



# **Wheelchair Accessible Transportation by Taxi and Inter-city Bus in British Columbia: Update 2017**





# CONTENTS

- Executive Summary .....1
- Introduction .....3
- Report Scope and Focus.....4**
- 1. Increases in Accessible Taxi Supply.....6**
- 2. Board Actions and Initiatives .....8**
  - Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Policy .....8
  - Service Standards and Accessibility Policy .....8
  - Accessible Service Plans ..... 10
  - Service Priority and Minimum Operating Requirements ..... 10
  - Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights ..... 11
  - Flip Seat Policy Review..... 12
  - Vehicle Identification..... 14
  - Locating Used WATs ..... 15
  - Soft Meters and “Talking Meter” Requirement..... 15
  - Ongoing Actions ..... 16
- 3. Stakeholder Initiatives and Actions..... 17**
  - Training..... 17
    - Taxi Company Initiatives Since 2012..... 17
    - TaxiHost Pro: Serving Customers with Disabilities..... 18
    - HandyDART in Metro Vancouver..... 19
    - In Review..... 20
  - Parking Innovations ..... 21

<b>4. Other Developments.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Accessibility 2024.....	22
Technology for Accessibility .....	22
Guide Dogs and Service Dogs.....	23
Future of Accessibility .....	25
<b>5. Enhancing the Accessibility of Taxis .....</b>	<b>26</b>
Enhancements for Taxi Applications.....	26
Accessible Taxis in Rural Communities.....	27
Use of Technology .....	29
Toward a Provincial Framework for Taxi Driver Accessibility Training .....	29
Accessibility and Future Regulatory Change.....	31
<b>6. Accessibility of Inter-City Buses .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>35</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report on wheelchair accessible transportation in BC (Update 2017) provides stakeholders with information and data on recent advances in wheelchair accessible transportation by the Passenger Transportation Board (PT Board), industry and others. We also note the current opportunities and challenges we see for the accessibility of commercial passenger transportation going forward.

Five years ago, the PT Board published a report on wheelchair accessible transportation in BC. Update 2017 follows up on the 5 actions the PT Board committed to in 2012 as well as additional steps the PT Board has implemented to further accessible transportation. We report on initiatives undertaken by stakeholders. Most information and findings in Update 2017 relate to wheelchair accessible taxis. However, some relate to services that people with disabilities receive whether or not they require a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Accessibility of inter-city buses is discussed briefly.

The basic story is that the BC population continues to grow and both the proportion of older people and the disabilities rates continue to increase. In five years, population grew about 6% and the overall number of taxis increased 21%. Throughout the Province, the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles increased by 51%. To show where these vehicles are available, we are introducing community-based statistics that identify the numbers of wheelchair accessible taxis available in BC communities.

The report sets out policy enhancements that promote the expanded use of wheelchair accessible taxis in more locations and that ensure they are available for use by people with disabilities on a priority basis around the clock. As well, it notes other new policies including one to allow the use of taxi soft meters with a requirement that a talking meter option is integrated.

The 2012 report identified the lack of availability of hands-on training for drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis. Multiple stakeholder groups took quick and effective action in Metro Vancouver to address this critical issue. There is still work to be done to ensure consistency in service levels received by persons with disabilities. We see an opportunity for stakeholders to leverage best practices that have been achieved and bring the region's service level up to a consistent standard that ensures all persons with disabilities receive appropriate service. We also see a need to expand training opportunities throughout the Province.

In the past five years, some taxi companies in the province have been serving HandyDART customers in increasingly large numbers (with both conventional and wheelchair accessible vehicles). In Metro Vancouver, where taxis provide the most HandyDART trips, future taxi trip numbers have also been capped by TransLink. There are two reasons. First, peak times for taxis conflict with times when HandyDART most needs taxis for overflow work. Second, TransLink has experienced limits in its ability to obtain the level of service delivery its customers need across the region—limits that keep

it from adding more taxi trips. Rather than leave it to TransLink to set a standard for the companies it uses, we see this as a reason to seek training and service improvements that benefit the region with potential spillover effects to other parts of the province.

In the past 5 years, the Province initiated its Accessible 2024 action plan and enacted a new Guide Dog and Service Dog Act. The introduction of ridesharing in other Canadian jurisdictions—and the potential introduction in BC—raises questions about implications for wheelchair accessible taxis and broader accessible service issues.

Bus companies that operate between two or more provinces or territories are subject to a Federal voluntary code of practice that aims to make these companies accessible to persons with disabilities. Although companies operating within BC are not subject to this code, a 2015 survey indicated that 4 of the 7 operators who serve the general public provide service for people with disabilities; of these, 2 have wheelchair accessible buses.

Update 2017 highlights the collective progress that has been made since 2012. We thank all stakeholders for contributing to the advances that have been realized. In particular, we acknowledge leaders within the industry who have stepped up to enhance the accessibility of the transportation services their companies and industry provide.

In Update 2017, Chapter 5 looks ahead to identify areas for further improvement. In this Chapter, we encourage stakeholders across the province to work together to increase the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis in smaller communities, improve response times for people who rely on wheelchair accessible taxis, start to develop a driver training framework for the province and include people with disabilities in the design and testing of taxi apps. If the Provincial Government changes the regulatory framework for taxis to allow ridesharing in BC, we urge it to include provisions that enhance accessible transportation options across the province.

Going forward, the Board will continue to take advantage of new opportunities to improve the accessibility and availability of taxis, inter-city buses and other vehicles we regulate.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Passenger Transportation Board (PT Board) initiated a review of commercial wheelchair accessible transportation that it regulates. These include taxis, limousines and small shuttles, called “passenger directed vehicles” and inter-city or scheduled buses. The PT Board sought to better understand accessibility issues and share what was learned. We set out to reflect the perspectives of both the people who use commercial transportation services and the businesses that provide it. We led a broad consultation and information-gathering effort that culminated in a report the PT Board published in January 2012, *Wheelchair Accessible Transportation by Taxi and Inter-city Bus in British Columbia* (the [2012 Report](#)).

The 2012 Report committed the PT Board to take five actions that have since been implemented. (See Appendix A, Table 2.) It also suggested five initiatives stakeholders could take to help improve accessible transportation services. (See Appendix A, Table 3.) Since we published the report, the PT Board and other stakeholders have made changes that have significantly expanded and enhanced the accessibility of commercial transportation services in the province.

We are publishing Update 2017 to celebrate the accomplishments of the past five years and update information in the original report. Accomplishments include increases in the number of wheelchair accessible taxis and improvements in driver training. Further, we are using this report to identify challenges and opportunities that are upon us or on the horizon. As technologies and business models change, Update 2017 builds on past experiences and recent discussion with stakeholders to outline areas for making new improvements in training, the latest apps and the licensing process. The result is three commitments by the Board and five suggestions for others with a stake in enhancing the accessibility of transportation services. Overall, we have prepared Update 2017 as another step in the continual effort to advance the safety and availability of accessible transportation as well as the overall satisfaction of individuals who use and rely on those services.

Update 2017 is not an exhaustive review of all issues related to accessible transportation. It is an update that adds to our collective understanding of wheelchair accessible transportation and related accessibility matters. We thank all persons who contributed to the work that went into the preparation of this update – participants whom we acknowledge in Appendix B.



## REPORT SCOPE AND FOCUS

### Service Providers

The Passenger Transportation Board (PT Board) regulates commercial passenger transportation services such as taxis, limousines, small shuttles and inter-city buses. For taxis, limousines and small shuttles, the PT Board regulates the supply of vehicles. To increase supply, the PT Board must consider that: there is a public need for the service; the applicant is fit and proper and capable of providing the service; and approving the application will promote sound economic conditions in the passenger transportation industry in BC.

This update brings focus to passenger transportation services (taxis in particular) used by persons with disabilities. Briefly, we also discuss commercial inter-city buses.

We acknowledge that persons with disabilities, particularly mobility issues, may use or seek accessible limousine or shuttle services. However, Update 2017 does not address the accessibility of these types of services directly. Providers of such services are encouraged to apply information in this document to enhance the accessibility of services they provide.

### 2012 Report

The [2012 Report](#) was published with the following aims:

1. To improve the PT Board's understanding of the transportation needs of people with mobility challenges
2. To improve the PT Board's understanding of vehicles, services and strategies for meeting those needs
3. To assess marketplace opportunities, as well as the challenges, for enhancing or expanding wheelchair accessible services





## Update 2017

Aims in the 2012 Report continue to guide our work on Update 2017 and the focus remains on wheelchair accessible taxis. Update 2017 first notes progress on matters reported in the 2012 Report. This includes:

1. Increases in accessible taxi supply (Chapter 1)
2. Enhancements of PT Board policies, programs and initiatives (Chapter 2)
3. Understanding the accessibility of ICBs (Chapter 6)

Update 2017 also reports on some of the progress that other accessibility stakeholders have made on their own initiative. In particular, see Chapter 3 with respect to training issues and parking for taxis. These actions by the PT Board and accessibility stakeholders (from 2012 to present) are summarized in Appendix A. In addition, Chapter 4 (Other Developments) notes external changes that present opportunities and challenges for the future of accessibility.

Looking ahead, Chapter 5 (Enhancing the Accessibility of Taxis) identifies areas for further improvement and introduces two new commitments made by the PT Board and five suggestions for other stakeholders.

## 1. INCREASES IN ACCESSIBLE TAXI SUPPLY

From 2012 to 2017, the population of BC grew about 6%. The percentage of people who are older is also increasing. Disability rates continue to increase and the highest rates relate to mobility (see Appendix C, “General Statistics”).

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**Between 2012 and 2017, taxi supply has increased 21% in 18 cities and towns across the Province.**

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In 2012, we reported on wheelchair accessible taxis in 18 selected cities and towns – including the most populated urban areas. In these 18 cities and towns, the total number of taxis approved by the Passenger Transportation Board (PT Board) increased by 21% to 2,902 taxis. Of all the taxis in these areas, the total number designated as wheelchair accessible vehicles increased 51% to 450. (See Appendix D, Table 5.)

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**Wheelchair accessible taxis increased 51% in five years.**

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Starting with this Update 2017, we are reporting wheelchair accessible taxi statistics, where available, for all communities (see Appendix E). In summary, 3,270 taxis are approved to operate in the province and of these, 461 (14%) are wheelchair accessible taxis. The majority of the vehicles are in Metro Vancouver; that is, 1,952 taxis which include 370 (19%) approved as wheelchair accessible taxis (see Appendix E, Tables 6 and 9).

Our statistics now include taxis approved and active or operating. Tracking “active taxis” gives us a better of picture of how many wheelchair accessible taxis are actually available for service. It will



tell us if an operator has voluntarily put on wheelchair accessible taxis and also let us know if an operator is not using all of its wheelchair accessible taxis.

Why are the numbers different? Data printouts are specific to a point in time. They do not capture the time between “Board approval” and “vehicles activated”. For example, as of May 5, 2017, 461 wheelchair accessible taxis were approved to operate in BC; however, 421 were actually operating (13% of approved taxis). Generally, the PT Board gives operators six months to get its vehicles on the road.

When the Board makes a decision that affects the number of taxis that are authorized in an area, it is making a decision on the maximum number of taxis. It may establish a requirement that a number of those vehicles are wheelchair accessible taxis. This ensures that a minimum number of accessible taxis are available, but there is no limit on how many of a taxi company’s authorized vehicles can be accessible taxis.

Any wheelchair accessible taxis that companies operate are dual use. This means a wheelchair accessible taxi can be used to provide trips for passengers either with or without a wheelchair. Wheelchair user trips are usually a small percentage of the trips with wheelchair accessible taxis. Thus, Board decisions on additional vehicles focus on overall public need.

Operators may voluntarily convert any number of “conventional” taxis to wheelchair accessible taxis. No Board approval is required and a conversion can take place immediately. (The reverse is not possible – an approved wheelchair accessible taxi cannot be converted to a conventional taxi without Board approval.)

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**Taxi companies in Burnaby, Duncan, Nanaimo, Fort St. John, Prince George, Terrace, Vernon, Quesnel and a few other BC cities have voluntarily put a wheelchair accessible taxi into service.**

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In June 2017, we met with accessibility stakeholders and received comments related to the PT Board’s review of application materials for additional taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis. These matters are discussed in Chapter 5 (Enhancing the Accessibility of Taxis).

## 2. BOARD ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES

The 2012 Report listed four “Board Actions” specific to taxis<sup>1</sup>. We have completed each action and initiated additional actions, policies and procedures aimed at getting more wheelchair accessible vehicles in taxi fleets, on the road, and available at all hours—with priority for people with disabilities. This section features initiatives that the Passenger Transportation Board (PT Board) has implemented since 2012. It includes PT Board responses to the actions it committed to in 2012 as well as more recent initiatives.

### Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Policy

In 2008, the PT Board established an operational policy to encourage the improved availability of accessible taxis in urban communities in British Columbia. This umbrella policy provides guidance to the PT Board and operators respecting wheelchair accessible taxis.

Operational Policy IV.1 states that taxi companies are expected to provide satisfactory service for persons who require accessible taxi services and integrate additional costs within their overall business plan and company structure.

In 2012, the policy was revised to set a goal of wheelchair accessible taxis operating in communities with eight or more taxis. The PT Board reviews and updates the operational policy regularly. It also considers this policy when applications are received to expand taxi services in a particular community.

### Service Standards and Accessibility Policy – Board Action 1

**2012 Action:** The Board committed to undertake a consultative approach to the use of taxi standards and to update its accessible taxi policy accordingly.

**2017 Status:** Applicants applying for more taxis must provide operational data to the Board. This includes data specific to wheelchair accessible taxis.

The 2012 Report identified the benefits of:

- enhancing data collection and reporting, and
- setting performance standards.

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1 See Appendix A for a detailed list of the Board Actions listed in the 2012 report.

Data collection and performance standards provide taxi companies and the PT Board with fact-based information about changes in taxi operations.

In 2013, the PT Board initiated the Taxi Standards Project to encourage taxi companies to provide data that is relevant and reliable when they apply for additional taxis. We produced data reporting spreadsheets to help standardize data reporting by applicants. The spreadsheets relate to trip volumes, vehicle usage and response times. The initial focus of this project was taxis operating in communities with a population of 60,000 or more. (In 2017, the PT Board expanded data reporting requirements to taxi companies in communities with a population of 10,000 or more.)



We also consulted with taxi companies and dispatch system manufacturers about data collection and reporting, and we surveyed local governments on taxi data matters. In 2014, the PT Board published a report about how taxi companies in BC collect, use and manage data about their taxi operation. In 2015, after further consultations, the PT Board published significant improvements to its data-reporting spreadsheets. The enhanced spreadsheets provide a more useful breakdown of data. They calculate 'bottom line indicators' that can assist applicants in preparing applications and the PT Board in deciding applications for more taxis. Applicants must complete PT Board spreadsheets when they apply for more taxis.

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### DECISION EXCERPT

The example below highlights the type information the PT Board receives from spreadsheets.

**“Company X’s wait time data shows that the 22-month average of trips that have waited up to 15 minutes or more across all time periods is 13.4% for conventional taxi trips and 15.7% for WATs. The conventional fleet vehicle utilization is 98.6% and the vehicle utilization is 96.6% for WATs<sup>1</sup>. Conventional taxis show an increase of 8% and WATs volumes have increased by 9%.”**

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<sup>1</sup> WATs are wheelchair accessible taxis.

## Accessible Service Plans – Board Action 2

**2012 Action:** The PT Board to modify application requirements to receive more detailed information from applicants about its accessible service and operations as well as the operation of public transit, including HandyDART, in the applicant's operating area.

**2017 Status:** Applicants must submit an Accessible Service Plan when they apply to add more taxis or start a new taxi service. Plans must be submitted with applications to add conventional or accessible taxis. In addition, if the Board initiates a fitness review of a licensee, it could request an Accessible Service Plan.

The PT Board produced the Reference Sheet, Preparing an Accessible Service Plan, to assist applicants. Since March 2012, the PT Board has required that taxi applicants provide an Accessible Service Plan. An Accessible Service Plan has three parts:

1. Company Information – that provides general information of vehicles, driver training and hours of service.
2. Priority Dispatch Plans – that describes how the applicant gives priority to passengers with wheelchairs and other mobility aids.
3. Community Information – that discusses local options for accessible transportation, including public transportation.

### Service Priority and Minimum Operating Requirements

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**This is an initiative to ensure that PT licences in the Metro Vancouver and Capital Regional Districts provide service to persons with mobility aids on a priority basis and, in some cases, to operate these vehicles at least proportionately to conventional taxis.**

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For a number of years, the PT Board had the expectation that taxi companies should manage and dispatch WATs on a priority basis to meet the transportation needs of people with mobility devices. In January, 2015, the PT Board updated its accessible taxi policy to say that the PT Board will, if it approves a wheelchair accessible taxi, specify as a term and condition of licence that wheelchair accessible vehicles must be dispatched on a priority basis to persons with mobility aids.

The PT Board learned that the PT Branch was receiving complaints about service to persons with mobility aids, including vehicles not being available at certain times of day. This was also raised with the PT Board through its industry advisory committee.

The PT Board undertook an analysis of taxis operating in the Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD) and in the Capital Regional District (CRD). This analysis determined that terms and conditions of licence were not consistent.

The PT Board addressed this issue in late 2015 and late 2016 by standardizing taxi licences in Metro Vancouver and Greater Victoria respectively with the terms and conditions set out in Table 1.

**Table 1: Standardized Terms and Conditions of Licence**

Service Priority Requirement:	Persons with mobility aids who require an accessible taxi for transportation purposes are priority clients for the dispatch of accessible taxis. The licensee must at all times use a dispatch and reservation system that dispatches accessible taxis on a priority basis to clients who have a need for accessible vehicles.
Minimum Operating Requirement:	Licensees must ensure that accessible taxi service is available to passengers throughout a 24-hour day in a reasonable manner and that accessible taxi availability is, at a minimum, proportionate to conventional taxi availability.

Setting these as terms and conditions of licence promotes compliance. Operators who do not comply with their terms and conditions are subject to enforcement action, including administrative fines.

### Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights – Board Action 3

**2012 Action:** The Board would talk to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure about expanding the Taxi Bill of Rights program implemented in Metro Vancouver.

**2017 Status:** The Board has implemented a Taxi Bill of Rights program for taxi operators outside of Metro Vancouver.

In 2008, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure introduced a Taxi Bill of Rights to improve taxi service quality in Metro Vancouver. The Taxi Bill of Rights is a statement of principles that outlines expectations of both taxi drivers and passengers. It contains four drivers' rights and eight passengers' rights. These rights address basic service and conduct issues, and they help prevent and resolve conflicts. The passenger rights confirm that a person may use a TaxiSaver voucher to pay for a trip and that there is a right to travel with an assistance dog. The Ministry has partnered with Consumer Protection BC to establish telephone and web-based services where feedback regarding Metro Vancouver taxi services can be directed. Consumer Protection BC will pass compliments on to the company and driver and either address concerns directly or refer people to the appropriate agency for complaint investigation and resolution.



The PT Board supported the Taxi Bill of Rights program and required taxi operators in Metro Vancouver to display a Taxi Bill of Rights in their vehicles.

In our development of the 2012 Report, we learned that the Taxi Bill of Rights had been beneficial in Metro Vancouver. As well, we received a number of requests to establish a taxi bill of rights in other communities. The 2012 Report noted that the PT Board supported the expansion of a taxi bill of rights.

The PT Board established a Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights program 2013. It is available to all taxi companies in BC outside of Metro Vancouver. The Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights:

- (a) clarifies expectations between drivers and passengers; and
- (b) promotes consistent, high-quality taxi service.

The voluntary program requires that taxi companies notify local governments that they are adopting the Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights. As well, taxi companies must purchase decals from a specific provider and install them in each taxi. Companies must have written policies and procedures for responding to complaints. The wording of the Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights, set out in Appendix F, is very similar to Taxi Bill of Rights in Metro Vancouver; however, the voluntary bill incorporates flexibility in payment methods.

The PT Board implemented a voluntary program because we wanted to make a taxi bill of rights available in all communities in the Province; however the PT Board did not have the resources or infrastructure to establish a mandatory program.

At present, 34 taxi companies in 11 Regional Districts (excluding Metro Vancouver) are participating in the Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights program. More information about the mandatory program in Metro Vancouver and the voluntary program for other parts of the Province is posted on the PT Board's [Taxi Bill of Rights webpage](#).

## Flip Seat Policy Review – Board Action 4

**2012 Action:** The Board will review its process for authorizing flip seats.

**2017 Status:** The authorization process is streamlined – New taxi companies approved for accessible taxis will receive flip seat authority; terms and conditions of licence for existing operators with accessible taxis will be changed to include flip seat authority.

An operator may install a flip down seat (flip seat) in its wheelchair accessible taxi if its PT licence has flip seat authorization. This is a motor vehicle regulation. Flip seats enable a licensee to carry additional passengers in a van when it is not used to carry a person seated in a wheelchair or scooter.

The PT Board sees flip seats as a means to make wheelchair accessible taxis a more commercially viable option for businesses and increase the availability of these taxis in a community, especially in smaller communities where taxi demand overall may be lower than in heavily populated urban communities.

During the consultations around the 2012 Report, the PT Board heard that a secured flip seat may shake or rattle while the vehicle is moving. This may be a source of anxiety for persons seated next to it in their wheelchair or scooter. The PT Board investigated this matter further.

We found that flip seats must be installed according to motor vehicle regulation guidelines, which requires an engineer's report. The Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE) Branch monitors flip seats and they must be checked every six months as part of the commercial vehicle inspection that taxis are required to undertake.

As well, an installed flip seat has a redundant, double lock to prevent it from falling when not in use.



Most companies in the Metro Vancouver and Capital Regional Districts have flip seat authority for one or more wheelchair accessible taxis. In some cases, the PT Board has simultaneously approved wheelchair accessible taxis and flip seat installation for taxi companies operating in smaller communities.

Given that flip seats increase vehicle seating capacity, thus enhancing their viability and that safety issues have been addressed, the PT Board decided to streamline its flip seat authorization process.

In 2017, the PT Board directed the Registrar to amend the terms and conditions of taxi licences with authorization to operate wheelchair accessible taxis to also authorize the installation of flip seats. When the PT Board approves a new application that includes wheelchair accessible taxis, flip seat authority will be included in the terms and conditions of licence.

We recognize that persons with mobility devices may be unnerved by noise emanating from a secured flip seat and suggest that taxi companies and advocacy groups allay these concerns by talking to people about the safe design and construction of flip seats.

## Vehicle Identification

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### New Initiative: Taxis in the Metro Vancouver Regional District can be identified by their Taxi Identification Code.

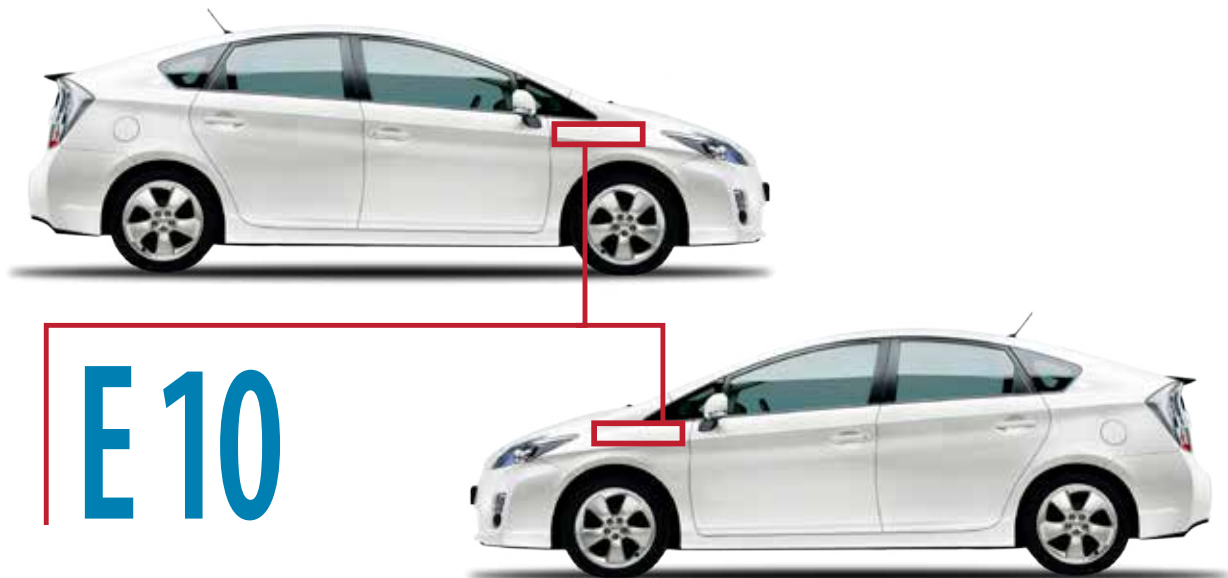
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Since June 2014, all taxis in Metro Vancouver have been required to display a unique taxi identification code. This code is made up of a letter that represents each taxi company and the unit or dispatch number for the vehicle.

In the picture on the next page, the “E” stands for the name of a taxi company and the 10 is the unit number of the vehicle.

Companies must have a taxi identification code on the inside and outside of each taxi it operates. As shown in Figure 1, the code is on the right and left front fenders. It is also on the rear of the taxi.

**Figure 1: Side Placement of Taxi Identification Code**



Inside the taxi, the taxi identification code is on the rear window behind the driver in all vehicles and in the back window behind the driver in all vans.

Taxi identification codes are easy for people to spot, including persons with mobility devices who ride in the rear of accessible taxis. The codes are useful for people who want to locate lost articles or provide feedback on the service they received. They also help taxi companies respond quicker and more

decisively to requests. This program was developed in consultation with industry, stakeholders and local governments.

Terms and conditions of licence require taxi companies in the Metro Vancouver Regional District to have a taxi identification code. Non-compliance may be subject to enforcement.

## Locating Used WATs

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**New Initiative: Contacting industry associations may allow operators in less urban areas to find used WATs easily.**

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In early 2017, the PT Board published an Industry Advisory that encourages taxi companies interested in purchasing wheelchair accessible taxis to contact taxi association representatives to help locate a used vehicle that may be available elsewhere (e.g. in one of the larger cities). This is a service that taxi associations have been providing for member companies. The PT Board's advisory encourages companies to use their taxi association to assist them.

## Soft Meters and "Talking Meter" Requirement

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**New Initiative: "Talking meters" increase accessibility to blind or partially sighted people in conventional taxis as well as people with mobility devices seated in the rear of vans.**

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The 2012 report identified the potential to convert a traditional taxi meter to a taxi meter that can announce the fare at set intervals and indicate when the meter is turned on and off. Integrating a talking meter option into a taximeter would assist passengers who are blind or partially sighted who may have trouble reading the trip fare that is displayed on the meter. Talking meters would also benefit persons seated in the back of wheelchair accessible taxis.

On a number of occasions, PT Board staff encouraged makers of taxicab equipment to add a talking meter option. However, encouragement did not produce the results sought.

In 2016, the PT Board took a different approach. Some taxi companies wanted to replace their traditional taximeters with a tablet or smartphone installed in their vehicle. They wanted to do this so they could benefit from the technological advances of new cloud dispatch systems – systems that incorporate a "taxi soft meter." The PT Board allowed this by creating a rule specifying soft meter requirements. One requirement is that any taxi soft meter must have a "talking meter" function within six months of switching to a taxi soft meter.

Taxi companies in large and small taxi markets have switched to taxi soft meters. At the time of writing, five companies in four Regional Districts are using taxi soft meters. One of these companies<sup>1</sup> has advised us that they have a working talking meter. For the others, we have a commitment letter to implement the talking meter by a fixed date.

### **Ongoing Actions**

The PT Board continually seeks ways to improve the supply and availability of accessible taxis in British Columbia and we will continue to do this through licensing decisions, standardization of licences and policy.

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1 The Board received notice from a taxi company in Cranbrook that the talking meter function has been installed. The six month deadline for companies in Vancouver and Victoria are coming up in the next two to three months. Licensees have been asked to confirm installation and staff are monitoring this. At the time of writing, the six month deadline has not passed for any company.

### 3. STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

The 2012 Report listed five “suggested actions” for stakeholders, ranging from driver training to communities and companies working together to address taxi service issues.

These actions are outside the Passenger Transportation Board’s (PT Board’s) regulatory ambit; however, they are important for improved accessible taxi service. Below we report out on two of the suggested actions: training and parking options.

#### TRAINING

**2012 Report:** The Board encouraged training institutions, interested groups and taxi companies to develop training programs that can be delivered in various parts of the Province.

**2017 Status:** Stakeholders initiated significant driver training improvements: the Vancouver Taxi Association developed its “Ask, Listen, Act ” training program; members of the BC Taxi Association deployed a train-the-trainer model for accessibility training; and the Justice Institute of BC (JIBC) updated its TaxiHost pre-employment courses.

The 2012 report identified a critical need for drivers of wheelchair accessible vans to receive hands-on training for safely loading passengers and their wheelchairs or scooters. The report encouraged stakeholders to enhance the accessibility training that taxi drivers receive.

Update 2017 reports out on the independent and collaborative improvements achieved by stakeholders, especially with respect to hands-on training. It also identifies current inconsistencies and inadequacies that are being experienced by some persons with disabilities who use taxis.

#### Taxi Company Initiatives Since 2012

In 2013, the Vancouver Taxi Association (VTA) produced the training course, *Ask Listen Act: Enhanced Taxi Driver Training for Customers with Disabilities and Seniors (“Ask, Listen, Act”)*. It developed the course by working with member taxi companies, the Disability Alliance of BC (DABC) and individuals or agencies representing people with disabilities.

*Ask Listen Act* trains existing drivers of VTA companies to deliver a taxi transportation service to customers with different disabilities and equipment (e.g. power wheelchairs and power scooters). It is designed to build up drivers’ comfort and confidence with the customers they are serving, and it prepares them for different situations they may encounter, such as people with: manual or power wheelchairs, walkers, canes or crutches; “sip and puff” wheelchairs; or assistance dogs.

The course guides the driver to approach their passengers respectfully—by asking, listening and then taking action. The course gives drivers instruction in a service-oriented way of learning what a customer needs and following through.

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**“Taxi drivers need to know the correct way to tie-down wheelchairs and scooters and to understand their passenger’s needs. This starts by asking them how they can help. Taxi driver training does not need to be complicated. It should be straightforward and relevant to the work.”**

*~ Jane Dyson, Disability Alliance of BC*

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Drivers of taxi companies with the Vancouver Taxi Association (VTA) must complete the training and demonstrate competence in course material. *Ask Listen Act* includes a manual, training videos, and hands-on training. We have heard from people with disabilities who contributed to *Ask Listen Act* that, since the course, service has improved and they feel comfortable in wheelchair accessible taxis in Vancouver.

The British Columbia Taxi Association (BCTA) has coordinated training for its member companies which operate in Metro Vancouver municipalities outside the City of Vancouver. These companies have received train-the-trainer instruction provided by the Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD), and some companies arrange for the RCD to train their drivers directly. In summer 2013 and August 2016, managers and senior drivers of BCTA member companies participated in day-long RCD train-the-trainer workshops that combined hands-on training for loading wheelchairs and scooters with training for providing service to people of different types of disability. The training manager for HandyDART participated in one of the RCD-led sessions for BCTA companies.

### **TaxiHost Pro: Serving Customers with Disabilities**

The Justice Institute of BC (JIBC) developed pre-employment TaxiHost training in 1994 to set a consistent and high-standard of taxi service, particularly in the Lower Mainland. Local governments in Metro Vancouver, Abbotsford and Chilliwack require that taxi drivers obtain a certificate of completion from TaxiHost Pro before an individual may start driving a taxi. The City of Vancouver also requires limousine drivers to complete the TaxiHost program.

TaxiHost Pro is a series of courses that takes a total of five days to complete. It consists of three courses delivered in face-to-face sessions at the JIBC campus in New Westminster. One course is dedicated to customer service skills, including services for people with disabilities. Classroom instruction uses videos to show drivers how to load a person in wheelchair, use the straps, and also how to fold a collapsible wheelchair and store it. The course does not have an extra module to



simulate van loading and use of tie-downs. Taxi companies are responsible for providing hands-on training to drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis.

In 2014-15, the JIBC updated course materials on mobility and non-mobility disabilities with input from a half dozen organizations representing people with a variety of disabilities. Course materials include appropriate language for discussing major types of visible and invisible disabilities such as impairments relating to mobility, agility, vision, hearing, cognitive development and mental illness.

### **HandyDART<sup>1</sup> in Metro Vancouver**

TransLink uses taxis as a strategy to increase the number of trips available to HandyDART customers. Taxis help reduce HandyDART trip denials, provide service for long or out-of-the-way trips, and serve areas where customer trip volumes are low. As well, taxis provide services when a HandyDART vehicle is: handling an emergency; broken down; or trying to get back on schedule.

Since 2012, TransLink has significantly increased the number of taxis it uses to provide service on its behalf of to HandyDART customers. In 2016, 132,360 HandyDART trips (10.8%) were provided by taxis<sup>2</sup>. These are both conventional and wheelchair accessible taxis. Trips were provided by taxi companies in Metro Vancouver that have a supplementary taxi services agreement with the HandyDART contractor<sup>3</sup>. In addition, taxi companies accept TaxiSaver coupons that the transit authority provides to customers.

TransLink has received persistent and significant concerns about customer service from HandyDART customers. Complaints relate to safety protocols and customer service practices. Complaints for taxi services are much higher than services provided by other HandyDART vehicles. As an additional challenge, peak demand periods for HandyDART trips tend to overlap with peak demand times for taxi trips.

TransLink takes the view that “regardless of who delivers HandyDART service, TransLink is always responsible for the customer.”<sup>4</sup> Despite a general increase in HandyDART referrals to taxis, the HandyDART service provider for TransLink has indicated that it has reduced referrals of HandyDART customers with wheelchairs to wheelchair accessible taxis. Primarily, it refers ambulatory passengers to taxis (sedan or dual-use accessible taxis).

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- 1 HandyDART is a door-to-door, shared ride service for passengers with physical or cognitive disabilities who are unable to use conventional public transit without assistance. In Metro Vancouver, a contract service provider (MVT Canadian Bus Inc.) provides HandyDART services with a centralized service team (available to customers 18 hours a day) and more than 300 buses.
  - 2 This figure was received from TransLink staff in June 2017.
  - 3 The Coast Mountain Bus Company.
  - 4 TransLink memo of March 22, 2017: “Custom Transit Service Delivery Review: Outcomes & Recommendations” (p. 2).



In 2017, a TransLink Project Advisory Committee recommended that TransLink take steps to ensure that taxis meet HandyDART customer service standards. TransLink management recommended that taxi service agreements be transferred from the HandyDART service provider to TransLink to allow direct oversight and build in performance levers. Although the outcomes of the recommendations are not yet known, TransLink has capped its budget for the use of taxis for HandyDART trips at 102,000 trips per year for the next 10 years.<sup>1</sup>

### **In Review**

Since the 2012 Report, the taxi industry has worked with other accessibility stakeholders to make substantial improvements in hands-on training for drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis and in accessibility training for taxi drivers. Despite these improvements, there has been a proliferation of uncoordinated training efforts and different levels of training and service. TransLink's decision to cap its use of taxis for HandyDART trips and its reduction in referrals of passengers who use wheelchair accessible vehicles – despite the financial advantages for HandyDART – indicates a mix of training, service level, and availability issues that should be examined further.

Outside the Lower Mainland, some taxi companies are able to access training resources that have been developed by the JIBC and the Vancouver and BC Taxi Associations. However, no system is in

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<sup>1</sup> See TransLink's 2017-2026 investment plan of November 2016, "Phase One of the 10-Year Vision" (p. 51)

place by which taxi drivers are accessing standardized training for serving people with disabilities (or people with mobility aids). We address the matter further in Chapter 5 and suggest that stakeholders work together to address these issues by developing a provincial framework for taxi driver training.

## Parking Innovations

**2012 Action:** The Board encouraged industry and stakeholders to work together to address parking challenges in urban, downtown areas.

**2017 Status:** The City of Victoria has a pilot project that allows taxis to stop near fire hydrants.

The 2012 Report noted that municipal parking bylaws and enforcement make it hard for taxis in Vancouver and some other cities to pick up or drop off passengers in downtown areas. It is a challenge for all types of taxicabs. It can be a particular problem for taxi drivers when loading or unloading a passenger and their mobility device, or when they are helping a person with a disability get themselves from or to a building entrance. We did not find any examples of bylaws that give deference to taxi drivers helping people with disabilities. However, we suggested collaboration to initiate a taxi parking or stopping solution when taxi drivers are helping a person with a disability.

The City of Victoria has initiated a one-year “Taxi Hydrant Zones Pilot” project. Under this pilot project, six locations are identified near a fire hydrant where a taxi can wait for a fare as long as they are in the vehicle and relocate immediately if an emergency vehicle arrives. If the one-year pilot is considered a success, some additional fire hydrants may be considered for taxi hydrant zones downtown in 2018. We see this project as an example of the kinds of initiative that local governments can take to improve service for taxi passengers, particularly those who need assistance embarking or disembarking from a taxi.

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**Taxis provide an essential transportation service to the community by reducing the overall number of private vehicles on the roads and providing transportation to visitors to Victoria and to those with mobility issues.**

*~ City of Victoria Website*

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## 4. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

A number of external initiatives and developments have emerged in the past five years that present potential opportunities and challenges for the accessibility of commercial passenger transportation in BC. Here we discuss two provincial government initiatives (Accessibility 2024 and legislation for guide and service dogs), issues relating to technology and accessibility and the expectations that ridesharing will be introduced to BC.

### Accessibility 2024

In 2014, the Provincial government established Accessibility 2024<sup>1</sup>, a ten-year plan and vision for BC to be the most progressive jurisdiction in Canada for people with disabilities. Accessibility 2024 includes “accessible transportation” as one of twelve building blocks. The transportation goal is for BC communities to have the most accessible transportation options in Canada by 2024. Success is measured by the number of communities that have transportation options for people with disabilities.

The Accessibility 2024 plan identifies service commitments and improvements for BC Transit, TransLink and BC Ferries. Although the PT Board, an independent tribunal, was not referenced in Accessibility 2014, each year we contribute summary information and statistics that are included in annual Accessibility 2024 progress updates.

### Technology for Accessibility

Technology is changing the transportation marketplace, the service expectations of customers and the ways that businesses manage their operation. Some taxi companies are using new taxi soft meters, cloud-based dispatch systems and other technologies that can improve their business productivity and customer satisfaction.

The 2012 Report noted the potential to leverage emerging technologies that can improve customer service for people in general, and people with disabilities in particular.



1 Accessibility 2024 webpage: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility>. Ten year action plan: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/report-library#acc2024>.



Often, talk of technologies is focussed on a particular device, app, or feature. But talk can also expand to a variety of integrated approaches.

Taxi soft meters that integrate with a cloud-based dispatch opens up new benefits for businesses and passengers. As noted above, any soft meter used in BC must have a talking meter function.

Apps like eCab and Zoro function as a “universal app” that a person can use to find the closest taxi in an area, regardless of the taxi company. We have also heard that such apps are not designed or available for use by people who are blind or partially sighted.

At a grander level, we note that technology is enabling integration of multiple modes of transportation. One example is the vision that TransLink has articulated. This is to work toward a single, integrated payment platform (based on its Compass Card) across multiple modes of transportation including transit, taxis, ferries, car sharing and parking<sup>1</sup>.

To ensure that transportation apps benefit people with disabilities, we encourage developers to approach accessibility in the design of an app or system, not simply as a function that is added to the system. Current technological developments should address accessibility matters now so that they can be properly integrated into advances of the future.

## Guide Dogs and Service Dogs

In January 2016, the provincial government implemented the Guide Dog and Service Dog Act and Regulation. Under the new requirements, businesses are still obligated to accommodate persons with disabilities that use guide or service dogs. The new legislation continues to provide certified teams with the same rights and privileges as people not accompanied by dogs. The legislation establishes higher standards for dog training and certification. It also clarifies the rights and responsibilities of both business operators and handlers of guide and service dogs.

In accommodating persons with disabilities, it is reasonable for taxi drivers to expect that guide or service dogs are clean, well-groomed, healthy and trained to a high standard. The guide or service dog should also behave in an appropriate manner. Therefore, a taxi driver can be reasonably assured that a dog will not pose a public safety risk or damage the vehicle. In addition to the *BC Guide Dog and Service Dog Act*, the Human Rights Code also requires businesses and taxi drivers to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities.

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1 See p. 19 of “Regional Transportation Investments: a Vision for Metro Vancouver”

The Board has heard of two issues with service dogs: drivers refuse to transport a service dog or, more recently, drivers are asking to see “government” certificates.

Both the mandatory and voluntary taxi bill of rights state that a passenger has a right to travel with an assistance dog. Issues have arisen when a driver has refused to transport a dog because the driver has an allergy. In such cases, the taxi driver is expected to immediately have another vehicle dispatched and wait with the passenger until the taxi arrives. Taxi companies require drivers to have a doctor’s certificate documenting the allergy. A 2015 BC Human Rights Tribunal case found that a taxi company that adopted this approach did not violate the Human Rights Code.

A more recent issue involves drivers asking for dog owners to provide provincial government certification for their dogs before entering the taxi.

Generally, drivers should exercise discretion when asking for certification, and only request it if the guide or service dog is misbehaving (e.g., growling or other aggressive behaviour). Guide and service dog and handler teams carrying government issued certificates have undergone training to a high standard and are monitored and assessed.

If the guide or service dog is not behaving in an appropriate manner and a driver is unsure if the dog is certified or trained to a high standard, he or she may ask if the dog is certified and to see the certification.

Section 12 of the Passenger Transportation Act Regulation states that a taxi driver may refuse service if they have reasonable grounds to believe that transporting the passenger would endanger the health or safety of a person.

For more information, please visit: [www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/human-rights/guide-and-service-dog).



## Future of Accessibility

Ridesharing<sup>1</sup> is available in many Canadian cities such as Calgary and Toronto, as well as other major population centres across the world. We expect that changes will come to BC in some form. Whenever and however changes are made, we know from demographic projections<sup>2</sup> that a continual need will exist for accessible transportation options. In jurisdictions where ridesharing has been introduced, accessibility strategies have often involved one of the following approaches:

- (a) Regulatory mechanism that requires taxis and ridesharing operators to operate wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- (b) Financial mechanism where a per trip charge is collected by a regulator from operators of non-accessible vehicles and used to support operators of accessible vehicles.

We see that any new regulatory scheme in BC should include a plan or mechanism to enable and incentivize commercial operators of accessible services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities regardless of type. Toward this end, Chapter 5 suggests that the provincial government address accessibility options as part of any regulatory changes it makes to commercial passenger transportation regulations in the province.

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1 Ridesharing is one of several labels that are used to describe services that may be characterized by the use of an app to book a transportation service that comprises a driver and their personal vehicle. Alternative labels include transportation network company (or TNC), ridehailing as well as ridesourcing.

2 See Appendix B.



## 5. ENHANCING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF TAXIS

Previous chapters review progress and issues on accessible taxis from 2012 to present. Prior to the next and final chapter on Inter-City Buses, Chapter 5 identifies areas for further improvements. It includes both commitments made by the PT Board and suggestions it has for companies and organizations with a stake in the service level received by persons with disabilities who use taxis in BC.

### Enhancements for Taxi Applications

Chapter 1 discussed the significant increase in taxi applications and approved taxis from 2012 to present.

For additional taxi applications, the PT Board requires public need indicators such as letters of support and operational data. With respect to data, the Board sets minimum data reporting requirements (i.e. trip volumes, vehicle usage and response times reported on PT Board taxi data spreadsheets). These requirements are discussed in Chapter 2.

The PT Board makes additional vehicle decisions after it reviews an application as a whole. Among other things, the Board considers whether the available information and evidence indicates that a public need exists for more taxis.

When we met with stakeholders in June 2017, advocates for persons with disabilities and some taxi industry representatives said that, from their perspective, Board decisions place too much emphasis on historical trip volume data. Public need indicators should include comparisons of data for wheelchair trips and conventional trips. In particular, response times and average driving time (to arrive at pick up locations) should be considered. The latter indicator relates to the coverage of wheelchair accessible taxis in a particular area. That is, a single accessible vehicle in a large zone will often need to travel a long distance to pick up a passenger—or further if a vehicle is called from another area or zone in the city. Stakeholders also suggested that the Board should give more consideration to letters from persons with disabilities in order to understand their experiences and individual needs for accessible taxi services.

As noted in Chapter 2, the PT Board may require some vehicles in a fleet to be wheelchair accessible but operators are not restricted in the number of wheelchair accessible taxis they may operate. Nonetheless, the Board is able to make more informed decisions when applicants present a useful mix of relevant quantitative and qualitative information about their taxi operation and proposal.

Stakeholders also pointed out that the coverage of wheelchair accessible taxis across a city or neighbouring areas is a key factor that affects response times. The use of company-specific dispatch systems spread these specialized vehicles thinly from the perspective of a passenger who contacts

one taxi company. Coordinating the dispatch of wheelchair accessible taxis for multiple companies in an area would enable a passenger to – either by phone or app – access the closest wheelchair accessible taxi in the area. In the 2012 report, we noted that taxi associations did not see a central dispatch system for multiple companies as a realistic option. Since then, technologies have advanced and apps have become available that enable booking and dispatch for cars in multiple companies in the same area. Although the design and implementation of a system that coordinates the dispatch of accessible fleets would require industry leadership, cooperation and resources, it should be a customer service improvement priority given the potential to significantly improve service for taxi passengers who use wheelchair accessible vehicles.

### **SUGGESTION 1:**

We suggest that taxi companies in urban areas (including Metro Vancouver and the Capital Region) use a central coordination or dispatch system for distributing and dispatching wheelchair accessible taxis across their region or city – to reduce response times for customers with mobility aids who require a wheelchair accessible taxi.

### **COMMITMENT A:**

The PT Board will amend its application materials for taxis to:

- a. require the reporting of data that directly compares performance on wheelchair accessible trips with performance on non-wheelchair accessible trips.
- b. require additional information in the Accessible Service Plan including more details about the applicant's distribution of wheelchair accessible taxis across its operating area (including vehicle allocations within taxi zones and major transportation hubs such as an airport) at high and low volume times of day—along with an explanation of how its vehicle distribution ensures the priority use of these vehicles for wheelchair accessible users.
- c. Introduce a template for Accessible Service Plans to clarify application requirements.

## **Accessible Taxis in Rural Communities**

In addition to meeting with accessibility stakeholders in June 2017, PT Board staff talked to the largest taxi companies in Williams Lake (pop. 10,750) and Fort St. John (pop. 21,000) to learn from their experiences of introducing wheelchair accessible taxis to their cities.

In Williams Lake, Town Taxi is required to operate one wheelchair accessible taxi if it operates the 11 taxis permitted under its licence. After making a commitment to community leaders to start a wheelchair accessible service—and after an extensive vehicle search—Town Taxi recently purchased a 2017 accessible van. At the time, the company had activated most but not all of the vehicles it is licensed to operate. The company's owner operates the vehicle as a dual-use taxi (generally within

the hours of noon to 9 pm) and keeps it parked at other times due to a general shortage of drivers. As well, at different periods of the day, demand is insufficient to operate all vehicles in the fleet.

The use of tie-downs was demonstrated to the owner of Town Taxi by a person with years of experience with wheelchair accessible taxis. Town Taxi says the vehicle is operated at a loss and that additional work outside the taxi business helps sustain the operation. Customers are happy to be able to use the accessible taxi to go to restaurants, appointments and special events without booking days in advance for a HandyDART. Town Taxi describes the operation of the accessible taxi as a community service. Passengers can use TaxiSavers in Williams Lake, although a recent extension of HandyDART hours has reduced bookings for the wheelchair accessible vehicle. Town Taxi also noted that, although the community wants a wheelchair accessible taxi; the company has provided the service without community financial assistance that could help it address driver shortages and the ongoing challenge of keeping the operation viable.

In Fort St. John, Teco Taxi voluntarily converted one vehicle in its fleet to a wheelchair accessible taxi. Work to introduce the service started in 2013 soon after Teco Taxi came under new ownership. The planning work included dialogue with local advocates for a wheelchair accessible taxi service. This included discussions with local government, its accessibility committee and a local non-profit that serves persons with disabilities. The company found that information in the PT Board's 2012 report on wheelchair accessible transportation was useful. The report identified the issues that licensee needs to address, particularly with regard to training and safety. In 2015, after a long search for a vehicle, Teco Taxi bought a used wheelchair accessible taxi in the Lower Mainland. After assessing operational risks, in terms of time and cost of getting a wheelchair accessible vehicle back on the road, Teco Taxi opted to dedicate the vehicle to wheelchair-use trips only. The company flew trainers at the Richmond Centre for Disability to Fort St. John to deliver accessibility training to interested drivers, dispatchers and managers. Training included hands-on training with wheelchair tie-downs and the importance of being patient with passengers. Drivers who operate the vehicle receive 100% of the fare to compensate for the extra time to provide the dedicated, specialized service (i.e. picking up the vehicle and providing a door-to-door service) plus extra opportunity for long, conventional trips. The company has been operating the service in response to community requests and the significant benefits for people who use the service. The operation of this service is sustained by other business revenues and has not been eligible for local government funding because the taxi company is a for-profit business. As well, TaxiSavers are not available in Fort St. John. Teco Taxi has found that, in its experience, introducing a wheelchair accessible service requires (a) a funding source, (b) buy-in of owners and drivers and (c) training.

**SUGGESTION 2:**

In rural communities that want a wheelchair accessible taxi option – whether the initiative comes from the community or a taxi licensee – we suggest that local representatives (e.g. taxi licensee, local government, persons with disabilities, local HandyDART operator) work together to find resources, synergies and will to support the successful start and operation of a wheelchair accessible taxi service in the area.

**Use of Technology**

In general, the use of apps has become commonplace since 2012 (e.g. for booking a taxi or paying a fare). Further advances and usage are expected. We have heard from stakeholders that apps are not usually designed with persons with disabilities in mind. Apps can be difficult for persons of particular disabilities to use (e.g. people who are blind or partially sighted).



Further, we have not seen apps that make it easy for a person with disabilities to communicate the individualized service they need (e.g. door-to-door service).

**SUGGESTION 3:**

We suggest that app developers (and taxi companies working with app developers) include persons with disabilities in the design, development and testing of apps used by taxi operators.

**Toward a Provincial Framework for Taxi Driver Accessibility Training**

Chapter 3 reviews the substantive progress made in accessibility training for taxi drivers since 2012. Through initiatives led by the Vancouver Taxi Association (VTA) and BC Taxi Association (BCTA), taxi companies in Metro Vancouver have received better training in the last five years, including “hands-on” training. This enables them to provide safer and more courteous service to persons with disabilities.

The Board does not have a mandate or expertise to assess existing training programs or lead further enhancements. Nonetheless, it is apparent that training modes and service levels vary within cities. Of note, TransLink is interested in seeing steps taken that meets the standard of

service that it expects for HandyDART customers. We also note that the Registrar of Passenger Transportation receives service complaints about accessibility taxi service without having authority to direct a company or driver to undertake training to prevent or minimize recurrences.

In the Lower Mainland, the recent proliferation of training activities is positive, but coordination and common standards are lacking. An opportunity exists to build on stakeholders' experiences with accessibility training to develop a training framework that can enhance accessibility training and service. This has the potential to benefit companies, drivers and passengers in the Lower Mainland and across BC. Although the aim is to enhance accessibility training, improving this type of training is best achieved within a broad taxi driver training framework.

#### **SUGGESTION 4:**

We suggest that taxi associations and other stakeholders in commercial passenger training in the province initiate a collaborative forum in which to develop a provincial driver training framework that, among other training goals, ensures that taxi drivers obtain the accessibility training they need to provide services so passengers are safe, feel comfortable and have their individual transportation needs met. The development of a provincial training framework should address the following matters:

- (a) The range of individual service needs of different customers (including instances when door-to-door services are needed)
- (b) Participation of persons with disabilities in the development, delivery and evaluation of accessibility driver training
- (c) The training needs of drivers at pre-employment and post-employment stages in their career (e.g. including refresher training and remedial training)
- (d) The training needs of drivers who provide specialized services (e.g. enhanced services for persons with disabilities; operating wheelchair accessible vans)
- (e) A potential menu of training models (e.g. certified institute, custom training programs, train-the-trainer, distance training) and applicable standards that are capable of achieving desired training outcomes across the province
- (f) A simple, efficient certification standard and registry that confirms a driver's level of competence as a commercial passenger driver (e.g. basic knowledge, specialized knowledge)
- (g) Overall efficacy and cost-efficiency of training.



**COMMITMENT B:**

If a new driver training framework is developed, the PT Board will consider the use of its authority to establish terms and conditions of licence that would require taxi drivers to complete appropriate training.

**Accessibility and Future Regulatory Change**

In Chapter 4 (the “Future of Accessibility” section) we briefly noted that accessibility should be addressed in the event that government changes commercial passenger transportation regulations to allow some form of ridesharing into BC.

From decisions we make on taxi applications and our consultations with accessibility stakeholders, it is clear that accessible transportation has significant human and economic benefits. At the same time, we know that the operation of those services takes extra effort, knowledge, financial cost and motivation. In short, it takes deliberate steps to set up and operate accessible transportation services. If government changes the regulations, options should be considered in light of the range of accessible transportation services required in urban and rural communities.

**SUGGESTION 5:**

If the Provincial Government changes the regulatory framework for commercial passenger transportation, we suggest that it include provisions to advance accessible transportation options across BC.



## 6. ACCESSIBILITY OF INTER-CITY BUSES

**2012 Action:** The Board report on accessibility of intra-provincial ICBs.

**2017 Status:** The Board completed a survey on the accessibility of intra-provincial ICBs in 2015.

Inter-city bus (ICB) operators provide scheduled bus services that link cities and towns. They operate buses on fixed routes and charge individual fares. ICB operators must have a passenger transportation licence approved by the Passenger Transportation Board (PT Board).

ICBs that cross a provincial boundary are subject to a federal, voluntary Intercity Bus Code of Practice. Last updated in 2011, this Code of Practice aims to make Canada's scheduled intercity bus network accessible to all persons with disabilities.

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### The Commitment of Bus Operators

**Bus operators are committed to enhancing their scheduled intercity network in Canada to provide access, in the spirit of respect and inclusion, to all persons with disabilities. Services will be provided through a combination of accessible equipment and facilities as well as personnel who have been trained to assist passengers with disabilities. There are a number of different methods to ensure the availability of accessible scheduled intercity bus services. The application of these methods will vary from region to region and from bus operator to bus operator.**

*~ Intercity Bus Code of Practice  
Transport Canada (April 2011)<sup>1</sup>*

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The federal Code of Practice sets out standards for a range of accessible transportation issues agreed to by the bus industry and consumers with disabilities. Complaints relating to accessible service are subject to a complaint-resolution process between passengers and bus carriers.

Standards address matters such as making reservations, the securement of wheelchairs, staff training and bus terminals. For example, operators agreed to operate sufficient wheelchair accessible equipment to be able to transport a person with a mobility aid or wheelchair with 48 hours of notice.

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1 Download the Intercity Bus Code of Practice at <http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/policy/intercity-bus-code-of-practice.pdf>



ICB operators providing service exclusively within BC are not subject to standards similar to the voluntary Code of Practice.

In 2015, PT Board staff identified 15 ICB carriers with routes in BC only. In January and February, staff conducted a telephone survey with the 10 carriers they were able to reach. Of these, seven were available for general ICB transportation and three were ski buses. Of the general ICB carriers, four (57%) serve people with disabilities of which:

- Two have accessible buses that accommodate passengers with wheelchair (one must be pre-booked and pre-paid).
- Two can transfer a passenger from a chair to the vehicle, and carry the folded wheelchair in the vehicle.
- Three are trained to secure people in wheelchairs.
- Two cited the option of working with a third-party company that operates an accessible van to provide transportation for a person travelling in a wheelchair.

The survey revealed variation in the types and sizes of intra-provincial ICB operations in BC. Generally, the most extensive accessibility options are available from the larger ICBs, especially if the company connects with an inter-provincial bus network. Toward the other end of the spectrum, some ski bus operators cited a lack of need for wheelchair accessibility. (See Appendix G for more details on the survey results.)

## CONCLUSION

Update 2017 highlights progress since the 2012 Report. It also identifies the need for further progress, especially in communities outside the Lower Mainland. It is important that the PT Board, industry and other stakeholders work individually and collaboratively to improve commercial transportation services for persons with disabilities.

Stakeholders have taken significant steps, especially in training, to improve service. We have seen progress concentrated in the Lower Mainland where most taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis operate. Additional steps are required to enhance training standards and consistent levels of service for persons with disabilities in all areas of the Province.

The PT Board has completed the actions it committed to in 2012. We will continue to seek ways to improve the supply and accessibility of taxis, inter-city buses and other vehicles that we regulate. We encourage stakeholders to continue their efforts to provide accessible services with knowledgeable, professional and competent drivers.

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Actions Taken on 2012 Commitments and Suggestions.....	36
Appendix B: Acknowledgements .....	41
Appendix C: General Statistics.....	43
Appendix D: Accessible Taxis in Selected BC Cities.....	46
Appendix E: Accessible Taxi Statistics (BC Communities and Districts).....	50
Appendix F: Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights.....	58
Appendix G: Intra-Provincial ICB Accessibility Survey .....	59

## APPENDIX A

### Actions Taken on 2012 Commitments and Suggestions

This appendix reports on the five actions the PT Board committed to in 2012 (Table 2). More details about those and other initiatives are provided in Chapters 1 (“Accessible Taxi Supply Increased”) and 2 (“Board Actions and Initiatives”).

In Table 3, this appendix notes progress we know that stakeholders have taken on actions that the PT Board suggested in the 2012 Report.

**Table 2: Board Commitments and Actions Taken (2012 – 2017)**

2012 Board Commitments	Actions Taken
<p><b>1   Review Accessible Service Standards and Policy</b></p> <p>The Board will, in consultation with the taxi industry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. research the future use of taxi service standards</li> <li>b. review its accessible taxi policy in light of this initiative</li> </ul>	<p>In 2013, the Board initiated the Taxi Standards Project that prompted taxi companies to enhance their collection of operational statistics for the taxis they operate. In subsequent years, it required applicants to report those statistics when they apply for additional taxis (first for companies in communities with more than 60,000 people and then for companies with more than 10,000 people). The initiative resulted in application decisions informed by more precise quantitative indicators respecting the use of conventional and wheelchair accessible taxis. It also encouraged taxi companies to set service standards and track performance over time.</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 2, “Service Standards” section.</p>

2012 Board Commitments	Actions Taken
<p><b>2   Accessibility Service Plans and Info</b></p> <p>The Board will ask applicants to describe the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The wheelchair accessible vehicles that an applicant provides (or proposes)</li> <li>b. The accessibility training that drivers receive</li> <li>c. The procedures in place to serve the transportation needs of people with disabilities</li> <li>d. How wheelchair accessible taxis are distributed within the applicant’s operating area and dispatch zones</li> <li>e. The hours when transit and HandyDART services are available in the community, and the hours when accessible taxis are (or will be) operated</li> </ul>	<p>In March 2012, the Board established a requirement that new and additional taxi applicants to submit an Accessible Service Plan (which includes a Priority Dispatch Plan and accessibility details for the company and community).</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 2 “Accessible Service Plans” section.</p>
<p><b>3   Taxi Bill of Rights</b></p> <p>The Board will consult with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure about expanding the Taxi Bill of Rights to communities outside Metro Vancouver.</p>	<p>Following discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and other stakeholders, the Board implemented a Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights Program in 2013. As of May 2017, 34 taxi companies in 11 regional districts (outside Metro Vancouver) are participating in a Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights program.</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 2, “Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights” section.</p>

2012 Board Commitments	Actions Taken
<p><b>4   Flip Seats Review</b> The Board will review its process for authorizing flip seats.</p>	<p>In 2017, the Board streamlined flip seat authorizations with licensing requirement for accessible taxi operators to give service priority to clients who need an accessible vehicle.</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 2, “Flip Seat Review” section.</p>
<p><b>5   Review of Intra-Provincial ICB Services</b> The Board will consult with inter-city bus licensees to review the accessibility of intra-provincial services in British Columbia. The Board will publish its findings.</p>	<p>In 2015, Board staff conducted telephone surveys with 10 of 15 intra-provincial inter-city bus operators. Results are published in this report.</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 6: “Accessibility of Inter-City Buses”</p>

**Table 3: Stakeholder Initiatives on “2012 Suggested Actions” (2012 – 2017)**

The 2012 Report made five suggestions for actions by stakeholders. These relate to issues that lie beyond PT Board control and jurisdiction. Chapter 3, “Stakeholder Initiatives and Actions,” discusses training and parking related initiatives. Here we summarize information we have on initiatives that stakeholders have taken. The information we have is not necessarily complete.

2012 Suggested Actions for Stakeholders	Progress Since 2012
<p><b>A   Enhanced Training</b> The Board encourages training institutions, interested groups and taxi companies to develop training plans and programs that can be delivered in many parts of the province.</p>	<p>Taxi companies with the Vancouver Taxi Association collaborated with the Disability Alliance of BC and other disability stakeholders to develop Ask Listen Act, a course to train their drivers in serving persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Managers and senior driers of taxi companies with the BC Taxi Association (serving most municipalities in Metro Vancouver) obtained training-the-trainer certification from the Richmond Centre for Disability for service persons with disabilities training.</p> <p>More Info: See Chapter 3, “Training” section.</p>



2012 Suggested Actions for Stakeholders	Progress Since 2012
<p><b>B   Enhanced Community Cooperation</b></p> <p>The Board encourages taxi companies and community leaders, when reviewing local wheelchair accessible taxi service to look at options for working together and addressing accessible transportation needs in the community. Further, they are encouraged to consider the following issues and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The higher business costs of operating wheelchair accessible taxis (higher capital and operating costs, and higher break-even point)</li> <li>b. Financial interests of taxi drivers</li> <li>c. Options that may exist to subsidize or reduce some operating costs</li> <li>d. Opportunities that may exist to increase accessible taxi ridership and revenues through a partnership with a HandyDART or paratransit provider</li> </ul>	<p>Generally, we have no information to report. With respect to (d) we are aware that TransLink significantly increased its usage of taxis to provide HandyDART trips in Metro Vancouver. In 2016, taxis provided at least 102,000 HandyDART trips (10.8%). This is discussed in Chapter 3 (“Training”).</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 3 “Training” section and the <a href="#">2012 Report</a> (pp. 28-34).</p>
<p><b>C   Enhance Door-to-Door Standard</b></p> <p>The Board encourages taxi companies to adopt and promote a door-to-door standard for customer service.</p>	<p>Nothing to report.</p> <p>Related Info: <a href="#">2012 Report</a> (p. 35).</p>
<p><b>D   Cooperate on Parking-Related Challenges</b></p> <p>The Board encourages the taxi industry and stakeholders to work together to address parking-related challenges of serving people with disabilities in urban, downtown areas.</p>	<p>The City of Victoria initiated a one-year “Taxi Hydrant Zones Pilot” project.</p> <p>More Info: Chapter 3, “Parking Innovations” section.</p>

2012 Suggested Actions for Stakeholders	Progress Since 2012
<p><b>E   Post Permissible Wheelchair Specifications</b></p> <p>The Board encourages taxi companies to publish the maximum size and weight of wheelchairs and scooters they can carry in their vehicles. It encourages companies to post this information online and share it with medical supply retailers that sell mobility aids.</p>	<p>We know of one taxi company that implemented this recommendation.</p> <p>More Details: <a href="#">2012 Report</a> (p. 36).</p>

## APPENDIX B:

### Acknowledgements

On June 23, 2017, we met with the group of individuals (listed below) at the Simon Fraser University downtown campus in Vancouver. The session was led by Mary Sjostrom, PT Board Member, with the assistance of Michael McGee, PT Board staff. Discussion was guided by a draft version of this report that participants received before the meeting, and participants who identified issues of significance to them and their constituencies. Stakeholder comments were shared with all PT Board Members and considered in the formulation of PT Board commitments and suggestions in Chapter 5. In addition, PT Board staff received information from two licensees (Nirmal Singh of Town Taxi and Tag Gill of Teco Taxi) in May and June 2017 about the wheelchair accessible taxi service introduced in their communities; highlights are included in Chapter 5 (the “Accessible Taxis in Rural Communities” section). We extend our gratitude to all those who shared their knowledge, experience and insights respecting the accessibility of commercial passenger transportation in our province.

#### Participants of the Ad Hoc Stakeholder Discussion of June 23, 2017, in Vancouver, BC

##### Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

- Pam Horton

##### BC Taxi Association (BCTA)

- Mohan Kang
- Shawn Bowden

##### BC Transit

- Kevin Rowe

##### Coast Mountain Bus Company (Transit Operator for TransLink)

- Liina Marshall

##### CNIB (BC and Yukon)

- Rob Sleath

##### Council of Senior Citizens’ Organizations of BC (COSCO)

- Gudrun Langolf

##### Disability Alliance of BC (DABC)

- Jane Dyson

### Passenger Transportation Branch

- Kristin Vanderkuip
- Chantelle Gergley

### Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD)

- Ella Huang

### TransLink

- Erin Windross

### Justice Institute of BC (JIBC) Driver Education Centre (School of Public Safety)

- Harry Randhawa

### Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)

- Marie Crawford

### Vancouver Taxi Association (VTA)

- Kulwant Sahota
- Emon Bari

## APPENDIX C:

### General Statistics

Statistics in this Appendix summarize past and projected trends that are relevant to the need for passenger transportation that includes transportation for people with mobility disabilities and other disabilities. Statistics vary from region to region.

#### Population

- 1) **BC Population is Growing.** In the next decade, the population of British Columbia is projected<sup>1</sup> to increase by about 14% from 4,648,055 in 2016<sup>2</sup> to about 5,320,000 in 2026. By 2041, the total population is expected to reach 6 million, a 29% increase from 2016.

#### Age Demographics

- 2) **Senior Age Groups in BC are Getting Larger.** The overall retirement-age population (65+) will increase steadily in real terms and as a percentage of total population. This part of the population increased from 15% in 2009 to 18% in 2016. It is projected<sup>3</sup> to reach 24% by 2028 and remain at 24% to 25% until 2041. By that time, almost a quarter of BC residents will be aged 65 or older. Further, the percentage of the population aged 80 or more is projected to double from 2016 (5%) to 2041 (10%).
- 3) **Older Populations Reside in Southern BC.** Populations with a higher percentage of people aged 65 or older (22-24%) include Vancouver Island, Thompson Okanagan, and Kootenay economic regions (see Appendix E). Populations with a moderate percentage (15-17%) include the Lower Mainland, Cariboo, Nechako and North Coast economic regions. Populations aged 65 or older are lowest (10%) in the Northeast economic regions<sup>4</sup>.

#### Disability Rates

- 4) **There is a strong correlation between age and disability rate.** Statistics Canada reports that “the disability rate in Canada increases steadily with age. This is also the case with most types of disabilities, especially disabilities related to mobility, agility, hearing, seeing and pain.” Figure 2 shows how disabilities become more common with age.

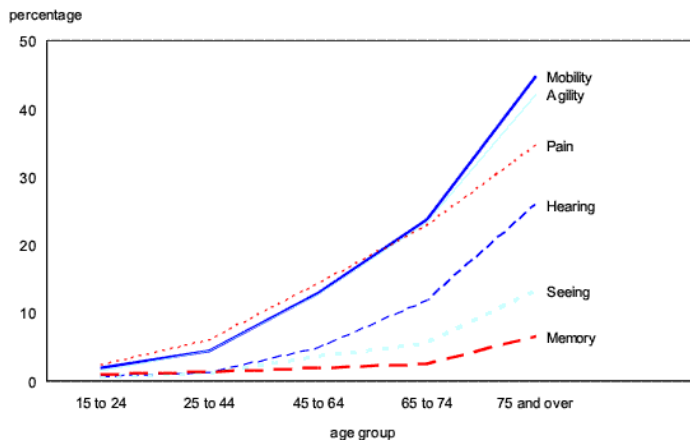
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1 Projections are published by BC Stats as of July 2016 as [2015-2041 Projections](#).

2 Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: British Columbia](#)

3 Projections are published by BC Stats as of July 2016 as [2015-2041 Projections](#).

4 Source: [BC Stats | 2015-2041 Projections Data: Total Population by Five Year Age Groups](#)

**Figure 2: Disability Rates by Age: Canada 2006<sup>1</sup>**

- 5) **BC disability rates are higher than Canadian rates – and increasing.** Based on 2006 statistics, the overall disability rate in British Columbia was 16%. This represents 638,640 British Columbians. This is an increase since 2001 when the disability rate was 14%. In that year, 530,130 British Columbians reported having a disability. British Columbia disability rates are consistently higher than the Canadian rates of 12.4% in 2001 and 14.3% in 2006.

## Public Transit

- 6) Transit is Expanding Services for People with Disabilities. British Columbia's two public transit agencies – BC Transit and TransLink – have significantly expanded their conventional and accessible transportation services over past decades. To illustrate, statistics for BC Transit are provided in Table 4.

**Table 4: The Growth of BC Transit over 35 Years (2016)**

	1979	1989	1999	09/10	15/16
<b>Number of Systems</b>	13	47	57	81	83
<b>Fleet of Buses</b>	190	322	642	1,003	1,007
<b>Annual Expenditures (million)</b>	\$58	\$73	\$131	\$252	\$290
<b>Ridership (million)</b>	19.2	21.1	29.5	49.3	51.7

Source: BC Transit<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006



In Metro Vancouver, TransLink subcontracts the operation of 338 HandyDART vehicles that are available 18 hours a day. In addition to HandyDART, BC Transit and TransLink deliver custom transit services through contracted Taxi Supplement and TaxiSaver (discounted coupon) programs. Minibuses, taxis and vans are used to provide paratransit services in rural and suburban areas<sup>2</sup>.

The BC Transit strategic plan<sup>3</sup> and the TransLink strategic plan<sup>4</sup> account for key trends such as the growing, aging and urbanization of the British Columbia population, the regionalization of public services and the potential for rapid shifts in the demographic profile of resource towns. We note that the regionalization of public services will continue to affect transportation in rural British Columbia.

- 1 BC Transit. (a) 1979 to 2009/10: Shaping Our Future: BC Transit's Strategic Plan | 2030 (p. 10), (b) 2015/16: Fast Facts BC Transit Corporate – March 31, 2016 (transit systems); 2015/16 Annual Service Plan Report (operating costs, p. 17); BC Transit Advantage Vehicles and Ridership (p. 1).
- 2 Performance measure comparisons of HandyDART, taxi supplement and TaxiSaver programs are found in a number of local and regional transit service plans. For example, see Exhibits 5-3 and 5-4 in the Nanaimo Regional Transit Business Plan (April 2008).
- 3 Shaping Our Future: BC Transit's Strategic Plan | 2030 (pages 17-18) Acknowledge the aging population trend and the need for immediate planning to further improve accessibility, ease-of-use and the safety of transit services. Further, it acknowledges that policies to regionalize services like health care and education may increase need for transit to connect residents to regionalized services.
- 4 Transport 2040: A Transportation Strategy for Metro Vancouver. Now and the Future (page 36) supports alternative delivery mechanisms for paratransit services including potential increase in the use of taxis “to lower per-ride costs, improve reliability, and reduce booking times.”

## APPENDIX D

### Accessible Taxis in Selected BC Cities

The PT Board's 2012 Report reports wheelchair accessible taxi statistics for selected cities and towns in BC. Table 5 below provides an update by including statistics for 2016 population and 2017 taxi fleets. In future, updates will be made to the comprehensive report that is introduced in Appendix E of this report.

**Table 5: Accessible Taxis in Selected BC Cities and Towns (2011 – 2016/17)**

Taxi statistics are sourced from the PT Board and PT Branch. For 2011, taxi statistics were current as of January 5, 2012. For 2016/17, taxi statistics were current as of May 5, 2017.

Location	Maximum Fleet	WATs Approved	WAT Portion	Population <sup>1</sup>
<b>Abbotsford</b>				
2011	71	8	11%	13,3497
2016/17	83	15	18%	14,1397
Change	17%	88%		6%
<b>Chilliwack</b>				
2011	31	4	13%	93,882
2016/17	31	4	13%	101,512
Change	n/a	n/a		8%
<b>Cranbrook</b>				
2011	30	-	-	25,037
2016/17	30	-	-	26,083
Change	n/a	-		4%
<b>Fort St. John</b>				
2011	24	-	-	26,380
2016/17	21	-	-	28,396
Change	-13%	-		8%
<b>Haida Gwaii</b>				
2011	7	-	-	5,354
2016/17	7	-	-	4,665
Change	n/a	-	-	-13%

1 Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: British Columbia](#). Populations are reported for 2011 and 2016.

Location	Maximum Fleet	WATs Approved	WAT Portion	Population <sup>1</sup>
<b>Kamloops</b>				
2011	74	4	5%	98,754
2016/17	81	5	6%	103,811
Change	9%	25%		5%
<b>Kelowna</b>				
2011	87	5	6%	179,839
2016/17	104	9	9%	194,882
Change	20%	80%		8%
<b>Greater Vancouver (excluding City of Vancouver)</b>	20%	80%		8%
2011	894	126	14%	170,9842
2016/17	1164	215	18%	183,1945
Change	30%	71%		7%
<b>Nanaimo</b>				
2011	65	4	6%	98,021
2016/17	65	4	6%	104,936
Change	n/a	n/a		7%
<b>Nelson</b>				
2011	9	-	0%	17,987
2016/17	9	-	0%	18,307
Change				2%
<b>Parksville</b>				
2011	8	2	25%	27,822
2016/17	8	2	25%	28,922
Change				4%
<b>Penticton</b>				
2011	29	4	14%	42,361
2016/17	29	4	14%	43,432
Change				3%

1 Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: British Columbia](#). Populations are reported for 2011 and 2016.

Location	Maximum Fleet	WATs Approved	WAT Portion	Population <sup>1</sup>
<b>Prince George</b>				
2011	86	2	2%	84,232
2016/17	86	2	2%	86,622
Change				3%
<b>Prince Rupert</b>				
2011	50	-	0%	13,052
2016/17	47	-	0%	12,687
Change	-6%			-3%
<b>Terrace</b>				
2011	19	-	0%	15,569
2016/17	19	-	0%	15,723
Change				1%
<b>Vancouver (City)</b>				
2011	589	113	19%	603,486
2016/17	783	159	20%	631,486
Change	33%	41%		5%
<b>Victoria Area (CRD)</b>				
2011	276	20	7%	344,580
2016/17	281	25	9%	367,770
Change	2%	25%		7%
<b>Whistler</b>				
2011	54	6	11%	9,824
2016/17	54	6	11%	11,854
Change				21%
<b>TOTALS (selected cities only)</b>				
2011	2,408	298	12.4%	3,529,519
2016/17	2,902	450	15.5%	3,754,430
Change	21%	51%		6%

Notes: Prince George was reported in 2012 as having 91 cabs, but it included 5 that are limited to rail contract service. 2012 and 2017 numbers have been corrected.

Prince Rupert and Fort St John's total fleet was reduced through the PT Board's Fleet Size Review process in 2014

1 Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: British Columbia](#). Populations are reported for 2011 and 2016.

A passenger transportation licence sets out the maximum number of taxis that a licensee can operate in their fleet.<sup>28F</sup> Taxi companies that want to expand their fleet beyond the maximum in their licence must apply to the PT Board. Table 5 shows the number of wheelchair accessible taxis (column 3) that must be operated if the licensee is to have a full fleet of taxicabs.

Taxi companies also have the flexibility to convert any number of the licensed taxis in their fleet to a wheelchair accessible taxi. In some communities, taxi companies operate more wheelchair accessible taxis than required in their passenger transportation licence. Some of the vehicles may be operated to meet requirements set by local governments (e.g. Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Kamloops), and some may be added voluntarily. Tables in Appendix E identify BC communities in which taxi companies operate additional wheelchair accessible taxis.

## APPENDIX E

### Accessible Taxi Statistics (BC Communities and Districts)

Appendix E presents a series of tables (7 through 14) which report taxi and demographic statistics for communities and regions of BC. Each table presents information for one of 8 economic regions in BC. Table 6 below presents a provincial overview by economic region.

Taxi statistics feature numbers of wheelchair accessible taxis that are approved, and also the numbers that are active. An “approved wheelchair accessible taxi” (or Approved WAT) is a Board-approved taxi that may only be operated as a wheelchair accessible taxi. An “active WAT” is a wheelchair accessible taxi that has been issued an identifier, current decal, and may be operated under the company’s passenger transportation licence. Note that applicants have six months to activate a vehicle after the Board approves an application for new or additional taxis. As well, taxi companies manage the distribution of vehicles within an area, or within zones in their operating area.

Table 15 describes reporting methods used for taxi statistics in Tables 6 through 14. Also note that the actual numbers of taxis and wheelchair accessible taxis in operation can be affected by decisions of taxi company managers and drivers. Further, a taxi company can convert any number of its approved conventional taxis to wheelchair accessible taxis without needing to change their licence.

**Table 6: BC Accessible Taxis by Economic Region (2017)**

BC	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Economic Regions	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Cariboo	8	115	4	6	5%	156,494	17%
Kootenay	11	68	1	2	3%	151,403	22%
Lower Mainland	48	2,137	395	349	16%	2,832,000	16%
Nechako	3	10	1	-	-	38,636	15%
North Coast	13	96	2	3	3%	55,500	15%
Northeast	10	60	1	2	3%	68,335	10%
Thompson Okanagan	33	294	22	22	7%	546,287	23%
Vanc. Island and Coast	107	490	35	37	8%	799,400	23%
<b>BC Totals</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>3,270</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>4,648,055</b>	<b>18%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: British Columbia](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15



Table 7: Cariboo Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

Cariboo	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Regional Districts and Municipalities	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Cariboo RD	3	20	2	2	10%	61,988	21%
Quesnel	2	9	1	1	11%	23,146	8%
Williams Lake	1	11	1	1	9%	10,508	19%
Fraser Ft. George RD	5	95	2	4	4%	94,506	14%
Prince George	3	86	2	4	5%	86,622	14%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>156,494</b>	<b>17%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Cariboo Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

Table 8: Kootenay Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

Kootenay	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Regional Districts and Municipalities	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Central Kootenay RD	3	15	-	-	-	59,517	24%
East Kootenay RD	5	49	-	1	2%	60,439	20%
Cranbrook	2	30	-	1	3%	26,083	20%
Kootenay	5	95	2	4	4%	94,506	14%
Boundary RD	3	4	1	1	25%	31,447	25%
Trail	2	3	1	1	33%	7,709	27%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>151,403</b>	<b>22%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Kootenay Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

Table 9: Lower Mainland – Southwest Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

Lower Mainland / Southwest	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Metro Vancouver RD <sup>1</sup>	30	1,952	370	327	17%	2,463,431	16%
Vancouver <sup>2</sup>	6	885	159	130	15%	631,486	15%
North Vancouver	2	202	21	24	12%	138,833	17%
West Vancouver						42,473	28%
Richmond	3	172	48	42	24%	198,309	17%
Burnaby	2	145	21	22	15%	232,755	16%
New Westminster	2	68	14	14	21%	70,996	15%
Surrey	7	394	78	71	18%	517,887	14%
White Rock	2	161	34	17	11%	93,729	25%
Delta	4	222	43	43	19%	102,238	19%
Coquitlam	3	118	19	11	9%	139,284	14%
Port Coquitlam						58,612	13%
Port Moody						33,551	12%
Maple Ridge	3	36	5	5	14%	82,256	14%
Pitt Meadows						18,573	16%
Langley	3	185	38	38	21%	143,173	16%
Fraser Valley RD	8	108	20	18	17%	295,934	18%
Abbotsford	4	60	13	13	22%	141,397	17%
Chilliwack	2	42	4	4	10%	83,788	24%
Mission	1	8	2	2	25%	38,833	14%
Hope	1	6	1	1	17%	6,181	29%

- 1 The Vancouver International Airport issued 525 vehicle permits to 18 taxi companies in Metro Vancouver to pick up passengers at the airport (YVR). The operation of taxis with a YVR permit are usually split between YVR and the taxi company's base jurisdiction. Taxi services at YVR vary throughout the day and week.
- 2 Vancouver taxi companies recently (April 2017) received approval to add 26 accessible taxis; the vehicle must be activated within six months.

Lower Mainland / Southwest	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Regional Districts and Municipalities	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Squamish Lillooet RD	8	65	5	4	6%	42,665	11%
Squamish	2	15	1	2	13%	19,512	11%
Whistler	3	44	3	2	5%	11,854	7%
Lillooet <sup>1</sup>	1	7	1	1	14%	2,275	24%
Sunshine Coast RD	2	12	-	-	-	29,970	30%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>2,283,200</b>	<b>16%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Lower Mainland-Southwest Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

**Table 10: Table Nechako Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)**

Nechako	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Regional Districts and Municipalities	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Bulkley Nechako RD	3	10	1	-	-	37,896	15%
Burns Lake	1	3	1	-	-	1,779	15%
Stikine "Region"	-	-	-	-	-	740	21%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>38,636</b>	<b>15%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Nechako Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

1 The licensee operating in Lillooet may also serve Lytton (pop. 249) and Cache Creek (pop. 963).

Table 11: North Coast Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

North Coast	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Regional Districts and Municipalities	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Kitimat Stikine RD	5	39	2	2	5%	37,367	15%
Terrace	1	19	0	1	5%	15,723	15%
Kitimat	1	3	1	-	-	1,779	15%
Skeena Queen Charlotte RD	8	57	-	1	2%	18,133	15%
Prince Rupert	2	45	0	1	2%	12,687	14%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>55,500</b>	<b>15%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: North Coast Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

Table 12: Northeast Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

Northeast	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
Regional Districts and Municipalities	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Northern Rockies RD	2	6	-	-	-	5,393	7%
Peace River RD	8	54	1	2	4%	92,942	10%
Dawson Creek	2	29	1	1	3%	12,178	13%
Fort St. John	4	21	-	1	5%	28,396	8%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>68,335</b>	<b>10%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Northeast Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

Table 13: Thompson-Okanagan Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

Thompson-Okanagan Regional Districts and Municipalities	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Central Okanagan RD	11	104	9	9	9%	194,882	21%
Kelowna	11	103	9	9	9%	127,380	33%
Columbia	8	54	1	2	4%	92,942	10%
Shuswap RD	5	28	1	1	4%	51,366	24%
Salmon Arm	1	8	1	1	13%	17,706	28%
North Okanagan RD	2	26	3	4	15%	84,354	24%
Vernon	2	26	3	4	15%	40,116	38%
Okanagan Similkameen RD	6	40	4	4	10%	83,022	31%
Thompson Nicola RD <sup>1</sup>	9	96	5	4	4%	132,663	20%
Kamloops	4	81	5	4	5%	90,280	22%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>546,287</b>	<b>23%</b>

Population source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Thompson-Okanagan Economic Region

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

1 Lytton (pop. 249) and Cache Creek (pop. 963) may be served the taxi licensee in Lillooet.

Table 14: Vancouver Island and Coast Communities with Accessible Taxis (2017)

Van. Island and Coast Regional Districts and Municipalities	Taxi Fleets		WATs Only			2016 Population	
	Licence Holders	Total Taxis Approved	Approved WATs	Active WATs	Active WATs Percentage	Population	Age 65+
Alberni Clayoquot RD	16	20	-	-	-	30,981	22%
Central Coast RD	-	-	-	-	-	3,319	15%
Comox RD	2	17	3	3	18%	66,527	26%
Comox/Courtenay	2	17	3	3	18%	39,627	37%
Cowichan Valley RD	6	33	-	2	6%	83,739	24%
Duncan	2	20	-	1	5%	44,451	24%
Ladysmith	1	2	-	1	50%	8,537	27%
Capital RD <sup>1</sup>	72	306	25	23	8%	383,360	22%
Greater Victoria	68	295	25	23	8%	367,770	21%
Sidney <sup>2</sup>	1	5	2	2	40%	11,672	41%
Sooke <sup>2</sup>	2	6	2	1	17%	13,001	17%
South Gulf Islands	4	11	-	-	-	4,732	43%
Mt. Waddington RD	3	13	-	-	-	11,035	16%
Nanaimo	3	73	6	8	11%	155,698	27%
Nanaimo	2	65	4	6	9%	90,504	25%
Qualicum	1	8	2	2	25%	8,934	52%
Powell River RD	1	5	-	-	-	20,070	28%
Strathcona RD	3	20	1	1	5%	44,671	22%
Campbell River	2	17	1	1	6%	32,588	25%
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>799,400</b>	<b>23%</b>

Population source: [Statistics Canada 2016 Census: Vancouver Island and Coast Economic Region](#)

Taxi source: PT Board and PT Branch statistics as of May 5, 2017. IMPORTANT: Reporting methods are noted in Table 15

- 1 The Capital Regional District includes 4 taxi companies in the Southern Gulf Islands (where no accessible taxis are operated).
- 2 Sidney and Sooke: Statistics for these municipalities only include taxis that are restricted to these communities. Most taxis licensed to operate in Greater Victoria may also operate in these municipalities.

**Table 15: Methods for Reporting Taxi Statistics**

The notes below explain how taxi vehicle statistics are reported in Tables 6 through 15.

### Overall Statistics

- (1) *Taxi statistics* include full-time and part-time taxis.
  - Some licensees have taxis that are licensed to operate on a part-time basis during defined peak periods (e.g. weekends or peak periods). These licensees are in the City of Vancouver (with 99 part-time vehicles) and the Capital Regional District (15 part-time vehicles).
- (2) *Active taxis* are those vehicles for which the PT Branch has issued a decal.
  - A decal does not guarantee that the taxi company has the vehicle on the road.
- (3) *Subject to revision and correction*
  - PT Board statistical reports are generated manually by staff as of a particular date. Despite every effort to present accurate statistics, discrepancies may occur inadvertently.

### Municipality Statistics

- (3) *Municipality taxi statistics* are reported only for those municipalities that have at least one wheelchair accessible taxi that is *approved* or *active*.
- (4) Some taxis that are licensed to pick up passengers in more than one municipality.
  - Vehicles in a taxi fleet are counted in a municipality's taxi statistics if the taxis are licensed to pick up passengers in an area that covers more than half the resident population.
  - Vehicles in a taxi fleet are counted in each community where the company operates.
- Instances of "double counting" occurs in some cases in the Lower Mainland, Capital Regional District.
- (5) Due to reporting methods noted above, municipality taxi statistics may not "add up" to totals reported for a regional district or economic region.

### Regional Statistics

- (6) Regional taxi statistics include all taxis for the region or province (without double counting).
  - Regions include regional districts, economic regions and the province.



## APPENDIX F

### Voluntary Taxi Bill of Rights

As a Taxi Passenger you have the right to:

1. Be picked up and transported to your stated destination by any available, on-duty taxi driver.
2. Pay the approved posted rate by any of the payment methods accepted by the taxi company.
3. A courteous driver who provides assistance, if requested, and who obeys traffic and safety laws.
4. Travel with an assistance dog or portable mobility aid.
5. A taxi that is clean, smoke free and in good repair.
6. Direct the route, or expect the most economical route.
7. A quiet atmosphere, upon request.
8. A detailed receipt, when requested.

As a Taxi Driver, you must obey all laws and have the right to refuse to transport a passenger:

1. To avoid contravening a law or condition of licence.
2. To protect your, or any passenger's, health or safety.
3. If the passenger is acting in an offensive manner.
4. If the passenger refuses to provide a deposit, if requested.

## APPENDIX G

### Intra-Provincial ICB Accessibility Survey

Chapter 6, “Accessibility of Inter-City Buses,” summarizes the outcomes from a telephone survey that PT Board staff conducted with 10 of 15 intra-provincial inter-city bus (ICB) carriers. Of the 10 respondents, 7 serve the general public and 3 provide a seasonal ski bus service to recreational destinations. This appendix reports additional survey results. We separated responses into the two types of intra-provincial ICB operator.

#### ICBs for the General Public

Of the seven ICB operators that serve the general public, four (57%) are wheelchair accessible. Of the four operators:

- two have accessible buses that accommodate passengers with wheelchair (one must be pre-booked and pre-paid)
- two can transfer a passenger from a chair to the vehicle, and carry the folded wheelchair in the vehicle.
- three are trained to secure people in wheelchairs

An additional two of the seven ICB operators cited the option of working with other companies (taxi and limousine companies with an accessible van) to provide transportation for a person travelling in a wheelchair. Further, ICB operators communicate accessible service options to customers online (two of seven), in a brochure (one of seven), and by ticket sales personnel (one of seven).

Table 16 identifies the accessibility training that staff receive.

**Table 16: Accessibility training by seven “General-Public” ICB Carriers**

5 (71%)	Bus drivers (of these, three companies train drivers to secure people who are travelling in a wheelchair)
4 (57%)	First aid attendant
1 (14%)	Ticket sellers / Booking agents / Depot Managers / Mechanic

In aggregate, training may entail initial and periodic training, a train-the-trainer model initiated by an extra-provincial operator, training by a BC Transit certified trainer for HandyDART operators, and Level 3 First Aid ticket.

Table 17 shows the accessibility of ICB depots (where they exist). ICB operators commonly use hotels and other facilities where passengers embark or disembark.

**Table 17: Accessible Facilities: Depots for Seven “General-Public” ICB Carriers**

3 (43%)	Wheelchair accessible depots (ramps, elevators)
3 (43%)	Accessible parking spots at depots
1 (14%)	Accessible washroom

### **Seasonal ICB Ski Buses**

Survey responses were received from three ICB operators that provide a ski bus service for skiers and snowshoers. Of these, one also provides service to the general public, tourists and day commuters. None of these operators are wheelchair accessible (other than one operator that would transport a folded wheelchair with another carrier). However, one ICB operator is accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessibility measures include training for bus drivers, ticket sellers, booking agents, depot managers, first aid attendants and ski patrol. Training materials and activities include training manuals (i.e. asking passengers what assistance they would like and listening to their response), periodic training and an adaptive ski program run by volunteers.



**Wheelchair Accessible  
Transportation  
by Taxi and  
Inter-city Bus  
in British Columbia**



**SEPTEMBER 2017**