



# **2024 OAKVILLE TRANSIT ANNUAL ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

*The following document is Oakville Transit's Accessibility Plan for 2024. Although it is a stand-alone document, it should be considered an integral part of the Town of Oakville's Annual Accessibility Update and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.*

## **Introduction**

The Town of Oakville, through Oakville Transit, has been providing transit services to the residents of Oakville since 1972. The Town is situated in Halton Region, approximately 30km west of Toronto. It is home to the main campus of Sheridan College and houses several national head offices. Oakville Transit provides conventional and specialized transit services to the Town's 231,000 residents. Oakville Transit's conventional transit services are provided within the urban boundaries of the Town for a total service area of 104 sq. km. These services connect with Burlington Transit to the west and Mississauga Transit to the east. As well, Oakville Transit connects with GO Transit's Lakeshore West Train service at four different stations; the Bronte GO Station, the Oakville GO Station, the Clarkson GO Station (Mississauga), and Appleby GO Station (Burlington). Connection with GO Transit bus services occurs at these same stations, with additional connections occurring at the park and ride terminals at Dundas/407 and Trafalgar/407. The Uptown Core Transit terminal at Trafalgar and Dundas is the only bus terminal owned and operated by the Town of Oakville, which also serves as a hub for conventional and Ride On Demand (ROD). Oakville Transit has a conventional fleet of 100 buses and provides service on twenty one fixed routes as well as eight school specials. Oakville Transit is also responsible for the operation of twenty three small capacity transit vehicles providing specialized and On Demand service.

Demand for conventional and specialized transit increased from 2022 compared to 2023. Specialized transit went from 75,828 boardings in 2022 to 109,765 boardings in 2023, an increase of 44.8%. Conventional transit boardings went from 2,446,572 boardings in 2022 to 3,955,896 in 2023, an increase of 61.7%. The increase in demand will generate additional opportunities for improved accessibility. This will be driven by both customer expectations and the ongoing requirements in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

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

**Oakville Transit is committed to:**

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

### **Internal Accessibility Planning Coordinators**

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

## **Conventional Services – 2023 service profile**

### **Type of Service**

Fixed Route – grid and local

### **Service Area**

Urban area, Town of Oakville

Connections are available to MiWay and Burlington Transit

### **Hours of Service**

Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

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

### **Annual Boarding**

3,955,869

### **Annual Revenue Service Hours**

218,095

### **Annual Revenue Kilometres**

4,709,278

### **Number of Routes**

23 regular routes

8 school specials

### **Types of Services**

Conventional

School specials

Late Night Service

Home to Hub (on demand)

### **Fleet Composition**

100 conventional buses

23 specialized buses

## **Fare Structure as of July 1, 2023**

Cash fare	\$4.00
Monthly passes	
• Adult	\$139.00
• Senior	Free
• Youth	Free
• Child	Free
PRESTO single ride	
• Adult	\$3.30
• Senior	Free
• Youth	Free
• Child	Free
GO co-fare	free

## **Specialized Services – 2023 service profile**

### **Type of Service**

Shared ride, door to door, pre-booked

### **Service Area**

Town of Oakville

Connections are available to Burlington Handi-Van and Peel TransHelp

### **Hours of Service**

Monday to Friday 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

Saturday 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

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

### **Types of Services**

Dedicated bus

Contracted taxi

### **Fleet Composition**

23 specialized low floor transit vehicles

### **Registrants**

3,517

### **Annual Eligible Passenger Trips**

95,249

### **Attendant/Companion Trips**

7,123

### **Annual Revenue Service Hours**

43,069

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Planning**

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

### **Barriers addressed in previous years**

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

- Implementation of free fares for Youth and Seniors in May 2023.
- Ongoing activities related to ensuring access and safety for residents to continue to use public transit services (conventional and specialized) through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Translation of COVID screening questions for care-A-van into top five languages spoken in Oakville in 2021.
- Introduction of a new transfer location between Oakville care-A-van and Burlington Handi Van at the Oakville Hospital.
- Increased level of service for the clearing of snow from bus stops from 48 hours to 24 hours after completion of snow fall, implemented in 2019.
- Launch of transit accessibility features on the Town's accessibility map.
- Introduction of Magnus Cards to assist residents with autism and cognitive disabilities to learn to take the bus.
- Specialized transit scheduling software which includes the following customer facing benefits:
  - Introduction of self-serve features including web, app and automated phone.
  - Expanded booking hours. Bookings can be made through these new platforms up until three hours before the end of the service day, including early morning, evenings, and weekends. These enhanced self-serve booking features provide greater flexibility to customers to be able to plan and book their transportation at their convenience.
- Introduction of an independent, medically certified contractor for the review of all specialized applications forms.
- Introduction of in person assessments to help inform the application process for specialized transit services. (Paused during the COVID pandemic).
- Introduction of an independent Appeal Committee for applicants who are found to be ineligible for specialized transit. Applicants can appeal the decision in writing within 60 days of the date on the denial letter.
- Outreach event to seniors' groups in 2018 and 2019 to educate/inform about Oakville Transit services. Direct hands-on familiarization exercise on board a bus.



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- Implementation of broadened eligibility criteria for January 1, 2017.
- Completion of update to service design standards and documentation of Standard Operating Procedures for care-A-van and other business units within the department.
- Introduction of automated stop announcements (audio and visual) on board conventional buses in 2015.
- Introduction of automated pre boarding announcements on board conventional buses in 2015.
- Introduction of real time bus tracking; customer information via text, app and web in 2015.
- Co-mingled Home to Hub service introduced to neighborhoods in North Oakville and Southeast Oakville; using the smaller specialized transit vehicles with capacity to provide co-mingled service to areas in North Oakville without conventional transit service.
- Service area expansion for care-A-van in 2015 to include the entire municipal boundary.
- Ongoing application of region-wide common eligibility and application form and appeal process
- Provided training on the requirements of the AODA and the Human Rights Code
- Conducted employee and volunteer training on:
  - Safe use of accessibility equipment
  - Acceptable modifications to procedures where temporary barriers exist or accessibility equipment on a vehicle fails
  - Emergency preparedness and response procedures that provide for the safety of persons with disabilities
- Added visual delineation at the platform curb edge at the Uptown Core Terminal.
- Finalized procedure on cycling of ramps by all transit operators during vehicle check.
- Implemented customer securement procedure for drivers on conventional accessible service.
- Implemented emergency evacuation procedures for drivers of conventional and care-A-van service.
- Continued to provide Easier Access Training and/or Ambassador Training to existing and newly hired bus operators.
  - 40 new hires trained each year
  - 75 drivers provided refresher training on average every 6 months – 1 year
- Priority and courtesy seating are available and clearly identified for persons with disabilities on all Oakville Transit conventional buses.
- Oakville Transit information is accessible on the website with a text-only option ([oakvilletransit.ca](http://oakvilletransit.ca)) and is linked to the Town of Oakville website ([oakville.ca](http://oakville.ca))

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

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

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

## **Plan to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility in 2024**

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

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

### **Actions planned for 2024**

Oakville Transit is compliant with all requirements under the AODA.

The list below highlights several actions planned in 2024 to support Oakville Transit's commitment to accessibility:

- New mobile app launched in 2024 for on-demand trip bookings. This new technology will allow residents to book and track their rides in real-time.
- New web portal and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) booking features available for care-A-van and on-demand customers to offer more options to book trips in addition to contacting our call centre.
- Expansion of Ride On-Demand zones – In 2024 the Ride On-Demand pilots in southeast and north Oakville will become permanent services allowing customers to travel curb to curb within a designated zone and to hubs in the same zone so they can connect with fixed route service. In addition, Oakville Transit will be expanding ROD service to two additional neighbourhoods currently serviced by Route 34 and Route 26.

- Completion of the 5 Year Business Plan to be presented to Council in November 2024 to help inform the future service initiatives.
- Initiation of an RFP and project to update real time digital signage at the Oakville GO Station, Sheridan College and Bronte GO Station, which will protect for Text to Speech capability.
- Route numbers will be added to all bus stop signs to help with information and wayfinding. At the time of this report, Routes 5A, 15, 18, 19, 20 and 28 have been completed to date.
- Begin development of a travel training program.
- Complete audit of the visual and audio next bus display on all conventional buses
- Continue to participate on the GTHA Specialized Transit Working Group to improve cross-boundary travel.
- Continue to participate on the CUTA Accessible Transit Committee
- Continue accessible customer service training for all new operators.
- Bus stop infrastructure improvements at bus stop locations, as well as installation of shelter amenities
- Continue integration of Oakville Transit bus stop infrastructure requirements with town and regional roadway improvement projects.

## **Consultation on this accessibility plan**

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

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

## **Communicating the plan**

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

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

Oakville Transit will monitor progress from the previous year's accessibility plan through an annual review that will list the previous objectives, actions taken and results. This document will be used for consultation with persons with disabilities in preparation to

## Appendix A

update the annual Transit Accessibility Plan. The review will be produced early in the year to enable consultations to be conducted, and recommendations formulated and costed in time for the preparation of Oakville Transit's budget for the next year.

# **Accessibility features on Oakville Transit vehicles**

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

### **Conventional Transit**

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

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

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

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

### **Specialized Transit**

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

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

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

The vehicle is immediately scheduled for repair.

# Identification of barriers to access to Oakville Transit for people with disabilities

## **Fleet Barriers**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

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

## **Snow removal barrier**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

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

## **Concrete infrastructure barrier**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will continue its bus stop infrastructure improvements in 2024, working towards greater accessibility and an overall improved customer experience. At this time 85% of stops have a hard surface.

## **Shelter barrier**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

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

## **Way-Finding barrier**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

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

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

### **Bus stop barrier**

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

#### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit adheres to its Council approved service standards which include guideline/warrants for placement of stops and shelters. Service design standards were last updated in 2017. These standards will be updated in 2024 with the development of the 5-year Business Plan.

### **Communication barriers**

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

#### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will continue to review all posted printed material to assist the needs of customers with vision loss. Oakville Transit also plans to replace outdated Variable Message Signs at the Oakville GO, Bronte GO and Sheridan College beginning in 2024.

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

#### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit continues to provide complete driving and accessible customer service training, including select components of the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) sponsored Transit Ambassador program to all new hires. Care-A-Van driving staff receive refresher training, including training on customer service, annually.

### **Policy barrier**

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

#### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit continues to work towards an ultimate solution to be able to have our taxi partners accept PRESTO payment. This barrier has somewhat been reduced with the implementation of free fares for seniors in May 2023.

## **Support person barrier**

Support person requirements vary across the GTHA region.

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit will be working with its partners across the GTHA to review policies and procedures related to support person requirements. Recent collaboration on the Fare and Service Integration within the broad GTHA will also be reviewing.

## **Road and sidewalk barriers**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

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

## **Bus stop signage barrier**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

Oakville Transit has been standardizing the placement of bus stop poles and signs at bus stop locations across the town since 2020 and will continue to do so in 2024.

## **Information barrier**

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

### **Strategy/Action**

There are app providers which allow for trip planning across the region, such as the Transit App.