

Transit Agency Responses to COVID-19: A review of challenges and opportunities for continued service delivery

Executive Summary

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has radically impacted public transport ridership and service provision across the country. Since the outbreak of the virus, transit agencies have had to adapt to new and rapidly evolving conditions. Many agencies modified services to reflect lower ridership levels and to ensure the safety of both riders and operators. These changes in service were guided by public health agencies, as well as major transit associations like the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) and International Association of Public Transport (UITP). Other agencies implemented precautionary measures like rear door boarding, temporary fare suspension, and reduced capacity limits to enable the safe continuity of operations. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, transit agencies are having to strike a balance between providing enough transportation options for essential travel and reducing service offerings to match the declining overall demand for mobility services.

Using a case study of Grand Riv

research will examine the operational challenges that transit agencies faced in providing service during the COVID-19 pandemic, and innovative ways in which transit agencies adapted their operations to address these challenges. The research will also present select innovative practices of other transit agencies, done nationally and internationally, to address some of the operational challenges created by COVID-19.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this report are:

How could Grand River Transit provide good quality transit service while maintaining the health and safety of its patrons?

1. What challenges did Grand River Transit face in modifying its bus and light-rail services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What have other transit agencies done, nationally and internationally, to address the immediate and short-term impacts of COVID-19?

Methodology

Findings

Transit agencies employed a range of strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary of Strategies Employed by Transit Agencies	
Masks and Face Coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◁ Mandatory mask policy◁ Distribution of masks to operators and/or community◁ Development of public awareness and education campaigns◁ Installation of signage to encourage mask usage◁ Increased cleaning of vehicles, terminals, and high-touch surfaces

Cleaning

