

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON OCTOBER 4, 2016
FROM:	JOHN BRAAM, P. ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER
SUBJECT:	SOUTHWEST ONTARIO'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Environmental and Engineering Services and City Engineer, the following actions be taken with respect to Southwest Ontario Public Transportation Opportunities:

- a) the principles of the New Directions : Advancing Public Transportation in Southwestern Ontario report **BE ENDORSED**; and
- (b) the Ministry of Transportation **BE REQUESTED** to develop an integrated multi-modal Public Transportation Master Plan for Southwestern Ontario, in partnership with the Government of Canada, Southwestern Ontario municipalities, and the public transportation service providers (VIA Rail, Metrolinx and the Ontario Motor Coach Association) serving the region;

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Civic Works Committee - June 19, 2012 - London 2030 Transportation Master Plan
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – November 9, 2015 - Shift Rapid Transit Update
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – May 5, 2016 - Shift Rapid Transit Business Case
- Planning and Environment Committee – June 13, 2016 – The London Plan

COUNCIL'S 2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

Municipal Council has recognized the importance of rapid transit, improved mobility and improving travel to other cities through better transportation connectivity specifically regional transit connections in its 2015-2019 - Strategic Plan for the City of London ([2015 – 2019 Strategic Plan](#)) as follows:

Strengthening Our Community

- Healthy, safe, and accessible city

Building a Sustainable City

- Robust infrastructure
- Convenient and connected mobility choices
- Strong and healthy environment
- Beautiful places and spaces
- Responsible growth

Growing our Economy

- Local, regional, and global innovation
- Strategic, collaborative partnerships

Leading in Public Service

- Collaborative, engaged leadership
- Excellent service delivery

BACKGROUND

The efficient and safe movement of people, goods and services throughout our city, to the region and beyond is the fundamental element of Mobility Framework within The London Plan. Our street network, rapid transit and local transit system, along with our railway network and airport, are part of a greater Southwestern Ontario transportation network that is a key to the continued economic growth of the region.

A convenient and connected public transportation system which provides flexible, reliable and viable transportation mobility choices for residents, will provide congestion relief along our City streets, better goods movements, enhance social equity, reduce air emissions and provide commuters with the speed and comfort required to make non automobile travel, sustainable and environmentally friendly.

London, like many communities in Southwest Ontario, are acutely aware of the transportation challenges present in our region. The intercommunity linkages that helped to build our region have declined over time and residents and businesses now find it more challenging to move between communities.

Municipal Council, at its meeting held on September 15, 2015 resolved:

That the following actions be taken with respect to the Province of Ontario's examination of the optimal use of transportation modes across the province, including recommendations on modernizing and appropriately regulating the intercity bus regime to ensure it remains an attractive and affordable travel option for Ontarians, as expressed in the 2014/2015 Mandate Letter for the Ministry of Transportation:

- a) *the Mayor BE REQUESTED to submit a letter to the Minister of Transportation requesting that the Minister include in the above-noted review, consideration of the role of the Ontario Highway Transport Board, with particular attention to opportunities to increase competition and encourage enhanced intercommunity public transit;*
- b) *the Minister of Transportation BE ENCOURAGED to complete a regional transportation mobility plan for Southwestern Ontario, including significant consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders, to identify opportunities for integration between transportation modes and across communities, and to identify gaps in the mobility network in the region; and,*
- c) *the Province of Ontario BE ADVISED that Municipal Council commends the Province of Ontario for taking leadership in moving towards High Speed Rail connecting Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, London and Windsor, as it will have a significant benefit for all of the Southwest Region, and urges the Province of Ontario to continue to pursue its future implementation. (6/22/SPPC)*

DISCUSSION

An integrated public transportation network of urban transit, intercommunity bus and rail service will afford Ontarians the widest variety of transportation options and unlock the economic potential of the region.

Based on the 2010 London Travel Survey, there are about 23,350 person trips into the City on a daily basis. These trips range from commuting to work, recreation, shopping and connecting with families and/or communities.

The City of London recognizes the environmental implications of continued fossil fuel use and the growing impacts of climate change. At an estimated 35%, transportation emissions are the single-largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the province. In London, the percentage is even higher with 45% of GHG emissions associated with the transportation sector. The City's Community Energy Action Plan (CEAP 2014 – 2018), sets overall goals to reduce the GHG generation consistent with the Province of Ontario's goals and includes measures related to transportation.

In 2015, London managed to reduce its total GHG emissions to levels that are 8% below 1990 levels. This surpasses the first milestone goal of London's CEAP and the Provincial target – to reduce total GHG emissions to six percent below 1990 levels by 2014. On a per person basis, Londoners and London businesses released 25 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions in 2015 than they did in 1990, along with reductions in air pollution emissions (e.g., nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds) from fossil fuel use. A further reduction in transportation GHG emission is vital to not only London's goals and targets but also Ontario and Canada as transportation is lagging behind other sectors with respect to GHG reductions.

Partnerships

Establishing partnerships at all levels of government and across our region is key to building strong communities. The City of London believes that a partnership approach to developing an integrated transportation network is key. The willingness and ability of all stakeholders to come to the table and establish shared goals, visions and ideals is essential to helping our region thrive. Additionally, partnerships provide significant value adds when approaching policy, planning, funding and service delivery. Shared policy development can lead to more thoughtful, meaningful and workable solutions to shared challenges and opportunities.

In order to develop a Southwestern Ontario Public Transportation system, a collaborative and successful partnership amongst federal, provincial, and municipal governments, Crown Corporations, public agencies and operators (public and private) is required.

The City has been participating in numerous provincial government consultations on various transportation initiatives such as Intercommunity Bus Modernization and High Speed Rail.

While each of these initiatives are moving forward individual components, there is a need for a systematic approach to the development of an integrated public transportation solution for Southwestern Ontario. The overall solution needs to incorporate multiple elements as municipalities across the region have varying needs and requirements.

Multi-Modal Terminals - A multi-modal terminal physically connects and integrates all other elements of the public transportation system. Whether the traveller's trip begins on foot, bicycle, car or a local bus, the multi-modal terminal provides the traveller with connections to the rest of the local urban transit system and inter-community services, ranging from traditional bus and passenger rail to highspeed and high-speed passenger rail services that are appropriate for the planned travel distance.

Urban Transit - The role of urban transit is to address local mobility and reduce automobile dependency and resulting GHG. The quality and quantity of urban transit options can play a major role in decisions people make about where they want to live and work, and where businesses choose to invest.

Within London, the Shift Bus Rapid Transit initiative, along with an enhanced local transit system, will provide the city with an integrated service that will connect residents to other mobility providers and reduce the dependency on the single occupancy vehicle.

Inter-Community Bus Service - Once served by a web of privately operated bus routes that connected more than 100 communities, Southwestern Ontario's inter-community bus services is but a shadow of its former self. Inter-community bus can and should play a vital role within a regional transportation system for Southwestern Ontario. Not only can such inter-community bus service create unmatched mobility across the region, it can provide integrated connections and a feeder service to the higher-order rail and urban transit systems across Southwestern Ontario and beyond.

GO Transit - Serving Southwestern Ontario through its Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)-centered bus and rail routes from Kitchener, Guelph, Barrie, and (through a VIA connection) Aldershot, the Metrolinx-operated GO Transit system is a vital piece of the public transportation puzzle. Ongoing GO expansion will improve mobility in the easternmost section of Southwestern Ontario. However, such expansions must be properly integrated with transit systems and services to the west of Kitchener to avoid unintended negative consequences to that part of the public transportation system.

High-Performance Rail - Fast, frequent and affordable intercity passenger rail services are at the core of many successfully integrated public transportation systems around the world. Incremental enhancements to the existing VIA Rail corridors and to its equipment fleet provide the opportunity to realize significant and affordable improvements to establish the VIA Rail service as a High-Performance Rail (HPR) system throughout Southwestern Ontario. Such investment provides incremental improvement opportunities, which if properly integrated, will develop travel patterns and demands in support of a potential High-Speed Rail.

High-Speed Rail - The ultimate evolution of intercity passenger rail is High-Speed Rail (HSR). An HSR system across Southwestern Ontario will generally require straighter rail alignments than the existing rail corridors can provide. The Government of Ontario is currently examining the potential of HSR to connect Toronto, Kitchener, London and Windsor through a feasibility study and it is anticipated that recommendations will be brought forward in the fall of 2016. Successful implementation of such a significant and complex rail investment will require integration with a strong Southwestern Ontario public transportation system that ensures community mobility and provides convenient access to the HSR system throughout Southwestern Ontario.

The City has also been working with the County of Oxford on advocating for a systemic approach to the development of an integrated public transportation solution for Southwestern Ontario.

The County has developed an advocacy document that outlines the principles of a Public Transportation Partnership. The document provides the context to the importance of each element as part of an overall strategy and is intended to serve as a tool kit for discussion.



The material has been used as the basis for outreach to the Southwestern Ontario Urban Mayors Caucus, and appropriate federal, provincial, Crown Corporation, agency and transit operators (public and private).

At the August 2016 meeting of the Mayors of Southwest Ontario, the following resolution was approved:

1. *That the Mayors of Southwest Ontario (MOSO) support the principles of “New Directions: Advancing Public Transportation in Southwestern Ontario”;*
2. *That MOSO, together with the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC), urges the Ontario Government to develop an integrated multi-modal Public Transportation Master Plan for Southwestern Ontario, in partnership with the Government of Canada, Southwestern Ontario municipalities, and the public transportation service providers (VIA Rail, Metrolinx and the Ontario Motor Coach Association) serving the region; and*
3. *That MOSO and WOWC members, as well as their respective Councils, communicate the importance of this Public Transportation Master Plan for the region with their respective Members of Provincial Parliament and the Ontario Minister of Transportation.*

The New Directions: Advancing Public Transportation in Southwestern Ontario document is attached under separate cover.

CONCLUSION

In order to develop a long term strategy and plan for a successful Southwestern Ontario Public Transportation system, a partnership with federal, provincial, and municipal governments, Crown Corporations, public agencies and operators (public and private) is required.

The New Directions : Advancing Public Transportation in Southwestern Ontario document provides a tool kit that can be used as a advocacy tool with key stakeholders and partners at the local, regional, provincial and federal level. It is recommended that Municipal Council endorse the principles identified in the document as a basis for a integrated multi-modal Public Transportation Master Plan for Southwestern Ontario.

SUBMITTED BY:	REVIEWED & CONCURRED BY:
EDWARD SOLDI, P.ENG. DIRECTOR, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION	KATE GRAHAM, DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC INNOVATION
RECOMMENDED BY:	
JOHN BRAAM, P.ENG. MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER	

Attach: Appendix "A" – New Directions: Advancing Public Transportation in Southwestern Ontario (under separate cover)