



April 2006 Accessibility Improvements on Kingston Transit: Rider Satisfaction Report

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Dr.1; July 12-06

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Background

On April 3, 2006 Kingston Transit introduced *Easier Access* bus service on Route #1 as a 6 month trial. All buses on this route have a low floor making it easier for passengers to get on and off the bus. These buses have wider doors and wider aisles. This type of service can assist people who have limited mobility and use a cane or walker.

Kingston Transit also introduced "bus alerting cards" around this same time. The Bus Alerting cards were distributed through the CNIB, with training in their use provided by the CNIB.

The goals for the survey were:

- 1) To assess the efficacy of the two accessibility improvements – partially accessible buses on Route 1, and alert cards for people with vision disabilities; and
- 2) To collect ideas for improving the existing accessibility improvements, and for expanding the level of accessibility on Kingston Transit.

Method

Kingston Transit, in conjunction with the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, began discussions for this research in April 2006. Kingston Access Services (Access Bus) provided advice on the survey development and assisted with information-sharing via its drivers. CNIB mailed surveys to 48 of its clients in late May. The survey was available to anyone in all Route 1 buses in May. All questions, including personal identity and contact information, were optional.

Communications about the survey included the following:

- Reference in an April 5-06 article with photo, on Page 2 of the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, "Public transit gets helping Hands: Woman's vision better busing being realized".
- Posters in Route 1 buses
- A section in the City of Kingston weekly ad in *Kingston This Week*
- Local radio advertising, including an interview on *CFLY-FM* with Barry Kaplan – Accessibility Co-ordinator.
- Emails messages sent on May 17 from Barry Kaplan to approximately 200 people with disabilities, or who have expressed an interest in accessibility issues.

Numerical roll-ups of responses to several survey questions are provided below. Actual comments from riders are found in the last two sections of this report.

Route #1 Survey: Summary Information

Number of completed surveys or related correspondence (as of July 12-06): 15

Assistive-Device User: 6

Able-Bodied: 9

Does our Easier Access service make it easier for you to use Kingston Transit?

- Yes: 10
- No: 3

Were you satisfied with the level of assistance provided by the bus driver today?

- Yes: 8
- No: 1

Were other riders on the bus considerate of your needs today?

- Yes: 6
- No: 1

How did you hear about the Easier Access Service and/or the Bus Alerting cards?

- Posters: 6
- Word of mouth: 5
- On the bus information: 5
- News report: 1

What other routes would you like to see accessible?¹

- Specific route: Route 4 (2 mentions). Route 12 (2 mentions). All other suggestions received no more than one mention.
- All routes: 1

¹ Combining responses from the CNIB and Route 1 surveys, “All routes” received 3 mentions; “Route 2” received 3 mentions.

Other comments

- More frequent service / longer hours of operation: 6
- More driver assistance for riders: 2
- Drivers are good: 2
- All other comments received no more than one mention.

CNIB Survey: Summary Information

Number of completed surveys or related correspondence (as of July 12-06): 15
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How well did this work for you?

- Worked well: 9
- Problems exist: 4

Were you satisfied with the level of assistance provided by the bus driver today?

- Yes: 10
- No: 0

Were other riders on the bus considerate of your needs today?

- Yes: 10
- No: 0

How did you hear about the Easier Access Service and/or the Bus Alerting cards?

- CNIB: 8
- Newspaper ad: 2
- Posters: 1
- Community organization: 1

What other routes would you like to see accessible?²

- Specific route: Route 2 (2 mentions). All other suggestions received no more than one mention.
- All routes: 2

Other comments³

- Wait for riders to be seated: 3
- Individual route maps: 2 mentions
- All other comments received no more than one mention.

² Combining responses from the CNIB and Route 1 surveys, “All routes” received 3 mentions; “Route 2” received 3 mentions.

³ Combining responses from the CNIB and Route 1 surveys, “wait for riders to be seated” received 4 mentions.

Route #1 Survey: Comments

What other routes would you like to see accessible?

- Wal-Mart via Princess to Riocan.
- Route 4 (two mentions)
- Route 6
- Route 2
- Route 3
- Route 12 (two mentions)
- All routes!!

Other comments

- More frequent service.
- Longer hours on the weekends. I would gladly pay \$3.00 or more if buses ran till p on weekends and midnight on weekdays.
- More buses on Sunday. Once an hour service is not enough.
- We need Sunday service to improve.
- People work and some of us can't get to (?)
- Have them run later, especially on Saturday night.
- I wish some bus drivers would help the elderly off the bus and their shopping cart.
- I had my shopping cart. When I got up, he jerked the bus and I almost fell.
- Service varies depending on the driver.
- Any passenger getting on or off with groceries, parcels, anything cumbersome, should have the lift lowered. As the lift service is never used during the colder months, will this now change?
- Please do not lurch forward until we are seated. I have nearly fallen more than once.
- Drivers are unable to lower buses in the winter. Can you solve this problem?
- People got on the bus before I could get off. The driver said I should leave by the back exit. I'm going to be more vocal if passengers charge onto the bus when I'm trying to get off.
- The bus driver should wait until a person is seated before pulling away from the bus stop.
- Thanks. By and large, the service offered is so far fairly good. Drivers (most) okay too.
- The bus drivers are very helpful. They have pulled me up the stairs many times.
- Some back exit doors have vertical handles. Sloping handles at front of bus is safer.
- Many disabilities are invisible – bus drivers should get sensitivity training.

- The low floor helps those short in stature also (including children).
- The new configuration of bus routes this year have been a huge improvement. I'm looking forward to more changes in the future, and your printing an error-free "Riders Guide" in Sep.-06.
- Think about posting another survey regarding ridership & feedback on your service.

CNIB Survey: Comments

How well did this work for you?

- Very well with bus driver assistance.
- Very well. Pleased with bus driver assistance.
- Worked well.
- Great. The drivers were nice.
- Drivers took note, were careful to let me off when I requested.
- They will be a great help as my eyes get worse.
- No problem, but the drivers knew me and were aware of my destination.
- Fine, because only one bus was involved.
- I carry the cards in my purse.

- There are two buses a few minutes apart. I always have to ask the driver if his/her bus is going to Calvin Park. I hoped the card would let the first bus go by without stopping, but I learned there are two #2's so the first one stops for me unnecessarily.
- No one even bothered to phone me from the CNIB to inform me of the meeting about them.
- I don't use the cards; I just have to ask someone.
- I am not using the bus hailing kit. I don't find it a problem to ask for what I need and if no one answers I know how to get pissed off enough to get someone to tell me what bus is there or get whatever information I need. Besides, I have enough things to carry around and I sure as heck don't need something else.

What could we do to improve our new Easier Access bus service, or the Bus Alerting cards (format, distribution, training, etc.)?

- Make sure the bus does not start before you are seated. I fell flat on my back and two passengers helped me up. The bus started and went around a corner before I had time to sit down.
- The service is excellent and a blessing for all of us who have to depend on them. Thank you.
- If passenger mentions destination, it would be helpful if driver would announce it on arrival there.
- Everything is fine.

What other routes would you like to see accessible?

- I would like to be able to go to the Frontenac Mall and Riocan Centre, but to date have not had the time to spend learning their numbers, times, and routes. I hope to soon.
- Near Kingsdale Chateau.

- We are looking forward to the bus coming into Greenwood Park (Abbey Rose Dr.) as this will eliminate the dangerous situation in winter on Hwy.15.
- 7
- 10
- 2 – Could easily go one block over to Francis Street to serve the Seniors Centre.
- I am one of many seniors who welcome a bus stop at the Senior's Association on Francis Street.
- 3
- Eventually, all the routes.
- Ideally, all routes (but that may not be financially feasible). Initially, the most likely routes that persons with disabilities would use should be targeted.

Other comments

- Install a protected bus-stop in front of the children's' nursery between 722 and 766 John Counter Blvd.
- Using a cane is easier in the wider aisle or entrance of the Route 1 buses.
- Thank you. I'll help any way I can.
- At the meeting (at the CNIB), two guys asked that we be given a schedule to tell us what number for each route. They told us they would look into it.
- Would rather take the bus mainly because of the friendly people and helpful bus drivers.
- The bus service has been outstanding over the years. The drivers went out of their way to help in any way possible. Congratulations and thank you.
- Route numbers on the outside REAR of the bus would allow potential passengers to know if they just missed their bus.
- Produce separate maps for each route. The all-in-one Riders Guide is too difficult for seniors and sight-impaired people to follow.
- Maps of individual routes would help me, and likely, others who use CCTV to read. The large map in the bus folder has all the routes marked in colour, but on the CCTV, all is black & white so each route is not discernable from the other.
- Kingston needs to provide vehicles that are accessible to a broad range of impairments on all bus routes.

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