

Moving Transit Forward

Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

December 20, 2021

Agenda

Why Integrate?

MOVING TRANSIT FORWARD

The road to today, and what the benefits of a consolidated transit system for Niagara could be

The Plan



The 'how' of integration – the final governance, financial, and service strategies that outline how a Commission would be formed

Significant Consultation



An overview of how municipalities, interested parties, and the public have been involved in the process

Next Steps



What the road forward is – the triple-majority process and road to opening day

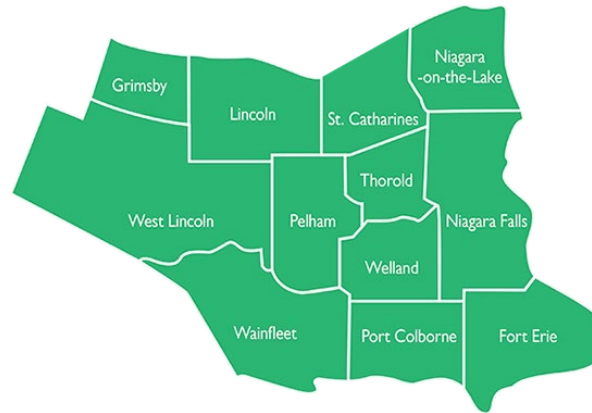
Why Integrate?

Moving Transit Forward

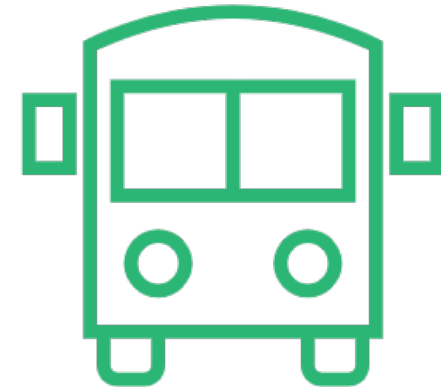
The vision is for a single, consolidated transit system, in the form of a new Transit Commission, that would formally integrate all existing Regional and local transit systems, and that will bring dramatic benefits to the residents of Niagara.



Connect to GO



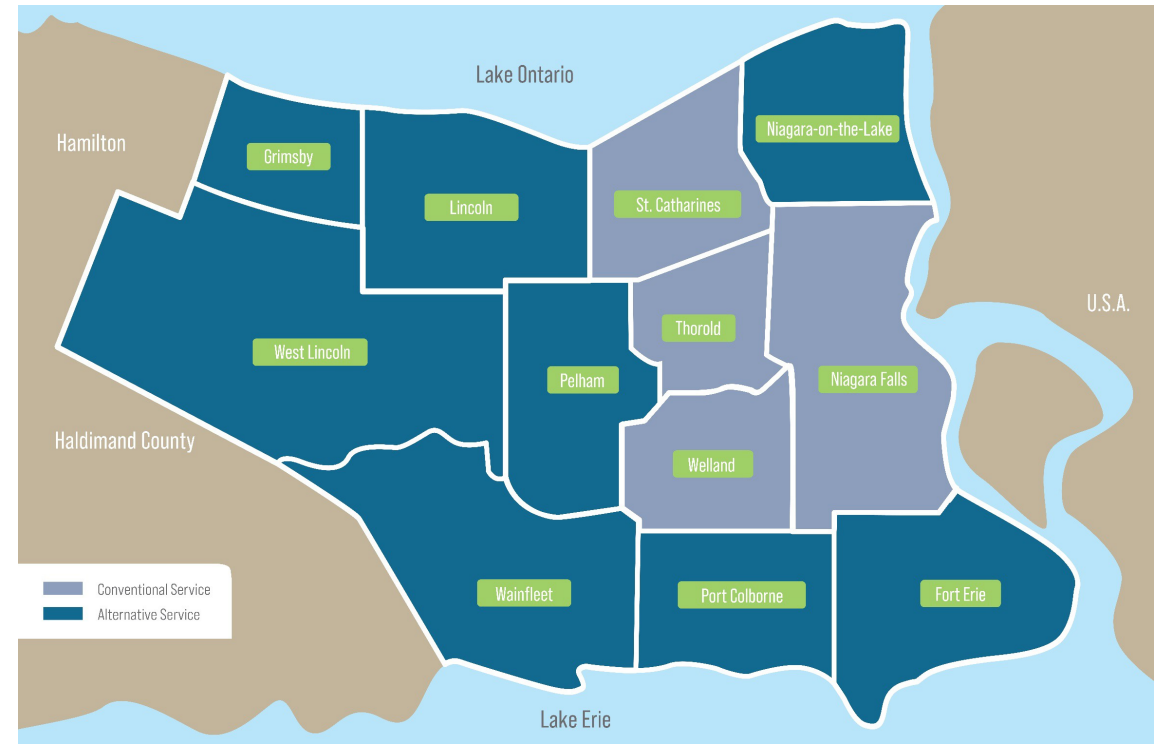
Connect Niagara



Enhance Service

Why Integrate?

- ✓ To create **one unified transit system** for Niagara.
- ✓ To break down barriers and **connect communities**, ensuring all residents in Niagara have access to transit.
- ✓ To **expand and enhance service** and mobility opportunities – with new, longer, and consistent operating hours.
- ✓ To implement **one, single fare** to take you anywhere in Niagara, using a new seamless customer-focused fare payment system.



Why Integrate?

- ✓ To support the **environment** by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing vehicles on the road, and support future moves to a cleaner, greener, zero-emission transit fleet.
- ✓ To ensure that **Students** and **Youth** have freedom and independence to safely get to school, participate in extra-curricular activities, or access a job.
- ✓ To support **social equity** and provide a foundation for a more **inclusive community**.
- ✓ To ensure transit is **funded fairly and sustainably**, with residents only paying for the service they receive directly.
- ✓ To deliver **better value for all Niagara taxpayers** through more efficient delivery of service and eliminating duplication.

It is only through the move to one consolidated transit agency for all of Niagara that these outcomes can be fully achieved.

The Plan

The Plan - Governance



The Full Commission model brings the right balance of autonomy and flexibility to innovate, drive growth, and meet the diverse and changing needs of the region

The Plan - Governance

Transitional Transit Commission Board	Public Advisory Committee
<p>(15) Total Elected Official Representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (3) St. Catharines • (2) Niagara Falls • (1) Welland • (1) Fort Erie • (1) Grimsby • (1) Lincoln • (1) Niagara-on-the-Lake • (1) Pelham • (1) Port Colborne • (1) Thorold • (1) Wainfleet • (1) West Lincoln 	<p>(20) Total Public Interested Party Representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (12) Niagara Residents (one per Municipality) • (2) Members representing Accessibility Advisory Committees or other Accessibility Stakeholders • (2) Post-Secondary Representatives (1 student union representative from Brock University and 1 from Niagara College) • (1) Member representing Niagara's Chambers of Commerce • (1) Senior Issues Stakeholder • (1) Youth Issues Stakeholder • (1) Transit Commission General Manager (ex-Officio)
<p><i>Members recommended by local Councils; appointed by Regional Council.</i></p>	<p><i>Resident members recommended by local Councils; all members appointed by the Transit Commission Board.</i></p>

** Reviewed by an external third-party to ensure that composition, size, and share of representation has resulted in an effective governing body that is achieving the strategic objectives of the Commission. The requirement for this review will be confirmed as part of the Municipal Transfer Agreements. Implementation to coincide with the next municipal election cycle (2026).*

The Plan – Niagara Service Standards

The Service Standards Strategy demonstrates to municipalities the types of enhancements they can expect to see in their communities in the future



Key Features

- ✓ Existing NRT OnDemand levels of service maintained and improved on
- ✓ Additional detail on where changes and growth may occur
- ✓ Three phases of improvements for Niagara residents
- ✓ Linked to and fully funded by Financial Strategy

The Plan – Financial Strategy

Funding Strategy - 12 Special Levy Tax Rates

Existing Regional Transit

Current state remains with costs allocated based on Region wide assessment

Local and Incremental Costs

Costs allocated to municipalities based on service hours

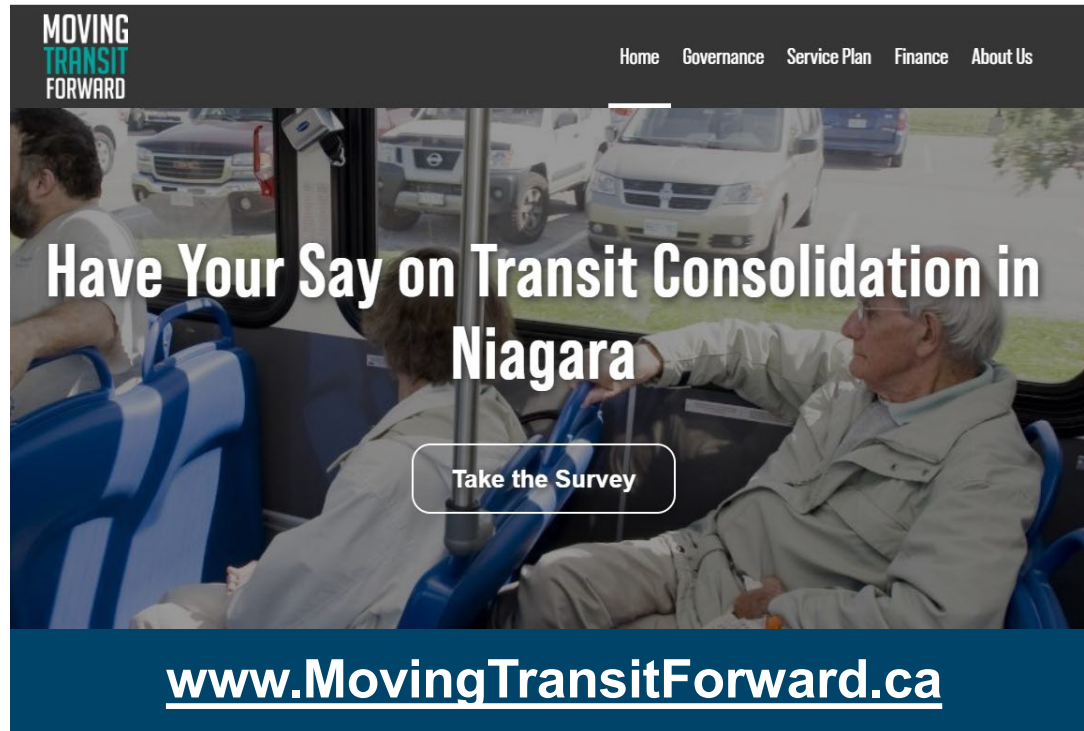
Key Features

- ✓ Municipalities who realize services will be directly allocated those costs
- ✓ Service-based principle
- ✓ Incorporates service standardization costs and accounts for future capital and operating growth
- ✓ Introduces a capital reserve strategy to ensure future needs of the Commission are sustainably met

Significant Consultation

Significant Consultation

Website + Public Survey



2,252

Total Respondents

82%

Governance
Strategy
Support

85%

Service
Strategy
Support

79%

Financial
Strategy
Support

Significant Consultation

Interested Party Information Sessions

- Online, virtual direct engagements with diverse stakeholder groups in all municipalities
- 9 thematic sessions + additional direct outreach sessions, engaging approx. 125 individuals
- Youth advisory committees, business groups (Chambers, BIAs), Brock & Niagara College, environmental groups, etc.
- Coordinated and suggested through direct outreach to all 12 local municipalities

Thematic Sessions

Environment
Seniors
Transportation
Business
Diversity/Inclusion
Health Services
Youth
Libraries
Post-Secondary
Transit Unions

Significant Consultation

Municipal Feedback – The Roadshow

Municipal input was key to NTGS recommendations and associated financial model, as well as subsequent revised strategies developed by the GSC. Significant change occurred from the initial proposal to the revised strategies as a direct result of municipal feedback

Phase 1 LAM Consultation



Revised Strategies



Phase 2 LAM Consultation



Final Strategies



Next Steps

Next Steps – Triple Majority

Regional Council

- Regional Council approval on November 25, 2021 – Vote 24-1 in favour
- Authority to operate *intra-municipal* (local) transit, having previously obtained authority for inter-municipal transit.

Local Councils

- Subsequent approval being sought from all 12 Local Area Municipalities
- Considered: Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Welland, Grimsby, Port Colborne
- Tonight: Niagara-on-the-Lake
- Tomorrow: Thorold
- January: Pelham, Lincoln, Wainfleet, West Lincoln

Triple majority support consists of:

- A simple majority of all votes on upper-tier council [Regional Council];
- A simple majority of all the lower-tier [LAM] councils passing resolutions consenting to the by-law; and
- The total number of electors in the lower-tier [LAM] municipalities that have passed resolutions consenting to the by-law form a majority of the electors in the upper-tier municipality.

Next Steps – Opening Day

**Assumption
of Service**

January 1, 2023

A New Transit Commission for Niagara:

- ✓ One Unified System
- ✓ Consistent Operating Hours
- ✓ One Brand
- ✓ Connecting Niagara
- ✓ More Inclusive
- ✓ Better Value
- ✓ Linking to GO Transit
- ✓ Supporting Business
- ✓ Driving Tourism
- ✓ Integrated Fares
- ✓ Environmentally Sustainable
- ✓ Youth and Seniors

The Time is Now

Why Integrate?

**MOVING
TRANSIT
FORWARD**

The benefits to Niagara of integrating transit are numerous, very clear, and extremely compelling

The Plan



Enormous and in-depth analysis has been done to conclude the financial, service and governance models to ensure success

Significant Consultation



Municipalities, interested parties and the community have all helped positively shape this proposal

Next Steps



The time is now to make a decision on whether Niagara will transform transit for the future and create a single transit system

Discussion