

# Metrobus Accessibility Committee Terms of Reference

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## 1. General Information

Reporting to: St. John's Transportation Commission

Start date: October 1, 2024

Meeting frequency: As required by work schedule

Lead Staff: Accessibility Lead

Other staff: General Manager, Manager of Accessible Transit Services

Commission Champion: TBD

## 2. Purpose

The Metrobus Accessibility Committee will focus on enhancing accessible transit for the Metrobus and GoBus services, and to support the implementation of transit related goals and actions identified in the [City of St. John's 2024-2026 Accessibility Plan](#).

The Committee will ensure the perspective of individuals with disabilities is reflected in the actions undertaken by Metrobus to address accessibility barriers in public transit.

This committee supports Metrobus' strategic goals as follows:

**Increase Customer Focus** – The Committee will ensure decision-making related to accessibility and inclusion reflects the voices of customers with disabilities. The Committee will work to implement solutions that improve the rider experience for all transit customers with disabilities.

**Create a Transit Supportive Culture** – The Committee will work to implement amenities and services that encourage riders with disabilities to use public transit as they engage with their communities. By removing barriers and enhancing accessibility, customers with disabilities will have more opportunities to travel independently and spontaneously throughout the city.

**Growth through Innovation** – The Committee will explore options to introduce new service delivery models, technologies, policies, and other services that facilitate greater accessibility and encourage more people with disabilities to use public transit.

**Environmental Protection and Sustainability** – The Committee, through its work to enhance accessibility on conventional transit, will create more opportunities for individuals with disabilities to choose conventional over either paratransit (where possible) or a single vehicle, which will help create a more sustainable transportation system.

**Increase Operational Efficiency** – The Committee will operate under a continuous improvement model and explore ways of doing things more efficiently and effectively, seeking funding opportunities and partnerships where appropriate.

### 3. Deliverables and Considerations

The Committee will:

- i) be consulted on matters that affect customers with disabilities, such as new accessibility initiatives and new/changing operational guidelines and policies.
- ii) provide recommendations to the Commission to inform decision-making.
- iii) liaise with the City’s Inclusion Advisory Committee as well as the disability community at large on matters of mutual interest.
- iv) participate in the evaluation of goals and actions taken to address accessibility barriers. Annual reviews will be conducted, and progress will be reported to the Commission and City Council.

### 4. Membership and Composition

The Committee will be comprised of 8 total members from the following stakeholder groups:

#### 1. Public Members (4)

The Committee will have no more than four (4) residents serving as public members who are individuals with disabilities and riders of public transit (Metrobus and/or GoBus). Public members are volunteers and will receive no compensation for participation. Preference will be given to residents of St. John’s.

#### 2. Metrobus Staff (3)

- Accessibility Lead
- Manager, Accessible Transit Services
- General Manager

The Accessibility Lead staff person will chair the Committee. Additional staff may be required for specific pieces of work.

### **3. Commission Champion (1)**

***Subcommittees:** When deemed necessary, the Committee may create a working group to deal with specific issues or deliverables. Working groups must have at least one member from the larger Committee. Working groups shall meet independently, reporting to the Committee on specified meeting dates, or as deemed necessary.*

#### **4.1 Length of Term**

Public Members shall be appointed for two years. If necessary, a public member may be asked to serve an additional year to ensure the continuity and expertise of the Committee. If a public member is appointed to fill a vacancy, the partial term shall not count towards the maximum length of service for the member. Public members shall not serve for more than three consecutive years.

Exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:

- An insufficient number of applications have been received.
- A particular area of expertise is required and there are no other suitable replacements.
- The committee would suffer from a lack of continuity (i.e. more than half of all members are replaced at once).

Staff and Commission representatives shall be reviewed every three years.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Roles**

Committee roles include:

- Supporting the implementation of the Committee's defined purpose
- Providing user-based expertise
- Providing a cross disability perspective
- Working within given resources

#### **Public Members**

Public members are expected to advise the Commission on how best to deliver on the purpose of the Committee. Members will apply personal skills, knowledge and experience in carrying out functions commensurate with the defined purpose of the Committee roles.

### **Metrobus Staff**

- The **Accessibility Lead** will chair the Committee and be responsible to:
  - compile the agenda, required documentation, and reporting
  - request additional staff support/attendance at meetings as needed
  - lead the Committee in establishing timelines, deadlines, and the creation of sub-committees where necessary.
  - Ensure the Committee is informed about relevant policy, procedure and available resources in reference to specific agenda items and provide procedural and/or technical advice to assist the Committee where appropriate.
- The **Manager, Accessible Transit Services** will:
  - liaise with the paratransit service providers on matters of importance to the paratransit service.
  - liaise with the City's Inclusion Advisory Committee to share information and receive feedback on transit related accessibility matters.
  - Ensure the committee is informed about relevant policy, procedure and available resources in reference to paratransit-specific agenda items.
- The **General Manager** will:
  - oversee the Committee's operation to ensure the work aligns with the strategic goals of Metrobus.
  - liaise with all Metrobus departments to ensure accessibility is considered in everyday operations.
  - incorporate feedback from the Committee into ongoing projects and initiatives.

### **Commission Champion**

The Commission Champion will liaise with the Commission to share input from the Committee and ensure accessibility is considered in decision-making processes.

## **5.2 Shared Responsibilities**

### **Conduct**

Members shall strive to serve the public interest by upholding Federal, Provincial and Municipal laws and policies. Committee members are to be transparent in their duties to promote public confidence. Members are to respect the rights and opinions of other Committee members.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Active participation in Committee meetings is expected of all members. “Active participation” may refer to both meeting attendance and/or engagement. Members who do not actively participate in more than 3 consecutive meetings without justified absence may be retired from the Committee at the discretion of the Commission.

Accommodations to attend and participate in meetings may be requested to overcome accessibility barriers.

Committee members who wish to request a leave of absence for an extended period of time (3+ months) may submit such a request to the Commission. Previously submitted applications may be used to fill temporary vacancies created by approved leaves of absence.

## **6. Reporting**

The Committee shall report to the St. John’s Transportation Commission (SJTC).

Agendas and any accompanying materials will be prepared by the Chair and circulated by e-mail one week prior to all meetings. Members are expected to review all materials prior to meetings. Alternate formats will be made available upon request.

Public members may submit items for the agenda prior to one week before a meeting.

Summary notes from each meeting will be shared with the committee for review.

When new initiatives are being considered by the Committee, details about the accessibility considerations will be reported to the Commission along with any recommendations.

## **7. Recruitment and Selection**

### **7.1 Recruitment, Vacancies and Applications**

When new members are required a “Notice of Vacancy” will be prepared by the lead staff and distributed to transit riders through various communication channels. This notice will

include general information regarding the committee’s purpose, its terms of reference and application form.

A vacancy occurs when a member resigns, vacates a position or when their resignation is requested by the Commission. Vacancies may occur at the date of resignation, the date the member ceases to be qualified or the date the Committee Chair declares the position vacant due to lack of attendance or active participation.

All applicants must complete an Application Form which may be obtained from Metrobus. Applications will be made available in alternate format upon request. Completed applications may be submitted by any of the following methods:

E-mail: [accessibility@metrobus.com](mailto:accessibility@metrobus.com)  
Phone: 709-570-2140  
Mail/in person: 25 Messenger Drive, St. John’s, A1B 0H6

## **7.2 Eligibility and Selection**

### **Eligibility**

Appointment of Public Members to the Committee will be made providing adherence with the following eligibility requirements:

1. Resident of St. John’s \*
2. Identify as an individual with disability(ies)
3. Current/recent (within 1-2 years) user of public transit – Metrobus and/or GoBus.

\* Exceptions may be made by the selecting body given the regional scope of the service.

### **Selection Criteria**

In addition to the above eligibility requirements, an applicant’s specific skills and experience will be important factors in Committee selection. Applicants with demonstrated participation in groups or initiatives whose goals are relevant to the Committee’s purpose will be preferred.

Some other considerations pertaining to general selection criteria include:

- past professional and volunteer experience,
- ability to perform required tasks, and
- complementary skills and competencies.

Consideration will also be given to creating a committee whose members bring diversity and a variety of disability perspectives.

Those who are selected to serve on the Committee will be notified by e-mail.

### **Commitment to Equity and Inclusiveness**

The St. John’s Transportation Commission is strongly committed to equity and inclusiveness. In selecting members, the Commission will aim to design processes that are transparent, accessible, free of discrimination and seek to remove barriers for disadvantaged groups.

## **8. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

The St. John’s Transportation Commission recognizes that engagement with transit riders and area residents is an essential component of an effective transportation system. Where appropriate, the Committee will work to gather perspectives and input from transit customers and the broader community on matters of mutual interest.

## **9. OTHER GOVERNANCE**

### **9.1 Review of Terms**

The terms of reference for the Committee will be reviewed every two years to ensure that the operations and function of the committee are still aligned with its defined purpose. Through this review process amendments to the Committee will be proposed and adjustments made to the Terms of Reference as required.

### **9.2 Meetings and Schedules**

The Committee will meet at least twice a year, and as often as required to ensure the successful implementation of the transit-related actions described in the *City of St. John’s Accessibility Plan 2024-2026*. The exact frequency of meetings will be determined by the Chair. The Commission will be respectful of members’ time and commitment when scheduling meetings.

Unless otherwise specified committee meetings shall be held at Metrobus Depot (25 Messenger Drive) and shall be closed to the public. Meetings will take place during regular weekday office hours.

### **9.3 Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality**

### **Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest refers to situations in which personal, occupational, or financial considerations may affect or appear to affect the objectivity or fairness of decisions related to the committee activities. A conflict of interest may be real, potential, or perceived in nature. Conflict of Interest may occur when a committee member participates in discussion or decision-making about a matter which may financially benefit that Member or a member of his/her family, or someone with whom the committee member has a close personal relationship, directly or indirectly, regardless of the size of the benefit.

In cases where the Committee agenda or discussions present a conflict of interest for a member, that member is required to declare such conflict; to abstain from discussion; and leave the meeting room until the agenda item has been dealt with by the Committee.

### **Confidentiality**

All members are required to refrain from the use or transmission of any confidential or privileged information while serving with the Metrobus Accessibility Committee. Any sensitive or private information obtained as a committee member must be kept in confidence and not shared with any unauthorized persons.