2018 Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Status Report

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Region of Waterloo Diversity, Accessibility & Inclusion Status Update

In 2018, Regional Council approved the Multi-Year Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion plan (2018-2022). The plan outlines the Region's strategy over five years to identify, prevent, and remove barriers in Regional programs and services for people with disabilities. This five year plan starting in 2018 was created in consultation with staff from across the Region, The Grand River accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC), as well as the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group.

In this report, you will find progress on actions taken to meet the requirements of the AODA in 2018 along with broader actions focused on diversity and inclusion.

Under the AODA there are specific planning requirements for transit organizations. The status report for Grand River Transit's multi-year accessibility plan, fulfilling the AODA transportation requirements, is included in Appendix A of this document.

Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion at the Region of Waterloo

The Region of Waterloo is committed to creating inclusive programs and services, served by a diverse workforce, that meet the needs of our growing and changing community. By removing barriers to services and programs across the Region of Waterloo and in the workforce, we will recognize the strength that comes with difference, embracing new ideas and perspectives.

This commitment to diversity and inclusion will be realized through processes that engage and support employees, creating a satisfying customer experience to those we serve. We do this because a satisfying service experience at the Region of Waterloo improves the quality of life for those we serve, and helps to secure their trust and confidence in the work that we do. By identifying, removing, and preventing barriers in the accessibility of our services, the Region of Waterloo is achieving our commitments to diversity, inclusion, and service excellence.

The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee

Public participation is an important feature of the work we do at the Region of Waterloo. Staff from the Region rely on feedback and input from the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) to ensure that we are working towards our vision of an inclusive Region of Waterloo. GRAAC advises Council and staff members on the accessibility of Regional services, programs, and facilities. Members of the GRAAC are appointed by Regional Council and by the Councils for the Cities of Kitchener and

Waterloo, and the Townships of Wellesley, Woolwich, Wilmot and North Dumfries, all of which also seek the advice of GRAAC in matters of accessibility.

In 2018, the Region consulted with the Grand River Accessibility Committee on the following items:

- Accessible Taxi fund;
- Isearchmycommunity data base and website;
- Accessibility at ION stops;
- Integrated Services project – Community services;
- The Region's Multi-year diversity and inclusion plan;
- Web Accessibility Strategy;
- Community-scale climate adaptation strategy.

In addition to the items above, representatives from GRAAC sit on other Regional committees and groups like the Accessibility Fees for Taxis Committee, the Moving Forward Stakeholder Panel (Region's Transportation Master Plan), and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group.

2018 Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Status Report

The 2018 Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Status Report includes the Region of Waterloo's commitment to removing barriers to our programs and services and the progress we have made on actions to meet the AODA. The action plans are spread across four areas.

- Welcoming and accessible spaces
- Access to services
- Communication and Engagement
- Inclusive Workplace

Each of the four areas contains actions to meet our requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. **Appendix A**: Overview of Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Actions in 2018. **Appendix B:** 2018-2019 Grand River Transit Accessibility Plan. **Appendix C:** Design of Public Spaces Standard Compliance Summary

Reviewing and Monitoring the Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Plan

The Region of Waterloo Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. An annual status report will be completed to document the progress and measures taken to implement the Region of Waterloo's strategy and meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the 2018 Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Status Report, and on the accessibility and diversity of our programs, services, and facilities. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

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TTY: 519-575-4608
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Region of Waterloo
150 Frederick St, 3rd Floor
Kitchener, ON N2G 4J3
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The 2018 Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Status Report is available online (www.regionofwaterloo.ca/accessibility) in accessible PDF and Full-Text Word formats.

Alternate formats, including paper copies of the 2018 Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Status Report are available upon request at no charge from:

Citizen Service
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Kitchener, ON N2G 4J3
Phone: 519-575-4757 ext 3861
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Appendix A: Overview of Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Actions in 2018.

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
Welcoming and Accessible Spaces	Citizen Service	Implement the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool in the Region of Waterloo's public-facing buildings to ensure that the greatest proportion of people who need or want to use Regional services, can access those services in a respectful way.	Complete	Internal D & I staff group will be formed in 2019 with work starting in 2019/2020
	Citizen Service	Develop protocols to facilitate smudging in Regional buildings.	In progress	Internal staff group will support with the development and implementation in 2019.
	Citizen Service	Review the Region of Waterloo Accessible Design Standards and complete deferred sections.	Complete	

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
Welcoming and Accessible Spaces	Citizen Service	Train staff to support welcoming spaces: location of the barrier free washrooms, quiet rooms, signage. Get input on the Welcoming Spaces Assessment tool from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder group.	In progress	Internal D & I staff group formed in 2019 with work starting in 2019/2020 External D & I stakeholder group will be formed in fall of 2019
	Citizen Service	Develop and deploy training on the Region of Waterloo Accessible Design Standards.	Deferred	Action moved to 2019
	Citizen Service	Post information about amenities in Regional facilities on the Region's website.	Deferred	Action moved to 2020
	Citizen Service	Launch process to allow community members to borrow the set of banners about diversity in Waterloo Region.	In progress	Banner available in 2019

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Facilities	Audit Regional facilities for accessibility, prioritizing facilities with the highest occupancy and public visitors. **Buildings to be done in 2019** - GRT Cambridge Station, Museum, New Dundee Library, Baden Library, Bloomingdale Library, Elmira Library, Library HQ, St. Clements Library, St. Jacobs Library, Ayr Library, Police HQ, Police Reporting Centre, South Division, North Division, 235 King, GRT Strasburg, GRT Chandler, Mannheim WTP, Safety Village (Main Bldg), Gaol, Governor's House, Operations Centre, EMS HQ, Waterloo Landfill (Admin Bldg.), Waterloo Landfill (MRC), Waterloo Landfill (Educ. Bldg.), Schneider Haus	In Progress	The following buildings have had onsite accessibility audits completed. **2017 -** 150 Frederick, 99 Regina, 150 Main, 20 Weber, Airport Terminal, GRT Ainslie, GRT Charles, Kinsmen Children's Centre **2018-** Edith Mac Children's Centre, Cambridge Children's Centre, Christopher Children's Centre, WRES Admin Building, Airport Operations Centre, Sunnyside Home, Supportive Housing, Linwood Library, New Hamburg Library, Wellesley Library
Access to Service	Citizen Service	Complete implementation of the Region's interpreter and translation guidelines.	In progress	To be completed in 2019

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
Access to Service	Community Services	Establish integrated service counters in the employment resource centres at 150 Main Street, 235 King Street and 99 Regina Street where customers can have access to Employment and Income Support, Children's Services and Housing Services at one counter location to provide more accessible, and coordinated services.	In progress	Anticipate launching the integrated reception areas in the spring of 2019
	Citizen Service	Develop online training modules to coincide with the launch of Volunteer Guidelines, including reference to accessible customer service training for volunteers.	In progress	To be completed in 2019

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Public Health	Implement a “reconcili-action” plan to educate Public Health staff about the history and impact of colonization on First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples so that there are changes in skills, knowledge and attitudes as well as the promotion of self-reflection.	In progress	ROWPHE Reconcili-Action Plan Update to September 2018 -135 PH staff attended ½ day training in Indigenous cultural competency -360 staff regularly received 16 “Reconcili-Action” email newsletters -10 Reconcili-Action Videos were produced and circulated to PH staff-featuring PH colleagues sharing why involved in the work of Reconciliation -A Population Health Profile of First Nations, Metis and Inuit in Waterloo Region was produced and disseminated to staff -16 PH staff took an eight week on-line Indigenous Cultural Safety Course

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Citizen Service	Educate Regional staff on "the history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Indigenous rights, Indigenous law, and Indigenous–Crown relations[1]".	In progress	
Access to Service	Community Services	Implement a new policy in Community Services, providing direction for communicating with residents, tenants, clients, Substitute Decision Makers (SDMs) and health service providers by using email or text messaging to improve access for customers, particularly those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.	In progress	

[1] Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report Calls to Action #57, 2015

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
Communication and Engagement	ITS	Maintain an inventory of applications owned by the Region and develop criteria to prioritize accessibility improvements.	Complete and ongoing	List created, changes will be made as required in 2019.
	Creative Services	Update Creative Services' intake process to make it easier for staff to request accessible videos.	In progress	To be completed in 2019
		Develop processes to collect, store and share data about diversity.	Deferred	Action moved to 2020
Communication and Engagement	Corporate Communications	Review and implement changes to the Information and Communication standard upon enactment.	Ongoing	
	Creative Services	Deploy online training on creating accessible videos.	In progress	To be completed in 2019

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Corporate Communications	Strengthen awareness and education of corporate accessible information and communication standards with an intranet support page and intranet promotions.	Completed	
	Citizen Service	Establish a diversity, equity and inclusion committee to support meaningful engagement of diverse members of the community.	In progress	Committee will be in place for 2019
	Citizen Service	Provide business units with tools, resources, and support from Citizen Service to ensure public engagement processes are inclusive.	Completed	
	First Nations, Metis and Inuit focussed Community of Practice	Identify and develop an approach to meaningfully consult with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples.	In progress	

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Corporate Communications	Launch the Region's new corporate website which will be accessible and compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A standards.	Completed	
	ITS and Citizen Service	Create an accessibility resource centre, where staff can access software to create accessible content, and assistive technologies to do user testing on digital content and websites.	Deferred	Action moved to 2020
	Citizen Service	Explore new technologies to enhance communication with Deaf and Hard of Hearing customers.	Deferred	Action moved to 2019
Inclusive Workplace	Citizen Service Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness Employee Services	Create guidelines and accompanying resources to accommodate transitioning in the workplace.	In progress	Draft guidelines have been developed; will be launched in 2019 along with staff education.

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Citizen Service	Develop and implement a plan to acknowledge and celebrate diverse religious and cultural events.	In progress	Internal D & I staff group formed in 2019 with work starting in 2019/2020
Inclusive Workplace	Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness	Benchmark audit of disability management/return to work accommodation program to identify areas for improvement to inform a three year plan.	Completed	An audit has been done by an outside provider
	Talent Management	Pilot new underfill language in the CUPE 1883 collective agreement which could help make new graduates and foreign trained professionals more competitive for positions.	Completed	
	Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness	Develop cognitive demands analysis for identified high risk jobs.	In Progress	Initial audit completed

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Return to Work, Benefits, Wellness	Develop tools e.g. cognitive functional demands form to better communication between treatment providers for suitable accommodations to be provided.	Completed	
	Citizen Service	Determine approach to consult diverse employees on corporate Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.	In progress	Internal D & I staff group will be formed in 2019 with work starting in 2019/2020
Inclusive Workplace	Human Resources and Citizen Services	Determine strategy to collect data about the diversity of the workforce and use the information to inform recruitment and retention processes and inclusion initiatives.	Deferred	Alternative options will be explored in 2019.
	Citizen Service	Revise and refresh tools and resources related to inclusion available on the employee portal.	In progress	To be completed in 2019
	Citizen Service	Conduct a learning event to educate staff on Islamic practices and provide strategies for working with Muslim customers and colleagues.	Completed	

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Citizen Service	Conduct a learning event to support the implementation of the interpreter and translation guidelines.	Deferred	Action moved to 2019
	Citizen Service	Conduct a learning event on serving customers with invisible disabilities.	Deferred	Action moved to 2020
	Talent Management	Create a manual for managers which will consolidate all policies and procedures related to employment equity, accommodation, etc.	In progress	Expected in 2021
Inclusive Workplace	Talent Management	Deliver Bias Aware Interview and Selection Training to GRT Supervisors.	In progress	To be completed in 2019
	Health and Safety	Launch “the Working Mind” across the organization to educate staff about mental health in the workplace.	In progress	Leadership sessions have been scheduled for PHE, CSD, Corporate Services, TES and PDL throughout the reminder of 2018.

Focus Area	Lead	Action	Status Update	Notes
	Citizen Service	Keep staff updated on changing legislation (e.g. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act).	Ongoing	
Inclusive Workplace	Talent Management	Participate in the planning and steering committee for the Global Skills conference targeted to new immigrants.	Completed	
	Talent Management	Present information about the Region's recruitment processes the Experience Matters program, geared towards people on social assistance trying to get back into the workforce.	Completed	
	Talent Management	Participate on the Working Pillar of the Immigration Partnership Council	Completed	
	Talent Management	Review and update interview and selection tools to incorporate best practices for recruiting and retaining skilled, diverse staff.	Completed	

Appendix B: 2018-2019 Grand River Transit Accessibility Plan

Section I - Executive Summary

The Grand River Transit (GRT) Accessibility Plan was developed with input from the Region's Grand River Accessible Advisory Committee (GRAAC) and the Specialized Transit Services Advisory Committee (STSAC), as well as consideration of input from customers via the customer contact system and the Grand River Transit Business Plan and the MobilityPLUS and Kiwanis Transit Business Plan's public consultation meetings. The Business Plans have been approved by Regional Council.

Grand River Transit is committed to:

1. The continuous development of accessible public transit services;
2. Working toward ensuring its facilities are barrier free;
3. Working toward providing barrier free employment and employment opportunities; and
4. Establishing communication services that respect the abilities of all customers, employees and the public at large.

The accessibility activities undertaken in previous years are reflective of the continued progress in advancing to the goal of full accessibility in transit services. GRT's commitment is based on making balanced, measured and sustainable progress, consistent with its business planning process and financial and operational capacity.

In addition to providing a brief update on prior year's activity, the following report includes a work plan that addresses all regulatory requirements as established under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Linking the accessibility plan initiatives to the GRT business planning process provides the mechanism to chart progress in identifying and removing existing barriers, safeguarding against any new barriers being created and finally ensuring that accessibility gains are sustainable.

Key Business Plan initiatives underway include; service expansion including additional Mobility*PLUS* and Kiwanis Transit vehicles, improving coordination of trips between Urban and Rural services and advances in the use of technology to improve reservations.

The GRT Accessibility Plan is vetted through both the Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) and the Specialized Transit Services Advisory Committee (STSAC) to discuss the progress toward the goal of full accessibility. Subsequent to those sessions, this Plan is appended to the Region's annual report as posted on the Region's website.

The plan will be reviewed and updated at a minimum every five years; however, given the ongoing development of accessibility regulations under the AODA, updates may be required sooner.

Peter Zinck,
Director, Transit Services
Region of Waterloo - Grand River Transit

Section II - Grand River Transit Services Profile

Grand River Transit provides two public transit services; namely, conventional transit and specialized transit services. Their respective profiles are as follows:

Conventional Transit Service – 2017/18 Service Profile

Type of Service	Fixed route - modified radial service	
Service Area	Primarily within the Region of Waterloo's Urban Service Area boundaries limited service extends into two Townships	
Hours of Service	Monday to Friday	5:15 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.
	Saturday	5:30 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
	Sunday	7:15 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
	Statutory Holiday	7:15 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
Promotional/seasonal extended service on various routes during the year.		
Annual passenger trips 2017	In 2017, ridership was 19.7 million; 2018 ridership is anticipated to be about 20.6 million; the number of registered Mobility*PLUS* specialized customers cannot be accurately determined for 2017 and 2018 due to the conversion of the fare system that is currently underway but has, historically, maxed at about 125,000 annual trips.	
Annual revenue service hours 2017	731,964 hours (770,136 total service hours)	
Annual revenue kilometers 2017	15,220,793 km (16,454,742 total service kilometers)	

Number of routes	63 conventional service routes in total, 58 all of which are utilizing low floor buses (5 Bus*PLUS* routes started in summer 2017 with low floor vehicles) and 63 identified as having bike racks: • 50 local bus routes • 8 express routes • 5 Bus*PLUS* routes: Bus*PLUS* services are provided in low demand areas such as new neighbourhoods or low-density employment areas. Bus*PLUS* services use a small bus to pick up and drop off customers at designated Bus*PLUS* stops. Initially, replacement Bus*PLUS* vehicles in 2016 were accessible using lifts; however low floor accessible vehicles went into service in summer 2017; audio-visual equipment is to be installed on these vehicles in late 2018 and early 2019.
Fleet make-up	Fleet size is 273 low floor accessible conventional buses as of September 2018. Three (3) of these buses are used for training however; they are used in service when needed. There are 33 Mobility*PLUS* Buses as of September 2018. The 2018 capital budget includes 2 replacements for Mobility*PLUS* in the urban service area and the 2019 Budget Issue Paper for implementation of the Mobility*PLUS* Business Plan includes 2 expansion vehicles (1 urban and 1 Kiwanis),The 2019 capital budget calls for the replacement of 6 Mobility*PLUS*

buses in the urban area.

Specialized Transit Services – 2017/18 Service Profile (Urban Service Area) Mobility*PLUS*

Type of Service	Shared Ride – Door to Door – Pre-Booked Service Registrants are able to book trips two to seven days in advance. Trips, with the exception of subscription trips, are awarded on a first come first serve basis. There is no guarantee of trip availability.	
Service Area	Within the boundaries of the Cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.	
Hours of Service	Monday to Friday	5:15 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
	Saturday	5:30 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
	Sunday	7:15 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
	Statutory Holiday	7:15 a.m. to 1:15 a.m.
Registrants (as of Dec 31, 2017)	7,900	
Annual eligible passenger trips	299,150 (2017)	
Attendant/companion trips	14,878 (included in eligible trips)	
Annual service hours	118,390 (2017) - includes both primary and secondary service providers	
Fleet requirements	Fleet requirements are provided by primary (dedicated vans) and secondary (contracted taxi) service providers. The primary service provider operates 33 vehicles, (budgeting for a 1 vehicle increase in 2019) while the number of vehicles provided by the secondary service provider corresponds directly to demand and budget. The four secondary service providers provide 17 accessible taxi vehicles.	
Service Administration	Service booking - handling in excess of 50,000 calls annually for trip booking, cancelations, etc. Service scheduling - providing daily schedules for primary and secondary service providers consisting of 25 vehicles per day during peak	

	periods and providing over 208,000 trips on an annual basis. Dispatching service – deals with “real-time” monitoring of the service through Mobile Data Terminals (MDT’s) aided by the Trapeze Novus Scheduling System. The recent 5-Year Business Plan allowed for an upgrade to Novus 4.1.1.0 in 2017(completed in 2018), allowing for prepayment of fares (to be implemented in 2019). The Plan also calls for subsequent modules (in late 2019) for “on-line booking”, Integrated Voice Recognition (IVR) for future bookings, callback and FLEX (allowing for integration of MP routes with Conventional routes) also to be considered in 2019.
Other Service Features	Taxi*SCRIP* service is for Mobility*PLUS* customers who buy Taxi*SCRIP* coupons for 50% of the face value of taxi service, call the taxis directly and pay with Taxi*SCRIP* coupons, delivering in excess of 76,000 annual trips in 2017. Complimentary fares on conventional transit for Mobility*PLUS* registrants generating in excess of 125,000 annual trips on conventional transit services to Mobility*PLUS* registrants. Commuter Bus Service, started as a pilot project in 2008 and in 2017 provided over 10,700 trips annually to 50 customers with developmental challenges (who would otherwise not qualify for Mobility*PLUS* services).

Specialized Transit Services – 2017/18 Service Profile (Rural Service Area – excluding North Dumfries) Kiwanis Transit

Type of Service	Shared Ride – Door to Door – Pre-Booked Service Registrants are able to book trips two to seven days in advance. Trips, with the exception of subscription trips, are awarded on a first come first serve basis. There is no guarantee of trip availability.	
Service Area	Within the boundaries of the Townships of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot and the Urban Service Area, depending on availability.	
Hours of Service	Monday to Friday	6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
	Saturday	7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Registrants	1,849	
Annual eligible passenger trips	47,372	
Annual service hours	18,084 - Includes both primary and secondary service providers.	
Fleet requirements	Fleet requirements are provided by primary (dedicated vans) and secondary (contracted taxi) service providers. The primary service provider operates 8 vehicles (budgeting for a 1-vehicle increase in 2019), while the number of vehicles provided by the secondary service provider corresponds directly to demand and budget.	
Service Administration	Service booking - handling in excess of 50,000	

	calls annually for trip booking, cancelations, etc. Service scheduling - providing daily schedules for primary and secondary service providers consisting of 7 vehicles per day during peak periods and providing over 47,300 plus trips on an annual basis. Dispatching service – deals with “real-time” monitoring of the service.

Specialized Transit Services – 2017/18 Service Profile (Rural Service Area – North Dumfries) Mobility*PLUS*

Type of Service	Shared Ride – Door-to-Door – Pre-Booked Service
Service Area	Within the boundary of the Township of North Dumfries. Transit Service can be arranged to and from the Urban Service Area, dependent on availability. During 2018, there were requests for additional service to the Cities of K-W And Cambridge from North Dumfries. These were allowed on a case-by-case basis.
Registrants	80
Annual eligible passenger trips	2,951
Annual service hours	Secondary service providers only, as required
Fleet requirements	Secondary (contracted taxi) service providers.
Service Administration	Service booking - handling in excess of 3,000 calls annually for trip booking, cancellations, etc. is done by Mobility*PLUS* Dispatching service – deals with “real-time” monitoring of the service.

Section III – Prior Years Accessibility Initiatives

Conventional Transit Service Plan – Accessibility Initiatives

Accessible Bus Stops
As of October 2018, there are 2,698 stops in the system of which over 75% are considered accessible without gravel or grass/turf landing pads.

Continuing forward, bus stops will be upgraded to accessibility standards as the Region's sidewalk network is expanded, noting that in a very few number of situations, the provision of a connector pad to the sidewalk network is not feasible due to physical limitations. In these situations, the stop will be marked as not being accessible and the nearest accessible area will be used to provide service to passengers (e.g. driveways) requiring an accessible stop.

Given the Cities of Kitchener, Waterloo & Cambridge are responsible for the construction of sidewalks, we have confirmed that all stop locations have not been made accessible, given the absence of a sidewalk, and will continue to work in conjunction with the Cities to address these locations in a timely manner. Further, going forward, all stops added to the system will be made accessible as may be required assuming same are linked to the City's sidewalk system.

Accessible Routes and Fleet
Transit routes are designated as accessible when all buses used on the route are low floor accessible buses and all stops (where possible) along the route are accessible (have a connecting pad from the stop area to the City sidewalk network, providing there is a connecting sidewalk and sufficient spacing to provide a connecting pad).

Grand River Transit's conventional transit service is defined by 58 fixed routes and 5 Bus*PLUS* Routes. All routes have been designated accessible since September 7, 2013. GRT entered into a new contract for Bus*PLUS* in 2016; these vehicles are now low floor accessible.

GRT's fleet is low-floor accessible.

INIT Technology Implementation:
GRT has completed the upgrade to its Automatic Vehicle Location and Communication (AVLC) system, often times referenced as "INIT Technology". The technology supports improved customer service and service delivery to all current

and future customers. The INIT system also provides assistance in the delivery of customer service, allowing supervisors to accurately investigate customer concerns funneled through the Marketing and Customer Service Area. Self serve features and real time information is available through the EasyGO next bus texting, online trip planning and mobile app., and digital LED next bus displays. The features of the system, all of which are fully functioning as of 2016, are set out below:

- Automatic in-vehicle visual display of next stop location,
- Automatic in-vehicle audio announcement of next stop location, tracking of in-service buses along routes via a Global Positioning System (GPS), a feature of INIT, which supports better service management,
- Automatic on-street information signs with real-time information on next buses noting, the signs are located at most IXpress stops,
- Automatic passenger counters on all buses.

The implementation of the INIT Technology has resulted in compliance with several sections of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation well in advance of the compliance date set out in the Regulation.

Bus Stop Sign Upgrade Program

In 2011, the design and colouring of bus stop markers was reviewed in consultation with various stakeholder groups including The Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee (GRAAC) and the Specialized Transit Services Advisory Committee (STSAC) in an effort to provide greater visibility and more comprehensive information relating to the stop. Suggestions included:

- A high contrast colour scheme
- Bus pictogram
- Routes servicing the stop
- Service notes as applicable
- Website
- Customer service information

In December 2016, GRT piloted a new stop marker at the Cambridge Centre Station. In additional to the changes requested, and the feedback received from both customers and staff, the new GRT bus stop signs are being installed and replaced as required.

Level of Conventional Service Accessibility

In late 2012, Grand River Transit's active conventional fleet became 100% low-floor accessible. This milestone will provide the opportunity for future service integration between the conventional and specialized services. It will also result in many more specialized trips being able to be accommodated on the conventional service, which should result in a decrease in demand, most notably in the period of April through November when snow and weather is not a barrier to some customers. Annually, Mobility*PLUS* customers are estimated to take in excess of 125,000 rides on the accessible conventional transit fleet.

Process for Managing, Evaluating and Taking Action on Customer Feedback

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

Receiving Feedback (Customer Generated)

Feedback from customers serves as key inputs to Grand River Transit's service delivery and annual service plans, including those elements dealing specifically with accessibility.

Customer feedback with respect to both conventional and specialized services is directed to customer service representatives at the Service First Call Centre (SFCC), who generate reports to the specific areas of GRT Services. A SFCC Notification is generated to extend a compliment, to record a request and/or to register a complaint or comment. Contacts are received from passengers/public via the telephone, in person, mail, email as well as the GRT website and social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter)

Annual reports are reviewed to determine trends and whether new programs and services have had an impact on customer contacts.

Procedures to Address Equipment Failures

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

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

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

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

1. The Bus Operator contacts dispatch and relays the defect information.
2. The Dispatcher determines the extent of the defect and identifies a change-off location.
3. Dispatch contacts maintenance who arrange for a replacement bus.

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

Other Grand River Transit Accessibility Policies

GRT and Administrative Customer Service Policies

Stop Announcements – General

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

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

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

As of January 2017:

> Automatic external-vehicle audio announcement of conventional bus route number and destination.

Stop Announcement – Route on Detour

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

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

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

Service Disruptions – Detours

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

> If detours are known within a sufficient notice period, in addition to placing notices on affected bus stops, public communication of the detour will be provided via the GRT's website and social media alerts. Information will also be available by phone from Customer Service staff.
>
> For detours with little advance warning, notices are placed on affected stops and the website is updated as soon as possible and alerts announced on social media. If the detour is of sufficient duration, the detour information will be provided via the GRT's website and social media alerts. Information will also be available by phone from Customer Service staff.
>
> Postings on the GRT website are to include a note that the information is accurate at time of posting and is subject to change without notice.

Future plans are to have new the software push out immediate detours and emergency alerts to customers directly to GRT twitter and bus stops.

SECTION IV – Methodology for Annual Update

Summary of AODA Specific Work Plan Initiatives

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) – Standard Development
Throughout the AODA standard setting process, the transit industry at large and Grand River Transit Administration have participated to various degrees. Subsequent to Standard approval, the industry has remained engaged with Ontario Public Transit Association Members.

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

On July 1, 2011, Regulation 191-11 came into effect, setting in place the related standard requirements dealing with Transportation, Employment, and Information & Communications under the AODA. The timelines associated with the requirements, as provided by Regulation, called for immediate compliance in some cases; as well, a number of Requirements had compliance dates up until January 1, 2017.

As of October 2016, GRT is in compliance with all Accessibility Regulation requirements as prescribed within the IASR – Regulation 191-11. For the full implementation schedule, reference past GRT Accessibility Plans: 2012 (DOCS 1223076), 2013 (DOCS 1454869), 2014 (DOCS 1734174) and 2015 (DOCS 1964609), 2016 (Doc's 2229778), and 2017 (Doc's 2562092).

SECTION V – Process for Estimating Demand for Specialized Transportation Services January 1, 2013

42. (1) Specialized transportation service providers shall, in their accessibility plans,

(a) Identify the process for estimating the demand for specialized transportation services; and

(b) Develop steps to reduce wait times for specialized transportation services.

Other Influencing Factors (Dialysis)

There are many other local influencing factors that can impact the demand for specialized service. The most significant factor in The Urban and the Rural Service Area over the past number of years, which is anticipated to continue in the foreseeable future, is the demand associated with customers who are dialysis patients. These customers generally require treatment three times per week (175 trips annually each). In 2017, there were 325 registrants (approaching 5% of total registrants) on the specialized service requiring dialysis treatments, which resulted in the demand for 34,000 trips (almost 20% of all trips provided on Mobility*PLUS* pre-booked services). Demand of this nature is the direct result of funding changes made in other Provincial Ministries, and as such, the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) will be calling on the government to review transportation funding provided to all ministries to ensure it is being allocated where it is needed most. GRT continues to have staff input into this process at the steering team level with OPTA. The Mobility*PLUS* 5-Year Business Plan has identified solutions and to make recommendations to the transportation needs of dialysis patients.

SECTION VI – Steps to Reduce Wait Times for Specialized Transportation Services

Change in Scheduling Software:
On March 17, 2014, GRT Mobility*PLUS* introduced new scheduling software after running with its second generation of computerized scheduling since 1998. The introduction of Trapeze Novus Scheduling Software increase productivity into 2016 by 3.2%, freeing up the taxi budget for an additional 6,750 rides annually as well as increasing on time performance from less than 75% to greater than 86%.

Given the only way to ensure trips are provided on schedule (or reduce wait times) is to leave room in the schedule to allow for unforeseen delays, trip schedulers must be careful not to leave so much time that will result in other trips being non-accommodated and an ultimately inefficient service. With the initiation of Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) in early 2012 and the new computerized scheduling system in March 2014, specialized services are able to measure On Time Performance going forward.

In the Fall of 2018, "Ghost Trips" were added into the daily schedule to better allow for same day bookings. This has worked up to the level of budget available and has been well received. There will need to be further analysis in 2019.

In late 2014 and into 2016 Requirement 64 – Eligibility Application Process was augmented in the area of its Appeal Process:

> If a person has completed an application for eligibility for specialized transportation services and the person's eligibility has not been determined within 14 calendar days after the completed application is received by the specialized transportation service provider, the person shall be considered to have temporary eligibility for specialized transportation services until a decision on his or her eligibility is made.
>
> GRT does not charge a fee to persons with disabilities who apply or who are considered eligible for specialized transportation services.
>
> GRT does require a reassessment of the eligibility of temporarily eligible registrants at reasonable intervals.
>
> GRT does, upon the request of the person requesting specialized transportation services, make available to the requester all of his or her specialized transportation services eligibility application and decision information in accessible formats.
>
> GRT has established an independent appeal process to review decisions respecting eligibility.
>
> The decision on an appeal with respect to eligibility is made within 30 calendar days after receiving the complete appeal application, but if a final decision is not made within the 30 days, the applicant shall be granted temporary eligibility until a final decision is made.

As of January 1, 2018, the following policy changes for specialized transit services were implemented to assist further in saving resources to handle increased demands and to reduce wait times for specialized transit services:

Eligibility Policy:
Removed the reference to being unable to climb or descend stairs for future Mobility*PLUS* eligibility, since all conventional buses are now low floor and no longer have this barrier. Current customers are being reassessed to this new criterion when their eligibility comes up for renewal. This application renewal process occurs at five-year intervals after a customer's initial registration. Current customers expected to be impacted by the new criteria are those who became eligible due to a disability where using stairs was a barrier.

No-Show and Late Cancellation Policy:
Introduced a new policy to enhance accountability for customers who regularly book trips and are either; not there when the bus arrives, or do not cancel early enough for the ride to be rebooked. This policy exists in most other specialized transit services to help ensure these untaken rides can be available for waitlisted customers.

Introduction of new Customer Self service online trip booking, trip notification and Pre-Prepayment account system:
To improve customer service and wait times for registration, GRT is developing and testing a new customer self-serve online trip booking and trip notification and prepayment system for its pre-booked service. Services will be implemented in 2019.

Increases in Service:
In September 2015, there was an increase of 1 bus in the complement of Mobility*PLUS* vehicles in dedicated service. There was to be an increase for the second time in as many years as per the 2016 budget process however, this will be delayed due to slow delivery time of expansion vehicle. Additional rides were added to taxis to absorb the difference from September to December 31, 2016. Currently, there is a 2-vehicle increase requested for the 2019 budget (1 vehicle each for the Urban and Rural Transit Areas).

Requirement 63 – Categories of Eligibility
(1) Every specialized transportation service provider shall have three categories of eligibility to qualify for specialized transportation services,

a) Unconditional Eligibility;
b) Temporary Eligibility; and
c) Conditional Eligibility

(2) For purposes of eligibility for specialized transportation services, specialized transportation service categorizes persons with disabilities as follows:

1. A person with a disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services shall be categorized as having unconditional eligibility.

2. A person with a temporary disability that prevents them from using conventional transportation services shall be categorized as having temporary eligibility.
3. A person with a disability where environmental or physical barriers limit their ability to consistently use conventional transportation services shall be categorized as having conditional eligibility.

(3) A specialized transportation service provider may deny requests for specialized transportation services to persons who are categorized as having temporary eligibility or conditional eligibility if the conventional transportation service is accessible to the person and the person has the ability to use it.

In 2017, Grand River Transit implemented changes to the categories of Eligibility, developed a new application form and a new assessment processes to be compliant with the AODA.

Additional funds for taxi service were introduced in Mobility*PLUS* for the 2018 budget to deal with eligibility for persons with cognitive disabilities.

Appendix C: Design of Public Spaces Standard Compliance Summary

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Recreational Trails and Beach Access Routes **(Sect. 80.6-80.16)**	Staff responsible for Regional forests and associated trails have been trained on DOPS requirements. DOPS specifications have been integrated in related procedures.	Trails undergo regular maintenance, and emergency maintenance as required. Procedures include mowing edges, keeping brush back, hazard removal, and required repairs.	All trail service disruptions are posted on site. Fencing is installed when necessary, and all repairs are completed as soon as possible.
Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas **(Sect. 80.16-80.17)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Outdoor Play Spaces **(Sect. 80.18-80.20)**	Do not have public play spaces	Do not have public play spaces	Do not have public play spaces
Sidewalks or Walkways (**Sect. 80.21-80.23)**	Roadways: Integrated requirements in Region of Waterloo standard specifications and drawings. Facilities: Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Roadways: Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Roadways: Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"
Ramps **(Sect. 80.24)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Maintenance Procedure"	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure "Building Notices"

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Stairs **(Sect. 80.25)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”
Curb Ramps **(Sect. 80.26)**	Roadways: Integrated requirements in Region of Waterloo standard specifications and drawings. Facilities: Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Roadways: Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Roadways: Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”
Depressed Curbs **(Sect. 80.27)**	Roadways: Integrated requirements in Region of Waterloo standard specifications and drawings. Facilities: Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Roadways: Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Roadways: Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre. Facilities: Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Accessible Pedestrian Signals **(Sect. 80.28)**	Ensured requirements are aligned with Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) guidelines for pedestrian signals, followed by the Region of Waterloo.	Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Transportation and Design and Construction.	Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre.
Rest Areas **(Sect. 80.29)**	Process for AAC consultation integrated in project plans as required.	Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities.	Planned service disruption procedures available through Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre.
Off-street Accessible Parking **(Sect. 80.32-80.38)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”
On-Street Accessible Parking **(Sect. 80.39)**	Consulted with AAC as required. Developed practices for identification and development of accessible on-street parking.	Preventative and emergency maintenance procedures available through Region of Waterloo Transportation, Design and Construction, and standard Maintenance agreements with cities.	Planned service disruption procedures available through Transportation and Design and Construction. Unplanned service disruption procedures available through Service First Call Centre.
Service Counters **(Sect. 80.40-80.41)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”

DOPS Item	DOPS Specification Documentation	Procedures for preventative and emergency maintenance	Procedures for dealing with temporary service disruptions
Fixed Queuing Guides **(Sect. 80.42)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”
Waiting Areas **(Sect. 80.43)**	Integrated requirements in standard specifications documents for internal and contractor use.	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Maintenance Procedure”	Facilities Standard Operating Procedure “Building Notices”