

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON JULY 17, 2017</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>KELLY SCHERR, P.ENG., MBA, FEC MANAGING DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HIGH SPEED RAIL</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Environmental and Engineering Services and City Engineer, the following actions **BE TAKEN** with respect to High Speed Rail initiative:

- a) that the implementation of a High Speed Rail link between Windsor and Toronto **BE ENDORSED** as a priority for the City of London; and
- b) that an integrated multimodal transportation mobility hub **BE CONSIDERED** for downtown London which will integrate the Provincial High Speed Rail station with rapid transit, local transit, VIA Rail and other transportation providers;
- c) the Mayor **BE REQUESTED** to submit a letter to the Premier of Ontario and Minister of Transportation reaffirming the City of London's support of the High Speed Rail initiative and that the letter be circulated to the Provincial and Federal Party Leaders, Federal Minister of Transport, Federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, and London MPPs and MPs.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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- Civic Works Committee - June 19, 2012 - London 2030 Transportation Master Plan
- Civic Works Committee - October 4, 2016 – Southwest Ontario's Public Transportation Opportunities

<b>COUNCIL'S 2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN</b>
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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

**Growing our Economy**

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

### Leading in Public Service

- Strong and healthy environment
- Beautiful places and spaces
- Responsible growth
- Collaborative, engaged leadership
- Excellent service delivery

## BACKGROUND

On May 19<sup>th</sup> 2017, Premier Kathleen Wynne, Deb Matthews, Deputy Premier and MPP for London North Centre, and Steven Del Duca, Ontario's Minister of Transportation, were in London to announce that the province is moving ahead with preliminary design work for High Speed Rail (HSR) along the Toronto-Windsor corridor. Ontario would be the first province to undertake a rail transformation to this technology and the project would support economic growth in Southwestern Ontario.

The project includes the investment of \$15 million in a comprehensive environmental assessment and the establishment of a new governing body to oversee the work required to design and implement HSR. The province also released a new report by David Collenette, Ontario's Special Advisor on high speed rail. In 2015, Mr. Collenette was asked to assess the project's feasibility and to assist the province in bringing HSR to the corridor. The 2016 Minister's mandate letter outlined the development of the overall HSR project, including a time line to deliver the Environmental Assessment.

The report (<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/publications/high-speed-rail-in-ontario-final-report/>) concluded that there is a business case for high speed rail along the Toronto-Windsor corridor and that there are opportunities to engage the private sector in financing and delivering the project.

### Context

High speed rail will be an economic and transportation game-changer for the City of London and Southwestern Ontario. It will provide congestion relief along the provincial highway system, reduce air emissions, promote the Southwestern and Central Ontario economy through better goods movement and provide commuters with the speed and comfort required to make non automobile travel, a sustainable, environmentally friendly and viable transportation mobility choice.

In general, "High Speed Rail" refers to a rail service that is able to achieve significantly faster speeds than conventional rail – including those currently operated in the Province of Ontario.

Key distinguishing factors of HSR include:

- Dedicated passenger lines with limited or no shared use with freight or conventional rail;
  - Development of an HSR network as part of an existing rail network with built up demand;
- Use of city centre stations that offer strong integration with other regional, commuter, metro/rapid transit networks;
- Use of standardized infrastructure throughout the network; and
  - Use of electrified operations.

HSR projects have been initiated to achieve varying policy goals around the world. Benefits of high speed rail projects go far beyond the 'high-speed' headline and include:

- Increasing the capacity of existing passenger rail networks;
- Increasing economic competitiveness of regions by providing rapid and reliable connections between major employment and economic centres; and
- Provision of more sustainable transportation options.

The Toronto to Windsor corridor is home to over 7 million people, making it Ontario's most populous transport corridor. Economic activity along the corridor provides over 3.4 million jobs and consists of knowledge-based economies, manufacturing, hospitality/tourism, and agriculture. Additionally, the corridor connects 8 major Canadian universities and several colleges and trade schools.

A number of travel options are available along the corridor, including:

- Auto: travellers can use the provincial highway network, including the 401, which connects the major cities along the corridor;
- Rail: travellers may use GO Rail (peak direction service from Kitchener- Waterloo to Toronto), and VIA Rail;
- Bus: travellers may use GO Bus (frequent departures with connections in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) for short distance, and private operators for corridor travel; and
- Air: travellers may fly between Toronto and Windsor and Toronto and London.

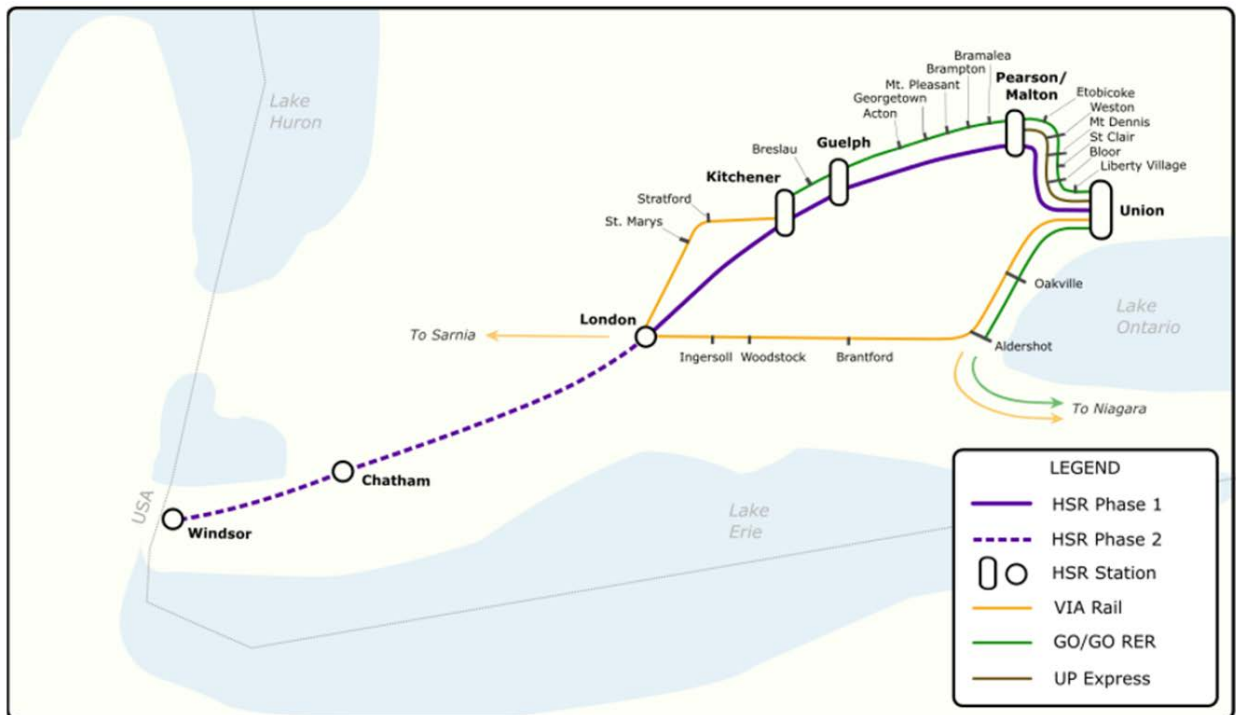
The report analyzed two scenarios to assess the vitality of HSR in the Toronto-Windsor corridor:

1. Scenario A: Electrified HSR service operating primarily on a dedicated right-of-way and capable of achieving a top speed of 300 km/h.
2. Scenario B: Electrified HSR service capable of achieving a top speed of 250 km/h operating on a combination of mixed conventional and dedicated railway.

The detailed assessment of Benefit-Cost Ratios (BCR) identified Scenario B as the preferred option for HSR. The BCR of 1.02 for Phase One and a BCR of 0.24 for Phase Two was due to the relatively higher levels of HSR ridership in the Toronto-London segment. Costs for this scenario were also found to be significantly lower at approximately \$7.5 billion base direct costs.

The business case for HSR is strongest between Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo and London. This part of the corridor demonstrates high levels of economic and population growth and is one of Canada's most innovative regions. This portion of the HSR line would generate significant ridership and benefits, and it is therefore recommended that it be delivered in a first phase with operations targeted to start as soon as 2025. The proposed rail network is shown in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1 - Proposed Future Railway Network**



The report provides the following overview of the HSR as it impacts the City of London, all of which will be subject to refinement and approval through the environmental assessment process.

### **Kitchener to London Segment (Phase 1)**

Westward from Kitchener-Waterloo’s planned multimodal station HSR trains would travel on newlybuilt dedicated tracks to London. This new two-track corridor would be constructed from Kitchener to London adjacent to the existing hydro corridor. This would require extensive engagement and study with Hydro One and various stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and landowners to ensure public safety and the proper functioning of the infrastructure in relation to the hydro right-of-way. Building dedicated tracks for HSR would allow the trains to achieve sustained speeds of 250 km/h for the majority of the segment, significantly improving travel times.

### **London to Windsor Segment (Phase 2)**

From London to Windsor, HSR would operate on a new bi-directional, electrified track adjacent to the existing CN and CP corridors.

### **London Station**

The location of the HSR stations, the infrastructure improvements that would be necessary at station locations, and how the service should be operated to maximize value were also reviewed. In general, HSR trains would require level boarding platforms at all stations to provide seamless accessibility for all passengers.

A new multimodal station constructed at downtown London’s existing VIA Rail station would be part of the city centre’s multimodal hub development. Once completed, this hub would include two new HSR platforms, three VIA Rail platforms for continued

Toronto-London service via the CN South Main line and local service to Kitchener via Stratford, as well as connections to the London Shift Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service and other local bus services.

## DISCUSSION

On the basis of the completed business case, the Province of Ontario has announced it is moving forward with an environmental assessment would determine the most appropriate route, examine technology options for the future railroad and determine what effect the route could have on the environment.

The undertaking will be a combined provincial and federal environmental assessment. The details of the process will be determined in the upcoming months through the initiation of the terms of reference by the Ministry of Transportaiton. The environmental assessment is anticipated to take 4 to 6 years.

City staff met with the provincial staff leading the process to discuss ongoing opportunites to engage as part of the environmental assessment, coordination of the project with ongoing City iniatitives such as the BRT process, as well as corridor protection and land use implications of the HSR along the railway lands.

The integration and coordination between the HSR and the BRT initiative will build upon synergies to develop seamless transportation mobility options for commuters and help define the mobility hub options in Downtown London. A key consideration will be the protection for an enhanced station with a potential new underpass of the railway where transit, BRT, VIA and HSR operations could integrate. The High Speed Rail EA will allow for London to help define the downtown mobility hub and protect the corridor through an update to the London Plan.

Connecting all communities along the HSR corridor remains an important priority to ensure that the benefits of HSR can be shared across Southwest Ontario. On October 11, 2016 City Council recognized the need for the province to develop an integrated multi-modal Public Transportation Master Plan. Such a plan would showcase the need for road, bus, rail and air connectivity across the region. To this end, the City of London is awaiting the findings of the Ministry of Transportation's bus modernization consultation undertaken in 2016.

### **High Speed Rail Advocacy**

As the province moves forward with the environmental assessment process for HSR, there are a number of important considerations for London. First, the City must take an active approach to ensuring representation in any consultation related to the future HSR corridor. This could include meetings with key ministers and stakeholders in support of HSR, as well as engaging local stakeholders to encourage broad local participation and support for the project within the City's networks.

As the economic, social and cultural centre of Southwest Ontario, London has a significant role to play in pulling regional voices together in support of HSR. With the right approach, HSR would bring transformative economic opportunity not only to the cities where the train has stops, but to the entire surrounding region. London can support buy-in for the project by communicating the potential benefits to all communities in the region, bringing neighbouring communities to the table during the consultation

process, as well as supporting a regional transit master plan to connect those cities in to the HSR corridor.

Some of this work is already being done through London's leadership role as chair of the Mayors Of Southwest Ontario (MOSO). Mayor Brown and this group has made HSR a key advocacy priority, and has already held meetings with the Premier and many senior ministers to discuss what HSR would mean to the entire region. MOSO continues to emphasize their position as an ideal consultative body on HSR, as the group represents cities along the entire length of the corridor, from Windsor to Kitchener, as well as communities which could be connected to the regional network through other intercity transit methods.

A final key aspect to ensuring HSR continues moving forward is engaging with the provincial opposition parties on the importance of HSR for London and the region. The 2018 provincial election presents an important opportunity for all parties to weigh in on their vision for regional transportation in Ontario. The City's engagement with all parties will be important to ensure that provincial election platforms include plans for the timely implementation of a HSR corridor in Southwest Ontario.

### **Engagement Opportunities**

The coming months present valuable and timely opportunities to engage with provincial decision makers on HSR. A significant opportunity is the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Annual Conference in August. The City of London will be requesting delegations with a number of key ministries to discuss local advocacy priorities, which could include HSR. This will also be an opportunity to engage other municipalities in the region, as well as Opposition members, through formal and informal meetings throughout the duration of the conference.

At the AMO Annual Conference, the Mayors Of Southwest Ontario will be hosting delegations of senior ministers and opposition leaders on MOSO identified priorities including HSR. These meetings will allow for a regional consensus in support of HSR to be clearly communicated to the province, at a key point in time given the proximity to the 2018 election.

HSR could represent the most significant provincial infrastructure project for generations, bringing unprecedented economic benefits to the city and the entire region. By supporting the advancement of a HSR corridor through Southwest Ontario, London is truly living up to its strategic vision as "a leader in commerce, culture, and innovation – our region's connection to the world".

## **CONCLUSION**

This report provides Committee and Council with an overview of the High Speed Rail initiative. The City has been actively engaged with the Ministry of Transportation through the development of the HSR report and will continue to participate in the technical advisory group as part of the future environmental assessment and related studies.

As the province moves forward with the HSR initiative, it will be critical for London to remain actively engaged in the discussion and planning efforts. This report recommends that HSR be acknowledged as a priority for the City of London, and that the significance of this initiative for London be communicated to government partners.

Should Council support this direction, HSR will be build into future advocacy work and feature more prominently in government relations activities. HSR represents a historic opportunity for governments to work together to achieve real economic benefits for London, the Southwest region, and the province.

**Acknowledgements**

This report was prepared with input from Kate Graham, Director of Community & Economic Innovation and Adam Thompson, Manager III, Government & External Relations.

<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>
<b>EDWARD SOLDI, P.ENG. DIRECTOR, ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>KELLY SCHERR, P.ENG., MBA, FEC MANAGING DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; ENGINEERING SERVICES AND CITY ENGINEER</b>

Attach: Appendix "A" – High Speed in Ontario Report Executive Summary