2018 Town of Huntsville Transit Needs Assessment and Ridership Growth Plan
Final Report

November 5,2018

Transit Consulting Network

Town of Huntsville Project Team

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Town of Huntsville retained the services of Transit Consulting Network to undertake the 2018 Huntsville Transit Needs Assessment and Ridership Growth Plan to provide a blueprint for improvements to public transit over the next five years (2019-2023). The Ridership Growth Plan was to address enhancements to transit within the Huntsville urban area currently served as well as investigate public transit service connections to the nearby communities of Novar, Port Sydney, and Deerhurst/ Hidden Valley. A transit asset management plan will also need to be in place to ensure sufficient rolling stock, infrastructure and technology is in place to support the proposed transit service plan.

1.2 Study Scope

The study was broken down into the following phases and tasks:

- Phase I: Critical Evaluation of Existing Public Transportation Services
  - To provide the Municipality with an in-depth understanding of Huntsville Transit operations from a logistics and community-wide perspective
- Phase II: Transit Ridership Growth Plan
  - Development of a Policy Framework for both fixed-route transit that is in line with the Municipality's strategic direction and the community's transit priorities
  - Develop route and service concepts based on the policy framework and best practices that would be carried forward to Phase III
- Phase III: Transit Service Plan
  - Development of the 2019-2023 Transit service expansion plan
  - Development of the Transit Asset Management Plan
  - Transit Ridership Growth Plan report

The ultimate goal and challenge are to make adjustments to Huntsville Transit that will improve its ability to meet the community needs and comply with existing and impending AODA requirements, while operating effectively within available resources, and not over-committing the Town of Huntsville financially. The study must find solid evidence on which to base recommendations that will lower the cost and/or improve the quality and availability of transit and mobility services, while ensuring full and timely compliance with AODA requirements.

1.3 Description of Existing Huntsville Transit Service

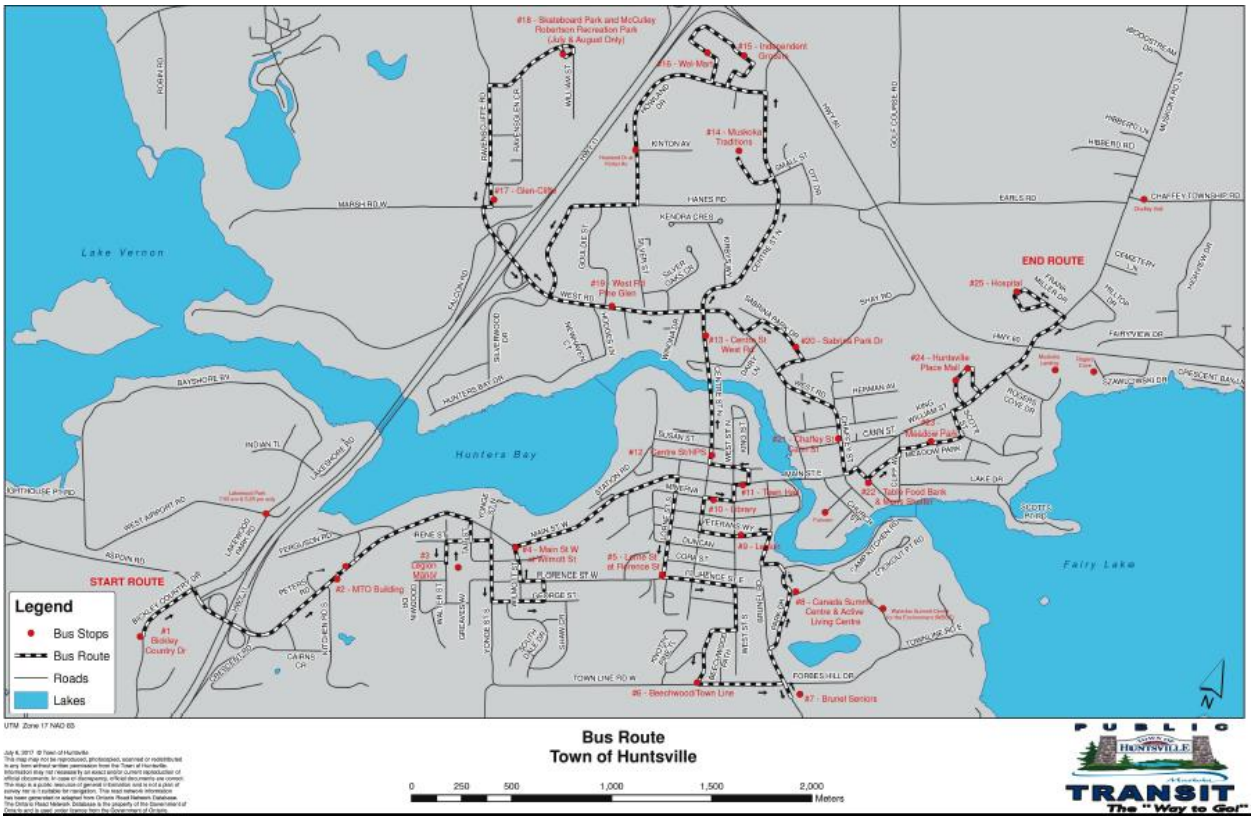
Huntsville Transit operates within the 12 square kilometres within the urban area of the Town of Huntsville, with service contracted to Campbell Bus Lines. There are approximately 50 designated bus stops in place where transit customers can board.

Transit customers can also request to be picked up and dropped off in non-designated areas where it is safe to do so; this practice is referred to as a 'flag stop'.

1.3.1 Huntsville Transit Route and Service Description

Huntsville Transit provides two types of public transit service described as follows:

- Conventional Transit: A single bus travels between Bickley County Dr. to the Huntsville District Memorial Hospital (herein referred to as the hospital) with two hours scheduled for the return trip. The bus operates along a fixed route and schedule during the following hours:
    - Weekdays 8:00am – 7:00pm
    - Saturdays 10:00am – 5:30pm
    - Sundays and statutory holidays – no service
- Conventional Modified Transit (CMT), which is a separate bus that operates as a dial-a-ride service by providing door-to-door and curb-to-curb service during the following hours:
    - Weekdays 8:00am – 5:00pm
    - Weekdays 5:00pm to 7:00pm and Saturday 10:00am – 5:30pm (at which time service requests are accommodated by Conventional Transit)
    - Sundays and statutory holidays – no service



1.3.2 Huntsville Transit Fleet

Huntsville Transit has a fleet of 3 vehicles, which are owned and operated by the service contractor, Campbell Bus Lines:

- 2015 F450 20-passenger bus with one wheelchair position
- 2011 F450 12-passenger bus with one wheelchair position
- 2009 F450 18-passenger bus with one wheelchair position; this bus is used as a spare vehicle

The average life cycle is reported to be six (6) years. At the time of this study, the 2011 F450 is scheduled for replacement by the end of 2018. The vehicle on order is a 2018 F450 that can be configured to carry 20 ambulatory passengers and one wheelchair, or two wheelchairs and 12 ambulatory passengers.

1.4 The Case to Support Transit Investments

Communities are finding that residents faced with the loss of personal mobility or unable to afford a car, are increasingly inclined or obliged to move to communities where affordable public transportation exists. Likewise, employers consider the availability of public transportation when making business location decisions. A major factor that makes possible a good quality of life is the availability of affordable public transportation since it enables those without access to a private car to obtain goods, services, jobs, and maximize social connectedness, now considered a health maintenance benefit.

The market for transit – students, the low-income working people, people with disabilities, senior citizens, people on social assistance, and those that simply want to forego having a 2nd or 3rd car are all segments of the population whose needs should not be ignored. The viability of policies to maintain the elderly in their homes instead of in long-term care, access to health care, social services, and essential maintenance such as shopping and banking all depend on personal mobility. Community leaders seeking to reverse or stabilize a potential decline in population must consider access to transportation as a key issue affecting the vitality and the financial health of their community.

ANNUAL DRIVING COSTS – based on the Camry LE				
Km driven per year	Annual operating costs (variable)	Annual ownership costs (fixed)	Total cost	Cost per km
12,000 km	$1,975.20	$7,179.84	$9,155.04	$0.76
16,000 km	$2,633.60	$7,494.00	$10,127.60	$0.63
18,000 km	$2,962.80	$7,494.00	$10,456.80	$0.58
24,000 km	$3,950.40	$7,801.08	$11,751.48	$0.49
32,000 km	$5,267.20	$8,373.48	$13,640.68	$0.43

Table 1: CAA 2015 Driving Costs

Another key factor that can be considered to support the availability of affordable public transit is the positive financial impact transit can have on a community. For example, the

ability to reduce car ownership can have a profound effect on a household's finances and quality of life. Table 1: CAA 2015 Driving Costs, based on a Toyota Camry LE, provides insight into the true cost of car ownership.

For auto owners who drive 16,000 kilometres per year, the total annual cost reported to own and operate a vehicle is $10,127per year. Arbitrarily applying a factor of 75% to be conservative, this would still equate to $7,600 per year or $630 per month compared to a Huntsville Transit monthly bus pass at $52.50, saving residents $577.50 per month. These savings would likely be spent on purchasing goods and services to support local businesses and improving the quality of life of residents.

For those residents who earn little income and are obliged to own a vehicle in order to get to and from work, car ownership is a financial burden. For example, a person working part-time, 24 hours per week, with a net income of $12 per hour must work 12 of those hours just to own and operate a vehicle. This consumes one-half of their earnings. A major car repair expense can be devastating. Those on low fixed incomes or who are more severely under-employed face even greater challenges.

2. PHASE I: CRITICAL EVALUATION OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

2.1 Transit Report Card and Peer Review

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) has kept records of individual transit systems and their performance across Canada since 1980 when transit systems began reporting detailed data annually. The data is summarized in annual Canadian Urban Transit Fact Books. This mature database has evolved over the years, is consistent, and is designed for industry professionals. The Ministry of Transportation of Ontario requires Ontario municipalities that apply for the 2-cent per litre dedicated gas tax funding to report similar statistics as a condition of funding. The Ontario database is managed by CUTA.

The data was analyzed for two purposes:

- To measure Huntsville Transit performance over the 5-year, 2013-2017 period
- To compare key 2016 Huntsville Transit performance metrics in relation to its peer group

Note (*): At the time of writing and analysis, 2017 data was not available for the peer group transit systems; however, having 2017 data would not impact the final study recommendations, which are based on priorities established during the community engagement process.

2.1.1 2012-2016 Huntsville Transit Report Card

Table 2: 2013-2017 Huntsville Transit Performance Data quantifies the change in performance over the five-year period.

2013-2017 CUTA Statistics -Huntsville Transit Report Card												
Year	Municipal Population	Service Area Population	Ridership	Total Direct Operating Expense	Passenger Revenues	Revenue Vehicle Hours	Cost per Hour	Passengers per Hour	Vehicle Hours per Capita	Revenue Passengers per Capita	Net Investment per Capita	Average Fare
2013	19,056	10,000	25,892	$242,067	$30,354	5,500	$43.98	4.7	0.55	2.59	$11.21	$1.17
2014	19,056	10,000	27,358	$248,681	$33,840	5,500	$45.21	4.97	0.55	2.74	$16.21	$1.24
2015	19,056	10,000	28,966	$260,151	$31,705	5,500	$47.30	5.27	0.55	2.90	$12.16	$1.09
2016	19,056	10,000	28,246	$273,232	$28,246	5,500	$49.68	5.20	0.55	2.86	$9.80	$0.99
2017	20,600	10,000	27,999	$281,152	$34,698	5,500	$51.12	5.09	0.55	2.80	$9.80	$1.24
% Change 2017 Vs 2013	8.1%	0.0%	8.1%	16.1%	14.3%	0.0%	16.2%	8.3%	0.0%	8.1%	-12.6%	5.9%

Table 2: 2013 – 2017 Huntsville Transit Report Card

2.1.2 2016 Huntsville Transit Peer Review

Comparisons were made of the various operating, service performance and financial data with eight other Ontario transit systems. Caution must be exercised when comparing peer review statistics since the peer review only provides a high-level assessment of transit service levels and costs in other comparable jurisdictions.

The criteria guiding the selection of peer review jurisdictions for comparison purposes with the Town of Huntsville were Ontario municipalities with a population below 40,000 with a similar service area and population density. It should be noted that transit systems across Ontario can vary significantly due to factors such as:

- Local labour costs
- Municipally operated versus contracted services
- Climate and topography
- Local bus fare policies
- High school student transportation policies (yellow school bus versus public transit)
- Local financial commitment to transit

Nine (9) Ontario municipal jurisdictions were selected and the 2016 data illustrated in Table 3 below. Since transit operating environments can vary significantly, direct comparisons between one jurisdiction and another should be made with caution.

2016 Canadian Urban Transit Association Statistics Peer Review													
Jurisdiction	Municipal Population	Ridership	Fleet Size	Total Direct Operating Expense	Passenger Revenues	Revenue Vehicle Hours	Cost per Hour	Passengers per Hour	Revenue Vehicle Hours per Capita	Revenue Passengers per Capita	Net Investment per Capita	Adult Cash Fare	Average Fare
Huntsville	19,056	28,593	5	$273,232	$28,246	5,500	$49.68	5.20	0.55	2.86	$9.80	$2.00	$0.99
Wasaga Beach	20,675	79,549	3	$587,567	$131,126	9,984	$58.85	7.96	0.48	3.84	$14.67	$2.00	$1.65
Collingwood	43,231	210,619	7	$760,158	$173,835	14,204	$50.36	14.83	0.75	11.09	$23.71	$2.00	$0.83
Fort Erie	30,710	56,526	4	$664,370	$36,972	8,791	$75.57	6.43	0.29	1.84	$16.56	$2.50	$0.63
Leamington	27,595	20,300	2	$252,757	$29,009	4,240	$59.61	4.79	0.21	1.02	$5.00	$2.00	$1.21
Midland	17,000	65,303	1	$235,029	$64,156	3,150	$74.61	15.48	0.25	3.90	$8.86	$2.00	$1.20
Port Colborne	18,600	21,410	2	$200,826	$54,870	2,510	$79.92	8.53	0.14	1.17	$8.00	$2.75	$2.40
Tecumseh	23,229	26,870	2	$271,005	$26,295	3,600	$75.28	7.46	0.21	1.56	$4.77	$2.00	$0.98
Quinte West	43,086	62,435	5	$557,582	$87,613	11,416	$43.03	5.47	0.59	3.20	$4.72	$2.00	$1.25
Brockville	21,870	102,797	5	$716,669	$189,715	11,005	$63.11	9.34	0.50	4.70	$16.32	$2.25	$1.76
Average of Peer Group	**27,333**	**71,757**	**3**	**$471,774**	**$88,177**	**7,656**	**$64.48**	**8.92**	**0.38**	**3.59**	**$11.40**	**$2.17**	**$1.32**
ON <50,000 Pop.	1,219,854	8,829,825	239	$32,879,581	$15,423,808	524,108	$80.93	16.40	0.60	9.52	$24.79	$3.62	$1.75

Table 3: 2016 Huntsville Transit Peer Review

2.1.3 Assessment of Huntsville Transit Performance

Transit Ridership and Services Hours

As can be seen in Exhibits 1 and 2, while the amount of service provided remained relatively static. From 2013 to 2017 in Huntsville, there was a modest 8.1% increase in transit use. It is interesting to note; however, that based on the 2004 Huntsville Transit Ridership Growth Plan and Asset Management Plan service increased by 130%: from 2,375 hours per year in 2004 to 5,500 hours in 2013. Transit use had also increased during the same period by 83% from 15,173 in 2004 to 27,999 in 2017. This can be explained by the increased investment in transit by the Town of Huntsville when the Province of Ontario 2-cent per litre dedicated transit gas tax was introduced.

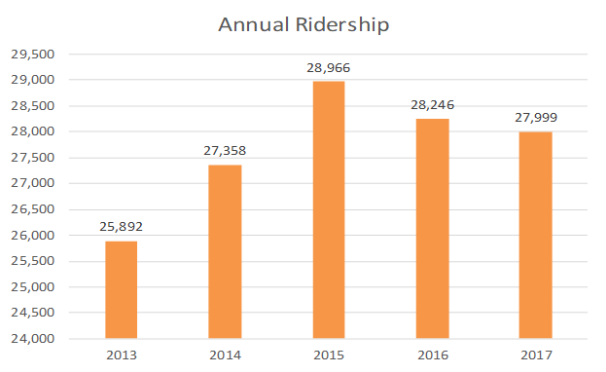


Exhibit 1: 2013-2017 Huntsville Transit Ridership

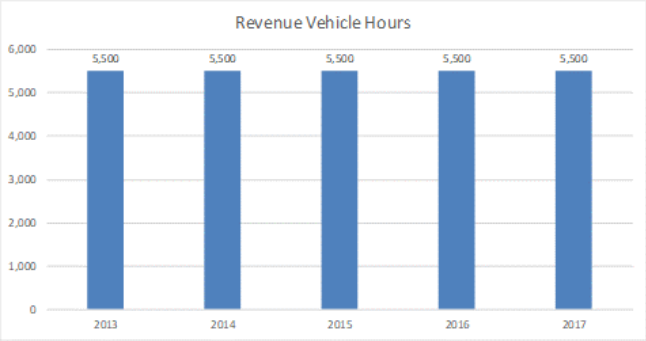


Exhibit 2: 2013-2017 Huntsville Transit Revenue Hours

To quantify the relative amount of service provided by the Town of Huntsville, the Service Hours per Capita measure has been developed in the transit industry, which is simply the number of annual hours of revenue service divided by the service area

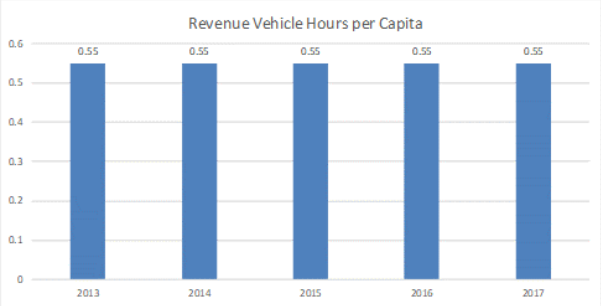


Exhibit 3: 2012-2016 Huntsville Revenue Hours per Capita

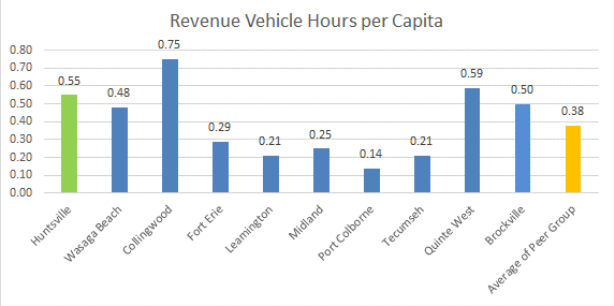


Exhibit 4: 2016 Peer Group Revenue Hours per Capita

population. These have been summarized in Exhibits 3 and 4.

On a per capita basis, the Huntsville Transit service area population (reported at 10,000 residents) remained static at 0.55 hours of service per capita. Although this compares favourably against the average value of the peer group (0.38 hours per capita), it is somewhat misleading. In this regard, the annual hours to accommodate the demand-responsive, wheelchair accessible service - also referred to as 'specialized transit' - is included in the annual service hours per capita served. This figure should be reported separately to CUTA since it is excluded in the hours reported for conventional transit; as such, we estimate that Transit Revenue Hours per Capita equal to 0.3 hours per capita served.

Further, based on recent transit studies undertaken by Transit Consulting Network, municipalities such as the Town of Fort Erie (2016), Town of Wasaga Beach (2018), and Municipality of Leamington (2018) will be increasing transit service levels to approximately 1.0 hours per capita. The trend to increase transit service levels in smaller communities is expected to continue as populations continue to grow and as the

transit-dependent number of seniors and other population groups will continue to increase.

Huntsville Transit Efficiency

Transit systems across Canada use the Passengers per Hour of service statistic as one measure to quantify transit efficiency and to help determine when to increase or modify service. Exhibit 5 and Exhibit 6 illustrate Huntsville Transit's efficiency from 2013 to 2017 and in comparison, with its peer group in 2016, respectively.

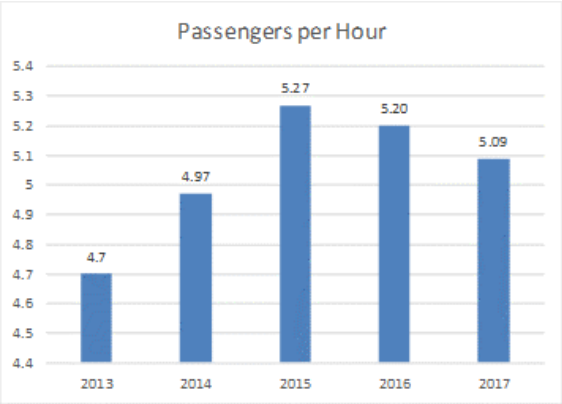


Exhibit 5: 2013-2017 Huntsville Passengers per Hour

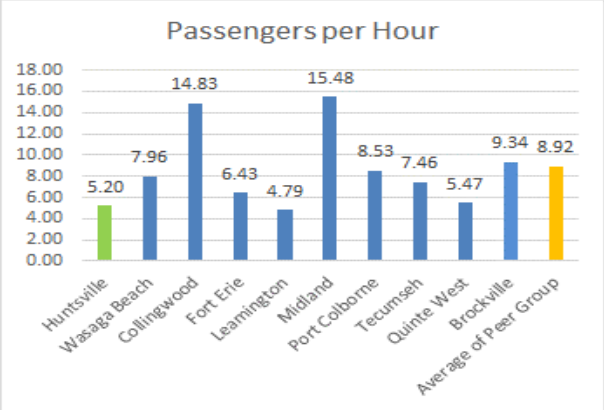


Exhibit 6: 2016 Peer Group Revenue Passengers per Hour

There was an 8.3% improvement in service efficiency from 2013 to 2017 during the 5-year period, although annual hours of service remained constant. In comparison to the peer group average in 2016, Huntsville Transit's service efficiency of 5.2 passengers per hour is 42% below its peer group average value of 8.92 passengers per hour. This can be explained by the fact that the demand-responsive service (Conventional Modified Transit) statistics are included in the data reported, whereas the peer group numbers are for fixed-route services only.

Huntsville Transit Service Effectiveness

A key measure of a transit system's effectiveness is how many trips are taken annually based on the population served in a given year, which is expressed in the industry as Revenue Passengers per Capita. This is calculated using the total passengers carried in a given year divided by the service area population reported. If transit ridership growth exceeds population growth then service is deemed to be more effective and as such, it can be said that transit is becoming more integral component of urban travel.

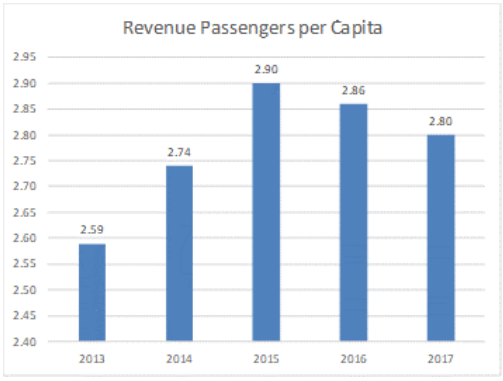


Exhibit 7: 2013-2017 Huntsville Passengers per Capita

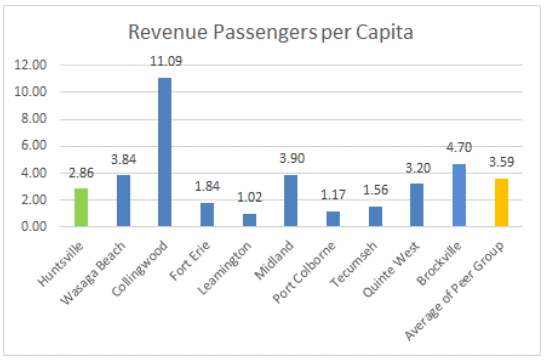


Exhibit 8: 2016 Peer Group Revenue Passengers per Capita

Exhibit 7 shows that Huntsville Transit's effectiveness has improved by 11.1% from 2.59 passengers per capita in 2013 to 2.8 passengers per capita in 2017. In comparison to the 2016 peer group, Huntsville Transit carried 20% fewer passengers on a per-capita-served basis. If Conventional Modified Transit customers are excluded, the Huntsville Transit value would be even lower. In this regard, while reallocating existing resources and introducing transit ridership growth measures can increase transit use, the most significant impact would be to increase the reach of fixed-route transit and to improve service levels from, for example, a two-hour to a one-hour frequency, which is more in-line with peer group transit systems.

2.1.4 Huntsville Transit Financial Indicators

Average Hourly Cost

A key metric that transit systems use to track financial performance is the direct cost per hour of service. This can vary significantly between transit systems due to differences in operating environments. A more important comparison would be to look at individual transit system performance over time to identify trends while a peer group comparison provides an opportunity to determine whether or not a transit system is in line with the norm.

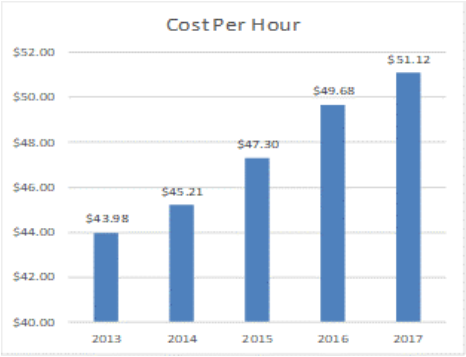


Exhibit 9: 2013-2017 Huntsville Transit Cost per Hour

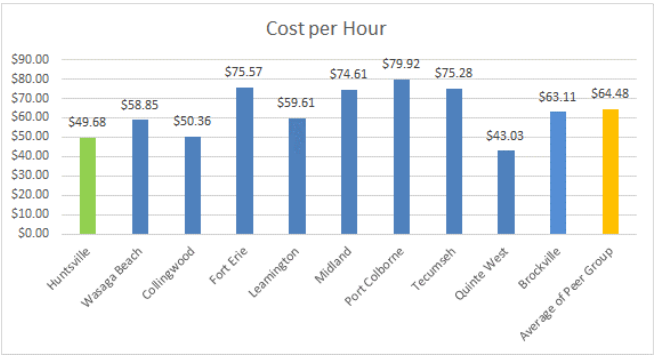


Exhibit 10: 2016 Peer Group Cost per Hour

Exhibit 9 illustrates that Huntsville Transit's hourly cost increased by a modest 16% from $43.98 per hour in 2013 to $51.12 in 2017. When compared to the 2016 peer group average in Exhibit 10, Huntsville Transit's hourly cost was 23% below the average. Transit system wage rates, operating environments, topography, etc. can vary significantly across Ontario and as such, the hourly cost of service should not be compared directly with any individual transit system. Reasons that can be attributed to Huntsville Transit's relatively low costs are the private sector contract in place and, from consultant observations, the low administrative overhead costs at the Town of Huntsville.

It is worth noting that the existing transit service provider, Campbell Bus Lines, owns the transit vehicles used and as such, the capital cost is included in their hourly negotiated rate. This is not typically the case for the vast majority of municipal transit systems, which own their transit vehicles and contract out transit operations and maintenance. Municipal ownership of vehicles enables municipalities to benefit from external funding programs that are in place, to reduce the net cost of transit to the municipality. For example, the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF) program provides for a capital cost sharing formula of 40% federal, 33% provincial and 27% municipal government. The program can be used for vehicle purchases, bus stop infrastructure improvements, technology, etc. This program is not extended to the private sector.

Average Annual Bus Fare

The average annual bus fare metric is simply the total revenue collected divined by the number or passengers paying a fare upon boarding (i.e. revenue passengers). Transferring passengers are calculated separately; however, since Huntsville Transit customers do not transfer, since there is only one bus route, only revenue passengers are recorded.

Although hourly transit costs have increased by 16% from 2013 to 2017, the average fare paid by Huntsville Transit passengers has not kept pace. What is telling is that, in Exhibit 12, the average Huntsville Transit fare of $0.99 in 2016 was 25% below the peer group average fare of $1.32. The increase in 2017 to an average far of $1.24 is more in line with the 2016 peer group average. The jump in the average fare in 2017 can be attributed the cash fare increase as well as the cancellation of free passes. Given that fares have not kept pace with costs, it is reasonable that fare increases could be justified, especially if service is expanded.

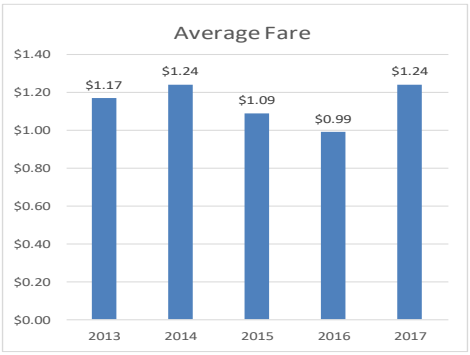


Exhibit 11: 2013-2017 Huntsville Transit Average Fare

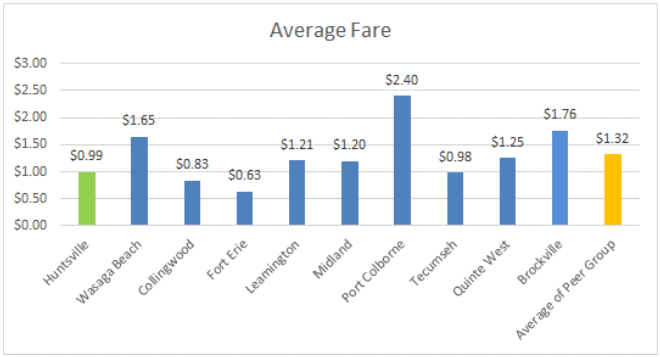


Exhibit 12: 2016 Peer Group Average Fare

Net Investment per Capita

A municipality's commitment to transit is reflected by the quality of the transit service (e.g. schedule reliability) and the quantity of the transit service provided (e.g. hours of service per capita), which is dictated by the financial resources made available. The Net Cost per capita is a high-level measure of the local municipal investment. It is calculated using net transit costs (total direct operating costs less revenues) and dividing by the total population served.

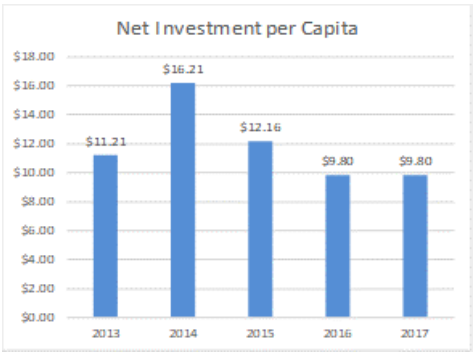


Exhibit 13: 2012-2016 Huntsville Transit Net Cost Per capita

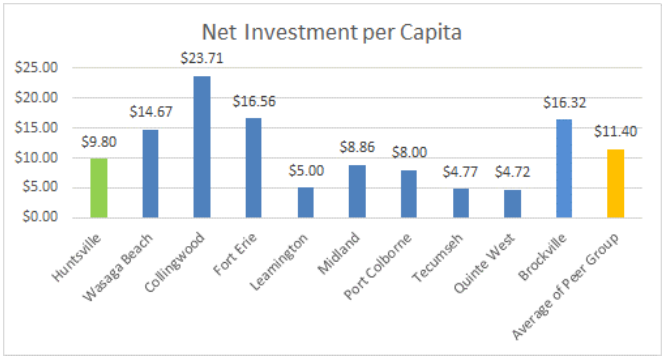


Exhibit 14: 2016 Peer Group Net Cost per Capita

As shown in Exhibit 13 the Town of Huntsville municipal contribution to support transit on a per-capita-served basis in 2017 was $9.80, which is 12% lower than was invested in 2013. When compared to peer transit systems in 2016, the Town of Huntsville invested 14% less, which can be attributed, in part, to the lower hourly cost. However, since the costs also include the door to door demand-responsive service, the actual net investment per capita for 'conventional transit' alone is far lower.

2.1.5 Summary of Report Card and Peer Review

Over the 2013 to 2017 transit report card period, Huntsville Transit's efficiency and effectiveness has improved modestly, costs have been kept in check and bus fares remain low; however, it is clear that on a per capita served basis, the relative investment in transit has decreased.

It was found that although some comparisons can be made with the peer group in 2016 (e.g. average hourly cost and average fare), direct comparisons of other metrics could not be addressed at the level of detail required. In this regard, the reporting of Conventional Transit and Conventional Modified Transit statistics should be reported under Conventional Transit while the demand-responsive accessible service should be reported separately in the future under the 'specialized transit' category followed by municipalities in Ontario and across Canada.

2.2 Community Engagement

The Transit Consulting Network (TCN) initiated the first round of the study's community engagement process, which consisted of four components:

- Preliminary stakeholder consultations
- Public Information Centre (PIC) to launch the study and obtain preliminary comments

The information obtained assisted the study team in identifying transit priorities that, combined with best practices, would be incorporated in the Huntsville Transit Master Plan.

2.2.1 Transit Focus Groups

Transit Consulting Network met with community representatives in a transit focus group setting as well as one-on-one meetings to obtain initial input to the planning process. At the opening of the transit focus group meetings, a PowerPoint presentation was made to provide an overview of the transit industry in small communities and to supply information on Huntsville Transit's performance over the last 5 years, and show at a high level, how Huntsville Transit compares to other small systems. The input received was used to assist the study team in focussing on transit priorities, and to help develop the on-line questionnaire that would be made available to the general public and businesses.

2.2.1.1 Preliminary Stakeholder Input

A summary of the discussions is provided as follows:

Deerhurst Meeting: Brody Purser, Deerhurst

- There is a shortage of workers due to affordable transportation. Approximately 50 prospective employees turned down jobs due to transportation issues.
- The challenge of affordable housing for employees to fill the gap as there is no public transit to Deerhurst.
- Housing consists of 40 at Deerhurst, 42 at Hidden Valley, and approximately 50 in the Town of Huntsville. This is accommodated through a payroll deduction.

- The quantity of employees varies year by year.
- Busiest time is May through Thanksgiving
- Suggests a shuttle to and from Huntsville for employees at specific shift times.
- Deerhurst pays over $10,000 per year in financial appeasement. There is a cost associated with staff turnover but not quantified as well as the impact of less service that is normally offered if employee complement was adequate

Business Transit Focus Group: Steve Campbell, BIA; Steve Carr, Comfort Inn; Brody Purser, Deerhurst; Scott Doughty, Hidden Valley Resort.

- Taxi costs are too high as it is a long way for employees. Hard to afford on minimum wage.
- Hidden Valley has to provide an allowance to some employees for gas/taxi.
- Deerhurst and Hidden Valley are paying high costs to keep employees.
- Would prefer to have a high season – low season model for transit service.
- Would need transit from 7 am through to midnight.
- Businesses need transit to function for their employees and are willing to work together with the Town in order to achieve mutual goals, including consideration given to allocating a portion of resort taxes.

Accessibility/Seniors Transit Focus Group: Laurel Shaw, AAL; Doug Millman, AAC; Trudi Belrose, CLH; Amber Gordon, CLH; Katharine Kristiansen, People First Huntsville; Gerri-Lee Nunn; Taylor Marshall, CHL.

- Affordable passes are essential. People are on a fixed income and can't afford an increase
- Fares have not kept pace and have been $2.00 since 2006. Average fare of $1.00 is too low.
- Should have input to the planning and development process to ensure ease of transit access to new multi-unit buildings
- The service is a massive asset to the community.
- Customers should understand the differences between conventional and modified-conventional for people with disabilities.
- CLH schedules one month in advance where possible
- Some people call Modified-Conventional service not from need but for convenience
- Need to set specific criteria for curb to curb service
- Schedule reliability is an issue
- Benches at bus stops would be welcome
- Travel training would be very helpful to seniors
- Drivers are great!
- Bus stop signs need to be AODA compliant, larger and installed at every stop

- Driving style needs to be a part of training for Drivers as some people with specific disabilities can be in a lot of pain when jolted. This is especially true when road conditions are bad.
- Earlier and later hours would be ideal
- Parking enforcement to de-congest bus stop areas is needed
- Extend out of town service to Port Sydney and Novar
- Service on Sunday for church-goers
- Electronic passes with specific instructions to drivers for those who cannot be left unattended
- Suggest north-south and east-west route connecting in downtown, complemented by accessible demand-responsive taxi service

Public Transit Focus Group: Chris Degazio; Florence Scarth; Donna Glashan, AAC Vice Chair

- 4 public participants + staff
- Smart card passes would be great
- Road conditions are a challenge
- Drivers are pleasant
- Supplementary drivers don't always answer the phone on Saturday
- Safety first; driver to ensure passengers are seated before moving
- More frequent early morning service; 2-hour mid-day service; 4-7 pm 1-hour service
- Sunday service is needed
- Bus stop improvements; more prominent and with posted schedules
- More benches required
- Fixed-Flex route service has created schedule reliability issues
- Outlying areas need to be serviced by the Modified-Conventional transit.
- Need criteria for separate specialized transit service, where feasible
- Shared-ride taxi an option.

Campbell Bus Lines Staff Input: Fixed Route and Modified Conventional Transit

- Cars are blocking buses at the hospital and enforcement is needed
- Improved snow clearing at bus stops
- Route 2 is formally curb to curb service for specialized passengers, but in practice it operates door to door
- Many people are using the dial-a-ride feature of Route 2 for convenience and are competing for trips with people with disabilities who have no alternative but to use the dial-a-ride feature
- Operator recalculates routes on the fly to accommodate a passenger who calls in for an on-demand ride. However, this means that some pickups will arrive a bit early or late.

- Since some passengers are being turned down for a ride to a medical appointment, it was suggested that a criterion is needed to give higher priority to medical trips
- Improve awareness of later services available
- The evening and Saturday service bus uses a different telephone number than the published phone number. That number should be call-forwarded to the correct number for evenings.
- Some stops are missing the bus stop sign
- Bus stop signs should have the phone number to call for information
- Better information is needed for the public with respect to the practices of 'flag stop' where fixed bus stops are not available
- The bus schedules should be posted on the web site so that parents and care-givers can help their children, or clients, to know when they should be at the stop, and when they will arrive on the return trip
- Unpredictability of bus arrival times makes it hard to teach clients how to use transit. Drivers should be taught not to depart early from a stop, or from a dial-a-ride booking
- There should be clear, published rules on how passenger complaints will be handled
- Low-floor buses would be a good thing if they save time for boarding and alighting, and make it easier for ambulatory people with disabilities to use the bus
- Later evening as well as Sunday service is requested by customers
- Having an accessible taxi in town would also be a great thing for increasing mobility independence
- Must establish eligibility criteria for specialized service to limit the demand and to enable eligible customers to qualify for specialized transit in other municipalities when travelling
- Lower cost requested for bulk ticket purchases
- Muskoka Seniors offers very good transportation, but it is not accessible.
- If Corridor 11 service was offered using an accessible bus, more people could use it for rides to and from places outside the Transit service area
- Expanded hours of service and coverage are required by some customers

The District Municipality of Muskoka: Ontario Works, ODSP, Housing, Youth

- 1,000 clients - Huntsville area accounts for approximately 1/3 of client base
- Insufficient transit coverage
- 2-hour service is too inconvenient for medical appointments, access to jobs, etc.
- Hours of operation are sufficient for the most part with the exception of clients entering the workforce
- $2.00 bus fare is considered a challenge for some clients
- Many clients live outside of central Huntsville due to lower rents

- New clients that move into the area are faced with long walks since they cannot afford more central living accommodations
- Approximately 65% of clients do not own a vehicle. A vehicle breakdown for the remaining 35% would pose a financial hardship or oblige clients to simply give up their vehicle
- Reimbursement for travel is available for taxis receipts; volunteer drivers receive $0.42 per km
- Book of transit tickets purchased for some clients
- Port Sydney has a health link trailer to accommodate people who cannot access services due to travel limitations
- Corridor 11 service is inadequate for long-distance medical-related trips outside of Huntsville
- Improved service to the primary foodbanks is needed (e.g. Salvation Army)
- Consideration can be given to providing an affordable transit pass or family pass for clients as well as dependents to assist clients to re-enter the workforce, attend medical appointments, do their shopping, and be better integrated into the community

Town of Huntsville Councillor Reps and Senior Management Input: Mayor Scott Aitchison, Councillor Bob Stone; Denise Corey (CAO) and Steve Hernen (Director of Operations and Protective Services)

Transit Consulting Network (TCN) presented a PowerPoint that provided an overview of Huntsville Transit, the study objectives and next steps, as well as a synopsis of the previous Transit Focus Group (TFG) input. Consensus was reached on the following points:

- Huntsville is at the tipping point where changes in transit may attract more users
- There was agreement that the fixed route and demand responsive transit statistics should be separated in order to better track performance and compare statistics with other municipal jurisdictions, and to better track the needs of an aging population and those unable to access or use fixed-route transit service
- Seniors are being attracted to the area
- Agreement that transit's reach must be expanded
- Consensus that hourly service, with an additional bus, should be a minimum in order to better serve resident and business needs
- Need a bus to Novar as it is a less expensive place to live than the urban Huntsville area; people in Novar work and shop in Huntsville and should be accommodated by transit
- Need to have predictable bus schedules

- Agreement was reached relative to the need to invest more in Transit in order to be in line with other successful small communities and to meet the needs of the growing retirement population

TCN also provided an overview of various transit service delivery options and route concepts developed by TCN and the Town of Huntsville to date, that would be further considered during the study.

2.2.1.2 Summary of Preliminary Stakeholder Input

Based on the discussions held, a number of issues and opportunities were identified, namely:

- There was a need to increase the frequency of service since every two hours cannot accommodate many appointments or work start and end times
- The conventional transit service deviates too often. Bus operators will deviate off-route to accommodate the public, which jeopardizes schedule reliability
- The line between fixed-route conventional transit and conventional modified transit service is unclear
- Consideration will need to be given to establishing eligibility criteria for using conventional modified transit service
- Consideration should be given to providing a separate specialized transit service to complement the conventional modified transit service
- Lack of service coverage within the Huntsville urban area
- Service to Novar and Port Sydney is increasingly needed since they offer more affordable housing
- From a social services perspective, the lack of affordable transportation is an impediment to meeting client needs and integrating lower income clients into the workforce
- From a business perspective, the lack of transit services to major employers such as Deerhurst and Hidden Valley has a negative impact on their ability to provide additional services to tourists, specifically during the summer period.
- A minimum of hourly service is required, which means that at least one additional bus route is needed
- Service to outlying areas – Novar, Port Sydney, Deerhurst, and Hidden Valley – could be modest to start (e.g. to accommodate employee work times)
- Increased public awareness is needed, as well as improved access to transit information

The stakeholder consultations to this point of the study provided Transit Consulting Network with the information needed to undertake a Public Information Centre and launch an on-line community-wide survey.

2.2.2 Public Information Centres

Transit Consulting Network and Town of Huntsville staff facilitated two consecutive Public Information Centres (PIC) on August 29, 2018 at Partners Hall located on the main floor of Huntsville Town Hall. Information boards were set up for public review while a brief PowerPoint presentation was delivered at the commencement of each PIC. This was followed by informal discussions with the attendees, who were provided with an opportunity to provide general comments on their transit service opinions and priorities.

Public Information Centre – August 29, 2018 3:30pm and 6:00 pm – John Gallegher, Nancy Weber, Kat Sumerset, Helena Renwick, Gord Bell, D. Glashan, Kim Young, Laurel Shaw.

- Suggested that service start at the Huntsville Bus Terminal/ MTO office to meet with Northland Bus service
- GPS Mobile App similar to Bracebridge Transit was requested
- Identify cost-sharing of any transit service to Novar with Parry Township since their residents will benefit
- Extend up Muskoka Road 3, loop to Highview at Glenwood to pick up more passengers
- Have bus go to Riverside Drive, Riverside School, and Civic Centre.
- Kimberley Clark office should be served by transit
- Flag stops are still needed
- Bus should stop and wait at the specified stops for a few minutes even if the driver does not see anyone there, as people may be waiting inside (i.e. buses should not be early and should operate as per a fixed schedule).

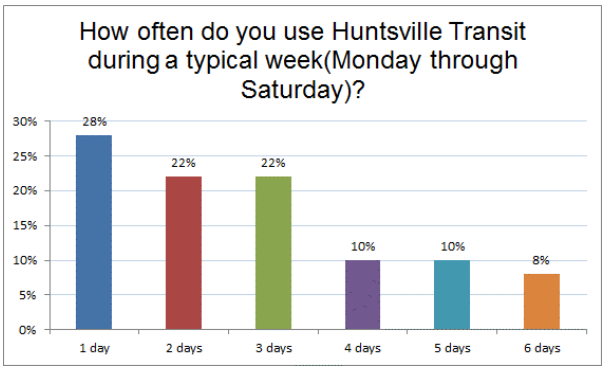
2.2.3 Community On-line Survey

An on-line general public transit survey for both transit customers and non-customers was launched on August 29, 2018 and closed on September 17, 2018. There was a total of 269 respondents to the online and hard copy transit survey; this represents a 1.3% sample of the total population of Huntsville. To complement this survey, a separate employer survey was distributed to businesses on September 24, 2018 by transit staff, with 7 companies participating.

On-line Survey for Transit Customers

20% responded that they used Huntsville Transit within the last 3 months (considered transit customers) while 80% were considered to be non-transit customers. Huntsville residents who do not use Huntsville Transit, rather than visitors, are the relatively untapped market with the largest growth potential.

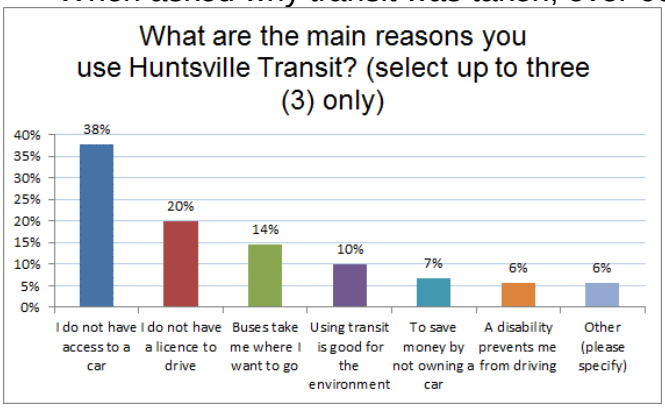
How often do you use Huntsville Transit during a typical week (Monday through Saturday)?		
Answer Choices	Responses	
1 day	28%	14
2 days	22%	11
3 days	22%	11
4 days	10%	5
5 days	10%	5
6 days	8%	4
	Answered	**50**



Although response sample of on-line survey is not large enough to be statistically significant, it does offer a snapshot of the total Huntsville Transit market, which can then be compared to the information received during the previous community engagement consultations that were undertaken.

Of the 50 transit customers that responded, 18% reported they used transit at least 5 days per week during the non-summer months.

When asked why transit was taken, over 60% of the reasons given are related to being

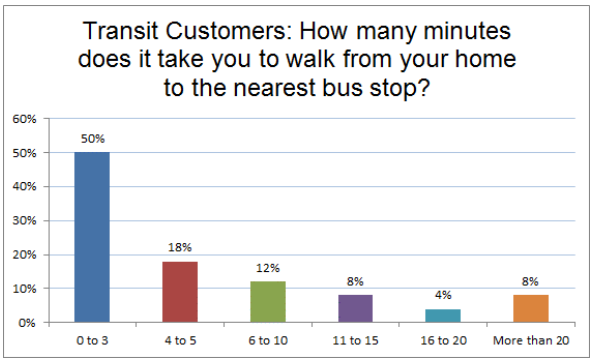


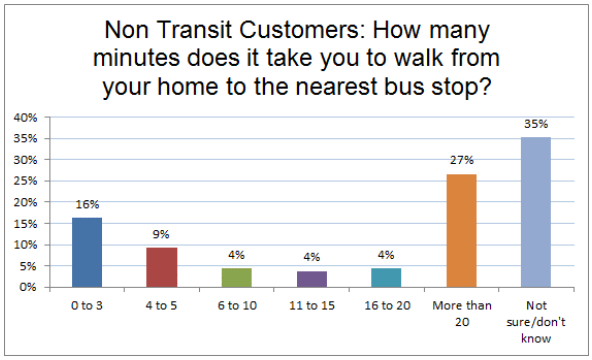
What are the main reasons you use Huntsville Transit? (select up to three (3) only)		
Answer Choices	Responses	
I do not have access to a car	38%	34
I do not have a licence to drive	20%	18
Buses take me where I want to go	14%	13
Using transit is good for the environment	10%	9
To save money by not owning a car	7%	6
A disability prevents me from driving	6%	5
Other (please specify)	6%	5
	Answered	**45**

captive - no access to a vehicle, not having a license or being unable to drive. As the population ages, reasons are likely to become more frequent. At some point, we all will be unable to drive due to age-related challenges. What is considered significant is that 7% of the reasons given related to money being saved by not owning a car while 10% indicated environmental reasons.

Of course, one of the most significant factors in determining whether or not one can or will use transit is the walk distance to the nearest bus stop. As a guide, transit bus stops should be within a 5-minute walk of 90% to 95% of residences, which equates to approximately 450 metres. Bearing in mind the 450-metre walk distance standard, the following responses are considered significant.

A significant number of transit customers (32%) reported they were beyond a 5-minute walk to a bus stop. Of the 65% of the non-transit customers that responded, more than 61% indicated they were beyond a five-minute walk. It was interesting to note that 35%

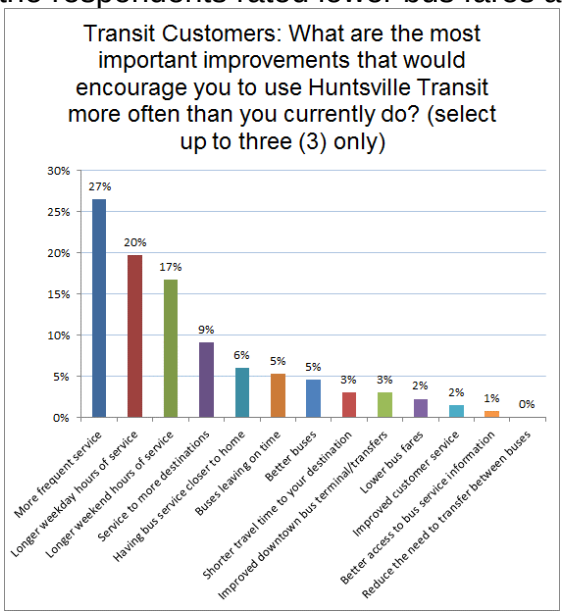




of the non-transit customers were not sure or did not know. The data clearly indicates that there is a lack of transit coverage. Although the data is not statistically significant, the numbers provide a clear understanding of what needs to be overcome, namely, improving route coverage in order to build transit ridership. While reasonable access to transit is a priority based on industry best practices, transit customers are also sensitive to the need for other improvements, which they were able to select up to three when asked the question.

The breakdown of the improvement priorities from a transit customer perspective (up to 3 selected) would need to be addressed to the extent possible in the proposed route and schedule design.

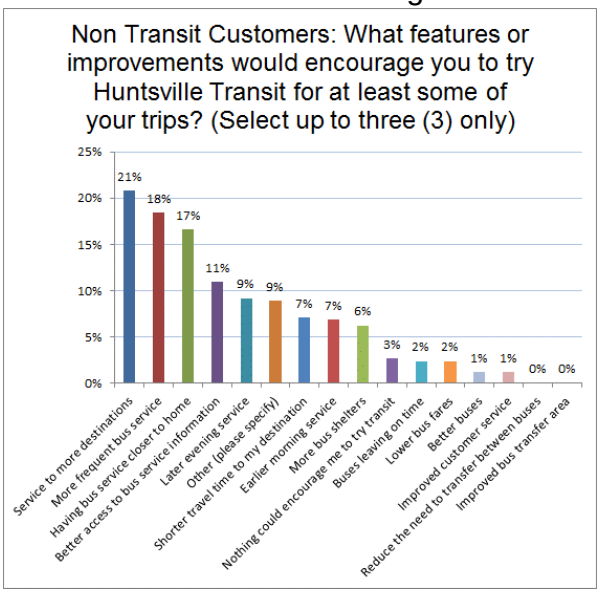
When transit improvements are arranged according to priorities, transit customers listed more frequent service as the priority. This in line with input received during the public meetings held before the survey. Longer weekday and weekend hours of service were the second and third most desired improvement. It is interesting to note that only 2% of the respondents rated lower bus fares as a priority.



Transit Customers: What are the most important improvements that would encourage you to use Huntsville Transit more often often than you currently do? (select up to three 3 only)		
Answer Choices	Responses	
More frequent service	27%	35
Longer weekday hours of service	20%	26
Longer weekend hours of service	17%	24
Service to more destinations	9%	12
Having bus service closer to home	6%	8
Buses leaving on time	5%	7
Better buses	5%	6
Shorter travel time to your destination	3%	4
Improved downtown bus terminal/transfers	3%	4
Lower bus fares	2%	3
Improved customer service	2%	2
Better access to bus service information	1%	1
Reduce the need to transfer between buses	0%	0
	Answered	**50**

On-line Survey for Non-Transit Customers

Non-transit customers were asked for the top three improvements they would like to see that would encourage them to use transit at least some of the time. It is interesting to note that only 3% of the total responses given indicated that the respondent would not use transit regardless of improvements. This confirms that vast majority of the non-transit customer market might consider transit as an alternative to a private vehicle.



Non Transit Customers: What features or improvements would encourage you to try Huntsville Transit for at least some of your trips? (Select up to three (3) only)		
Answer Choices	Responses	
Service to more destinations	21%	70
More frequent bus service	18%	62
Having bus service closer to home	17%	56
Better access to bus service information	11%	37
Later evening service	9%	31
Other (please specify)	9%	30
Shorter travel time to my destination	7%	24
Earlier morning service	7%	23
More bus shelters	6%	21
Nothing could encourage me to try transit	3%	9
Buses leaving on time	2%	8
Lower bus fares	2%	8
Better buses	1%	4
Improved customer service	1%	4
Reduce the need to transfer between buses	0%	0
Improved bus transfer area	0%	0
	Answered	**186**

As expected, the top reasons given were related to expanding the reach of transit and having more frequent service. What this indicates is that if improvements are made to Huntsville Transit to address transit customer priorities, the improvements will not only attract new transit customers, they will also address the priorities of existing transit customers.

Community-wide on-line Survey Comments

An open-ended question provided an opportunity for respondents to comment, namely, 'Any other ideas on how we can make Huntsville Transit better?" Of the 269 respondents to the online transit survey, 68 respondents providing one or more comments about Huntsville Transit services. The on-line survey comments complemented the feedback received during the consultation process, such as:

- Serving more residential areas, Hidden Valley/ Deerhurst, Novar and Port Sydney
- Frustration with reliability and infrequent service
- Not enough bus stops, bus stop signs, benches and shelters
- Make it easier to board buses for people with mobility aids
- Buses staying on route (Note: reference to conventional transit bus undertaking conventional modified transit service)

The feedback received pointed to a need to expand the areas of operation to better serve workers and businesses, improve directness of travel, increase frequency of service, and improve bus travel times and reliability. The service improvement priorities sought by transit customers and non-transit customers were similar in most respects. The comments and suggestions were also passed onto Huntsville Transit staff in a separate document for review and consideration.

Comparison with 2017 Town of Huntsville Community Outreach and Survey

Extensive community feedback received during the study was reviewed by Transit Consulting Network and compared to the Town of Huntsville survey results outlined in the Transit Study report dated April 21, 2017. Although questions were somewhat different, both community outreach initiatives had similar results relative to identifying community priorities from the perspective of transit customers, non-transit customers and businesses. The 2017 findings revealed, for example, the need for expanded hours of operation, service to more destinations, more frequent service, and a need to improve Conventional Modified Transit service.

Summary of Community Engagement Input

The community engagement process made it clear that in order to grow transit ridership and make transit more effective in the Town of Huntsville, more residents need to have access to affordable bus service to accommodate the latent demand that exists today. Transit coverage within the Town must be expanded and frequencies increased to

encourage existing transit customers to use transit more often and, over time, attract new transit customers. Earlier and later service hours, and Sunday service are also needed to meet employer and employee needs, which are not adequately addressed. In this regard, as transit improvement priorities are adopted going forward, and the service is marketed appropriately, transit can continue to build on past successes.

Given the increase in the seniors' population and recognizing that newer residential developments are beyond existing bus routes, the demand for increased coverage will only continue to grow. Many residents of all age groups want to be more independent; they want to age in place, and they want to get around without having to rely on friends and family; they find taxis to be cost-prohibitive.

An interesting observation from the community engagement process was that the residents were requesting only modest service for areas where there is currently no service. They simply want sufficient transit service to access goods and services a few times per week rather than being provided with all-day service.

Another reason the environment has changed since 2013 is AODA legislation, which requires the Town to provide an alternative accessible service to people who are unable to use Huntsville Transit. Fortunately, regular transit and specialized transit services have become more integrated throughout Canada, which is the case in Huntsville and as such, there is an opportunity to meet community priorities in a more cost-effective manner going forward.

3. PHASE II: RIDERSHIP GROWTH PLAN

Study Phase I: Critical Evaluation of Public Transportation, incorporates findings from two perspectives – that of the community and what the 'numbers' are saying. Phase 1 is critical and is what the Transit Ridership Growth Plan is really all about. Working closely with the municipality, a 'made-in-Huntsville' transit policy framework that incorporates best practices for small municipalities was developed. This, in turn, sets the stage for the development of a transit ridership growth strategy and, ultimately a transit service plan to be completed in Phase III: Transit Service Plan.

3.1 Transit Policy Framework

Transit policy drives the decision-making process by providing transit management and political decision-makers with the tools needed to support service recommendations and to maximize transit growth opportunities while maintaining cost effectiveness. Setting policies early also drives the planning process and clarifies, for example, whether service changes should be designed to expand the system and target new riders, or whether existing funding levels should be reallocated to better serve existing customers. It is important to ensure that the policies reflect input from all stakeholders, including non-transit users.

The policy framework consists of:

- **Goals and Objectives,** to provide general policy direction for the community
- **Transit Service Design Guidelines** to assist in determining where, when and how service will be provided.

3.1.1 Goals and Objectives

Through the consensus-building process that the consultant team advocated throughout the study, Transit Consulting Network (TCN) developed a number of goals and objectives that update the vision and mission statements developed in the 2006 Huntsville Transit Ridership Growth and Asset Management Plans.

The 2006 vision and mission statements have been updated to place a stronger focus on accessibility.

Proposed 2018 Vision Statement

The preferred future of public transportation in the Town of Huntsville:

"The Town of Huntsville will provide a fully accessible public transit system that addresses the needs of existing and future residents, tourists and the business community, and supports an improved quality of life".

Existing 2006 Mission Statement

The purpose of Huntsville Transit:

"To provide safe, reliable, efficient, and customer-friendly public transit service that enhances the transit customer experience."

To support the transit vision and mission statements, a number of goals and objectives were developed.

Service Goals

To provide an environmentally friendly public transportation system in the Town of Huntsville to:

- Improve the quality of life of residents who are without access to an automobile such as the elderly, students and those that cannot afford an automobile
- Improve bus stop access to transit service
- Meet the travel demand generated by various target markets in the employment, academic, commercial, medical, and tourist industries
- Recognize that the Town of Huntsville has a summer service demand to be accommodated during the May to August tourist season
- Recognize that transit is an integral component of urban growth
- Provide a viable alternative to the private automobile

Financial Goals

The financial goals should encourage Huntsville Transit to provide an efficient and effective public transportation system within the financial capability of the Town of Huntsville.

Service Area Objective

Huntsville Transit should provide service within the urbanized area and connect to rural communities within the Town of Huntsville.

Service Frequency Objective

The minimum frequency of service to be provided shall eventually be a minimum of every 60 minutes during the weekday peak periods to accommodate school and work trips, and every 120 minutes during all other periods.

Performance Goals

Transit performance targets have been established for the next 5 years as a method to support continuous improvement principles:

- Effectiveness:
    - To increase transit use by 40 percent – from 2.8 trips per capita in 2017 to 4.0 trips per capita within 5 years
- Efficiency:
    - To increase service utilization by 20 percent from 5.1 passengers per hour in 2017 to 8.0 passengers per hour by 2023
    - To attain 95% schedule adherence, defined as buses arrive zero minutes early and not more than five minutes late at all bus stops

The performance targets identified can be adjusted, as required, and are designed to be sufficiently challenging to encourage continuous improvement while recognizing that ridership growth initiatives must be balanced by fiscal responsibility.

3.1.2 Transit Service Design Guidelines

Since 1980, municipalities have embraced various iterations of transit supportive land use policies and guidelines to address urban sprawl, support route design principles, maximize directness of travel, and balance community needs with local affordability.

3.1.2.1 Transit Service Standards

The goals and objectives provide general policy direction for the Town to follow with respect to the provision of Transit service. Transit service standards are needed to guide Huntsville in determining when, how often and how transit service will be provided through:

- A framework for making rational decisions about the level and the quality of service in the community
- Increased public awareness of Transit's present and potential future roles
- A strong commitment by Council to maintain service standards while balancing social and environmental objectives with fiscal responsibility
- A high degree of acceptance by Council and taxpayers for Transit expenditures based on a decision-making process that is perceived as fair

3.1.2.2 Transit Service Level Policies

Recognizing fiscal restraint and the need for an expanded and sustainable public transportation system, there must be a balance between providing a desirably high level of service, and affordability. The service level policies have been designed to enable residents who have no alternative to transit to expect a minimum level of service.

Currently, year-round fixed-route transit service is provided from 8:00am to 7:00pm, Monday through Friday and 8:00am to 5:30pm on Saturdays. There is no holiday or Sunday service. This service is complemented by demand responsive service as well as Conventional Modified Transit (CMT) service.

It is recommended that minimum service frequencies be increased from every two hours to every hour to better accommodate the journey-to-work market as a priority, while also improving service to other markets. In doing so, the service design should enable residents served by conventional fixed-route transit to travel by bus to their destination in no more than one hour.

Thereafter, consideration can be given to increasing service at periods such as peak hours on weekdays.

Proposed Hours of Operation

The following service hours are proposed for the Transit Service Plan within the next five years:

- Monday through Friday 6:00am – 11:00pm
- Saturdays: 7:00am – 7:00pm
- Sundays: 8:00am – 7:00pm

In order to meet AODA regulations, an alternative accessible service must be available to residents with a disability who reside within the conventional transit service area and who are unable to use conventional transit. Huntsville Transit's demand-responsive service and/or an alternative service could address this requirement.

3.1.2.3 Service Reliability

It is reasonable to expect buses to be reliable, that is, buses must be on time at all publicly scheduled time points. 'On time' should be defined as buses never being early at a scheduled time point (zero minutes early) and not being more than 5 minutes late, to allow for unforeseen delays. In order to maintain service reliability and maximize transit efficiencies, bus schedules must reflect what is actually doable on the street and as such, scheduled times may vary by time of day and by season.

Bus operators should travel along their designated route in an expeditious but safe manner, in compliance with the route timing points. This would ensure bus operators never arrive early along the route and are not more than a few minutes late. By following this practice, schedules along the route would be consistent and layover (recovery) times that take place would be maximized.

3.1.2.4 Land Use Planning and Transit

Arterial transit routes offer a more attractive service because they are more direct and cost-effective than transit routes along slower internal collector roads and residential streets. However, transit service along collector roads or local streets is necessary in many cases since arterial roads are often spaced too far apart to accommodate acceptable transit walk distance requirements. When designing for new residential developments, maximum transit route coverage at minimal cost must be viewed as a priority, in a manner similar to other services the Town provides.

Following the development of community master plans, there are two planning phases that should address public transit needs – the Secondary Plan and the Draft Plan of Subdivision. These are summarized in the following:

- Determine basic location and orientation of transit routes

- Design a street system and walkway layout, which attempts to accommodate efficient transit service along the arterial and collector road system
- Identify locations of activity centres (schools, shopping facilities and medium to high density residential areas) along transit routes
- Identify mobility hubs and transfer facilities to maximize integration of modes and reduce overall transit travel times
- Co-ordinate location of bus stops with design of intersections and walkways in order to minimize walk distances, provide for reasonable bus stop spacing, and provide for safe pedestrian routes; and
- Locate walkways which would serve as many purposes as possible (i.e. access to bus stops, schools, shopping, parks, and trail links)

When developing bus routes, best practices are applied to route design, acceptable walk distances to bus stops, the location of bus stops, and bus stop accessibility.

3.1.2.5 Acceptable Transit Route Design

There are various ways of arranging transit routes to provide service. Best practices have been introduced relative to route design principles that provide for:

- Reasonable walk distances to bus service for residents
- Directness of travel by bus
- Safe travel speeds and reliable schedules

The guidelines can be applied when re-designing bus routes and used for land use planning purposes to help ensure transit requirements are being met during periods of urban growth. Applying the guidelines consistently provides transparency and objectivity when determining where bus routes will be placed.

3.1.2.6 Transit Travelways

Transit routes should be provided along arterial and collector roads which have reasonable through access, rather than on crescents or cul-de-sacs, to the extent possible. A 9.0 metre pavement width is the preferred for transit routes. Exceptions can be made where no reasonable alternative is available to provide for acceptable walk distances to residential dwellings and businesses.

3.1.2.7 One-way Transit Loops

Provision should be made to minimize the length of one-way transit loops to no more than 2.0 kilometres. One-way transit routes provide for transit service on one side of the street only and will typically be found in residential areas to minimize vehicle requirements and where two-way service may not be warranted. Of course, exceptions may be made as a trade-off to minimize costs.

3.1.2.8 Bus Route Design Speeds

Safe travel speeds are needed to ensure buses can maintain their schedule and be designed such that people can get from point A to point B in the quickest and safest manner possible. An average design travel speed of approximately 18-22 kph should be in place in urban environments.

Huntsville Transit's average travel speed was reported at only 15.4 kph in 2017, which is attributed to the following:

- Bus deviations along residential streets to provide reduced walk distances for some transit customers
- The lack of designated bus stops, which results in the need for a 'flag stop' practice, which is more suitable for rural roadways than in urban areas.

3.1.2.9 Bus Route Lengths and Population Density

Road layouts in residential developments should be designed such that transit routes require a minimum of 1,000 residents served per 1.0 kilometre of transit route. Within the urbanized area of Huntsville, this is not possible and as such, transit efficiencies compared to more dense communities in Ontario cannot be expected since the reality is that longer bus routes are required in order to serve fewer residents.

3.1.2.10 Walk Distance to Bus Stops

A guideline used to help design or redesign bus services is ensuring there is a reasonable walk distance to bus service as follows:

- 90% of dwelling units should be within a 450-metre walk distance of an existing or future bus stop
- 70% of dwelling units should be within a 300-metre walk distance of a bus stop.
- All multiple housing units should be within a 300-metre walk distance of an existing or future bus stop.
- Special needs housing, high density employment, shopping, medical, and institutional development should be within a 150-metre walk distance of a bus stop.

The 450-metre walk distance standard is considered a realistic goal that equates to less than a 5-minute walk time to a bus stop for most people (walking at 4 kph). If a more stringent standard than 450 metres is chosen, this may result in improved coverage in existing residential areas but at higher cost. Given the hilly topography of some residential streets, it is recognized that walk speeds would be less in many cases; however, this market can be addressed by the demand-responsive service in place.

3.1.2.11 Bus Stop Locations and Design

Once bus routes are designed or existing routes modified, the following strategies should be applied to bus stop locations and bus stop design:

- **The location of bus stops should be coordinated with the design of walkways, intersections and development in order to minimize walk distances and provide for reasonable bus stop spacing.**
  Ideally, bus stops should be located at walkways and intersections as well as being in proximity to high density residential complexes and major shopping facilities in order to minimize walk distances for most people. Other factors used to determine bus stop locations and reasonable spacing are demand, road type, pedestrian safety, and public requests.
- **In industrial areas, sidewalks should be provided along at least one side of the roadway.**
  Industrial areas are considered to be 'pedestrian-hostile' environments due to higher volumes of truck traffic; however, it is important that employees be provided with safe pedestrian access from bus stops to their places of employment, particularly during winter weather conditions.

  Walkways, for the purpose of transit connections, must be constructed using a material which can be maintained year-round. Responsibility for the maintenance of these walkways must be allocated to the appropriate department.
- **Bus stops and bus stop amenities should meet Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA) requirements.**
  Meeting AODA requirements will better enable some customers with limited mobility to use Huntsville Transit for at least some of their trips.

3.1.2.12 Trade-offs

Since the types of residential community design varies significantly from high density apartment complexes to low density estate type development, all design objectives may not be met in all cases. Trade-offs may be necessary from time to time in view of other design considerations.

In order to provide some flexibility in the guidelines, the following recommendations should also be considered:

- That land use/transit coordination is a necessary and valuable goal, recognizing that in the implementation of the transit subdivision design guidelines, trade-offs may be made in some instances with other planning, engineering and environmental considerations.

- That secondary plans and draft plans of subdivisions recommended by staff shall reflect efforts to achieve the transit guidelines stated herein.
- The Town of Huntsville should initially inform the development industry of the proposed guidelines as set out in this report. It is suggested that the appropriate Town staff be responsible for informing developers and their representatives on an ongoing basis at the Secondary Plan and the Draft Plan of Subdivision stages.

The key factor is that it be ascertained at the outset of community design whether or not the design guidelines have been met with every effort made to attain them. It is foreseeable that existing and planned subdivisions which do not meet all of the guidelines would receive a lower level of transit service (e.g. peak period only) than more transit-oriented subdivisions which meet or exceed the design objectives.

Expanding route coverage within the Huntsville service area while increasing the annual transit service hours is an obvious transit ridership growth strategy. The following section addresses specific strategies to maximize the effectiveness of the service expansion.

3.2 Ridership Growth Strategies

With an expanded transit system and increased hours of operation, Huntsville Transit would be in a better position to target specific markets and other strategies, which are discussed in the foregoing.

3.2.1 Expanding Transit Coverage

Huntsville Transit currently serves one-half the population of Huntsville. There are pockets of residential areas within the Town of Huntsville that lack reasonable access to Huntsville Transit. These areas include:

- Residents within the urban area of Huntsville beyond a 5-minute walk to a bus stop, such as:
  - Town Line Rd. W. between Yonge St. S. and Beechwood Path
  - Muskoka Rd. 3 N between the hospital and Golf Course Rd.
  - Highway 60 to Deerhurst/ Hidden Valley
- Novar, which is approximately 17 km north of downtown Huntsville
- Port Sydney, which approximately 18 km to the south of downtown Huntsville

It is reasonable to assume that increasing transit coverage will increase transit use. While the urban area of Huntsville can be better accommodated by redesigning the existing bus route and improving service efficiencies, serving the communities of Novar and Port Sydney would be more challenging given their distance from downtown Huntsville.

3.2.2 Better Accommodating Employee Shifts

The current weekday service hours, which begin at 8:00am and end at approximately 7:00pm do meet many shift times especially those that begin shifts at 7:00am in the tourist and industrial sector and those shifts that end at 10:00pm to 11:00pm. Huntsville should eventually provide longer service hours to accommodate shifts and while doing so, enable all businesses to meet the needs of their customers for shopping and other trip purposes. It is suggested that Huntsville work closely with the business community to quantify unmet needs.

3.2.3 Peak Period 'Specials'

While fixed route and scheduled Transit services provide coverage that ties residential areas to many destinations throughout the Town, the schedules may not be timed sufficiently to accommodate some employers and their shifts, which typically occur in the early morning and late afternoon. In addition, all-day service is not required for some industries. To accommodate industry shifts, a route could deviate for one trip in the morning and afternoon or, alternatively, a separate bus could be routed to pick up employees on a separate route and deadhead to the business, if there is sufficient demand.

Consideration can also be given to using large taxis that would connect the industry to the nearest bus stop. For example, instead of all-day service to Kimberly-Clark, a taxi can be timed to connect with Transit service at the nearest bus stop where transfers take place. In order to minimize resources and costs, the Town could approach industries to alter their shift times by up to 30 minutes to reduce vehicle requirements and also consider offering subsidized transit passes to their employees to off-set the cost of service.

3.2.4 Seniors – the 'Grey' Market

Seniors are a growing segment of the population that will place further demands for accessible transportation since, at some point, progressively fewer of us will be able to drive or walk to the nearest bus stop, yet might not qualify for specialized transportation (Muskoka Seniors). This 'grey' market will continue to challenge Councilors to meet resident needs. What is interesting; however, is that these residents are not demanding full service; their demands are modest for the most part. The ability to access infrequent medical appointments, go shopping or even socialize (which is also beneficial to health), can make a significant difference to their quality of life, even if service is provided only a few times a day and a few days per week.

3.2.5 Tourism Market

Deerhurst Resort and Hidden Valley in combination, are year-round tourist destinations and as such, there is a need for employee travel, including on Sundays and Statuary

holidays. The environment is similar to that of Wasaga Beach, Collingwood and Blue Mountain where service is made available seven days a week. In addition to the seasonal tourist markets in Huntsville there are the residents of the newer condominium developments in proximity to the two resorts.

3.2.6 District Municipality of Muskoka Clients

The range of clients served by the District of Muskoka – youth, Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) clients and others, require affordable transportation to access jobs, jobs training, medical facilities, and recreation, and be less dependent on social assistance programs and require no financial support. Social agencies defray some client transportation costs through mileage reimbursement or the purchase of bus tickets. Consideration can be given to investigating the business case for the District Municipality of Muskoka to provide clients with a monthly bus pass that would provide for unlimited travel on an expanded Huntsville Transit service, thus enabling them to integrate more fully into the community.

3.2.7 Travel Training

Travel training is for people of all ages and abilities who need additional knowledge and skills in order to use transit effectively. The following groups are potential candidates for a Travel Training Program:

- Individuals with physical disabilities
- People with certain sensory disabilities
- People with cognitive or intellectual disabilities
- Individuals with communication disabilities
- Seniors not familiar with taking the bus
- New immigrants

The materials and principles can be adapted to suit individuals with a wide range of abilities and can be supplemented with a public information guide. The manual would be divided into comprehensive sections that cover everything one needs to know and understand when taking the bus, and should contain both text and photos to help with assimilation and enable the customer to use the bus system safely and with confidence. **Travel training provides the link between wanting to make a journey and actually making the trip.** The program encourages those that use Huntsville Transit's demand-responsive service and/or Muskoka Seniors transportation clients to use lower cost fixed-route Huntsville Transit convention transit service, which would translate to increased efficiencies for transit and improved quality of life for the individual.

There are travel training programs available across Canada that can be used to develop one for Town of Huntsville residents that can be used by various agencies and caregivers. The 'myRide' Travel Training manual originally developed by the study team project manager, Wally Beck, for York Region Transit in 2007 is one excellent example of a transit travel training program. https://www.yrt.ca/en/riding-with-us/myride-travel-training.aspx

3.2.8 Enhanced Marketing and Branding

In conjunction with the implementation of new transit service improvements, there would be an opportunity to brand the entire transit system by adopting clear and consistent messaging and information through a communications plan. Branding builds and enhances transit system visibility by communicating a clear message to existing and potential transit customers that this is *their* transit service.

The very basic aspects of branding would consist of common and universal images throughout the following components of the transit system:

- Bus stops signs that are prominent and are accessible
- Posted schedules and route maps at major busy stops and shelters
- System route maps (printed, online and posted)
- Fonts (including AODA compliance with font size and contrasting colours)
- Service annoncements, detours, route changes, etc.
- All promotional and marketing materials

3.2.9 Smart Card Fare System

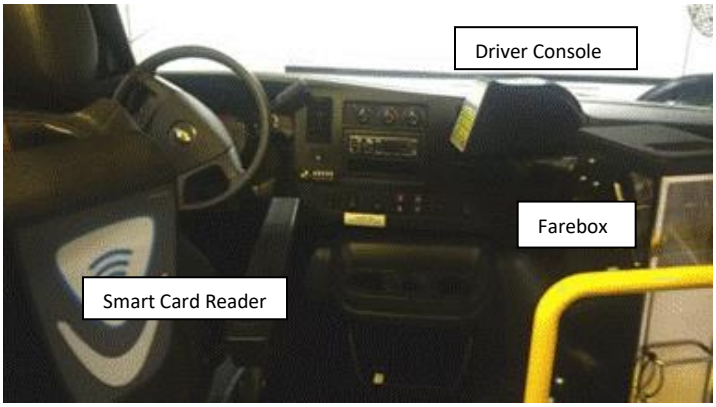
A transit smart card system enables transit customers to load value on a microchip-based card that acts like an electronic purse (e-purse), also referred to as a farecard. The smart card has monetary value similar to those typical of retail sector loyalty cards; however, that's where the similarity ends.

What differentiates the transit smart card from a retail card is the back-end software that consists of 'business rules' such as a complex fare pricing system built in to the farecard. Value can also be reloaded onto the (re-usable) smart card, as required.

A number of transit systems throughout Ontario utilize low-cost fare collection technology that is integrated with GPS such as Bracebridge, Wasaga Beach, Collingwood, Midland, Penetanguishene. The use of the tap and pay 'proximity' smart cards is considered to be a transit ridership growth strategy by the Province of Ontario given its ease of use (simply tap the card reader) and eliminating the need for exact cash fare. By integrating with GPS, the Town of Huntsville will be able to track smart

card boarding transactions by bus stop, direction and time period (by trip, by hour, time of day, week, month, and annually).

Other benefits of the smart card technology include:



- Reduced boarding times
- Tracking of smart card use through embedded serial numbers
- Flexibility in fare pricing (i.e. to the five-cent level, if required)
- Ease of implementing fare changes
- Built-in times for transfers, which do not have to be viewed by the bus operator
- Ridership boarding data for 100% of all trips
- Enables mobility payment from a smart phone
- Built-in GPS will enable Huntsville Transit to add real time schedule information
- The ability to be used at other transit systems with smart card systems, thereby negating the need to purchase tickets or passes; this provides seamless integration)

Knowing bus stop boarding activities by passenger classification (student, senior, adult, mobility) will also help identify priorities for bus stop enhancements such as benches and shelters. This would also provide the information needed to adjust schedules, as required. Since cloud-based software is used, there is no ongoing requirement for a server or support required from municipal IT staff.

3.2.10 Bike Racks on Buses

Active transportation has been playing a significant role in the overall transportation choice across Canada. Since all transit customers are pedestrians, they benefit from walk distance guidelines as proposed in this report. One active transportation market that has not been accommodated are those that travel by bicycle. Bike racks on buses are now becoming the norm for public transit systems.

Bike racks allow transit customers to bicycle to transit stops, mount their bicycle on one of two bike mounts then board the bus. At the end of a trip, the bicyclist can then continue travel. Doing so expands the transit market potential and is a step towards a

successful active transportation strategy that does not unduly burden the ability of buses to maintain schedules.

Sault Transit currently allows bikes on buses. Given the modest passenger loads experienced, Sault Transit staff would like to see higher transit ridership prior to installing bike racks. An average cost of $2,000 per bike rack would include the purchase of modest bike storage facilities.

3.2.11 Bus Fare Pricing Strategy

When boarding a Huntsville Transit bus, transit customers pay by cash, punch pass or monthly pass. Transit fares are designed to be affordable for the transit customer and priced appropriately to mitigate the net of transit to the taxpayer.

A best practices fare pricing philosophy with respect to balancing transit costs with revenues is to have a fare pricing policy that has a higher fare for the infrequent transit customer (base cash fare) and one that rewards frequent transit customers through pre-purchased fares such as tickets and monthly passes. Concession fares (discount) are also commonly offered to students and seniors; however, as illustrated in Table X 2017 Peer Review Transit Fares, that is not always the case and the degree of the discount vary across Ontario.

The 2018 Huntsville Transit fare structure and discounts are summarized is as follows:

Adult and Senior

- $2.25 cash fare
- $22 for an 11-ride punch card ($2.00 per ride)
- $52.50 monthly pass ($0.82 per ride based on 20 days @ 2trips per day)

Student

- $1.00 cash fare
- $10 for an 11-ride punch card (9% discount, $0.91 per ride)

Municpal Transit Fares - 2017	Adult	Senior	Student	Pre-school
Huntsville				
Cash	2.25	2.25	1.00	free
Ticket (unit cost) (10 Tickets)	1.13	0.90	1.30	
Monthly pass	52.50	52.50	25.00	
Wasaga Beach				
Cash	2.00	1.50	1.50	free
Ticket (book of 20)	30.00	20.00	20.00	
Monthly pass (also youth 6-19)	40.00	30.00	30.00	5.00
Other Universal pass	120.00	120.00	120.00	
Special notes: monthly pass for wasaga link, BlueMountain link				
Collingwood				
Cash	2.00	1.50	1.50	free
Ticket	2.00	2.00	2.00	
Monthly pass	40.00	30.00	30.00	
Other Universal pass	120.00	120.00	120.00	
Special notes: monthly pass for wasaga link, BlueMountain link				
Leamington				
Cash	2.00	1.75	1.50	1.00
Ticket (unit cost)(11 tickets)	2.00	2.00	2.00	
Other (22 tickets)	1.59	1.36		
Special notes: Children under 12 $1.00				
Midland				
Cash	2.00	1.75	1.75	free
Ticket (unit cost) (20 tickets)	1.25	1.00	1.00	free
Huntsville				
Cash	2.25	2.25	1.00	free
Ticket (unit cost) (10 Tickets)	1.13	0.90	1.30	
Monthly pass	52.50	52.50	25.00	
Fort Erie				
Cash	2.50	2.50	2.50	free
Ticket (unit cost) 5	2.25	2.25	2.25	
Ticket (unit cost) 10	2.10	2.10	2.10	
Monthly pass	60.00	60.00	60.00	
Other: Niagara Falls	3.50	3.50	3.50	
Special notes: beyond Niagara Falls prepaid fare	6.00	6.00	6.00	
Port Colbourne				
Cash	2.75	2.75	2.75	1.50
10 Ride Pass	2.40	1.90	2.10	
Monthly pass	78.00	59.00	68.00	
Other - Link fare services	3.50	3.50	3.50	
Special notes: Children under 12 with paying adult free				
Brockville				
Cash	2.25	2.25	2.25	free
Ticket (unit cost)	1.80	1.80	1.80	
Monthly pass	64.00	64.00	64.00	
Other (40 Ride pass)	64.00	64.00	64.00	
Special notes: Medical or support person no charge				
Tecumseh				
Cash	2.00	1.50	1.00	free
Monthly pass	35.00	30.00	25.00	
6 month pass	175.00	150.00	125.00	
annual pass	350.00	200.00	250.00	
Special notes: Veterans, Blind Persons, Person accompanying a Disables rider - Free				
Quinte West				
Cash	2.50	1.50	1.50	free
Monthly pass	40.00	30.00	20.00	
Special notes: Children 6-12 Cash 1.00, monthly pass 15.00				
Kawartha Lates				
Cash	2.00	1.50	1.50	free
Tokens (unit cost)	1.67	1.43	1.43	
Monthly pass	60.00	50.00	50.00	
Special notes: ages 6-12 1.00 cash fare				

- $25 monthly pass (62.5$0.625 per ride based on 20 days @ 2trips per day)

Pre-school Children

- Free, accompanied by an adult

Table 4: 2017 Peer Review Transit Fares

As identified in the 2016 Transit Peer Review, the average fare was $0.99 and increased to $1.24 in 2017 after several years of no increase. There is no increase in the 2018 Huntsville Transit fares.

When monthly passes were introduced in the 1980s, they were priced to enable customers to use transit 5 days per week to get to and from work or school (40 to 42 trips per month) and provide free transit after hours and on weekends. Transit systems in smaller municipalities such as Huntsville Transit that provide far less service and operate on fewer days do not price monthly passes in the same way given the much lower level of service. For example, the $52.50 adult pass is equivalent to approximately 22 trips at the 11-ride ticket price ($2.00), which is a deep discount compared to being priced at 40 trips.

The proposed pricing fare principle to support transit ridership growth and help to off-set the cost of transit improvements and supporting rationale is summarized as follows:

Cash Fares:

- Recommendation: A single high cash fare that is paid by all transit customers with discounts offered on pre-paid fares such as tickets and passes
- Rationale: To encourage the use of prepaid fares; to speed up transit boarding times; to reduce fare evasion

2-hour Free Transfer for Prepaid Tickets

- Recommendation: To enable transit customers to use transit free within 2 hours of paying a fare upon boarding. The issued transfer would enable a customer travel on any bus in any direction at no additional cost. The single ticket would act as a 2-hour period pass.
- Rationale: To encourage increase transit use and allow stopovers such as:
    - Dropping a child off at daycare then carrying on to work
    - A short trip to pick up groceries and return home

After Hours Student Activity Pass:

- Recommendation: To provide students with a deeply discounted pass for unlimited rides after school hours and on weekends.
- Rationale: To enable students to travel affordably anywhere after yellow school buses have been deployed for any after-school activity (e.g. sports, part time jobs, recreational, social, etc.)

30-day Transferable Period Pass:

- Recommendation: To provide a monthly adult period pass that take effect the day it is first used and provide unlimited travel. The pass can be used by anyone. The suggested price is suggested to reflect 30 adult trips at the adult ticket price for the first year then increase to 40 trips per year over a five-year period commencing the year Sunday service is provided
- Rationale: To replace the monthly transit pass and provide the flexibility to be used by anyone whether family members or not.

It should be noted that the suggested fare pricing and conditions of use are far easier to administer with the use of smart card technology and would result in the eliminating the use of punch cards to enable quicker boardings that, in turn, translates to improved efficiencies.

3.2.12 Realtime Passenger Information

The inherent GPS technology of the smart card system could be upgraded to provide real time passenger information via smart phone mobile apps, personal device assistants (PDA) and from home computers. The availability of real time schedule information will enable transit customers to reduce the time needed to wait at bus stops by obtaining next bus stop arrival times, which will be helpful during inclement weather conditions. Based on the experience of the Transit Consulting Project Manager at Kitchener Transit (now Grand River Transit), on-line passenger information was measured to increase off-peak transit use in Kitchener-Waterloo by 3%.

3.2.13 Summary of Transit Ridership Growth Strategies

The transit ridership growth strategies based on best practices were identified for the Town of Huntsville to implement over time. It is worth noting that increasing transit coverage, expanding hours of operation, improved technology, and enhanced community awareness will result in increased transit use, which would translate to increased external funding. In this regard, if Huntsville Transit ridership growth exceeds that of the Ontario average, the Town of Huntsville will receive a larger share of the provincial 2-cent per litre dedicated transit gas tax.

3.3 Family of Transit Services - Alternatives

Based on the community engagement process and policy framework developed, there are a number of transit route and service concepts that were considered for the Town of Huntsville 2019-2023 Transit Ridership Growth Plan. The Town of Huntsville currently operates three forms of public transportation – Conventional Transit, Conventional Modified Transit and demand-responsive paratransit; together, they are considered a ‘family of transit services’. There are also other innovative services that can be

considered by the Town that are low-cost and build on more recent best practices and existing local resources.

A description of each service provided by the Town of Huntsville as well as alternative forms of service delivery are assessed for potential consideration in the 2018 Transit Ridership Growth Plan.

3.3.1 Conventional Transit Fixed-route Service

The conventional transit fixed-route service is the backbone of Huntsville Transit. Rather than using heavy-duty transit vehicles such as those provided by Orillia Transit, smaller communities such as Huntsville typically use smaller community buses on a fixed-route and schedule. The service is provided every two hours and is designed to generate or attract a larger proportion of seniors ridership by serving areas such as seniors' residences, shopping centres, recreation, social, and medical facilities. However, in order to better accommodate the work trip demand and meet other community expectations, a more frequent service with expanded hours of operation will be required.

Recommendation: Conventional Transit to continue as scheduled fixed-route service.

3.3.2 Demand-responsive Paratransit/ Specialized Transit (Conventional Modified Transit)

Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) regulations state that municipalities with public transit (conventional transit) are not required to provide 'Specialized Transit' but must provide an alternative service for people with disabilities unless it is impracticable to do so. [1]

'Paratransit' is a general term that describes a range of demand-responsive door to door or curb to curb services that complement conventional transit while 'Specialized Transit' or 'Specialized Transportation Services' generally refers to separate reservation-based public transportation service for people unable to use or access conventional transit. The Town of Huntsville's approach to meeting the specialized transit needs is by operating the Conventional Modified Transit (CMT) (herein referred to as "Paratransit"), which requires 24 hours' notice from the transit customer. To minimize costs, the Paratransit bus is removed after 5:00pm on weekdays and all-day Saturday and is replaced with a fixed flex-route service whereby the conventional transit bus will deviate off-route on a request basis.

Recommendation:

- That the dedicated demand-responsive Huntsville Transit service be referred to as "Paratransit"
- That Paratransit service, as currently operated, be considered as the primary service delivery option to complement conventional transit service

3.3.3 Fixed Flex-Route Concept

A fixed flex-route service combines some of the advantages of conventional transit (predictable service, low cost per passenger) with those of paratransit services. A fixed flex-route bus can be deployed along both arterial and collector roads similar to conventional transit service. The bus would follow a normal scheduled route but have the ability to deviate off the route and return to the route within no more than five (5) minutes to continue their trip. Route deviations for pick-ups must be requested in advance, either through dispatch or by phoning the vehicle directly, if permitted. Although drop-offs may be requested in advance, they can also be requested on-board.

[1] AODA regulations state the obligation to provide alternative transportation as follows:
"Alternative accessible method of transportation
45. (1) Except where not practicable to do so, a conventional transportation service provider that does not provide specialized transportation services shall ensure that any person with a disability who, because of his or her disability, is unable to use conventional transportation services is provided with an alternative accessible method of transportation." O. Reg. 191/11, s. 45 (1).

Huntsville Transit's version of the fixed flex-route service where conventional transit also accommodates paratransit requests for service - is unique for the following reasons:

1) More than one route deviation is allowed per trip;
2) There is no eligibility procedure in place; and
3) There is an allowance for 15 minutes (versus up to a maximum 5 minutes) in the bus operator's one-hour schedule to accommodate requests

Currently, this deviation sometimes makes the bus late arriving at the next stop. Given the need to have a reliable schedule at stops and route-end points, it is necessary to set limits to both the number and the distance of deviations (usually one per roundtrip). Buses also need to be low-floor and equipped with ramps to speed up the boarding and alighting of passengers, especially those with mobility devices; ramps are not currently available on Huntsville Transit buses, which rely on wheelchair lifts. The low floor design (to be discussed later in this report) also makes boarding and alighting faster and easier for ambulatory people with disabilities, parents with a stroller, and people with a shopping buggy.

When the paratransit bus is removed from service as a cost efficiency measure, the current fixed route service with route deviation seems to adequately address the need of people who are unable to use conventional transit. Unfortunately, there are significant strains on adherence to the published transit schedules. These delays increase the time for transit customers to get from point A to point B, and lead to rider frustration and dissatisfaction. Reliable on-time performance is critical to building transit's reputation and ridership.

Huntsville's current demand-responsive paratransit service (i.e. CMT) is not truly paratransit/ specialized transit. Whereas specialized transit is strictly regulated by the AODA, alternative services have more latitude in service design and policies. They are relieved of some of the requirements of specialized transit that add significantly to the administrative costs. Among these is the requirement for a formal eligibility process to regulate access to the conventional service.

Based on 2016 CUTA statistics reported by Ontario municipalities with less than 50,000 population, specialized transit cost an average of $26.62 per eligible passenger while the cost per trip for conventional transit services was reported at $5.35 per passenger. The Town of Huntsville cost per passenger in 2016 was $8.57, but this includes both conventional transit, fixed flex-route service and the dedicated Paratransit service in place.

Recommendation: That fixed flex-route service continue to be considered further as a public transportation service option.

3.3.4 Muskoka Seniors Transportation

Muskoka Seniors Transportation is an established local multi-service agency that provides rides to seniors and people with disabilities by using a blend of professional and volunteer transportation that is pre-booked and operates door to door or curb to curb. To assist Muskoka Seniors, Muskoka Red Cross provides software resources for booking and scheduling rides. At the present time, Muskoka Seniors does not operate a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, and therefore carries only ambulatory people and those with a folding walker or wheelchair. However, Muskoka Seniors officials have stated they would be very interested in acquiring and operating an accessible vehicle if the means became available.

If Muskoka Seniors operated a fully accessible vehicle, it could function as an alternative to Huntsville Transit's fixed flex-route and paratransit service, providing demand-responsive trips that do not fit within Transit's schedule. Under this scenario, booking requests that could not be accommodated by Huntsville Transit would be re-directed to Muskoka Seniors, or alternatively to an accessible taxi provider, if available. In this regard, the Town could make an agreement with a local taxi firm to put an accessible taxi into service. Since accessible taxis are more expensive than sedan taxis to acquire and operate, it is common for the transit system to guarantee a certain amount of revenue to the taxi provider, and in some cases provide a capital subsidy to help purchase the vehicle, in order to strengthen the taxi operator's business case for acquiring such a vehicle.

Recommendation:

- That the Town explore opportunities with Muskoka Seniors to provide Paratransit service that cannot be readily accommodated on Huntsville Transit.
- That the Town explore opportunities with local taxi companies to put an accessible taxi into service that could be used as an alternative service by Huntsville Transit's Paratransit service.

3.3.5 Specialized Transit Eligibility

In the event that the Town decides to provide specialized transit service with an eligibility requirement, it will have to ensure that an eligibility programme is in place. AODA regulations require that any person with a disability may apply to use specialized transit, whether his or her most limiting condition is physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental illness. The key criterion is 'unable to use conventional transit due to a disability'.

Conditional Vs Unconditional Eligibility Specialized services are required to administer a process for determining eligibility, ensuring that approved procedures are used for application and eligibility determination. The regulation states that the possible outcomes of the eligibility determination process are: Unconditionally Eligible,

Conditionally Eligible, Temporarily Eligible, or Not Eligible. Conditional eligibility is the qualification to use specialized transit when certain conditions are present in the transit environment, such as ice and snow, non-accessible transit stops, or the need to make a complex trip that requires one or more transfers. Some large Ontario communities are now managing conditional eligibility on a 'trip-by-trip' basis.

Trip by Trip Eligibility When trip-by-trip eligibility is applied, the specialized service staff assess whether a given trip request could be made on conventional transit, in view of the interactions between the registrant's functional limitations and the access barriers he or she would have to overcome to complete the trip on transit. If staff determine that the trip could be made on transit, then the request for a specialized transit trip is denied, and the person receives assistance to plan the trip on transit.

Administering conditional trip-by-trip eligibility requires skilled staff with detailed knowledge of the mobility limitations of the person requesting the trip, and of the access barriers they would encounter if making the trip on conventional transit.

In smaller municipalities, eligibility is typically a simpler matter – clients may be granted unconditional eligibility, or seasonal eligibility, under which the person may only be eligible to use specialized transit from November to May, but is unconditionally eligible during the rest of the year.

Recommendation:

- That the Town of Huntsville request input from the Accessibility Advisory Committee on the following issues:
    - Would further development of the Paratransit service and potentially other additional measures, such as assisting Muskoka Seniors to acquire and operate an accessible vehicle, and efforts to work with the taxi industry to complement transit service, if feasible
    - The potential to have paratransit service give priority to trip requests for medical appointments

3.3.6 Fixed-route Shared-ride Taxi

Where demand is low, the taxi industry can be used to offer a low-cost option to residential areas that are too distant from existing fixed route transit services. An accessible van or small bus can be used. The significant benefits are lower cost, extended reach for transit, and the ability to establish the pattern of catching a transit vehicle at a designated stop at a scheduled time. Taxis would travel along a set route and schedule and customers would board at designated bus stops, similar to fixed-route Huntsville Transit service. Even for areas of the Town where no fixed route transit exists due to low density and demand, there are still expectations that at least some service can be provided.

Taxis could be used in a number of ways:

- Feeder services from outlying communities to link up with Huntsville Transit at a designated bus stop or bus transfer area
- A fixed or fixed-flex schedule and route
- As a feeder service to employment areas not adequately served by public transit
- As a limited feeder service to remote neighbourhoods where transit may only be required to access goods and services for residents that are unable to drive yet do not have access to transit

Shared-ride taxis can be used in conjunction with bus service until bus service is warranted. No dedicated dispatch service is required for this option. Since taxis would not offer a door-to-door service and are being shared, the service is not viewed as competing with regular taxis.

Contracted taxi service providers would be compensated based on a negotiated hourly or per trip rate. The Town of Huntsville might undertake to offer a minimum revenue guarantee in the contract tender if deemed necessary to secure good quality bids. As an example, taxi vans could provide an initial service reaching areas currently not served. The schedules could be developed upon consultation with residents.

Recommendation: That shared-ride taxis be considered for outlying neighbourhoods and communities as a potential alternative to conventional transit or paratransit service.

3.3.7 Dial-a-Ride

Dial-a-Ride service is a demand-responsive curb-to-curb service whereby residents call into a dispatch centre or driver cell phone to request service. For regular trips (i.e. daily, weekly, etc.), service can be arranged on a reservation basis so that the customer is not required to continuously call. Service can be solely in response to requests or can be structured to operate on a frequency basis (e.g. every two hours). In that case, the requester is given the next available time the vehicle can arrive to pick him or her up, and an approximate arrival time at destination.

Similar to a fixed route shared-ride taxi, a dial-a-ride customer would be able to transfer to a bus route if necessary to complete the trip. On the return trip, the process is the same: the customer is required to call and request the trip. Dial-a-Ride service is generally used in place of bus service in areas where population is sparse and demand for service is low. The need to request each trip and wait for the next available time can make it less convenient for the customer. There would be little need for dial-a-ride service within the urban area of Huntsville since it will be sufficiently served by a revised, fixed-route community bus service.

Recommendation: To be considered for outlying neighbourhoods and communities outside of the urban area of Huntsville as a potential alternative to fixed-route bus service.

3.3.8 Uber Taxi Model (Town of Innisfil)

Similar to Dial-a-Ride, the demand-responsive Uber taxi pilot project operated in the Town of Innisfil is a unique service that operates in place of regular transit service. The Uber service requires customers to have a mobile app on their phone; however, a resident can also use a regular phone line to arrange service, which can be shared with others. The passenger pays the normal zone-based bus fare ($3.00 or $5.00) while the difference in the cost is subsidized by the Town.

The experience was presented by Town of Innisfil staff at the Ontario Public Transit Association conference on April 23, 2018 with the following highlights given:

- The Innisfil communities, in proximity to the City of Barrie, are dispersed over a large geographic area
- The program is in its infancy, was well received and demand has grown to approximately 4 passengers per hour (Huntsville Transit carried 5.09 passengers per hour in 2017)
- Residents use the service predominantly for travel within the Town, to GO Transit stops and stations, and to link up with Barrie Transit
- At some point it is expected that some fixed-route services could be implemented to replace some Uber service when there is a business case to do so
- In order to have an Uber service option, there needs to be a supply of Uber driver available either in or close to the municipality, to avoid long, unpaid deadhead trips for drivers, and ensure that service is sufficiently prompt to meet Uber standards.
- Although Uber owns the data (i.e. individual information and trip origin-destinations, etc.), data is shared with the Town

In the opinion of Transit Consulting Network, it is too early to determine the applicability of Uber service for the Town of Huntsville particularly since other low-cost options exist, and Uber is not currently operating in proximity to Huntsville.

Recommendation: To be monitored and considered in the future as an alternative to Dial-a-Ride and Fixed Route Shared-ride Taxi service for areas not served by Huntsville Transit.

3.3.9 Summary of Family of Transit Services

Since the development of the 2006 Transit Ridership Growth Plan and Asset Management Plan, there have been a number of transit service deliver concepts that have evolved in order to adapt to changing demographics and to maximize the return on every transit dollar spent. The Huntsville Transit fixed flex-route and paratransit service are two examples that represent best practices, which the Town of Huntsville can build upon in better meeting community public transportation needs.

Huntsville Transit conventional fixed-route scheduled service can be improved significantly to attract more residents as transit customers, including many that use the Paratransit service. As improvements to the conventional transit system take hold, those unable to use the fixed-route service could continue to reserve the Paratransit service, perhaps with trips requested for medical purposes receiving priority. During the early stages of service improvements, the Town of Huntsville could further explore other opportunities to expand the family of transit services by working closely with Muskoka Seniors transportation service, the tourist industry, and the taxi industry (i.e. dial-a-ride and accessible taxi) to provide increased capacity when Huntsville Transit service cannot meet community needs. This ‘walk before you run’ strategy is designed to minimize risk and costs.

4. PHASE III: TRANSIT SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLAN

The community engagement process enabled the study team to identify community priorities relative to provision of transit service. These priorities, coupled with transit best practices, enabled the study team to develop a policy framework to guide the development of the Transit Master Plan.

4.1 Route and Service Design Challenges and Opportunities

In terms of route design and scheduling, there are a number of challenges faced by the Town of Huntsville that limit cost-effective transit route design options, namely:

- Dispersed low-density population
- Hilly topography is a challenge for many individuals as well as for buses during inclement winter weather conditions; this limits the number or residential streets buses can travel along
- Lack of development to support transit along roadways that connect Huntsville to Deerhurst/ Hidden Valley, Novar and Port Sydney
- Lower housing costs (e.g. rentals) force lower income residents to reside outside the urban area of Huntsville where transit is needed but not available
- The separation of urban developments by waterway connecting Lake Vernon to Fairy Lake (Hunters Bay) and Highway 11:
    - Results in the need to have more kilometres of route travelway than would normally be required to serve the same population
    - Limits route design flexibility
- Main Street downtown traffic during the summer months slows buses and should be avoided to the extent reasonable
- High proportion of seniors require routes to deviate off main roadways

Although challenges exist, these challenges can be overcome by applying best practices in transit route design, designing service by putting oneself in the shoes of a transit customer and by recognizing that transit cannot be all things to all people. In this regard, opportunities exist to better accommodate community priorities and expectations, namely:

- Streamline conventional transit routes by eliminating route deviations, where current customers affected are within an acceptable walk distance to a bus stop

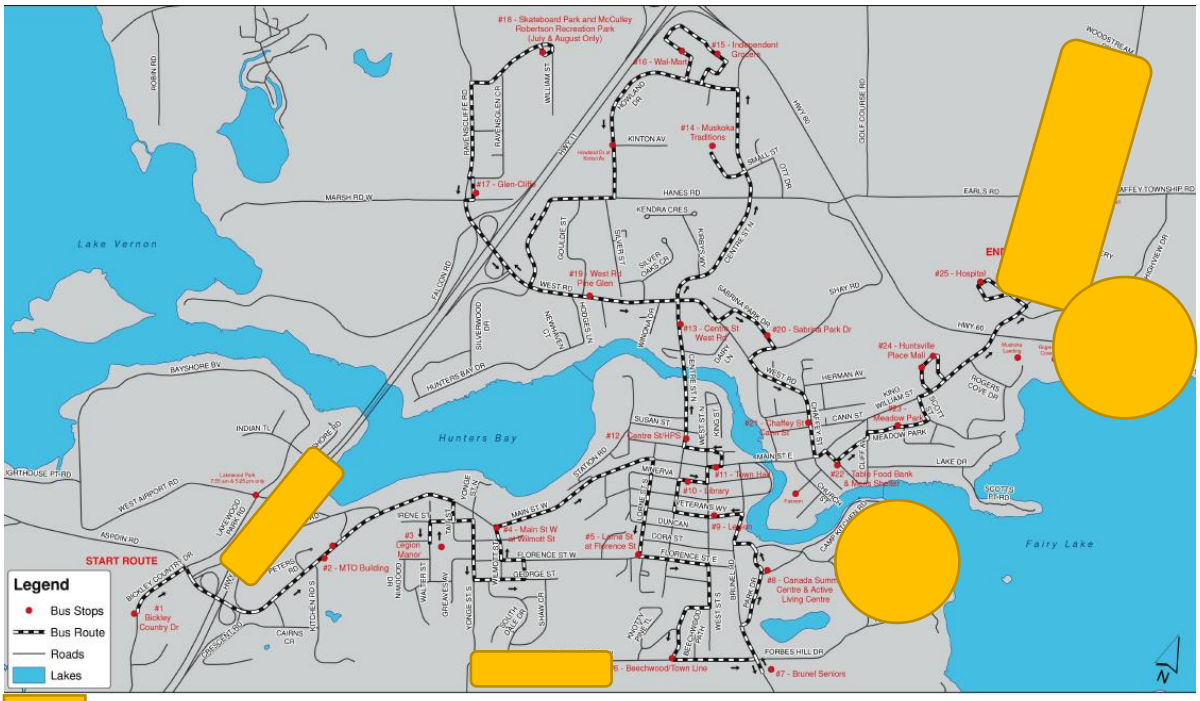
- Providing a limited number of bus trips from outlying communities to Huntsville then to Deerhurst and Hidden Valley
- Utilizing taxis where demand is low and ensuring taxis used are wheelchair accessible, when required
- Establish, using best practices, priority criteria for the use of the separate Paratransit service (e.g. medical appointments)
- Increase the number of bus stops and eliminate the practice of flag stops along urban streets to maximize safety and reduce the number of delays
- The use and testing of the fixed flex-route service concept as a pilot project

4.2 Accommodating Newer Development

In order to grow Huntsville Transit demand, it is important that residents are within a reasonable walk distance to bus stops, which is addressed in Section 3.1 Transit Policy Framework. Currently, less than half of the Town's residents are beyond the acceptable walk distance to transit and as development continues to grow outside the current urban areas, a larger portion of the population will not have access to transit.

While it is important to expand transit service to areas within the Huntsville urban area (e.g. Town Line Rd. W.), it is equally important to provide service to areas outside the current urban area (e.g. Muskoka Rd. 3, Fairyview Rd., Novar, Port Sydney, etc.). To do this cost-effectively, one needs to develop a route that can reach as many residences and businesses as possible within one hour, which is in-line with the minimum hourly transit service proposed.

It is also important to have a transit service in place before residential developments are fully built because the availability of affordable public transportation helps future residents determine car ownership requirements before they move in. In this regard, since the 'car is king' in existing areas where transit service does not exist, it can take a few years of transit in place before it can reach its potential. For example, a two- or three-car family could reduce car ownership needs if an alternative exists that meets their needs; this benefits the family financially. However, residents will not sell their car overnight simply because transit is available. It takes time.



Areas beyond a 5-minute walk to existing Huntsville Transit fixed-route service

4.3 Route and Service Design Strategy

The proposed route and service design strategy applied in the development of route concepts reflected:

- Adding a second route for the urban area of Huntsville to:
  - Improve and streamline route coverage within the urban area of Huntsville to ensure schedule reliability
  - Eliminate the practice of flex-route service for conventional transit service when dial—a-ride curb-to-curb service is available
  - Provide hourly frequency on the conventional transit service
  - Provide direct two-way service to the extent possible
  - improve existing scheduled travel speed from 15.4 kph to a more reasonable range of 20 – 25 kph
- Provide a separate core transit service and implement fixed flex-route conventional transit service, when feasible
- Limited bus travel from Novar to Huntsville that would connect with Huntsville Transit, including service to Deerhurst and Hidden Valley for employees and other members of the public

- Utilize accessible taxis for curb-to-curb service when demand is minimal, or requests made the day before cannot be accommodated by Paratransit

In the development of the route concepts, it was deemed important by the study team that existing bus stops served would continue to be served to the extent possible.

4.4 Proposed Route Concepts

The proposed two-bus route concept illustrated in Exhibit 15: Proposed Huntsville Transit Route Concept is described as a route that enables the most distant residents served to reach the furthest point of the conventional transit service area in less than 60 minutes. The Eastbound direction commences at the Huntsville Bus Station through the Town of Huntsville urban area to the Muskoka District Memorial Hospital then branches out to serve Muskoka Rd, 3 to Golf Course Rd. on one trip then and along Highway 60 to Deerhurst and Hidden Valley on alternate trips. On the return trip, the Westbound bus travels in the reverse direction and terminates at the Huntsville Bus Station.

In order to have a dependable 60-minute service, it was necessary to eliminate the fixed route conventional transit service west of Highway 11, which would be served by Paratransit or, alternatively, a demand-responsive shared-ride taxi service. The proposed route provides hourly coverage throughout most of the urban area of Huntsville for the first time and as such, transit ridership will increase accordingly. The far more reliable and frequent Transit service should also significantly mitigate the demand for the reservation-based Paratransit service. This will, in turn, enable Paratransit to serve a higher portion of residents unable to use or access the conventional transit fixed-route service.

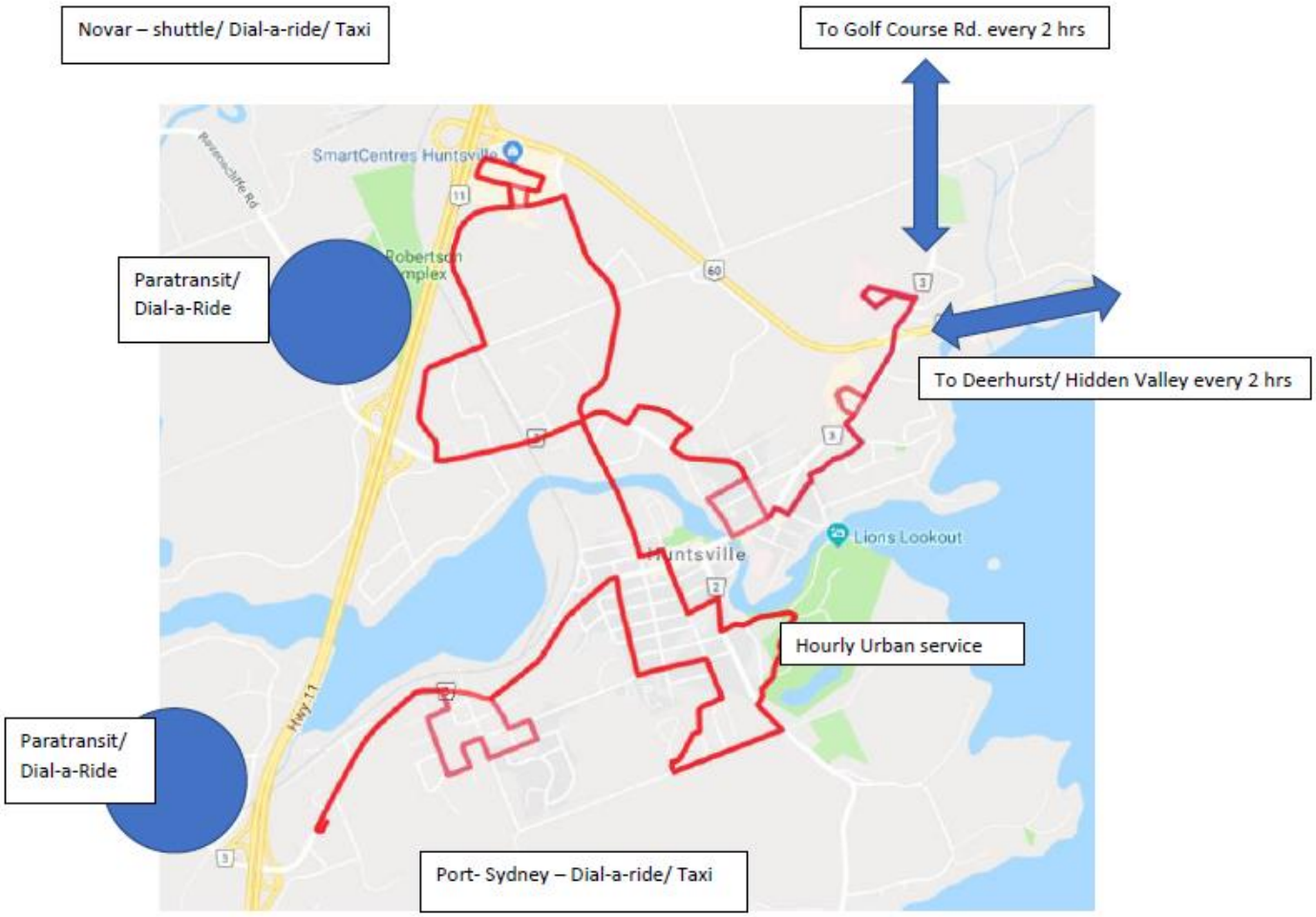


Exhibit 15: Proposed Huntsville Transit Route Concept

Appendix A provides a full version of proposed route concept. Route 1A travels between the Huntsville Bus Station to Golf Course Road along Muskoka Rd. 3 N via the hospital. Route 1B follows similar routing until the hospital then travels along Highway 60 to Deerhurst/ Hidden Valley (Route 1B).

4.5 Proposed Five-year Transit Expansion Plan

A five-year transit service expansion plan was developed to ensure that service hours are expanded within five years to a 7-day per week year-round operation with weekday service beginning at 7:00am to accommodate 7:30am to 8:00am shift start times within Huntsville and ending at 11:00pm during weekdays to accommodate industrial, retail and service sector employees who complete their shifts at approximately 10:00pm.

4.5.1 Overall Transit Expansion Strategy

The overall transit expansion plan strategy begins with the redesign of the existing bus route and the separation of the Conventional Transit (herein referred to as Transit), and demand-responsive Conventional Modified Transit (herein referred to as Paratransit). This was seen as essential in order to increase Transit coverage within the urban Huntsville area and to ensure that Transit travel is predictable, reliable and designed to attract Paratransit customers to the Transit system, thereby freeing up Paratransit to serve those most in need that are unable to use or access Transit. In order to improve schedule adherence and reduce travel times, the 'flag stop' program within the urban areas will need to be eliminated by installing additional bus stops (discussed in Section 4.7 Transit Asset Management Plan), purchasing ramp-equipped buses and introducing smart card technology to reduce boarding times.

The proposed route concept will require the removal of fixed route Transit service west of Highway 11 given the low demand (total annual average of 2.6 passengers per day in 2017); however, low-cost alternatives are proposed. Also, it may yet be possible to extend the new route on some trips 'if' there is sufficient schedule time available once the new route has been in place and tested. This is part of the implementation phase.

Two buses will be required for the one-hour transit route options while one bus will be dedicated to Paratransit. AODA requires that the Paratransit service hours of operation must mirror those of Transit; the current service meets that requirement; however, since the Paratransit bus would be dedicated and operated for more hours each day, there may be an opportunity to use the bus for some Transit trips such as an early morning link to Novar or return trip at the end of the day where demand for Paratransit is non-existent or nominal.

Other low-cost alternatives such as shared-ride taxis or the use of the Muskoka Seniors Transportation with some funding provided by Huntsville can be tapped to meet needs not accommodated by Transit or Paratransit. This is an evolutionary approach that will require a seasoned service provider such as Campbell Bus Lines that can build on its strong relationship with existing customers. For example, if a request from a Deerhurst resident is made for Paratransit, it may be possible to have Transit 'flex' the new route to accommodate the trip, which negates the need to have two buses in the same area.

This 'walk before you run' approach provides the flexibility to grow the service with the lowest cost service as demand dictates over time. Another example of this would be the initiation of a dial-a-ride service in Novar that can meet several resident needs with one trip rather than multiple trips or using Paratransit on regular client trips to accommodate other transit customer needs.

Public education through travel training programs will also be necessary to assist those that are not familiar with transit and to educate existing transit customers on the changes to be made. For example, buses can be made available at seniors' residences and community events with information packages that can be distributed. Muskoka Seniors Transportation clients can also be educated now that Transit can reach more residents and businesses in a timelier manner.

The transit expansion highlights over the next five years (2019-2023) are summarized in the foregoing. It should be noted that start and end times for service are approximate only.

4.5.2 Year 1 (2019): Revised Bus Route and Expanded Paratransit Hours

The first year will be focussed on redesigning of the scheduled conventional transit (Transit) route, increasing the span of service, and matching Paratransit hours to Transit hours.

January 2019 Improvements Description

- Route 1A service every 2 hours between Bus Station and Golf Course Rd.
- Paratransit service hours match Transit hours
- Service west of Highway 11 to be eliminated with limited service accommodated by Paratransit

May 2019 Improvements Description

- Add Rte. 1B service to Deerhurst/ Hidden Valley with service every two hours; this will require an additional bus
- Service between Bus Station and Hospital to increase from every two hours to hourly
- Begin Transit and Paratransit weekday and Saturday service one hour earlier (7:00am)

Service Impact:

- Transit service hours increases 81% from 3,300 to 5,800 hours per year; this represents

  an increase from 0.16 hours to 0.26 hours per capita based on the total Huntsville population

- Paratransit service increases by 69% from 2,300 hours to 3,800 hours per year

OPTION: The optional introduction of 8:00am to 7:00pm Sunday service to coincide with May 2019 improvements instead of 2020 as proposed in 4.5.3, would result in the following added hours of service in 2019:

- Additional 800 hours for Transit service in 2019 (two Transit buses for hourly service)
- Additional 400 hours for Paratransit service in 2019 (one Paratransit vehicle)
- Note: If implemented, adjustments will need to be made to Table 5: 2019-2023 Proposed Operating Budget

4.5.3 Year 2 (2020): Add Sunday Service 8:00am – 7:00pm

- Designed to accommodate the local work trip needs and tourist market
- Transit service hours increases 32% from 5,800 hours to 7,600 hours per year; this represents

  an increase from 0.26 hours to 0.35 hours per capita based on the total Huntsville population
- Paratransit service increases by 18% from 3,800 hours to 4,500 hours per year

4.5.4 Year 3 (2021): Introduce Dial-a-ride Service to Novar and Port Sydney

- Offer shared-ride taxi up to 3 trips per day, two days per week to Novar and Port Sydney
- Taxi service provided to and from nearest bus stop (e.g. Bus Station for Port Sydney residents and Hospital for Novar residents)
- Transit service hours increases 7% from 7,600 hours to 8,100 hours per year; this represents

  an increase from 0.35 hours to 0.37 hours per capita based on the total Huntsville population
- Add Paratransit peak period bus 4 hours per weekday day to accommodate growing market
- Paratransit service increases by 22% from 4,500 hours to 5,500 hours per year (Note: accessible taxi service may be used in lieu of Paratransit bus)

4.5.5 Year 4 (2022): Extend Weekday and Saturday Span of Service

- Increase span of Transit and Paratransit service weekdays from 7:00pm to 11:00pm
- Transit service hours increases 25% from 8,100 hours to 10,100 hours per year; this represents

  an increase from 0.37hours to 0.45 hours per capita based on the total Huntsville population
- Paratransit service increases by 18% from 5,500 hours to 6,500 hours per year

4.5.6 Year 5 (2023): Add Weekday Peak Period Bus

- Budget for added peak period Transit bus 6 hours per weekday to be used as required (work trip shuttles/ extras, increased dial-a-ride, Paratransit, etc.); this flexibility will be needed to better match service with demand based on the experience obtained during the previous years' improvements
- Transit service hours increases 15% from 10,100 hours to 11,600 hours per year; this represents

  an increase from 0.45 hours to 0.52 hours per capita based on the total Huntsville population

4.5.7 Transit Ridership Growth

As community public transportation needs are increasingly being met, transit use will grow over time and result in increased transit revenues. An attempt was made to differentiate the demand between Transit and Paratransit service based on data provided by Campbell Bus Lines.

In this regard, Huntsville Transit carried a total of 27,995 passengers in 2017, broken down between Transit and Paratransit as follows:

- 20,372 passengers based on 3,290 revenue hours of service (6.2 passengers per hour)
- 7,623 passengers based on 2,260 revenue hours of service (3.4 passengers per hour)
- 5.2 passengers per hour combined Transit and Paratransit

Since Paratransit demand is currently accommodated by Transit after 5:00pm on weekdays and all-day Saturday and that there are no eligibility criteria in place for Paratransit, it was determined that Transit and Paratransit ridership growth estimates will be based on the following over the next 5 years:

- Transit is estimated to attract an average 5 passengers per hour in the first year* (2019), increase by 1.0 passengers per hour over the following 2 years (2020, 2021) then increase by 0.5 passengers per hour in 2022 and 2023
- Paratransit is estimated to attract 3.4 passengers per hour and remain constant

  Note (*) The 5.0 Transit passengers per hour of service in the first year is less than 6.2 passengers per hour carried in 2017. This conservative approach is considered reasonable since it does take time to attract new transit customers in areas currently not served.

Since approximately 80 to 90% of the population is to be served with an improved new route structure and schedule as well as dial-a-ride service options in comparison to only half the population today, the Transit demand estimate is considered to be reasonable. It is also in line with the 2016 peer group average of 8.9 passengers per hour. The Paratransit efficiency estimate of 3.4 passengers per hour exceeds that of 3.1 passengers per hour of specialized transit systems in municipalities with less than 50,000 population; however, Huntsville's Paratransit service has fewer restrictions on eligibility and is, fortunately, more integrated with Transit customers than other municipalities.

4.5.8 Transit Ridership Revenues

Transit fare increases are necessary to off-set the cost of transit service and to keep pace with inflation yet remain affordable. In 2017, transit fares collected ($34,698) were nominal and covered 12.3% of the cost of operating transit ($281,152). The average passenger fare paid was $1.24. The proposed fare pricing strategy provides for a single cash fare that applies to all transit customers while discount fares would only apply to those that prepay with tickets or passes.

It is suggested that the Town of Huntsville consider the following fare pricing strategy discussed earlier once service has been expanded:

- Increase all cash fares from $2.25 to $2.50 for adults and seniors and from $1.00 to $2.50 for students
- Offer prepaid ticket discounts to adults at an average cost of $2.00 (20% discount)
- Offer prepaid ticket discounts to seniors and students at an average cost $1.50 (40% discount)
- Introduce a $60 - 30-day transit pass based on 30 trips at the $2.00 discount adult fare to be increased to 40 trips upon the introduction of Sunday service; the pass would be transferable
- Pre-school children would continue to board free when accompanied by an adult
- Introduce a student activity pass and a family pass when service is provided on Sundays

- Increase transit fares each year to keep pace with inflation as a minimum
- In order to meet AODA requirements, Paratransit fares cannot exceed the Transit fare

Since there is a proposed doubling of service over the next year and tripling of service by 2023 while also extending the reach of transit, it is reasonable to assume that higher fares could be supported. To be conservative, it is suggested that the average fare would be set at the $1.60 in the first year and increased by $0.10 each year until 2023. For comparison purposes, the average 2016 transit fare paid in municipalities with less than 50,000 population was $1.75.
Given the longer distances of Novar and Port Sydney, future consideration can be given to charging a zone fare premium. During the interim, the proposed fare could be in place to attract new Transit customers.

4.5.9 Impact of Transit Expansion

Transit ridership growth will occur in response to service increases; however, it takes time to improve transit efficiency. For example, if service hours are increased to accommodate more work shifts, households may opt to eventually eliminate the need for that 2nd or 3rd car. Enhanced branding and community awareness can also go a long way to growing transit use sooner than later.

The Town of Huntsville Transit Ridership Growth Plan is designed to take Huntsville to the next level - to expand the reach of Transit and Paratransit and to better meet the needs of residents and businesses, including the tourist industry through increased hours of operation. More important is that Transit is designed to be far more reliable, efficient and effective while Paratransit would continue to serve the growing number of aging residents that will unable to drive.

The transit service increases were designed to reflect the key priorities of a variety of stakeholders, including businesses. The proposed recommendations provide a blueprint for the Town of Huntsville to follow for the next five years and beyond. By generating transit conversations through the use of evidence-based data, the residents of Huntsville will be properly served. The timing of the improvements; however, are subject to change depending upon budget constraints, the timing of new residential and commercial development, and the availability of enhanced external funding such as the federal Public Transit Infrastructure Fund, the provincial Community Transportation grant program, and the dedicated Provincial transit gas tax.

4.5.10 External Funding

4.5.10.1 Dedicated 2-cent per Litre Provincial Gas Tax Fund

For every litre of gasoline sold, Ontario currently provides two cents to municipalities to help fund local public transit improvements. For the 2016 operating year, the Town of Huntsville applied to receive $114,976 while the Town's contribution would be $131,478. On January 27, 2017 the Province of Ontario announced that beginning in 2019, Ontario is proposed to gradually double the municipal share of gas tax funds to a total of $0.04 per litre by 2021-22 as follows:

- 2.5 cents for 2018-2019
- 3.0 cents for 2019-2020
- 3.5 cents for 2020-2021
- 4.0 cents for 2021-2022

In 2016, 99 municipalities received a share of a dedicated transit tax collected by the Province, which is determined by a formula of 70% ridership and 30% cent population. In this regard, if the number of municipalities receiving the dedicated gas tax remains constant, maintain their existing ridership levels and population, the doubling of the gas tax could also double the gas tax received by Town of Huntsville. Since the increased funding proposed is not confirmed, the study team elected not to apply the proposed increases to the budget; however, municipal staff would take this into consideration should it be passed in 2018.

Going forward, since the gas tax allocation among municipalities is heavier on transit ridership growth (i.e. 70%) than population (30%), transit ridership growth strategies take on a more important role. If transit system effectiveness (e.g. revenue passengers per capita) improves better than the provincial average, the municipality will benefit in two ways:

- Increased passenger revenues
- Increased gas tax revenue attributed to transit ridership gains

Another factor that comes into play is the amount of gasoline sold. Ironically, if more gasoline is sold in Ontario, this adds to the carbon footprint; however, more gas tax revenues will be collected by the Province of Ontario and as such, Ontario transit systems will benefit further.

The Federal and Provincial governments have recognized the importance of transit to municipalities and residents. As such, these levels of governments are investing more in public transit. Huntsville Transit should be encouraged to apply for and invest in current

and future funding programs. This could accelerate, accommodate or augment the cost of newly proposed services, benefiting all residents.

4.5.11 Transit Advertising Revenue

To reduce the cost of transit to the taxpayer, municipalities sell advertising space on bus benches, bus shelters and the exterior of buses. It is recommended that the Town of Huntsville first sell advertising on bus benches, which would need to be located along busy arterial roads to attract clients, which are typically real estate agents, lawyers and local businesses seeking a low-cost marketing tool. Roadways that may be considered are Main St. W., West Rd. and Centre St. N.

Assuming $75 per month net advertising revenue for 20 benches, this would equate to $24,000 per year in revenue. The $18,000 is equivalent to providing approximately 400 hours of service per year or one shuttle bus operating 1.5 hours per weekday through the year. In order to minimize the administrative effort, it is suggested that the bench advertising be contracted out to a third party.

Other forms of revenue include bus shelters and on the exterior of buses. Once bus shelters are installed (there are no shelters in place today), the Town can solicit bids from advertising firms for both mediums.

4.6 Huntsville Transit Five-year Financial Plan

4.6.1 2019-2023 Huntsville Transit Operating Budget

The Huntsville Transit operating budget is based on the following assumptions:

- Based on 2017 dollars
- Transit vehicles are owned by the contractor with the costs expressed in cost per hour and applied to the operating budget:
    - The cost per hour for the existing fleet (cutaways) in 2017 was $3.50 per hour in 2017 for 5,550 hours of service
    - The average hourly cost will gradually increase incrementally to $4.20 per hour by 2023 for 18,100 hours of service and to accommodate low-floor wheel-chair ramps
- Increasing the average bus fare from $1.24 in 2017 to $1.60 in 2019 then increasing the average fare by 10 cents per year to $2.00 in 2023
- Transit ridership estimates, expressed in passengers per hour, will separate the fixed-route service (Transit) from the demand-responsive service (Paratransit) estimates with growth occurring in the Transit service only

- Enhanced marketing, branding, travel training, and community awareness to be in place
- Increased transit advertising revenues from bus stop benches estimated at 20 benches @ $75 net monthly profit per bench

Based on the aforementioned assumption, the proposed 2019-2023 Transit Budget is illustrated as follows:

Proposed Five-year Huntsville Transit Operating Budget	2017 CUTA Submission	Year				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Population	20,660	21,280	21,590	21,900	22,200	22,510
Transit Revenue Hours per Total Pop.	**0.16**	**0.27**	**0.35**	**0.37**	**0.45**	**0.52**
Transit Revenue Hours of Sevice	3,290	5,800	7,600	8,100	10,100	11,600
Paratransit Revenue Hours of Service	2,260	3,800	4,500	5,500	6,500	6,500
Total Revenue Hours of Service (2016)	**5,550**	**9,600**	**12,100**	**13,600**	**16,600**	**18,100**
Total Direct Operating Costs						
Administration Costs	$26,787	$26,787	$26,787	$26,787	$26,787	$26,787
Marketing and technology	$11,721	$10,000	$10,000	$7,500	$7,500	$7,500
Bus stop snow removal	$0	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000
Total Fixed Expenses	$38,508	$41,787	$41,787	$39,287	$39,287	$39,287
Contractor Expenses (excluding Vehicles)*	$223,221	$386,112	$486,662	$546,992	$667,652	$727,982
Estimated Contractor Vehicle Cost**	$19,425	$35,520	$45,980	$54,400	$68,060	$76,020
Total Expenses	**$281,154**	**$463,419**	**$574,429**	**$640,679**	**$774,999**	**$843,289**
Ridership and Revenues						
Average Fare	**$1.24**	**$1.60**	**$1.70**	**$1.80**	**$1.90**	**$2.00**
Annual Transit Passengers	20,372	29,000	45,600	56,700	75,750	92,800
Annual Paratransit Passengers	7,623	12,920	15,300	18,700	22,100	22,100
Total Annual Passengers	27,995	**41,920**	**60,900**	**75,400**	**97,850**	**114,900**
Transit + Paratransit Annual Revenues	$34,698	**$67,072**	**$103,530**	**$135,720**	**$185,915**	**$229,800**
Advertising Revenues (20 bus benches)		$0	$18,000	$18,000	$18,000	$18,000
Other revenue TBD (e.g. subsizied passes)		$0	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000	$10,000
Total all Revenues	$34,698	**$67,072**	**$131,530**	**$163,720**	**$213,915**	**$257,800**
Net Cost (Cost less total all revenues)	**$246,456**	**$396,347**	**$442,899**	**$476,959**	**$561,084**	**$585,489**
Dedicated Provincial Transit Gas Tax* **	$114,976	$124,632	$131,440	$254,090	$332,242	$295,547
Estimated Net Operating Cost to Huntsville	$131,478	$271,715	$311,459	$222,869	$228,842	$289,942

Table 5: 2019-2023 Proposed Operating Budget

Note: * Contractor expense includes the cost to operate and maintain the bus service

** Contractor vehicle capital cost is expressed in cost per hour, which is the life cycle cost of the fleet divided by the number of bus hours ($3.50 per hour with fleet in 2017 gradually increases to $4.20 per hour by 2023 to reflect the low-floor vehicle size

*** Provincial gas tax credits are based on previous year's statistics

The net cost to the Town of Huntsville each year will depend on the gas tax revenues received by the Province of Ontario. For example, in 2017 the gas tax revenue submitted to the Province for funding is $114,976 (47%) while the Town of Huntsville contributed $131,478 (53%) to the $246,454 net cost. In 2018, the Town of Huntsville will have a net contribution of $139,861, which is estimated to increase to $271,715 in 2019.

To put the net cost to the Town of Huntsville into perspective, the average annual cost of service over the 2019-2023 period as well as the net municipal contributions were compared to 2017:

- Average annual cost to operate Huntsville Transit from 2019 to 2023 is estimated at $659,363 per year, which approximates a 134% increase over 2017 ($281,154)
- Average annual net cost to Town of Huntsville from 2019 to 2023 is estimated at $264,965 per year, which approximates a 102% increase over 2017 ($131,478)
- While the Town's contribution will increase by 102%, the growth in service hours will more than triple from 5,550 hours per year to 18,100 hours per year.

Based on the comparison made, the annual average net Town cost of Transit and Paratransit service will be far less (102%) than the average annual increase in the cost of service (134%) over the 2019-2023 period. This can be attributed to the increased bus fares and higher ridership revenues; however, the additional dedicated Provincial gas tax attributed to transit ridership growth has not been reflected and as such, the municipal contribution would be less if the percent gains in transit use exceed the provincial average gains (see sub-section 4.6.1.1 Dedicated 2-cent per Litre Provincial Gas Tax Fund).

4.7 Transit Asset Management Plan

To support the transit ridership growth plan, there will be a need to invest in technology, infrastructure and a fleet replacement and expansion plan.

4.7.1 Fleet Plan

The fleet plan addresses both vehicle design and a fleet replacement and expansion plan. In a public transit system, there are several vehicle types and options available that can range from large vans to heavy-duty conventional transit buses. In fixed-route transit services for urban areas, there are a number of vehicle options that can be explored.

4.7.1.1 Preferred Bus Design

In determining the appropriate bus model and size, municipalities should consider a number of factors, namely:

- Seating capacity and standee capacity needed to ensure that the bus capacity can accommodate the transit demand for the life cycle of the bus
- Wheelchair accessibility, which is a mandatory requirement for public transit systems
- Wheelchair position (forward-facing versus rear-facing)
- Passenger accessibility, which favours ramp access over steps when boarding
- Passenger comfort for ease of boarding, fare payment and seating
- Vehicle replacement cycle to determine average annual replacement costs based on life expectancy of the vehicle
- Maintenance requirements

Since community vehicle costs can vary significantly (i.e. from $100,000 to $400,000 or more, depending on size and weight (from 'cutaways' on truck chassis to heavy duty mid-size diesel buses), consideration must be given to what is best for the transit customer, seating and standee capacity, vehicle operating costs, maintenance costs, and the replacement cycle. The current buses are sufficient to handle future bus loads given that Huntsville Transit carried approximately 5.1 passengers per hour of service in 2017. Community bus options are compared in Table 6 below.

Community Bus Option	Estimated Cost	Life Cycle	Approx. Annual Capital Cost	Comments
High floor 8.2 metre (27')	$100,000	5 years	$20,000	'Cut-away' vehicle (gas) with steps Wheelchair lift required Approx. 20 passengers + standees
Low-floor ramp-equipped 8.2 metre (27')	$160,000	7 years	$23,000	Cut-away type (gas) with one forward-facing wheelchair position; Approx. 20 passengers + standees
Low-floor mid-size Up to 10.0 metre (33')	$250,000	7 years	$35,000	Gas or diesel powered with ramp; forward or rear-facing wheelchair positions; up to 35 passengers + standees
Heavy-duty 9.2 metre (30') to 10.7 metre (35')	$400,000	12 years	$33,000	Rear-facing wheel chair position; Up to 35 passengers + standees; Life can be extended up to 18 years with extensive refurbishment

Table 6: Community Bus Options

Municipalities that currently have high floor community buses that operate a fixed-route transit service would better serve their residents with low-floor ramp-equipped buses similar to the buses operated by Bracebridge Transit. Although high-floor community buses are the least expensive, the higher annual cost of $3,000 over the 7-year life a low-floor bus with a ramp is nominal.

Ramps reduce the time needed to board for all transit customers and offer enhanced safety for seniors, people with strollers or walkers, and ambulatory people with disabilities. In addition, since there are few curbs for ramps to fold out onto, it is also recommended that the kneeling feature be added as a specification to better accommodate mobility devices. If a transit customer is not able to board from the roadway shoulder (i.e. where there is no sidewalk), buses can be equipped with a kneeling feature, which would be deployed along with the ramp, as required.

Bus designs and sizes can vary significantly between models as does the price and as such, annual or ongoing research on what is available, and their costs should be undertaken by staff well in advance of the procurement process. The best source of research is to contact transit peers to obtain their first-hand experience. In this regard, although one bus may be the lowest cost, the fuel and maintenance costs could off-set the savings compared to a higher-priced vehicle.

8.2 metre low-floor bus with ramp

Up to 10 metre low-floor bus

Based on best practices, it is recommended that vehicles used for fixed route Transit services be able to accommodate 20-passeneger seats and a minimum one wheelchair position. In addition, buses should be low-floor ramp-equipped versus the current lift-equipped buses with steps, which are referred to as ‘cut-aways’.

Paratransit vehicles would ideally be ramp-equipped as well since buses can be inter-changeable between Paratransit and Transit to offer flexibility; however, the lift-equipped vehicle (2011 F450 12-passenger bus with two wheelchair positions) used for Paratransit is being replaced with another lift-equipped bus at the time of writing (18-passenger with two wheelchair positions). It is suggested that that as the fleet expands, consideration be given to using Transit vehicles to provide Paratransit service from time to time to confirm their ability to accommodate wheelchairs equally in the curb-to-curb service. This approach is taken for the City of Kawartha Lakes (Town of Lindsay) where buses are identical for their Transit and Paratransit services.

4.7.1.2 Fleet Replacement and Expansion

Based on the proposed transit service plan, there is a requirement for three in-service buses – two buses for the Huntsville Transit fixed-route service and one bus for the demand-responsive Paratransit service. Huntsville Transit should also have a complement of two spare buses to replace buses that are out of service.

Spare buses serve a number of purposes:

- Replacing a bus that requires major repairs when the bus can be out of commission for several weeks or even months
- Replacing a bus that requires major repairs due to an accident
- Replace buses when in-service breakdowns occur
- Extend the life of the entire fleet by rotating the buses in use

The current fleet plan consists of two vehicles that would be used as spares – the 2011 F450 being replaced will be refurbished as well as the 2009 F450 (18-passenger with one wheelchair position). The current fleet is owned by the contractor and as such, the rolling stock (fleet) costs are reflected in the transit operating agreement. In addition to the spare vehicles, the contractor (Campbell Bus Lines) also has access to other vehicles, as required.

The current buses used have a life span of 5 to 6 years at a cost approximating $100,000 while the proposed low-floor buses at an estimated cost of $160,000 have a tested life span of 7 years. Depending upon their hours of operation, the low-floor bus life can be extended much further provided spare vehicles are rotated with in-service vehicles.

For conservative budgeting purposes, it is recommended that the Town of Huntsville eventually plan for the purchase of low-floor buses for both Transit and Paratransit (in-service and spares) while utilizing the two planned spare cut-aways during the interim as follows:

Transit Service Expansion:

- 2019: One low-floor buses to accommodate hourly transit commencing May
- 2020: One low-floor bus to replace 2015 F450 bus, which will then be used as a spare
- 2023: One low-floor bus to accommodate additional peak service

Paratransit and Spares:

- 2018: F450 18-passenger 2 wheelchair positions to be used for Paratransit (bus on order)

- 2019: Current 2015 F450 20-passenger bus with one wheelchair position to be used as spare for Transit upon delivery of second low-floor bus
- 2021: 2009 F450 18-passenger bus with one wheelchair position to be refurbished, utilized as a spare and replaced with a low-floor bus
- 2022: 2011 F450 12-passenger bus with one wheelchair position to be utilized as an added spare then retired from fleet and replaced with low-floor bus

4.7.1.3 Vehicle Ownership and Costs

Huntsville Transit vehicles are owned by the contractor, Campbell Bus Lines, with the capital cost built into the hourly rate, which was $43.72 reported in 2017. The current vehicles have a life span of 5 years. Assuming the $96,000 2018 F450 to be purchased by Campbell Bus Lines and a 5-year life, the average annual cost per vehicle is $19,200 for the current 'cutaway' fleet of three vehicles – two in-service and one spare. The 5,500 hours of service reported in 2017 translates to an hourly cost $3.50 per hour. The cost to operate and maintain the fleet (capital cost portion excluded), therefore, approximated $40.22 in 2017.

If the three buses were low-floor ramp-equipped buses at a cost of $160,000 per bus with an average annual capital cost of $23,000, the hourly cost of the buses over 5,500 hours of service would have been approximately $4.20, which is 20% higher than the current $3.50 hourly cost. The proposed fleet purchase plan consists of one low-floor bus in 2019, an added low-floor bus in 2020 and a third bus in 2023 for in-service Transit needs while Paratransit will require the replacement of Paratransit vehicles with low-floor buses in 2021 and 2022. As service hours are increased, the average annual vehicle capital cost will change as well and will impact the total cost of service, which will need to be reflected in the contractor agreement.

Subject to further discussions and negotiations between the Town and the Contractor, the estimated impact on the annual capital cost would be up to an additional 20% of the 2017 cost for budgeting purposes. To support this, in the proposed 5-year budget, the estimated contractor vehicle costs of $306,000 is 10.4% of the total contactor cost to operate and maintain the buses ($2,938,000) for the five-year period. Going from 8.7% to 10.4% of the contractor cost (a 20% increase) is considered reasonable since the improved and expanded fleet will require a higher level of investment.

In the future, there may be opportunities to capitalize on enhanced external funding for vehicle purchases, which is only available to the public sector. At that time, the Town should consider partial ownership where the Town owns the in-service vehicles or full fleet ownership where the Town owns both the in-service vehicles and spares. A business case can be addressed at that time.

4.7.2 Transit Technology

A number of transit technology improvements can enhance bus travel in Huntsville by building upon the existing GPS-based 'next stop' announcement system that was installed in 2017, namely:

- Installation of a smart card technology estimated at $7,000 per bus
- Portable smart card readers for other vehicles such as taxis
- Real time passenger information and mobile apps

As discussed as a transit ridership growth strategy, the technology will enable the Town of Huntsville and the service contractor to monitor route performance remotely, which can be used to support future route and service changes without the need for in-house transit planning or IT staff support since the technology would be cloud-based.

4.7.3 Bus Stop Infrastructure

With the implementation of new transit service improvements, there is now an opportunity to brand the entire transit system by adopting clear and consistent messaging and information through a communications plan. Branding builds and enhances transit system visibility by communicating a clear message to existing and potential transit customers that this is their transit service. Enhanced bus stop infrastructure addresses this need.

The very basic aspects of branding would consist of common and universal images throughout the following components of the transit system:

- Bus stops signs that are prominent and are accessible
- Posted schedules and route maps at major busy stops and shelters
- System route maps (printed, online and posted)
- Fonts (including AODA compliance with font size and contrasting colours)
- Service announcements, detours, route changes, etc.
- All promotional and marketing materials

Citizens who may consider riding transit, especially those who have the option to drive, may be deterred by the unfamiliarity of the transit system (where it goes, the fare collection, the boarding process) – basically every aspect of using it. The following information should be available where feasible at bus stops:

Minimum

- Name or Identification number of the stop (i.e. 4-digit I.D. number)
- Routes that serve the stop by posting each route number
- Decals providing high tonal contrast colours for easy viewing by persons with low visibility
- Bus stop signs should be double sided with the international bus pictogram, so prospective customers may see the location of the bus stop from 2 directions
- Bus stop signs should use 3M reflective sheeting material (similar to other traffic signs) to enable bus drivers to easily view them during nighttime and low visibility periods.

Posted Schedules at Bus Stops

At Major (busy) Bus Stops

- Schedule departure times (see example from Burlington Transit)
- Route map
- Fare information
- Phone number (to access transit information)
- Website addresses to link to a future Huntsville Transit GPS/Real time application and other information about transit (fares, hours of service, routes, etc.)

At Transit Shelter Locations

- Same information as above
- Transit system map

Bus Stop Area Improvements

There is a total of 50 bus stops served by transit with no bus shelters. Additional bus stops are needed to eliminate the flag stop practice in the urban areas while bus shelters are needed to protect transit customers from inclement weather. Municipal transit systems typically strive to have 25% to 50% of total bus stop locations with transit shelters.

For budgeting purposes, there will need to be a requirement for bus stops that are spaced at an average of every 250-300 metres on both sides of future bus travel ways. For every 1.0 km of a two-way bus route within built-up urban areas, the Town should

budget for up to 8 bus stops with landing pads and two shelters. For buses travelling along rural roadways, the flag stop program can be in place.

Subject to on-street site selections, there will be a need to have bus stop infrastructure along approximately 15 kilometres of two-way urban service, which would equate to the need for approximately 70 new bus stops for a total of 120 bus stops and 30 bus shelters.

For budgeting purposes, the following unit costs have been estimated for the supply and installation of various bus stop area components:

- $300 Bus stop post and sign
- $300 Bench
- $1,000 Concrete bus pad (up to 12-metre length)
- $7,500 4 ft. X 8 ft. standard shelter; $12,500 for 5’ x 10’ shelter
- $500 miscellaneous (e.g. waste receptacles)
- $50,000 to $75,000 heated shelter and other improvements for new mobility hub

It is suggested that, initially, bus stop signs (approximately $50 each) be installed on existing sign or utility posts, where available, then install posts where existing sidewalks are in place ($300 each). Concrete pads, benches and shelters be added as demand dictates (i.e. based on highest boardings). The boarding information can be obtained from the smart card data. The priorities would be based on safety first and demand secondly. Given the relatively higher cost of bus shelters, the Town can elect to install shelters over many years (e.g. several in the first two years then 2 to 4 shelters per year thereafter.

It is recommended that bus stop infrastructure be included in a developer’s subdivision development requirements since bus stop landing pads would be linked to sidewalks in many cases. Transit customers are, after all, pedestrians. The Town can also approach major retail centres and other institutions (e.g. hospital) to install bus stop shelters to accommodate transit customers, which is a nominal expense compared to the cost they incur for constructing and maintaining parking facilities.

4.7.4 Bike Racks on Buses

It is recommended that all Transit and Paratransit buses be equipped with bike racks at an estimated cost of up to $2,000 per bus installed. The bike racks can be re-used at the end of the bus life. Future bus purchases should include bike racks as a standard option.

4.7.5 2019-2023 Capital Budget

The proposed capital budget required to support the Transit Ridership Growth Plan is provided below and is necessary to support current and future applications for external funding.

Proposed 5-year Capital Budget	Year					Total
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Fleet Expansion	$160,000	$160,000			$160,000	$480,000
Fleet Replacement			$160,000	$160,000		$320,000
Transit Technology	$35,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$55,000
Bus stop infrastructure	$10,000	$40,000	$30,000	$30,000	$20,000	$130,000
Bike Racks on buses	$4,000	$4,000				$8,000
Total	**$209,000**	**$209,000**	**$195,000**	**$195,000**	**$185,000**	**$993,000**

Table 7: Proposed 2019-2023 Capital Budget

The total 5-year capital budget is estimated at $993,000, which does not reflect any external funding.

4.7.6 Summary of Transit Asset Management Plan

The Transit Asset Management Plan is designed to support the investment needed to expand and improve upon the current service.

The Federal Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF), announced in March 2017 provides funding for transit rolling stock, infrastructure and technology across Canada for municipalities that invest in public transit. The formula provides for 40% funding by the Federal government, 33% Provincial and 27% Municipal. The Town of Huntsville has applied for $262,107 for funding over a 10-year period.

Eligible projects must meet one of the following outcomes, which is met by the Asset Management Plan:

- Improved capacity of public transit infrastructure.
- Improved quality and safety of existing and future transit systems.
- Improved access to a public transit system.

While infrastructure investments are currently borne by the Town of Huntsville, vehicles are owned by the contractor and are not subject to the PTIF funding. Since the PTIF program and other future funding programs would require Town ownership of the assets, the Town should eventually purchase and own all or a portion of the transit rolling stock in order to capitalize on the funding available since 100% of a transit vehicle's cost is currently charged back to the Town in the hourly rate.

Given the need to improve bus stop infrastructure to enhance comfort and safety, it is recommended that the Town of Huntsville first invest in bus stops and shelters and technology then consider purchasing and owning future transit vehicles as funding becomes available.

4.8 Summary, Recommendations and Next Steps

The Transit Master Plan study was broken down into three phases:

- Phase I: Critical Evaluation of Existing Public Transportation Services
- Phase II: Transit Ridership Growth Plan
- Phase III: Transit Service Plan

The community engagement process involved consultations with bus operators, the general public, the business community, accessibility and social service agencies, and senior staff of the Town of Huntsville. It was made very clear at the outset of the study that the Huntsville Transit was stretched to the limit on both the Transit and Paratransit operations. Efforts to minimize costs have given rise to service reliability issues, while residents in many areas of Huntsville lacked service. There was also a clear need to modernize the transit fleet and improve infrastructure that would be in-line with other municipal initiatives such as better accommodating the increase in the aging population, serving the needs of the tourist industry and, although the study focussed on the Huntsville urban area, addressing needs of residents in Novar and Port Sydney.

4.8.1 Recommendation

The Town of Huntsville Transit Ridership Growth Plan culminated with a number of proposed improvements that address community priorities:

- Expand transit coverage within the urban Huntsville service area to accommodate more residents due to population and development growth that has occurred
- Operating Paratransit service during the same hours of the fixed-route Transit service
- Expand the hours and days of operation to better accommodate the worker
- Support the expansion of service to Novar and Port Sydney
- Expand and modernize the transit fleet
- Investing in bus stop infrastructure

- Embracing technology to improve fare collection, provide real time schedule information, and the ongoing monitoring of passenger loads and bus schedule adherence

It is recommended that the Town of Huntsville approve, in principle, the recommendations of the Transit Ridership Growth Plan and take steps to implement change in 2019.

4.8.2 Next Steps

The most important recommendation of the Transit Ridership Growth Plan was the revised route design. Fortunately, very few bus stops need to be eliminated and far more bus stops will need to be added. Given that the route changes can be considered significant by some, the implementation phase will require extensive marketing efforts to educate the existing transit customers and new transit customers that will be receiving transit for the first time.

Upon approval by Council, the following tasks will need to be undertaken prior to implementation:

- Bus procurement
- Procure and install Transit technologies (can be specified with vehicle procurement)
- Identification of new bus stops and installation of bus stop signs
- Identify a start date that may be based on vehicle delivery
- Test new routes and modify, as required
- Community outreach to educate existing and future transit customers
- Finalize bus stop locations and infrastructure needs
- Enhanced branding and marketing
- Procure heated shelter(s) and other bus stop infrastructure

It should be pointed out that during the implementation phase, further route and schedule modifications can be expected; this is normal. As the route and service changes are rolled out, it will be important to monitor the impact of the changes and recognize that while some current customers may be slightly impacted, far more existing transit customers and new customers will benefit in the longer term once service is expanded.

Appendix A

Huntsville Transit Route Concept

Legend

- Proposed Route 1A
- Proposed Route 1B
- Roads

PROPOSED END ROUTE

PROPOSED START ROUTE

Proposed Route 1B to Hidden Valley and Deerhurst Area

UTM Zone 17 NAD 83

DRAFT - Proposed Bus Route
Town of Huntsville

0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Meters

PUBLIC TRANSIT — Town of Huntsville, Muskoka — The Way to Go!