

Submitted by:



# TOWN OF MILTON Transit Master Plan 2013 - 2017 MOVING MILTON FORWARD

*Appendix H - Marketing and Communications Working Paper*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Marketing Review was prepared based on a review of current and recent marketing promotions, campaigns and materials. Interviews with full time and contracted staff, with the specialized transit contractor along with feedback from the public at the Public Information Centres, has set the context for this Review.

Transit staff understands the critical role that marketing plays in the success of transit services. To market well means to communicate effectively and efficiently, - and to target the correct audiences. This will be especially important for Milton Transit as it significantly increases its transit services in response to the local population and employment boom and to the anticipated, increased growth in ridership.

This Working Paper offers a review of Milton Transit's current marketing and communications efforts and identifies key areas for moving forward that will help meet the objectives of Milton's Transit Master Plan.



## 2.0 MARKETING SERVICES STAFFING FUNCTION

Milton Transit develops and conducts the majority of its market outreach with in-house transit resources. Each member of Milton Transit staff contributes to the marketing efforts in various ways.

The staff consists of a full-time Coordinator, Transit who provides overall leadership, direction and supervision of the transit program and is responsible for the planning, development, implementation, project management and policy work for all aspects of conventional and specialized transit service delivery.

The Coordinator, Transit (Coordinator) recommends marketing direction and often suggests opportunities for outreach. The Coordinator reviews draft marketing programs and materials prior to final implementation and is often involved in marketing campaigns and events, both at the planning and at the implementation stages.

The Coordinator is assisted by a full-time Transit Administrator, who is primarily responsible for overseeing Specialized Transit services, providing administrative support, including assistance with events; interacting with customers; providing support for the location and installation of bus stops and other transit amenities. The Administrator is still heavily involved in customer outreach, overseeing the development of new maps, schedules, brochures and helping to organize and/or to staff various local events.

A Marketing Assistant was on contract from May to December of 2012, providing support for the creation and production of marketing initiatives and communication/promotional materials for both the conventional and the specialized services. This is not a full-time or permanent position.

During this period, the Marketing Assistant coordinated with external contractors such as graphics companies, events partners, and other municipal departments, especially Community Services, which manages municipal communications and marketing. The Assistant also helped to develop marketing strategies for various target markets and helped ensure that the Milton Transit Brand was maintained. The use of this Marketing Assistant was helpful in expanding the marketing activities of Milton Transit and allowing Milton Transit staff to focus on other priorities.

Milton Transit staff is assisted by the Marketing staff at Community Services, especially for partner-programs or for programs that affect Transit and the Community as a whole.

The advantage of having both of the Transit employees (with the help of the contracted marketing employee) involved in the marketing of transit is that they have developed a sound understanding of how integral Marketing and Communications is to the success of the Transit system and its services.

The disadvantage is that the number and variety of responsibilities they must manage on a daily basis does not give them the time to manage and/or oversee a consistent and focused marketing and communications approach.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that a Marketing Assistant position similar to the one included in 2012 be approved as a contract or a permanent staff position to support the ongoing marketing efforts. In the short-term, this may be a part-time position until the demand for transit marketing requires a full-time function.

This new internal or contracted position would be responsible for Marketing and would manage, rather than assist with the communications and outreach needs of Milton Transit. This person would continue to work closely with the Coordinator, Transit and the Transit Administrator, as well as with Town staff, with the media and with marketing partners. He or she would oversee any of the work delegated to third-party marketing contractors. These contracted businesses may include graphics companies, IT specialists, map designers, copy writers, marketing planners, events coordinators, volunteers and more.

## 3.0 REVIEW OF TARGET MARKETS

Milton Transit has been working hard at its marketing and communications outreach within the human and budgetary resources it has available for this purpose. Based upon the marketing efforts to date, Transit's primary targeted audiences appear to be:

- Town of Milton general public;
- Milton Transit riders in general;
- Secondary school students;
- Seniors; and
- People with disabilities.

Milton Transit has also targeted some additional audiences through its various efforts; these include, but are not limited to:

- Primary school students; and
- Families.

All of the above are viable target markets for Milton Transit; however, with the human and budgetary resources available for marketing, it will be important to spend energy and resources to prioritize markets and to more accurately target the markets that are the most likely and viable candidates for Milton Transit services.

The Milton Transit Master Plan has a focus on service for Industrial Park employees, on new weekend and later evening service (which may be especially attractive for students) and on expanding community coverage, including more feeder trips for GO Transit riders. Some of the audiences to be targeted as a result of this Plan are self-evident. Others are less so, but are critical to the success of Milton and its new Transit Master Plan.

It is recommended that Milton Transit will be well served to focus the majority of its energies and resources targeting the markets noted below, which are listed in order of priority.

### 3.1 *Town of Milton Council*

Milton Transit prepares reports and creates presentations for Council and for Council meetings. Council members are also invited and some do participate in promotional events, such as Milton Transit Passenger Appreciation Day. Participation by the Mayor and Council members in transit-based events is a sign of a willingness to share and communicate. However, it is critical that all Council members fully understand and appreciate the opportunities presented by local development and by population growth as it pertains to Transit. Conversely, it is imperative that Council members recognize that a shortage of transit service will present growing challenges to Milton, in terms of traffic, parking, for attracting new businesses and in the well-being of those who do not, or who can no longer drive. By being very well-

versed on the topic of public transportation, they can help Milton Transit to effectively budget and plan in order to support the rapid local growth and change.

While Council is not a transit target market in the usual sense, Council is a critically important audience for Transit. Through clear, targeted communications, Transit can help Council members to most effectively and easily understand issues, challenges and opportunities facing Transit. This targeted communication will serve to further benefit the Town, and certainly current and future transit riders.

### 3.2 *Students, Secondary School and Beyond*

One third of the Milton population is under 19 years of age. Milton Transit currently targets secondary school students. It serves the local secondary schools with “Student Specials”, which are transit services geared to the “bell times” of the local secondary schools (Craig Kielburger, Bishop Reding and Milton District Secondary Schools). Two additional Milton secondary schools are now also being planned.

Transit, in partnership with the Milton Public Library, runs a “Read and Ride” program for students 14 years of age and younger. The program allows students with a library sticker to ride transit for free in the summer. The 13-14 age group is on its way to starting secondary school, so this program does help to encourage young people to take transit and to have parents be at ease with transit travel for their children. Transit employees set up and staff Information Booths at the Milton secondary schools.

Teenage years are a good time to promote transit as an important travel choice for daily life. Some students will stay in the area and may become future students of Wilfrid Laurier at Education Village. Others may find work locally and stay or return to become permanent residents. There is an opportunity for Milton Transit to develop transit converts through this very substantial youth market.

High school students are at an age where parents generally allow them to make their own travel choices. Low cost student pass programs, like those offered in Oakville and Burlington, promote the use of transit during after-school hours, on weekends and holidays. In fact, the new Master Plan Fare Strategy suggests adding a “Student Freedom Pass” to encourage those students that do not ride transit to and from school, to use Milton Transit after school and on Saturdays. Should Milton Transit venture into planning for such a pass, it will be critical to first research the local market. Are students travelling to after-school or weekend jobs or recreational activities that would be on Milton Transit routes? At what time do most secondary schools end the school day? A Student Pass that can only be used as of 5:00pm, for example, will be of limited interest to students who end their school day at 3:00pm.

Students living in Milton, but travelling to other GTHA post-secondary education centres are also a viable target for Milton Transit. The Master Plan recommendation is for an increase in timely connections to GO Transit – suggesting this will become an increasingly strong market for affordable local transit. Post-secondary students are often paying substantial tuition fees and owning a vehicle is a challenge.

Additionally, perhaps of all of the age groups, it is the students that are most ready to support environmentally-friendly travel. Many already walk or bike, even if only in their free time, and most are on limited budgets.

### *3.3 GO Transit Riders*

The Milton Transit Master Plan emphasizes strong Milton Transit/GO Transit connections. Residents working or going to school outside of the municipality will increasingly rely upon GO Transit services. As the population of Milton continues to develop, parking services at the Milton GO Station are likely to become strained.

To encourage use of its transit services, Milton Transit offers a discount to GO riders, both in its cash and pass fares. Milton Transit is encouraged to continue to work closely with Metrolinx/GO Transit to target the Milton commuters, to market partnered fares and to share in marketing and outreach strategies.

### *3.4 Seniors and People with Disabilities*

While the Town of Milton has a younger than average population, the older population will continue to grow rapidly, as it has been doing across Ontario. Some of the people in this demographic group may lose the ability to drive, or may prefer not to drive at certain times of the day or in inclement weather. Others may apply for the specialized transit services because of increasing health and mobility issues.

Currently, some of the more frail seniors (those with various forms of disabilities, which can include health challenges such as arthritis) can register to become clients of the Milton Transit specialized service. However, serving the entire population of seniors with the expensive specialized service is not financially sustainable in the longer term.

Seniors that can use or can be 'Travel Trained' to use accessible conventional transit are an ideal market to target for mid-day off peak services. These are services that are traditionally under-used, and this is no exception for Milton Transit. By encouraging seniors to shop, visit recreation centres, meet with friends and schedule their medical appointments in the mid-day off peak times, Milton Transit can encourage more ridership in those otherwise low-ridership times.

For people with disabilities, regardless of age, they expect and are entitled to equal transportation opportunities as compared to the rest of the population. The challenge is for Milton Transit to accommodate this growing population compassionately, effectively and efficiently. Milton Transit must work towards educating older residents and residents with disabilities about its Family of Services, including accessible conventional transit and Community Bus, in order to ensure that its Specialized Services are available for those who truly cannot make use of any of the other components of the Family of Services.

The above audiences should be Milton's Primary Target Markets for the coming five years. Other markets may vie for the attention of Milton Transit resources, including young families, businesses and

the media. With Milton Transit's limited resources, those to target that are likely to most quickly help increase ridership are the local businesses, other Town Departments, the media and young families, in that order of priority.

### *3.5 Businesses and their Employees*

Under the Transit Master Plan, Milton Transit will provide expanded service to business and industrial areas. By partnering communications efforts with the businesses, Milton Transit can help to minimize its own marketing costs and resources while effectively reaching these employee audiences.

### *3.6 Other Departments of the Town of Milton*

Milton Transit has promoted its services in partnership with other municipal departments, such as Community Services, which oversees recreation and parks. The opportunity to partner in transit promotions with other Departments can help to reach rider audiences (e.g. students, seniors) both more efficiently and economically. Additionally, it will be helpful for Transit to work with other Town departments when it comes to other partnerships and sponsorships, so that these alliances can be coordinated in such a way as to maximize the partnerships and minimize duplication of sponsorship requests between the departments.

### *3.7 Media*

Milton Transit uses the local media primarily through newspaper ads and the media does cover Milton Transit good news stories from time to time. Milton Transit staff should continue to focus on the on-going development of media relations so that information relayed through radio and newspaper can be achieved primarily through news articles and not ads, which are less effective.

### *3.8 Young Families*

This is a considerable population group within Milton and at first glance, it would appear to be a group to target especially for the off-peak mid-day hours when Transit vehicles are less full. Young families on limited budgets may also be more inclined to reduce the number of cars in their household if effective local transit is available.

This is also a population group that takes more convincing to use public transportation than those noted above. For example, one of the biggest issues facing transit systems over the past three decades has been that of accommodating strollers on vehicles, regardless of the time of day. For a young parent, managing one or more children, often with a stroller, along with "kid's gear", shopping bags, etc., can be difficult, if not intimidating on public transit. Milton Transit can begin to work towards catering more to young families by developing policies on if and how drivers can assist parents with children in strollers to board and disembark, by developing driver training tools on this topic, and by communicating family and child friendly policies through its various communications efforts.

### 3.9 Recommendations for Proposed Target Markets:

Milton Transit is in the position of supporting one of the fastest growing Canadian communities. The challenge with such growth and therefore so much opportunity, is managing resources. Focusing on a few key, primary target markets – those that are the most likely candidates for both current and for planned new services-- will yield the highest returns.

Milton Transit cannot afford to market effectively to everyone within the Town of Milton. At the same time, not everyone in the Town of Milton is likely to become a Transit rider. It is recommended that the following should be the primary and targeted focus of marketing, communication and outreach:

#### Primary Target Markets

- Town of Milton Council
- Students (secondary and post-secondary school)
- GO Transit Riders
- Seniors and People with Disabilities

#### Secondary Target Markets

- Businesses & Industrial Areas
- Other Departments of the Town of Milton
- Media
- Young Families

By targeting the groups noted above, Milton Transit can also begin to address and to improve ridership in the off-peak hours. Seniors and retirees often have more choice as to when they travel, be it for recreation, shopping, volunteering, part-time work, health care, adult learning studies, socializing, etc. Students of post-secondary education often have varied class starting times, as well as varied part-time working hours. Businesses, especially retailers, often have employees whose shifts begin and end at other than the usual 9:00am - 5:00pm hours. By ensuring that these audiences are well aware of their transit travel options, Milton Transit can encourage better use of its services during off-peak times.



## 4.0 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC MULTI-YEAR MARKETING PLANNING - A MARKETING PLAN

Milton Transit staff has the vision to deliver strong, ongoing marketing. Transit staff understands the need for and the value of a strong Marketing Plan with a long-term direction. However, Milton Transit has limited human and budgetary resources to develop such a Plan to date.

A comprehensive, detailed multi-year Strategic Marketing Plan would supply the framework for longer term marketing strategies, for budgeting resources and for ensuring that the key Transit Target Markets are consistently in the forefront of Milton Transit's marketing efforts. Such a Plan would include strategies to plan, budget for and work with changing communications and other technologies, and with new and changing legislation.

The Marketing Plan would be useful when communicating with Municipal Council and with key transit stakeholders, and would help decision-makers to ensure that the Transit Master Plan continues to be directly supported by its Transit marketing program.

If Council approves the 2013-2017 Transit Master Plan, work can begin on a long-term Strategic Marketing Plan. Human and budgetary marketing resources can be set, including communications plans needed for changes to routes, schedules, contracts, vehicles, facilities, policies, fares and legislation.

This Working Paper forms an initial step in identifying potential directions for the recommended long-term Strategic Marketing Plan.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that Milton Transit develop a strategic multi-year Marketing Plan once the new Transit Master Plan has been approved. The Transit Master Plan will recommend staffing needs, IT upgrades, route and service recommendations for the Family of Milton Transit services and more. Once it is known when and how these services are to be implemented, a multi-year Marketing Plan can be developed to support the new Transit direction.

While the Marketing Plan would cover the five year period, it would be adjusted and updated on an annual basis and would be flexible enough to accommodate new or unexpected opportunities or equally, to help overcome unexpected challenges.

Milton Transit staff understands the need for and the value of strong, well-directed marketing, but internal resources may not allow adequate time for the development of a strategic overall Marketing Plan. Milton Transit can look to external experts for assistance in its development.



## 5.0 REVIEW OF MARKETING STRATEGIES

Milton Transit's marketing efforts have evolved to their current status, in part, for reasons of opportunity, historical precedence, resources available and the interest of local partners.

Milton Transit currently markets primarily via:

- Brochures and flyers that provide route, schedule and other key transit information;
- The Transit pages of the Town of Milton web site; and
- Participation in community events.

Its marketing and communications efforts can be grouped into the following target market categories, with the understanding that there are areas of market "over-lap" amongst the various marketing efforts:

### Town of Milton General Public

- "Community Connections" transit map and schedules, which includes trails, parks and facilities;
- "Welcome to Milton" Development Community partnership Transit information - letters & materials;
- Free Ride Days for local events and festivals;
- "Santa Bus" transit staff resources (in partnership with those that decorate the vehicle); and
- Charity promotion transit staff resources and/or, web info, ads and materials for seasonal promotions such as the "Stuff-a-Bus" charity promotion (Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas) and the United Way Campaign (autumn).

### Milton Transit Riders in General

- Transit map and schedule (Milton Transit Rider's Guide) in print and on web site;
- Transit service change brochures, ads and web-site information;
- Transit automated information phone line (with specific scripts); and
- Passenger Appreciation Day (a free ride day).

### Students

- Rider's Guides for secondary school specials (Craig Kielburger, Bishop Reding, Milton District Schools) in print and on web site;
- Milton Transit "Read & Ride" program for children, in partnership with the library (ads, posters and stickers); and
- Transit Info Booths at Milton secondary schools.

### Seniors and People with Disabilities

- Conventional accessible transit features detailed in print and on the web site;
- Community Bus map and schedule (Community Bus Rider's Guide) in print and on web site;
- Community Bus service change materials ads, brochures and web information;
- Community Bus Launching events;
- Specialized Transit materials and web site info;
- Trans-Cab materials and web site info; and
- Transit information session at Seniors Centres and Homes.

What follows is an overview of which of the above programs to continue; which ones to continue, but modify; and which ones to eliminate.

#### 5.1 *Primary Programs to Continue*

Of the current programs, those that will support the new Transit Master Plan and are recommended to be continued and budgeted for are (these Programs are noted in priority order of importance to Transit, however, changes to service are a very close second to providing the basic, regular service information, as customers may interpret incorrect information as no better than lack of information).

- Maps and schedules for Milton Transit's Family of Services, in print and electronically; and
- Service, fare and/or policy change information, in print and electronically.

Virtually every Transit system in Canada views these programs as the corner-stones of transit information. Both the markets to be targeted (noted above) and current and future customers in general, require this type of information in order to use transit successfully.

As more information, including Transit information, is sought and found on-line, it is likely that the need for offering and distributing print materials will lessen, over time. However, as long as riders seek printed copies of maps and schedules, it will be important for Milton Transit to ensure that they are readily available and readily found. Transit offers maps and transit print materials at its Town operated facilities, as well as to new homeowners. Below are suggestions for the distribution of print materials by Student and Senior Ambassadors. In addition to these resources, distribution of print materials would include major employers, retail centres, as well as medical and recreation facilities. It has also been suggested that the display and distribution of transit maps and information in new subdivision sales offices should be made a requirement of Draft Plan Approval for developers. This is an example of a "Made in Milton" strategy to inform new residents of the transit options available to them before they move in and become members of the community.

#### 5.2 *Secondary Programs to Continue*

These are programs which are not as critical to the transit customer, in that they do not provide basic transit information. However, these programs appear to work well in educating certain key target

markets about transit, without over-stressing Milton Transit resources. These Secondary Programs to continue are noted in priority order of importance to Transit.

#### Milton Transit “Read & Ride” Program for Children

The “Read & Ride” partnership program with the Milton Library offers children free transit service to and from the library in the summer months. This program does not appear to stress Milton Transit resources and it provides children an opportunity to experience transit at an age when they are soon transferring from grade school to secondary school. It can be considered a pre-cursor to the Secondary School Target Market.

#### “Passenger Appreciation Day” (a free ride day)

The “Passenger Appreciation Day” offers riders a free day of transit service. The Mayor and some of the Town’s Councillors take the time to ride the buses on this day. It is a good opportunity for Council to hear from Transit customers and for Transit customers to take the time to share their transit service ideas with Council members. This promotion helps Town Council, by encouraging their participation in Transit and giving them the opportunity to further educate themselves about the needs of local transit customers.

#### Free Ride Days for Local Special Events

These programs (e.g. Canada Day, Milton Street Festival) appear to be well used and have the advantage of showing that Transit is an important component of the Milton community. However, even with subsidies from local businesses, they cost Milton Transit considerable administrative resources to develop ads, flyers, posters, fare box covers as well as written communication to contractors (PW Transit; A1 Rose Taxi) detailing transit requirements for these events. As yet, Milton Transit cannot prove a return on these investments. However, it is possible that this program could successfully target young families. It is recommended that Milton Transit continue to offer the current set of Free Ride Days, including Canada Day and the Milton Street Festival until such a time as its Marketing Plan can include a measurement tool to help determine the usefulness of these Free Ride Days. Alternately, if it is determined that Transit free rides on event days are key to the health and economic growth of the town, it will be important that staff resources be specifically budgeted for these events, without negative impact to the Primary Programs.

### *5.3 Programs to Keep, but Modify*

These are programs which provide some community outreach, but which do not specifically target Milton Transit’s key markets, are not critical to the success of Milton Transit and may strain the limited Transit resources. They are noted in order of priority, in that the partnership with the development community is the most likely to have a measurable effect upon ridership and the Santa Bus is very visible for the entire community.

#### “Welcome to Milton” Development Community Partnership Transit Information

The intent is to inform new residents of the local Transit services, and at first glance, this appears to be a solid program. However, the time and resources required by Transit staff to keep this program going

appears to outweigh the results. This program should be further investigated, in partnership with the development community, to determine if there is a more efficient and convincing manner of gaining the attention of new residents to Milton. There may be a possibility of including GO Transit in an enlarged partnership, which may also help to both promote the transit services and reduce some of the strain on Milton Transit marketing resources.

#### “Stuff-a-Bus” Charity Promo

This promotion is held at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. This promotion demonstrates goodwill, but it is resource heavy for Transit Staff to administer. Systems, such as Sarnia Transit, which are in Milton Transit’s peer group, do offer a similar program, in part because of the strong Council support that they receive for it. However, with a staff size almost identical to that of Milton Transit, Sarnia only offers this promotion once a year. It might be suggested that the administration of this event be handed over to service clubs, charitable organizations or PWTransit to reduce the impact upon Town human resources. However, Transit staff is and must be responsible for everything that occurs on its vehicles. Even with volunteer help, this event will draw considerable staff resources away from the everyday business of running and improving upon the transit system. It is difficult for charity promotions to prove that they positively affect transit ridership. If Milton Transit wishes to continue with the “Stuff a Bus” program, it is recommended that it be reduced to once a year, possibly at Thanksgiving or at Christmas time.

#### 5.4 *Programs to Eliminate*

##### “Two for One” Student Fare Program

This program allows students who purchase a July monthly student pass to receive an August pass for free. Milton Transit has not seen an increase in student ridership during the summer months, suggesting that this program is not yet effective, given the current service level. Additionally, this program costs Milton Transit fare revenue and internal resources for marketing the program. It is recommended that this program be eliminated until such a time where the student market can be better serviced in the evenings and weekends.

#### 5.5 *New Programs to Consider*

This first list of programs for consideration would replace some current programs. They are listed in priority order.

##### Student Transit Ambassadors, replacing Transit Info Booths at Milton Secondary Schools

Providing information to secondary school students about Transit is critical, especially as this is one of Milton Transit’s key target markets within its Master Transit Plan. However, even with only a small number of secondary schools in the municipality, this type of activity requires more resources than Milton Transit can currently afford, both in terms of staffing and budget.

A Transit Student Ambassador Program would help to keep students informed throughout the school year. Milton Transit would work with each of the administrations of the secondary schools to choose

one or more students to act as Milton Transit Ambassadors. Transit would educate each of these selected students about Milton Transit and its services. Each Student Ambassador would be charged with keeping students at his or her school informed about Transit services, particularly as they relate to student needs. This could include posting print and/or electronic memos, making maps and schedules available at a designated location within the school, sharing information electronically, such as by sending transit web site links to fellow students, and being available to answer student questions about Transit. Ambassadors could encourage students to enter their most common travel destination points (regardless of the travel mode used) on a sheet posted in the school area where the maps are, or to electronically send the Ambassador their destinations, such that they can be forwarded to Milton Transit for its own data base.

In return for the Student Ambassador's efforts, Milton Transit could provide these students with free passes for the school year or use the time they devote to Transit as part of their mandated community service/involvement hours. Markham Transit, before it became a component of York Region Transit, had many similarities with Milton Transit. Although larger, it also serviced a rapidly growing population and a land area that included a large rural component. The Student Ambassador Program in Markham helped efficiently direct information to a key target audience without straining the resources of the Transit staff. Even larger communities, like neighbouring Mississauga Transit, have a version of a Student Ambassador Program in place.

#### Transit Senior Ambassadors, Replacing Information Sessions at Seniors Centres and Homes

Providing information to seniors about Transit is also critical; they are one of Milton Transit's key target markets. Again, resources to provide personal attention at Seniors' Centres and Homes are very scarce.

Milton Transit could contact interested seniors, possibly through the municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee, or through the municipal staff that was involved in developing the "Older Adult Strategy". (This Strategy plans for the current and future recreational needs of residents who are, or will soon be, older adults). Transit would ask for volunteers from the seniors' community to act as Transit Information Ambassadors. Many seniors are gregarious, have time and enough energy to volunteer, and like sharing useful information, especially with other seniors. For example, in Peterborough, which has a population size similar to that of Milton, seniors attending transit focus group meetings were quick to indicate that they wanted to volunteer to help disseminate transit information to other seniors in their area. As with the Student program, in return for each Ambassador's efforts, Milton Transit could provide free passes or could offer a form of recognition, such as a gift or plaque of recognition, presented on Passenger Appreciation Day.

Both Student and Senior Transit Ambassadors can help to encourage their audiences to participate in transit surveys, as they become available and to assist Transit, where feasible, in the collection of those surveys. Over time, these Ambassadors could also be coached upon how to help their audiences to plan Transit trips.

### Transit Advisory Committee Update

The Transit Advisory Committee includes two elected Councillors, the Mayor (ex-officio) and four members of the community at large. The application process is conducted at the beginning of each elected Council session and is for the term of Council, which is four years. Members will be expected to review fare policies, service hours, operating policies, transit routes, overall accessibility of vehicles and facilities as well as marketing and outreach. The Committee is to provide a forum for receiving and evaluating customer concerns and expectations, and reviewing financial reports and performance indicator information in order to provide recommendations.

Milton Transit may wish to add to its “Terms of Reference” for the Committee Members to ensure that members from the public will include, as much as possible, representatives of the Milton Transit ridership. For example, each of a GO rider, a student and/or a person with a disability would reflect current markets. As the customer markets change and evolve, so would the Committee membership. This is not to suggest that the current Committee does not reflect the Transit ridership, but simply to ensure that future Committee members are as reflective of the evolving transit ridership as possible.

Additionally, Transit Advisory Committee members could be encouraged, as part of their role, to help deliver and share transit information within the Town. Much like the Student and the Senior Transit Ambassadors, these “Transit Advisory Committee Ambassadors” could deliver maps, schedules and other materials to businesses and centres that they would normally frequent. Those that can attend Teacher-Parent gatherings could help to inform parents and school staff of the value, the time savings, the security and the reliability of Milton Transit. In doing so, they may find that they receive feedback about Transit from business people, retailers, educators and parents which will help to serve them in their roles on the Transit Advisory Committee.

Completely new programs to consider are shown in an order of priority based upon how important they are for reaching the target markets and for how quickly and efficiently they could be put into place.

### Trip Planning

Milton Transit can begin by linking its Web site to the Metrolinx Trip Planning site and to the Google Trip Planning site. Over time, it is expected that enough on-line trip planning options will be made available that Milton may not have to go to the expense of developing its own. However, should it wish to do so, it can gain advice from many of the neighbouring GTA transit systems, such as Mississauga, which already has a transit trip planning option on its web site.

### Travel Training

A Travel Training Program for older seniors and for people with disabilities will help residents to feel confident to use Milton conventional and Community Bus services. Milton staff will wish to familiarize themselves with the Metrolinx Generic Travel Training Program, to be made available to GTHA transit systems. If other surrounding transit systems adopt Metrolinx’s version of the Travel Training Program, it would be helpful for the Milton version to harmonize with that program. This program can directly benefit Milton’s seniors and customers with disabilities; and, it may also serve to make new Canadians more comfortable with riding their transit system.

### Use of Social Media to Disseminate Information

Social Media can be used to gauge the public pulse on transit issues, but it can also be used to deliver information quickly. For alerts, such as notice of temporary service disruptions, Social Media such as Twitter can be an ideal communications mechanism. If well managed, it is quick, direct and inexpensive. However, this is true only as long as the communication remains outgoing. Transit must have a strong Social Media policy in place (in sync with that of the municipality) and must let the public know that it will not respond to Social Media feedback (due to resource limitations). The marketing staff at Guelph Transit and at Grand River Transit can offer timely information about the challenges posed and the successes achieved as a result of using Social Media to disseminate Transit information.

### Joint Marketing Partnerships with GO Transit

It is both in Milton's and in Metrolinx/GO Transit's best interest to work together to encourage commuters to use their joint services. Programs could be simple and could begin with event-based communications.

### Transit App

With one of the youngest populations in Ontario, the demographics are right for having them connect or find out about their transit trips through mobile apps.

Should Milton Transit wish to consider having its own Transit App developed, it can contact any number of the GTHA colleges to determine if staff might consider the development of a Transit app as a component of a student curriculum. If not, Transit may be able to make contact with educators or students that would be interested in developing a Milton Transit app for little or no cost. Additionally, Metrolinx may be able to assist and provide advice on App development or consider a partnership with Milton. Its new GO Transit App enables passengers to access and store scheduled information on trains and buses, receive information and notifications about departures and browse bus stops and stations on a map within the Greater Toronto Area. GO Mobile allows passengers to subscribe for a notification service and receive audible alerts in the proximity of their destination.

### Partnerships with Businesses to Provide Transit Shelters

In the industrial area, which will be serviced by Milton Transit "Industrial Specials", Milton Transit can consider contacting some of the key businesses to discuss the opportunity for them to purchase and manage their own bus shelters. The shelters would have to meet Milton Transit standards, including advertising standards. Businesses could use the shelters for their own advertising, but would be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of these shelters. The shelters would provide added incentive for employees to use transit and would provide businesses with additional marketing space.

### An Advertising Program that can Grow and Change

Milton Transit does not have many resources for advertising, including targeted ads. However, staff has repeatedly expressed interest in becoming more involved in environmental campaigns. Environmental ads do target the student and the younger adult audiences, and increasingly, the public in general. Milton Transit could consider introducing an ad campaign that could be used and sustained over many

years and become a part of the Milton Transit Brand. The campaign would primarily use pictograms or symbols to define a bad choice and a good choice – the good choice always being Milton Transit. For example – a pictogram of a gas tank (bad) next to the Milton Transit logo (good). Over time, Milton may get the public involved by asking them to send in their ideas and suggestions for the “bad”, to potentially be used in upcoming ads.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Milton Transit continue with these marketing programs, in priority order:

- Maps and schedules for Milton Transit’s Family of Services, in print and electronically;
- Service, fare and/or policy change information, in print and electronically;
- Milton Transit “Read & Ride” program for children;
- “Passenger Appreciation Day”; and
- Free Ride Days for Local Special Events.

It is recommended that Milton Transit keep, but modify these marketing programs, in priority order:

- “Welcome to Milton” Development Community partnership Transit information;
- “Stuff-a-Bus” charity promotion; and

It is recommended that Milton Transit eliminate this marketing program:

- “Two for One” Student Fare Program.

It is recommended that Milton Transit consider adding these marketing programs into its multi-year Marketing Plan, in priority order:

- Student Transit Ambassadors, replacing Transit Info Booths at Milton Secondary Schools;
- Transit Senior Ambassadors, replacing information sessions at Seniors Centres and Homes;
- Transit Advisory Committee, update;
- Trip Planning;
- Travel Training;
- Use of Social Media to disseminate Information;
- Joint marketing partnerships with GO Transit;
- Transit App;
- Partnerships with Businesses to Provide Transit Shelters;
- Social Media; and
- An Advertising Program that can grow and change.

## 6.0 REVIEW OF THE MILTON TRANSIT BRAND

Brand awareness means that customers and potential customers can recognize a product or service through a name, logo, colours, service style and the audiences being targeted. Brands within the overarching brand (e.g. Community Bus as a component of Milton Transit) help customers understand which services are offered and helps ensure that customers know which of their needs are satisfied by each brand through its services.

It is suggested that Milton Transit aspires to build awareness of the Milton Transit service, position Milton as a community that can offer good public transportation services and create community pride in its growing and changing services. These objectives show that branding is more than a visual identifier; it is also an overall identity. Over time, the identity can acquire new attributes, as the services change and grow.

Milton Transit buses and communications materials are generally identifiable as aspects of Milton Transit and it is expected that the Transit brand will be a reflection of the Town brand. However, Transit marketing materials are not always visually consistent in their branding and some communications pieces lack a level of sophistication to which Milton Transit wishes to aspire. The incredible growth and development in Milton begs for a vibrant and modern transit brand that will make people take notice.

Less dependence on illustrations and more use of photos will help to upgrade Transit's visual imagery. As an example, the new Rider's Guide of September 2012 includes a large photo which considerably improves the look of the brochure, when compared to the 2008 version, which includes no photography.

Milton Transit should continue to work with Community Services to ensure that the Transit colours, typefaces, etc. follow the overall Municipal guidelines. Through its branding, Milton Transit can show itself to be an integral component of the Town of Milton as well as a sophisticated and desired transportation option.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that Milton Transit work with a branding expert to focus on the merits of Milton and of Milton Transit and to continue to strengthen brand presence. As Milton Transit grows, the brand must necessarily continue to support the changes that this growth will bring.

Milton Transit is also encouraged to monitor reaction to its branding. Recommendations for how to monitor the effectiveness of marketing efforts (including branding) are noted in Section 7.0.



## 7.0 MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSIT MARKETING

Milton Transit would benefit from knowing if its Marketing efforts reach its targeted audiences. However, Marketing as a component of Transit does not stand alone. Other factors such as changes to service, fluctuations in the economy, reliability of equipment, ability to invest in capital, quality of employee training and so much more all contribute to ridership growth.

So, how does one measure marketing success, if the success of the system is reliant on so many factors? A number of measures can be used for components of the Marketing Plan. Some are already being used by Milton Transit, but will require additional resources. Others, such as focus group sessions to review recent campaigns are an option, but these can be resource-heavy. The options recommended below should provide Milton Transit with a good picture within limited human and monetary resources.

Milton Transit receives customer feedback through a number of methods. Customers wishing to file a complaint, a compliment or make an enquiry can call the Milton Transit phone number to speak with a staff member; they can e-mail transit directly or they can make the contact through the Transit web site.

An automated Customer Contact database program to log and track customer complaints and suggestions can help Milton Transit to sort contacts by route, by driver, by time of day and by various other categories. Such a system can help Milton Transit to assess how well it is reaching out to customers on a wide variety of topics, be it information about detours, fare changes, new services, special events and more.

If such software does not already exist within another municipal department, or if municipal IT staff is not available to help create a program for Transit, it may be possible for Milton Transit to obtain a version of such software from another municipality. Alternatively, basic packages can be obtained on the commercial market for \$3,000-5,000.

Milton Transit can also gauge public perceptions about Transit by tracking Social Media activity, such as Twitter. Milton Transit should follow the Town's guidelines for handling Social Media.

Over time, as Milton Transit grows and the resources grow with it, Transit may wish to review particular aspects of the marketing of one or more of its services, such as a new route, a service adjustment, and a fare media design change or a policy campaign. For feedback on these types of very specific topics, focus group sessions, targeted customer e-mail questionnaires, mini-surveys at certain locations (e.g. transfer hubs on targeted routes) can be used to obtain data without spending the time and resources of a major survey. With limited staff resources, Milton Transit can consider out-sourcing these types of feedback options for reasonable costs. However, this option is not recommended as a regular aspect of the 5-year Transit Master Plan, as it requires considerable resources.

Recommendations:

1. That Milton Transit purchase, have developed for them, or share with the Town, a database format that allows staff to efficiently obtain feedback information based upon virtually any topic. This database would include feedback from the transit drivers (including contracted employees), from customers calling the transit phone line, from e-mails, including those coming through the Transit Web Site and through Social Media.
2. That the database be searched for commentary upon marketing and customer communications and that this information be formatted in such a way so as to be able to compare it to feedback from previous months and years.
3. That the marketing/communications information gleaned from the database is regularly shared with Milton Transit staff and contracted service providers.
4. That Milton Transit staff track the public pulse on marketing and on transit services, in general, through a Social Media tracking tool. There are many options available on the market. Milton Transit may wish to use one that is recommended by transit peers or organizations such as Metrolinx.

## 8.0 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

For 2013, Milton Transit should budget primarily for:

- the development of a multi-year Marketing Plan;
- changing its communications and information materials, as necessary, to comply with AODA legislation.

The budget estimates for the above elements of Marketing work, which would come from the Transit operating budget, but which are additional to the current budget are:

1. \$25,000 - \$30,000 for preparation of Multi-Year Strategic Marketing Plan
2. \$5,000 to update marketing materials specific to Transit, to comply with AODA

For the 2013 Marketing Planning, shown below, resource requirements and Budget Estimates are noted.

Transit systems in Canada, over the past 30 years, have spent anywhere from 0.5 percent to 3.5 percent of their operating budgets for marketing. The amounts have ebbed and flowed with the economy. Realistically, a transit system should base its marketing budget (as with budgets for routing, scheduling, etc.) on the level of local projected growth, demographics, municipal development plans, etc. The Town of Milton is in very rapid growth mode. As Transit works to meet the needs of that growth, it is important that service changes and upgrades are well communicated to the public. A larger marketing budget is warranted during this time; however, the budget can be reviewed by staff at such a time as growth eventually slows down.



## 9.0 THE 2013 MARKETING PLAN

### 9.1 Foreword

The Marketing Strategy described above includes the recommendation to develop a multi-year Marketing Plan. This Plan would be based upon the service improvements that are recommended in the five year Master Plan and that specifically have been approved and budgeted for by Town Council. This multi-year Marketing Plan would include Annual Marketing Work Plans, which would evolve to accommodate local service changes, as well as policy and legislative changes.

To enable Milton Transit to structure its marketing work for the coming year, the first Annual Marketing Plan is included here. It offers recommendations for resource requirements and budgets for specific programs and campaigns that support the Multi-Year Strategies noted above. This Plan can act as a blueprint of sorts, for the Annual Plans for years 2014 to 2017.

For 2013, the new Transit Master Plan recommends services changes which will include the introduction of hourly transit service on Saturdays and the extension of hours for weekday evening service. These improvements will appeal to the secondary school student market as well as providing additional work trip opportunities for many residents.

Peak period employment service will be expanded to serve more locations in the Hwy 401 industrial area and employers will be invited to enter into partnership agreements for off peak and weekend service requirements.

To capture a greater share of the interregional commuter market, a zone bus 'drop off' service will augment local routes to ensure that all eight GO train arrivals will be met by local Milton Transit services.

### 9.2 Target Markets for 2013

Based upon the multi-year Marketing Strategies noted above and the Transit Master Plan recommendations for 2013, the markets to most heavily target for 2013 are:

- High School Students;
- GO Transit Riders; and
- Businesses in the Highway 401 Industrial Area.

The other target markets, which include Town of Milton Council, Seniors, People with Disabilities, Town of Milton Departments, the Media and Young Families will receive some marketing and communications attention in 2013, but the three target audiences listed above are suggested as the main focus of new marketing programs in the 2013 Marketing Work Plan.

The suggested 2013 programs are listed below. Some programs, such as the creation and distribution of route map and schedules, remain because they are expected customer information elements. Others, such as Community Events, will continue until their impact upon Transit can be more accurately measured. A number of the new Target Market Programs address audiences to be served with the evening, Saturday, industrial and GO connection service upgrades.

### General Transit Information Outreach

- Transit Maps, Schedules;
- Trip Planning; and
- Social Media as an Outreach Mechanism.

### Target Market Information Outreach

- Metrolinx/GO Transit Partnership;
- Student Transit Ambassadors;
- Read & Ride Program; and
- Travel Training.

### Community Events

- Passenger Appreciation Day;
- Canada Day;
- Milton Street Festival; and
- Stuff-A-Bus campaigns.

## 9.3 General Transit Information Outreach

### 9.3.1 *Maps and Schedules for Service Changes*

It is recommended that Milton Transit staff source and work with a graphic artist, under contract, to develop artwork for maps, schedules and information brochures, to be used both in print and in on-line transit information materials. Milton Transit should also source and contract a map designer, unless the graphic artist noted above has proven design capabilities in this area.

The 2013 maps and schedules would include the new Transit Master Plan 2013 route and service changes, along with any changes to fares and to other policies. The maps/schedules would be released at the time when Milton Transit launches the major changes. If these changes are to be launched late in 2013, smaller information pieces conveying the upcoming changes should be released once Council has approved the launch dates.

The maps and schedules should be created for printed formats, as well as for web site communications.

Notification of the upcoming services changes and the availability of the new maps/schedules should be communicated through the Town web site, the Milton Transit phone line voice messaging system, Twitter, and through word-of mouth by Transit drivers.

It is recommended that printed maps/schedules be distributed to:

- Town of Milton facilities, including recreation facilities;
- On-board Milton transit buses;
- The Milton Transit Family of Services Contractors;
- Sales offices of new residential subdivisions;
- Partners participating in an employer shuttle partnership; and
- Homes and businesses that are on or near the transit routes.

With special attention being given to:

- Local Secondary Schools;
- Local seniors centres and buildings;
- Businesses in the industrial area; and
- Major employers.

The maps/schedules should be on the Town of Milton/Milton Transit web site, be AODA compliant and be easy to print.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| • to arrange and manage map and graphics work                         | 40 hours |
| • to arrange electronic and print distribution of maps as noted above | 70 hours |
| • to arrange media stories, driver updates and Social Media feeds     | 30 hours |

Budget Estimate:

- |                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| • graphics              | \$25,000 |
| • map and schedule work | \$15,000 |

### 9.3.2 Trip Planning

It is recommended that Milton Transit link its Web Site to the Metrolinx Trip Planning site.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| • to communicate with Metrolinx to maximize use of this link | 15 hours |
|--|----------|

### 9.3.3 Social Media to Disseminate Information

It is recommended that Milton Transit use Social Media, specifically Twitter, to deliver customer alerts regarding temporary service disruptions and detours.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to establish a procedure for sending alerts
  - to ensure implementation of the Town's Social Media Policy
  - to send alerts
- 50 hours

9.4 Target Market Information Outreach

9.4.1 Metrolinx/GO Transit Partnership

It is recommended that Milton Transit partner with Metrolinx/GO Transit to encourage Milton commuters to use their joint services. The partners should work together to determine whether to market basic commuter services, or to begin joint marketing efforts based on special events and programs. Initial shared programs will help to act as the blueprints for future shared endeavours.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to communicate and work with Metrolinx/GO staff
  - to develop copy and arrange for artwork, as necessary
  - to implement one new shared program in 2012
- 100 hours

Budget Estimate:

- shared graphics/printing
- \$10,000

9.4.2 Development Community/GO Transit Partnership

It is recommended that Milton Transit continue to work with the development community to inform new residents of the local Transit services. Transit staff would meet with the development community and with GO Transit staff to develop an extended partnership. This may help to reduce some of the staff resources currently required by Milton Transit for this program, while serving to broaden the scope of transit information being provided to new residents.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to meet and communicate with the development community and GO Transit
  - to update communications materials
- 150 hours

Budget Estimate:

- graphics/printing, in partnership with GO and the development community
- \$6,000

9.4.3 Student Transit Ambassadors

It is recommended that Milton Transit staff work with each of the administrations of the local secondary schools to choose one or more students to act as Milton Transit Ambassadors. Transit will educate the selected students about Milton Transit. Each Student Ambassador will be charged with keeping students at his/her school informed about Transit services, through print and/or electronic memos, making maps and schedules available at the school, sharing information electronically and answering

questions. For 2013, Milton Transit will not specifically create new materials for the students, but it will provide these Student Ambassadors with free transit passes.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to work with the administrations of the local secondary schools
  - to educate Student Ambassadors
  - to provide print materials to Student Ambassadors
  - to follow-up 4 times with Student Ambassadors over the school year
- 150 hours

**9.4.4 Milton Transit “Read & Ride” Program**

It is recommended that the “Read & Ride” partnership program with the Milton Library, which offers children free transit service to and from the library in the summer months, be continued in 2013.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to coordinate with the Library Admin staff
  - to arrange for updates to communications materials
- 25 hours  
35 hours

Budget Estimate:

- graphics/printing
- \$2,000

**9.4.5 Travel Training**

It is recommended that Milton Transit adopt and use the Metrolinx Generic Travel Training Program to help seniors and people with disabilities to better use the conventional transit services. While students, GO riders and commuters to the industrial area will be the main new targets of 2013, Metrolinx is rolling out the Travel Training Program in 2013 and it is likely that it will work with the GTHA systems, as a group, to ensure that the program can be easily implemented. For this reason, it is recommended that Milton Transit not wait until 2014 or later to begin implementation of Travel Training. Once the program is up and running, it will use incrementally less Transit staff resources over time.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to fully familiarize themselves with the Metrolinx Generic Travel Training Program
  - to adapt the program to include Milton services, fares and policies
  - to contact and work with local agencies and organizations and to actually train Travel Trainers
  - to create new transit communication materials, if necessary and to package current materials
  - to follow up with Trainers and to be available for questions
- 200 hours

## 9.5 Community Events

### 9.5.1 Passenger Appreciation Day

It is recommended that “Passenger Appreciation Day”, which offers riders a free day of transit service, be continued in 2013. The Mayor and Councillors, along with staff from the various Town departments, would be encouraged to take the time to ride the buses on this day. Transit staff would inform the public to look for Council and Town staff on vehicles, giving riders the opportunity to provide timely feedback regarding transit services.

Transit staff would work to promote this program by encouraging the local media to run one or more articles. Information outreach would also be achieved through the Town web site, the Milton Transit phone line voice messaging system, Twitter, and through word-of-mouth by Transit drivers.

#### Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to arrange for updates to electronic and communications materials 35 hours

#### Budget Estimate:

- graphics/printing (e.g. fare box covers) \$2,000

### 9.5.2 Canada Day and the Milton Street Festival

It is recommended that Canada Day Free Ride Day and the Milton Street Festival Free Ride Day continue in 2013, as these programs may help to target young families to try Milton Transit.

#### Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to communicate with other Town Departments
- to partner with local businesses for subsidies
- to work with the media
- to update electronic and print communications materials 160 hours

#### Budget Estimate:

- graphics/printing (e.g. fare box covers; flyers) \$2,000

### 9.5.3 “Stuff-A-Bus” Charity Promotion

It is recommended that the “Stuff a Bus” promotion be held once a year, at Christmas time, in conjunction with the Santa Bus program.

#### Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to arrange to have the Santa Bus decorated (the contractor does this)
- to arrange to have the buses emptied and the goods brought to charity
- to contact the media
- to write fresh copy for Town web site, Transit phone line, Twitter 50 hours

Budget Estimate:

- graphics/printing \$3,000

*9.5.4 United Way Campaign*

It is recommended to continue this primarily municipal, internal campaign and that Milton Transit staff work with the other municipal departments to determine if duties can be more closely partnered or shared to help reduce resource constraints.

Transit Staff Resource Estimates:

- to meet with other municipal departments to determine if more elements of the campaign can be partnered or shared
- to carry out the duties required by the campaign 50 hours

*9.6 A Word About Other Strategies*

It can be noted that the some Marketing Strategies are not listed in the first Annual 2013 Milton Transit Marketing Plan. While these other Strategies are very important to the long term success of Milton Transit, the 2013 Marketing Plan necessarily accounts for human and budgetary resource limitations.

Some of the new marketing programs recommended for initiation in 2013 can help to lower the cost of initiating other programs in 2014+. For example, the lessons learned in implementing the Student Ambassador Program will be useful in developing and implementing the Senior Ambassador Program. The partnerships with Metrolinx/GO Transit and with the development community/GO Transit can help to act as a reference point for time and resources needed in developing partnerships with businesses in the Industrial Area.

*9.7 Measuring the Level of Success of Marketing Programs for 2013*

It is recommended that That Milton Transit purchase, have developed for Transit, or share with the Town, a data-base format that allows staff to efficiently obtain feedback information based upon virtually any topic.

It is also recommended that Milton Transit staff use Social Media to track the public pulse on marketing and on transit services.

Over time, Student and Senior Ambassadors, as well as members of the Transit Advisory Committee may be able to assist with encouraging customers and would-be customers to provide feedback to Transit, through a variety of available mechanisms.

For measuring the programs noted in the 2013 Marketing Plan, the following measurement tools are suggested:

### 9.7.1 General Transit Information Outreach

- Transit Maps, Schedules
- Trip Planning
- Social Media as an Outreach Mechanism

To help measure how efficient and effective the above outreach mechanisms are, Milton Transit staff should review, at minimum, on a monthly basis, the feedback received through their newly developed Customer Contact data-base system. The numbers and types of complaints recorded through this system will provide Transit staff with a picture of how well their communications materials are reaching their audiences.

Additionally, Social Media can be used not only as an outreach tool, but also as a tracking tool. A weekly review of comments regarding Milton Transit on Twitter will give Transit staff a sense of the transit challenges and opportunities facing the younger target market.

### 9.7.2 Target Market Information Outreach

- Development Community/GO Transit Partnership
- Metrolinx/GO Transit Partnership
- Read & Ride Program
- Student Transit Ambassadors
- Travel Training

All of these programs are partnership-based. By keeping the communications channels open with these partners, via phone, electronic and in-person contacts, Milton Transit staff can assess which elements of the programs are working well and which ones requiring fine-tuning.

By measuring ridership changes in school zones, on GO service linked routes and on Specialized Transit and Community Bus, Milton Transit will be able to determine if the Target Market programs are reaching and influencing their audiences. For the programs noted above, ridership measurements to determine behaviour change should be reviewed approximately one year after the initiation or the upgrading of a program, to allow for potential program issues to be resolved and to ensure that weather patterns, road detours and other short term mitigating factors are taken into context.

### 9.7.3 Community Events

- Passenger Appreciation Day
- Canada Day & Milton Street Festival
- Santa Bus & Stuff A Bus
- United Way Campaign

The targets of the above programs are primarily young families, possibly some of the seniors population and the media.

Milton Transit should review its off-peak ridership within a month of each program to determine if any ridership increases are evident, especially in the off-peak hours. Transit staff should also keep a record of media stories directly related to each event, to help determine if these programs encourage media attention.

In addition to the above measurement tools, Milton Transit can, at any time and for any program, advertise and implement on-line public feedback surveys. Linked to the Transit web site, such surveys can include very specific and targeted questions (e.g. If you are a GO Transit rider, do you connect with Milton Transit? If not, why not?)

Onboard user surveys can also be conducted at relatively low cost with the assistance of the service contractor. It is suggested that the users of Saturday service, later evening services, industrial specials and new GO connector services be surveyed to determine their usage patterns and the effectiveness of marketing efforts in attracting them to these service improvements.

Milton Transit may also consider conducting an attitude survey approximately every three years. Such a survey could be contracted to a survey specialist, to mitigate the impact upon Milton Transit staff resources. It is suggested that it is important to receive feedback from both riders and non-riders. As such, targeted telephone interviews are recommended.