



# **2021 OAKVILLE TRANSIT ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

*The following document is Oakville Transit's Accessibility Plan for 2021. Although it is a stand-alone document, it should be considered an integral part of the Town of Oakville's Annual Accessibility Update and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2018-2023.*

## **Introduction**

Demand for Oakville Transit conventional and specialized services declined significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated provincial lockdowns. It is expected that demand for these services will gradually increase through 2021 and into 2022 with a return close to pre-COVID levels by 2023. With this increase in demand will come increasing opportunities for improved accessibility. This will be driven by both customer expectations and the requirement to comply with legislation, in particular, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

If Oakville Transit is to offer itself as a viable means of transportation, then all Oakville residents should have access. Accessible buses are a major component, however, full system accessibility means much more. Oakville Transit has implemented numerous initiatives designed to ensure equal access to transit services, This includes such things as improved service levels, facility access, walkways, landing pads, shelters, signage, customer service and access to information. For many residents, Oakville Transit is the only means of travel to work, school, medical appointments, to run errands, attend cultural and recreational events, and to participate in social activities. All residents will directly benefit as the accessibility of transit services is improved. In addition, improved accessibility will lead to increased use of Oakville Transit, contributing to continued ridership growth.

### **Oakville Transit is committed to:**

- Continued improvement of access to public transportation premises, facilities and services for customers and employees with disabilities
- Consultation with people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plan and services
- Provision of high quality accessible services to all customers and employees
- Improving the accessibility of its conventional transit to better meet the needs of all riders

## **Internal Accessibility Planning Coordinators**

The Director of Oakville Transit and the Manager of Planning and Accessible Services will act as Accessibility Plan Coordinators.

# Conventional Services – 2019 service profile

*(2019 service profile is being used to illustrate pre-COVID conditions)*

## Type of service

Fixed Route – grid and local

## Service Area

Urban area, Town of Oakville

## Hours of Service

Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Sundays and Holidays 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m

## Annual Boardings

3,376,070

## Annual Revenue Service Hours

210,878

## Annual Revenue Kilometres

5,139,309

## Number of Routes

23 regular routes

7 school specials

3 senior specials

Late Night Service

## Types of services

Conventional

School specials

Senior specials

Late Night Service

Home to Hub (on demand)

## Fleet Composition

100 conventional buses

## Fare Structure as of March 1, 2020

Cash fare \$4.00

Monthly passes

- Adult \$131.60

• Senior	\$63.05
• Youth	\$84.05
• Youth Freedom	\$20.00
PRESTO single ride	
• Adult	\$3.16
• Senior	\$2.00
• Youth	\$2.43
GO co-fare	\$0.80

## **Specialized Services – 2019 service profile**

*(2019 service profile is being used to illustrate pre-COVID conditions)*

### **Type of service**

Shared ride, door to door, pre-booked

### **Service area**

Town of Oakville

### **Hours of service**

Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Sundays and Holidays 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### **Types of services**

Dedicated bus

Contracted taxi

### **Fleet composition**

19 specialized low floor transit vehicles

### **Registrants**

4,094

### **Annual Eligible Passenger Trips**

146,072

### **Attendant/Companion Trips**

763

### **Annual Revenue Service Hours**

39,504 (dedicated bus)

## **Process for estimating demand for specialized services**

Staff estimates the demand for specialized services through review and analysis of the following factors:

- Past ridership trends
- Review of incremental annual increase in demand
- Ridership growth levels (both conventional and specialized)
- Anticipated changes to legislation, policies and/or procedures which may increase demand for services

## **Steps to reduce wait times for specialized services**

Staff will continue to work on reducing wait times for specialized services. This will be done through the addition of more vehicles and tools, such as automated scheduling, expanded use of mobile apps and the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS). The ITS will provide additional information to assist in improving scheduling and operations. ITS will provide service coordinators with real-time location of care-A-van buses which will facilitate more efficient handling of changes to schedules.

# Measures Oakville Transit has taken in previous years to remove barriers to accessibility

## Planning

Oakville Transit drafted its first accessibility plan in 1992. The plan is updated every year and involves a review of barriers previously addressed, identification of remaining barriers, development of a prioritized plan to address these barriers and consultation with primary stakeholders, including the town's Accessibility Advisory Committee.

## Barriers addressed in previous years

The following are some of the steps taken to identify and remove barriers to people with disabilities:

- Ongoing activities related to ensuring access and safety for residents to continue to use public transit services (conventional and specialized) through the Covid pandemic.
- Introduction of a new transfer location between Oakville care-A-van and Burlington Handi Van at the Oakville Hospital.
- Increased level of service for the clearing of snow from bus stops from 48 hours to 24 hours after completion of snow fall, implemented in 2019.
- Launch of transit accessibility features on the Town's accessibility map
- Introduction of Magnus Cards to assist residents with autism and cognitive disabilities to learn to take the bus
- Completion of our Specialized Transit Scheduling system project which includes the following customer facing benefits:
  - Introduction of self-serve features including web, app and automated phone.
  - Expanded booking hours. Bookings can be made through these new platforms up until three hours before the end of the service day, including early morning, evenings and weekends. These new enhanced self-serve booking features provide greater flexibility to customers to be able to plan and book their transportation at their convenience.
- Introduction of an independent, medically certified contractor for the review of all specialized applications forms.
- Introduction of in person assessments to help inform the application process for specialized transit services
- Outreach event to seniors' groups in 2018 and 2019 to educate/inform about Oakville Transit services. Direct hands-on familiarization exercise on board a bus.
- Implementation of broadened eligibility criteria for January 1, 2017
- Completion of update to service design standards and documentation of Standard Operating Procedures for care-A-van and other business units within the department
- Introduction of automated stop announcements (audio and visual) on board conventional buses in 2015
- Introduction of automated pre boarding announcements in 2015

- Introduction of real time bus tracking; customer information via text, app and web in 2015
- Co-mingled Home to Hub service introduced to neighborhoods in North Oakville and South East Oakville; using the smaller specialized transit vehicles with capacity to provide co-mingled service to areas in north Oakville without conventional transit service.
- Service area expansion for care-A-van in 2015 to include the entire municipal boundary.
- Ongoing application of region-wide common eligibility and application form and appeal process
- Provided training on the requirements of the AODA and the Human Rights Code
- Conducted employee and volunteer training on:
  - Safe use of accessibility equipment
  - Acceptable modifications to procedures where temporary barriers exist or accessibility equipment on a vehicle fails
  - Emergency preparedness and response procedures that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities
- Added visual delineation at the platform curb edge at the Uptown Core Terminal
- Finalized procedure on cycling of ramps by all transit operators during vehicle check
- Implemented customer securement procedure for drivers on conventional accessible service
- Implemented emergency evacuation procedures for drivers of conventional accessible and care-A-van service
- Continued to provide Easier Access Training and/or Ambassador Training to existing and newly-hired bus operators
- Priority and courtesy seating is available and clearly identified for persons with disabilities on all Oakville Transit buses
- Oakville Transit information is accessible on the website with a text-only option ([oakvilletransit.ca](http://oakvilletransit.ca)) and is linked to the Town of Oakville website ([oakville.ca](http://oakville.ca))

## **Identification of barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities**

Oakville Transit is committed to accessible transportation infrastructure and services. Oakville Transit recognizes that its infrastructure - including its bus stops, bus shelters, and vehicles - may present barriers to some people with disabilities. A list of identified barriers to accessibility is attached at the end of this document (Appendix B).

The availability of resources is a major factor in determining the pace of progress in reducing or eliminating the barriers identified in consultation with people with disabilities. Resource constraints will mean that not all barriers can be addressed at once and as a result, prioritization of initiatives is required. We are committed to accessible transportation infrastructure and services for all and are proud of the achievements made thus far.

# Plan to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in 2021

Oakville Transit is committed to the following actions on an annual basis:

- Consulting with people with disabilities to seek their advice on which barriers, and which remedial actions should have priority for the coming year
- Making provision in capital and operating budgets to seek funding to address high priority barriers
- Taking advantage of opportunities to secure funding to extend or accelerate the removal of priority barriers
- Consulting with the town's Accessibility Coordinator, Accessibility Advisory Committee, and other stakeholder groups, with respect to addressing barriers to accessibility

## Actions planned for 2021

Oakville Transit is compliant with all requirements under the AODA.

The ongoing COVID pandemic has changed the focus of attention on a number of initiatives for Oakville Transit. However, we continue to pursue projects which will improve accessibility for residents in Oakville. The list below highlights a number of actions planned in 2021 to support Oakville Transit's commitment to accessibility:

- Introduction of Mobility on Demand service, including booking and tracking. This new service will allow residents residing in specific zones to access transit rides using an on demand app, and will be able to track their ride in real time.
- Ongoing audit of audible announcement system in transit buses.
- Accelerated bus stop infrastructure improvements
- Continue to participate in development of PRESTO solution for taxi partners.
- Continue to participate on the GTHA Accessible Steering Committee to improve cross-boundary travel.
- Continue accessible customer service training for all new operators.
- Continue integration of Oakville Transit bus stop infrastructure requirements with town and regional roadway improvement projects

For further actions planned, please refer to the Town of Oakville Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2018-2023.

## Consultation on this accessibility plan

In the preparation of this plan, Oakville Transit will consult with:

- Town of Oakville's Accessibility Advisory Committee to ensure input is received from people with disabilities
- Oakville Transit operating and support staff to ensure that those responsible for delivery of accessible service provide input

## **Communicating the plan**

Information about the accessibility plan will be available at Town Hall, Oakville Transit's administrative office and on [oakvilletransit.ca](http://oakvilletransit.ca)

## **Ongoing review and monitoring of the plan**

Oakville Transit will monitor progress from the previous year's accessibility plan through an annual review that will list the previous objectives, actions taken and results. This document will be used for consultation with persons with disabilities in preparation to update the annual Transit Accessibility Plan. The review will be produced early in the year to enable consultations to be conducted, and recommendations formulated and costed in time for the preparation of Oakville Transit's budget for the next year.

# **APPENDIX A – Accessibility features on Oakville Transit vehicles**

## **Procedures for dealing with accessibility equipment failures**

### **Conventional Transit**

Driving staff are required to perform a pre-operations check of their vehicle prior to the start of their shift. The pre-operations check includes the cycling of the ramp.

Drivers document any minor vehicle malfunction in the normal course of operation. This documentation is reviewed daily, and the vehicle is scheduled in for maintenance, prioritized by the Maintenance Manager and Maintenance Supervisors.

Should the ramp of a conventional bus fail to operate electronically, the driver may manually deploy the ramp for customers to board.

The malfunction of any of other accessibility features on a vehicle will be dealt with in the manner described above.

### **Specialized Transit**

Driving staff are required to perform a pre-operations check of their vehicle prior to the start of their shift. This check includes the cycling of the ramp, as well as review of belts, tie downs, etc.

Drivers document any minor vehicle malfunction in the normal course of operation. The Maintenance Department reviews this documentation daily, and schedule the vehicle in for maintenance by priority.

In the case of a failure of the accessibility equipment on a specialized transit vehicle, the driver immediately notifies the Supervisor and the dispatch office. The Supervisor will arrange for an immediate 'change off' of the vehicle, and customers impacted are contacted by the dispatch office.

The vehicle is immediately scheduled for repair.

# **Appendix B - Identification of barriers to access to Oakville Transit for people with disabilities**

## **Fleet Barriers**

Conventional buses: ramps are not always functioning on low floor buses. Manual deployment is not always possible.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit has standard operating procedures for the cycling on ramps during the bus operator pre-trip inspection. This confirms functionality prior to the bus entering service each day. Drivers immediately notify a Supervisor of any ramp deployment issues that arise through the course of a day.

## **Snow removal barrier**

Delay in clearing snow and ice from bus stops and shelters.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit contracts the removal of snow from stops and shelters within 24 hours of the termination of the snowfall. Transit Supervisors also conduct specific checks of high priority locations to ensure snow, ice and windrows are removed.

## **Concrete infrastructure barrier**

Boarding and alighting from buses is more difficult because many of the stops do not have a proper concrete landing pad.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will significantly accelerate its bus stop infrastructure improvements in 2021; working towards greater accessibility and an overall improved customer experience.

## **Shelter barrier**

A passenger may have to wait for a bus as long as 30 minutes or more. During inclement weather, the absence of a shelter at the bus stop can be a barrier to using Oakville Transit.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will continue to install shelters as per budget allocations.

## **Way-Finding barrier**

Bus shelters don't have street names on them. Adding names would help customers with way finding.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will investigate feasibility of adding street names to shelters. Oakville Transit participates on a GTHA committee with Metrolinx to identify opportunities to

improve and coordinate way-finding. The results of this study may contribute to future improvements in way-finding. Addition of ITS system automated stop announcement will also help.

### **Bus stop barrier**

Bus stop locations should be as close to public buildings as possible.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit adheres to its Council approved service standards which include guideline/warrants for placement of stops and shelters. Service design standards were last updated in 2017.

### **Communication barrier**

Timetable signage, station maps are not easily readable by people with vision loss due to small print, insufficient contrast, or being located too high to be read from a seated position.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will continue to review all posted printed material to ensure it meets the needs of customers with vision loss.

Oakville Transit has VMS signage of next bus arrivals at the Oakville GO Station, Bronte GO Station, Sheridan College and Uptown Core Terminal.

### **Communication barrier**

Conventional transit bus drivers have not been trained to accommodate all disabilities or may need periodic refresher training.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit continues to provide complete driving and accessible customer service training, including select components of the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) sponsored Transit Ambassador program, to all new hires.

### **Policy barrier**

care-A-van customers are currently not able to use PRESTO cards on taxis when a taxi is assigned for their trip. Requires customers to potentially carry two forms of fare media.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit continues to work with PRESTO for an ultimate solution to be able to have our taxi partners accept PRESTO payments.

### **Support person barrier**

Support person requirements vary across the GTHA region.

**Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will be working with its partners across the GTHA to review policies and procedures related to support person requirements.

**Road and sidewalk barriers**

The walking and wheeling path to/from bus stops may not have curb cuts at corners. Where curb cuts exist, they may be too low to provide a cue to a visually impaired person that they are about to step into the street.

**Strategy/Action**

The planning and installation of curb cuts is not under the jurisdiction of Oakville Transit, however, we will coordinate with other Town departments to assist in improving the accessibility of the pedestrian experience whenever possible.

**Bus stop signage barrier**

The height, location and visibility of signs at terminals and service stops are barriers for some people.

**Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit has been standardizing the placement of bus stop poles and signs at bus stop locations across the town in 2020, and will continue to do so in 2021.

**Information barrier**

There is currently no integrated system for customer information on transit trips requiring transfer between service providers.

**Strategy/Action**

TRIPLINX (managed by Metrolinx) allows customers using conventional transit to trip plan across the entire GTHA. Customers can obtain information on travel by transit throughout the GTA through a single source. As well, there are other providers of apps which allow for trip planning across the Region, such as the Transit App.