



Final Report

# Cobourg Transit Review

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Prepared for Town of Cobourg  
by IBI Group

February, 2014

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Town of Cobourg provides conventional and specialized public transit services seven days a week. It also co-funds a connecting service to the neighbouring town of Port Hope. Transit has been operating in the Cobourg for over 20 years and has expanded incrementally to meet the growing needs of the community and its residents. The last review of Cobourg's transit services was undertaken in 2006 and the recommended actions under the control of the Town were implemented.

On the basis of the growth and changing needs of the community, the Town decided to undertake a review of its public transit services with the following objectives:

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

## Work Plan

The activities undertaken included:

- A review of the operating contract with Coach Canada and administration of the contract and oversight of the transit services by the Town;
- Meetings with stakeholders individually as well as through meetings with established Town committees and a public open house;
- Survey of residents and transit users about their attitudes regarding the public transit services and their priorities for improvements on-board buses and through the Town website;
- A stop-by-stop weekday ride count for each transit route and a review of ridership data collected by the Town;
- A peer review;
- A review of the specialized transit service including the accessible taxi operation with regard to eligibility criteria, registration, trip booking, dispatching and vehicle utilization;
- A review of the status of the Town's compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) for both the specialized and conventional transit services; and
- A review of the transit routes and route schedules to ensure that they effectively serve the community and can be operated with a high degree of reliability.

## Current Conditions

Transit services are provided seven-days-a-week including most Statutory Holidays. Monday to Friday service operates from 6:15 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.; and Sundays and Statutory Holidays, 8:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. The conventional transit service is a



fixed route operation covering most of the town with each route operating hourly. The specialized transit service, "Wheels", is demand-based and operates during the same service hours as the conventional transit service and provides door-to-door, advanced booking, personalized service to people unable to access the conventional system due to a disability. "Wheels" is provided by a small, accessible bus during the daytime hours (8:00am to 3:30pm) and then an accessible taxi during early morning (6:15am to 8:00am), late afternoon and evening (3:30pm to 7:45pm) weekday hours and all day Saturday and Sunday.

The conventional and specialized transit services are contracted to Century Transportation Limited while taxi component of the specialized service is contracted to VanAir Taxi.

Cobourg partners with the Town of Port Hope on a shared-cost basis to provide a transit connection between the two towns. This service, operated by the Town of Port Hope, serves the Northumberland Mall, the Hospital on White Street and Walmart, then travels via Elgin Street West to Port Hope. This service operates every hour Monday to Saturday from 7:00am to 7:10pm Monday to Friday and 9:00am to 3:10pm on Saturdays.

### Ridership

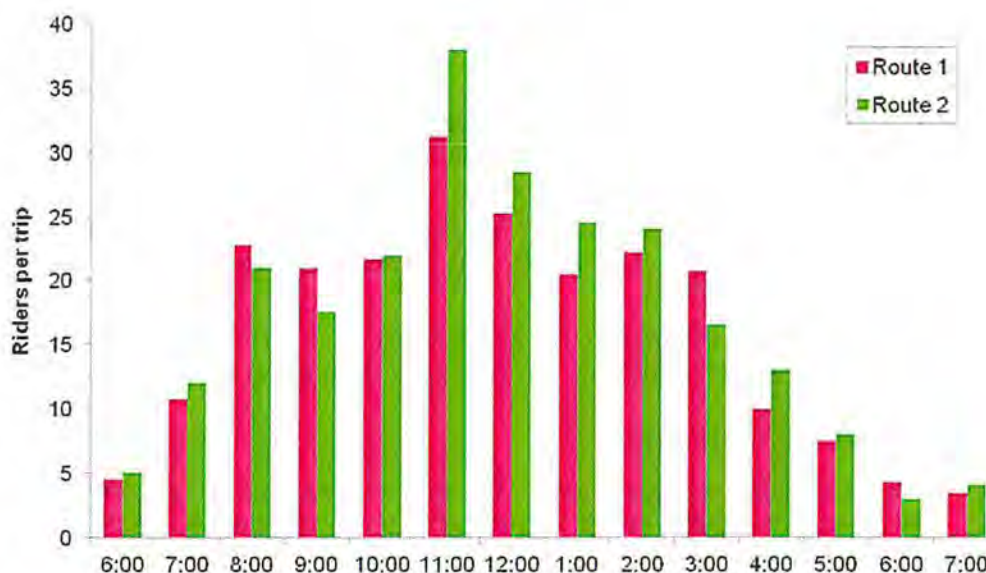
Transit use has been steadily increasing over the past five years following a brief decline in 2007. The following exhibit summarizes the ridership trend since 2006.

Exhibit 1: Cobourg Transit Ridership Trend 2006 - 2013

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Ridership</b>	76,800	70,000	72,000	77,014	95,319	101,930	107,642	112,561

A stop-by-stop count of people boarding and alighting at each stop and by trip for each route, was undertaken in October 2013. Exhibit 5 presents a graph of the ridership levels by time of day (weekdays) for both routes. This pattern illustrated is typical for most transit systems. Based on the ride count, the primary destinations and origins for transit users are the downtown and the Northumberland Mall. Secondary destinations or origins are Walmart, the hospital, CDCI East/King Medical and the Community Centre.

Exhibit 2: Ridership Levels by Time of Day



The ridership levels for Saturdays, Sundays and Statutory indicate that Saturday ridership is approximately 2/3s that of weekdays while Sundays is approximately 1/4. However, the changing pattern of shopping on Sundays and trends in other municipalities indicates that Sunday is becoming more comparable to Saturday ridership levels. Statutory Holiday ridership is comparable to Sunday ridership levels.

#### Vehicles

Cobourg has a fleet of four vehicles available for the conventional and daytime Wheels small bus transit services. The Taxi operator utilizes its own accessible vans or cars, as required.

#### Fares

Fares for the two transit services are based on a cash fare of \$2.00 with tickets and monthly passes available. Children under age 6 ride free. Books of 10 tickets represent a 20% reduction from the cash fare. Adult monthly passes cost \$60.00 and equate to 30 rides per month at the full cash rate while the seniors and student pass is \$30.00, equivalent to a cash fare of \$1.00 per trip. Transit fares were last increased approximately 10 years ago although the Student monthly pass was recently reduced from \$50.00 to \$30.00 as a result of a request from student representatives. The Town further amended the fare structure in 2013 by selling four sheets of transit tickets (40 tickets) for \$40.00, a significant reduction of \$24.00. It appears that this change may have contributed to a reduction in fare revenue compared to 2012 as revenue declined by approximately \$16,000.00.

Transfers are issued to permit users to take more than one route to complete their trip, are currently being used to permit users to "stop over" to either complete their trip or make a return trip for one fare at either the downtown or Northumberland Mall stops. This is an unusual transfer arrangement. For the Port Hope shuttle, Cobourg Transit users can transfer free of charge to the shuttle. From Port Hope, users pay a \$1.00 premium in addition to the Port Hope fare to transfer to a Cobourg Transit bus.

#### Budget

The total investment for both the conventional and specialized transit services in 2013 was \$810,395.00 including the capital reserve. Revenues totalled \$132,170.00 from fares and \$3,388.00 from the sale of advertising space on benches. After allocation of provincial gas tax of \$186,050.00, the net Town investment in transit for 2013 was **\$488,787.00** or **\$26.42** per capita.

#### Future Growth

Cobourg has a population of approximately 18,500 and is attracting both young and retired people in view of its many amenities, heritage and activities. While some re-development and intensification is occurring in the older part of the town south of the railway corridors and along the waterfront, the majority of future growth is planned to occur to the northwest (west of William Street) and in the northeast. The development in the northwest is active today while the development in the northeast is projected to occur over the next 5 to 10 years.

The Town's population is projected to increase over the next 30 years by approximately 50% to 27,800 by 2041, a modest average increase of 300 people per year. By 2031, the population will grow by 4,700 to 23,200.

On this basis, accommodating this rate of growth will be manageable and can be expected to have a limited impact on travel patterns and traffic levels in the Town. From a transit perspective, however, the key effect of the growth will be the addition of the new residential areas in the northwest and northeast which will require an expansion of transit service into those areas.

## Assessment of Transit Services

Based on the review of the transit services, the following is the assessment of the Town's transit services, future needs and opportunities for improvement.

### Conventional Transit Service

In general, the conventional transit service is operating efficiently based on a review of the financial and performance measurement criteria. Fares are lower as is the operating cost. The Town is also benefitting from a favourable contractual rate from the private operator.

### Ridership

While ridership has been increasing, there is the potential to increase transit use further based on comparison to the Town's peers and future growth projections. A target ridership level of 8 rides per capita (up from 6.1) or 128,000 trips should be a short term objective.

### Route Network

Although a re-structuring of the existing route network would be advantageous based on travel patterns, in future as the town grows to the west and northeast, it will be necessary to re-structure the routes by adding a third route in order to serve the new areas. This re-structuring may be required within the next 5 years depending on the pace of new development. The third route can be expected to require an additional bus and would increase the transit system's revenue-hours by 50% or 4,400 hours annually representing an operating cost increase of approximately \$250,000. If the existing cost recovery rate was maintained a total of \$80,000 in new revenue from 57,000 new rides would need to be generated. The resulting additional annual investment required by the Town would be \$170,000.

### Service Levels

The current service levels (days and hours) provide a good level of service during the primary hours of activity. One of the primary requests to improve Cobourg Transit received from stakeholders was to extend the service hours later into the evening to 9:30 or 10pm in order to serve the mall as well as the library and theatre which all close after the current end-of-service time of 7:10pm. This would have a cost of approximately \$85,400 annually.

### Specialized Transit/Wheels/Taxi

Specialized transportation is not intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation for individuals with disabilities but rather a system that can provide individuals with disabilities with the same public transportation service opportunities everyone else receives.

The current delivery framework with the contracted operation of accessible purpose-built bus Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 3:30pm supplemented by an accessible taxi service contract for weekday morning and evening service as well as weekend service, appears to be cost-effective as evidenced by the financial performance and is performing well. This delivery framework including the use of a contracted, non-dedicated supplemental taxi service is consistent with specialized transit industry norms.

Trip booking and scheduling should remain a centralized function for reasons which include accountability, the ability to maximize vehicle productivity and service efficiencies.

The use of a separate telephone number on weekends for trip reservation presents an unnecessary level of confusion to clientele. The weekday telephone number should continue to be used on weekends.

A review of the Taxi agreement and sample invoices suggests there are opportunities for improvement such as documentation with invoices, how fares are collected and reconciled.



Alternative payment schemes such as hourly or per-trip should be explored to ensure costs are consistent with demand and usage.

#### Eligibility and Certification of Users

The current eligibility and certification requirements and process for Wheels users needs to be improved to meet current accessibility and AODA requirements. Areas for improvement are included in this report along with a proposed amended user application form.

In addition, an appeal process needs to be prepared.

Overall, Cobourg should encourage the voluntary use of accessible fixed route services for those Wheels 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.

#### **Fares**

Transit fares have not been increased for some 10 years during which time operating costs and the cost of living have increased. As a result, it is reasonable that an increase in fares be considered. A proposed fare strategy together with revenue projections is included in this report which would gradually increase the cash fare, for example, from the current \$2.00 to \$2.50 over the next five years as well as the fare payment options.

#### Transfer Policy

The Town should review the transfer policy current in use to align with the core principle of transferring from one route to route to another to complete a single trip.

#### **Infrastructure**

##### Vehicles

The Town has a capital program for renewing the vehicle fleet and to add a third bus for future conventional transit service route expansion. The existing conventional transit vehicles are appropriate for the service and represent good value for money as well as offering comfort and convenience to users. For the Wheels service, the Town may wish to review Wheels ridership patterns to determine if a small bus is appropriate in future or an accessible van.

##### Bus Stops

The bus stop design could be improved to be more distinctive and include additional information about the transit services.

The number of bus stops and bus stop spacing is currently below industry standards. Additional stops should be installed to reduce walking distances and improve access to transit service. As well, stop locations should be reviewed to ensure accessibility and compliance with AODA standards by 2025. A program for making stops accessible is required.

##### Shelters

The current ratio of shelters to stops (1 to 10) is low based on industry trends and to attract users. The ratio should be doubled.

##### Terminal

More informative signage and transit information should be provided at the downtown terminal.

Improvement of the stop arrangements and customer amenities at the Northumberland Mall should be a priority.

### Marketing, Communications and Customer Information

The Town's transit marketing, communications and customer information activities and materials could be improved including the development of a new transit brochure, re-designation of the transit routes, and adoption of a dedicated "Transit Information" telephone line and availability of transit information "after hours". A marketing, communications and promotion plan should be developed as the basis for annual activities to promote transit along with a suitable budget and staff resources.

### **Budget**

A 5-year operating and capital budget forecast for the period 2014 to 2018 is provided within the report (chapter 6.8, Exhibit 14) and presents estimated costs for the various program changes and activities proposed within the study as well as estimated costs for transit expansion to three routes in 2018 as well as revenues associated with the suggested fare strategy.

### **Oversight and Management of Transit**

The current level of resources available for transit oversight and management is limited. In particular, the current arrangement where transit is one of multiple responsibilities of the Town Engineer makes it difficult for this staff person to fully carry out all of the tasks associated with managing the transit services.

Accordingly, additional resources should be made available to ensure that the Town's responsibilities regarding management, monitoring of the contractor, planning and responding to customer needs are effectively carried out. A number of activities and policy areas as suggested within the report (chapter 6.6)

### **Accessibility/AODA Compliance**

The Town must undertake the following actions regarding its Wheels service, accessibility practices and compliance with the AODA:

#### Wheels:

- Implement amended eligibility/certification process. Adopt revised application form;
- Adopt an appeals policy/process;
- Formalize free fare policy for attendants;
- Ensure that an Accessibility Plan has been prepared (with annual updates);
- Integration with conventional transit - Provide enhanced customer service to encourage voluntary use of accessible conventional transit services (travel training, trip planning, etc.); and
- Maintain arrangement with Century Transportation being responsible for all trip requests and scheduling (including weekends).

#### General:

- Ensure stops are routinely and reliably announced at all times. The preferred approach is to install a GIS-based voice and visual stop announcement system which the Town should consider.
- Ensure all transit staff including contractor staff have received training as proscribed in the AODA;
- Be able to provide customer service in alternate formats for persons with disabilities on request;

- Improve route designations to include key destinations and program bus destination signs to provide information on route destinations.
- Prepare a plan to make bus stops accessible; and
- Accept wheelchairs and scooters on conventional transit and ensure contractor staff for conventional transit are trained to accept and secure mobility devices.

#### Cost Reduction Alternatives

There are limited opportunities for reduce the municipal investment in transit given the existing cost structure, service commitments and service levels. The two primary methods to reduce costs would be to either **reduce the level of service** or **increase fares**.

Service level reduction alternatives include discontinuing Sunday or Statutory Holiday service as a potential cost savings of approximately \$43,000 annually, or curtailing early morning trips (estimates savings of \$22,100 annually) or eliminating evening service (estimated savings of \$46,450).

#### Recommendations

Based on the review and assessment of the Town's transit services, the following are the recommended actions for consideration by Town Council along with optional actions.

It is recommended that:

1. Transit service be expanded to the new areas of the Town in the northwest and northeast with the addition of a third transit route by 2017 at an approximate net annual cost of \$170,000 and that a route review study at an estimated cost of \$15,000 be first undertaken to develop the most appropriate route network;
2. The Town consider increasing transit fares by \$0.25 for the cash fare and a reduced amount for tickets and passes in 2014 as outlined in Exhibit 14 within this report and then adjusted progressively over the next 5 years;

And, further, that the Town:

3. Continue with a centralized trip reservation function for its accessible Wheels and Taxi services and with a single telephone number during all service hours;
4. Investigate and assess alternate costing methods such as hourly or per-trip rates for the taxi contract to ensure costs are consistent with demand;
5. Update the Eligibility and Certification requirements and process for Wheels users as required for compliance under the AODA as outlined in section 6.2.2 of this report including the adoption of the Wheels Application form provided in Appendix A;
6. Develop an Appeals Process for Wheels users for compliance with the AODA;
7. Formalize the existing transfer policy on the conventional service and institute a tracking system to determine the level of transfer use and, subject to the use of transfers and potential revenue risk, develop a more appropriate transfer policy as outlined in section 6.3 of this report;
8. Plan for the replacement of the spare conventional transit bus and the Wheels bus in 2015 with the latter vehicle size subject to further review of Wheels trip patterns and capacity requirements;
9. Purchase an additional low-floor conventional bus for expansion of the conventional service for delivery in 2016;
10. Consider increasing the number of bus stops in the Town as outlined in this report;

11. Consider increasing the number shelters over the next 5 years towards a target coverage of 20% of stops;
12. Introduce information signage and a transit information display at the downtown terminal;
13. Review the adoption of a new style of larger, distinctive bus stop signage to incorporate route numbers and bus arrival times;
14. Incorporate more descriptive information about the destination of each fixed route and program the conventional bus destination signs to also indicate the route destination and key areas served;
15. Investigate the introduction of an automated bus stop announcement system on the fixed route buses;
16. Develop a marketing and communications plan by the Communications Officer and upgrade the customer information materials including the route map and schedule brochure and adopt a dedicated telephone number for transit information including after-hours recorded information on transit;
17. 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;
18. Increase oversight and monitoring activities of the contractors to include regular meetings, inspection of buses;
19. 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;
20. Consider separating farebox vaults and cash receipts by route by day in order to improve reconciliation of fare revenue by route and day;
21. Consider increasing staff resource available for transit oversight and management to ½ FTE;
22. Undertake the required steps as outlined section 6.7 to ensure full compliance with the AODA including ensuring all staff involved in the delivery of transit services are trained as prescribed by the AODA; and
23. Prepare and implement a plan to make all bus stops accessible by 2024.

In the event that Council wishes to reduce its financial investment in transit it is recommended that:

Evening, Sunday and Statutory Holiday service be discontinued.



# 1 Introduction

The Town of Cobourg provides conventional and specialized public transit services seven days a week. It also co-funds a connecting service to the neighbouring town of Port Hope. Transit has been operating in the Cobourg for over 20 years and has expanded incrementally to meet the growing needs of the community and its residents. The last review of Cobourg's transit services was undertaken in 2006 and the recommended actions under the control of the Town were implemented.

The town has experienced new residential and commercial development growth in its northwest, north and northeastern quadrants with the result that there has been a steady increase in the population of the town over the past 15 years and with it, changing travel patterns and community profile. Along with this has come changes in the needs and expectations of town residents with regard to transportation and, particularly, public transit. At the same time, new public policy initiatives regarding accessibility represented by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) has placed increased focus on the public transit needs of the community.

In view of the history of public transit in the community, the Town recognizes the value that a strong public transit service brings to the community in terms of mobility, economic development and a sustainable lifestyle. On the basis of the growth and changing needs of the community, the Town decided that it was timely to undertake a review of its public transit services with the following objectives:

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

The over-arching objective of the review is to ensure that the Town's transit services are being delivered efficiently and meet the needs of the community.

The following report presents the results of a review of the Town's conventional and specialized transit services including an analysis of current operations and performance, a review of future needs, conclusions and recommendations for consideration by Town Council.

## 1.1 Study Methodology

The approach to this study has centered on working closely with Town staff to review and assess the existing conventional and specialized transit service, interviews with the contractors retained to operate the services, consultation with the community and key stakeholders to receive advice on community and resident needs, conducting a public open house and reviewing the trends in the development of the Town. Specifically, the following activities were undertaken:

- A review of the operating contract with Coach Canada and administration of the contract and oversight of the transit services by the Town;





- Meetings with key stakeholders individually as well as through meetings with established Town committees and a public open house;
- Asking resident about their attitudes regarding the public transit services and their priorities for improvements through surveys distributed on-board buses and through the Town website;
- A stop-by-stop weekday ride count for each transit route and a review of ridership data collected by the Town;
- A review of the specialized transit service including the accessible taxi operation with regard to eligibility criteria, registration, trip booking, dispatching and vehicle utilization;
- A review of the status of the Town's compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) for both the specialized and conventional transit services; and
- A review of the conventional and connecting transit routes and route schedules to ensure that they effectively serve the community and can be operated with a high degree of reliability.

## 2 Background

This section provides the background context for the review of the existing transit services and evaluation of future transit needs based on the Town's characteristics and future plans for population growth and development.

### 2.1 Town Characteristics

The Town of Cobourg is located in Northumberland County, situated on the north shore of Lake Ontario halfway between Toronto and Kingston. Founded in 1798, Cobourg is rich in heritage offering a vibrant downtown, sophisticated small town atmosphere and renowned waterfront that serves as a popular getaway destination.

Throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, the town invested heavily in purchasing property along the waterfront and beautifying the area. A boardwalk was developed to connect the harbour and large sandy beach while further pathways were created to encompass Victoria Park and the historic downtown. Because of this renewal and revitalization, many community activities now revolve in and around these spaces.



Development was historically centred in the area to the south of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railway corridors and the lake but has over the past 20 years expanded to the north.

The Town is served by VIA Rail which has a station on the CN main line at Division Street. The main traffic corridors within the town are the former Highway 2 (King Street), William Street and Elgin Street.

The primary centres of commerce and retail are the downtown and the Northumberland Mall at Elgin Street West and Prince of Wales Drive. Employment is generally located in the same areas as well as along Division Street.

Today, Cobourg has a population of approximately 18,500 and is attracting both young and retired people in view of its many amenities, heritage and activities. The demographic profile of the town indicates the following age breakdown based on the 2011 Census.

Exhibit 3: Population Age Distribution

AGE RANGE	% OF POPULATION
0 – 14	18.1
15 – 24	11.9
25 – 44	24.7
45 – 64	24.2
65 – 74	10.8
75+	10.3

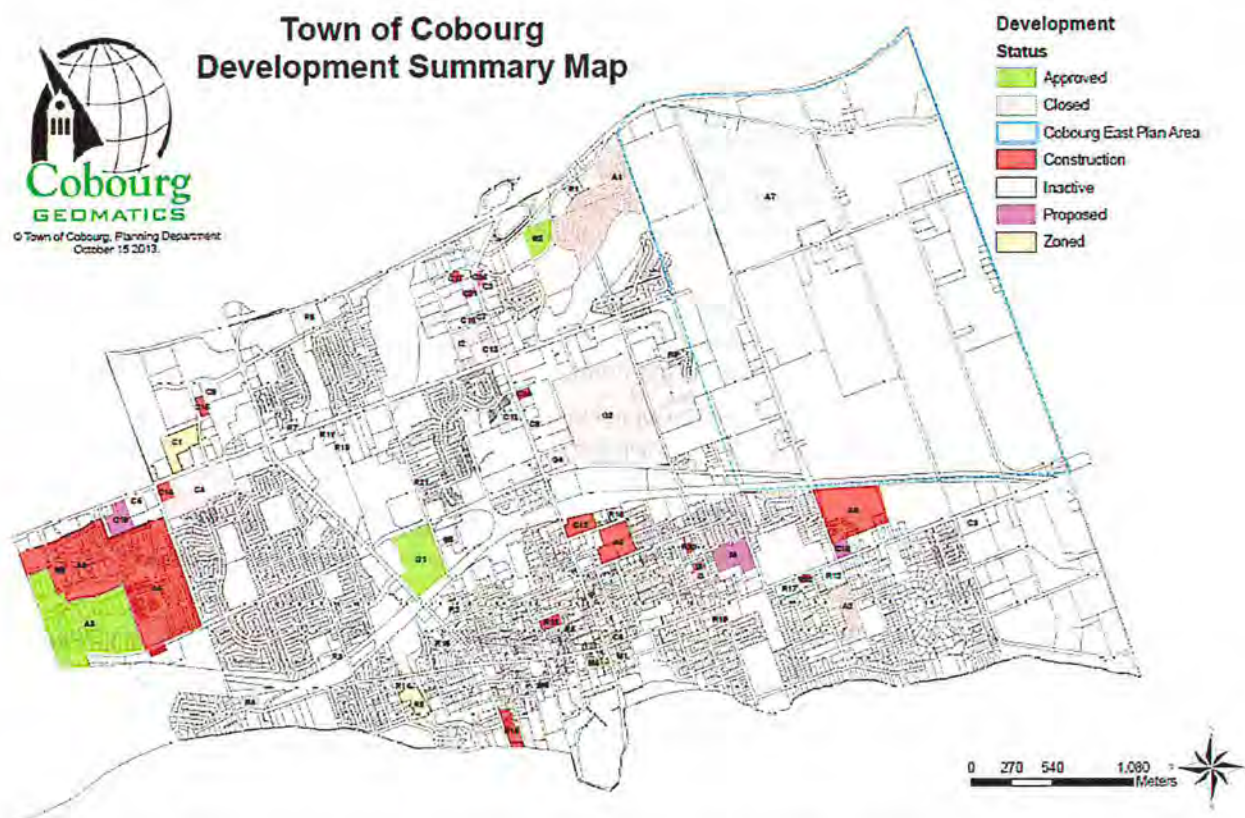


As can be seen from the above age summary, the percentage of the population over age 65 is 21.1%, which is higher than the provincial average. This number can be expected to increase in the future in line with similar trends in society and other communities.

## 2.2 Future Growth

While some re-development and intensification is occurring in the older part of the town south of the railway corridors and along the waterfront, the majority of future growth is planned to occur to the northwest (west of William Street) and in the northeast. The development in the northwest is active today while the development in the northeast is projected to occur over the next 5 to 10 years. Exhibit 2 illustrates the areas and status of development plans within the Town.

Exhibit 4: Summary of Development Plans



The Town's population is projected to increase over the next 30 years by approximately 50% to 27,800 by 2041, a modest average increase of 300 people per year. By 2031, the population will grow by 4,700 to 23,200.

On this basis, accommodating this rate of growth will be manageable and can be expected to have a limited impact on travel patterns and traffic levels in the Town. From a transit perspective, however, the key effect of the growth will be the addition of the new residential areas in the northwest and northeast which will require an expansion of transit service into those areas.

As a community which is appealing to older adults, amenities, including public transit, will become increasingly important to future residents and can be expected to be the basis for both attracting as well as retaining people within the community. This latter point can be significant to the overall economic health and vitality of the town.



## 3 Review of Existing Transit Services

This section reviews the Town's existing conventional and specialized transit services as the basis for preparing conclusions and recommendations to improve services for consideration by Town staff and Council.

Both of the Town's transit services are provided seven-days-a-week including Statutory Holidays. Monday to Friday service operates from 6:15 a.m. to 7:45 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.; and Sundays and Statutory Holidays, 8:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Each of the service is reviewed individually below.

### 3.1.1 Conventional Transit – Cobourg Transit

The conventional transit service, "Cobourg Transit", is a fixed route operation covering most of the town. Two routes, designated "1" and "2", connect most developed areas with the downtown and the Northumberland Mall. Each route operates hourly and takes one hour to complete each trip. The travel time from downtown to the Northumberland mall is 15 minutes as is travel to the east end (route 1) and northeast part of the City (route 2). One bus is required for service on each route resulting in two buses being in service all day. Exhibit 4 illustrates the two transit routes.



The conventional transit service is contracted to Pacific Western Transportation, doing business as "Century Transportation Limited", who recently purchased the local transportation company, Coach Canada (Trentway-Wagar Inc). Coach Canada had been operating the service for a number of years. The current operating contract, which took effect in January 2010, includes supervision of the service, provision of bus drivers, maintenance of the buses, fuel and insurance, and is for 5 years with provision for a further extension of five years. Thus, the initial five-year term requires a decision by the Town whether to extend the contract or not in 2014. The contract terms and conditions are typical for a small municipality and the contractor is responsible for all areas associated with the operation of the transit service including collecting fares. The Contractor is also required to provide a facility for operations and to maintain and clean the vehicles. This facility is located in Port Hope. All fare revenues are returned to the Town. Payment to the contractor is on the basis of service or revenue-hours and the rate is currently (2013) \$56.70 plus allowance for fuel escalation and a higher rate if company vehicles must be used.

#### Ridership

Transit use has been steadily increasing over the past six years following a brief decline in 2007. The following exhibit summarizes the ridership trend since 2006.

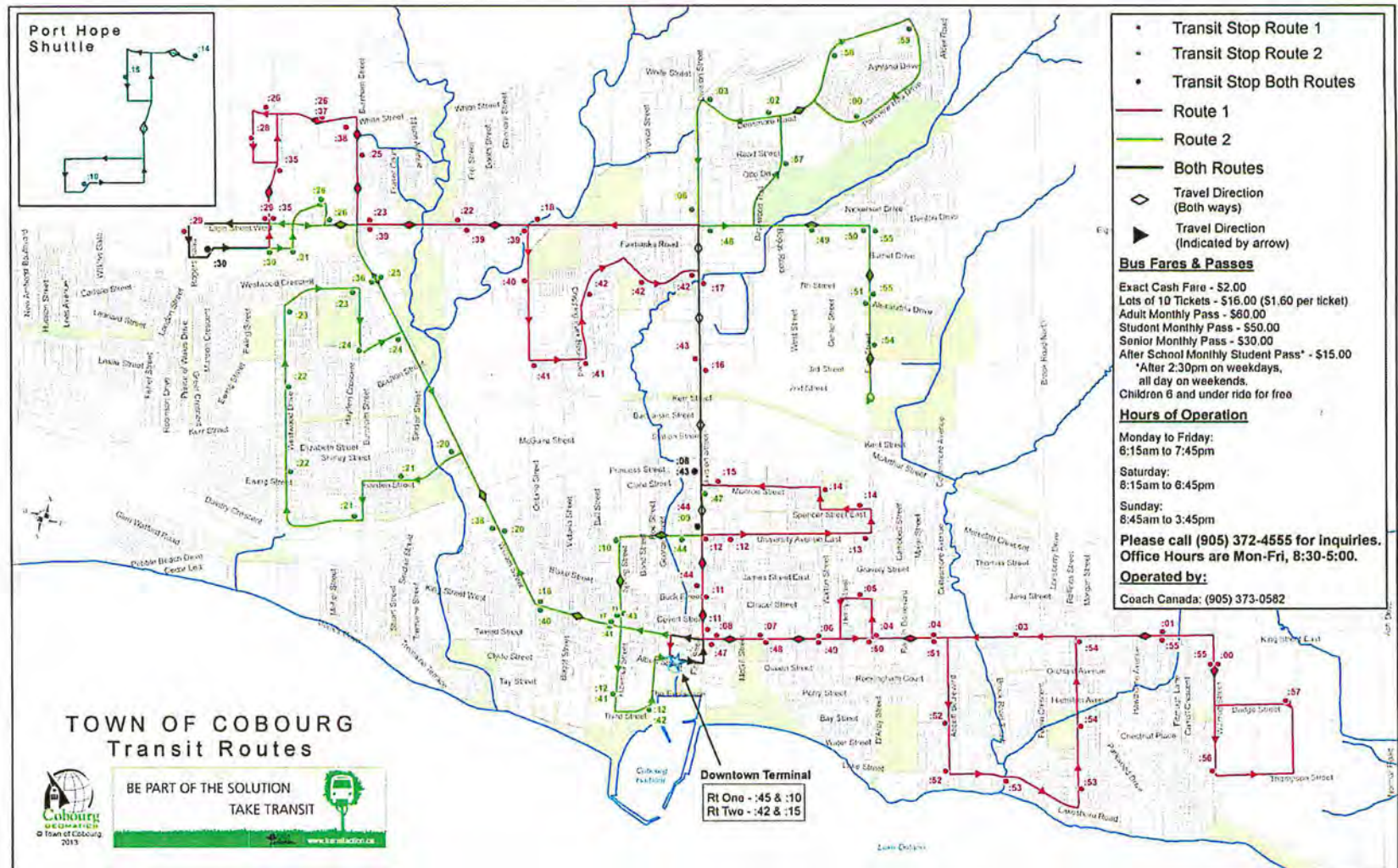
Exhibit 5: Cobourg Transit Ridership Trend 2006 - 2013

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Ridership	76,800	70,000	72,000	77,014	95,319	101,930	107,642	112,561

The Town collects ridership statistics on a daily basis by route but not on a trip by trip basis. Recording ridership on a trip by trip basis provides more insight into ridership levels and patterns



Exhibit 6: Cobourg Transit Route Map





and greatly assists in analyzing and planning the service. The Town has not regularly (annually or semi-annually) counted ridership on a stop-by-stop basis. This approach provides even greater insight into the pattern of transit use and productivity of the various areas served.

Exhibit 7: Ridership Levels by Time of Day

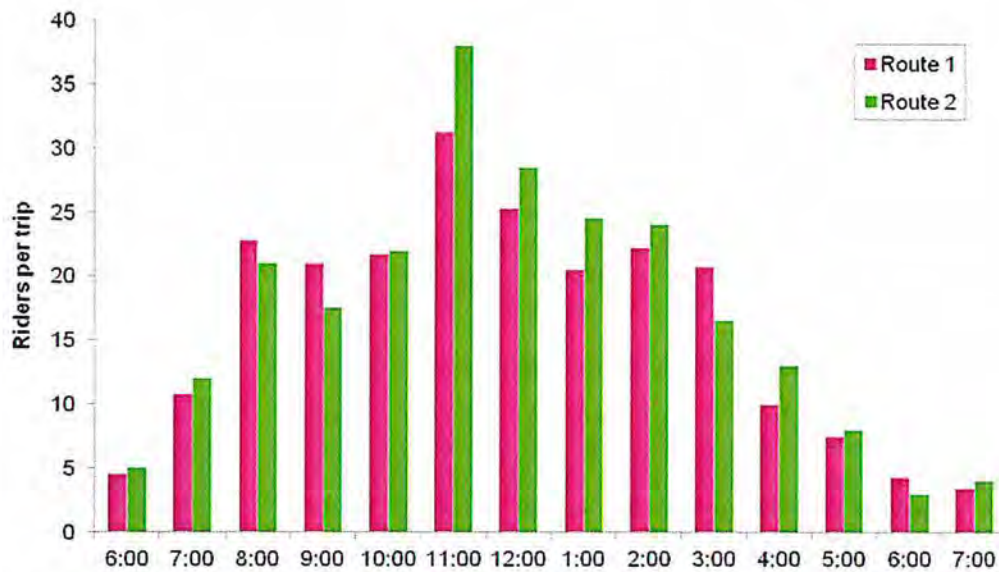
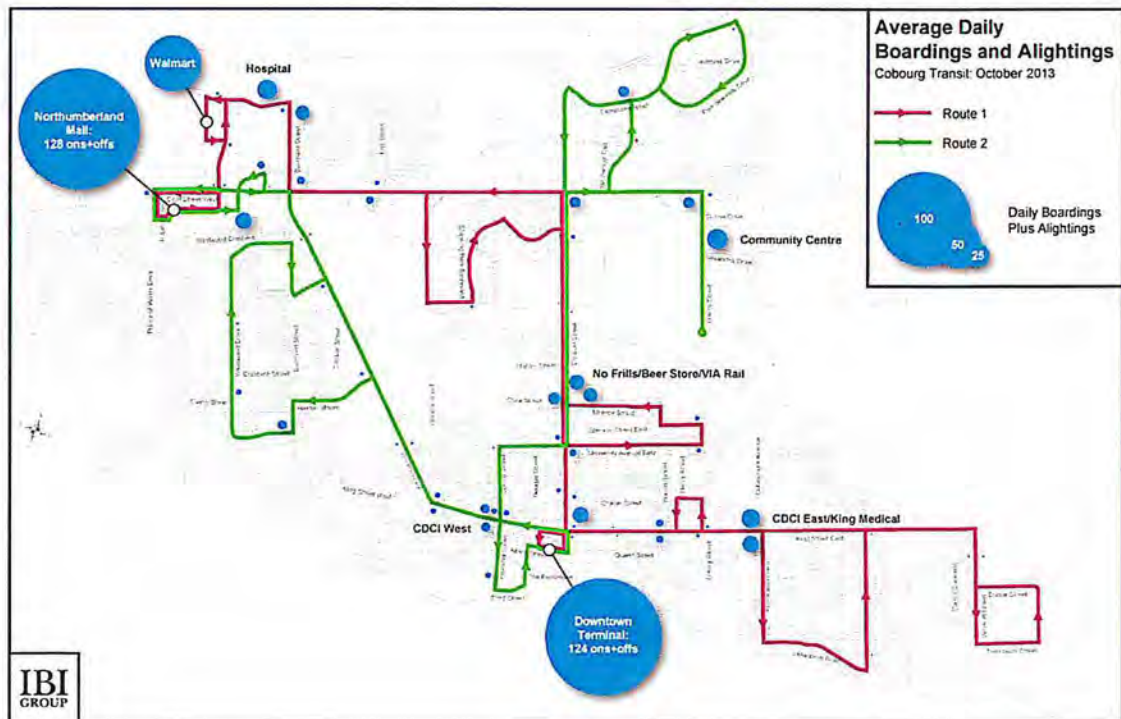


Exhibit 8: Summary of Ridership by Stop



In order to gather more detailed information on current ridership levels and patterns, a stop-by-stop count of people boarding and alighting at each stop and by trip for each route, was undertaken over two weeks in October 2013. The information gathered is illustrated in Exhibit 5 presenting a graph of the ridership levels by time of day (weekdays) for both routes, and Exhibit 6, the level of stop activity. As can be seen in Exhibit 5, the first trip of the day attracts an average of 4 to 5 riders on each route with the second trip increasing to 11-12. This pattern is typical for most transit systems.

Based on the ride count and as illustrated in Exhibit 5, the primary destinations and origins for transit users are the downtown and the Northumberland Mall. Secondary destinations or origins are Walmart, the hospital, CDCI East/King Medical and the Community Centre.

### Weekends and Holidays

The ridership levels for Saturdays, Sundays and Statutory Holidays were reviewed based on Town statistics and indicate that Saturday ridership is approximately 66% that of weekdays while Sundays is approximately 25%. However, the changing pattern of shopping on Sundays and trends in other municipalities indicates that Sunday is becoming more comparable to Saturday ridership levels. Statutory Holiday ridership is comparable to Sunday ridership levels.

### 3.1.2 Specialized Transit – Wheels and Taxi

To serve people with disabilities, a separate on-demand transit service is provided, called "Wheels" and operates during the same service hours as the conventional transit service. Wheels provides door-to-door, advanced booking, personalized service to people unable to access the conventional system due to a disability. "Wheels" is provided by a small, accessible bus during the daytime hours (8:00am to 3:30pm) and then an accessible taxi during early morning (6:15am to 8:00am), late afternoon and evening (3:30pm to 7:45pm) weekday hours and all day Saturday and Sunday.



The accessible Wheels and Taxi service serves approximately 470 registrants including approximately 230 wheelchair/scooter users. The number of registrants represents about 2.6% of the service area population. Users must pre-qualify to use the service based on criteria and medical certification by making application through the Town. Although the eligibility criteria, forms and process for determining eligibility have been in place for a number of years they require updating to reflect current practices.

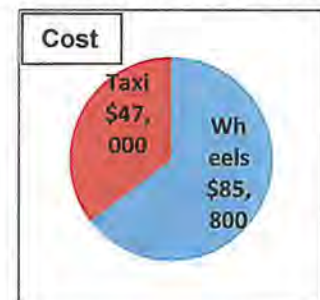
Both of the specialized services are contracted to private firms: the Accessible Wheels service using the small bus to Coach Canada (now Century Transportation), and the taxi component to VanAir Taxi, a local taxi operator.

The Coach Canada rate is \$42.62 per revenue-hour while the taxi contract is on the basis of the standard metered taxi rate plus \$3.00. Users pay the regular transit fare to the taxi operator which is then deducted from the taxi invoice to the Town.

For Wheels, the following are the key financial and operating characteristics:

#### Financial (2013 budget):

- Total: \$132,800.





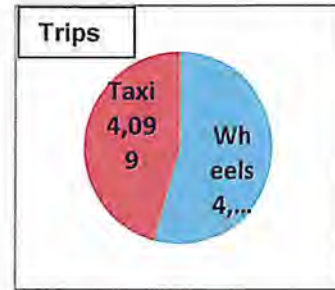
- Wheels Service: \$85,800.
- Taxi Wheels: \$47,000.

**Operating:**

- Annual number of trips: 8,972
  - Wheels Service: 4,873
  - Taxi Wheels: 4,099
- Wheels Service – annual hours: 1,914

**Financial & Operating Performance:**

- Cost per trip:
  - Total: \$14.80
  - Wheels Service: \$17.60
  - Taxi Wheels: \$11.47
- Cost per hour – Wheels Service: \$44.00
- Trips per hour – Wheels Service: 2.5 trips/hour
- Cost per capita: \$7.38
- Passengers per capita: 0.50



**3.1.3 Port Hope Shuttle**

Cobourg partners with the Town of Port Hope on a shared-cost basis to provide a transit connection between the two towns. This service, operated by the Town of Port Hope, serves the Northumberland Mall, the Hospital on White Street and Walmart, then travels via Elgin Street West to Port Hope. This service operates every hour Monday to Saturday from 7:00am to 7:10pm Monday to Friday and 9:00am to 3:10pm on Saturdays.

**3.1.4 Vehicles**

Cobourg has a fleet of four vehicles available for the conventional and daytime Wheels small bus transit services. Two are 32-foot low floor buses purchased in 2010 and were manufactured by Eldorado National which are capable of accommodating people with mobility restrictions and use mobility devices. One additional bus, a 2004 low-floor vehicle manufactured by Blue-Bird, is available as a spare. For the Wheels service, the Town has a small, 16 passenger 2006 Ford E450 bus which is typical for this type of operation.

As part of the operating contract, the contractor provides back-up vehicles if necessary. The Taxi operator utilizes its own accessible vans or cars, as required.

**3.1.5 Fares**

The fares for the two transit services are the same and are summarized in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 9: Transit Fare Structure

FARE CATEGORY	FARE
Cash – all users	\$2.00
Tickets – all users	10 for \$16.00
Monthly Passes	
Adults	\$60.00
Seniors	\$30.00
Students	\$30.00
Students after 2:30pm weekdays and weekends	\$15.00

Children under age 6 ride free. The cost of tickets represents a 20% reduction from the cash fare, which is a significant discount. Typical discounts are up to 15%. The Adult monthly pass cost equates to 30 rides per month at the full cash rate while the seniors and student rate is equivalent to a cash fare of \$1.00 per trip which is low.

Transfers, which are issued to permit users to use more than one route to complete their trip, are available upon the payment of the fare but are currently being issued on a person and location-specific basis and permit users to “stop over” to either complete their trip or make a return trip for one fare at either the downtown or Northumberland Mall stops. This is an unusual transfer arrangement.

For the Port Hope shuttle, Cobourg Transit users can transfer free of charge to the shuttle. From Port Hope, users pay a \$1.00 premium in addition to the Port Hope fare to transfer to a Cobourg Transit bus.

Cobourg’s transit fares were last increased approximately 10 years ago although the Student monthly pass was recently reduced from \$50.00 to \$30.00 as a result of a request from student representatives. The Town further amended the fare structure in 2013 by selling four sheets of transit tickets (40 tickets) for \$40.00, a significant reduction of \$24.00. It appears that this change may have contributed to a reduction in fare revenue compared to 2012 as revenue declined by approximately \$16,000.00.

On this basis, there is justification to consider an increase or adjustment in the fare rates. Transit fares should be reviewed and adjusted at regular intervals in order to both keep pace with inflation and maintain a reasonable cost sharing between user and community costs, but also to reinforce the value of the service to all stakeholders.

### 3.1.6 Budget

The Town’s investment in its transit services for 2013 is summarized in Exhibit 8.

The total investment for both the conventional and specialized transit services was \$723,585 excluding the capital reserve of \$86,810.00. Revenues totalled \$132,170.00 from fares and \$3,388.00 from the sale of advertising space on benches. After allocation of provincial gas tax of \$186,050.00, the net Town investment for 2013 was **\$488,787** or **\$26.42** per capita.

The level of transit service (revenue-hours per capita) provided is average for a community the size of Cobourg although the level of transit use (rides per capita) at 6.1 is low and indicates the potential for improvement. The contractor rate for the conventional and Wheels service is very favourable and the Town is fortunate to have a long term contract to rely on. The Town

administrative cost of \$19,023 is modest, representing approximately 2.6% of total cost. More typical administrative costs can be in the range of 3 to 5%.

Exhibit 10: Annual Transit Operating Budget and Town Investment (2013)

ITEM	TOTAL
<b>Ridership:</b>	
Conventional Transit	103,080
Wheels (Bus and Taxi)	9,481
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,561</b>
<b>Revenue-Hours:</b>	
Cobourg Transit	8,726
Wheels (excluding Taxi)	1,914
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,640</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Fares (cash, tickets, passes)	\$132,170.00
Advertising (benches)	\$3,388.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$135,558.00</b>
Average Fare Per Passenger	\$1.21
<b>Operating Costs</b>	
Operating Contracts -	\$658,162.00
Town Administration & Misc	\$19,023.00
Advertising and Promotion	\$2,500.00
Insurance	\$18,500.00
Facility Maintenance	\$10,400.00
Transit Study	\$15,000.00
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$723,585.00</b>
Capital (Vehicle replacement reserve)	\$86,810.00
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$810,395.00</b>
Revenues	\$135,558.00
Provincial Gas Tax	\$186,050.00
<b>Net Total Municipal Investment</b>	<b>\$488,787.00</b>
Operating cost/hour	\$68.00
Net Cost Per Capita	\$26.42
Revenue-Hours Per Capita (conv. Transit)	0.48
Rides Per Capita (conv. Transit)	6.1
Cost recovery	18.7%



### 3.1.7 Bus Stops, Shelters and Terminal

#### Bus Stops

For the conventional transit service, there are approximately 98 stops located throughout the Town. This represents a stop spacing of 400 metres based on the estimate length of each route of 21 kilometres. Bus stop spacing is typically 200 metres or less while 400 metres is typically the walking distance to a stop from the surrounding service area. The current stop spacing distance indicates that there should be more stops to improve access to transit by reducing the walking distance. The Town currently installs additional stops and shelters on a request basis.

The bus stop signs are of a standard design and size featuring a pictograph of a bus and the words "Bus Stop". As such, the stops are not readily recognizable due to the white background while the location and installation arrangements of many of the signs are easily visible to people approaching the stop from any direction. Bus stop signs should be double-sided and mounted to provide maximum visibility from any direction. Also, there is limited information about the route serving the stop although some stops do feature an over-sticker which provides a customer information number for people to call.



#### Shelters

Shelters for transit users are located at some 10 locations throughout the town which represents a ratio of 1 shelter per 10 stops. Many towns and cities are targeting a coverage rate of 25% to 30% as a way to increase the attractiveness of transit. The shelter designs are of a generally standard size and a mixture of standard and heritage styles. None of the shelters have advertising space.

Benches are provided at a number of stops by an advertising firm who pays revenue of approximately \$3,500 annually to the Town.

#### Terminal

A terminal, or central transfer point, for the transit system has been established in the downtown area on Albert Street adjacent to the waterfront park. The terminal includes a building with a waiting area and washrooms. While the presence of the terminal and building is a positive step for transit users in that it provides a dedicated place for buses to meet and transit users to transfer between routes, it is, however, somewhat remote from the main downtown core activity area and is therefore not readily visible. As such, it reduces the profile of transit in the community. A preferred location would have been either be on King Street itself or immediately adjacent to King Street such as on Third Street.

For the building itself, there is no signage to indicate that it is the transit terminal other than the presence of two bus stop signs. As well, there is also no transit information available. A large route map and schedule display with contact information would be helpful.

### 3.1.8 Marketing, Communications and Customer Service

Marketing and communications materials are available to inform the public about the transit services and consist of a route map brochure supported by information on the Town's website. Both sources provide limited information about the transit service and related policies. The amount and presentation of the information and content could be improved from a graphics

standpoint and should provide more information about route schedules and hours of operation. Some of the information provided on the brochure is conflicting.

The schedule lists all of the bus stops, which is helpful, but is difficult to understand and relate to the flow of the routes.

Brochures are available at Victoria Hall, WalMart near the Northumberland Mall, the Cobourg Public Library and on the bus. It does not appear that transit information is available at the important Northumberland Mall.

The bus routes are designated as "1" or "2" but with no indication of destination or area being served. Since the buses are equipped with electronic destination signs, considerably more information could be presented to help inform transit users about the route destinations as well as other activities such as special events.

The information on the website is easily accessed from the Town's main page although the information on the transit page contains conflicting information about child fares and the description of Cobourg Transit as combining reliability of fixed route service with dependability of "door-to-door" service, which is not accurate. There is also no reference to the transfer policy.

Personalized service for persons requiring assistance in using or understanding how to use Cobourg Transit is available through the Engineering Department telephone number but only during office hours Monday to Friday. No information is provided after office hours even though the transit service operates early morning, evenings and on weekends.

Although transit users or enquiries can be made via email, it does not appear that the Town is active in other social media, such as Facebook or Twitter. These sources help to engage the public and raise the profile of transit. While the concept of social media may seem inconsistent with the profile of Cobourg as a retirement community, an increasing percentage of older adults are familiar with and use social media. Of course, younger adults and teenagers in the community do use social media to a greater extent and setting up these resources would appeal to them.

The Town is intending to more actively promote transit through its on-staff Communications Officer resource as well as through social media.

### **3.1.9 Accessibility**

Accessible public services are a legislated standard and include public transit. Municipalities are required to have an Accessibility Plan covering all municipal services outlining how municipal services are being made accessible. For transit, the plan should address how the Town will ensure that the services are being made accessible according to the AODA and is to be updated annually and should be available on the Town website. The Town does not appear to have an Accessibility Plan.

Notwithstanding the availability of a specific accessibility plan, the Town has progressed to make its transit services accessible in terms of the purchase of low floor buses and through the continuing provision of the Wheels specialized service. Other areas to be addressed as part of the overall accessibility plan include:

- Customer service and availability of information in alternate formats;
- Training of staff both within the Town and the contractors in the AODA requirements for customer service;
- Announcing stops on fixed route buses;
- Ensuring fares and fare media are equal between the two services;
- Ensuring that service hours are equal;

- Developing a plan to make all conventional transit bus stops accessible; and
- Ensuring that destination sign information on the fixed route buses provides an indication of the route and key destinations.

A number of these areas require further action by the Town to ensure accessibility requirements are met including stop announcements, staff training, bus destination sign information and a plan for bus stop accessibility.

### **3.1.10 Town Oversight and Administration**

Responsibility for oversight of the Town's transit services rests with the Manager of Engineering within the Town's corporate structure. Oversight includes, among other activities, the following activities:

- Planning and general management of the services;
- Budget development, approval and administration;
- Developing and updating transit policies;
- Administration of the operating contracts (conventional and specialized) including approval of invoices;
- Monitoring the performance of the contractor to ensure compliance and satisfactory service delivery;
- Responding to and investigating (as necessary) customer feedback;
- Location, installation and repair of bus stops and shelters; and
- Investigation of relevant regulatory and public policy issues related to public transit (such as the AODA) and development of applicable action plans.

Oversight also includes interacting with other Town departments and external agencies (Port Hope, MTO, Metrolinx) to ensure the Town's transit services meet customer expectations and legal requirements.

The Manager of Engineering is the primary contact and person responsible for transit but has a wide range of other duties and responsibilities associated with the position in addition to transit with the result that the amount of time available for transit oversight is limited.

The Engineering Department does respond to enquiries for transit information which is handled by a support staff person.



## 4 Stakeholder Consultation

To gather input from transit users and the community at large regarding their opinions and needs about transit, a survey was distributed on board the conventional transit routes for one day and posted on the Town's website for two weeks for people to access and complete by computer "on line". In addition, a public information meeting was held on November 6<sup>th</sup> and selected interviews held with the contractors and an individual who uses the transit services.

### 4.1.1 On Board and Web Survey

For the on-board and web surveys, a total of 154 responses were received: 103 hard copies (completed on the buses); and 51 online (web survey). A copy of the survey is provided below.

Exhibit 11: Transit Survey



#### PASSENGER SURVEY

*Dear Transit Rider—You can help us improve transit by answering the following questions. Please, fill out only one survey & return this form to the driver. Thank you!*

**1. What is the main purpose of your trip today?**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work                | <input type="checkbox"/> Attending High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure outing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Dental care | <input type="checkbox"/> Attending College     | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal reasons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sightseeing           | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to VIA    |

**2. Where is your destination? (main cross streets, neighbourhood, company etc.)**

**3. Where did you start your trip? (main cross streets, neighbourhood, company, etc.)**

**4. What is the main reason you chose transit today?**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer to ride the bus | <input type="checkbox"/> No car was available | <input type="checkbox"/> Save money          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not able to drive      | <input type="checkbox"/> Help the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> No driver's licence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____            |   |  |

**5. What do you think of the following elements of Cobourg Transit service?**

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Frequency of Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directness of Routes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Operating Hours (Start/End)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comfort	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Method of Fare Payment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seat Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Driver Friendliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of Route/Schedule Info.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Fare Cost: Are current fare prices...?**

- ☐ Too low      ☐ Reasonable      ☐ Too high

**7. Are maps and schedules easy to understand?**      ☐ Yes      ☐ No

**8. Tell us the best ways to improve transit service! (rank 1 to 6—from high to low)**

More frequent service in: the mid-day \_\_\_\_\_

More frequent service in: the evenings \_\_\_\_\_

More frequent service on: weekends \_\_\_\_\_

Improved customer amenities and accessibility \_\_\_\_\_

Improved service to VIA Rail station \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**9. How often do you ride the bus?**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 days a week   | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 days a week       | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 days a week                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 days a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than once/week | <input type="checkbox"/> This is my 1 <sup>st</sup> trip |

**10. Are you male or female?**      ☐ Male      ☐ Female

**11. How old are you?**      ☐ 15 or under      ☐ 16-18  
☐ 19-24      ☐ 25-44      ☐ 45-64      ☐ 65 or over

**12. Please use this space to suggest other ways we might improve bus service.**

*Thank you for your time and effort!*

As can be noted, the surveys asked respondents to indicate their reasons for using transit, trip purpose, overall opinion and satisfaction with the service in a number of categories, and suggestions on how to improve transit.

### **Trip Purpose**

The primary trip purposes were: Shopping with 72 respondents; followed by Personal/Leisure - 62; Work - 40; Medical/Dental - 36; School - 9; and Other - 16.

### **Reasons for Choosing Transit**

The reasons for choosing to use transit were quite varied and represented the full range of reasons from not being able to drive, to helping the environment:

- Not able to drive - 49
- No car available - 44
- No driver's licence - 34
- Save money - 20
- Prefer to ride the bus - 14
- Help environment - 13
- Other - 7

These responses indicate that of the 181 responses received (respondents gave multiple answers) 134 could be considered captive riders with 47 being choice riders (people who have a choice whether to use transit or not). The number of choice riders, those who indicated that they prefer to ride the bus and choose to ride transit to help the environment, totals 27% and is quite high which reinforces the value of transit in the community.

### **Opinions of the Service**

Overall, respondents were pleased with the service provided including the frequency of service, operating hours, travel time, punctuality, directness, comfort, ease of transferring between buses and availability of information. Each of these areas was rated as "Good".

People rated as "excellent" the safety of service, cleanliness of the buses, method of fare payment, seat availability (ability to be seated), driver friendliness: Excellent

Fares were rated as "reasonable".

### **Suggestions for Improving Transit**

Respondents provided the following suggestions:

1. Improved service in the evenings (later hours);
2. Improved service in midday (more direct or more frequent service); and
3. Improved service on weekends (earlier and later especially on Sundays).

Other suggestions received were:

- Ensure buses arrive on time (and especially not early)
- Bus routes should share the same stops to make transfers easier at certain locations;
- Service should be extended to match mall/library hours (ie. later evening service);
- Strollers and shopping carts often crowd the front of the bus and make reaching a seat difficult; and
- Would appreciate real-time information about bus arrival times.



The most frequent comment for improving transit service was to operate the service later in the evenings. There were several comments about commencing service earlier in the morning.

#### **4.1.2 Public Open House Meeting**

A public open house meeting was held on November 6<sup>th</sup> at Victoria Hall to answer questions and receive input from the public about the transit services. This meeting was preceded by a meeting with several transit users and the Town's environmental and accessibility committees. Display materials included information on key characteristics of the transit service, a route map, questions about the importance of transit in the community and questions about how to improve transit service.

Comments received included strong support for transit in the community, a comment that it should expand to new areas and provide later evening service as well as that the routes be realigned to be more direct. Several comments were received about ensuring that the service was more accessible for people using mobility devices and ensuring that bus drivers announced stops.

#### **4.1.3 Personal Interviews**

In addition to the surveys and public information meeting, meetings were held with the staff of Coach Canada, the proprietor of Van Air Taxi, and a local resident, Mr. Jerry Ford, a disability advocate and user of the Wheels service. These individuals supported the value of public transit in the community and the specialized service in particular, and supported improvements and expansion of the service. The proprietor of Van Air Taxi provided his perspective and suggestions regarding improvements to trip reservation and dispatching practices for the Wheels service which are incorporated in the conclusions and recommendations. Coach Canada staff provided information about the operation and management of the services and feedback from bus drivers about transit needs which have been considered in the assessment of the services.

#### **4.1.4 Field Observations**

Trips on the conventional routes were also taken to observe operations, driver conduct, ridership patterns and the overall functionality of the routes.

For these trips, the driver handled the vehicle well and courteously, waiting for users to sit before pulling away from a stop, answered questions from users. However, the driver did not announce stops, as is required by the AODA legislation and human rights directives, an issue which must be addressed. Continuing to rely on drivers to call stops is not effective especially if new, temporary or replacement drivers (in the case of illness or other absences occur) are utilized. The most effective way, therefore, is to adopt an automated stop announcement system using GPS technology which is the direction followed by other transit systems. A stop announcement system incorporates on-board LED variable message signs to display the next stop as well as interior and exterior speakers for "announcing" the next stop.

Persons observed using transit represented a broad cross-section of transit users, user characteristics and trip purposes. Riders included young adults, parents with young children, middle age adults and seniors. Several riders utilized mobility devices (walkers) while several younger riders also had strollers and one senior had a small (fold-up) shopping cart. The majority of riders were destined to either the downtown or the mall although several students boarded and alighted at the catholic high school. Several others were destined for medical clinics.

Bus stop placement and spacing indicated opportunities for improvement. A number of stops were located such that there was infringement on the stop area by neighbouring car parking spaces, especially in the core area, while other stops would present challenges to persons with

mobility restrictions and using mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters from using the conventional service which is in conflict with AODA requirements. Stop spacing was excessive in most areas along the routes indicating a requirement for additional stops in order to improve both access to and convenience in using the service.

The field observations provide useful input into assessing the performance of the transit system and identifying opportunities for improvement.

## 5 Peer Review

To place the performance of Cobourg's transit services in context and as a potential indication of opportunities for improvement in terms of ridership potential and costs, the following exhibits present a summary of the key statistics for peer transit services in Cobourg's population grouping (<50,000) based on 2012 Canadian Urban Transit Association statistics. The peer systems are listed on page G17 of the CUTA publications for conventional transit and page G16 for specialized transit. In view of the population range involving larger municipalities with generally higher ridership and performance statistics, the following statistics should be viewed as a comparative guide only.

Exhibit 12: Peer Review – Conventional Transit

STATISTIC	COBOURG	PEER GROUP
Population	18,500	<50,000
Adult Cash Fare	\$2.00	\$2.71
Adult Monthly Pass	\$60.00	\$64.26
Average Fare	\$1.41	\$1.70
Rides/Capita	5.8	14.42
Rev-Hrs/Capita	0.48	0.69
Rev/Cost	21%	34%
Direct Operating Cost	\$66.29	\$93.22
Net Cost/Capita	\$25.42	\$30.53

Notwithstanding the population range, Cobourg's key performance indicators compare favourably with the peer group. The fares are lower as is the average fare and the operating cost. The cost recovery and net cost is comparable to the average of the group which indicates that the lower cost to deliver the service is consistent with the lower fares. However, the level of service provided (Rev-hrs/capita) is lower as is the ridership level (rides/capita). Although there is a direct relationship between the level of service and ridership, it appears that there may be the opportunity to increase ridership further. This would require a detailed review and assessment of the route structure.

For Cobourg's Wheels and Taxi specialized service, the following exhibit presents operating characteristics for Cobourg relative to peer properties in a population group of less than 50,000 people.

Exhibit 13: Wheels/Specialized Transit Peer Comparison

	COST PER PASSENGER	COST PER CAPITA	PASSENGER (TRIPS) PER CAPITA	REGISTRANTS PER CAPITA	TRIPS PER REGISTRANT
Cobourg's Accessible Wheels and Taxi Service	\$14.80	\$7.38	0.50	0.026	19.1
Peer Group (<50,000)	\$22.60	\$10.03	0.50	0.02	23.7



This peer analysis indicates that the Wheels/Taxi service cost per passenger is 34.5% less than the Population Group average. The Town's investment in specialized transit as measured as the cost per capita, of \$7.38, is approximately twenty-six percent less than that of the peer group average of \$10.03. The number of trips and registrants per capita is identical to the peer group average while the utilization per registrant is marginally less. However, overall, the Wheels service performance is commendable.

## 6 Assessment of Transit Service Needs

Based on the review of the existing transit services, their performance, ridership levels, needs of the community, interviews and feedback from stakeholders, the peer review, accessibility needs, infrastructure status (vehicles, stops, shelters, terminal) and a review of Town oversight and administration summarized in the previous section, forms the basis for the following assessment of needs and proposed improvements to the Town's transit services.

### 6.1 Conventional Transit

#### 6.1.1 Ridership

Transit ridership has been increasing steadily over the years, as summarized in Exhibit 12, and can be attributed to population growth as well as the demographics of the community and likely, a greater awareness and interest in using public transit. As indicated in the peer review, there appears to be the potential to increase transit use further which can be achieved with increases in service levels and hours of service as well as improvements in the route network. Additionally, and not to be under-estimated, is the impact of promoting transit use on ridership. Highlighting the value of transit in the community, increasing knowledge and availability of transit and raising the profile of the transit service all can contribute to a positive attitude and increases in ridership.

A target ridership level of 8 rides per capita or 128,000 trips should be a short term (5 year) objective for Cobourg. At the same time, the transit service needs to keep pace with growth in the community and should be progressively extended to the new areas in the west and northeast over the short term.

Exhibit 14: Cobourg Transit Ridership Trend 2006 - 2013

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Ridership	76,800	70,000	72,000	77,014	95,319	101,930	107,642	112,561

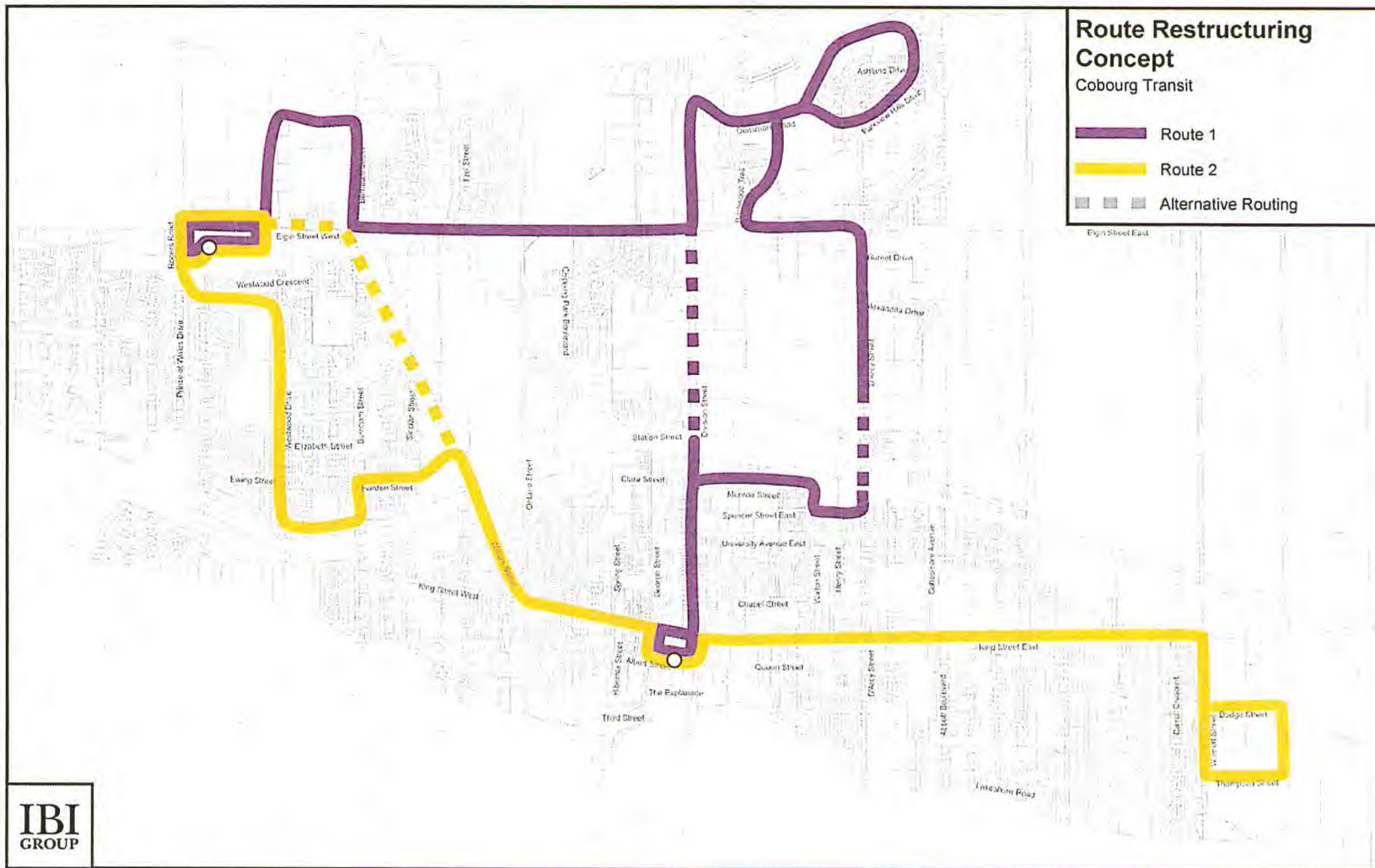
#### 6.1.2 Route Network

As noted above, a higher level of transit ridership should be achievable within the existing service area. In this regard, the existing route network does not appear to adequately serve the town and the dominant travel patterns. There is duplication of service between the two routes along Division Street and a lengthy indirect connection from the residential area in the northeast to the mall, the primary travel destination. Therefore, it is suggested that consideration be given to re-structuring the routes to provide a defined east-west link along the King-William corridor and defined north-south/east-west link along the Division and Elgin corridors between the mall and the downtown. The following exhibit illustrates the suggested route re-alignment.

#### Future Needs

Notwithstanding the suggested re-structuring of the routes above, as the town grows to the west and to the northeast, it will be necessary to again re-structure the routes and add a third route simply because it will not be feasible to cover the new areas with two routes. This re-structuring may be required within the next 5 years depending on the pace of new development and Town staff will need to monitor this timing of new developments in order to determine when the additional route may be required. The third route can be expected to require an additional bus. This would increase the transit system's revenue-hours of service by 50% or 4,400 hours annually and represent an operating cost increase of approximately \$250,000. If the existing cost recovery rate (32%) was maintained, a total of \$80,000 in new revenue from 57,000 new

Exhibit 15: Concept for Reconfigured Route Network





rides would need to be generated. The resulting additional annual investment required by the Town would be \$170,000.

### 6.1.3 Service Levels

The current service levels (days and hours) provide a good level of service during the primary hours of activity. However, one of the primary suggestions, or requests, to improve Cobourg Transit received from stakeholders was to extend the service hours later into the evening to 9:30 or 10pm in order to serve the mall as well as the library and theatre which all close after the current end-of-service time of 7:10pm. Extension of service would require an additional 2.5 hours of service per route per day, or approximately 1,525 hours annually. This would have a cost of approximately \$85,400 annually. A cost recovery of 11% to 15% could be expected on the basis of an estimated 12,000 additional trips taken on transit annually.

## 6.2 Specialized Transit/Wheels/Taxi

Wheels and Taxi specialized transportation services provide an invaluable service for the Town's elderly and disability communities. It remains imperative that there exists, however, non-discriminatory access to accessible conventional services where available with Wheels and Taxi services acting as a "safety net" for people who cannot use Cobourg's accessible 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 receives.

The current delivery framework with Coach Canada operation of accessible purpose-built buses Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 3:30pm, supplemented by an accessible taxi service contract for weekday morning and evening service as well as weekend service, appears to be cost-effective as evidenced by the financial performance and performing well. This delivery framework including the use of contracted, non-dedicated supplemental taxi service is consistent with specialized transit industry norms.

While the current operation arrangement of bus and taxi is cost-effective, the following observations are provided to improve service and enhance governance.

#### **Trip Booking and Scheduling Responsibilities:**

- Consistent with industry norms for the operation of specialized transit services, the Wheels and Taxi Service requires advanced booking for all trips taken by its registered users. All reservations (up to 24 hours in advance) are made with Coach Canada.
- Trip booking and scheduling should remain a centralized function for reasons which include accountability, the ability to maximize vehicle productivity and service efficiencies.
- Current challenges of responsibility for "missed trips" and other qualitative considerations may be addressed through provisions in contract documents including those identified below.
- Currently, there is a separate number on weekends for trip reservation. This presents an unnecessary level of confusion to clientele. The weekday telephone number should continue to be used on weekends. From the contractor's standpoint, they can arrange to "call forward" the weekday number for consistency. This should be achievable especially with the supplementary charge by the contractor for handling reservations on weekends.

### **Accessible Taxi Service Contract:**

A review of the November 21, 2008 Agreement and sample invoices suggests the following opportunities for improvement and general observations:

- The documentation accompanying invoices should be improved with more detail added to invoices to identify the meter rate, premium rate (\$3.00), fare received and the net amount being invoiced to the Town for each trip. Also, it is not clear how taxi invoices are reconciled and charges validated.
- Alternate payment schemes such as hourly rates or on a per-trip basis (possibly with the use of prescribed zones) should be explored in order to ensure costs are consistent with demand. In particular, the use of the metered rate for taxi compensation detracts from the shared-ride nature of specialized transit and further fragments the market and ability to realize productivity improvements for the accessible taxi service.
- Performance-based criteria should be incorporated into the taxi service agreement or contract.
- Reporting requirements should be clearly articulated in the agreement along with improved explanation of the billing process, details on fare collection and reconciliation and other reporting requirements related to trips which are or are not permitted.

### **6.2.1 Integration with Conventional Transit**

Overall, Cobourg should encourage the voluntary use of accessible fixed route services for those Wheels 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.

### **6.2.2 Eligibility and Certification of Wheels Users**

The current eligibility and certification requirements and process for Wheels users needs to be improved to meet current accessibility and AODA requirements.

#### **Eligibility**

The specialized transit service is 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 Wheels or Taxi services.

It is therefore critical that Wheels 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 Cobourg 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 also important to recognize the transport needs of persons with a cognitive disability or mental illness where functional limitations may be less straightforward to assess. An amended application form shall reflect the requirements of those with a non-physical functional limitation and shall reflect 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. 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.

A draft Wheels Application form is provided in Appendix A for consideration and use by the Town. It would be appropriate to have it reviewed by the Town's solicitor and Human Resource officer.

### **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, Wheels 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 Cobourg's conventional transit to frequent user (of conventional transit) programs when participants may accumulate points redeemable for free travel or other rewards.

### **Appeal Process**

The AODA/Integrated Accessibility Standards requires that transportation providers establish a process to appeal decisions if they are denied access to specialized transit service. The following is a recommended appeals procedure for persons whose applications for Wheels eligibility are denied or for persons who have received suspension notices for other reasons.

An individual may file an appeal when the Town denies specialized transit service for any of the following reasons:

- Eligibility.
- Suspension resulting from excessive No-Shows or Late Cancellations.
- Suspension for Seriously Disruptive Behaviour.

The Town must inform an applicant or current customer of a decision to deny eligibility status or to suspend service by letter. Individuals then have 60 days from the date of the letter informing them of an eligibility denial or service suspension to request an appeal. Request for an appeal must be sent in writing to the Town.

The Town then establishes an independent Appeal Panel to review decisions respecting eligibility.

Once the request for an appeal is received, the Appeal Panel will convene. The Appeal Panel is to issue a final written decision within 30 days of the appeal hearing. Wheels will not provide



service to individuals who are pursuing an eligibility appeal. However, if the Appeal Panel has not made a decision within 30 days after the hearing, temporary service will be provided. This temporary service will continue until a decision on the appeal is reached.

Upon appeal for a No-Show suspension, Wheels service will be provided pending the appeal; suspension of service will not begin until the appeals process is complete. If the decision is not made within 30 days of the completion of the appeal hearing, the individual appealing the suspension shall be granted service until a final decision has been reached.

Persons requesting an appeal will be notified in writing of the time, date and location of the appeal hearing. Individuals are encouraged to attend the appeal hearing although attendance is not mandatory. If individuals requesting appeals cannot attend, they may have another person(s) represent them at the hearing. If the individual or a designated representative is not present at the appeal hearing, the Appeal Panel will base its decision on the documentation submitted by the Town.

Users who exhibit behaviour that the Town documents as being seriously disruptive will be suspended from receiving Wheels services until the Appeal Panel reviews the suspension. Passengers who exhibit behaviour that is violent or illegal will be denied specialized transit services. An Appeals Panel will review an incident of violent or illegal behaviour upon requests, but will only act to verify that such behaviour occurred. Verification of violent or illegal behaviour will result in denial of Wheels service.

In summary, the foregoing is intended to:

- Preserve the integrity of Wheels and Taxi 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 Town 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 requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards; and
- Be fiscally responsible and accountable.

**Wheels Services:  
shared ride public  
transit for those  
unable to use  
accessible public  
transit**

### 6.3 Fares and Fare Policies

Transit fares have not been increased for some 10 years during which time operating costs and the cost of living have increased. As a result, it is reasonable that the transit fare rates should be adjusted to reflect the time since the last increase and the cost trends. On a go-forward basis, transit fares should be reviewed regularly and adjustments (increases or other changes) made no less often than every two years nor greater than four or five years. Not adjusting fares regularly can negatively affect maintaining a reasonable balance between the cost paid by users and the investment in the service by the Town and ratepayers leading to a situation where a major increase in fares may be required to rebalance the equation. At the same time, keeping fares low, while helpful in encouraging greater use of transit, does not help to adequately fund needed improvements in the service to keep it viable and attractive or reinforce the value of the service. Low fares lead to a negative opinion of the transit service.

In considering fare adjustments, particularly where alternatives to cash fares such as tickets and passes are available, two approaches are possible:

1. Increase all fares and fare media by an the same amount or percentage each time fares are adjusted; or
2. Increase cash fares by one amount one year then increase the fare media only the next time.
3. Increase cash fares by one amount and the fare media by a lesser amount one year, then increase the fare media by the remaining amount the following time.

The last approach is preferred as it allows fare revenues and the fare increases to be phased over several years thereby providing a more "incremental" approach to any fare increase without the risk that users would migrate from paying cash to tickets or passes as would occur with the second approach.

A review of fares in comparable communities does indicate that it is reasonable for Cobourg for adjust transit fares upward. On this basis and considering the length of time from the last fare increase, the following strategy is proposed over a five year period:

Exhibit 16: Proposed Multi-Year Fare Strategy

YEAR	CASH	%	TICKETS	%	ADULT PASS	%	STUDENT	%	SENIOR	%
2013	\$2.00		\$1.60	-	\$60.00		\$30.00	-	\$30.00	-
2014	\$2.25	12.5	\$1.70	6	\$63.00	5	\$42.00	40	\$33.00	10
2015	\$2.25	-	\$1.80	6	\$66.00	5	\$44.00	5	\$36.00	6
2016	\$2.25	-	\$1.90	5.5	\$67.50	2.3	\$46.00	4.5	\$37.50	4
2017	\$2.50	11	\$2.00	5.3	\$70.00	3.7	\$50.00	8.6	\$40.00	6.6
2018	\$2.50	-	\$2.10	5	\$72.00	2.9	\$54.00	8	\$42.00	5

The fare adjustments would generate an approximate 6% increase in revenues, or \$9,000 to \$10,000 each year.

Also, in reviewing the fare rates for students and seniors, it is suggested that the Student pass rate be increased to a level between that of the senior and adult rates. Further, the discounted ticket rate should be eliminated and returned to the original value.

In the above fare strategy, the current relationship between the fares for the pass categories are maintained over the five years, namely, a differential of \$30.00 for Seniors and \$18.00 (as adjusted) for students below the adult rate. The ticket rate would continue to be approximately 20% less than the cash fare.

#### Transfer Policy

As noted in the review of fares in section 3.1.5, transfers are issued to transit users on a location and time specific basis which can be used within a specified time period. In effect, the current transfer practice allows users to "stopover" and then make a return trip within a specified time period (1 hour at the mall and 1.5 hours downtown). This is a significant cost advantage for users and does help to promote short trips by effectively reducing the fare for a transit trip in half. As a result, there may be a loss in revenue. The Town has recorded approximately 5,000 transfers in 2013 which represents a potential revenue risk of \$5,000 to \$10,000 if all transfers were used for return trips and to avoid payment of a return fare. However, it is likely that many transfers are not used for a return trip such that the revenue risk may be closer to \$5,000.



Notably, the current transfer policy is not documented and its origin is uncertain. Transfers are hand-written and there are no records kept of the number issued although transfers are collected by drivers are placed in the farebox. Thus, the number of transfers issued is uncertain and uncontrolled. If anything, as with a receipt for a purchase at a store, a duplicate copy of the transfer should be retained by the driver and handed in at the end of the day to management. Transfers should also be numbered.

While the addition of controls to the use of the transfer is desirable, the current "policy", or practice, should be re-visited in view of the revenue risk. Transfers are normally issued to riders who must use more than one route to complete their trip as a form of "receipt" or proof that they paid their fare on the first bus. A suitable "standard" transfer policy used by other transit systems would be:

"Transfers are only issued at the time of fare payment and is to be used to complete a one-way trip from origin to destination. It must be used on the first connecting bus at the transfer stop location. It cannot be used for stopovers. Transfers must be kept in good condition and shown to the operator on the connecting bus. Transfers are the passenger's responsibility. If lost, another will not be issued and the passenger will be required to pay full fare when boarding the connecting bus."

The transit fare structure offers transit users reduced fare alternatives to the cash fare, as in tickets and passes, to the extent that the current transfer policy may be unnecessary.

Short of revising the policy to comply with first principles of transfer use, it is suggested that the Town formalize the transfer policy, include it in all printed materials as well as incorporate it into the appendix to the agreement with contractor and introduce controls so that the use of the transfers can be assessed. Once the number of transfers being used is understood then Town staff can better assess the impact of the current "policy" on potential revenue loss and determine whether a change in the policy is necessary.

## 6.4 Infrastructure (Vehicles, Stops, Shelters, Terminals)

Regarding the infrastructure for the transit system, the following are required actions to renew and maintain these resources:

### Vehicles

The two buses used for the conventional service can be expected to last 12 years, perhaps 15 depending on condition and maintenance practices. As such, replacement of these vehicles cannot be expected for at least 8 years. The spare bus, which is now 11 years old and in reasonable condition, may have a further 2 to 3 years of economic life remaining although it is to be noted that the vehicle is no longer manufactured and obtaining parts is becoming increasingly difficult. Rather than replace this vehicle with a new vehicle, the Town should consider a good, used vehicle of similar type at modest cost. All future buses should be of a similar type and size. Smaller vehicles would not be suitable in view of increasing accessibility needs due to mobility devices as well as increasing prevalence of strollers and shopping carts.

The Town does have a reserve fund for the future replacement of these vehicles. This may need to be revisited within the next 5 years to ensure that it will provide sufficient funds for the replacement of the vehicles.

At such time as the fixed route service is expanded to three routes, potentially within 5 years as suggested within this report, an additional transit bus will be required for that service. The Town has provision within its capital





budget in 2016 for this purchase currently estimated at \$480,000.

For the Wheels service, the vehicle used is nominally a 5 to 7 year vehicle and is now at the upper end of that guideline. Although it appears in good condition, consideration will need to be given to replacing this vehicle within the next 2 to 3 years. At that time, consideration should be given to whether a similar size vehicle is required or a smaller vehicle such as an accessible van would be more suitable. In order to make this determination, Town staff should analyze ridership patterns and, specifically, the occurrence of multiple trips to determine the need for a bus compared to an accessible van. If it is determined that a small bus is again the most suitable vehicle then it should be replaced with a low-floor style vehicle, such as the "Arboc" as pictured here, now widely available in the marketplace. The estimated cost for these vehicles is \$150,000.

### Stops

As discussed earlier, the existing bus stop sign is standard but not distinctive. A bus stop sign should be readily identifiable both to aid users in locating a place to board the bus but also as a form of system "promotion" or advertising. A distinctive bus stop sign helps to raise the profile of the transit system within the community. The example to the right from **Woodstock** illustrates a bus stop sign which incorporates the route number and time that the bus is to scheduled to arrive at the stop.



In addition to revising the bus stop sign, as noted earlier, the number of bus stops should be increased to improve access to transit and reduce the walking distance. As well, stop locations should be reviewed to ensure accessibility. All new stops locations should consider accessibility and passenger convenience. The estimated cost for each additional stop may be in the order of \$250.00 subject to confirmed Town costs for signage, pole and installation.

Overall, an important AODA requirement is that all bus stops as well as shelters must be accessible by 2025. For stops, this will involve ensuring there is an accessible path to the stop (sidewalk, curb cuts, level ground), ensuring each stop with a landing pad of specified size to permit boarding/exit of a wheelchair or scooter at the bus' accessible door (typically the front door). Guidelines are available through the Ontario Public Transit Association. Future signage should also be suitable for people with disabilities.

Making stops accessible will involve a detailed survey of each stop and development of individual plans for each stop (based on standard design criteria) and funding to complete the program by 2025, if not sooner. Based on the existing systems approximate 100 stops plus the recommendation to increase the number of stops to 150 or more, this would mean an upgrade program of some 15 or more stops per year. General cost estimates to upgrade stops vary according to the specific conditions at each stop but may average \$1,500 to \$2,000 per stop representing a potential expenditure of up to \$30,000 per year.

### Shelters

To attract new users but also provide an enhanced customer experience for transit users, the Town should invest in installing more shelters with a 5-year target of increasing the current coverage ratio 10% to 20%, or a doubling of the number of shelters. Each shelter would need to meet accessibility design criteria. The estimated cost for a shelter is \$10,000 including concrete pad.



## Terminals

While a relocation of the downtown transfer point to a more visible location would be beneficial to the profile of the transit service, the existing facility could be improved by the installation of a sign to noting that it is the Transit Terminal and more descriptive information on the transit service including a route map, schedule, fare summary and information number and more descriptive bus stop signs. The photographs from the recently opened transit terminal in Woodstock illustrate potential examples.

In view of the fact that the Northumberland Mall is the second major trip generator and destination for transit users, improvement in the customer amenities at the transit stops at the mall should be a priority with consideration given to providing a shelter, bench and transit information at the primary stop. In addition, the eastern-most stop at the mall should be upgraded to provide a more defined stop location, waiting area and accessibility features. Currently, this stop requires bus drivers to stop in the parking area with no defined bus stop "area". It is recognized that, since the area in question is privately owned, it is hope, nevertheless, that the Mall ownership will recognize the value of improving the amenities it provides to transit users. Given the large area of land used for car users and the associated expense of maintaining that area, the modest improvements suggested for transit users are relatively minor in comparison.



## 6.5 Marketing, Communications and Customer Service

There are a number of areas where the marketing and communications materials used to inform and promote the Town's transit services and the customer service activities can be improved. The following are suggested:

- The route map and brochure should include a new map and schedule information
- More information on map – fares, transfers
- Dedicated/identified "transit information" telephone number
- Automated transit information.

A review of the marketing and communications materials used to inform and promote transit and customer service practices indicates that there are opportunities to improve the materials and practices to enhance the image of transit in Cobourg. As a starting point, the colour scheme used on the vehicles is a positive feature and should be applied to all materials used to inform and promote Cobourg Transit including bus stop signs and other related signage such as at the downtown terminal.

For the route map brochure, the following improvements are suggested:

- Retain the services of a marketing person to develop a more eye-catching brochure with graphics. A number of good examples of transit brochures exist in the industry and reference to these would provide ideas for a new brochure for Cobourg notwithstanding Cobourg's size. The brochure should incorporate the colours and logo used on the buses as the overall theme;
- Utilize a more useful street base map;

- Use thicker lines for the routes and indicate with angled arrows where routes turn from one street to the next;
- Do not list stops and times as this is confusing. Instead, provide a simplified summary schedule for each route;
- Re-designate the two routes with names of either the main street or primary area being served and utilize the electronic destination signs to indicate the final destination ("Northumberland Mall", "Willmott Street", "Downtown", "Parkview Hills", etc);
- Do not include times on the route map as this can clutter the map. Instead, provide, for example, large dots along each route indicating 5 minutes intervals as well as several time points in the route schedule;
- Standardize the route arrival/departure times at the downtown terminal. The two routes should arrive/depart together at 15 and 45; and
- Include more information on the brochure about using transit and particularly regarding the transfer policy (subject to the recommendation of this report) and the Port Hope Shuttle. The routing to/from Port Hope is not explained.

From a customer service perspective, a dedicated "Transit Information" line should be established. Persons answering it should say "Cobourg Transit". The current 905-372-4555 telephone number is the Engineering Office number which is used for a variety of other purposes. After-hours and when the Transit Number is busy, there should be an automated message providing basic transit route, schedule and fare information. This can readily be arranged through the telephone service provider.

For transit materials as well as tickets and passes, these should be made available at additional locations within the Town.

The Town should also develop a marketing, communication and promotion plan as a basis for its annual activities for promoting transit in the community. In support of this work, the annual budget allocation should be increased above the current level of \$2,150 per year. A general guideline is 1.5 to 2% of the operating budget which would represent approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000. Additional staff resources will also be required to effectively deliver the marketing and communications activities. The Town is planning to utilize its on-staff Communications Officer to enhance transit marketing and communications efforts which should include an overall plan.

## 6.6 Town Oversight and Management of Transit Service

While the Town contracts the operation of its transit services to private firms, the services remain first and foremost a municipal responsibility. The Town is responsible for planning, promoting and managing the service and is, obviously, accountable to its residents for the quality of the service. With the services contracted, there is also the added responsibility, as a matter of fiscal and risk protection, of administering the contracts to ensure that the contractors are delivering the committed services. This involves regular monitoring of their performance and reviewing their performance with them to ensure compliance with the operating contract.

As planners and managers of the service, Town staff also collect and analyze ridership, financial and planning data to ensure that the service is performing satisfactorily and is meeting the needs of the community.

Even though the Town's transit service is relatively small, it still has all the features and activities associated with larger systems but with the added dimension, as noted above, of monitoring the performance of the private contractors. Although the Town is fortunate to have competent firms operating the services for them, this does not reduce the need for strong oversight of the transit



services. In order to effectively manage the transit services, sufficient Town staff resources need to be available. The current arrangement where transit is one of multiple responsibilities of the Town Engineer makes it difficult for this staff person to fully carry out all of the tasks associated with managing the transit services.

In reviewing the Town's current activities to manage and monitor its transit services, it is recommended that the Town consider undertaking the following specific additional activities:

- Town staff should ride transit routes regularly (monthly) to observe driver and customer interaction as well as route performance and infrastructure (stops, shelters) conditions;
- Meet with the contractors quarterly to review performance and specific parts of the contracts to ensure compliance, such as staffing, employee training, driver operating instructions, fare policies and practices;
- The transit vehicles should be regularly inspected to ensure that they are being properly maintained and to ensure acceptable cleanliness standards. The inspection should include a review of the maintenance records kept by the contractor with an emphasis on ensuring that the required provincial safety inspections are completed on time. The reviews and visits should be documented in writing. An independent vehicle maintenance expert could be retained for the vehicle inspection element;
- Reports and Records – The daily ridership counts should be kept on a trip by trip basis instead of one daily total. This change would provide more information about ridership trends;
- Fare revenue – the farebox vault contents should be counted separately and daily and compared with the daily ridership totals in order to provide an improved reconciliation of ridership and fare revenues;
- The invoices for the Specialized transit service provided by Van Air Taxi should be more detailed as to costs and basis for the invoice. Should provide more scrutiny of trip patterns and level of use for Wheels and the Taxi service to ensure consistency of use.
- Take a more active role in marketing and promoting transit in the community including preparation of a marketing and communications plan. Also revise information materials for residents and transit users such as the route map and schedule brochure. Establish a dedicated telephone information line for transit.
- Policies:
  - There should be more detailed transit service and customer policies prepared as guidelines for the contractor and their drivers to enforce in terms of customer behaviour;
  - Prepare an Accessibility Plan;
  - Adopt a reconfirmed or revised transfer policy. The transfer policy should be incorporated within the operating contracts.

In order to more effectively manage and plan the town's transit service and monitor the performance of the contractors, additional staff resources are required compared to the current situation. An appropriate staffing level would be 1,000 hours per year or 0.5 of an FTE. This would represent an approximate 0.4 FTE increase from the current resources.

## 6.7 Accessibility/AODA Compliance

In addition to the changes and improvements noted for the Wheels service in section 6.2 including updating and expanding the eligibility criteria, registration and appeals processes, the following outlines requirements for AODA compliance for transit in general.

The *Integrated Accessibility Standards* (Ontario regulation 191/11)) provides for standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

The Minister responsible for the AODA has established a process to develop and implement the accessibility standards necessary to achieving the purposes of the Act. Within this process, standards development committees have been established by the Minister to develop proposed accessibility standards.

Standards to develop under the Act include:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment

The following exhibit presents select elements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards specific to fixed route and specialized transit, the timeframe for compliance and an indication of the Town's status regarding compliance based on available information.

Exhibit 17: Town of Cobourg Compliance with AODA

AODA/INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD/REQUIREMENTS	COBOURG TRANSIT/WHEELS CURRENT STATUS REGARDING COMPLIANCE
<b>Training:</b> Including safe operation of accessibility equipment; transportable mobility aid securement systems; boarding and alighting assistance procedures; etc.	Not compliant. To be completed
<b>On board announcements of stops and connections (fixed-route)</b> Operator audibly announces (manual or electronic means) next major stops	Reliant on driver announcing stops.
<b>Accessibility public transportation policy and planning</b> Preparation of an accessible public transportation plan; maintain in consultation with a local accessible public transit advisory committee; identify and report actual results against performance measures; etc.	Town's web site reference: <i>Cobourg Community Accessibility Committee</i> – to provide advice and recommendations to Town Council on matters related to accessibility. <a href="http://www.cobourg.ca/community-accessibility.html">http://www.cobourg.ca/community-accessibility.html</a> No reference to having prepared an Accessibility Plan.
<b>Type of service</b> Deliver accessible origin to destination services considering the functional limitations of passengers	Compliant
<b>Time of service</b> Provide the same hours and days of service as provided by fixed route public transit in the same	Compliant

catchment area	
<b>Area of service</b> Specialized public transit service area be the same catchment area as the fixed route transit catchment service area	Compliant
<b>Reservations</b> Accept trip bookings between the opening of the booking period the previous day and 3 hours prior to the published close of the booking period the previous day	Compliant - with published advance booking requirement
<b>Pick-up times</b> Where possible and practical notify eligible passengers of pick up delays	Compliant
<b>Fares</b> Same base fare structure for all public transit services within a jurisdiction. Same fare media options.	Compliant – same cash fare
<b>Personal care attendant fares</b> Shall not charge a fare to personal care attendants, recognized by the transportation provider, accompanying a passenger with a disability.	<p>Need to specifically have policy address “free fare” for <i>attendant</i>. Current policy (Nov. 18, 1992) addresses conditions where passenger requires an attendant but is silent on non-payment of fare.</p> <p>Include reference in Wheels Policies &amp; Procedures regarding <i>Companions</i> as to who may accompany and those required to pay fare.</p>
<b>Trip restrictions</b> Not restrict the number of trips an eligible passenger is provided or any operational practices that limits the availability of service.	Compliant – according to published material
<b>Eligibility</b> Shall provide specialized transit services to individuals with disabilities that prevents them from using fixed route public transit temporarily or permanently.  Consider eligible unconditionally (unable to use fixed route), temporarily, or conditionally (environmental or physical barriers limits ability to consistently use fixed route transit).	Non-compliant as current eligibility is based on physical limitations <sup>1</sup> only. Need to update eligibility criteria and process.
<b>Eligibility process</b> Make eligibility application information available in accessible formats.  Consider an applicant provisionally eligible if an eligibility determination has not been made within 7 calendar days following submission of the completed application.	<p>Non-compliant/no reference in published material.</p> <p>Non-compliant/no reference in published material.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Current eligibility includes physically unable to use Cobourg Transit; physically unable to board public transit vehicles, unable to walk a distance of 175 meters, have a temporary disability, visually impaired.



Establish an independent appeal process for eligibility decisions that are unfavourable to the applicant with a final decision rendered within 14 calendar days upon receipt of an appeal.	Non-compliant/ no existing process
<b>Visitor service</b> Make specialized transit services available to visitors. Consider as eligible, visitors who provide confirmation that they are eligible for specialized transit in the jurisdiction in which they reside or meet the eligibility requirements of the host jurisdiction.	Non-compliant / no existing policy
<b>Companions</b> May allow companions to travel with an eligible passenger if space is available and will not result in the denial of service to other eligible persons.	Compliant

In summary, the Town must undertake the following actions regarding the Wheels service, accessibility, and compliance with AODA:

**Wheels:**

- Implement amended eligibility/certification process. Adopt revised application form (Appendix A);
- Adopt appeals policy/process;
- Formalize free fare policy for attendants;
- Ensure that an Accessibility Plan has been prepared (and annual updates);
- Integration with conventional transit - Provide enhanced customer service to encourage voluntary use of accessible conventional transit services (travel training, trip planning, etc.);
- Maintain arrangement with Coach Canada being responsible for all trip requests and scheduling (including weekends) – efficiencies with centralized trip booking functionality while maintaining consistency and familiarity from the customer's perspective;
- Additional assessment of taxi contract with consideration of:
  - (a) incorporating performance based criteria (incentives for meeting/exceeding productivity or performance targets);
  - (b) assessment of alternate modes of payment (i.e., hourly, per trip, etc.) in order to maximize service efficiencies and effectiveness by promoting ride-sharing; and
  - (c) incorporate enhanced criteria/reporting (data management) to foster greater accountability through ridership/operational and financial reporting.

**General:**

- Ensure stops are routinely and reliably announced at all times. The preferred approach is to install a GIS-based voice and visual stop announcement system which the Town should consider. The estimated cost for this installation may be in the range of \$30,000 for the transit system's three buses plus hardware on the buses (message signs and speakers), geo-coding of all bus stops, installation of software to support it centrally, creation of the route files, recordings, etc. plus

configuration and installation costs. Previously used hardware components may be available from another transit system to assist in reducing the implementation cost.

- Ensure all transit staff including contractor staff have received training as proscribed in the AODA;
- Be able to provide customer service in alternate formats for persons with disabilities on request;
- Improve route designations to include key destinations and program bus destination signs to provide information on route destinations;
- Prepare a plan to make bus stops accessible; and
- Accept wheelchairs and scooters on conventional transit and ensure contractor staff for conventional transit are trained to accept and secure mobility devices.

## 6.8 5-Year Budget Forecast

Exhibit 16 below presents a 5-year forecast of Cobourg's transit (conventional and specialized) operating and capital cost requirements for the period 2014 to 2018 incorporating the proposed additions noted previously within this report. The base budgets for 2014 and 2015 are the Town estimates. The base budget estimates for 2016 to 2018 include an approximate 2% increase in the operating contracts. All other costs are in constant 2013 dollars.

The budget includes the following:

- provision for the introduction of a third route in 2017 at an operating cost of \$250,000 although this route may be required sooner depending on the pace of development in the new areas;
- A route review study in order to develop an appropriate route network for the resulting expanded service area. The estimated cost of this type of study may be in the order of \$10,000 to \$15,000 and is included in 2017;
- An increase in the marketing and communications budget of \$10,000 is included with an additional \$5,000 in each of 2017 and 2018 to promote the change in transit service associated with expansion into the new areas; and
- Consideration of an increase in staff resources of \$20,000 annually representing 1/3 of an FTE. This amount is increased in 2017 and 2018 to reflect additional effort required for the implementation of the service expansion.

The budget does not include the cost of extending evening service hours in view of the estimated low cost recovery for this service as discussed in section 6.1.3.

Exhibit 18: Five-Year Budget Forecast

BUDGET ITEM	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>OPERATING</b>						
Base Budget	\$810,395	\$861,292	\$877,079	\$892,079	\$907,079	\$922,079
<b>Additional Items:</b>						
Service expansion – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Route					\$250,000	\$250,000
Marketing and Promotion	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Staff Oversight (additional to existing)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Route Review Study					\$15,000	
<b>Total Additional Cost</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$305,000</b>	<b>\$290,000</b>
<b>Total Annual Operating Cost</b>	<b>\$840,395</b>	<b>\$891,292</b>	<b>\$907,079</b>	<b>\$922,079</b>	<b>\$1,212,079</b>	<b>\$1,212,079</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Ridership	112,000	115,000	118,000	121,000	124,000	132,000
Base Fare Revenue	\$161,000	\$173,000	\$182,000	\$191,000	\$201,000	\$211,000
Fare Increase	\$12,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$9,000
Revenue – Service Expansion					\$40,000*	\$80,000
Advertising	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
<b>Total Fare Revenue</b>	<b>\$176,500</b>	<b>\$184,500</b>	<b>\$194,500</b>	<b>\$204,500</b>	<b>\$254,500</b>	<b>\$303,500</b>
<b>NET CITY COST – OPERATING</b>	<b>\$663,895</b>	<b>\$706,792</b>	<b>\$712,579</b>	<b>\$717,579</b>	<b>\$948,079</b>	<b>\$908,579</b>
<b>CAPITAL</b>						
Expansion Bus				\$480,000		
Replacement bus (Conventional)			\$100,000			
Replacement Bus (Wheels)			\$150,000			
Stop Announcement System	\$40,000	-	-	-	-	
Additional Stops (75)	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$3,750	-	-	
Enhance Transit Stops		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Additional Shelters (15)	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>\$77,500</b>	<b>\$47,500</b>	<b>\$293,750</b>	<b>\$520,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>0</b>

\*Revenue for 1<sup>st</sup> year of new service. 50% of estimated annual total.



The revenue projections include the fare adjustment noted in this report averaging approximately 6-7% per year or approximately \$ 9-10,000 additional revenue annually. For the service expansion in 2018, one-half of the anticipated new ridership and revenue is projected given that it can take at least one year or more to reach ridership expectations.

In the capital budget projection, the bus required for the new service is indicated as being purchased in 2017 so that it is available for the service expansion.

The increase in the number of bus stops is distributed over 3 years to minimize the required level of effort although this timeline could be compressed if sufficient resources were available to handle a faster implementation.

A total of 15 additional shelters are included over five years, or three per year.

### 6.8.1 Cost Reduction Alternatives

The operation and budget of the transit services were reviewed to identify opportunities for any cost efficiencies or reductions. As noted previously, there are a number of areas where additional costs will be required to meet both existing service and customer needs (ie. marketing, customer service, Town oversight, bus stops, shelters) as well as legislative requirements (ie. AODA) and these are included in the budget.

Also, as noted previously, the Town benefits from a low operating cost per revenue-hour from its contractors and also from a low administrative cost. Therefore, there are limited opportunities to reduce the municipal investment (net municipal cost) in transit except by either **reducing the level of service** or **increasing fares**.

An increase in fares has been included in the budget forecast and is recommended in view of the lengthy period of time since the last fare adjustment as well as inflation. A higher fare increase than discussed within this report, of course, can be considered although it should be cautioned that a larger fare increase would likely negatively impact transit ridership levels.

Other Town net cost reduction alternatives are:

#### 1. Discontinue Sunday or Statutory Holiday Service

Sunday service is provided from 8:45am to 3:45pm (last trip is 3:10pm), a total of 14 revenue-hours per day for both routes. The approximate operating cost is \$41,500 per year plus the cost of Wheels service estimated at a further \$7,500 based on an estimated 10 trips per Sunday. Conventional transit ridership averages about 80 trips per Sunday representing revenue of approximately \$5,865 annually. Therefore, the net annual cost for Sunday service is approximately **\$43,000**.

Elimination of Sunday service would therefore reduce the Town's transit investment by approximately \$43,000. However, elimination of Sunday service would likely result in negative feedback from residents and transit users and would have implications for many events held in the Town which are primarily on weekends. As well, as noted previously, changing social patterns with regard to shopping and other activities are increasing travel activities and therefore the expectation and need for transit service on Sundays.

As an alternative to elimination of Sunday or Statutory Holiday service, the Town could consider converting to a demand-response (Dial-a-bus) service on those days. This service concept, which is used in many municipalities to serve low density or low ridership area, would see the town served by one vehicle with people calling in ahead of time to be picked up according to pre-determined trip times (hourly). Service would be to the nearest bus stop. The advantage of this approach is that it would reduce the vehicle and driver requirement to one thereby reducing operating costs by half. The potential net cost savings would be some \$21,500 annually. However, this type of service is generally not as convenient for most people compared to the

fixed route service due to the requirement to call ahead of time and the uncertainty of when the bus would arrive at the local stop. Additionally, there could be operational capacity issues to be able to both cover the town and respond to multiple origins and destinations. For these reasons, the demand-response alternative, while representing a potential cost savings, is not a feasible approach for providing transit service on Sundays or statutory holidays.

## 2. Curtail Early Morning or Evening Service

As illustrated in section 3.1.1, both the early morning (first trip) and late evening (after 6:10 pm) services attract the lowest levels of daily ridership, averaging approximately 3 to 5 trips per route (6 to 10 total). As the people taking the first trips are likely to make a return trip on transit later in the day, the impact on ridership of eliminating the first trip could be twice the actual number of riders for a total ridership loss of 12 to 20 per day.

Eliminating the first trip in the morning would reduce annual weekday operating costs by approximately \$28,200 minus fare revenue of \$5,685 for a net annual savings of **\$22,100**.

For the late evening service, an average of 3 to 4 rides are taken on each route for the two trips involved (6:10pm and 7:10pm), or a total of 12 to 16 rides. There may also be a corresponding impact on ridership before 6:10pm if those using transit after 6:10pm are returning after using transit before 6:10pm. On this basis, the actual ridership impact could be a loss of 24 to 32 trips per day.

Eliminating the two evening trips at 6:10pm and 7:10pm would reduce annual weekday operating costs by approximately \$56,400 minus fare revenue of \$9,948 for a net annual savings of **\$46,450**.

## 7 Recommended Actions

Based on the foregoing review of the Town's transit services, the following are the recommended actions for consideration by Town Council along with optional actions.

It is recommended that:

1. Transit service be expanded to the new areas of the Town in the northwest and northeast with the addition of a third transit route by 2017 at an approximate net annual cost of \$170,000 and that a route review study at an estimated cost of \$15,000 be first undertaken to develop the most appropriate route network;
2. The Town consider increasing transit fares by \$0.25 for the cash fare and a reduced amount for tickets and passes in 2014 as outlined in Exhibit 14 within this report and then adjusted progressively over the next 5 years;

And, further, that the Town:

3. Continue with a centralized trip reservation function for its accessible Wheels and Taxi services and with a single telephone number during all service hours;
4. Investigate and assess alternate costing methods such as hourly or per-trip rates for the taxi contract to ensure costs are consistent with demand;
5. Update the Eligibility and Certification requirements and process for Wheels users as required for compliance under the AODA as outlined in section 6.2.2 of this report including the adoption of the Wheels Application form provided in Appendix A;
6. Develop an Appeals Process for Wheels users for compliance with the AODA;
7. Formalize the existing transfer policy on the conventional service and institute a tracking system to determine the level of transfer use and, subject to the use of transfers and potential revenue risk, develop a more appropriate transfer policy as outlined in section 6.3 of this report;
8. Plan for the replacement of the spare conventional transit bus and the Wheels bus in 2015 with the latter vehicle size subject to further review of Wheels trip patterns and capacity requirements;
9. Purchase an additional low-floor conventional bus for expansion of the conventional service for delivery in 2016;
10. Consider increasing the number of bus stops in the Town as outlined in this report;
11. Consider increasing the number shelters over the next 5 years towards a target coverage of 20% of stops;
12. Introduce information signage and a transit information display at the downtown terminal;
13. Review the adoption of a new style of larger, distinctive bus stop signage to incorporate route numbers and bus arrival times;
14. Incorporate more description information about the destination of each fixed route and program the conventional bus destination signs to also indicate the route destination and key areas served;
15. Investigate the introduction of an automated bus stop announcement system on the fixed route buses;
16. Develop a marketing and communications plan by the Communications Officer and upgrade the customer information materials including the route map and schedule brochure and



adopt a dedicated telephone number for transit information including after-hours recorded information on transit;

17. 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;
18. Increase oversight and monitoring activities of the contractors to include regular meetings, inspection of buses;
19. 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;
20. Consider separating farebox vaults and cash receipts by route by day in order to improve reconciliation of fare revenue by route and day;
21. Consider increasing staff resource available for transit oversight and management to ½ FTE;
22. Undertake the required steps as outlined section 6.7 to ensure full compliance with the AODA including ensuring all staff involved in the delivery of transit services are trained as prescribed by the AODA; and
23. Prepare and implement a plan to make all bus stops accessible by 2024.

In the event that Council wishes to reduce its financial investment in transit it is recommended that:

Evening, Sunday and Statutory Holiday service be discontinued.

## Appendix A – Draft Accessible Wheels & Taxi Service Application Form

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## *Wheels* APPLICATION FORM

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***Accessible Wheels and Taxi Service*** is intended for those persons who, due to a functional limitation, cannot board, ride or disembark from a fixed-route Cobourg Transit bus.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call *Wheels* at:

**(905) 373-4555**

**HOW TO APPLY FOR *WHEELS* 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 *Wheels*.
- *Wheels* 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 Cobourg Transit's accessible fixed-route transit 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.

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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 *Wheels*? 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 Cobourg Transit fixed route buses. Check one box only:

9. A. ☐ I can independently recognize my destination and leave the vehicle.
- B. ☐ I cannot independently recognize my destination and leave the vehicle.
- 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 Cobourg Transit fixed route bus 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 question 12.

12. Can you transfer to a car without assistance?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

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

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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 *Wheels*. If *Wheels* 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:

*Wheels Registration*  
Cobourg Transit  
55 King St. W  
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2

or Fax: 905-372-1533.



**PART B: FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL TO COMPLETE**

**Cobourg Transit's *Wheels* service is intended for those persons who, due to a functional limitation, cannot board, ride or disembark from a Cobourg Transit fixed-route transit bus.**

**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:

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3. Condition causing disability: 

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4. Severity: mild ☐ moderate ☐ severe ☐ profound ☐

5. Expected duration of disability:

☐ **Temporary:** Expected duration until 

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 / 

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 / 

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YY MM DD

☐ **Permanent:** Conditions with no expectation of improvement.

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

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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 *Wheels* certification, or with the person's permission, forward it directly to *Wheels*.

*Wheels Registration  
Cobourg Transit  
55 King St. W  
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2*

*or Fax: 905-372-1533.*