

TO: TSTG GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
JULY 14th, 2020

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 IMPACT ON TRANSPORTATION II**

Origin:

Covid-19 Response

Executive Summary

The transportation consortium has been working with both School Bus Operators and School Board staff to try to identify what resources will be available to provide transportation services for September. The School Boards need to know that without altering the school day model there will be insufficient capacity to transport all students to and from school. Normal planning for the school year is concluded by the end of July and to date the transportation consortium has yet to receive confirmation on what model the schools plan to deliver educational services or what subset of students are to be prioritized. Without this information, transportation staff are not able to start planning for September, which makes hitting a September 8th start date a challenge.

Comment(s):

1. The September landscape continues to change on a daily basis. Transportation staff are currently focusing on three areas besides preparing our transportation accounts. The school bus operators to determine supply, the School Boards to determine demand, and the logistics to manage a student transportation delivery system for September.
2. We are working with School Bus Operators to better gauge the number of drivers that will be available to service students come September. All operators now have re-started their training programs and are planning on training sufficient drivers to exceed the normal summer turnover of drivers. However, the historical turnover does not take into account Covid-19 related issues such as a drivers concern for their own physical safety come September and a new educational model that may challenge their availability to driver a bus at different times. These issues along with a one student per seat configuration will reduce the number of available seats. Capacity will be further reduced if students from schools situated in close geographical locations are not allowed to ride on the same bus or at least on the same bus but on different runs. The two charts below summarize the available capacity using different delivery models for each School Board.

TDSB

Model	Social Distancing Rule	Fleet Reduced Capacity	Frequency	Variations	Integration Level ****	BB	MB	MV	WC	TOTAL Capacity
7	OPSC	0	Everyday	Multiple		7872	5310	64	304	13550
8	OPSC	0	Alternate	Multiple		15745	10619	128	608	27100
9	OPSC	10	Everyday	Multiple		7085	4779	58	274	12196
10	OPSC	10	Alternate	Multiple		14169	9558	116	548	24391
11	OPSC	22	Everyday	Multiple		6140	4142	50	238	10570
12	OPSC	22	Alternate	Multiple		12281	8284	100	476	21140

TCDSB

Model	Social Distancing Rule	Driver Reduced Capacity	Frequency	Variations	Integration Level ****	BB	MB	MV	WC	TOTAL Capacity
7	OPSC	0	Everyday	Multiple		12580	1968	8	56	14612
8	OPSC	0	Alternate	Multiple		25160	3936	16	112	29224
9	OPSC	10	Everyday	Multiple		11323	1771	7	50	13151
10	OPSC	10	Alternate	Multiple		22646	3542	14	100	26302
11	OPSC	22	Everyday	Multiple		9813	1535	6	44	11398
12	OPSC	22	Alternate	Multiple		19625	3070	12	88	22795

Social Distancing Rule = 1 student per seat, siblings sit together

Driver Reduced Capacity = % reduction in capacity as a result of insufficient drivers

Frequency = whether service is provided every day or on an alternate schedule

Variation = whether the bus is used once or multiple times

Integration Level = Complexity associated with students from different schools riding on the same bus

BB = Big Bus, normal capacity 71 passengers – OPSC capacity = 23

MB = Mini Bus, normal capacity 18 passengers – OPSC capacity = 8

MV = Mini Van, normal capacity 5, passenger – OPSC Capacity = 1

WC = Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle, normal capacity 3 WC students and two Walk on students. OPSC Capacity = 2

- To date, we have not received any indication of any changes to the student population that will need service. We know some students may not return but with the reduced capacity highlighted above, a subset of the current transported population may need to be removed from transportation temporarily until such a time that service can be fully restored. The consortium will need direction on what subset of population is a priority. Depending upon the available capacity, there will be issues providing service for all families. The two charts below summarize the reason for transportation and grade of the students we are currently transporting for each School Board.

Important to note that different Departments within the School Boards are demanding prioritization of transportation for their students. Also the fact that if Special needs students are to be transported every day that we do not have the capacity to do so on an everyday schedule with the mini bus, mini-van , and WC fleet unless decisions are made to support a subset of those students on that schedule. Although we identified two wheelchair students per bus, that will also generate a shortage for spaces for students requiring this type of service. These charts are designed to allow staff to identify what combination of students can be transported given the reduced capacity issues.

TDSB

Travel Code	Grade															Grand Total
	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SPEC	
CIY	1	1	1	1	1		2	2	2		1			1		13
DIST	605	1033	945	994	958	1214	1202	43	19	31	36	32	37	5	2	7156
EMP	185	179	215	206	206	252	287	432	111	58	14	1	8			2154
ESP			3	1	1	1	4	33	41	31						115
GIFT					2	418	445	138	54	31						1088
GRAND	9	6	11	5	6	11	7									55
HAZ	10	32	57	63	75	64	76	14	24	25		1				441
REDIRECT	4	24	102	49	48	49	108	1	1							386
School Relocation	14	68	76	76	67	53	57	25		2						438
SIBL	2	5	24	18	9	6	11	7	3	4		2				91
Section 23	22	35	45	23	20	24	27	21	31	27	23	38	19	26	14	395
SPEC	238	547	328	395	362	456	414	501	423	446	356	354	335	382	350	5887
TMD	3	4	3	5	1	4	1	2	1	4	3	1		1		33
Grand Total	1093	1934	1810	1836	1756	2552	2641	1219	710	659	433	429	399	415	366	18252

TCDSB

Program	Grade															Grand Total
	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SPEC	
CIY	3	3	3	2	2	5	7	3	4	4	1	1	1	1		40
DIST	1078	1064	1109	1297	1217	1172	1104	1119	1116	1030						11306
EMP	203	208	267	278	273	285	272	297	293	243						2619
ESP	33	35	42	50	40	36	50	41	42	36	2	3	5	4		419
EXC	146	164	179	234	178	204	173	170	112	127			1			1688
GRAND	39	115	89	106	123	131	165	158	157	157						1240
HAZ	188	163	190	195	162	199	170	186	166	147						1766
MAG	11	32	31	27	30	33	37	39	39	41						320
NQ	603	603	652	643	651	681	700	611	622	580						6346
REDIRECT	21	21	12	15	18	13	10	14	6	7						137
School Relocation		32	29	14	16	29	42	41	32	32						267
Section 23	12	24	17	14	12	10	11	5	3	6	5	6	10	24	51	210
SPEC	78	352	146	175	171	235	255	217	160	158	100	73	115	91	158	2484
TMD	1		2	2		2	2	4	1	7	5	1	2	4		33
Grand Total	2416	2816	2768	3052	2893	3035	2998	2905	2753	2575	113	84	134	124	209	28875

CIY = Child in Youth (foster care)

DIST = Distance

EMP = Empty Seat
ESP = Extenuating Priority
EXC = Extenuating Circumstances
GIFT = Gifted
GRAND = Grandfathered
HAZ = Hazard
MAG = Magnet School Students
NQ = Board Approved Students
REDIRECT - School Full - Student redirected
School Relocation
SIBL = Eligible student sibling
Section 23
SPEC = student with special needs
TMD = Temporary Medical

4. Based on the charts above in number 2 and 3 we can make some assumptions regarding transportation based on supply and demand. The only way the School Boards can transport all students with a reduced capacity is if they are all on an alternate day schedule with 100% of drivers returning to work. Based on information from the School Boards and the modelling they are considering it is unlikely that this scenario will be viable for September. In order for the transportation unit to set up transportation it is imperative to know what educational model will be in place. Using those charts above, you can start to identify what combinations of students and scenarios can be implemented given the reduction in capacity.
5. Special needs transportation poses a significant challenge due to the complex nature of transportation requirements. The transportation unit strongly recommends that a consistent pick up and drop off location be used at the start of the school year to minimize disruption to bus routes and maximize available spaces. Schools would also need to dismiss these students at one single time in order to maximize the use of available seats. Consideration will need to be given to eliminating any mid-day type service, especially if the School Boards decide on a shortened day model (which is not recommended due to driver availability). Transportation will also need to know if eight month special education programming (TDSB – KELI and TCDSB – KLP & PAST) is going ahead as the available seats on a bus took into account these vehicles and students. Driver availability may be another issue with these routes as many drivers only wish to drive these eight month, 4 day a week school bus runs. At this time, there is no way to transport all special need students on an everyday schedule in any of the current capacity models.
6. Outside agencies, Section 23, and Provincial Schools will also require some consideration for service. Students in these programs are generally students with higher needs but may not technically be School Board students. These programs and centres are not always bound by School Board decisions and may create logistical issues in delivery of service. These students tend to have higher needs and should be grouped with other special needs students when reviewing capacity and numbers.

7. Some school models are indicating a change to the program day. In order to maintain the effectiveness of staggered bell times, School Boards should consider altering the program day to maintain the existing staggering at the new time of day. (i.e. existing two schools are 8:30 to 3:00 and 9:00 to 3:30 – new times should reflect the same time variance, so 8:30-1:00 and 9:00-1:30) this simply allows the existing runs paired up to continue to be utilized in the new timing scenario. Supervision schedules at schools may need to be reviewed or increased in the event that buses maximize the operational windows in order to generate greater efficiencies in coupling of buses.
8. As previously reported, we do estimate that it would take two months to set up a brand new transportation solution given a new set of standards. Given that no information is available for us to start planning bus routes the likelihood of having a solution in place to start on September 8th would be challenging. Even more challenging then confirming the model is confirming which students will still require service. A model really has to be confirmed by July 17th to allow staff the weekend to set up the accounts and have staff start on the following Monday. It is unlikely that we will have confirmation of student attendance prior to September start, which will result in many educated guesses being made in how to set up service. School Bus Operators have already indicated a concern about when the routes will be available so they can go through their process of route signup and trial run of the routes. Consideration for a partial start or delayed start for bussing should be considered so that all stakeholders are afforded an opportunity to ensure they have the information and resources available for a specific start date. This also will allow a general solution to be ready for school start and then a more localized and specific school bus plan implemented a few weeks into school. In fact, a delayed start to transportation will allow the schools time to communicate with specific families and ensure all students are advised and assigned as needed.
9. With all the issues highlighted above, there has been little in the way of communication out to stakeholders. The consortium website has been updated with basic information and a general message about returning in late August for updates. Our concern is that with the reduced capacity that some families may not have transportation for September and the absence of information will make it much more difficult to find solutions this late in the year. It is recommended that a communication go out to all families during the week of July 27 with a list of Q and As about busing for the fall.
10. Accessing alternate modes of transportation will also provide some challenges for transportation. Transit is available, and although physical distancing cannot be ensured (similar to the school bus configuration as well) on the TTC it is a regular and consistent means to get students to and from school. Similarly, taxi service will likely need to be continued to be utilized to transport students with unique needs or those travelling extreme distances where transportation via a school bus is not cost effective or of benefit to the students and family in terms of time on the vehicle.
11. The transition back to a normal delivery of service will also take some consideration on how that will be handled. If staff can maintain a dual account throughout this start-up period then a transition back can be implemented with about two weeks' notice. If resources are not available to manage the two transportation accounts in parallel then it will take that two month period to get the new transportation account back up and

running. The underlying understanding is that there is no mid step back to the business as usual model as this would complicate planning significantly.

Considerations:

Whereas Student Transportation provides an important component to many student's daily school lives, the following items are proposed for School Board Consideration:

1. That an alternate week schedule be utilized for all students to minimize driver/student confusion, to make daycare arrangements more manageable, and to take advantage of natural decontamination over the weekend.
2. That any student that does not meet the Board transportation policy or approved by Board action be suspended from transportation until such a time that additional school bus capacity is available. (empty seat, extenuating circumstance etc.)
3. That the transportation model number 12 be used for planning purposes and to identify for School Board staff the number of students spaces available so they can in turn identify any subset of students to be prioritized.
4. That any shortened day model maintain the same reduction for all schools so that school staggering remains intact. (comment 7 details)
5. That all special needs programs maintain a common bell time at the school so all students can be transported on fewer buses and maximize seat usage.
6. That eight-month programs (KELI, KLP, PAST) be suspended (or run without transportation services) until such a time that school bus capacity is available to accommodate those students.
7. That student transportation services be delayed for the first week of school (or later if planning is incomplete) to allow schools time to prepare and ensure accurate assignment of students and transportation.
8. That new applications or changes to transportation requirements be withheld until September 21st and weekly thereafter to allow the transportation system to adjust to the new demands in conjunction with consideration #7 above.

K. Hodgkinson
General Manager