

# County of Brant Specialized Transportation Service

Final report as a framework for a taxi-based Ontarians with Disability Act  
Integrated Standards Part IV – Transportation implementation.  
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**This document was not solicited or paid for by the County of Brant. It is an attempt to alleviate the “blaming” of people with disabilities in Paris Ontario for the current state of the specialized transportation service as of June 1, 2012.**

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## Introduction

The County of Brant five-year contract for a specialized transportation service ended in September 2011. As of June 2012 the contract either has been extended or the incumbent specialized transportation service provider is operating without a contract. It is not clear which is the case.

Within the County of Brant the only “transit system” is taxi whether it is a conventional taxi service or the specialized taxi service. In the County of Brant under the contract that ended September 2011 a conventional taxi service provider also operated the specialized taxi service.



Figure 1 Map of the County of Brant from the County's web site.<sup>1</sup>

There is no public transit in the form of busses with routes within the County with the exception of the City of Brantford which operates a bus based transit system as well as a bus based LIFT program (specialized transportation system). Currently in Brantford a person with a disability pays the same fare on the public transit system as they do on the LIFT transit system. The fare is \$3.00.

Outside of the City of Brantford, where there is no bus based transportation systems, taxi fares can range from \$5.00 to over \$40.00 (if someone wants to travel from Paris into Brantford).

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<sup>1</sup> Map of the County of Brant from the “Simply Brant” web site:  
<http://www.brant.ca/forvisitors/communitiesinbrant.shtml>

During the five-year lifetime of the specialized transportation system contract for the County of Brant, fixed fares were in place that provided for a person with a disability to travel anywhere in the County for \$6.00 with the County subsidizing the fare with another \$20.00 no matter the length of the trip(local or to Brantford). In 2011, Tthe fare to the individual with disabilities was increased to \$7.00 and the “top-up” by the County remained the same for each trip.

There were no limits on the activity the person with a disability could bewas using the service for or how many times a day the specialized transportation service could be accessed. It could be work, medical or personal.

There is currently no information available on the status of the contract that ended June 1, 2011. It is assumed that the contract was extended. As of June 2012 it is also assumed that no RFP (Request for Proposal) or Tender has been issued as a search for an RFP comes up with no results. It is also assumed that any RFP , if it did exist, would not contain elements of the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, part IV – Transportation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) since the County of Brant Master Transportation Plan published in 2008 does not mention the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act which came into law in 2005 nor does it identify any impact the standards for transportation would have on the Master Plan. The County of Brant Master Transportation Plan does, however, identify some alternatives to the taxi-based service currently in place (Section 6.6.1 County of Brant Master Plan 2008)

In addition it appears that the original contract which ended in September 2011 endured management and fiscal irregularities that should have voided the contract. This includes but is not limited to the specialized transportation service embarking on a recruitment drive for specialized transportation service clients where the contract identified a specific payment schedule for the contract; and the County not providing a mechanism for accountability and oversight.

The questionable management of the specialized transportation service on the part of both the County and the specialized transportation service provider culminated in an action that was to be implemented June 1, 2012 limiting access to the specialized transportation service by people with disabilities based on arbitrary moral judgements. People with disabilities were “blamed” for the chaos and out-of-control spending related to the specialized transportation service.

At the very core of these problems is the fact that the county is the one contracting the service and needs to establish working boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as it pertains to the contract.

This report attempts to identify some of the major issues faced by rural communities, infrastructures used in other communities to manage specialized transportation services, and to offer a framework for discussion by the county, people with disabilities and conventional and specialized transportation service providers in the region. It also identifies the standards set forth in the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation also known as Ontario Regulation 191/11.

## **Factors Affecting the Specialized Transportation Service**

There are several “layers” of conditions that influence the specialized transportation service in the County of Brant as there are in all other municipalities:

- Inherent human rights of people with disabilities.
- Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation.
- The County of Brant Master Transportation Plan 2008.
- The existing or extended contract.
- A growing population of people with disabilities.
- A growing population of people over the age of 65.
- Fiscal responsibilities and constraints.

## **Accessible Transportation is a Right**

As Canadians, people with disabilities are protected under the Canadian Charter of Rights:<sup>2</sup>

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular,

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<sup>2</sup> Canadian Charter of Rights: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/charter/FullText.html>:

without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

## Ontario Human Rights Code

Within the province of Ontario, people with disabilities are protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code:<sup>3</sup>

### Services

1. Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, s. 1; 1999, c. 6, s. 28 (1); 2001, c. 32, s. 27 (1); 2005, c. 5, s. 32 (1).

### Contracts

3. Every person having legal capacity has a right to contract on equal terms without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, s. 3; 1999, c. 6, s. 28 (4); 2001, c. 32, s. 27 (1); 2005, c. 5, s. 32 (4).

### “Disability” means,

(a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

(b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

(c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

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<sup>3</sup> Ontario Human Rights Code: [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90h19\\_e.htm#BK1](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm#BK1)

(d) A mental disorder, or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”)

### **Constructive discrimination**

11. (1) A right of a person under Part I is infringed where a requirement, qualification or factor exists that is not discrimination on a prohibited ground but that results in the exclusion, restriction or preference of a group of persons who are identified by a prohibited ground of discrimination and of whom the person is a member, except where,

(a) The requirement, qualification or factor is reasonable and bona fide in the circumstances; or

(b) It is declared in this Act, other than in section 17, that to discriminate because of such ground is not an infringement of a right. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, s. 11 (1).

### **Idem**

(2) The Tribunal or a court shall not find that a requirement, qualification or factor is reasonable and bona fide in the circumstances unless it is satisfied that the needs of the group of which the person is a member cannot be accommodated without undue hardship on the person responsible for accommodating those needs, considering the cost, outside sources of funding, if any, and health and safety requirements, if any. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, s. 11 (2); 1994, c. 27, s. 65 (1); 2002, c. 18, Sched. C, s. 2 (1); 2009, c. 33, Sched. 2, s. 35 (1).

### **Idem**

(3) The Tribunal or a court shall consider any standards prescribed by the regulations for assessing what is undue hardship. R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, s. 11 (3); 1994, c. 27, s. 65 (2); 2002, c. 18, Sched. C, s. 2 (2); 2009, c. 33, Sched. 2, s. 35 (2).

It is becoming clear that the elimination of services through the specialized transportation service is the result of a contract dispute and therefore does not seem to be covered under “undue hardship.” This is a situation created by both the County and its Contractor.



The Ontario Human Rights Commission recognizes the complex nature of providing accessible transportation in the province of Ontario. In 2001 the Ontario Human Rights Commission published the “Duty to Accommodate<sup>4</sup>” document which was followed by the “Consultation Report: Human Rights and Public Transit” outlining the duty municipalities have to provide equal access to activities in the community including specialized transportation services.

“Equal access by persons with disabilities, older Ontarians, and families with young children to adequate, dignified public transit services is a right protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code. For many, it is also a necessity – in order to obtain an education, find and keep a job, or use basic public services like health care. Lack of access to transit may also lead to isolation, as visiting friends or participating in the life of the community becomes difficult or impossible. <sup>5</sup>”

The Ontario Human Rights Commission recognizes the fiscal constraints of specialized transit services, however, under the duty to accommodate this is not reason enough to eliminate or avoid providing accessible transit either using conventional transportation services or specialized transportation services.

“Improvements in accessibility of public transit services have been hampered by a lack of resources. Public funding for transit in Ontario is relatively low, accounting for only 25% of revenues, the rest coming from the fare box, as compared to American transit systems, which typically receive about 60% of their revenue from public sources. <sup>6</sup>”

“Others combine such services with contract taxi/livery services and/or taxi scrip services<sup>6</sup>. These taxi services are used to transport persons with ambulatory disabilities, and, where usable, are generally found to be more cost-effective per trip than specialized vehicles. For example, in 1993, Hamilton calculated the cost per trip of its taxi/livery service at \$8.27, as opposed to \$24.30 for its accessible van service. A number of municipalities also have some form of community bus services. For example,

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<sup>4</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Duty to Accommodate 2001: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/applying-code/duty-accommodate>

<sup>5</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/consultation-report-human-rights-and-public-transit-services-ontario?page=ConsultPubTransit2-INTRODUC.html>

<sup>6</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/consultation-report-human-rights-and-public-transit-services-ontario?page=ConsultPubTransit2-INTRODUC.html>

Toronto's Wheel-Trans also offers some "zone" bus service that provides more spontaneous door-to-door service within specific high trip generating zones.<sup>7</sup>

"Where individuals are unable, because of their disabilities or because of the non-inclusive design of many older transit systems, to access conventional transit systems, transit service providers have a duty to accommodate these needs, up to the point of undue hardship. While some transit providers argue that Para transit is a type of voluntary special program under human rights law<sup>11</sup>, it is the position of the OHRC that Para transit is a form of accommodation that can be required to meet the duty to accommodate under the Code<sup>12</sup>.<sup>8</sup>

The Policy goes on to recognize that even up-front inclusive design and systematic removal of existing barriers may not always result in full participation for persons with disabilities, and at this point, differential treatment may be required in order to provide equal opportunity to full participation.

"This applies to transit services. There will always be individuals who will be unable to use even the most accessible conventional transit system. Certainly, at this point in the evolution of conventional transit, there are many individuals in these circumstances. A segregated Para transit system is therefore a necessity to achieve equality for persons with disabilities, and this will most likely always continue to be the case, although the need may diminish as the accessibility of the conventional system increases."

"The right to equal treatment in services means that Para transit systems should be comparable to conventional transit services in terms of the types and level of services they provide, unless the provision of comparable services will cause undue hardship for the transit service provider.<sup>9</sup>

A contract dispute between the County and the specialized transportation service provider does not seem to fit under "undue hardship for the transit service provider." The County is dealing with a contract that is in limbo and a specialized transportation service demanding more money to offset business losses. Neither party seems to be paying any attention to the

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<sup>7</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit, page 11.

<sup>8</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit, page 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit, pages 17 and 18.

Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation.

If there is a dispute over the contract that requires legal intervention, then both parties should pursue this independent of eliminating service for people with disabilities.

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards Part IV – Transportation**

The scope of this section relates to specialized transportation services. There are requirements for conventional transportation services and the County will need to ensure that these are met by the identified deadlines.

Since the specialized transportation service infrastructure already exists in the County of Brant, almost all of the standards in Part IV – Transportation can be implemented under a new RFP or Tender. These include:

- **Section 34**, information on equipment is to be available and available in alternate format upon request.
- **Section 35**, non-functioning service equipment – if no alternate equipment is available, conventional transportation vehicles should be used and equipment repaired as soon as possible.
- **Section 36**, accessibility training – all staff are to be trained as per Section 7, there are additional training requirements related to obstacles, barriers, and disruptions in service.
- **Section 37**, emergency preparedness – in addition to Section 13, shall establish, implement, maintain and document emergency preparedness and response policies that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities.
- **Section 38**, fares for support persons – no additional fare will be charged for a support person and the criteria and process to identify a support person are in this section.
- **Section 63**, categories of eligibility since the County of Brant Master Transportation Plan 2008 (page 22) acknowledges the broader range of people with disabilities, this section can be implemented now.

- **Section 67**, visitors – specialized transportation services (a) make specialized transportation services available to visitors who demonstrate eligibility as per Section 63.
- **Section 68**, origin to destination based on the needs of the person with a disability.
- **Section 70**, hours of service – the specialized transportation service must run during the same hours as the conventional transportation service.
- **Section 71**, booking requires an on-demand booking availability and a minimum booking time of three hours before the end of the previous days operational hours. Since the specialized transportation service is taxi, on-demand booking will be easy to implement. (Delays should be as with conventional taxi service, someone might have to wait 15-20 minutes for transportation based on demand.)
- **Section 72**, trip restrictions – no restrictions on the availability of the service or number of trips per day. Since the origin to destination standard identifies the needs of the person with disabilities as a criteria, travel should not be limited to specific types of travel; for example, work or medical.
- **Section 73**, delays - every specialized transportation service provider, where the specialized transportation services require reservations, shall provide information on the duration of service delays to affected passengers by a method agreed to by the specialized transportation service provider and passenger.

**Sections 39 and 40** identify transition for existing contracts and equipment. Since it is not clear if there is a current contract, this needs to be clarified.

**Section 41** identifies that an accessibility transportation plan is to be created and published by January 1, 2013.

**Section 42** states that a specialized transportation service is to create and publish an accessibility plan as per this section by January 1, 2013.

**Section 43** identifies additional information that is required in the accessibility plans for both conventional and specialized transportation services.

**Section 66** needs to be discussed as it identifies the fare parity. This section assumes a public transportation system that is bus-based not taxi based. The implementation of fare parity is to

ensure that people with disabilities are not paying more for transportation in order to pay for equipment (for example accessible vehicles, bus stops and signage).

According to the County of Brant Master Transportation Plan 2008<sup>10</sup>, fare parity is not occurring. A client pays \$7.00 to travel anywhere in the County while the County is paying \$20.00 per ride no matter the destination. This means that if a fare is less than \$7.00 the client is overpaying as is the County. Given that the fare from Paris to the VIA station in Brantford is \$20.00 the specialized transportation service would appear to be charging a total of \$27.00 for a service that costs \$20.00 under conventional transportation service fares.

It is recommended that a forensic accounting of the specialized transportation service provider be conducted in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (Ontario Disability Support Plan) and Veteran's Affairs to determine fare parity implementation.

The County needs to continue subsidizing the special transportation service but the level of subsidy needs to be discussed and identified in an RFP and subsequent contract.

**Section 69** also needs to be discussed as it relates to coordinated services between municipalities. The discussion needs to include whether the specialized transportation service needs to establish drop-off stops at Brantford transit transfer stations; or, because the specialized transportation service for the County of Brant also must provide origin to destination service if this is sufficient and meets the needs of the people with disabilities in the County. This section appears to pertain to busses (for example the TTC in Toronto meets the Mississauga Transit at a specified transfer station, the Mississauga Transit meets the Oakville Transit at two specified transfer stations, the Oakville Transit meets the Burlington Transit at one specified transfer station and so forth.)

**Section 74** allows for the companions and friends of the person with a disability to travel with that person if there is enough room; and that children and dependents can travel if appropriate restraints are available (for example, seat belts or car seats) and there is room to facilitate this.

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<sup>10</sup> County of Brant, Master Transportation Plan 2008, Section 2.3, page 22.

## **Integrated Accessibility Standards Part IV – Transportation – Municipalities**

**Section 79** of the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, part IV – Transportation begins the standards and responsibilities of a municipality for both conventional and specialized transportation services under this law.

The following information has been copied directly from the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation.<sup>11</sup>

### **Duties of municipalities, accessible taxicabs**

79. (1) Every municipality shall consult with its municipal accessibility advisory committee, where one has been established in accordance with subsection 29 (1) or (2) of the Act, the public and persons with disabilities to determine the proportion of on-demand accessible taxicabs required in the community.

(2) Every municipality shall identify progress made toward meeting the need for on-demand accessible taxicabs, including any steps that will be taken to meet the need, in its accessibility plan required under Part I.

(3) Municipalities shall meet the requirements of this section by January 1, 2013.

(4) In this section, “accessible taxicab” means an accessible taxicab as defined in section 1 of Regulation 629 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 (Vehicles for the Transportation of Physically Disabled Persons) made under the Highway Traffic Act.

### **Duties of municipalities, taxicabs**

80. (1) Any municipality that licenses taxicabs shall ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs are prohibited,

(a) From charging a higher fare or an additional fee for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities for the same trip; and

(b) From charging a fee for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices.

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<sup>11</sup> Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation:  
[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2011/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r11191\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2011/elaws_src_regs_r11191_e.htm)

(2) Any municipality that licenses taxicabs shall ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs place vehicle registration and identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab.

(3) Any municipality that licenses taxicabs shall ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format to persons with disabilities who are passengers.

(4) The information in subsection (2) shall meet the requirements of subsection 58 (3).

(5) Municipalities described in this section shall meet the requirements in this section,

(a) By July 1, 2011, in respect of subsection (1); and

(b) By January 1, 2012, in respect of subsections (2) and (3).

Several deadlines for the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation have passed without any acknowledgement by the County. Even in other areas of the Integrated Accessibility Standards the County seems to be taking the “if we ignore it, it will go away” stand.

The dispute with the specialized transportation service provider is an opportunity for the County to implement all of the sections of Part IV – Transportation for both conventional transportation services and the specialized transportation service since both are taxi- based.

It is also an opportunity to examine what other municipalities are providing for people with disabilities and to improve the level of service and funding (in the form of clearly defined accountability)

It is recommended that the sections of the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Part IV – Transportation that can be implemented immediately be done and the issue of fare parity be discussed further. It seems that fare parity would apply to the population of people with disabilities as well as those without. In other words, some people with disabilities cannot be discriminated against by denying them subsidized fares.

## **County of Brant Master Plan 2008**

In the County of Brant, Master Transportation Plan 2008 the specialized transportation service was identified as having fixed fares of \$6.00 with the County paying an additional \$20.00 for each fare, no matter the distance.

“The only transportation service that the County subsidizes is for specialized transportation services through Paris Transportation Service. The County has a contract with Paris Transportation Services to provide a pre-booked, shared ride, accessible door to accessible transportation service for persons that have a temporary or permanent physical disability or who are intellectually challenged. The service is provided from point to point within the County and from locations within the County to locations in Brantford depending on the client's requirements. The client pays the provider \$6 per trip each way regardless of the destination. The County is billed \$20 plus GST for each trip regardless of the destination.<sup>12</sup>”

In 2011 the fares for the specialized transportation service were raised to \$7.00 with the County contribution remaining the same.

The Master Plan does recognize the importance and necessity of public transportation for people with disabilities:

“Providing good, fully accessible transit in communities of all sizes also provides mobility to the thousands of Ontarians with disabilities and the increasingly aging population, and ensures that all residents can continue to be active in their community.<sup>13</sup>”

One of the solutions discussed in the County of Brant, Master Transportation Plan 2008 was shared ride taxis.

“Similar to Dial-a-Bus, Shared Ride Taxi utilizes local taxi-cabs to provide transit service. The Trans-Cab service picks up and drops off customers at designated stops.<sup>14</sup>”

Shared rides were part of the original contract with the specialized transportation service provider. This is one way of reducing costs for the specialized transportation service and should be investigated to ensure compliance with the contract.

It is clear when reading the County of Brant Master Transportation Plan that having a specialized transportation service was important to the planners and they had taken into account growth in the need for specialized transportation services to meet the needs of people

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<sup>12</sup> County of Brant, Master Transportation Plan 2008, Section 2.3 Public Transportation, page 22.

<sup>13</sup> County of Brant, Master Transportation Plan 2008, Section 2.3, page 23.

<sup>14</sup> County of Brant, Master Transportation Plan 2008, Section 6.6.1, page 80.



with disabilities and a growing population of people who would no longer be able to drive (aging population).

## **County of Brant Contract for Specialized Transportation Service**

The contract for the specialized transportation service was entered into on June 1, 2008 and ended on May 31, 2011. There was a mutually agreed upon potential for an extension of the contract for two (2) years. The contract could be cancelled by either party by providing 120 days notice.<sup>15</sup>

The author of this report did not have access to any of the schedules attached to the contract for specialized transportation service. It is recommended that these schedules be reviewed for compliance.

**Section 2.2** Despite Section 2.1 herein, failure to comply with any or all terms and conditions of this contract constitutes cause for the cancellation of the Contract and either party, may cancel this Contract for any breach by the other party, upon giving the other party ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY (120) days notice. During the ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY (120) day period following such notice of cancellation, the Contract shall remain in full force and both parties shall be obliged to use their best efforts to fulfill all of their obligations under the Contract. The party cancelling shall not be liable to the other party for cost or damages of any kind caused by such cancellation.

**When the fares were raised from the contracted amount to \$7.00 was this put before Council and voted on?**

**Section 2.3** The County shall not, by reason of cancellation, termination or expiry of this Contract, or for any reason whatsoever, be liable to the Contractor for compensation, reimbursement, or damage on account of the loss of prospective income, leases, or commitments in connection with the business or goodwill of the Contractor or otherwise.

One of the things that those of us with disabilities are hearing from the specialized transportation service provider is that by contracting for the specialized transportation service that the company is “losing money and will go out of business if fares for the specialized transportation service are not raised.” This section would appear to invalidate any changes to the current fare structure without voiding this contract.

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<sup>15</sup> County of Brant, Contract for Specialized Transportation Service 2008, section 2.1.

**Sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3** provide for the County to have final word on disputes, eligibility and the assignment of the specialized transportation service.

This would indicate that any overages that were billed for and paid were done so in consultation and collaboration with the County. In these sections the County has final approval on anything associated with the specialized transportation service which also means that nothing should have been implemented (or accepted) in an ad hoc manner. Was the fare increase approved by Council?

Given that as of June 15, 2012 those of us with disabilities have heard that the specialized transportation service is going to metered rates for the specialized transportation service, and that these amounts will be billed to the County, was this approved by the County?

If not, it invalidates the contract and the 120 days notice should be given to the specialized transportation service so that an RFP with standards reflective of the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation should be created.

In addition, the Accessibility Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Community Services committee should identify clear processes and procedures for a specialized transportation service to avoid this situation in the future.

**Section 4** of the contract identifies the obligations of the specialized transportation service provider. Section 4.1 identifies that the special transportation service provider is responsible for providing and maintaining the accessible vehicles for the specialized transportation service.

**Section 4.3** allows for the increase in the number of vehicles as identified by the County:

4.3 The parties agree that if upon review of service levels, the County requires an increase in the maximum number of vehicles in peak service, alternate terms and conditions will be negotiated between the parties.

**Section 4.5** allows for the County, in consultation, to amend the contract:

4.5 Subject to consultation with the Contractor, the parties agree to grant to the County the right to amend the County of Brant Specialized Transportation Service Policy, as set out in Schedule "A", from time to time during the term of the agreement.

**Section 4.8** identifies some specific elements of the specialized transportation service including part ii which states "ii) At the office maintain a 24 hour communication system, its reservation

booking system, vehicle dispatch facilities and shall retain all books and records of the operation.”

**Section 4.8, part vi** states “vi) Accept as many reservations as possible having regard to passenger capacity and the number of vehicles”

**Section 4.8, part xi** states “xi) Establish with the County reconciliation procedures for daily service, trip count, eligible passenger and attendant count and logging of service interruptions.”

Under **section 4.9** reports were to be submitted on a regular basis. What was identified in the reports and how were discrepancies handled?

It is clear from the terms of the contract that ended June 1, 2011 that clearly defined deliverables, terms and accountability will be needed to ensure problems in the future with the contractor are minimized and the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, and Part IV – Transportation are implemented.

It is clear from the contract that there were identified billing periods. It is not clear why the substantive increase in billing was not flagged for review or why the substantive increase in billing was approved and paid.

It is also clear from the contract that the County retained control over the specialized transportation service but has somehow lost that control over the lifetime of the contract.

## **Government of Ontario Aging at Home**

In 2007 the Government of Ontario launched the “Aging at Home Strategy” to encourage people to stay in their own homes with supportive care for as long as they can.

“In expanding community living options for seniors through enhanced home care and community support services, Aging at Home provided seniors and their caregivers with the appropriate local support services, avoiding the unnecessary loss of independence due to premature admission to higher care long-term care homes or hospitals.”

“The Aging at Home Strategy continues to be a key element in providing the right services, in the right place, at the right time.”

“Delivered through Ontario’s 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), AAH programs, including innovative projects that support non-traditional partnerships or

new preventative and wellness services, are locally developed and implemented across health care sectors.”<sup>16</sup>

Although the current Aging at Home Strategy is housed in the Ministry of Health and delivered by Health Care Providers in Local Health Care Networks, as this strategy gains popularity the issue of mobility and specialized transportation must be included in funding for this initiative.

Confining people to their homes without the ability to travel for personal reasons would appear to be counter-productive to the government strategy. Part of being independent is the ability to go out of your home and participate in your community.

When the Aging at Home Strategy is combined with the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, especially the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV- Transportation, one can only conclude that funding and support for mobile independence will be as important to the Government of Ontario as receiving health care in one’s home is.

This topic must be put on the table for discussion by the provincial government to ensure the success of the Aging at Home Strategy.

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<sup>16</sup> Government of Ontario, Ministry of Health, Ontario’s Aging at Home Strategy:  
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/ltc/33\\_ontario\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/ltc/33_ontario_strategy.aspx)

## Funding for Specialized Transportation Services

There are many factors affecting funding for specialized transportation services in Ontario. Among them are reduced or eliminated transfer payments from either federal or provincial governments and in Ontario the “Aging at Home<sup>17</sup>” policy and plan encourages people to remain in their own homes as long as they are able. The goal of the Aging at Home plan is to provide medical and transportation resources to people with evolving disabilities through aging so that they can remain independent.

Most municipalities are facing difficulties in subsidizing taxi fare parity if the taxi service is the only specialized transportation service available.

“In 1998, the government of Ontario implemented the Local Services Realignment (LSR) which details the reform initiatives in the management and funding of key public services of which transportation is included (AMO/MAHO, 1999). With respect to transportation, full service delivery and funding responsibility for airports, roads and bridges, highways and municipal transit are now fully transferred to the municipalities. The Municipal Act, 2001 which took effect in January 2003 sealed most of the provisions of the LSR. However, while the municipalities have been given wider legislative and organizational authority under the Act, there are limitations on their financial activities [Treff and Perry, 2003]. Thus, significant mismatches remain between municipal responsibilities and financial resources. Starting in 2002, the Government of Ontario committed gas tax allocation to municipalities and recently has allowed flexibility in the use of the funds beyond capital transit expansion purposes. Of late, a new City of Toronto Act was passed in January 1st 2007 providing Ontario's capital city greater fiscal autonomy (Government of Ontario, 2007b). Still, efforts are underway to look more in-depth into this provincial-municipal fiscal and service delivery relationship (Government of Ontario, 2006b).<sup>18</sup>”

Although the issue before the County currently revolves around funding for the specialized transportation service, before changes can be made to the funding as per the original contract and the estimated growth identified in the County of Brant Master Transportation Plan, the

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<sup>17</sup> Government of Ontario, Aging at Home: <http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2010/08/aging-at-home-strategy-expands.html>

<sup>18</sup> Policy Spheres And Elderly Transportation Needs: A Case Study Of Ontario, Canada, Ruben Mercado Antonio Paez K. Bruce Newbold, Corresponding author: Antonio Paez, page 5.

County needs to step back from the current contract dispute with the incumbent specialized service provider. This will facilitate a more realistic approach to funding and providing a specialized transportation service in the County that meets the needs of people with disabilities.

Attempting to claw back access to specialized transportation service is not the answer. Clearly identifying accounting and billing practices for a Contractor is a first step while allocating the funds necessary to provide a specialized transportation service is another step.

Some communities have attempted to implement volunteer-based specialized transportation services. However, in every case reviewed, issues related to reliability of volunteers, quantity of volunteers, reimbursement of gas and mileage costs, and the cost of insurance for vehicles has made these efforts unfeasible and inadequate.

“Further, some submissions pointed to a troubling trend whereby responsibility for accessible transit is increasingly being shouldered by volunteer initiatives. Community Care Access Peterborough offers a service whereby volunteers provide transportation to medical appointments and quality of life activities, as well as a multi-handicapped vehicle that serves county residents. Peterborough CCAS notes that the van operates with a significant deficit each year because of the lack of support from the province, and that the deficit is covered by the fundraising initiatives of volunteers. While committed to providing this service, the organization notes, “we would like this recognized as an essential service and funded accordingly”. Transportation Action Now stated that the province's Community Transportation Action Program (now discontinued) is a “blatant attempt to return the provision of Para transit service to the volunteer sector or to the status of a charitable service”, and noted that, while these types of initiatives may work in small homogeneous rural communities where there are more volunteer drivers, for larger cities, these programs are completely inadequate to the level of need.<sup>19</sup>

In almost all reports from smaller municipalities, taxi-based service was identified as the most cost effective. As with the County of Brant in its Master Transportation Plan, purchasing busses, establishing routes and paying the administrative and support staff costs renders bus base public transit in rural areas difficult to implement.

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<sup>19</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit, page 27.

“Financial barriers exist for rural transportation models, since it can be difficult to justify a transportation system that carries a small number of passengers over a large distance.<sup>20</sup> The Durham Transportation Master Plan 2003 showed that rural communities in the Region of Durham were better off using demand-responsive transit services. These include public Para transit, van pools, school buses, and taxis. This is not surprising due to Canada's low population density, especially in rural areas, and the high operational costs of a full-service bus line.<sup>21</sup>”

The Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report – Human Rights and Public Transit identifies the need to involve people with disabilities in any planning for transit in their community whether it be conventional or specialized transportation services. This is further emphasized by the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

“The process of accommodation, as well as the outcome, should be respectful of the dignity of the persons affected, and should take into account the importance of integration and full participation. As a number of submissions pointed out, persons with disabilities are well aware of limitations in the current system, and of their own needs. Any planning process should recognize that older persons, persons with disabilities, and families with young children are important stakeholders in the process.<sup>22</sup>”

It should be noted that, under the Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate, costs must be distributed as widely as possible within the organization so that no single department is burdened with the cost of an accommodation. The appropriate basis for evaluating costs is the budget of the organization as a whole, not the branch that is providing the service in question.<sup>23</sup>

In the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report – Human Rights and Public Transit, the Ontario Human Rights Commission states that it will: “Work with transit service providers to ensure that they have access to appropriate tools for understanding their human rights obligations as transit providers.<sup>24</sup>”

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<sup>20</sup> Region of Durham Planning and Works Departments, "Transportation Master Plan," Regional Municipality of Durham, (2004), page 35.

<sup>21</sup> Policy Spheres And Elderly Transportation Needs: A Case Study Of Ontario, Canada, Ruben Mercado Antonio Paez K. Bruce Newbold, Corresponding author: Antonio Paez, page 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit, page 39.

<sup>23</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation on Human Rights and Public Transit, page 39.

<sup>24</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Consultation Report on Human Rights and Public Transit, page 40.

It is recommended that the County and the specialized transportation service provider take advantage of the Ontario Human Rights Commission educational offerings around their human rights obligations.

## **Specialized Transportation in Other Municipalities**

This section of the report focuses on how other municipalities are providing specialized transportation service in the form of accessible taxis. There are a wide range of ideas that can be investigated by the County of Brant to provide inclusive transportation to the community.

This section will identify how fares and subsidies are handled in large and small municipalities in Ontario. This is the area of the County of Brant specialized transportation service (County Service) that is out of control as per the contract and overages that have been paid.

There are some features of the specialized transportation service in the County that need to be considered:

1. People with disabilities may live in Paris but work in Brantford. A round trip full fare from downtown Paris to the VIA station (both used as points of reference only) costs \$40.00. Limiting the number of trips to Brantford for every person using the specialized transit service is not practical.
2. Seniors may have more than one appointment in Brantford per day:
  - a. Can an agreement with LIFT be implemented to allow people with disabilities from Paris to access Brantford Transit and the LIFT program: or,
  - b. Is it more cost effective to use the County of Brant specialized transportation service. Age and type of disability need to be considered.

Information needed to make decisions about the future funding of the specialized transportation service in the County of Brant:

1. How many trips in total were billed in each year of the contract (2008 through 2011 inclusive)?
2. How many trips per month during those years were within the boundary of Paris?
3. What was the average fare of the trips within the boundary of Paris?



4. How many trips were from Paris to Brantford for each month of the contract (and how many return trips)?
5. How many trips per day from Paris to Brantford (and return trips) were there for each month of the contract?
6. How were shared rides billed to the County?
7. How were rides billed under ODSP and Veterans Affairs billed to those agencies? Was there any overlap?

We need to know the details of the implementation of the contract in order to determine the level of subsidy of the specialized transportation service. All of this information should be readily available.

It should also be noted that every municipality has undergone a needs analysis to help understand the needs of people with disabilities and an aging population and its effect on mobility in the municipality. The County has not done this.

## Niagara-on-the-Lake Ontario

In examining the Niagara-on-the-Lake region, several elements of deciding whether to continue with a specialized transportation service that is taxi-based or implementing bus service were considered in their Transit Needs Study.<sup>25</sup>

“Conducting a telephone survey of 500 residents supplemented by a web-based and hard-copy surveys and stakeholder consultations to assess attitudes and needs for transportation alternatives in the Town;”

“Determining what the potential demand may be in terms of number of users, user profiles, travel patterns and destinations of the community through analysis of planning data, travel information and the results of the surveys;”

“Reviewing existing transit initiatives in the Town and Niagara Region; and,”

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<sup>25</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:  
<http://notl2.iwebex.com/files/%7B9B2BFD0F-F671-4220-B423-AC9A66AD42A4%7DTTR-NOTLtransit%20Final%20Report%20-%202010-10-04.pdf>

“Providing potential direction and alternatives to meet the needs of town residents and businesses.” (Page 8)

There are similarities between Paris (County of Brant) and Niagara-on-the-Lake in terms of tourism, however, it can be agreed for the purposes of this report that Niagara-on-the-Lake has more tourism potential which will affect transit implementations.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is also similar in its population which is 14,000 and has remained stable according to the 2006 statistics<sup>26</sup>. This is roughly the same population as Paris Ontario which has a population of between 8,000 and 10,000 people.

The demographics of Niagara-on-the-Lake can also be compared to those of Paris in that both are smaller municipalities that are attractive to “baby boomers.”

“As a result, the Town's median age is among the highest in the province, at 49.1 years, contrasting against a much younger surrounding Niagara Region, the median age of which is just 41.9 years, as shown in Exhibit 2-4.”<sup>27</sup> (Page 13)

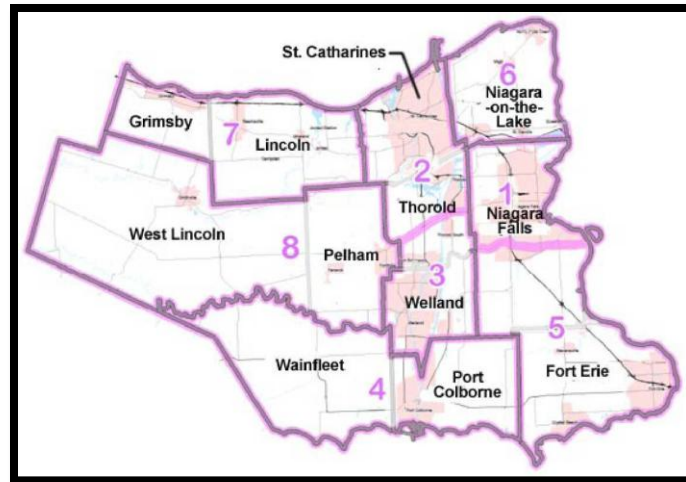
In Niagara-on the-Lake, specialized transit is from municipality to municipality (Niagara-on-the-Lake includes Old Town Niagara, Virgil, St. David’s, Glendale, and Queenston):

“Fares are based on a zone system, as shown in Exhibit 2-5. The cost of a one-way trip is charged at \$7.50 per zone. This means travel within the same costs \$7.50, while trips to a different zone costs an additional \$7.50 for each zone traveled across. Riders are required to buy in advance multi-ride tickets with 4 \$7.50 zone fares (ticket cost is \$30). Customers present a valid ticket upon boarding and the driver punches out the appropriate number of \$7.50 fares.” (Page 14)

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<sup>26</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:  
<http://notl2.iwebez.com/files/%7B9B2BFD0F-F671-4220-B423-AC9A66AD42A4%7DTTR-NOTLtransit%20Final%20Report%20-%202010-10-04.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:  
<http://notl2.iwebez.com/files/%7B9B2BFD0F-F671-4220-B423-AC9A66AD42A4%7DTTR-NOTLtransit%20Final%20Report%20-%202010-10-04.pdf>



**Figure 2 Exhibit 2 from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Transit Needs Study, Final Report.**

Surrounding municipalities (zones) include St. Catherine's, Welland and Niagara Falls.

The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study looked at municipalities of similar size and transit infrastructure (specialized taxi transportation service) and identified that in Elliot Lake, Sault Ste. Marie, Bracebridge and Pelham that although a bus-based transit system was explored and in the case of Pelham was implemented on a one year trial bases, the use of taxis for specialized transportation service remained the most cost effective.<sup>28</sup> (Pages 46 and 47)

One of the options the town is exploring is an enhancement to the token system. The report cites lack of access to tokens (only sold at one location or through mail), the need to increase ridership and to remove restrictions on the number of tokens purchased but have a minimum of 10 tokens purchased to minimize the administrative burden on the municipality.<sup>29</sup> (Page 57)

The same page referenced indicates similar costs per ride to travel within the defined area for the specialized transportation system as exists in the County of Brant. The report also suggest increased funding for the specialized transportation service (taxis) (Page 57).

The report also explores a fixed route system where all vehicles are accessible vehicles travelling between areas such as Niagara-on-the- Lake, Virgil, Old Town and Queenston with

<sup>28</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:

<sup>29</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:

on-demand specialized transportation service (taxi) used for people with severe disabilities and those living in more rural areas of the municipality.<sup>30</sup> (Page 61)

The financial implications for the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to implement a fixed bus system supported by a specialized transportation service (taxi) is estimated to be:

“Financial implications for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake are as follows. Niagara-on-the-Lake, along with all other municipalities in the Region, has already contributed to the capital investment of \$3.7 million by the Region for the purchase of 8 accessible vehicles. This cost has been drawn from reserves, meaning the costs have been collected from past levies. The Region is expected to allocate \$1.35 million in 2011 and \$2.7 million every year thereafter for the operations of this Pilot project. Niagara-on-the-Lake's proportion of the Region's tax levy is 6.77% (based on 2010 budget). Thus, Niagara on the Lake's levy will include approximately \$91,400 in 2011 and \$182,800 each year thereafter to cover transit operating expenses.<sup>31</sup>” (Page 61)

This costing is for the fixed bus system only. Respondents to a survey of residents with and without disabilities indicated that a reasonable fare for a fixed route system would be \$2.00 to \$3.00 per ride (Page 62)

## **ST. Albert and Strathcona Alberta**

There are two transportation studies/plans reviewed for this report that come from municipalities in Alberta.

The municipality of Strathcona in Alberta outside of Edmonton is facing similar transit issues that the County of Brant is:

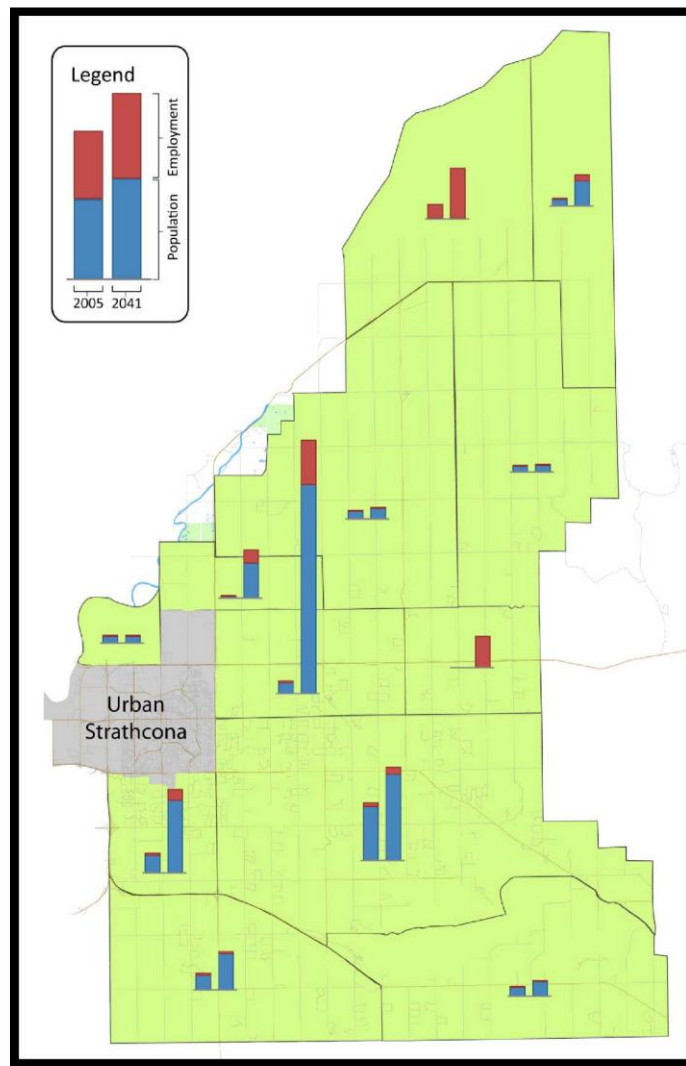
“An aging population will result in a significant increase in specialized transit (door-to-door) demand as well as the demand for more accessible fixed-route transit. The existing specialized service should be improved in terms of service coverage, service hours, and destinations outside of the County. Strategic changes are required to improve the overall service to specialized transit users, particularly to accommodate all

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<sup>30</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:

<sup>31</sup> The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Transit Needs Study, Final Report:

trip purposes and to better integrate with Edmonton's specialized transit service.<sup>32</sup>”  
(Page 12)



**Figure 3 Exhibit 13 - Population and Employment in Rural Strathcona (2005 - 2041)<sup>33</sup> (Page 43)**

The recommendations of the report identify the need for specialized transportation service (taxi) due to the rural nature of the municipality.

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<sup>32</sup> Strathcona County Transit, Transit Master Plan, Final Report: [http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP\\_FinalReport\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP_FinalReport_Appendix.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Strathcona County Transit, Transit Master Plan, Final Report: [http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP\\_FinalReport\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP_FinalReport_Appendix.pdf)

“In our recommendations for the specialized transit system, GENIVAR has proposed a standard of equivalent service, establishing an objective that, over time, services will be equivalent in as many ways as possible. In the short-term, our recommendations focus on high priority items such as service coverage, hours of service and days of service. In the longer-term, it will be appropriate for Strathcona County to explore other ways the service can be designed to be equivalent.”<sup>34</sup> (Page 17)

Strathcona Transit does not have the quality of coverage that the specialized transportation service (County of Brant, County Service) does, however in all communities, complete integration and increased use are goals. Alberta also does not have the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act providing standards for transportation with deadlines and significant penalties.

In Strathcona, according to the report, travel is “complimentary” for people with disabilities on fixed route transit.<sup>35</sup>

“Fares for specialized transit would remain distinct from those for fixed-route transit in the short-term. However, the two fare structures will become increasingly related. In the future, the County could consider transitioning specialized fares for local and inter-municipal travel to be the same as fixed-route fares.” (Page 19)

“The question of fares is one that often arises. Historically, systems have justified a higher fare for specialized transit on the basis that it costs more, while others have deemed it to be a premium service that warrants a premium fare. Many communities now recognize that the service is not a premium - it has characteristics that are necessary to provide transportation. Therefore, door-to-door service is not a premium; it is merely a necessary service characteristic.” (Page 127)

“Recent legislation treats the cost issue differently. Under the Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in Ontario, it will soon be illegal to charge more for a Para transit trip than on fixed-route services. In the United States however, the Americans with Disabilities Act recognizes that the higher cost of service may limit the ability for

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<sup>34</sup> Strathcona County Transit, Transit Master Plan, Final Report: [http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP\\_FinalReport\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP_FinalReport_Appendix.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Strathcona County Transit, Transit Master Plan, Final Report: [http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP\\_FinalReport\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP_FinalReport_Appendix.pdf)

some communities to provide sufficient service, and therefore allows fares for specialized transit to be up to two times the prices of the fixed-route fare.” (Page 128)

“Currently, fares for specialized services are higher than those paid by passengers on the fixed-route system. There is no reduced fare for persons with a disability to ride the fixed-route system. Under the comparability principle, it may be desirable in the long-term to also achieve parity with respect to fares. This could involve similar fare structures, including discounts, and similar fare media.” (Page 128)

One of the strategies being recommended for Strathcona Transit is true fare parity in the future beginning with fare parity in local areas (in the Case of the County of Brant, this could be for trips within Paris) while inter-municipal fares are subsidized until a point in the future.

“Fares for specialized transit could continue to be higher than fixed-route fares to reflect the higher cost of providing demand-response service. In the future, the County could consider transitioning specialized fares for local and inter-municipal travel to be the same as fixed-route fares.”<sup>36</sup> (Page 116)

St Albert’s Alberta is also a municipality combining urban areas and rural areas. It does have a Handibus fixed route system with limited support from a specialized transportation service in the form of a contracted taxi:

“StAT staff are responsible for Handibus overall supervision, service monitoring, planning, customer service, marketing and communications, and operations (trip booking/assignment), they are not dedicated to the Handibus program and also assume other duties within the department. StAT contracts with Diversified Transportation Ltd. for the drivers and road supervision of Handibus services. A contract with Sturgeon Cabs provides for peak hour taxi service to/from Edmonton.”<sup>37</sup> (Page 13)

The usage of the Handibus and limited accessible taxi service are identified in the report:

“The following profiles the existing travel demand for Handibus service (based on the existing delivery framework of local Handibus trips and limited taxi service to Edmonton) and presents an estimate of latent demand. The calculations use national

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<sup>36</sup> Strathcona County Transit, Transit Master Plan, Final Report: [http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP\\_FinalReport\\_Appendix.pdf](http://www.strathcona.ca/files/Files/Attachment-TRANSIT-TMP_FinalReport_Appendix.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> St. Albert’s Handibus Final Report: <http://www.stalbert.ca/uploads/files/transit/Handibus%20Final%20Report-%2004-20-12%202.pdf>

incident rates for disabilities to estimate the future number of persons with disabilities in the City. As the population grows, the demand for Handibus service will naturally increase. There is reason to believe the request rate may also increase due to a larger proportion of seniors in the community. Further, these calculations are based on recognized trip rates and comparisons of levels of service of communities of a comparable size to that of St. Albert.

Existing Demand (2011):

305 registrants o 7,810 trips

Latent Demand (2016)

480 registrants

24,000 trips (@ trip rate of 50 trips/registrant)

15,500 local trips

8,500 regional/Edmonton trips<sup>38</sup> (Page 16)

While the limited taxi service is outsourced to a taxi company, there are no accessible taxis in the city of St. Albert.

Need to explore the possibility of the expanded use of taxis as part of the Handibus program. Taxis could be good and it may generate a demand for accessible taxis in the City. There are no accessible taxis in St. Albert.<sup>39</sup> (Page 18)

As the Ontario Human Rights Commission acknowledges the existence of chemical allergies also known as “environmental allergies,”<sup>40</sup> “it should be noted that in almost all of the reports and consultations, dirty, smelling of smoke taxis were seen as a deterrent from using taxi based taxi-based specialized transportation services (as well as Para transit). This is something that the county needs to add to any RFP (Request for Proposal).

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<sup>38</sup> St. Albert’s Handibus Final Report: <http://www.stalbert.ca/uploads/files/transit/Handibus%20Final%20Report-%2004-20-12%202.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> St. Albet’s Handibus Final Report: <http://www.stalbert.ca/uploads/files/transit/Handibus%20Final%20Report-%2004-20-12%202.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, Accommodation of Environmental Sensitivities – A Legal Perspective: [http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/pdf/legal\\_sensitivity\\_en.pdf](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/pdf/legal_sensitivity_en.pdf)



There is no specific information on the fares for the Handibus except that they are twice that of the regular fixed route transit. St. Albert's goal is to bring into effect fare parity. There was one reference to subsidizing the Handibus and limited accessible taxi service in the report:

The role of Handibus in providing door-to-door specialized transit means that it requires a significantly higher subsidy to provide an equal level of mobility.<sup>41</sup> (Page 13)

As with other municipalities with urban and rural populations, subsidizing specialized transportation service is viewed as a short term solution. In the County of Brant, this approach can be undertaken provided that the County investigate other funding sources. It is not practical to identify the short term elimination of subsidies for the specialized transportation service (taxi-based) without ensuring that people with disabilities living in the County of Brant have an alternative in place and functioning. Any move from the subsidized special transportation service to a parity based one needs to be seamless.

## **Kingston Ontario**

Kingston has been showcased as a model of specialized transportation delivery, however as with any model, there are clients whose needs may not be met<sup>42</sup> and gaps in the delivery of service. As a progressive model of service delivery it provides a good foundation for the County of Brant and other municipalities. The blog article is referenced to illustrate that no solution meets everyone's needs. The goal is inclusive design and universal access to the extent it can be provided. This is why the County of Brant needs to hear from those using the specialized transportation service.

Currently Kingston does not have a policy on accessible taxis as part of their specialized transportation service. However, Kingston did commission a study on this issue and options for implementing accessible taxi service as part of the specialized transportation service strategy.<sup>43</sup>

The establishment of wheelchair on-demand accessible transportation systems, comparable to those of the rest of the community enhances the opportunity for people with disabilities to participate fully. The goal, therefore, is to identify the most viable

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<sup>41</sup> St. Albet's Handibus Final Report: <http://www.stalbert.ca/uploads/files/transit/Handibus%20Final%20Report-%2004-20-12%202.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Transit Blog article by "wheelchairdemon:" <http://wheelchairdemon-transit.blogspot.ca/>

<sup>43</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc: [http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

solution to enable persons with disabilities the same demand-responsive service throughout the community as standard taxis offer other travelers<sup>44</sup>. (Page 5)

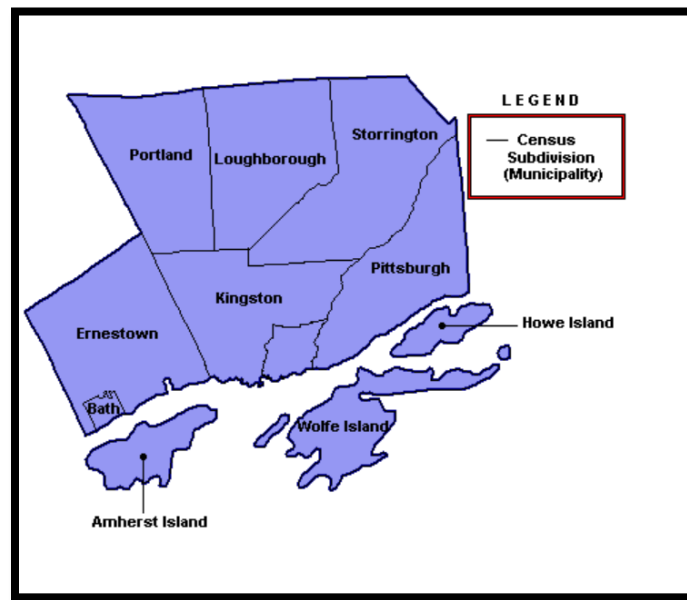


Figure 4 Map: EI Economic Region of Kingston.<sup>45</sup>

One of the areas of discussion in the City of Kingston report is the use of standardized versus wheelchair accessible vehicles. Recognizing that not all people with disabilities require wheelchair equipped taxis, one option in reviewing and revising the specialized transportation service in the County of Brant would be for the client to identify the need for a wheelchair accessible/ramp equipped vehicle. This would allow standard taxis to be used for people with disabilities who use walkers, canes and mobility aids other than wheelchairs. Some people with disabilities may find it easier to get in and out of a standard taxi than a van.

“Any discussion about accessible taxi services should recognize that taxis are already accessible to customers with a wide range of disabilities, including wheelchair users. The existing taxi service in the City of Kingston, which uses sedans or vans, can accommodate wheelchair users who are able to transfer from a wheelchair to a taxi

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<sup>44</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:

[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Map of Economic Region of Kingston Ontario:

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=images+of+region+of+kingston+ontario&view=detail&id=46BEC56E27C033A9A93A89EC66425FAB47E25FFA&first=0&qpv=images+of+region+of+kingston+ontario&FORM=IDFRIR>

seat. The issue is, therefore, not about accessibility; it is about full accessibility for those users who require transportation while remaining in a wheel chair or scooter.”

“Full accessibility requires specialized vehicles that are equipped to transport people who remain seated in wheelchairs or scooters during the trip and the service needs to be provided by drivers trained in the operation and safety considerations of these vehicles. To bring the service in line with that provided to the rest of the community, wheelchair accessible vehicles with properly trained drivers should be available 24-hours a day and seven days a week, on an on-demand basis. This is currently not the case in the City of Kingston as there are no wheelchair accessible taxi vehicles.<sup>46</sup> (Page 18)

Payment of drivers of accessible vehicles is also discussed in the City of Kingston report:

“In order to attract drivers to provide wheelchair accessible service, efforts are needed to ensure the same potential to generate income as a driver of a standard taxicab (generally accomplished through providing an hourly wage). This further increases the cost of service.<sup>47</sup>” (Page 6)

Kingston has considered fares and discounts into the implementation of a specialized transportation service that includes taxis:

“A taxi scrip program is another option used by some municipalities which provides discount taxi vouchers to eligible customers. Program participants are responsible for the cost difference between the voucher value and the actual meter charge. A taxi scrip program which is currently not available in Kingston may, in fact, be a more cost effective way of serving needs than increasing paratransit services as this program will typically reduce the demand for paratransit service, with the potential to reduce the overall net municipal cost of service. However, savings will only materialize if a commensurate reduction in the paratransit contract is undertaken. As such, at this time, a taxi scrip program for on-demand accessible service is not recommended until a comprehensive accessible transportation strategy is developed and a cost benefit

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<sup>46</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:  
[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:  
[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

analysis is undertaken to rationalize the most effective manner in which to coordinate services and discounts between paratransit and accessible taxi service.<sup>48</sup>” (Page 7)

The importance of including people with disabilities in the planning and transportation strategy of a community is emphasized in the Kingston report:

“A number of stakeholders, were interviewed during the course of this study which consistently identified a need to better coordinate all accessible transportation services and develop a comprehensive action plan. A coordinated transportation plan centered on the needs of the customer's perspective will also help to maximize transportation resources in the community.<sup>49</sup>” (Page 7)

Currently in the County of Brant, no formal studies have been undertaken and people with disabilities have not been asked as a whole to provide feedback and ideas on how to improve the service or how well the service is meeting their needs. As many people with disabilities face issues of low income (both seniors and those under age 60) the barrier faced by fare parity in the form of paying the same rate for a taxi as people without disabilities is an arduous one. With a round trip fare to Brantford, where most of the health care, employment, educational and recreational activities are being a minimum of \$40.00, fare parity is not practical. A subsidy of some level is required to ensure that people with disabilities in the County of Brant can be mobile and participate in their communities.

At this time there is no data available on how many people use the specialized transportation service in the County of Brant or the trip destinations (how many are local versus to Brantford and other communities within the County). This data needs to be retrieved from the contractor of the special transportation service.

The County of Brant needs to examine all types of subsidy/funding for the specialized transportation service. In the case of specialized transportation services where taxi is the only mode of transportation used, fare parity among people with disabilities is as important as trying to achieve fare parity between specialized transportation services and conventional transportation services.

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<sup>48</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:  
[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:  
[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

The City of Kingston report, after reviewing funding options, had a recommendation for a small increase in fare for taxis serving the Kingston area:

“In recognition of the additional cost of service, the desire to avoid direct municipal subsidy, and the desire to secure a steady funding source, it is recommended that a small surcharge be instituted for all taxicab fares. It is recommended that the Taxi Commission be requested to increase the drop rate (this the amount charged upon entering the taxi which is currently \$2.85 plus GST) by \$0.05 per trip for all taxi fares (accessible and standard) which would be available to the wheelchair accessible taxi service providers to offset all estimated additional costs to the brokers of operating a wheelchair accessible taxi. It is anticipated that this would have no impact on driver income as this additional \$0.05 per trip would flow through to the brokers as the service provider of the wheelchair accessible taxi service. This would be equivalent to a 0.7% increase for a customer on an average taxi fare, and even less for longer trips. It is anticipated that this would have limited/no impact on the demand for service or affordability from a customer perspective.

“This approach offers the advantage of spreading the cost over a large customer base with limited/no impact on customers and it fully offsets the additional capital and operating costs of accessible on-demand taxi service. This will improve the economic viability and sustainability of the service. This approach would be easy to administer, particularly if the accessible plates are issued to the three taxi brokers, maintains equity across the industry and will not impact the City's levy requirements. This innovative approach should create the impetus for the industry to provide wheelchair accessible on-demand taxi service. As the population ages and demand for wheelchair accessible taxis increases, the need for ongoing subsidization through a fare surcharge may not be necessary.<sup>50</sup>” (Page 9)

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<sup>50</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:  
[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

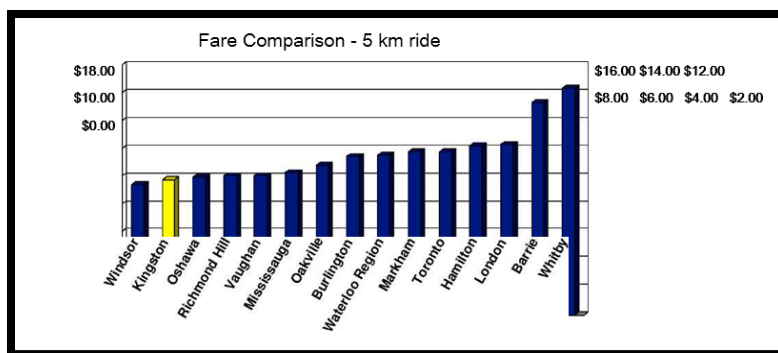


Figure 5 City of Kingston, Fare Comparison - 5 km ride<sup>51</sup> (Page 10)

In exploring funding of the specialized transportation service where taxis are the vehicles and the municipality is larger, there is a greater opportunity to reduce subsidies from the municipality. In the County of Brant, there are two taxi companies and no fixed route bus based transit.

“Generally, municipalities that have taxi companies operating with large fleets rather than many small independent businesses have an increased ability to provide accessible service with no subsidy. The fleet managers are able to offset losses in accessible service against the operating profits of standard taxi service. In the City of Kingston, where the industry is comprised of many small independent businesses, without some form of incentive for individual plate holders operating wheelchair accessible taxis, this approach would likely not be sustainable.<sup>52</sup> (Page 9)

One of the other recommendations in the City of Kingston report is that all drivers receive training on the wheelchair accessible vehicles.<sup>53</sup> (page 11) Currently in the County of Brant there are only a few drivers who can drive the specialized transportation service vehicles. If all drivers were trained to drive the wheelchair accessible taxis the need for specialized drivers would be spread among the general taxi driver population.

<sup>51</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc: [http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

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It should be noted that in the County of Brant there are some taxi drivers with disabilities. Although all drivers will receive training under the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation, the existence of drivers with disabilities needs to be considered in any municipality when determining a strategy for reducing funding of the specialized transportation service. The goal of equal access to one's community also includes equal access to employment by people with disabilities.

As the number of drivers with disabilities is not great, spreading the work to all drivers in the taxi company can help reduce costs and increase service for a specialized transportation service.

The City of Kingston report identified some pilot projects to be considered including providing each operator with one wheelchair accessible plate.<sup>54</sup> (Page 13) This would be done to encourage competition and decentralize a specialized transportation service from one company. There are more than two taxi companies in Kingston as well as independent operators. The recommendation in the Kingston report is to provide the plates to the companies as opposed to the independent operators in the pilot project.

This approach would give people with disabilities a choice in their service provider. The program can still be subsidized at the municipal level by having any tokens or taxi scripts sold by the County instead of through a taxi company or sold through the taxi company that would have purchased the tokens or taxi scripts from the County.

Any program changes to the specialized transportation service in the County of Brant MUST include detailed documentation provided to the County each month on ridership levels, number of trips and destinations (local or to Brantford). Currently this information is not available.

The report by the City of Kingston is by far the most comprehensive discussion of implementing a specialized transportation service that is taxi-based. The County of Brant has an existing specialized transportation service that needs to be reconsidered in that the contract ended June 1, 2011 and is operating under an extension, the contractor is making changes to the service and it is not clear whether these changes are approved by the County or are covered in the contract, and the changes are in direct opposition to the Accessible Ontarians with

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<sup>54</sup> Accessible On-Demand Taxi Service, City of Kingston Draft Report, Management Consulting Inc:  
[http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi\\_DraftReport.pdf](http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/transportation/AccessibleTaxi_DraftReport.pdf)

Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation (for example, a reduction of hours of service booking).

## Waterloo Ontario

Grand River Transit is the fixed bus route system used in urban Waterloo as a specialized transportation service. In 2010 Waterloo/Mobility Plus revised their mission statement:

“MobilityPLUS provides persons with disabilities in the Urban Service Area of Waterloo Region and North Dumfries with access to safe, convenient and comfortable transportation, encouraging the use of Grand River Transit accessible buses whenever possible and providing a range of specialized services to people who cannot use regular transit due to a disability<sup>55</sup>”.

The Region of Waterloo has a model of program delivery that includes three options of transportation for people with disabilities: MobilityPlus, Kiwanis Transit and Grand River Transit. It also includes access to accessible taxi vehicles.

“Improving the quality of taxi service, reducing the unit costs of the van services, and meeting the requirements of the AODA are therefore the watchwords of this new plan.<sup>56</sup>”

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<sup>55</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 5

<sup>56</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 1.



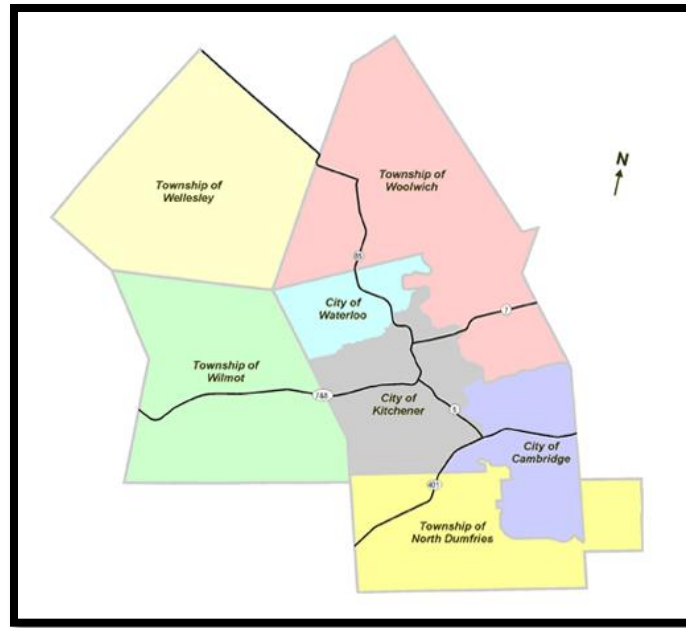


Figure 6 Map of Waterloo region.<sup>57</sup>

In 2002 Grand River Transit commissioned a five year business plan study.

“TaxiSCRIP, introduced in 2003, provided 62,000 spontaneous trips in sedan and accessible taxis, subsidized 50% by MobilityPLUS.”

“Perhaps most significant of all, in 2010 MobilityPLUS registrants made 106,000 trips on GRT conventional transit under the free fare incentive program. The Program Commuter Bus service, introduced in June 2008, now carries about 7,000 passenger trips each year transporting people with cognitive disabilities to and from their work or program “activities.

“Progress has been made towards an effective travel training program to foster in people with disabilities and seniors the skills they need to use GRT conventional service effectively.<sup>58</sup>”

<sup>57</sup> Map of Waterloo region: <http://www.movingtowaterlooregion.ca/about/localmunicipalities.html>

<sup>58</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 2

The Region of Waterloo conducts customer surveys to assist in planning for the specialized transportation service:

“Urban customers have concerns regarding the quality of taxi services operating under contract to MobilityPLUS, especially sedan taxis. Also mentioned were the inability to obtain a trip when needed at peak travel times, long waits on the phone when requesting a trip, and uneven schedule adherence.”<sup>59</sup>

Currently the County of Brant has no mechanism to receive complaints or feedback on the specialized transportation service. As the contractor makes arbitrary decisions on when customers can schedule trips and other measures, reliability of the specialized transportation service is rapidly deteriorating in the County of Brant.

In section 5.3 of the five year business plan, the Waterloo region identifies specific goals for their taxi-based specialized transportation service:

“Performance-based contracts for sedan and accessible taxis. Now that the recent change in Regional bylaws makes it possible to employ taxis at rates other than the meter rate (flat-rate, distance-based, or some variant of meter rate) and to negotiate specific terms of service, MobilityPLUS has the opportunity to develop improved taxi service contracts that identify specific performance targets such as on-time performance, vehicle and driver cleanliness and fitness, a minimum standard of driver training, complaint reduction, and reporting, and which offer incentives for excellent performance. During this Business Plan period, updates to the contracts for taxi services should be implemented to encourage and achieve better performance and higher quality service.

Expansion of trips. Over the life of the Business Plan, the number of annual trips provided by contracted sedan and accessible taxis should expand to 85,000 from the current 70,000.

Strategic deployment. These trips should be focused on evening and weekend hours when it is uneconomical to use a MobilityPLUS van, including those hours when additional service will be required by incoming AODA regulations. These will be ‘fringe’ hours when demand for service is limited. Taxis will also continue to be used at other

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<sup>59</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 3.

times to absorb overflow trips, particularly longer trips where ride-sharing potential is minimal and vehicle utilization is low.

Additional accessible taxi licenses. Regional licensing officials report that all 15 accessible taxi licenses are currently in use. To create more capacity, Grand River Transit should consider requesting the Region to create additional accessible taxi licenses. Regional licensing officials have suggested that they would be receptive to such a request.<sup>60</sup>

Section 5 of the five year plan identifies the need for a staff person whose responsibilities include the monitoring of the program,

“Creation of a Technical Coordinator position reporting to the Assistant Manager MobilityPLUS. This position, made necessary by the anticipated increase in service hours required by the AODA, for which additional management-level support is needed, would also discharge the important functions of :

“Centralizing expertise on the mobile data terminals and scheduling software,”

“Interfacing with technology vendors,”

“Coordinating technical training for call-takers, schedulers, dispatchers and drivers,”

“Helping to define and monitor key service productivity and quality indicators, and “

“Advising the Assistant Manager on technical issues. “

“This position might also be assigned responsibility for the annual accessibility plan and for coordinating and monitoring AODA compliance measures.”

“It is noted that since the need to cover these functions is acute and immediate, making the position a two or three-year contract assignment, rather than a permanent position would make it easier to proceed. The ongoing need for the position could then be reviewed after two years to determine whether a permanent position is still required.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 5.

<sup>61</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 5, page 7.

Given the lack of information available related to the existing or extended contract for the specialized transportation service operating in the County of Brant, dedicating staff to manage the contract and deliverables for the County as well as providing information on accessible vehicles, fare infrastructures and what is being deployed in other municipalities will mitigate the chances of the County being in the same chaotic situation it has found itself in 2012. The staff person will then be able to contribute to the master transportation plan for the County and realistic figures and data will be readily available to County Council when making decisions on the specialized transportation system.

The Region of Waterloo is also investigating alternate payment options:

“On-line, IVR and web-based trip confirmation, cancellation and booking. If implemented by 2014, these options might fulfill the AODA obligation for extended booking hours, and save the service significant extra staff time.”

“Pre-paid fares available to all clients. Some leading software packages include this capability as a no-cost option. It is a great convenience to passengers who have difficulty handling cash or tickets. It reduces the time and effort of daily cash and ticket counts. It also provides an easy way to deduct fares for late cancellations and no-shows. “

“Re-loadable TaxiSCRIP and fare cards. “

“Negotiate a discount off the meter rate for TaxiSCRIP passengers. MobilityPLUS might be able to achieve this because of it is a major purchaser of taxi services. Changes to the Regional taxi by-law now seem to make this feasible.<sup>62</sup>”

At this time the priority of the County of Brant is to reign in the overages and put in place accountability mechanisms by both the County and the contractor for the specialized transportation service. Alternate fare options are presented in this report to demonstrate that options are available and need to be discussed in the context of the County of Brant Master Transportation Plan and the five year plan for the specialized transportation service in the County.

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<sup>62</sup> Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Grand River Transit, MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit - Five-Year Business Plan 2012 – 2016, page 23.

A critical component of any planning is the consultation with people with disabilities to identify the needs and usage of the current specialized transportation system. Attention also needs to be paid to the growing aging population in the County. People may prefer to use cars, however as people age and driving is not an option, the specialized transportation service will maintain its role in securing independence for people with disabilities and seniors in the County of Brant.

## Recommendations and Summary

This report was undertaken in response to arbitrary changes in the provision of the specialized transportation service in the County of Brant known as County Service. The contract dispute between the County and the contractor has put the independence and mobility of people with disabilities at risk.

Although on June 6, 2012 the County Council reversed its decision to cut service to people with disabilities, the conflict remains. One of the critical pieces of moving forward by the County will be the dedication of staff to manage the contract and the specialized transportation service. Currently there are no figures available on the number of people using the service, the number of trips per day, the destinations or the number of inter-municipal (to Brantford and other County communities) trips. Without data, good decisions cannot be made.

1. It is recommended that a forensic accounting of the specialized transportation service provider be conducted in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services (Ontario Disability Support Plan) and Veteran's Affairs to determine the number of trips, destinations and billing practices for all three agencies currently funding the specialized transportation service. From the forensic accounting we can pull the data necessary to make decisions going forward with County Service.
2. The creation of a task force/working group on June 6, 2012 by the County to review and make recommendations on the specialized transportation service by August 2012 is a good start in taking back control of the contract and the specialized transportation service by the County of Brant. The scope of this task force /working group is to create the criteria for an RFP (Request for Proposal) if a single company continues to operate the specialized transportation service or to recommend that the specialized transportation service be distributed to all taxi companies in Paris. Fare parity and the amount of subsidy from the County will also be explored to determine areas where funding can be reduced and/or distributed to the general taxi industry in the County.
3. As per Section 2.3 of the contract which ended June 1, 2011, it is recommended that this clause be reviewed as the specialized transportation service provider is inferring that it is the specialized transportation service that is creating the situation where the company is going out of business. Since the contractor who operates the specialized transportation service also operates a conventional transportation service (both of them

tax- based), once again a forensic accountant is recommended in addition to legal advice related to this section of the contract.

4. The author of this report did not have access to any of the schedules attached to the contract for specialized transportation service with the County of Brant. It is recommended that these schedules be reviewed for compliance.
5. The author did not have access to the data regarding ridership or destinations (local or to Brantford or other communities), whether they were shared or single rides, and the average regular fare for each trip or what was charged to the specialized transportation service (specifically related to shared rides).
6. It is clear from the terms of the contract that ended June 1, 2011 that clearly defined deliverables, terms and accountability will be needed to ensure problems in the future with the contractor are minimized and the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation are implemented.
7. If there is a dispute over the contract that requires legal intervention, then both parties should pursue this independent of eliminating service for people with disabilities.
8. It is recommended that the sections of the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Part IV – Transportation that can be implemented immediately be implemented as soon as possible. The issue of fare parity requires further discussion. It would seem to be contrary to the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, part IV – Transportation to exclude some people with disabilities from subsidized fares.
9. Given that every randomly chosen municipality reviewed for this report has subsidized special transportation services (where taxi-based service exists);, and section 11 of the Ontario Human rights Code; fare parity within a large municipality where taxi-based service is the only means of conventional or specialized transportation is discriminatory. It adds an additional layer of discrimination to People with disabilities who are typically low income and on disability pensions or support plans.
  - a. It is recommended that all types of funding be explored including the use of the gas tax incentive, grants and subsidies as well as the funding of specialized transportation services under the provincial government’s “Aging at Home Strategy.”

10. It is recommended that the County and the specialized transportation service provider take advantage of the Ontario Human Rights Commission educational offerings around their human rights obligations. Even the Ontario Municipal Board has a “Ontario Municipal Accessibility Toolkit: Accessible Transportation Standard<sup>63</sup>” to assist municipalities in implementing the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation.

It is clear from all of the reports that the key issue in providing taxi-based specialized transportation services for any municipality is the cost of the wheelchair accessible vehicles, the limited number of qualified drivers and the current need to subsidize part of the fare to encourage access to accessible transportation for people with disabilities.

It is also clear from these reports and documents referenced for this report, that there are many innovative solutions being discussed and implemented.

It is recommended that once the County of Brant has found a resolution to the current contract dispute the County can focus on a viable accessible transportation plan to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the County as the population of people with disabilities and those who are aging increases.

It is also recommended that this process as well as information related to the specialized transportation service be transparent and publically available so that everyone knows the rules. Currently there is a noticeable lack of information and data available. Providing detailed information on the specialized transportation service is one of the first items in the Accessible Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV – Transportation. All participants in the specialized transportation service, the County, the contractor and those of us with disabilities need clear detailed information to refer to.

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<sup>63</sup> Ontario Municipal Accessibility Toolkit – Accessible Transportation Standard:  
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