



BRIEFING NOTE

National Transit Strategy

December 19, 2011

Issue:

1. Need for a National Transit Strategy which would include the following key elements:
 - dedicated federal transit investment to maintain current and expand transit service levels across Canada
 - federal tax incentives for individuals choosing transit (e.g. tax exemption for employer provided transit benefit)
 - a requirement for communities to have integrated land-use and transportation master plans that have transit as a primary means of serving future growth in travel demands
 - intergovernmental cooperation to ensure accountability measures are in place
2. Consistent with the elements of a National Transit Strategy, London is seeking federal investment in partnership with the province and city in its bus rapid transit program targeted for approval as part of the City's Transportation Master Plan in 2012.

Key Messages:

- there is a significant need for transit infrastructure investment supporting asset renewal, replacement and expansion.
- the investment is critical not only to maintain current service levels but to expand, noting increasing demand (e.g. in London, since 1996, transit ridership has increased by 83% while service level has increased by only 15%)
- the investment is critical to support shared municipal, provincial and federal objectives of:
 - economic vitality and competitiveness
 - improved access and mobility
 - increased safety of transportation
 - improved public health
 - improved local and global environment

Background:

Communities across the country are relying on revitalized and expanded public transit systems to help address major challenges such as air pollution, congestion, community access/mobility and economic competitiveness.

At the same time local governments, and London is no exception, are finding it increasingly difficult to even maintain current service levels. There is a critical need for long term sustainable investment by senior levels of government to help maintain and expand local transit systems. The current funding model (that largely relies on passenger fares and municipal tax base) is not sustainable.

The need for a National Transit Strategy has been supported by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Urban Transit Association.