



Niagara  
Transit



# General Manager's 2024 Annual Report

# General Manager's Message

On behalf of Niagara Transit, I am pleased to present the 2024 Annual General Manager's Report. This report is a snapshot of our successes and challenges throughout the year. It provides insight into where we've been and where we're going, in 2025 and beyond.

We would not be where we are today without the many individuals that have contributed, and continue to contribute, their talent, hard work, dedication and passion to make transit in Niagara a truly connected network that serves our ridership and the broader community. Our board, our staff and our ridership have all contributed to how far we have come in such a short period of time. I want to make special mention of our operators and front-line staff who keep our wheels turning on a daily basis. Your dedication and professionalism are never taken for granted.

Everything we do at Niagara Transit is guided by our core values and foundational pillars.

Service Excellence    Safety    Customer Focus  
Affordability    Employee Success

In 2024 we made significant strides in all these areas and will make even more in 2025.

Our on-time performance (OTP) led our industry peers, our ridership continued to significantly outpace our budget, we launched our new brand, made improvements to our customer service hours, replaced the 'Red Line' and made other service improvements to our conventional and microtransit services.

As we move into our third year, I am excited by what the future holds for transit in Niagara. This year we will complete our master plan that will modernize our operations and lay out the path for where we are headed for the next ten years. We are reshaping our specialized transit service to meet the needs of our most vulnerable riders. We are harmonizing fares across the system and introducing the Transit Benefit Pass to make transit affordable for those in our community who receive Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program assistance.

Thank you for your continued commitment to transit in Niagara. Our service truly makes a difference to our ridership and the Niagara community. It is an exciting time to be a part of Niagara Transit! We're just getting started!

Sincerely,



Carla Stout, DPA, General Manager





## 2024 Board of Directors

<b>Chair Mayor Mathew Siscoe</b>	St. Catharines
<b>Vice-Chair Mayor Wayne Redekop</b>	Fort Erie
<b>Councillor Reg Freake</b>	Grimsby
<b>Councillor J.D. Pachereva</b>	Lincoln
<b>Councillor Joyce Morocco</b>	Niagara Falls
<b>Councillor Maria Mavridis</b>	Niagara-on-the-Lake
<b>Councillor Wayne Olson</b>	Pelham
<b>Councillor Eric Beauregard</b>	Port Colborne
<b>Councillor Dawn Dodge</b>	St. Catharines
<b>Councillor Caleb Ratzlaff</b>	St. Catharines
<b>Councillor Anthony Longo</b>	Thorold
<b>Councillor Wayne Cambell</b>	Niagara Falls
<b>Mayor Brian Grant</b>	Wainfleet
<b>Councillor Leo VanVliet</b>	Welland
<b>Councillor William Reilly</b>	West Lincoln



# In memory of Wayne Campbell



Niagara Transit is deeply saddened by the passing of Niagara Falls local councillor, Wayne Campbell. Councillor Campbell was a valued Niagara Transit Commission Board member since its inception, and his dedication to our community will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and the community during this difficult time.



**In 2024 the Niagara Transit Board adopted our mission, vision and values. They will guide Niagara Transit now and in the future in all our decision making and planning processes.**

### **Mission**

Providing safe, reliable, and sustainable transit service in Niagara.

### **Vision**

Working together towards a more connected region.

### **Purpose**

Helping every person in Niagara experience independence, freedom, and a sense of discovery.

### **Values**

Service Excellence

Safety

Customer Focus

Affordability

Employee Success

# **2024 Highlights**

# Service Excellence

## Strong Service Delivery and OTP on our Conventional Service!

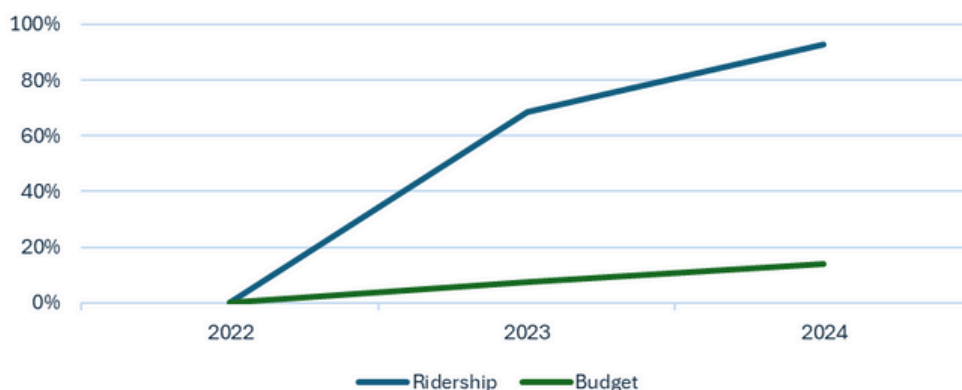
We are proud to have nearly 100% service delivery and 83% on-time performance (OTP) in 2024 on our conventional routes. The average OTP for peer transit services in Ontario is 79%. We are taking delivery of new conventional buses and specialized vehicles in 2025 and expect even greater performance!



## Ridership Continues to Outpace Budget

Ridership has seen drastic increases since Niagara Transit was amalgamated in 2022. We have met this demand by harnessing the efficiencies we have found through the amalgamation process. This has been achieved while contending with having to create new reserves, address inflationary pressures, provide enhanced customer service and absorb the cost of standing up a new organization. While this is an exceptional achievement, there is now minimal room for greater efficiencies. To make further improvements to service, like the standardization of service hours and adding intermunicipal Sunday and holiday service, greater investment will be required. As demand continues to grow, we don't want to leave riders behind.

**Ridership increase vs Budget increase since Amalgamation**

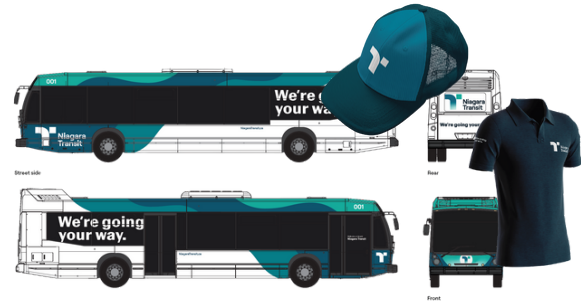


# Service Excellence

cont'd

## New Niagara Transit Brand Launched!

In 2024 we completed and launched the new Niagara Transit brand! We are transitioning all our previously separate fleets to the new brand over time to unify the service and manage costs responsibly. You will also begin to see our brand on our on-street signage and bus shelters we have assumed from Pattison Outdoor.

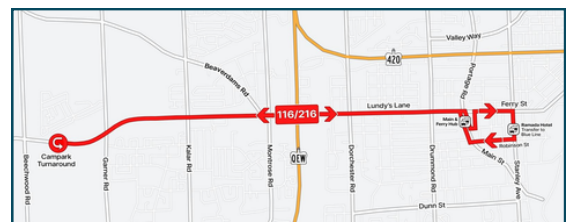


## New Specialized Operator Training

After assuming Niagara Falls' Chair-a-Van service in 2024 we developed and delivered a 3-day training program to all operators that provide specialized service. Training included safe vehicle operation, best practices for loading and unloading ambulatory and non-ambulatory passengers, mobility device securement, review of AODA Customer Service Standards, visiting frequently accessed locations in the City, and how to assist passengers with mobility, visual, speech, and developmental/psychological impairments.

## Replacing the WEGO Service

This year the Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) took over what was previously WEGO. To maintain service for local transit riders in Niagara Falls we replaced the former 'Red Line' with the 116/216 route, maintaining its connection to the NPC's 'Blue Line' at Stanley Avenue in the tourism core. We continue to support the NPC's operations with transit expertise.





# Safety

## Onboard Camera Installation

Camera installations on our full fleet were completed in 2024. All fixed route buses and specialized vehicles were upgraded to 8 or 9 camera full digital IP systems including over the air updates along with wireless video download requests. All of our non-revenue (operations and maintenance) vehicles were also equipped with single front facing camera systems.

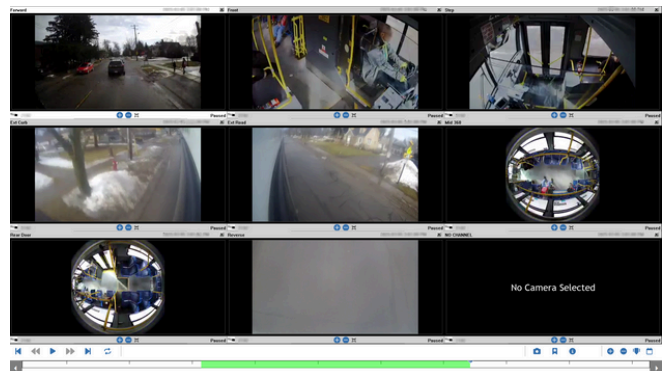


## Niagara Riders Feel Safe

We consistently monitor rider safety and gather their feedback. In 2024 over 90% of riders reported feeling safe taking Niagara Transit. As a benchmark, the average among Canadian transit systems is 86%. Rider safety is a top priority and we will continue to focus on it in 2025.

## Implemented Video Surveillance Policy

Niagara Transit implemented our video surveillance policy this year. The policy creates system design guidelines, notice of use requirements, and access and recording procedures. It ensures riders feel safe and staff have clear procedures to follow when dealing with surveillance of our fleet and facilities.





# Customer Focus

## Customer Experience Department

The new Customer Experience Department rollout was completed in 2024. Thirteen dedicated customer service representatives were introduced to improve accountability, communications and customer support. The introduction of this service saw a 229% increase in trip booking calls and 191% increase in general customer service inquiries!



## Introduced a New Client & Community Coordinator

Since September, our Client & Community Coordinator has engaged with the Niagara community and met with seniors groups, not-for-profit organizations, student groups and public organizations to educate residents about transit and gather feedback to help make service improvements.

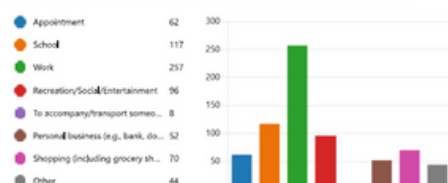
## Began Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Meetings

In 2024 our Public Advisory Committee began meeting and developing their workplan. The committee has a member from each local municipality in Niagara and several system stakeholders. Staff attended all PAC meetings to gather feedback and engage in discussions with the committee regarding transit services.



## External Survey

What is the main purpose of your most frequent trip? Please select one response.



In 2024 we conducted a survey of transit riders and non-transit riders to gather feedback. We had more than 700 responses, with close to 75% riders and 25% non-riders. This information is highly valuable to inform what we do moving forward on things like rider communications, demand planning, transit funding, and service improvements.

# Affordability

## Strong Budget Performance

Niagara Transit had a strong budget performance in 2024. This was due in part to higher than anticipated UPASS and fare revenue, unbudgeted supplemental tax revenue, and savings on things like the commingled contract and fuel prices. The end of the year saw a significant surplus that allowed us to transfer funds to much needed reserves.



## Consolidated Niagara Falls and Welland Operations

Welland staff shifted operations to the Niagara Falls garage in 2024. Having a single location for all south operations staff will ensure more efficient fleet maintenance and consistent access to transit leadership and dispatch staff for operators. It has also allowed for a repurposing of the Welland location into an interim training facility.

## ZETF Application

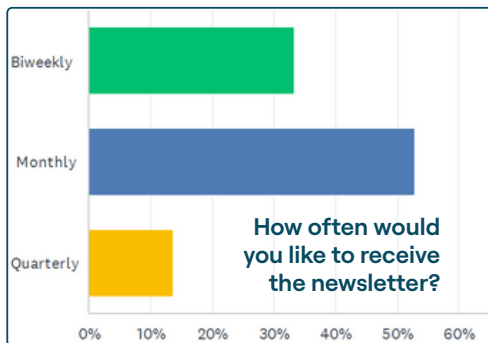
The transit industry is moving away from fossil fuels and towards zero-emission vehicles. To ensure we are providing the best value for Niagara taxpayers we are looking to take advantage of federal and provincial programs including the federal government's Zero Emission Transit Fund, which we applied for this year. This fund will assist with our capital requirements to purchase new, zero-emission vehicles.



# Employee Success

## New Bus Operator Recruitment Model

To expedite the hiring process for applicants and maximize staff time we have moved to a new “recruitment day” model. This allows the interview and testing process to be completed for 40-50 pre-screened, invited candidates over a two-day period that would have previously taken weeks to complete.



## Internal Communications Survey

In 2024 we conducted a fulsome communications survey with all Niagara Transit employees to help shape the development of the new employee newsletter and forthcoming intranet. The results will help us build these tools to best connect and inform all NT staff.

## Job Analysis & Evaluation

We worked with a 3rd party to conduct job analysis and evaluation of all non-unionized roles. This standardizes our job descriptions within the organization and provides role clarity for our teams, helping to align the roles to our organizational objectives.

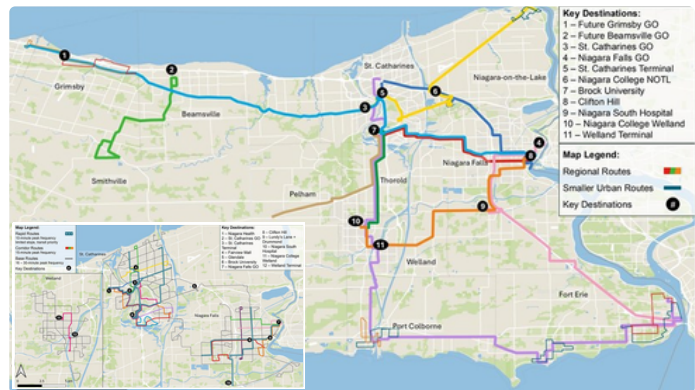




# What's Next in 2025?

## Niagara's First Transit Master Plan

In 2025 we will finalize the first ever Transit Master Plan for Niagara. This plan will guide how we move forward to improve and invest to keep people moving over the next 10 years. It's scheduled to be finalized in the fall of this year.



## A New Approach for Commingled Microtransit

In 2024 we rolled out the commingling of our microtransit services; including all formerly contracted ondemand and specialized services.

In 2025 we will continue to refine service to ensure AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) compliance and provide reliable transportation for the most vulnerable in our community. It is an important step in creating a truly connected, barrier free Niagara.

## Transit Benefit Pass

For the first time in Niagara we will be launching the Transit Benefit Pass. This low-cost, monthly pass will support those receiving Ontario Works assistance, the Ontario Disability Support Program, or those meeting a low-income threshold. It will make transit available to nearly 50,000 more Niagara residents! We have partnered with Niagara Region's Social Assistance Services office to administer the program and to mitigate the cost to the taxpayer.



# What's Next in 2025?

cont'd

## Fare Harmonization

Niagara Transit's fares will be harmonized for all trips at \$3.50 beginning on July 1, 2025! This is an important step to make trips across the region affordable for riders and to prepare for future connections to the GO network and other transit providers in the Greater Golden Horsehoe.



## New Buses and Specialized Vehicles Arriving

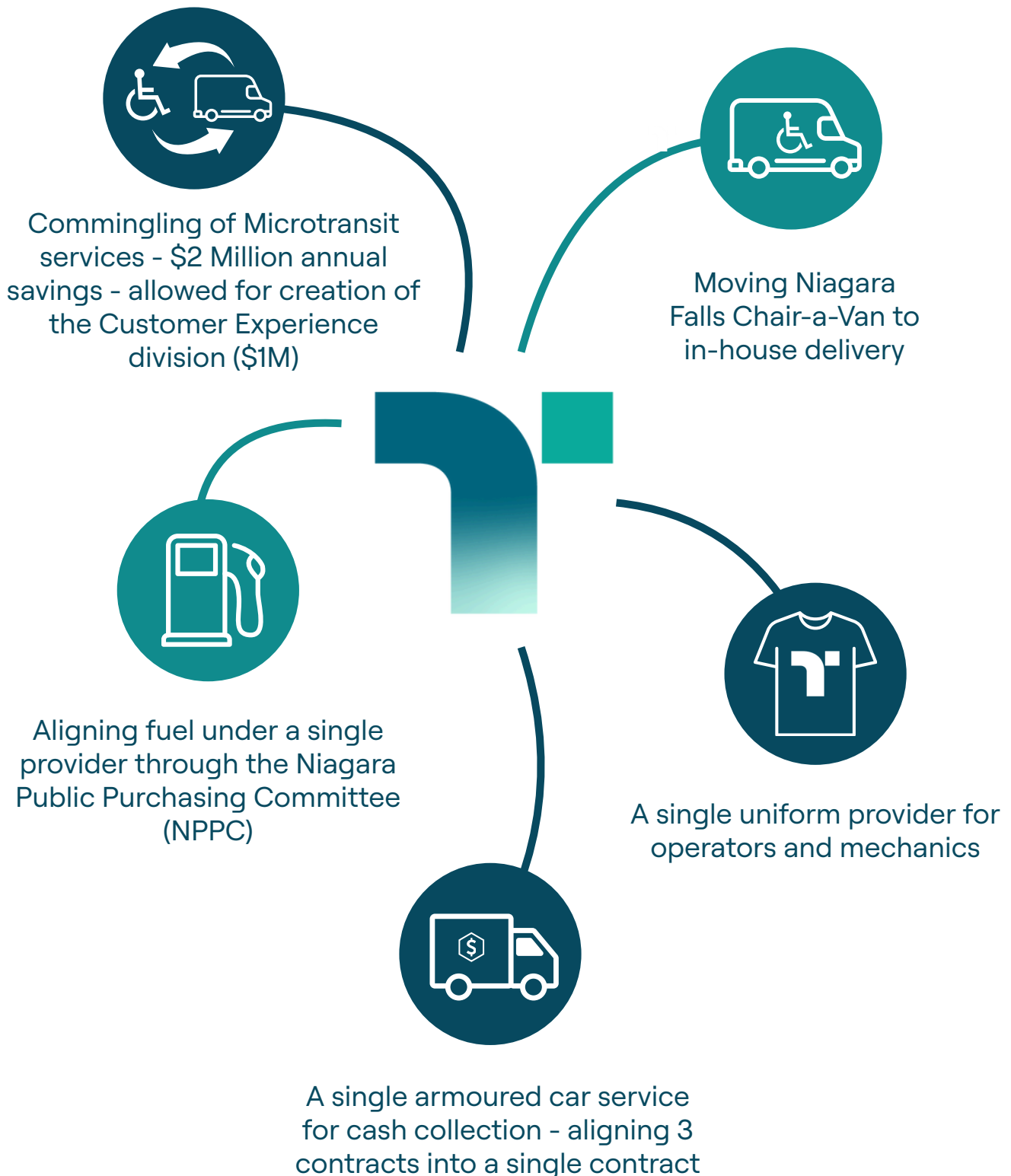
While many gains in service can be achieved through planning, there is no substitute for a reliable fleet that's size matches the demand for transit in our community. In 2025 we will be taking delivery of a number of new vehicles, both conventional and specialized, to replace our oldest and most challenging assets from a maintenance perspective. This will improve on-time performance (OTP) and reduce maintenance costs which have been heavy since Niagara Transit was formed. They will also display our great new brand, unifying it over time across the fleet!



# 2024 Key Performance Indicators



# 2024 Efficiencies Highlights

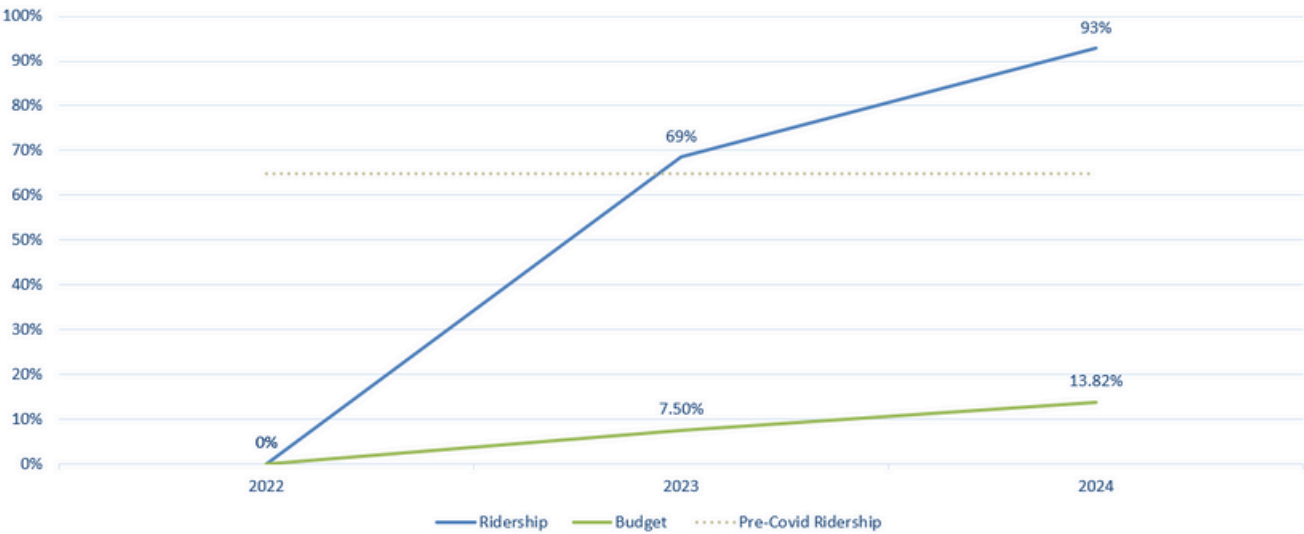


Reliable and Consistent On-Time  
Conventional Service

Nearly **100%** service delivery.

On-Time Performance of **83%**  
vs. 79% industry peer average

Ridership Increase vs Budget Increase  
Since Amalgamation



	2022	2023	2024
Ridership	5.6 million	9.5 million	10.9 million
Cost per Ride	\$8.06	\$5.57	\$5.22
Cost per Ride (excluding Capital Reserve)		\$5.34	\$5.02

(Blended rate for all transit services)

# 2024 KPI's

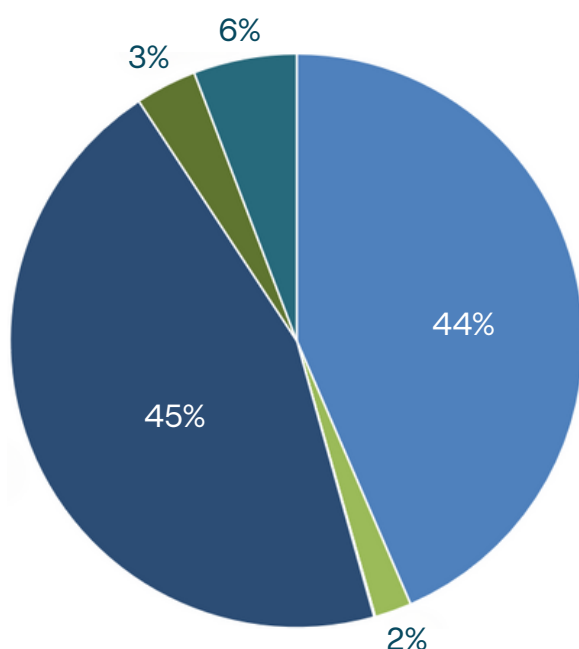
cont'd

## Niagara Transit Snapshot

Number of Local Routes	88
Number of IMT Routes	11
2024 Staff *	451
Number of 40' buses	151
Number of 60' buses	14
Average age of 40' and 60' bus	8
Number of specialized transit buses	23
Average age of specialized buses	6
Number of support vehicles	40

\*2024 Budgeted Full Time Equivalent staff including temporary staff

## Who Rides Our System?



Classification	Definition
Adult	18+
Child	Under 12
Youth	13 to 17
Senior	65+
Post Secondary	Brock & Niagara College

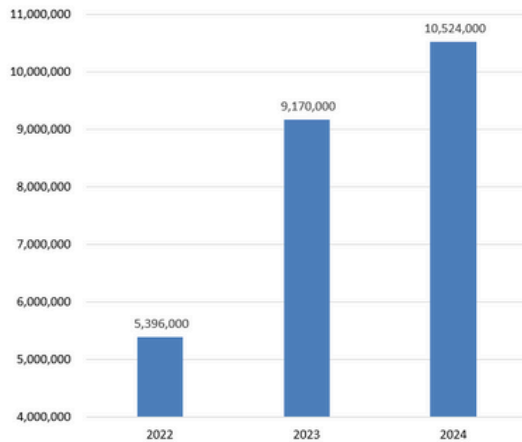
Adult ■ Post-secondary Student ■  
 Senior ■ Youth ■ Child ■



# 2024 KPI's

cont'd

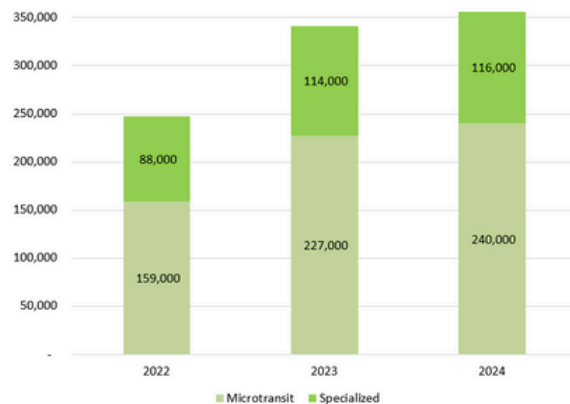
## Conventional Ridership



	Ridership Per Revenue Vehicle Hour	Revenue Vehicle Hours Per Capita
2022 Prov. Avg <sup>1</sup>	16.7	1.2
2023 Prov. Avg <sup>1</sup>	21.7	1.2
2023 NTC Conventional	21.4	1.1
2024 NTC Conventional	23.0	1.1

<sup>1</sup>Provincial Average is based on Canadian Urban Transit Association Data. Comparing similar sized Transit Agencies (pop. 100k to 750k), which may or may not include Microtransit

## Specialized and Microtransit Ridership



	Specialized Transit		Microtransit
	Ridership Per Revenue Vehicle Hour	Revenue Vehicle Hours Per Capita	Ridership Per Revenue Vehicle Hour ***
2022 Prov. Avg <sup>1</sup>	1.9	0.2	n/a
2023 Prov. Avg <sup>1</sup>	2.3	0.2	n/a
2023 NTC	1.7 <sup>2</sup>	0.1 <sup>2</sup>	2.8
2024 NTC	1.8	0.1	2.9

<sup>1</sup>Provincial Average is based on Canadian Urban Transit Association Data Comparing similar sized Transit Agencies (pop. 100k to 750k)  
<sup>2</sup>Revised

	Specialized & Microtransit
Average Time on Vehicle <sup>1</sup>	19 mins
Average Distance per Trip	9.64 km
Average Wait Time *	5.75 mins

<sup>1</sup>From July 1, 2024 onward

# 2024 KPI's

cont'd

## Social Media



Visits	20.7K	416%	2.9K	284%
Follows	723	244%	537	-
Interactions	4.1K	542%	678	100%
Clicks	992	629%	49	100%
Reach	86K	390%	13.6K	414%

## Website

Active Users	259K	416%
New Users	255K	244%
Sessions	486K+	542%
Page Views	1.2M	629%
Avg. Engagement	1m 54s	390%



# General Manager's 2024 Annual Report