



October 23, 2023

Members of Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

At the August 30, 2023 meeting, the Commission received a communication from Municipal Council which included a request for the London Transit Commission to:

- i) develop a detailed 2023 to 2027 work plan providing clear information on how LTC will implement Council's 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan, with particular focus on the Mobility and Transportation Strategic Area of Focus and its Outcomes, Expected Results and Strategies, but also on other Strategic Areas of Focus that are associated with LTC and its operations; and
- ii) report back to the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee with the results of i) at its meeting on October 31, 2023

The following provides an update on the initiatives outlined in the motion as well as additional items that may be of interest to the Committee.

London Transit Business Plan and Related Process

The Commission's Business Plan (Plan) and related planning process, developed in the mid-1990's have provided the crucial direction for London Transit as an organization and a transportation service. The Plan, which is updated every four years, serves:

- as a reflection of today, and as a starting point for the future;
- to focus resources on prioritized challenges and expectations;
- as a communication tool, supporting the development of informed relationships; and
- to promote accountability, transparency and continuous improvement

The Plan and related planning process are directional in nature, focusing resources on a shared vision and outcomes. The Plan serves as a critical communication tool supporting informed relationships, accountability and transparency. An integral part of the process includes the preparation and presentation of the Annual Report, which provides an assessment of performance against the key objectives of the Business Plan.

The Plan has traditionally been reviewed and updated every four years, reflecting the term of the Commission. While this approach has worked well, the transition to multi-year budgeting, with the four year budget period being offset by one year from the term of the Commission, has resulted in the need for adjustments to programs and metrics in the final year of the Plan given budget realities. Further, unknowns with respect to future Council priorities and budget realities resulted in many uncertainties at the time of Plan approval.

In an effort to mitigate these concerns, and to ensure alignment of the Commission's Business Plan with that of the Council's Strategic Plan, the Commission approved the extension of the 2019-2022 Business Plan to cover 2023, resulting in the next Business Plan covering the period of 2024 through 2027 which aligns with the multi-year budget. Development of the 2024-2027 Business Plan is underway, with the expectation that it will be finalized subsequent to Municipal Council's approval of the 2024-2027 Operating and Capital budget programs. The 2024-2027 Business Plan will include strategies to address the areas of Council's 2023 to 2027 Strategic Plan which relate to public transit services as set out below:

- Wellbeing and Safety – item 1.7b – Assess opportunities to enhance garbage collection in bus shelters

- Wellbeing and Safety – item 2.3b – Provide, enhance, and promote access to municipal subsidy programs, including public transit
- Safe London for Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse and Trans People – item 1.3b – Increase the capacity of the City of London, agencies, boards, and commissions to recognize, address, and prevent sexual violence
- Mobility and Transportation – item 1.2c – Continue to support the London Transit Commission’s Zero Emission Bus Fleet Implementation Framework
- Mobility and Transportation – item 1.3a, 1.4a and 1.6a – Support greater access to affordable, reliable public transit and paratransit through the implementation of the London Transit Commission’s 5 Year Service Plans, including growth hours
- Mobility and Transportation – item 1.4b – Support implementation of the London Transit Commission Ridership Growth Strategy initiatives
- Mobility and Transportation – item 1.4c – Support transit rider survey initiatives to improve rider satisfaction
- Mobility and Transportation – item 1.4d – Implement London’s Rapid Transit Corridors to improve reliability for current and future transit.
- Mobility and Transportation – item 1.6b – Support the implementation of Alternative Service Delivery options to areas of the city not currently served by transit

While the 2024-2027 Business Plan has not been finalized, the remainder of this report provides discussion with respect to the Commission’s plans/strategies to address each of the above items in Council’s Strategic Plan.

Wellbeing and Safety – item 1.7b – Assess opportunities to enhance garbage collection in bus shelters

London Transit’s shelter cleaning and maintenance is undertaken by a contractor as part of the shelter advertising contract. The costs associated with the cleaning and maintenance are deducted from the annual revenue share London Transit receives in return for the exclusive rights to advertise in LTC’s shelters. The current contract requires that all shelters be cleaned once every two weeks. In addition, administration can contact the contractor directly in the event of excessive garbage or glass breakage, which is required to be addressed within 48 hours of notification. London Transit shelters do not currently include garbage receptacles, noting in some cases, the City of London has placed garbage receptacles near to or adjacent to high-use stop locations.

As set out in the Commission’s Staff Report #5 dated August 30, 2023, through the contract renewal process for shelter advertising, administration requested the costs associated with enhancing the cleaning cycles for shelters from the current bi-weekly schedule to a weekly schedule as well as the option to include garbage bins and pickup in shelters. The shelter contractor does not provide garbage disposal nor pickup as part of their business model; however, they did provide a cost to increase the frequency of shelter cleaning from bi-weekly to weekly. The cost associated with this service enhancement is \$107,900 per year, expressed as a decrease in the annual revenue guarantee provided under the contract.

This item has been included in the Commission’s growth budget request for 2024, noting the change can be implemented immediately upon approval of the budget request.

Wellbeing and Safety – item 2.3b – Provide, enhance, and promote access to municipal subsidy programs, including public transit

Growth in the use of public transit fare subsidy programs will occur as growth in services is implemented resulting in overall growth of ridership. While none of the specific groups represented in the various transit fare subsidy programs are prioritized when considering service growth, London Transit administration is in discussion with area school board administration with regard to the level of conventional service provided to each of the area schools in an effort to identify areas of demand and associated responses to same as part

of the next Five Year Service Plan. Growth in each of the subsidized fare categories will be measured and reported on annually.

Safe London for Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse and Trans People – item 1.3b – Increase the capacity of the City of London, agencies, boards, and commissions to recognize, address, and prevent sexual violence

London Transit administration is represented on the Safe Cities Working Group, and participates in planning sessions and regular meetings. Participation in this initiative and any elements in future work plans is included on the Commission's annual work program as a priority. London Transit administration will provide updates to the Commission with respect to any new initiatives stemming from this group including the recommended approach to addressing same.

Mobility and Transportation – item 1.2c – Continue to support the London Transit Commission's Zero Emission Bus Fleet Implementation Framework

Transit sector experience with Zero Emission Bus Implementation indicates that a dedicated team is required to lead this transition in order to ensure a smooth transition to new bus technology with limited impacts to service performance. The initial approach that London Transit has undertaken with respect to participating in the joint procurement for a turn-key solution has somewhat mitigated the need for additional dedicated staff resources during the procurement phase; however, as work begins to get underway, additional resources will be required.

The Commission-approved status quo operating budget includes provision for two full-time equivalent positions in 2024 which will be shared between the Zero-Emission Bus project and the Highbury Facility Rebuild Project. This shared approach will suffice in 2024 given the significant work associated with both of these projects will not occur until later years. Moving existing staff to cover these requirements is not an option given resource capacity and the need to continue to maintain and support the current fleet of diesel buses.

The Commission's Growth Business Case includes the addition of three full-time equivalent positions in 2025 that will provide the appropriate resources to both the Zero-Emission Bus Implementation and the Highbury Facility rebuild. In addition, the Growth Business Case also includes the capital costs associated with the fleet transition, including the incremental costs of zero-emission buses versus diesel buses as well as the related charging infrastructure required for battery electric buses. Of note, given the initial battery-electric buses are not anticipated to be in service until 2025, the Growth Business Case includes the option for the purchase of Hybrid Diesel/Electric buses in both 2024 and 2025. While this is not part of the Commission's Zero-Emission Bus Fleet Implementation Framework, the option is being provided for Council consideration as it relates to the Climate Emergency Action Plan efforts in the near term to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions from municipal fleets.

Mobility and Transportation – item 1.3a, 1.4a, 1.4b, 1.4d, 1.6a and 1.6b – Support greater access to affordable, reliable public transit and paratransit through the implementation of the London Transit Commission's 5 Year Service Plans, including growth hours, London Transit Ridership Growth Strategy and Alternative Delivery Implementation Strategy, and implementation of London's Rapid Transit Corridors

Addressing these items individually or collectively will require a growth in service hours on the respective Conventional and Specialized Transit Services, the manner in which the service improvements are directed will determine which specific element above is addressed. The Commission's 2023 operating budget did not include any growth in either conventional or specialized service given the outstanding growth elements from the 2021 and 2022 had yet to be fully implemented. The focus for 2023 has been to implement all outstanding growth hours and then resume annual service growth going forward.

With respect to the Conventional Transit Service, the Commission gave consideration to the known outstanding service requests when determining the appropriate level of growth to request for the next multi-year budget period. The table below provides a high-level summary of the known service demands/requests from various stakeholder groups.

Conventional Transit Service Outstanding Service Improvements

Service Improvement	Issues Addressed	Estimated Annual Service Hour Requirement
Earlier service for all routes (starting at 5am)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to employment with early start times 	24,000
Extend remaining routes to 1am Mon-Sat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to employment with late finish times 	20,000
Extend Sunday Service to midnight on all routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address increased ridership and demands on Sundays Improved access to employment on Sundays 	20,000
Start remaining routes at 7am on Sundays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address increased ridership and demands on Sundays Improved access to employment with early start times 	18,000
Extend service into new growth areas including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cedarhollow Hamilton/Old Victoria area Hyde Park between Sunningdale, Wonderland and Fanshawe Park Road South Byron Wickerson Road area West 5 Southwinds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to the community to areas that are currently not served by public transit 	44,800
Improve frequencies on existing routes to be no more than two times the frequency on connecting Rapid Transit routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved reliability and viability of public transit system wide 	184,000
Improve operating times/frequencies of routes currently serving industrial areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to industrial areas 	13,000
Total Estimated Outstanding Service Hour Requirements		323,800

Note that the table above does not include all outstanding requests for new/improved service, nor the implementation of additional Alternative Service Delivery (ASD) options as identified in the Alternative Service Delivery Framework.

The Commission's Growth Business Case includes the request for an additional 25,000 annual service hours for the Conventional Transit Service in each of the four years 2024 through 2027. This request provides for an increase of approximately 7,000 annual hours above which was included in the previous multi-year budget for growth in Conventional Transit Services. It should be noted that should these incremental hours be approved by Municipal Council, they will only address approximately 1/3 of the outstanding service requirements. As discussed earlier in this report, the Commission's 2024-2027 Business Plan and related Service Plans will provide further details with respect to priority areas the approved growth hours will be directed toward, including those areas that will be addressed through Alternative Service Delivery models.

Specific to the implementation of London's Rapid Transit Corridors, a separate business case with respect to the capital requirements and updated operational costs for the corridors will be provided for Municipal Council deliberation as part of the multi-year budget process. The estimated 184,000 hours of service set out in the table above represent the incremental hours required to increase frequencies on the existing transit routes that will feed the rapid transit corridors.

With respect to Specialized Transit Services, in response to stakeholder requests and direction from Municipal Council for increased service levels, the Commission's Growth Business Case includes the request for a total of 58,000 service hours to be added incrementally with 20,000 hours added in each of 2024 and 2025, followed by 10,000 hours in 2026 and 8,000 hours in 2027.

Service improvements for both Conventional and Specialized Services will be confirmed subsequent to the budget approval process, and will be incorporated into the Commission's 2024-2027 Business Plan and related Service Plans.

Mobility and Transportation – item 1.4c – Support transit rider survey initiatives to improve rider satisfaction

The annual Voice of the Customer survey, while put on hold during the pandemic, is scheduled to resume in 2023 and has been included in the status quo budget for future years. As set out in the Commission's Staff Report #3, dated September 27, 2023, the 2023 surveys are scheduled to take place in November, with results available in early 2024. Results of the surveys will be included as input in the Commission's 2024-2027 Business Plan, Service Plans, and Accessibility Plan Updates, all of which will be finalized in early 2024 subsequent to finalization of the Commission's 2024-2027 Operating and Capital budget programs.

In addition to the items specifically referenced in Council's Strategic Plan, the following provides an update on a number of other strategic areas of focus included on the Commission's work program.

Implementation of Outstanding 2021 and 2022 Service Improvements

No service growth budget was allocated to 2023 given the deferral in implementing the 2021 and 2022 service plans as the result of the pandemic and related resource shortages. The plan for 2023 conventional service has been to implement the deferred service improvements as resources became available throughout the year, versus waiting until September to implement all changes at once. The following provides an overview of the service improvements implemented to date in 2023 on the conventional transit service:

- In April 2023, approximately 12,000 of the 36,000 hours of outstanding service were implemented. These changes focused on improving frequency during periods where routes were operating at 60-minute headways and reducing this to 30-minutes. These changes were well received by both passengers and Operators.
- Additional service changes were implemented in June 2023 which focused on adding additional round trip time on Route 2 in order to improve schedule adherence and reliability of the route and frequency improvements on Route 20. In addition, Route 38 was introduced in June to provide service to the Innovation Park Industrial area.
- In September, changes were implemented to increase running time on Route 16, and increase frequencies on Routes 25, 102 and 106. Saturday service was introduced on Route 24, and a new branch to Route 36 was introduced providing service operating north of Oxford along Clarke Road, Huron and Robin's Hill Road.
- In February 2024, service changes will be made to Route 25 during the AM Peak and early evening periods to improve frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes. These changes are anticipated to improve the current crowding conditions being experienced on the route during these time periods.
- The remainder of the service improvements (approximately 5,000 hours) will be implemented in 2024 as resources are available, noting the primary factor impacting the ability to proceed with these outstanding improvements is the requirement of additional buses. Ongoing delays with respect to the receipt of the 2023 replacement bus order now not anticipated for delivery until first quarter 2024 coupled with ongoing resource challenges in the Mechanic complement have resulted in the determination that proceeding with the remaining improvements in February is not possible. This situation will be closely monitored and remaining changes will be implemented as soon as possible.

With respect to the Specialized Service, administration has worked with the contractor throughout 2023 to identify solutions to the resource and supply chain issues impacting their ability to increase service levels.

Commission approval of an alternative vehicle for use in the delivery of the specialized service will see 10 additional vehicles added to service by the end of 2023, which will bring service levels to the level approved for 2023 (including all outstanding growth hours). The table below sets out a high level overview of the progression to date as well as the planned full service levels by the end of 2023.

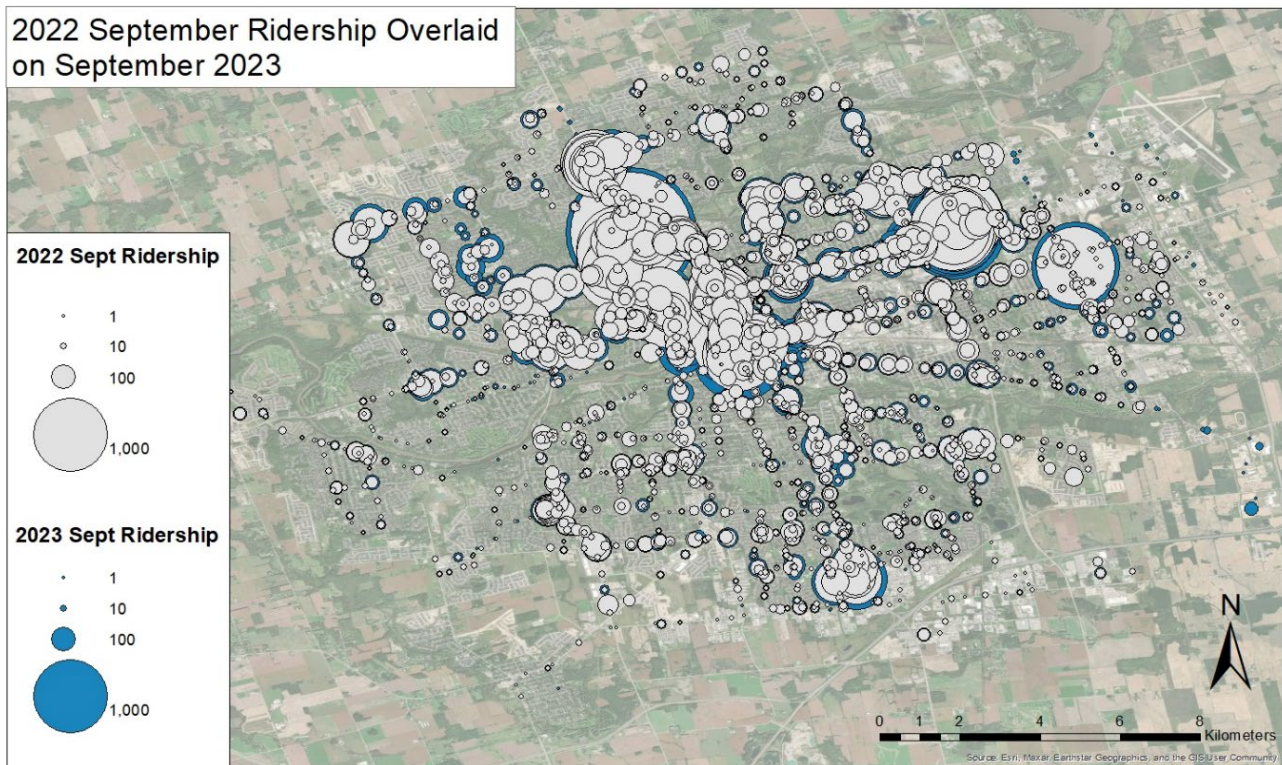
	Jan	Aug	Oct	End of 2023
Average Weekday Scheduled Service Hours	395	450	475	570
Average Weekday Rides	830	945	998	1,200
% Increase		14%	6%	20%

All outstanding hours for the remainder of 2023 will be assigned to schedules during the period of 8:00am to 6:30pm on weekdays noting this is the period of highest demand. With these remaining vehicles in place, service levels will be reflective of all of the growth hours outstanding from the 2021 and 2022 service plans. These service levels will remain in place for 2024, noting that some adjustments to the shifts may be undertaken to better align service with demand.

2023 Conventional & Specialized Service Monitoring

Ongoing operational challenges with crowding and schedule adherence are being experienced on a daily basis and as such the Planning department has been assessing options to make changes to service to address these issues, albeit without the ability to increase the number of peak period vehicles in operation. Assessments included a review of all routes in an effort to identify any routes with high frequency that had runs that were under-utilized; noting should this be the case, there would be opportunity to reallocate resources to other routes. As shown in Figure I, ridership increases over September 2022 levels are occurring system-wide, and as such, reallocating resources from one route to another will just move and potentially exacerbate the issue.

Figure I – 2022 September Ridership Overlaid on September 2023



As part of the current Five Year Service Plan, minimum ridership targets by revenue service hour as well as triggers to consider increases in frequency were established. The minimum ridership targets as well as the thresholds requiring additional frequency vary by route classification. As set out in the tables below, virtually all route categories are at a point that frequency increases are warranted based on the set triggers in the service planning guidelines.

Revenue Service Hour Boarding Minimums and Triggers by Route Type and Service Day

	Weekday		Saturday	Sunday
Express Routes	Day	Evening	All Day	All Day
Minimum Productivity Targets	30	30	30	30
Productivity Trigger for Service Improvement	40	40	40	40
Base Arterial Routes				
Minimum Productivity Targets	50	30	30	20
Productivity Trigger for Service Improvement	75	50	50	30
Minor Arterial Routes				
Minimum Productivity Targets	25	20	30	15
Productivity Trigger for Service Improvement	45	30	30	25
Local Routes				
Minimum Productivity Targets	20	15	15	15
Productivity Trigger for Service Improvement	40	25	25	20
Industrial Routes				
Minimum Productivity Targets	15	15	N/A	N/A
Productivity Trigger for Service Improvement	25	20	N/A	N/A

September 2023 Weekday Revenue Service Hour Boardings by Route Category

Weekday	Morning Peak	Base	Afternoon Peak	Early Evening	Late Evening
Express Routes	32.6	51.7	53.5	38.3	16.3
Base Arterial Routes	36.5	53.1	55.1	44.0	22.6
Minor Arterial Routes	31.9	39.8	45.9	34.9	15.8
Local Routes	32.4	41.2	45.2	31.3	14.2
Industrial Routes	27.0	15.9	30.8	3.4	0.0

September 2023 Saturday Revenue Service Hour Boardings by Route Category

Saturday	Early Morning	Morning Peak	Base	Early Evening	Late Evening
Express Routes	7.5	22.3	52.1	40.9	23.5
Base Arterial Routes	18.8	31.5	50.3	48.4	27.3
Minor Arterial Routes	13.3	24.6	39.2	36.7	18.9
Local Routes	13.1	24.8	38.1	35.6	20.3

September 2023 Sunday Revenue Service Hour Boardings by Route Category

Sunday	Early Morning	Morning Peak	Base	Late Evening
Express Routes	11.0	36.2	53.6	32.9
Base Arterial Routes	28.9	40.0	51.8	37.6
Minor Arterial Routes	16.5	30.6	39.1	26.0
Local Routes	18.7	31.0	36.4	25.9

Legend

Below the minimum boardings per revenue vehicle hour
At or above the minimum boardings per revenue vehicle hour
At or above the trigger requiring a review for the additional of frequency

As illustrated in the map and tables above, reallocating resources at this time is not an option to address crowding concerns or schedule adherence issues. Planning also assessed the option of realigning buses along a route to try to smooth out the loads across all buses. Through the assessment, this option was also determined to not be feasible at this time as adjusting the schedules, especially on the longer routes, could have negative impacts on existing transfer connections and in turn, potentially result in moving the heaviest crowding to another run on the route.

Tripper buses will continue to be utilized to provide additional capacity on the system as resources allow. Work will continue to implement the outstanding service improvements as soon as operationally feasible.

Planning staff recently attended an Ontario Public Transit Association meeting of transit planning staff from across the province where responding to increased ridership demands with limited resources was one of the agenda topics. Unfortunately, most Ontario systems are experiencing the same difficulties with respect to labour and supply chain issues, resulting in difficulties responding to the growing demand. Of interest, a number of transit systems indicated that travel patterns for post-secondary student populations had significantly shifted, with more students living further from campus in an effort to reduce their housing costs. A review of the London map set out earlier in this report indicates a similar issue, with growth being experienced in many of the peripheral areas of the city, where route frequencies tend to be lower. Responding to this shift requires increased frequencies, which requires additional buses. As set out in the Commission's Staff Report #4, dated October 25, 2023, bus deliveries have become problematic, noting there is still not an estimated delivery date for the expansion buses ordered in June. Should these buses not be delivered by the fall of 2024, service improvements will be limited to those that can be undertaken without the need for additional buses (off-peak).

With respect to the Specialized Service, collection of data with respect to completed trips, requested trip times and common pickup and drop off locations has been ongoing through 2023 in an effort to identify the days/times that additional resources will be dedicated to as they become available. The review indicated that the highest demand for trips is occurring from 8:00am to 6:00pm Monday through Friday. Additionally, the Sunday morning time period was identified as a period of increased demand. As increased resources have become available, they have been applied to vehicle shifts for the following time periods:

- 8:00am to 6:30pm on weekdays
- 8:00am to 2:00pm on Saturdays
- 8:00am to 6:00pm on Sundays

Currently there are 38 vehicles scheduled per day Monday through Friday, with two additional show up vehicles staffed to offset any lost time that may occur on the day of service. In the event of no lost time, these vehicles are incorporated into the daily schedule and utilized to assist with schedule adherence issues and same day trip requests. By the end of 2023 there will be a total of 50 vehicles in operation on the specialized service to deliver the budgeted hours.

2024 Service Plans

The draft 2024 Conventional Service Plan will be tabled at the Commission's November 29, 2023 meeting, noting the plan cannot be finalized until such time as the growth budget allocation has been confirmed. The Draft Plan is tabled to allow for appropriate stakeholder consultation in advance of finalizing the planned improvements. As per past practice, Members of Council will be provided a copy of the draft report and will also be directly contacted should there be any stakeholder consultations scheduled in their respective wards.

With respect to the Specialized Service, as set out earlier in this report, service levels can begin being adjusted subsequent to budget approval for growth hours and the securement of the required resources to deliver the hours.

Responding to Construction-Related Service Impacts

Through the majority of 2023, 19 Conventional Service routes have been impacted by ongoing construction projects resulting in extended and often inconvenient detours for transit riders. A number of the detours during the 2023 construction season have been significant with routes detoured further away from the regular

routing than would traditionally be expected due to multiple construction projects occurring in the same area at the same time. A special construction connector for Route 20 was implemented to allow service to be provided to the Mornington area during the Quebec and East London Link Phase II projects were underway.

While many of the detours have been long term in nature, there have also been a significant number of road closures (for construction, parades, utility work, etc.) that London Transit has not been made aware of with sufficient advance notice. This has resulted in creating last minute detours with little to no advance notice for customers. Responding to detours (both planned and last minute) has required approximately 75% of the Planning department's resources, which in turn has placed pressure on the 2024 service planning process.

Given ongoing resource challenges, the ability to add additional buses or additional time to affected routes to mitigate schedule adherence issues has not been possible. This has resulted in significant reliability issues system wide, throughout the majority of 2023.

The nature and extent of construction across the City has also negatively impacted the schedule adherence of the specialized service as well as the ability to get customers as close as possible to their destination while ensuring an accessible drop off location and pathway to their final destination.

Upgrade of Scheduling, Automatic Vehicle Location and Interactive Voice Response Software – Conventional Transit Services

The software utilized for scheduling, automatic vehicle location and interactive voice response for the Conventional Transit Service will be updated in 2024. In addition to increased system stability, this upgrade will provide enhanced features allowing for better communication of detours as well as more accurate vehicle location positioning and more precise real time bus arrival information. This project will require significant staff resources in order to ensure a smooth transition that does not negatively impact service delivery.

Implementation of Smart Card Infrastructure on Specialized Service

The initiative to implement portable smart card readers on the Specialized Service was carried forward from 2022 as the result of supply chain issues relating to the hardware required for implementation. A purchase order has been issued to the vendor and work is currently underway on this project. The vendor is aware this is a priority item and has indicated Q1 2024 as the timeframe for project completion.

Assessment of Specialized Service Booking System and Booking Window

The software currently utilized for the Specialized Service booking/scheduling was installed in 2016. During the pandemic, ownership changed twice, with the end result being a product that continues to be maintained; however, the turnaround time on service calls is unacceptable, resulting in administration having to implement workarounds to problems identified with the software. Additionally, a number of outstanding enhancements expected to be implemented (including live vehicle tracking) are no longer moving forward.

Given the status of the current system, administration has determined that a replacement system is necessary and is assessing various options moving forward. LTC administration is currently in the process of assessing options associated with replacing the software, noting the requirements that the replacement software include the following features at time of implementation:

- Customer portal that allows for on-line trip management including trip booking and cancellation.
- Real-time arrival information available to customers via customer portal, text/email notification.
- Ability to ensure equal access in trip booking between customers utilizing online booking with those utilizing telephone.
- Customizable parameters for trip scheduling that align with LTC service targets (length of time on vehicle, schedule adherence, etc.).
- Detailed reporting of key service metrics (same day bookings, split between demand and subscription bookings, non-accommodated by time of day, etc.).

Administration has participated in demonstrations of potential software solutions, and is now undertaking due diligence with respect to speaking with transit systems that are currently utilizing the software options in order to confirm the systems perform in the manner in which the vendor indicated during the demonstration. It is anticipated that further information with respect to this undertaking will be available at the Commission's November meeting.

Budget associated with this software replacement has been included in the 2024 Capital Budget program, approved by the Commission at the August 30, 2023 meeting.

Highbury Facility Rebuild

London Transit administration has continued to work closely with civic administration on the funding request for the Highbury Facility Rebuild Project. The project has been submitted to the Federal Government by the Province of Ontario; and staff have responded to a number of follow up questions. At this time, no confirmation of funding has been received.

Subsequent to funding approval, the next steps in the process will be to undertake the detailed design of the replacement facility followed by a request for proposal and contract award for the work.

2024 Fare Adjustment

At the September 2023 meeting, the Commission approved a fare adjustment that will take effect on January 1, 2024. This adjustment was deemed necessary during multi-year budget deliberations. The fare adjustment attempts to balance the increased costs associated with the delivery of public transit services between the rider and increased City of London investment. The table below provides the changes to fares that will be effective January 1, 2024.

London Transit Commission Fare Adjustment Effective January 1, 2024

Fare Category/Type	Current Fare	New Fare (Jan 1, 2024)	Increase
Cash			
Adult	\$3.00	\$3.50	17%
Child (12 and under) ⁽¹⁾	\$1.50	\$1.75	17%
Ticket (Stored Value)			
Adult	\$2.25	\$2.65	18%
Senior ⁽²⁾	\$1.70	\$2.00	18%
Youth (13-17)	\$1.80	\$2.12	18%
Child ⁽¹⁾	\$1.30	\$1.53	18%
Monthly Pass			
Citipass	\$95.00	\$112.00	18%
Weekday	\$81.00	\$95.00	18%
Post-Secondary	\$82.00	Eliminated	N/A
Student Summer	\$95.00	Eliminated	N/A
Park & Ride	\$70.00	\$83.00	18%
Youth (13-17) ⁽²⁾	\$61.00	\$72.00	18%
Income Related ⁽²⁾	\$61.00	\$72.00	18%

Notes:

- (1) Children currently ride free under a City of London subsidy, fares in table reflect those that would be in place should the subsidy no longer be provided
- (2) Senior tickets and Youth and Income related passes are priced based on the current City of London subsidy applied to each fare category

Public Transit Advocacy

London Transit is a member of both the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) and the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA). In addition to providing opportunities for the sharing of best practices with peer transit systems, these Associations undertake advocacy efforts at both the Provincial (OPTA) and Federal (CUTA) levels.

A recent survey of Ontario transit systems undertaken by OPTA included the following findings:

- Transit systems experienced an average increase in operating costs in 2023 of 14%
- Transit systems experienced an average increase in capital project costs in 2023 of 41%
- Transit systems implemented fare adjustments to address budget shortfalls:
 - 2023 – 50% of systems increased fares
 - 2024 – 47% of systems will increase fares
- Strategies utilized to address shortfalls:
 - Adjust/reduce service levels
 - Raise fares
 - Draw on reserves
 - Identify new sources of revenue
 - Defer projects
 - Find other efficiencies

While all of the aforementioned strategies are common practice as part of a budget exercise, implementing these strategies at a time when ridership is growing beyond what can be accommodated on current services and when riders are already struggling to make ends meet due to inflationary pressures on the cost of living is contrary to a number of longstanding best practices with respect to public transit services, including but not limited to the following:

- Services should be enhanced in preparation for anticipated growth in ridership demand, in order to ensure a quality experience for new transit riders. The province of Ontario, and virtually all municipalities across the province are experiencing unprecedented growth due to higher than forecasted immigration. Not only has this resulted in increased housing costs due to limited stock, it has resulted in increased pressure on transit service that are already operating at or beyond capacity.
- Fare adjustments should be aligned with service improvements in order to mitigate a loss of ridership. Riders will pay for a service they believe there is value in. Fare adjustments coupled with service reductions and/or lack of service growth to respond to increased ridership pressure are more likely to result in ridership losses.

In response to these issues, OPTA and CUTA have been undertaking advocacy efforts focused on what is required to avoid the aforementioned responses which will inevitably lead to the downward spiral created when fares increase and service decreases resulting in ridership declines. The transit sector experienced this phenomenon in the 1990's when provincial funding levels were significantly reduced and municipalities did not have the means to make up the shortfall. The resulting ridership losses took in excess of ten years to be restored. The remainder of this report provides an overview of the current OPTA and CUTA advocacy efforts.

Ontario Public Transit Association – Provincial Advocacy

In light of the significant operating and capital budget shortfalls being experienced at transit systems across the province, OPTA advocacy will be focused on increasing the level of funding provided by the Province of Ontario that is directed at investment in public transit services.

The total available PGT for the 2022/23 allocation year is \$379.5 million, which is made up of the \$0.02 per litre allocation and a top up of approximately \$80 million to maintain pre-pandemic funding levels. London's allocation has been calculated at \$11,052,415 which is slightly less than the previous year's allocation. For 2024, this entire amount is allocated to the conventional transit service status quo operating budget.

On October 30, 2023, OPTA will be holding an advocacy day at Queens Park during which transit system members will meet with Ministers and Ministry staff to discuss the need for increased provincial funding which will enable transit systems to grow to meet the current and future demand associated with continued growth in population across the province. The final materials for this advocacy effort were not finalized at

time of report writing; however, administration is participating in the creation of same and will also be participating in this event.

Canadian Urban Transit Association – Federal Advocacy

On September 20, 2023, CUTA held its annual Policy Forum in Ottawa which focused on three key topics; the policy intersections between transit and housing, ensuring safety for transit riders and workers, and funding and financing public transit. Attendees at the forum included transit system, business and labour representatives, as well as staff from various federal government ministries. The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities was the keynote speaker.

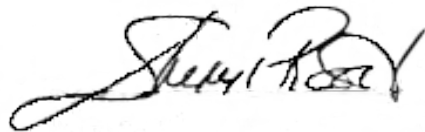
On September 21, CUTA members participated in a number of meetings with various federal Members of Parliament and Ministerial staff to provide CUTA's recommendations for programs/initiatives to address the aforementioned issues facing transit systems across the country. The key recommendations tabled during these meetings included:

- Shifting the start date of the Permanent Public Transit Fund into the 2024 budget (currently scheduled for the 2026 budget) to assist transit systems in addressing infrastructure deficits;
- Open the intake process for the Permanent Public Transit Fund in 2024 so transit systems can begin the planning and application process in advance of the funding being made available;
- Encourage the Federal Government to take a leadership role in an upcoming national taskforce, along with provinces, local governments, and transit agencies, to develop a national public transit strategy with a new funding model for Canada's public transit agencies;
- Establish an application-based transit safety and security fund that allocates \$75 million per year for two years to assist transit agencies with the specific expenditures needed to prevent, combat, and respond to safety and security incidents on their systems; and
- Strengthen penalties for assaults on transit workers by amending subsection 269.01 of the Criminal Code, expanding beyond its current definition of transit operators to include all transit workers.

In the coming weeks, CUTA will be releasing a document which identifies a number of recommendations for all levels of government with respect to how public transit can help tackle Canada's housing crisis. This document is the result of extensive consultation across the country with transit systems, municipalities, provincial governments, the federal government, developers, housing stakeholders, and academia. This document will be the basis for future ongoing discussions with all stakeholders on this critical issue.

Representatives from the Commission and LTC administration will be in attendance at the meeting to present this report and will be pleased to provide further details on any of these updates.

Regards



Sheryl Rooth
Chair, London Transit Commission