Fare Parity

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

This standard was dealt with under the Transit Services Fare Structure effective July 1, 2012. The same fare and fare media shall be charged and accepted on both services. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 67 – Visitors

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

Every specialized transportation service provider shall, make specialized transportation services available to visitors; and consider as eligible, visitors who provide confirmation that they are eligible for specialized transportation services in the jurisdiction in which they reside, or visitors who meet the specialized transportation services eligibility standards of the specialized transportation service provider.

Lift+ Specialized Transit allows visitors to register with the service through the application process. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 69 – Coordinated Service

There is no adjoining urban area outside the boundary of the Transit Service Area and therefore this does not apply to Transit Services.

#### Standard 70 – Hours of Service

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

Where a transportation service provider provides both conventional transportation services and specialized transportation services, it shall ensure that the specialized transportation services have, at a minimum, the same hours and days of service as the conventional transportation services. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 73 – Service Delays

(Note – Integration of specialized transit services took effect January 1, 2014)

Every specialized transportation service provider, where the specialized transportation services require reservations, shall provide information on the duration of service delays to affected passengers by a method agreed to by the specialized transportation service provider and passenger. This standard does not apply in respect of delays in service that arise during the trip. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

## **IASR – Standards for Compliance January 2014**

### **Standard 38 – Fares, Support Persons**

No conventional or specialized transportation service providers shall charge a fare to a support person with a disability where the person with the disability has a need for a support person. It is the responsibility of a person with a disability to demonstrate their need for a support person. Support Person Program Application forms must be completed and approved by Transit Administration. Once approved, the applicant will receive an ID card for the respective service they require support on. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

### **Standard 64 – Eligibility Application Process**

A specialized transportation provider shall determine a person's eligibility within 14 calendar days of receiving an application for eligibility. If a decision cannot be made, the person shall have temporary eligibility until such time that a decision can be made. A fee shall not be charged to a person with a disability who applies for eligibility to a specialized transportation service. A service provider may require reassessment of a person with temporary eligibility at reasonable intervals. A service provider shall establish an independent appeal process to review decisions with respect to eligibility. A service provider shall make a decision on an appeal with respect to eligibility within 30 calendar days after receiving the complete appeal application. If a decision cannot be made, the applicant shall be granted temporary eligibility until a final decision is made. A service provider shall have policies respecting the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information collected for purposes of determining eligibility. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

### **Standard 65 – Emergency or Compassionate Grounds**

Specialized transportation service providers shall develop procedures respecting the provision of temporary specialized transportation services earlier than 14 calendar days referred to in section 64, where the services are required because of an emergency or on compassionate grounds and where there are no other accessible transportation services to meet the person's needs. Given the City of Thunder Bay has accessible taxis available to the general public, and as such a person requiring accessible transportation who has not yet been deemed eligible for specialized transit can book a taxi, there is no standard to establish emergency or compassionate ground criteria. Further, Thunder Bay Transit's conventional transit fleet is 100% low floor accessible so, depending on the nature of the person's disability, they may be able to complete their trip on the conventional service. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 71 – Booking

Every specialized transportation service provider, where the service requires reservations, shall provide same day service to the extent that it is available and provide accessible means to accept reservations. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 72 – Trip Restrictions

No specialized transportation service provider shall limit the availability of specialized transportation services to persons with disabilities by restricting the number of trips a person with a disability is able to request or implementing any policy or operational practice that unreasonable limits the availability of specialized transportation services. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 78 – Accessibility Training

Conventional and specialized transportation service providers shall conduct employee regarding the safe use of accessibility equipment and features, acceptable modifications to procedures in situations where temporary barriers exist or accessibility equipment on s vehicle fails, and emergency preparedness and response procedures that provide for safety of persons with disabilities. Transportation service provider shall keep record of all training. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

### **Standards for Compliance January 2017**

#### Standard 51 – Pre-boarding Announcements

Thunder Bay Transit’s procedures require Operators to provide trip and destination information to boarding passengers, upon the passenger’s request. Transit Services is compliant with this standard. Section 2 of this standard requires every conventional transportation service provider to ensure that there are electronic pre-boarding announcements of the route, direction, destination, or next major stop on its vehicles. Transit Services is compliant with this standard.

#### Standard 63 - Categories of Eligibility

Every specialized transportation service provider shall have three categories of eligibility to qualify for the service:

- Unconditional – a person with a disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services at all times;
- Conditional – a person with a disability where environmental or physical barriers limit their ability to consistently use conventional transportation services; and
- Temporary – a person with a temporary disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services for a period of time.

Transit Services is in compliance of this standard.

## **SECTION 5 – PROCESS FOR MANAGING, EVALUATING AND TAKING ACTION ON CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

Feedback from customers can be generated by the customer or transferred internally through various Corporate departments to Transit Services. Generally, when Transit Services initiates the gathering of feedback, it is related to a specific issue. The methods for managing, evaluating and taking action with respect to each method are discussed in greater detail below.

### **Receiving Feedback (Customer Generated)**

Feedback from customers serves as key inputs to Transit's service delivery and annual service plans, including those elements dealing specifically with accessibility. Customer feedback with respect to both conventional and specialized services is directed to customer service representatives at the Transit Service's main office, who report to the Supervisor Customer Care & Administrative Services. A customer issue form is generated to extend a compliment, to record a request and/or to register a complaint or comment. Contacts are received from passengers/public via the telephone, in person, mail, email as well as Transit Service's website and social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter).

At the time the contact is received via telephone or in person the customer is asked to indicate whether they would like to be contacted directly with a response. In some instances, issues received via email or letter will be contacted directly via the means it is received. In all cases where a customer has indicated their desire for a response, and to the extent they have provided valid contact information, Transit Services staff contacts the customer.

In terms of compliments, all Transit Services employees who are identified in compliments received from customers are acknowledged in the form of an open memo from the Operation Supervisor for the quality customer service they have provided.

Requests received are generally with respect to service (actual service, new service requests, requests for amenities, etc.) and are forwarded to the appropriate area for review and follow-up. In the event a request is something that can be acted upon outside of the service planning process, appropriate action is taken by Transit Services staff and the customer is advised accordingly.

Complaints are recorded and forwarded to the appropriate Supervisor for investigation and action as appropriate. Customers who request a response to a complaint will be advised that an investigation has taken place and the matter was dealt with accordingly; however, in accordance with privacy legislation and related City of Thunder Bay policy, they will not be provided with any details with respect to personnel matters. The report breaks down the contacts in a number of ways to provide further insight into the identified issues, on a prioritized basis, from a customer perspective.

## **SECTION 6 – PROCESS FOR ESTIMATING DEMAND FOR SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Transit Services' process for attempting to estimating demand for specialized services and reducing wait times after the integration date of January 1, 2014 includes a number of key factors that must be taken into consideration, all of which can vary in influence over time. These factors include:

- the number of trips the current service is unable to accommodate as requested. These trips are referred to as un-accommodated trips.
- the eligibility criteria for the specialized service, noting given standards under AODA legislation, expanded criteria will be required in Service Area to include those individuals with temporary disabilities.
- the level of accessibility of the conventional transit service offered. This includes accessible buses and stops and amenities as well as the areas of the city the service covers. This also includes the extent to which the service provider has implemented programs to encourage specialized transit customers to utilize accessible conventional service when possible as well as the level of service integration that exists between the conventional and specialized services.
- local demographics including but not limited to factors of age, disability, income etc.
- the location of key origins and destinations within The Urban Service Area and their proximity to one another. This includes senior homes, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, medical offices etc., all of which tend to be primary origins and destinations for specialized transit customers.
- local policies and practices with respect to accessible transportation services including but not limited to the availability of accessible taxis.
- hospital policies with respect to outpatient treatments, dialysis unit scheduling and demand etc. noting these policies may be influenced by senior government program funding.

Charts are created which depict the impacts of the aforementioned factors on the level of demand for specialized services, noting at any point in time the magnitude of the impacts is subject to change, and as such, determining the level of demand for the specialized service is not a onetime event, but rather an ongoing exercise.

### **Un-accommodated Trips**

Un-accommodated trip requests have existed since the early years of specialized transit services within the City of Thunder Bay. In the years between 2007 and 2012, un-accommodated trip requests rose an average of 8.8%. Since taking over the specialized service, un-accommodated trips have decreased by more than 70%.

The manner in which the demand for specialized service is estimated is to measure the number of trips that could not be accommodated on the date and time which they were originally requested. These trips are referred to as an "un-accommodated request". Adding these trips to the total number of trips provided provides an estimated trip demand for a given time period. This measure provides an estimate based on the current registrant base for the service.

The other aspect of estimating demand is the anticipated growth in registrants for the service, noting with each registrant added there is an accompanying need for access. Transit will measure un-accommodated requests by day, and summarize same by month, and then by year. This information is relied upon when making service enhancements or adjustments, in order to ensure that service is being provided during the periods of highest demand.

When preparing annual budgets, consideration will be given to the anticipated growth in registrants. As the conventional service is fully accessible, access to conventional service for some specialized transit customers will become an option, and as such, it would be expected the demand for specialized services could decrease. However, as the population ages, so does the number of residents that need specialized services. Standards included in the Integrated Accessibility Regulation will result in increased demand for specialized transit services, noting the standard to expand eligibility criteria in Standard 64 as of January 1, 2014.

### **Level of Conventional Service Accessibility**

In 2007 Transit's active conventional fleet became 100% low-floor accessible. This milestone will provide the opportunity for future service integration between the conventional and specialized services. It will also result in many more specialized trips being able to be accommodated on the conventional service, which should result in a decrease in demand, most notably in the period of April through November when snow and weather is not a barrier to some customers.

### **Other Influencing Factors (Dialysis)**

There are many other local influencing factors that can impact the demand for specialized service. The most significant factor over the past number of years, which is anticipated to continue in the foreseeable future, is the demand associated with customers who are dialysis patients. These customers generally require treatment three times per week. In 2012, there were approximately 33 registrants on the specialized service requiring dialysis treatments, which resulted in the demand for over 10,000 dedicated trips annually. The provision of dedicated trips for required treatments directly affects the availability of service to other users.

### **Forecasting Demand Tool**

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) is the collective and influential voice of public transportation in Canada. In coordination with its member properties and external consultants, CUTA has designed a forecasting demand tool for specialized transportation providers to assist with estimating trip demand, capacity needs, service design considerations, and budget standards. The tool utilizes demographical data from Statistics Canada as well as municipal resources.

The tool is merely to provide a forecast of need for the specialized transportation system. With an on demand booking system in place, the goal is to have no un-accommodate trips; however, they may always exist.

## **SECTION 7 – STEPS TO REDUCE WAIT TIMES FOR SPECIALIZED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

Specialized transit customers have identified on time performance as a high priority. As such, booking agents and scheduler place a significant emphasis on limiting customer wait times when creating the daily service schedules; attempting to ensuring there is adequate time for drivers to complete their daily schedule on time. For the purposes of this report, wait times for specialized transportation services will be referred to as “On Time Performance”.

Given the service is a shared-ride service; there are a number of factors that can influence performance against this target, many of which are not within the control of Thunder Bay Transit. These factors include, but are not limited to the following:

- traffic conditions, which can be significantly influenced by weather conditions, construction, delays caused by trains, accidents, etc.;
- designated drop-off location issues (i.e. cars parked in designated drop off locations) which result in delays in dropping customers currently on-board the vehicle ;
- passengers not being ready for their pick-up (i.e. dialysis patients not ready to leave, late medical appointments, etc.) which result in delays that can impact the rest of the day; and
- passengers who do not take their scheduled trip, but don't cancel it (i.e. no-show trip) noting the policy is that drivers will wait 5 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time or the time of arrival, whichever is later, before leaving the pick-up location.

Given the only way to ensure trips are provided on schedule (or reduce wait times) is to leave room in the schedule to allow for unforeseen delays, trip schedulers must be careful not to leave so much time that will result in other trips being un-accommodated and an ultimately inefficient service. With the anticipated initiation of new Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) in 2017, specialized services will be able to measure On Time Performance going forward.



## SECTION 8 – PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS EQUIPMENT

### FAILURES

Fleet standards are determined based on the number of vehicles required during peak operating times, plus those that will be subject to required inspections and maintenance. This is referred to as the spare fleet ratio. This ratio can vary significantly given factors such as the age and make-up of the fleet noting that while older buses may require higher levels of maintenance to keep them running efficiently, newer buses tend to have more electronics and features that may fail.

There are a number of actions taken to mitigate in-service breakdowns, including the following:

- Each day, prior to a bus leaving the garage for service, the Operator completes a “circle check”, ensuring that the vehicle is functioning properly, this check includes the various accessibility features on the bus (ramp, kneeling feature, tie downs, etc.). Should any features be found to not be in working order, the Operator will attempt to have it repaired prior to going into service. If the bus cannot be repaired in time, an alternate bus is assigned to the Operator.
- Daily bus defect reports are turned into the garage by the Operator at the end of the day for follow-up by maintenance before buses are re-deployed.
- Every evening when buses are serviced (refueled, fare box emptied, etc.), employees also check that features of the bus appear to be in working order. In the event that an issue is discovered, the bus is either repaired that evening, or removed from service the following day until it can be repaired.

While the aforementioned steps mitigate in-service breakdowns, they do not eliminate them. When a bus defect disables the bus while in service, the following steps are taken:

- The Bus Operator contacts the on-duty Controller and relays the defect information.
- The Controller determines the extent of the defect and identifies a change-off location.
- The Controller contacts maintenance who arrange for a replacement bus.

It should be noted that the procedures set out above may be impacted by severe weather or other vehicle issues that may result in the inability to replace all buses experiencing difficulty in service (i.e. severe winter conditions may impact the functionality of the ramp or kneeling features of the bus).

# SECTION 9 – OTHER THUNDER BAY TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES

## Thunder Bay Transit Administrative Customer Service Policies

### Stop Announcements – General

Thunder Bay Transit employs Technology on-board its accessible conventional fleet of buses which provides for the automatic announcement and display of next stop information on board all buses. There is a risk that the system may malfunction, with such malfunction applying to a specific bus and/or system wide. In such situations, every effort is made to mitigate the duration of any downtime associated with the malfunction.

The Administrative Policy relating to the calling of stops, in the event the automatic stop announcement feature is not functioning, is as follows:

- In the event that the automatic stop announcement system fails to operate, the Operator will manually indicate to boarding customers the automated call out system is not functioning and if assistance finding a stop is needed, they should see the Operator.
- If the stop announcement feature is malfunctioning on a specific bus, Operators are to contact the Controller and arrange for the bus to be changed-off.

### Stop Announcement – Detour on Route

Bus routes are subject to detour routing from time to time. The detour may be planned (e.g. relating to scheduled major road/sewer construction) or may be as a result of an unscheduled event such as water main break. Detours may require the establishment of temporary stops (replacing regular stops).

The Administrative Policy relating to the calling of stops, when a route is on detour, is as follows:

- During periods when a route is on detour, the Operator will manually indicate to boarding customers the automated call out system is not functioning and if assistance finding a stop is needed, they should see the Operator.

### Service Disruptions – Detours

Consistent with Thunder Bay Transit's Customer Service Policy, a supporting Administrative Policy respecting the communication of detours has been established, which is as follows:

- If detours are known within a sufficient notice period, in addition to placing notices on affected bus stops, public communication of the detour will be provided via Thunder Bay Transit's website, and social media alerts. Information will also be available by phone from Customer Service staff.

For detours with little advance warning, notices are placed on affected stops and the website is updated as soon as possible and alerts announced on social media. If the detour is of sufficient duration, the

detour information will be provided via Thunder Bay Transit's website, and social media alerts. Information will also be available by phone from Customer Service staff.

Postings on the Thunder Bay Transit website are to include a note that the information is accurate at time of posting and is subject to change without notice.