Niagara-on-the-Lake – Town Council has approved a contract to provide residents and visitors with a local transit system.

The 3-year service contract, awarded to partners Niagara Classic Transport and Niagara Patient Transfer, is officially set to begin on April 2. Preliminary route maps and schedule information will soon be available on the Town’s web site. Transit brochures will be available at Town offices in early March. Print and radio advertising will also be carried out to promote the new system.

The transit schedule includes the continuation of the seasonal shuttle between Fort George and the Historic Old Town District, as well as a new year-round, conventional route linking the communities of Old Town, Virgil and Glendale.

“This is an exciting first step for our community,” stated Lord Mayor Dave Eke. “We heard repeatedly during the municipal election campaign that a public transit system was needed. Following thorough review by the Evaluation Team and Council, we have selected a provider and are now in a position to deliver on this commitment.”

By creating a public transit system, the Town is now eligible to apply for financial assistance through the province’s Dedicated Gas Tax Funds for Public Transportation Program. The Town currently provides roughly $165,000 in funding for existing shuttle services.

The current token system for taxi or community shuttle services will only be available until April 2 when the new system (with wheelchair access) begins. Residents who are unable to board the regular bus, and whose destination is within the defined service area of Old Town, Virgil and Glendale or within 175 meters of Regional Road 55/Taylor Road during the set service hours of 7:45 a.m. – 6:45 p.m., will be able to apply for subsidized curb-to-curb specialized transit service.
The 2012 estimated expenditure for the new transit service includes operational, administrative and communications costs, as well as start up costs for things such as signage and bicycle racks.

When projected revenue sources are factored in, including estimated gas tax funding, the additional cost to Town for this service is approximately $62,000 for the coming year.

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