

<p>1. PARA TRANSPO SERVICE - STANDARDS FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BOOKING</p> <p>SERVICE DE PARA TRANSPO – NORMES EN MATIÈRE D'ADMISSIBILITÉ ET DE RÉSERVATION</p>

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

That Council revise the Transit Commission's Terms of Reference to establish a Para Transpo Eligibility Appeals Panel.

RECOMMANDATION DE LA COMMISSION

Que le Conseil municipal révise le mandat de la Commission du transport en commun pour lui permettre de créer un Comité d'appel d'admissibilité aux services de Para Transpo.

DOCUMENTATION / DOCUMENTATION

1. Steve Kanellakos, City Manager report, dated 1 June 2016
(ACS2016-CMR-OCM-0021)

Rapport de Steve Kanellakos, Directeur municipal, daté du 1 juin 2016
(ACS2016-CMR-OCM-0021).
2. Extract of Draft Minutes, Special Transit Commission meeting, 27 June 2016

Extrait de l'ébauche du procès-verbal de la réunion extraordinaire de la Commission du transport en commun, le 27 juin 2016.

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Transit Commission
Commission du transport en commun
27 June 2016 / 27 juin 2016**

**and Council
et au Conseil
13 July 2016 / 13 juillet 2016**

**Submitted on June 1, 2016
Soumis le 1 juin 2016**

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Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE LA VILLE File Number: ACS2016-CMR-OCM-0021

**SUBJECT: PARA TRANSPO SERVICE - STANDARDS FOR ELIGIBILITY AND
BOOKING**

**OBJET: SERVICE DE PARA TRANSPO – NORMES EN MATIÈRE
D'ADMISSIBILITÉ ET DE RÉSERVATION**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Transit Commission approve the Para Transpo Eligibility Criteria and the related application, eligibility, and booking procedures described in this report; and**
- 2. That the Transit Commission recommend that Council revise the Transit Commission's Terms of Reference to establish a Para Transpo Eligibility Appeals Panel.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

- 1. Que la Commission du transport en commun approuve les critères d'admissibilité aux services de Para Transpo et les procédures correspondantes en matière de demande, d'admissibilité et de réservation décrites dans le présent rapport.**
- 2. Que la Commission du transport en commun recommande au Conseil de réviser le mandat de la Commission du transport en commun pour lui permettre de créer un Comité d'appel d'admissibilité aux services de Para Transpo.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Para Transpo service is a critical link to providing transportation services for customers who are unable to use OC Transpo's 100 per cent accessible conventional transit buses some or all of the time due to a disability. Para Transpo enables Ottawa to be an accessible, inclusive city, with mobility available to all customers, whether able-bodied or disabled. OC Transpo's commitment to accessibility continues with the introduction of the O-Train Confederation Line in 2018, which will also be a fully-accessible service.

The City has made major investments in improving Para Transpo service in recent years. Ongoing engagement with customers, stakeholder groups, and the staff members who work directly with customers identified that a review of certain long-standing Para Transpo service standards was needed.

In May 2015, the Transit Commission approved OC Transpo's review of Para Transpo's eligibility and booking processes, including undertaking consultations with stakeholders

and customers. A report was presented for information at the February 17, 2016, meeting of the Transit Commission that detailed the results of the stakeholder consultation.

The recommendations that were considered and included in this report are based on feedback from customers and stakeholders, the evolution of the accessible transit industry, best practices by other transit agencies, the Canadian Urban Transit Association's Paratransit Eligibility Code of Practice, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. These improvements have been aligned with Council's priorities, including the Older Adult Plan, the Municipal Accessibility Plan, and the Equity and Inclusion Lens. These recommendations are intended to create a more sustainable service that is able to serve customers who truly require Para Transpo's services and who have no other mobility choice. It is also an opportunity to ensure customers are made fully aware of all accessible transportation options available to them.

The recommendations resulting from the consultation and analysis fall into nine categories:

1. Eligibility;
2. Eligibility Criteria;
3. Service Delivery;
4. Taxi Coupon Program;
5. Application and Assessment Process;
6. Appeals Process;
7. Application Renewal;
8. Late Trip Cancellation; and
9. Other Issues Examined as Part of Review – Trip Prioritization and Collection of Unpaid Fares.

It will take approximately one year to implement all of the changes recommended within this report. OC Transpo aims to have all recommendations in place by the end of Q2

2017. However, several changes require less time to prepare for roll-out, and will be implemented sooner where possible.

BACKGROUND

On May 20, 2015, the Transit Commission approved OC Transpo's review of Para Transpo's eligibility and booking processes. The review included undertaking consultations with stakeholders and customers in order to capture their opinions and recommendations prior to developing the recommended changes to Para Transpo's eligibility and booking processes contained within this report. The ways in which OC Transpo sought feedback from customers and stakeholders included: facilitated consultation groups; questionnaires; emails/letters; and, through the Accessibility Advisory Committee. On February 17, 2016, the Transit Commission received a report with the results of the consultation. Stakeholder feedback from the consultations is included in this report in the discussion of each recommendation.

DISCUSSION

Para Transpo serves more than 13,000 individual customers and provides approximately 800,000 customer-trips each year, with an operating budget of \$33 million per year. The service delivery model used by Para Transpo is comprised of 82 City-owned, operated, and maintained minibuses (full-sized passenger carrying van) as well as up to 92 taxi vehicles (mix of accessible vans and sedans) which are owned, operated and maintained by a contracted taxi company. Para Transpo books and schedules approximately 3,200 unique customer trips each weekday within the urban and rural areas of the City of Ottawa and to the Hull sector of Gatineau. The operation is also responsible for: dispatching service; assigning work to operators; monitoring on-street service over a service area of 2,796 square kilometres; maintaining the fleet of minibuses; and, managing the taxi-coupon program, which provides discounted taxi fares for approximately 1,900 Para Transpo customers who purchase coupons each year.

Para Transpo service has been in place since 1980 and is a critical link to providing transportation services for customers who are unable to use OC Transpo's 100 per cent accessible conventional transit buses some or all of the time due to a disability. Para Transpo enables Ottawa to be an accessible, inclusive city, with mobility available to all

customers, whether able-bodied or disabled. OC Transpo's commitment to accessibility continues with the introduction of the O-Train Confederation Line in 2018, which will also be a fully-accessible service.

The City has made major investments in improving Para Transpo service in recent years, including modernization of the minibus fleet, expanded service capacity, new dispatching and communication systems, and a new electronic fare collection system. These improvements have been aligned with Council's priorities, including the Older Adult Plan, the Municipal Accessibility Plan, and the Equity and Inclusion Lens. Ongoing engagement with customers, stakeholder groups, and the staff members who work directly with customers has identified the need for a review of certain long-standing Para Transpo service standards, and this report is the result.

Consultation sessions for Para Transpo stakeholders were held between August 24 and November 17, 2015. These consultations reinforced OC Transpo's commitment to one of its Departmental Priorities – improving service to Para Transpo customers. They also reinforced the three pillars of service excellence: customer satisfaction; employee engagement; and improved operational performance. Overall, the feedback from both customers and stakeholders indicated that the consultation process was extremely well received and that participants appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences and to make recommendations for improvement.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is provincial legislation that aims to achieve full accessibility throughout Ontario by the year 2025. OC Transpo is federally regulated and therefore the AODA, a provincial statute, is not applicable. However, the recommendations in this report do consider AODA standards for categories of eligibility, eligibility application and independent appeals processes. This is consistent with the 2012 Council-approved Accessibility Policy, which identifies the exemption for OC Transpo but also establishes the provisions of the AODA as provincial best practices.

Staff from OC Transpo work closely with partners of the paratransit industry and have participated in projects in association with the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA). Work has included the development of an eligibility code of practice, forecasting ridership demand on paratransit services, and industry best practices, all of

which have been considered in the recommendations within this report. OC Transpo also actively participates in CUTA's accessible transit committee.

OC Transpo has also received multiple comments and requests from agencies and community groups who are interested in expanding Para Transpo's eligibility criteria to include persons with developmental and mental health disabilities.

Since the current eligibility requirements were established, OC Transpo has made a significant investment in enhancing the accessibility of its system:

- **Low-Floor Accessible Transit Fleet** – Conventional transit services (i.e., buses and O-Trains) are and will continue to be 100 per cent low-floor.
- **Facility Accessibility Improvements** – OC Transpo has made numerous improvements to stations and facilities, with the objective of removing existing barriers and enhancing access for customers with disabilities. Some examples include installing new power doors at station and shelter entrances, expanding accessible parking areas and passenger pick-up/drop-off zones at Park and Ride lots, improving lighting throughout the system and installing tactile walking surface indicators at the edge of all O-Train Trillium Line platforms.
- **Next Stop Announcements** –The conventional bus and O-Train Trillium Line fleet are fully equipped with a next stop announcement system that provides audible and visual on-board announcements of next stops and route destinations. These announcements make it easier for all customers, including those with vision and hearing loss, to identify their stop.
- **Accessibility Design Standards** – OC Transpo has developed new accessibility design standards for Transitway stations and on-street bus stops to ensure that new and renovated transit facilities provide customers with universal access.
- **Travel Training** – There has been an increase in the number of customers participating in transit travel training, which is designed to teach customers with disabilities, seniors, and new Canadians to travel safely and independently on conventional transit. This comprehensive instructional program is delivered in cooperation with approximately 50 community partners, including school boards, hospitals, agencies providing services to persons with disabilities and seniors'

groups. Each year, OC Transpo staff provide travel training services to approximately 2,000 people.

As a result of these enhancements, OC Transpo's conventional transit system (bus and O-Train) provide mobility options that did not exist when Para Transpo's eligibility criteria were first established. This review presents an opportunity for OC Transpo to implement changes to the eligibility criteria that enhance accuracy and support equity and cost effectiveness. The changes recommended in this report are intended to create a more sustainable service that is able to serve customers who truly require Para Transpo's services and who have no other mobility choice. It is also an opportunity to ensure customers are made fully aware of all accessible transportation options available to them.

The following recommendations, in nine categories, are the result of the consultation and analysis.

1. Eligibility – It is recommended that eligibility be expanded to include all persons whose disabilities preclude them from using conventional transit service.

Currently, Para Transpo provides alternative transportation services for customers who are unable to use conventional OC Transpo some or all of the time. Eligibility determination is guided by disability and mobility, and is based on an applicant's physical disability. As a result, persons with developmental and mental health disabilities have not had the same opportunities to use Para Transpo as those with physical disabilities.

During the consultation sessions, 72 per cent of questionnaire respondents indicated they agreed with having greater inclusion of customers with developmental and mental health disabilities on Para Transpo service. Participants at the consultation sessions generally agreed with expanding the criteria, with some raising concerns regarding service availability if eligibility were to be more inclusive.

The resulting additional demand resulting from the recommendation will be partially offset by additional capacity created by the higher capacity Para Transpo minibuses and

a new contract with Para Transpo's contracted taxi service. It will also be partially offset by decreases resulting from other changes recommended in this report.

2. Eligibility Criteria – It is recommended that the following criteria for eligibility be applied, using three categories of eligibility that are consistent with AODA standards and CUTA best practices: full, temporary, and conditional.

Eligibility is currently classified into three categories: permanent, temporary and "winter-only". Once a customer has been identified as permanent, this classification is indefinite.

Stakeholders were asked if Para Transpo should consider a conditional category of eligibility, meaning a customer's ability to use Para Transpo will be situation-specific and unique to a customer's transportation needs. Most respondents (77 per cent) agreed.

Full Eligibility

Full eligibility will include those who have a disability that prevents them from using conventional transit at all times. For these customers, it is not reasonable to use conventional transit under any circumstance.

Temporary Eligibility

Temporary eligibility will include those who have a disability that prevents them from using conventional transit for a period of time. For example, temporary eligibility might be granted for someone who has recently undergone surgery which, in turn, has affected their mobility and ability to travel on conventional transit for a period of time. For these customers, it is reasonable for them to resume using conventional service after this period.

Conditional Eligibility

Conditional eligibility will include those with a disability where environmental or physical barriers limit their ability to consistently use conventional transit. For these customers, it is reasonable for them to use conventional transit to make some trips, but not others. Reasons for not being able to make conventional transit trips include seasonal weather conditions, distance from or to a conventional bus stop and path-of-travel obstacles. Conditional eligibility may also apply to customers whose disabilities or health

conditions are variable, meaning that some days their disability or condition may prevent them from being able to use conventional transit. Para Transpo customers with variable health conditions will have the opportunity to determine their need for Para Transpo service on a given day. Conditions will be based on information provided during the customer application and renewal processes.

Customers who are able to use conventional transit for all of their trips will not be eligible for Para Transpo service.

3. Service Delivery

i. Para Transpo will continue to be operated using the door-to-door service delivery model and Para Transpo operators will ensure that customers are escorted inside an accessible door, where an accessible door exists.

Para Transpo currently operates as a door-to-door service for customers, using both in-house minibuses and contracted taxis. Customers are typically picked up at, and escorted to, the outermost accessible door of a building.

Other options for delivering paratransit service were considered. Most other Canadian transit agencies that deliver paratransit service also do so by using a door-to-door service delivery model. Another delivery model used by some agencies is hand-to-hand, whereby the paratransit operator picks up a customer who has been waiting with a caregiver, and drops the customer off at a destination to another caregiver. The operator typically requires a formal signature from caregivers at either end of the trip. Most Canadian agencies require customers to have an attendant if it has been determined they cannot travel independently.

The recommended continuance of the door-to-door service delivery model will be consistent for all customers, including those who need attendants, regardless of their disability. Continuing with this operating model avoids the need for additional operating costs, additional time required per trip, change in the operator's role (requiring additional training), new procedures and an amendment to the current taxi contract that other service delivery models, such as hand-to-hand, would require.

ii. Customers will be required to travel with an attendant only if it is necessary to protect the health and safety of the customer or other customers, or if there are

customer supports or needs required that are beyond what an operator can provide. The requirement for an attendant would be determined through the application process.

Currently, the majority of customers do not require an attendant while travelling, and this will continue to be the case.

4. Taxi Coupon Program – It is recommended that the taxi coupon pilot program be concluded and that the program be made a regular part of Para Transpo service, at the current funding and availability levels.

In July 2007, Council initiated a taxi coupon pilot program, whereby Para Transpo customers may purchase discounted taxi fares as an alternative to Para Transpo. The program was established to attract customer trips away from Para Transpo in order to free up capacity and provide customers with more flexibility for making trips. The program allows customers to pay for 60 per cent of the cost of a taxi trip, with the remaining 40 per cent being subsidized by the City. Customers can book a trip at their convenience with participating taxi companies in Ottawa. All registered Para Transpo customers are eligible to participate in this program.

The program has been highly successful and while the number of trips taken using the taxi coupon program is not known due to the fact that taxis charge based on the time and distance it takes to complete a trip, resulting in a different cost per ride, interest in the program is growing each year. In 2015, 1,899 customers purchased taxi coupons compared to 392 customers in 2007. Para Transpo tracks the number of taxi coupons used, and the taxi companies are reimbursed by the City the cost to provide the service.

Today the program continues to divert demand away from Para Transpo, which reduces upward pressure on the budget. It provides Para Transpo customers with yet another transportation option and reduces the overall cost to the City.

This recommendation will conclude the pilot project and formalize the taxi coupon program as one of Para Transpo's service offerings. The program would continue at the current funding and availability levels.

5. Application and Assessment Process

At present, determining if an applicant meets eligibility requirements is completed using an application form. The application is completed by the candidate and is supported by a medical professional. OC Transpo staff review the information provided in the application form to assess the applicant's eligibility for service. No in-person interview or assessment is required. An applicant's eligibility is based on their disability, their use of a mobility aid, and whether or not they are able to use conventional transit.

i. It is recommended that qualified healthcare professionals review and assess all applications, following the Eligibility Criteria recommended earlier in this report.

Staff would establish a contract to perform this work with a qualified agency or firm with expertise in the assessment of disabilities. The contractor will have qualified healthcare professionals on staff, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, occupational health nurses, or similar. The City does not currently have available staff capacity to carry out this work. The agency or firm would be engaged following the provisions of the City's Purchasing By-Law.

ii. It is recommended that where an application does not demonstrate a clear need for Para Transpo service after an initial review and a follow-up in-person interview, an in-person functional assessment be completed by a qualified healthcare professional in the relevant field of the applicant's disability.

This process will be included in the external contract for application assessments.

These recommended application process steps are consistent with the feedback from the customer and stakeholder consultation process. They are also consistent with the CUTA best practices, which indicate that in-person assessments are more effective than solely paper-based applications and that an in-person interview and assessment process can better help in identifying a significant proportion of applicants' functional abilities. Consultation with other transit agencies indicates that having a medical professional involved in the application review process is a common practice in the paratransit industry due to the importance of having professionals with knowledge in the medical field with better understanding of applicant's abilities make the determination of eligibility.

Costs for these contracted services will be managed within OC Transpo's current budget. Staff will closely monitor the additional costs and will revisit and request additional funding if required in future years.

6. Appeals process – It is recommended that an appeals process be created for potential customers whose application has been denied and who wish to have the decision reviewed.

Currently, applicants who are denied eligibility for Para Transpo service may contact OC Transpo and ask that their application be reviewed a second time. If this course of action is taken, staff review the application a second time, and seek additional information, if required, to make a final decision. The decision of the appeal made by OC Transpo staff is final. The process typically takes less than five business days.

The recommended appeals model follows a two-step process:

1. An individual who wishes to appeal a decision on eligibility will be able to apply for a review to be conducted by the department;
2. If eligibility is denied again, the applicant will be able to request a hearing by an independent Eligibility Appeals Panel, to be heard within 30 calendar days of OC Transpo's receipt of the appeal.

The Eligibility Appeals Panel would be comprised of three members: the General Manager, Transit Services, and the Medical Officer of Health, or their designates, and one customer with a disability who uses both conventional and Para Transpo service.

The designates would be selected by the General Manager, Transit Services, and the Medical Officer of Health. The customer panel member would be selected in a manner consistent with the advisory committee selection process. Consistent with the City of Ottawa Advisory Committee Expense Policy, the public member of the panel would not be remunerated for his or her time but would have transit or parking costs reimbursed.

The Eligibility Appeals Panel will base their decision on the Para Transpo Eligibility Criteria as approved by the Commission. The criteria recommended earlier in this report are based on an individual's inability to use conventional transit. The panel will have final authority on decisions regarding eligibility for Para Transpo service. Appealing

applicants, and/or their representative will be able to attend their hearing, however meetings will not be open to the public due to the confidential nature of the hearing where private and medical information will be discussed. The panel will meet as needed. The decision of the appeals panel will be final and official records of panel hearings and decisions will be maintained by staff. As with any decision of a municipal authority, the panel's decisions would be subject to judicial or other review as required by applicable legislation.

The CUTA code of practice suggests an appeals panel model and establishing a level of review by internal staff which may help resolve issues before they rise to the level of a full appeal heard by the Eligibility Appeals Panel, as recommended in this report.

7. Application renewal – It is recommended that all Para Transpo customers have their eligibility renewed once every three years.

Currently, once OC Transpo identifies a customer's eligibility as permanent, the classification is indefinite.

Over half the questionnaire respondents participating in the stakeholder outreach agreed with introducing an eligibility reassessment after a period of time. This opinion was also heavily shared by those who attended the in-person consultation sessions. The most common time period suggested by respondents was every three years.

The renewal process will provide staff with updated information on Para Transpo customers, including their reported ongoing needs for using the service. With the possibility of changing built environments, new assistive technologies and medical advancements, some customers who currently need Para Transpo service might not have the same requirement in the future.

OC Transpo will contact customers to request updates to contact information and reasons for needing Para Transpo service. There will be no requirement for a medical professional to review or sign a renewal form. The renewal process will identify customers who may no longer be eligible and will be required to resubmit or amend their application form. Existing Para Transpo customers will follow this new renewal process first, with customers who have been with Para Transpo the longest to be renewed first. Some customers who are currently eligible for the service may no longer

be eligible once the new criteria are introduced.

In addition to the feedback from the customer and stakeholder consultation, this recommendation is consistent with [section 64\(3\) of Part IV of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Integrated Accessibility Standards](#), and with CUTA best practices suggesting a three-year eligibility term. Minimal additional costs will result from this change, including the cost to update customer literature.

8. Late cancellation of booked trips

When a customer does not show up for a trip or cancels a trip at the last minute, Para Transpo is often unable to schedule trips for others and thus reduces its optimal operating capacity.

Currently, registered customers can reserve Para Transpo service in two ways: by making a demand booking (booking a trip the day before it is required); or by registering for a subscription booking (making the same trip between the same locations, at the same time each day or each week, such as travelling to school or to work).

OC Transpo currently has a progressive action process in place for customers who do not show up for their trip or who cancel their trip later than the current standard. It is in effect for only those customers who are on a regular subscription booking. The current definition of a late cancellation is one that is made after 5:00 p.m. the day prior to the scheduled trip. The current process sets out actions that are to take place when customers either:

- exceed ten regular booking late trip cancellations in a calendar month
- exceed three regular booking “no shows” in a calendar month
- exceed 25 per cent of regular booking trips cancelled and/or “no shows”

The reason for a customer having to cancel their trip is not currently considered by staff. There is currently no policy or action for customers who book trips on-demand.

i. It is recommended that a late cancellation be defined as one in which a customer cancels less than three hours before their scheduled pick-up time.

This will increase flexibility for customers, is similar to other transit agencies, and will usually allow staff enough time to accommodate other customers' trip requests.

ii. It is recommended that the late cancellation procedure be based on a points system for late cancellations and no-shows, with progressive actions taken as points accumulate, to discourage high levels of late cancellations and no-shows.

Other Canadian transit agencies have a similar late cancellation policy as the recommended procedure. Single points are given for each late cancellation, and two points are given for no-shows. Once customers accumulate certain thresholds of points within a period, progressive actions are taken. Actions range from information letters being sent to customers reminding them of the procedure, interviews with OC Transpo staff to discuss the procedure and confirm the customers' travel needs, to short and long term suspensions of service.

Reasons for customer cancellations and no-shows will be considered for a customer when actions are being reviewed. OC Transpo will not penalize customers who have had to cancel late for reasons beyond their control (illness, late medical appointments, weather, for example).

iii. It is recommended that the late cancellation procedure be applied to all trips, regardless of whether they were booked by subscription or by demand.

With the recommended procedure in effect, OC Transpo expects to see a reduction in the number of late cancellations and no-shows. With that outcome, space can be reallocated to accommodate other customers.

9. Other issues examined as part of the review

Trip prioritization

Currently, no Council policy exists that prioritizes trips based on the purpose for which a trip is to be made. A long-standing procedure does exist that allows customers who are only able to travel in a minibus or accessible taxi van to book their trips each day from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m., before bookings are opened to other customers.

Although 57 per cent of survey respondents agreed that Para Transpo should prioritize trips, with medical, work and shopping essentials being the priorities, feedback was

mixed. A common theme raised at the stakeholder consultations and in questionnaires was that a person's mental health and social inclusion is highly important. Some respondents felt that leisure activities are important in establishing a balanced lifestyle and in encouraging participation in the community, and thus should not be considered less of a priority than other essential categories.

Customers and other stakeholders were asked in a questionnaire if Para Transpo should maintain its current practice of allowing customers who are only able to use a minibus or an accessible taxi van to have priority to book trips before all other customers, 68 per cent agreed.

OC Transpo will continue the operational practice of allowing customers with mobility devices to book between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m., but will reallocate a small number of these spaces to ambulatory customers.

This change in operational practice will allow for a balance of scheduled trips for all customers and will create a more equitable service. This will be achieved through reclassifying some capacity, which is currently classified as van-only, to ambulatory-only. This will shift more available trips to customers who begin booking at 9:00 a.m. While this change will provide a more equitable service, it will also mean that customers who previously were rarely denied a trip when booking between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m., may now be refused trips.

Collection of unpaid fares

Customers who are not able to pay a fare upon pick-up are still provided the Para Transpo trip that they have booked, as OC Transpo does not want to deny service to those requiring accessible transportation that has already been scheduled. In cases where fares are not paid, customers are provided with a no-fare slip that contains details of the customer's trip and the amount of fare owed. It is expected that the customer pay for the outstanding fare at a later date.

OC Transpo continues to work with individual customers who have outstanding balances for unpaid trips. Recovering money, regardless of the amount owed, is part of the City's audit and finance responsibility, similar to other City services. OC Transpo is working closely with the City's Finance Department to review the collections policy as it

applies to outstanding fare payments for Para Transpo. This work will include the creation of an appropriate minimum threshold that can be used for collecting outstanding payments.

The new electronic fare payment system for Para Transpo (ParaPay) will be an account-based system where the customer will be responsible for maintaining payments through the new system. Once the ParaPay account-based fare payment system is operational, Para Transpo customers will be advised if they have an outstanding balance at the time of booking their trips.

Implementation of policies and processes

It will take approximately one year to implement all of the changes recommended within this report. OC Transpo aims to have all recommendations in place by the end of Q2 2017. However, several changes require less time to prepare for roll-out, and will be implemented sooner where possible. The table below outlines implementation timelines for each of the changes.

Table 1: Implementation Timelines

Eligibility and booking area	Estimated implementation dates:			
	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017
Expanding eligibility			X	
Eligibility Criteria			X	
Service delivery (including taxi coupon program)	X			
Application and assessment process			X	
Appeals process			X	
Application renewal				X
Trip cancellation		X		

Eligibility and booking area	Estimated implementation dates:			
	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017
Trip reallocation	X			

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Recommendations in this report apply to existing and potential Para Transpo customers in the rural parts of the City as well as in the urban areas.

CONSULTATION

Considerable effort was put toward public consultation for the review of Para Transpo eligibility policies and booking processes. The changes recommended in this report are a reflection of the feedback received throughout the various stages of consultation and this report highlights the stakeholder consultation efforts undertaken as part of the service standards review.

OC Transpo received feedback from customers and stakeholders leading up to the review and created a working group comprised of members of the City's Transit Commission to help guide the stakeholder consultation process. OC Transpo hosted a series of stakeholder consultations between August 24 and November 17, 2015, which involved seeking feedback from both customers and stakeholders, through in-person facilitated consultation sessions, online and hard-copy questionnaires, email and written letters, and through participation at the November 17, 2015, meeting of the City's Accessibility Advisory Committee. A report was presented for information at the February 17, 2016, meeting of the Transit Commission that detailed the level of effort and results of the stakeholder consultation.

Furthermore, following the development of draft recommendations, OC Transpo staff met with the Transit Commission working group and a focus group of customers and stakeholders to seek their feedback prior to finalizing the recommendations for presentation to the Transit Commission for approval. Overall, the recommendations were well received by both the Transit Commission working group and the focus group of customers and stakeholders.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE(S) COMMENTS

OC Transpo staff attended the November 17, 2015, meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) to present details of the service standards review and to seek member feedback. Members of the committee generally agreed with the review of Para Transpo service standards which they felt was much needed, and they appreciated the opportunity to receive the presentation and to provide comment. The staff presentation was received with no further direction. The AAC requested that they be kept informed of progress on the review.

Following the tabling of the Para Transpo Service Standards Review – Consultation Update report at the February 17, 2016, meeting of the Transit Commission, Transit Services staff attended the AAC meeting on February 23, 2016. Staff presented the results of the stakeholder consultations on the Para Transpo service standards review at the AAC meeting on February 23, 2016. Overall, AAC members appreciated the update and asked to be kept informed as the final recommendations were drafted and carried forward. Comments focused on the importance of creating a reassessment process that is well thought out and not cumbersome for customers.

Given the AAC's keen interest in the service standards review, staff included two representatives from the AAC in the focus group of customers and stakeholders that reviewed staff's recommendations prior to the report being finalized and presented for consideration to the Transit Commission.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the implementation of the Recommendations of this report.

The City Clerk and Solicitor Department (Legal Services) provides the following specific information to address the legal issues related to Recommendations.

External Services for Assessment of Applications

Section 5 of the report proposes that Transit Services proceed with the retention of an external, professional agency with healthcare expertise to review and assess applications of customers for Para Transpo service and provide its conclusions on an applicant's eligibility for Para Transpo services to Transit Services. It is noted that the City's *Purchasing By-law* would apply to this proposed procurement of external services, and as a result the retention of these external services would have to meet the requirements of the By-law.

Given that the report states that the cost for these proposed external services can be managed within OC Transpo's current budget, no approval by Council is required at this time. Should this change, as noted in the report, staff will be required to obtain Council approval for additional funding should it not be possible to absorb the costs of these external services within existing OC Transpo approved budget allocations in the future.

It is noted that the City's Supply Branch and Legal Services can provide assistance to ensure that an appropriate agreement is concluded with the qualified service provider in order to address the term and conditions of this provision of services. It is also observed that this agreement would put into place appropriate protection of privacy measures, practices, and procedures to ensure that the service provider and Transit Services Department comply with the requirements of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), in respect of the services to be undertaken by the external service provider as well as the internal management and administration of the service provider's recommendation within the Transit Services Department. Similarly, the requirements of the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA) may also apply in certain circumstances to the collection, use, and disclosure of personal health information by the external service provider. Any agreement and processes developed with the external provider will therefore need to account for this legislation as well, as required.

Appeals Process

Section 6 of the report proposes the establishment of a 3-member the Para Transpo Eligibility Appeals Panel (“Appeals Panel”), to review appeals by individuals whose applications for Para Transpo services have been refused, following an initial, internal review of the refusal by the Transit Services Department.

Transit Services staff has advised that the Appeals Panel will convene on an “as needed” basis, and that the appeal review and decision-making process will be held in confidence, due to the personal information contained in the application for services. The applicant will be involved the review process, which will also be held in confidence. The applicant’s participation in this process will ensure that they are provided with the appropriate rules of procedural fairness.

Delegated authority is being sought for the Transit Commission to appoint the General Manager, Transit Services, and the Medical Officer of Health or their designates to Appeals Panel. The third member of the Appeals Panel is a member of the public, as described in the report, to be appointed by Transit Services. In keeping with the existing practices and procedures for membership in Advisory Committees, the public member of the Appeals Panel will not be remunerated, and will be subject to applicable City policies, by-laws, Code of Conduct, similar in nature for this position. It is recommended that the term of appointment for the members of the Appeals Panel mirror what is currently in place for Advisory Committees of Council.

The appropriate processes and practices will need to be developed to support the administration and management of this Appeals Panel, in order to ensure fairness in the appeal process. Similarly, it is expected that the appropriate record-keeping processes will be developed by Transit Services to ensure that the decisions of the Appeals Panel are properly and securely documented, retained, and communicated to the affected parties, in writing, in keeping with the City’s *Records Retention and Disposition By-law*

2003-527, as amended and related Records Management Policies and Procedures), and to ensure the integrity of the administrative decision-making process. Protection of privacy practices and procedures for the Appeals Panel and for Transit Services staff involved in the administration and management of the appeals process will also be required to ensure compliance with MFIPPA, including the execution of a non-disclosure agreement by the public member of the Appeals Panel.

Transit Services staff have recommended that the decision of the proposed Appeals Panel is to be final. It should be noted that with any administrative decision, an applicant may apply to a court of competent jurisdiction for relief, appeal, or review of the Appeals Panel. The City would be in a position to represent itself in the appropriate forum.

The establishment of an appeals panel as proposed in this report is not clearly within the Terms of Reference of the Transit Commission. For instance the following sections of the Terms of Reference are relevant and related however do not grant such specific authority being sought:

1. Provide direction on, and ensure the implementation of, policies and programs with respect to the operation of Transit Services;
4. Pursue the following objectives in order to provide the best possible public transportation service for all transit users:
 - a. Attract an increasing number of customers to transit;
 - b. Determine and meet the transit needs of residents and visitors;

As a result, staff is seeking Council's general authority to grant such approval in Recommendation 2.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk implications.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The overall anticipated financial impact of the recommendations in this report is cost neutral and no additional funding is required.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The recommendations in this report consider AODA standards for categories of eligibility, eligibility application and independent appeals processes. This is consistent with the 2012 Council-approved Accessibility Policy, which identifies the exemption for OC Transpo but also establishes the provisions of the AODA as provincial best practices.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This report supports the following 2015-2018 Term of Council priorities:

Transportation and Mobility – Meet the current and future transportation needs of residents and visitors through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Transportation Master Plan, including ensuring the City's transit services are reliable and financially sustainable. Continued focus on improving mobility during the LRT implementation, and support for alternative transportation methods including cycling and walking, as well as transit.

Service Excellence – Improve client satisfaction with the delivery of municipal services by measurably strengthening the culture of service excellence at the City, by improving the efficiency of City operations, and by creating positive client experiences.

Governance, Planning and Decision Making – Achieve measureable improvement in residents' level of trust in how the City is governed and managed, apply a sustainability lens to decision-making, and create a governance model that compares well to best-in-class cities around the world.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – Stakeholders Invited to Participate in Consultations

DISPOSITION

Staff will begin work required to implement all policies within the specified timelines.

Document 1

Stakeholders Invited to Participate in Consultations

Community Non-Profit Organizations

- Association Integration Sociale D'Ottawa
- Autism Ontario
- Brain Injury Association Ottawa
- Canadian Council of the Blind
- Canadian Hearing Society
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Ottawa
- Centre for Cognitive Therapy
- Christian Horizons – East District
- Citizen Advocacy
- Parrainage Civique
- CNIB
- Cumberland Housing
- Down's Syndrome Association Ottawa
- Epilepsy Ottawa
- Good Companions Centre
- Innovative Community Support Services
- Jewish Family Services
- L'Arche Ottawa
- Live Work Play
- MS Society
- Ottawa Community Housing
- Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO)
- Ottawa Foyers Partage
- Ottawa-Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities
- Ottawa-Carleton Lifeskills Inc.
- Psychiatric Survivors Ottawa
- SALUS
- Service Coordination for Persons with Special Needs
- Services Co-ordination des Services
- Shepherds of Good Hope
- St. Stephen's Residences of Ottawa Inc.
- Stroke Survivors Association of Ottawa
- Tamir Foundation
- Total Communication Environment
- Vista Centre
- Y's Owl Maclure Co-Operative Centre

Community Support Services

- Abbotsford Senior Centre
- Aging in Place Buildings: 395 Somerset St., 160 Charlotte St., 445 Richmond Rd., 616 Kirkwood Ave., 1455 Clementine Blvd., 540 Thompson St., 800 St. Laurent Blvd., and 31 McEwen Ave.
- Carefor Health and Community Services
- Centre Séraphin-Marion d'Orléans
- Centre De service Guigues
- Centre Pauline-Charron (Vanier)
- Centretown Community Health Centre
- Churchill Seniors Centre
- Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre
- Gloucester Senior Adults' Centre
- Gloucester South Seniors Centre
- Heron Seniors Centre
- Kanata Seniors Centre
- Kanata Seniors Council
- La Patro d'Ottawa
- Lowertown Community Resource Centre
- Nepean Seniors Centre
- Old Forge
- Orléans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre
- Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
- Rendez-vous des aînés francophones d'Ottawa
- Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre
- Roy G. Hobbs Seniors Centre
- Rural Ottawa South Support Services
- Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
- Somerset West Community Health Centre
- South East Community Health Centre
- The Council on Aging of Ottawa
- Vanier Community Services Centre
- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre

Long Term Care Facilities

- Alta Vista Retirement
- Amelie Residence
- Amica at Westboro
- Amica Blackburn
- Andy Andras
Housing Co-op
- Beacon Heights
- Belcourt Residence
- Billingswood Manor
- Blackburn Lodge
- Bridlewood
- Bruyère Village
- Camilla Gardens
- Carlingview Manor
- Carleton Lodge
- Cartier Place
- Centre d'accueil
- Champlain
- Clementine Towers
- Crystal View Lodge
- Cumberland Lodge
- Daly Coop
- Duke of Devonshire
- Élisabeth Bruyère
Residence
- Elmwood Lodge
- Embassy West
- Retirement Centre
- Empress Kanata
- Extendicare Medex
- Fairfield Manor
- Forest Hill
- Garden Terrace
- Gladstone Terrace
- Glebe Centre
- Glebeview
Residence
- Golden Manor
- Governor's Walk
- Grace Manor
- Granite Ridge
- Green Valley
Terrace
- Hampton Lodge
- Heritage Residence
- Hillel Lodge
- Hunt Club Manor
- Jardin Royal
- Kanata Place
- Kanata Retirement
Residence
- Kingsway Arms
- Landmark Court
- Laurier Manor
- Longfields Manor
- Lord Landsdowne
- Lynwood Lodge
- Maplewood
Retirement
Community
- Marochel Manor
- McEwen Terrace
- Moments Manor
- Montfort Long Term
- Montfort Manor
- New Edinburgh
Square
- New Orchard Lodge
- Oakpark Retirement
- Ogilvie Villa
- Orléans Villa
- Osgoode Care
Centre
- Parklane Residence
- Peter D. Clark
- Portobello
Retirement
- Prince of Wales
Manor
- Presland Residence
- Promenade Seniors
Retirement

- Queenswood Villa
- Ravines Retirement Residence
- Red Oak Retirement
- Duford Residence
- Résidence Saint-Louis
- Springfield Residence
- Richmond Heights
- Rideau Gardens Retirement
- Rideau Place
- Rideau Terrace
- Robertson House
- Rochester Manor
- Rockcliffe Retirement
- Rockwood Residence
- Rosemount Centre
- Rothwell Heights Residence
- Sarsfield Colonial Home
- Sienna Senior Living
- Starwood Nursing Home
- Sterling Place
- Stonehaven
- St-Patrick's Home of Ottawa
- St-Vladimir Russian Residence
- Symphony Senior Living Kanata
- Tannenhof
- The Palisades
- The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre
- The Redwoods
- The Royale Kanata
- Thompson Terrace
- Thorncliffe Place
- Unitarian House
- Valley Stream
- Villa Marconi
- Waterford Retirement
- Watford House
- Wellington Towers
- West End Villa
- Westwood
- Windsor Park Retirement Living

Schools

- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Ottawa Catholic School Board
- Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l'Est ontarien
- Carleton University Accessible Services

Hospitals

- The Royal – Mental Health – Care & Research
- Élisabeth Bruyère Hospital
- Montfort Hospital
- Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre
- Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre
- Ottawa Rotary Home
- Queensway-Carleton Hospital

Retailers of Accessible Devices

- Motion Specialties
- Conval-Aid Inc.
- Canada Care Medical
- Ottawa Mobility Equipment Store