

Burlington Transit Accessibility Plan

October 2020 – September 2021

1. Summary

This report serves as Burlington’s Transit Accessibility Plan, established in compliance with the requirements set out in the ‘Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) –191-11’ and the ‘Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)’.

This plan will outline the specific strategies to address Burlington Transit’s accessibility action plan and to ensure that public transit services are accessible.

The actions taken over the previous years is Burlington Transit’s commitment in advancing accessible Transit Service, facilities, employment and communication. Burlington Transit has implemented several initiatives designed to provide equal access to transit services throughout the City. The demand for accessible transit services is driven by both customer expectations and the requirement to comply with legislation, in particular, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

This plan will include an update on yearly activity and will include annual consultations with the public and Burlington’s Accessibility Advisory Committee, to ensure the goal of full accessibility. Burlington Transit expects that demand for its services will continue to grow with an aging population and increasing need for accessible services. Full system accessibility includes improved service levels, facility access, walkways, landing pads, shelters, signage, customer service and access to information.

This plan is an integral part of the City of Burlington’s Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2019-2024.

2. Burlington Transit Service Profile (Conventional and Specialized)

The following two tables outline Burlington Transit’s conventional and specialized service profiles.

Table 1: Conventional Services – 2019 Service Profile

Profile Area	Description
Type of Service	Fixed Route
Service Area	City of Burlington
Hours of Service	Monday to Friday: 4:25 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.; Saturday: 6:25 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.; Sunday: 7:15 a.m. to 10:20 p.m.
Annual Ridership	2,452,867
Annual Revenue Service Hours	177,555
Annual Revenue Kilometers	3,925,302
Number of Routes (before September 2019)	18 Regular, One School Special, Three Late Night, One Express, Three Community Connector
Number of Routes (after September 2019)	12 Regular, One School Special, Three Late Night, One Express

Types of Services (before September 2019)	Regular, School Special, Late Night, Express, Community Connector
Types of Services (after September 2019)	Regular, School Special, Late Night, Express
Fleet Composition	48 Accessible 40-foot conventional buses 11 Accessible 30-foot conventional buses Four Specialty Buses

Note: In Q1 2020, Burlington Transit revised its transfer rate calculation to count smart card taps 45 minutes after fare validation as a return trip rather than a transfer within the 2-hour transfer window.

Table 2: Specialized Services – 2019 Service Profile

Profile Area	Description
Type of Service	Shared Ride, Door-to-Door, Pre-booked
Service Area	City of Burlington
Hours of Service	Monday to Friday: 4:25 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.; Saturday: 6:25 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.; Sunday: 7:15 a.m. to 10:20 p.m.
Types of Services	Dedicated Bus
Fleet Composition	14 Accessible Specialized Transit Vehicles
Registrants	Over 1,000
Annual Eligible Passenger Trips	51,143
Attendant/Companion Trips	4,386
Annual Revenue Service Hours	27,587

Note: In Q1 2020, Burlington Transit conducted a data cleanup of the Specialized Transit dispatch software database to ensure the data being reported is accurate, consistent, and up to date with reporting logic. This will account for the significant change in 'active registrants' and 'support person' counts, as there were duplicate records being reported and inactive clients unaccounted for in the old reporting system.

Burlington Transit's fare concessions and pricing are the same for conventional and specialized transit.

3. Prior Year Accessibility Initiatives

The following are some of the steps taken to identify and remove barriers to people with disabilities in 2018:

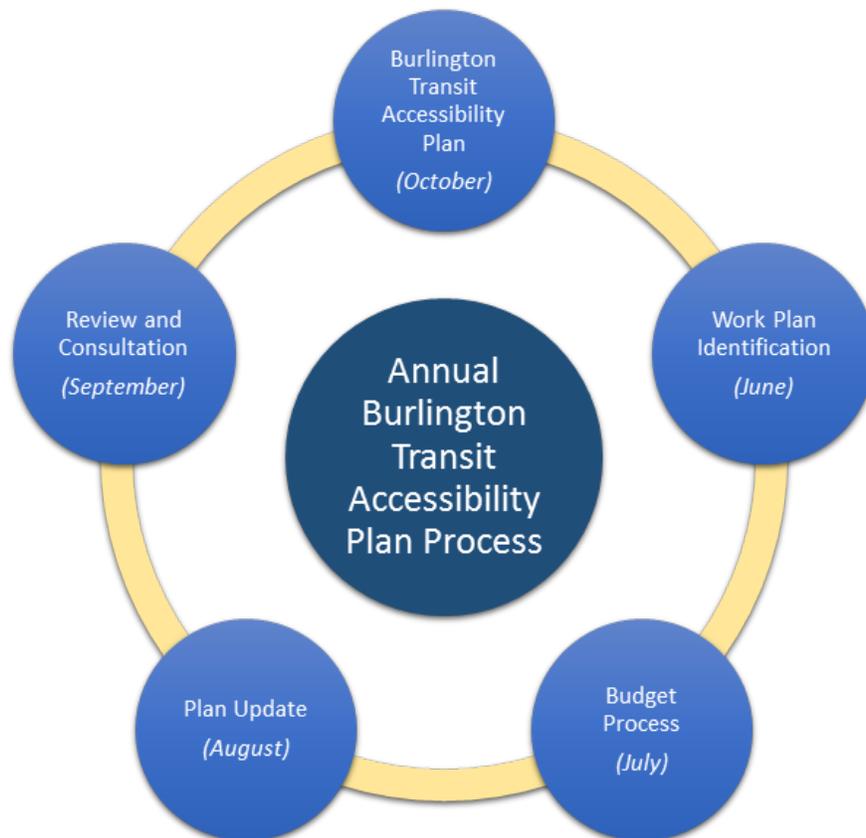
- Ongoing application of region-wide common eligibility and application form
- Provided training to all Operators on the requirements of the AODA and the Human Rights Code
- Conducted employee training on:
 - Safe use of accessibility equipment

- 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 all customers with special consideration to persons with disabilities
- Priority and courtesy seating is available and clearly identified for persons with disabilities on all Burlington Transit buses
- Burlington Transit information is accessible on the website with a text-only option (burlingtontransit.ca) and is linked to the City of Burlington website (burlington.ca)
- Continue to improve infrastructure at bus stops and other related transit infrastructure
- Larger fonts on route guides/ride guide in 2018
- Implemented a Free65 Program that offers seniors access to free transit weekdays between 9:00am and 2:30pm on both conventional and specialized (pilot to December 31, 2020)

4. Internal Accessibility Plan Responsibility and Update Methodology

The Manager, Transit Planning and Business Services and the Coordinator, Business Services will act as Accessibility Plan Coordinators for Burlington Transit.

The plan is a living document and will be updated annually. The following process outlines the steps by which the plan will be reviewed and updated.



Each year, Burlington Transit will review the plan and ensure its accuracy and that it meets the requirements set out in the applicable legislation. This review process will begin in June by updating the status of previously identified action items and adding new items for the coming year. The BAAC will be consulted on new action items to be included in the updated plan. In July these items will be identified in the coming year's proposed budget. The plan will be updated in August and made available for feedback by BAAC and members of the public in September. Once all feedback and comments are gathered and reviewed, the plan will be finalized in October for distributing.

Burlington Transit will monitor progress from the previous year's accessibility plan through this annual review.

4.1. Consultation on this Plan

In the preparation of this plan, Burlington Transit has consulted with:

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

- Public through a Burlington's Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting

5. Process for Managing, Evaluating and Taking Action on Customer Feedback

The City of Burlington takes feedback from its residents seriously and use the information to enhance and make service improvements. In 2018, the City of Burlington launched Service Burlington, a customer service focused approach to providing a means for residents to provide feedback by phone, email, an online form and in person at the Service Burlington Counter at City Hall.

All feedback provided by customers, good or bad, is documented within the system and is sent to the appropriate department for action.

In the case of Burlington Transit, customer feedback with respect to both conventional and specialized services is directed to Burlington Transit's Customer Service Representatives through Service Burlington. A customer form is generated to extend a compliment, to record a request and/or to register a complaint or comment through the City's customer relationship management technology. Interactions are received from passengers/public via the telephone, in person, mail, email as well as Burlington Transit's website and social media account (Twitter).

At the time the contact is received via telephone or in person the customer is asked to indicate whether they would like to be contacted directly with a response. In some instances, issues received via email or letter will be contacted directly via the means it is received. In all cases where a customer has indicated their desire for a response, and to the extent they have provided valid contact information, a Burlington Transit representative contacts the customer.

In terms of compliments, all Burlington Transit employees who are identified in compliments received from customers are acknowledged in the form of a bulletin from the Operation Supervisor for the quality customer service they have provided.

Requests received are generally with respect to service (actual service, new service requests, requests for amenities, etc.) and are forwarded to the appropriate area for review and follow-up. In the event a request is something that can be acted upon outside of the service planning process, appropriate action is taken by Burlington Transit staff and the customer is advised accordingly.

Complaints are recorded and forwarded to the appropriate Supervisor for investigation and action as appropriate. Customers who request a response to a complaint will be advised that an investigation has taken place and the matter was dealt with accordingly; however, in accordance with privacy legislation and related City of Burlington policy, they will not be provided with any details with respect to personnel matters.

5.1. Gathering Feedback (Burlington Transit Generated)

Burlington Transit utilizes a number of approaches to gather feedback from customers including:

- Online surveys via Burlington's Get Involved web page – as required
- City Committees – as required
- Peer consultations – ongoing
- Public Outreach – as required
- On-street/bus intercepts – as required

All data and information collected assist in making decisions with respect to the topic being reviewed and assessed.

6. Process for Estimating Demand

The process to identify service demand requirements includes an analysis of factors and influences which can be variable over time. These factors include:

- Past ridership trends
- Review of incremental annual increase in demand
- Ridership growth levels (both conventional and specialized)
- Local demographic trends
- Forecasted population growth, new developments and intensification
- Anticipated changes to legislation, policies, procedures and complimentary fare pilots may increase demand for services

Detailed analysis is completed as part of the annual budget process based on the influence of these factors throughout the year. It is important to note that at any point in time, the impact level of these factors vary, and as such, determining demand for specialized transit is an ongoing exercise.

7. Steps to Reduce Wait Time

7.1. Specialized Service

Burlington Transit staff will continue to work on reducing wait times for specialized transit through monitoring the 'on-time performance' metric and scheduling efficiencies. Given the service is a shared-ride service; there are a number of factors that can influence performance against this target, many of which are not within the control of Burlington Transit. These factors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Traffic conditions, which can be significantly influenced by weather conditions, construction, accidents, etc.;

- Designated drop-off location issues (i.e. Cars parked in designated drop off locations) which result in delays in dropping customers currently on-board the vehicle;
- Passengers not being ready for their pick-up (i.e. Late medical appointments, etc.) Which result in delays that can impact the rest of the day; and
- Passengers who do not take their scheduled trip, but don't cancel it (i.e. No-show trip) noting the policy is that drivers will wait five minutes past the scheduled pick-up time or the time of arrival, whichever is later, before leaving the pick-up location.

7.2. Conventional Service

Burlington Transit has taken the following steps to reduce wait times which include:

- Real time bus schedule information posted in an open data format allowing several app developers to utilize data
- Communication to riders via twitter

8. Procedures to Address Equipment Failures

The best way to avoid service issues and equipment failures is prevention. The following steps are taken to mitigate in-service breakdowns:

- Before the Operator leaves the garage for service a “circle check” is completed to ensure that the vehicle is functioning properly. This check includes the various accessibility features on the bus (ramp, kneeling feature, tie downs, etc.). If any features are 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.
- 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.

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

- The Operator contacts the on-duty Operations Supervisor and relays the defect information.
- The Operations Supervisor identifies a change-off location.
- The Operations Supervisor 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 having trouble in service.

9. Ongoing Commitments

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

- Consulting with customers 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 barriers in a priority-based manner
- Consulting with the City's Accessibility Coordinator, Accessibility Advisory Committee, and other stakeholder groups, with respect to addressing barriers to accessibility
- Continue customer service and accessibility training of all new operators.

10. Communicating the Plan

Burlington Transit will communicate the accessibility plan to the public through the following actions:

- The Plan will be available at our administrative office at 3332 Harvester Road and at City Hall at 426 Brant Street.
- The Plan will be published on Burlington Transit's website at www.burlingtontransit.ca

Appendix A: Progress Report for Actions Identified for October 2019 – September 2020

The table below highlights the progress of the action items planned in 2019 and 2020 to support Burlington Transit's commitment to accessibility:

Table 3: Progress Report for Action Items for October 2019 to September 2020

Action Item	Year Identified	Status as of June 2020	Actual/Estimated Completion Date
Service changes September 2019; improved frequency and connections within the City of Burlington, increasing customer's choices for travel.	2019	Complete	Actual: September 2019
Establish a new eligibility application form.	2019	Complete	Actual: August 2019
Establish/update all accessibility policies.	2019	Deferred to Q4 2020	Estimated: Q4 2020
Addition of media screens with real-time information at the Burlington GO and Downtown Terminal.	2019	Ongoing	Estimated: Q4 2020
Conduct outreach events to educate/inform about Burlington Transit services. Direct hands-on familiarization exercise on board a bus.	2019	Ongoing; Not being conducted within 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.	Estimated: Ongoing
Participate in development of PRESTO solution for specialized transit.	2019	Ongoing	Estimated: Ongoing
Implement a new bus stop upgrade program for infrastructure improvements at conventional bus stops; including integration with the City of Burlington's roadway improvement projects. <i>Additional information added in 2020: This program is based on the Bus Stop Upgrade</i>	2019	Ongoing	Estimated: Ongoing

<i>Process. Criteria for upgrade scores will be included in the Plan. Stop upgrades would be to bring stops to Burlington Transit Bus Stop Design Standards that were developed and presented to BAAC in 2019.</i>			
Develop and implement a first-trip package for new customers.	2019	Deferred to Q4 2020	Estimated: Q4 2020
Increase communications and how-to sessions to enhance public knowledge of the transit service. This would focus on the service information, service options, and fare payment.	2019	Deferred to 2021 due to COVID-19	Estimated: Q3 2021
Review travel training options to develop a new program that will educate the community on services and travel opportunities. This would be the operational side of the service. How-to use the service.	2019	Deferred to 2021 due to COVID-19	Estimated: Q3 2021
Review improved links with surrounding municipalities.	2019	Ongoing	Estimated: Ongoing
Develop communications and education for medical centres in Burlington on specialized transit and the eligibility for specialized transit. <i>Additional information added in 2020: Staff will investigate providing materials in large print, braille and audio.</i>	2019	Deferred to Q4 2020	Estimated: Q4 2020

Appendix B: Actions Planned for October 2020 – September 2021

The table below highlights a number of action items planned in 2020 and 2021 to support Burlington Transit's commitment to accessibility:

Table 4: Action Items for October 2020 to September 2021

Action Item	Year Identified	Status	Estimated Completion Date
A handout to go with acceptance letters that will provide details on the specialized transit service.	2020	Ongoing	Q2 2021
Online tutorial videos on how to use specialized transit. These online tutorials would be part of a training program. Training could be tailored to the customer.	2020	Ongoing	Q2 2021
Continue with the Outreach Programs.	2020	Ongoing	Ongoing
Implement On-Demand Service (allowing for same day bookings).	2020	Ongoing	Q3 2021
Make all bus stops accessible. This is based on the Burlington Transit Bus Stop Design Standards that were developed and presented to BAAC in 2019. If a stop does not fit within a design standard, or if it is Std A (not accessible) then it will be upgraded.	2020	Ongoing	Ongoing
Investigate technology options for enhancing accessibility (e.g. texting options, audio signage). Accessible communications will be at the forefront.	2020	Ongoing	Q3 2021
Colour contrast and reduce glare for people	2020	Ongoing	Q4 2020

with low vision on customer query devices.			
Evaluation of bus stop upgrades beyond the current bus stop design guidelines (e.g. bigger shelters, real time arrival displays).	2020	Ongoing	Q3 2021
Increased signage on bus shelters. This signage will include bus stop etiquette points, customer service contact information, and "no smoking" and "no vaping" provincial signage.	2020	Ongoing	Q1 2021
Map of accessible bus stops. This is based on the Burlington Transit Bus Stop Design Standards that were developed and presented to BAAC in 2019. Accessible stops would be any stop that is a Std B, C, or D. If the stop does not fit with a design standard, it will be evaluated as to whether it has a landing pad and clear path to sidewalk. The map will be online on Burlington GIS Centre. It will be updated annually.	2020	Ongoing	Q2 2021
Continue working with Metrolinx on improving accessibility at GO stations.	2020	Ongoing	Ongoing