

MEMORANDUM

NTC-C 27-2025

Subject: Q2 2025 Commingled Transit Statistics

Date: August 26, 2025

To: Niagara Transit Commission

From: Emma Braniff, Supervisor, Specialty Services

This memorandum provides an update on the performance and progress of Niagara Transit Customer Experience (CX) Department's comingled specialty service for Q2 2025. Building on the outcomes and observations reported in Q1, this update highlights ridership trends, operational insights, and service developments specific to the second quarter of 2025. CX staff, supported by statistical analysis from Heather Talbot, Consultant, Corporate Services, continue to assess system performance in collaboration with Voyago, the contracted service provider.

The current contract outlined a 20% ridership growth target over the life of the agreement, using 2023 data as a baseline. Early results indicated positive momentum in both specialized and microtransit services. As the service progresses through its second year, continued monitoring and operational adjustments remain essential to achieving long-term growth targets. Niagara Transit remains committed to ensuring service availability, accessibility, and efficiency, aligned with the NTC's mission to deliver AODA-compliant (Accessibility for Ontarians, with Disabilities Act), barrier-free, accessible, and reliable transportation while upholding our core values of service excellence, customer focus, equity, and affordability.

During Q2 2025, the comingled service provided a total of 65,171 trips. This represents a 3% increase compared to the 2023 baseline data, though a 12.7% decrease relative to the same period in 2024. In comparison to Q1 2025, which realized a total of 70,856 trips, Q2 serviced approximately 435 fewer trips per week on average. While seasonality may be a factor, the presence of user trip denials suggests the demand exists.

Specialized transit ridership totaled 11,039 trips, representing a 4% increase over the RFP baseline and a 19.4% decrease compared to Q2 2024. However, due to the comingled integrated service, registered specialized customers were able to book 2,581 local Microtransit trips reflecting an increase in accessibility. Microtransit accounted for 51,551 trips, excluding the 2,581 provided to registered specialized transit users,

combined there were a total of 54,132 Microtransit trips booked which represents a 2% increase over the RFP data and an 11% reduction compared to Q2 2024. In comparison to Q1 2025, which realized a 9.3% growth over the RFP data, Q2 only realized a 2% growth over the RFP data.

The following table provides a summary of total ridership by service type, with comparisons to RFP baseline data and the 2024 comparator:

	2023 Q2 VIA, Regional Limousine, BTS/FAST	2024 Q2 VIA, Regional Limousine, BTS/FAST	2025 Q2 Voyago	% Change 2025 vs RFP Data	% Change 2025 vs 2024	Q2 Forecast – Year 2Contract 20% Growth
Micro	52,841	60,972	51,551	2%*	-11.2%	
+ Registered Specialized User on Micro*	NA	NA	2,581			
Specialized	10,639	13,698	11,039	4%*	-19.4%*	
Total Ridership	63,481	74,670	65,171	3%	-12.7%	76,177

* Growth percentages are based on Micro trips plus Registered Specialized users booking Microtransit trips

Ridership patterns varied across municipalities. Fort Erie recorded the highest trip volume of 24,406, followed by Niagara-on-the-Lake with 12,212. Compared to Q2 2024, trips to St. Catharines increased to 4,250 from 3,864, Wainfleet experienced a notable increase from 15 to 213 trips in Q2 2025. Port Colborne recorded a decrease from 7,592 trips in Q2 2024 to 3,976 trips in the current quarter which is a 6% increase over Q1 2025 ridership and will continue to be monitored.

April – June Ridership by Service Type and Municipality	Micro Service	Registered Specialized User <i>Local Micro Trip</i>	Specialized Service	Total 2025 Q2	Total 2024 Q2
Fort Erie	21,496	1,054	1,856	24,406	26,382
Grimsby	5,631	320	304	6,255	7,632

Lincoln	5,213	286	357	5,856	6,437
Niagara Falls	155	0	1,970	2,125	2,289
Niagara-on-the-Lake	11,743	182	287	12,212	14,352
Pelham	787	399	272	1,458	1,572
Port Colborne	3,209	335	432	3,976	7,592
St. Catharines	1,844	1	2,405	4,250	3,864
Thorold		0	1,187	1,187	1,730
Wainfleet	106	4	103	213	15
Welland	728	0	1,754	2,482	2,364
West Lincoln	639	0	76	715	368
DART Transfer Points		0	36	36	73
Grand Total	51,551	2,581	11,039	65,171	74,670

The significant increase in registered specialized customers utilizing microtransit services is a clear indicator that the commingled service delivery model is functioning as intended. The model was designed to enable all customers access to transit, providing more flexible and responsive mobility options without compromising the standards mandated under the AODA, where applicable. The noted increase in these trips, compared to the RFP baseline, confirms that this integration is actively bridging service gaps, especially in areas where local specialized service and fixed-routes transit are not currently available.

By leveraging microtransit, specialized customers are benefiting from a more immediate and geographically broad access to transit, reducing dependence on a dedicated fleet. This enhances system efficiency by optimizing vehicle use and balancing demand across service streams; contributing to service equity, cost containment, and operational sustainability.

Based on hourly customer trip denials, there are insufficient vehicles on the road to meet the current demand throughout the day. A total of 11,450 denials were recorded between April and June, 2025, which if serviced would increase ridership by 17%. Hourly analysis shows that denials steadily increase from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., decline through the early evening, and rise again after 8:00 p.m. This pattern highlights capacity constraints during both daytime peaks and late evening periods. As we enter the second year of the commingled contract, service planning was to include capacity for 20% growth, which would surpass the substantial ridership growth seen in the first

half of 2024. As outlined in the RFP, proponents were required to provide information on the number of vehicles necessary to accommodate current ridership levels, and a plan to support up to 20% ridership growth over the life of the contract. This growth should support a reduction in trip denials as service adjustments and additional resources are implemented. It should be noted that as capacity increases, increased availability should stimulate additional demand; thus reducing the overall number of trip denials.

Additionally, on-time performance (OTP) has improved quarter over quarter. Pickup OTP increased to 92.2% from 89.5%, while drop-off OTP improved to 93.2% from 91.2% from the previous quarter. This improvement reflects positively on service delivery and reliability; providing a better experience for customers. While the increase may be influenced by lower overall trip volumes, it nevertheless demonstrates the system's ability to maintain and enhance service standards amid operational pressures.

On May 12, 2025, Niagara Transit launched the new multimodal feature that provides seamless connection between Micro and fixed route services. This allows customers to travel efficiently, improves connectivity and simplifies the trip booking process for customers within a single platform; enhancing the overall transit experience in Niagara. In the 6 weeks following implementation, 77 multimodal trips were successfully completed. These represent trips that would previously have resulted in failed searches. The introduction of this feature supports a more connected and accessible transit network and is expected to contribute positively to overall service performance.

Certain municipalities, such as St. Catharines and Wainfleet, demonstrated ridership growth and improved access, reinforcing the model's responsiveness to community-specific needs. At the same time, the observed hourly denial trends continue to provide actionable insights for vehicle scheduling and capacity planning. By aligning vehicle deployment more closely with peak demand periods and expanding the fleet, Niagara Transit aims to alleviate constraints and better meet service demand across the region. This dual focus on targeted municipal growth and system-wide operational adjustments ensures that service delivery continues to evolve in a balanced and data-informed manner.

The commingled service continues to demonstrate stability following the initial year of transition and consolidation. With continued monitoring, capacity adjustments, and operational refinements, the system remains well positioned to advance toward the growth targets outlined in the contract while improving accessibility and mobility across the Niagara region.

In the coming quarter, Niagara Transit will continue to work closely with Voyago to address capacity constraints and improve service availability. A key focus will be on supporting the service provider in advancing service capacity and operational strategies to align with the contractual target of 20% ridership growth. Efforts will also include refining vehicle deployment strategies to better respond to peak demand periods, enhancing trip coordination, and promoting the multimodal feature to increase utilization. Additionally, ongoing monitoring of trip denials and customer feedback will guide adjustments to service delivery to ensure that accessibility standards and operational objectives are consistently met.

As noted in the Q1 report, the Niagara Transit CX department continues to concentrate efforts on enhancing service awareness in areas undergoing route adjustments, refining vehicle deployment to respond to peak accessibility demand, and strengthening trip sharing protocols to increase network efficiency. Ongoing training and recognition programs for front-line staff will reinforce our commitment to Employee Success while directly improving the customer experience over the second half of the year and will be reported on in the Q4 2025 report.

To further advance service development, Niagara Transit issued a new RFP on July 4, 2025. This RFP introduces an enhanced service delivery model designed to strengthen legislated requirements for availability of specialized service within the AODA. The model aims to expand specialized services to allow all registered users to move freely within their community, and to expand service for all users to reduce trip denials. The new procurement process reflects ongoing efforts to align service planning with evolving ridership patterns, community needs, and operational efficiencies identified through the performance of the commingled model.

In summary, Q2 2025 results reflect a service that continues to evolve in response to regional transit needs. With more than 65,000 trips delivered this quarter, the system remains well-positioned to achieve the contract's 20% growth target as capacity and service improvements continue to be implemented. The commingled model has proven effective in integrating specialized customers into the total service network contributing to service flexibility, efficiency, and improved access across the region. Niagara Transit remains committed to delivering an AODA-compliant, barrier-free, increasingly responsive, and financially sustainable transit system for the Niagara region, with a continued focus on growth, accessibility, and customer experience.

Respectfully submitted and signed by



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Appendices

Appendix 1 2025 Q2 Micro Dashboard – For Board and LAMs