



Cobourg Transit Service Review



Presentation to the Town of Cobourg Council
February 24, 2014

Study Objectives

Review transit services:

- To ensure that the services are suited to the needs of residents;
- To ensure that the services are being provided efficiently;
- To ensure that the services and related policies and practices are appropriate; and
- To identify opportunities for improving the transit services.

Work Undertaken

- Review of the operating contracts
- Review of conventional and connecting transit routes and route schedules
- Meetings with stakeholders
- Survey of residents and transit users - on-board buses, Town website
- Stop-by-stop ride count for each transit route
- Peer review
- Review of the specialized transit service - eligibility criteria, registration, trip booking, dispatching and vehicle utilization
- Review of the status of Town compliance with the AODA for transit

Current Situation

- Conventional (Cobourg Transit) and specialized (Wheels, accessible taxi) transit services
- Hours of service – 7 days a week including stat holidays
Two fixed routes; demand response; connecting service to Port Hope (jointly funded)
Contracted – Century Transportation, VanAir Taxi
- 4 vehicles
- Ridership:
 - Cobourg Transit: 112,556
 - Wheels – 8,972
 - Steadily increasing since 2006
- 2013 Town investment - **\$470,381** + capital reserve, less revenues and gas tax.
- \$25.42/capita = \$0.50/week



Current Situation

- Fares:
 - Cash - \$2.00;
 - Tickets – 10/\$16.00;
 - Passes – Adult - \$60.00, Seniors/Students - \$30.00 (Student after hours - \$15.00)
- Infrastructure - 98 bus stops, 10 shelters, downtown terminal
- Town Oversight – Manager of Engineering, some support from other Town staff

Current Assessment

- Efficient service delivery design (esp. Wheels)
- Ridership increasing
- Positive ridership and public attitude towards transit
- Qualified contractors – favourable rate
- Routes – good on-time performance
- Opportunities to improve ridership through increased transit promotion, improved coverage -> Extend service to new areas (northeast, west) within next 5 years
- Marketing and customer information – opportunities for improvement
- Improve customer environment - > more stops, shelters
- Ensure compliance with AODA - stops, signage, customer information materials
- Increase Town oversight
- Limited opportunities to reduce costs -> reduce service, raise fares

Key Issues From Stakeholders

- Earlier service
- Later service in evenings (match library and mall hours)
- Real-time information on bus arrivals
- Bus drivers to announce stops
- Extend to new areas of town

Service Levels

- Extend service to new areas in the northwest and northeast with a third transit route by 2017
- Undertake route review study to develop the most appropriate route network (est. \$15,000)

Fares

- Consider transit fare increase of \$0.25 in 2014; adjust progressively over the next 5 years

Wheels Specialized Transit Service

- Continue with centralized trip reservation function for Wheels and Taxi services and a single telephone number during all service hours
- Investigate alternate costing methods for taxi contract such as hourly or per-trip rates to ensure costs are consistent with demand

Accessibility

- Update Eligibility and Certification requirements and process for Wheels users including revised Wheels Application form
- Develop an Appeals Process for Wheels users
- Ensure full compliance with the AODA including staff training

Transfers

- Adopt revised transfer policy – eliminate return trips

Vehicles

- Replace spare conventional transit bus and Wheels bus in 2015. Review vehicle size for Wheels based on trip patterns and capacity requirements
- Purchase an additional conventional bus for expansion of service in 2016

Stops, Shelters, Terminal

- Increase number of bus stops
- Increase number shelters towards target coverage of 20% of stops
- Provide information signage and transit information display at downtown terminal;
- Consider adoption of a new bus stop sign to incorporate route numbers and bus arrival times
- Prepare plan to make all bus stops accessible by 2024

Marketing and Customer Information

- Incorporate more descriptive route information to indicate the route destination and key areas served
- Investigate automated bus stop announcement system on the fixed route buses
- Develop marketing and communications plan; upgrade customer information materials including route map and schedule brochure, dedicated telephone number with after-hours information
- Consider an increase in the annual budget amount for marketing and communications to \$10,000 with a higher allocation in 2017 and 2018 to coincide with the expansion of the transit service

Town Oversight and Management of Service

- Increase oversight and monitoring activities of the contractors to include regular meetings, inspection of buses;
- Revise ridership count practice for the conventional service to count rides by trip per route each day as well as consider annual ridership counts by stop;
- Consider separating farebox vaults and cash receipts by route by day
- Consider increasing staff resource available for transit oversight and management to ½ FTE