



Quinte Transit Rebrands, and Partners with Other Agencies to Streamline Service



QUINTE TRANSIT:

A non-profit transportation provider offering conventional & specialized services within rural southern Ontario.



CHALLENGES:

Managing COVID- related changes, and remaining operationally- efficient with expanding service areas.



SOLUTIONS:

Forming partnerships with other agencies to keep up with customer demand, and sharing technology to improve efficiency.



RESULTS:

Ability to expand to new service areas & increase number of loops by 30%, streamline services with other agencies, and meet customer demands.

About Quinte Transit

Operating since 1990, Quinte Transit (formerly Quinte Access Transportation) is a non- profit organization, providing public and specialized transit services within rural southern Ontario. Since 2008, Quinte has provided public transit for the City of Quinte West, in the Trenton Ward. Quinte's Fixed Route transit system runs through the main arteries of Trenton and is available to anyone – including specialized transportation for persons with disabilities and seniors in the City of Quinte West, and the Municipality of Brighton.

Quinte Transit has recently undergone a modern rebranding. Changing their name from Quinte Access Transportation to the more inclusive "Quinte Transit" — and with a new colourful logo, website refresh, and important new transit agency partnerships — Quinte is actively moving their agency forward, to increase their operational efficiency, and meet the growing needs of their communities.

Identifying Opportunities with Transit Agencies, Bancroft & Belleville

Shelly Ackers, Quinte's Executive Director, is at the helm of her agency's innovation. Quinte West shares overlapping service areas and service offerings with neighbouring transit agencies, Belleville Transit and Bancroft Community Transit. Given the overlap, Shelly has proactively engaged the leaders of Belleville Transit and Bancroft Community Transit, to explore how they might work together to streamline services.



"For years now we've explored how we can work together to coordinate some of our services so that we're not duplicating, but offer services even to each other, to help facilitate some of these trips."

- Shelly Ackers,
Executive Director, Quinte Transit

Increasing Operational Efficiency & Customer Satisfaction

Shelly meets regularly with Belleville Transit's Manager of Operations, Paul Buck, and Bancroft Transit's Director of Operations, Gwen Coish. Working together, they are moving their operations forward by combining some of their individual services.

With the city of Belleville being a main hub in the region, featuring attractions like a casino and a large shopping mall, vehicles from the three agencies converge in the city at several points throughout each day. However, Bancroft drivers often find themselves driving up to 2 hours one-way to Belleville, just to fulfil their scheduled routes, regardless of rider capacity. By partnering with Belleville, Bancroft and Quinte have been able to work out a deal where their drivers meet Belleville's drivers less than an hour away. From there, customers can transfer buses, and continue to their Belleville destination, while Bancroft and Quinte drivers are able to return home and spend their time more productively, like facilitating more trips than before. The result is the formation of more regional transportation services, facilitated through shared resources. It's a win-win-win situation for the three partnering transit agencies.

Shelly explains that concessions like these go a long way to providing ***"opportunities to service more people while sharing resources."*** It also fulfils the collective mandate to ***"move as many customers as we can, by getting them to their vehicles in the first place."***

Building on Their Success

Since implementing TripSpark's **paratransit software suite**, and introducing a **fixed route solution** about 4 years ago, Shelly has been pleased with the results of Quinte's operational growth, in spite of the pandemic.

Highlights

Since the last Quinte Case Study:



14
Paratransit Vehicles
(up from 12)



7
Fixed Route Vehicles
(up from 5)



8
Routes
(Up from 4)*

Trips per month pre-COVID:

11,036

(September 2019)

Trips per month post-COVID:

8,430

(September 2021)**

Looking to build on Quinte's success, Shelly and her fellow transit agencies are exploring ways to continue to share services and save money. This is easy to achieve, since the agencies each host the same Novus platform, TripSpark's **on-demand/demand response/paratransit software suite**. There is significant cross over in services and service areas, so Quinte is working with Belleville and Bancroft to share their scheduling and routing technology so they ***"can get the right clients to the right services, without duplicating trips and services."***

Quinte Van named for
longstanding Board
member Bob W.



Partnership for Progress

In working closely with partners Belleville and Bancroft, Quinte Transit has achieved increased efficiency. Ultimately, this has saved each agency many hours, by not duplicating services. For example, by utilizing Belleville's main bus terminal, and Loyalist College as transfer points, Quinte has been able to **increase their number of loops by 30%**, while keeping turnaround times at a minimum. This enables Quinte to provide maximum service, to meet the growing demands of their riders.

Another perk of partnering is that Quinte customers can take advantage of a 1-fare platform. That is, they can seamlessly transfer from Quinte to Belleville buses, without any added cost.

Also, in changing their service model by removing restrictions for their specialized services, to cover over 1,000 square kilometers of Prince Edward County, Quinte allows conventional riders to use the service in an on-demand way.

Considering New Technology

Shelly is always looking at new ways to reach her growing customer base across Quinte's vast, rural communities, and new technology seems to be the next logical solution. Lethbridge Transit's **fixed route redesign and microtransit success story** with TripSpark, has Shelly considering implementing **Rides on Demand (RoD)** next. Lethbridge was able to **increase rider satisfaction and offer better service – despite budget cuts totaling \$350,000 –** and Shelly sees the value for Quinte as well.

Rides on Demand, a low-cost, easy-to-implement, smartphone app, is an add-on to their existing Novus platform, and will provide Quinte's riders with another cost-effective, on-demand travel option.

Shelly is also exploring a fare integration system, to allow for seamless payment options for all of Quinte's services.

Paying Tribute to Their VIPs

Quinte has a long and important history. Quinte Access Transportation was founded more than 30 years ago by Nadine Mattis, whose daughter, Tracy, used a wheelchair. Mattis understood the importance of providing a transit service with the same kind of access to people with special needs as able-bodied people. When Nadine's daughter passed away, Quinte named one of their specialized service vans "Tracy", in her honour. Since then, the tradition of naming their vehicles after important members of the Quinte Transit community, has remained. For example, there's the "Billy D." van, after Quinte's long-time supportive board member, Bill Dunk. And there's the "Patty" vehicle, named after Pat Sutherland, Quinte's beloved Transportation Coordinator. This van-naming tradition is uniquely Quinte's, and it speaks volumes to their character, and love of community.

The Future of Quinte Transit

Since Shelly Ackers started with Quinte Transit over 15 years ago, the agency, her role, and her partnerships, have grown exponentially to support population growth, and Quinte's changing customer needs. Shelly has an unwavering dedication to her community and her industry, and continually finds innovative solutions to support them.

By sourcing funding through the municipalities, the Ontario Transit Association, and even organizations like The United Way, Quinte works hard to ensure they have sustainable funding for their growing operation. Fostering open and ongoing dialogue with partnering agencies, to ensure they are maximizing their collective resources, is just one more way Shelly and Quinte Transit are leading the way for other transit agencies.

**4 recently added routes connect 4 municipalities with fixed route transit, augmented with on-demand service, providing curb-to-hub/stop, hub/stop-to-hub/stop.*

***Overall drop in trips of 23% for September 2021. However, this represents a substantial increase over September 2019 to September 2020, as ridership dropped by 41% in that YoY timeframe.*

MOVING >> << TOGETHER

TripSpark Technologies is a community transportation technology company focused on helping mid-sized transit agencies and private operators increase rider satisfaction, drive revenue, and address specific operational needs. TripSpark makes this possible by nurturing strong partnerships with our customers, offering the latest technologies and providing exceptional support.