

<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS CIVIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING ON MARCH 14, 2019</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>HISTORY OF LONDON'S RAPID TRANSIT INITIATIVE</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Environmental & Engineering Services and City Engineer, the following information **BE RECEIVED** with respect to the history and status of London's Rapid Transit Initiative.

<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 7, 2013 – Bus Rapid Transit Strategy
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – June 23, 2014 – Approval of 2014 Development Charges By-Law and DC Background Study
- Civic Works Committee – July 21, 2014 – Rapid Transit Corridors Environmental Assessment Study Appointment of Consulting Engineer
- Civic Works Committee – June 2, 2015 – Rapid Transit Funding Opportunities
- Civic Works Committee – August 24, 2015 – Shift Rapid Transit Initiative Appointment of Survey Consultants
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – November 9, 2015 – Shift Rapid Transit Update
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – January 28, 2016 – Downtown Infrastructure Planning and Coordination
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – May 5, 2016 – Shift Rapid Transit Business Case
- Planning and Environment Committee – June 13, 2016 - The London Plan
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – September 12, 2016 – Rapid Transit Implementation Working Group
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – May 3, 2017 – Rapid Transit Alternative Corridor Review
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – May 15, 2017 – Rapid Transit Corridors
- Civic Works Committee – July 17, 2017 - Shift Rapid Transit Additional Engineering and Legal Survey
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – July 24, 2017 – Rapid Transit Master Plan and Business Case
- Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – September 18, 2017 – Project Management Plan, Communications Plan and Consulting Fees Amendment

## 2015-19 STRATEGIC PLAN

The following report supports the Strategic Plan through the strategic focus area of Building a Sustainable City by implementing and enhancing safe and convenient mobility choices while supporting the creating of an efficient, inclusive and sustainable transportation system.

### PURPOSE

On February 13, 2019, Council directed staff to assemble a list of transportation projects that are both likely to be eligible for Public Transit Infrastructure Stream (PTIS) funding and able to be delivered within the PTIS funding window ending in March of 2028 to be presented at a public participation meeting scheduled for March 20, 2019. Council further resolved that staff were to report back, prior to the above-noted public participation meeting, with respect to a history of the work-to-date on the Bus Rapid Transit project.

This report highlights the history of transportation planning that has informed the current plan and describes how the project could move forward under the PTIS program.

### BACKGROUND

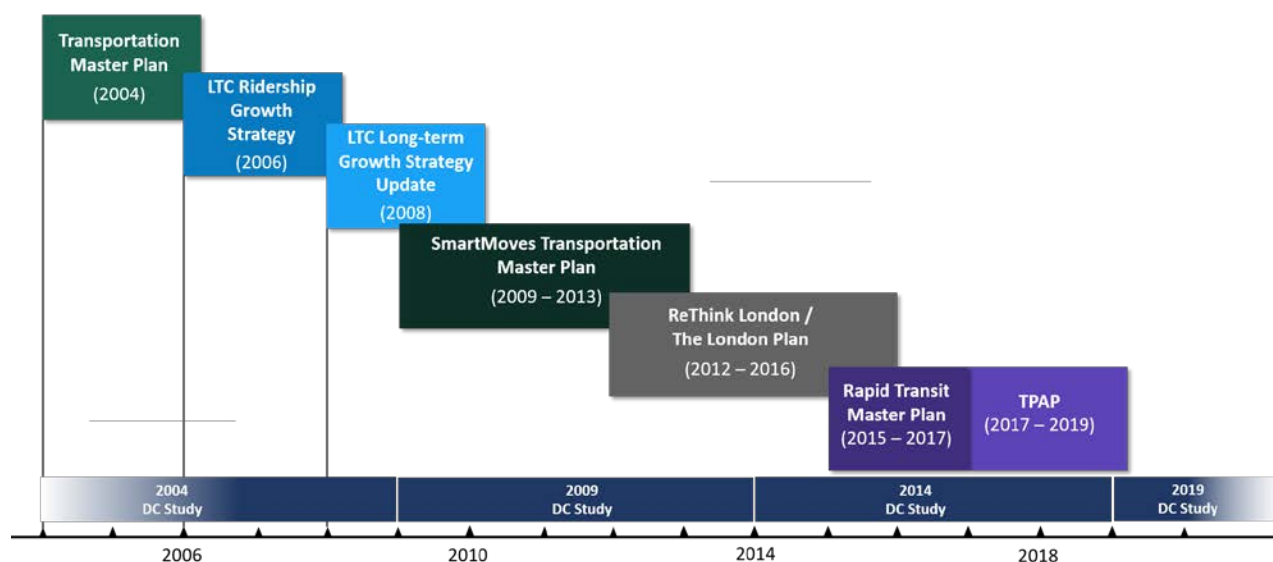
#### **Transportation Planning**

The City of London has long prioritized transportation planning as a foundation of overall city-building and development. How easy – or difficult – it is to get around a city impacts citizens' ability to get to work, school, appointments and events. It plays an important role in their ability to engage and participate in the community. Transportation planning enhances quality of life for all citizens – whether they drive, bike, walk or use transit – no matter where they live in the city.

#### **The Lead up to Rapid Transit**

Since 2004, through studies and consultation, the City of London has identified rapid transit as an opportunity to improve mobility for all Londoners. London's Rapid Transit Initiative builds on three guiding documents: London's Transportation Master Plan: Smart Moves 2030, The London Plan and London's Rapid Transit Initiative Environmental Assessment. These plans have been advanced over the course of four different City Councils.

## Timeline of Integrated City Planning



### Smart Moves 2030 Transportation Master Plan (2009-2013)

Developed between 2009 and 2013, the City’s Smart Moves 2030 Transportation Master Plan aimed to improve all modes of transportation in London, while addressing and shaping the city’s population growth and mobility needs. The plan allocates more than \$1 billion for transportation improvements across the city over a 20-year period and supports mixed-use intensification on major corridors, strategies to encourage active transportation, and strategic road widening and corridor optimization. The \$500-million BRT network was designed to work with other planned improvements – including enhancements to roads and cycling – to improve mobility for all Londoners.

### ReThink London, The London Plan (2012-2016)

Starting in 2012, the ReThink London process consulted with 10,000 Londoners on how to shape city growth and development. That consultative process was the foundation for The London Plan, London’s official plan. The London Plan builds off of Ontario’s Provincial Policy Statement and works with the Transportation Master Plan, by encouraging infill development and increased densities primarily along a network of nodes and corridors to promote sustainability, walkability and revitalization of neighbourhoods and business areas. The London Plan highlights the critical importance of transportation and includes a series of rapid transit corridors within a “Primary Transit Area,” which is defined as an area for focused residential intensification and transit investment.

### Rapid Transit Master Plan (RTMP) and Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) (2015-2019)

The Rapid Transit Master Plan (RTMP) considered various routes within the city for higher order transit. The process also considered various rapid transit options culminating in the selection by Council of a Bus Rapid Transit system. The RTMP paved the way to begin the formal Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) – a provincially regulated process created to support transit initiatives – that included further consultation with the public and stakeholders.

During the initial phase of TPAP, the public was able to provide feedback on design options for the various corridors and other elements of the transit network through numerous public consultation events and stakeholder meetings. This was followed by the formal 120-day consultation phase, which began in June 2018. During that phase, the project team held 12 widely publicized drop-in, open-house style consultation sessions as

well as several pop-up booths in neighbourhoods across the city. The purpose of the consultation was to invite Londoners to provide input on some features of the system. The input received from residents, businesses and stakeholders during this phase was vital, and resulted in refinements ranging from turn lane locations to added cycling connections.

The TPAP consultation period is expected to be complete by Q2-2019, followed by 30 days of public comment and 35 days for a Minister's decision. Completion of the Environmental Assessment will allow the City of London to move forward with any or all elements of the BRT project, but does not bind future decisions of Council.

## DISCUSSION

### **Rapid Transit Major Components**

The BRT plan is currently in the TPAP consultation as a single project. This project consists of the Downtown Couplet and four Transit Corridors, as follows:

#### Downtown Couplet

With the recent re-construction of Dundas Place all east-west buses have been rerouted to operate along the proposed Downtown Couplet. The proposed rapid transit corridors for the downtown would frame Dundas Place, circling buses in transit lanes along Queens Avenue, King Street, Ridout Street and Wellington Street. When complete, the Downtown Couplet would formalize transit operations that are already in place, in a way that would improve traffic capacity in general traffic lanes and revitalize 2 km of streets that surround Dundas Place. While rebuilding the roads, the project would address necessary underground work, including replacing and upgrading aging sewers and watermains.

#### South Corridor

Wellington Road is a busy arterial road that is overdue for major infrastructure improvements, including safety improvements, major sewer work to address flooding, and replacement of sanitary sewers and watermains that are nearly 100 years old. While rebuilding the road to address those issues, the road would be widened to maintain two general lanes of traffic and put buses in transit lanes, improving capacity for vehicles while increasing transit frequency and reliability. This work would enhance safety for drivers by improving the alignment of the "Wellington curve" and adding dedicated turn lanes at signalized intersections. Smarter traffic signals would be installed and emergency services vehicles would be able to use transit lanes to reduce critical response times. Sidewalks and cycling facilities would be added on both sides of Wellington to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. A park-and-ride facility would be established near Highway 401 to improve connectivity with employment areas and surrounding municipalities.

#### East Corridor

Connecting East London with improved transit would link Fanshawe College's eastern and downtown campuses, support revitalization of Old East Village, encourage development of the former London Psychiatric Hospital and McCormick's lands and ultimately facilitate improved transit service to the airport and industrial areas. This project would remove buses from mixed traffic and put them in transit lanes, with the goal of improving traffic capacity in general traffic lanes and increasing frequency and reliability of transit. While rebuilding the roads, the project would address necessary underground work, including replacing and upgrading aging sewers and watermains to help address flooding. It would add dedicated turn lanes at signalized intersections to enhance safety for drivers. Emergency services vehicles would be able to use transit lanes to reduce critical response times. As part of the work on this corridor, smart traffic signals would be installed and active transportation infrastructure would be enhanced. The terminus of the east leg would serve as the primary node to extend transit service to major industrial employment lands along the Veterans Memorial Parkway Corridor.

### North Corridor

This corridor includes 6.4 km of roads connecting London's Downtown to Western University and Masonville shopping area. This corridor already serves as a major transit spine. The work would include redesigning a stretch of Richmond Street, eliminating stop-and-start conflicts with buses and left and right turning vehicles. Proposed continuous transit lanes would take buses out of mixed traffic, supporting vehicle traffic flow while minimizing impacts on the neighbourhood. Dedicated left- and right-turn lanes, and extended right turn lane/bus bays would be added to improve traffic flow and safety for drivers and support local buses on the route. As a result, vehicular traffic in the single through lane would experience fewer obstructions than the existing two lanes today. Emergency services vehicles would be able to use transit lanes to reduce critical response times.

### West Corridor

This corridor would address a number of opportunities to enhance travel along Oxford Street, which currently serves as a major east-west transit spine with both express and local routes. Along the majority of the route, from Downtown to west of Wonderland Road, this corridor would install continuous transit lanes, with the goal of improving traffic capacity in general traffic lanes and increasing the frequency and reliability of transit. Dedicated turn lanes would be added at signalized intersections to enhance safety for drivers, and emergency services vehicles would be able to use transit lanes to reduce critical response times. While rebuilding the roads, this gateway would address necessary underground work, including replacing and upgrading aging sewers and watermains. Smarter traffic signals would also be installed.

## **Time Frame Moving Forward**

On May 8, 2018, City Council approved the preliminary design, launching the Transit Project Assessment Process. This initial phase of TPAP is a 120-day consultation phase, which began in June 2018. In discussions with the Ministry, it was determined there was a need to provide more comprehensive information about potential heritage impacts so the TPAP consultation clock was paused to address this work. The final installment of heritage evaluations was presented to London Advisory Committee for Heritage (LACH) February 13, 2019. The TPAP clock will end on March 28, triggering the start of a 30-day public comment period. The comment period will be followed by a final 35 days for a Minister's decision. It is anticipated that the Environmental Assessment will be completed in early June. There are no risks associated with wrapping up the study and finishing the Transit Project Assessment Process. Doing so will give Council a completed Environmental Assessment that does not bind future decisions of Council.

The current plan is being considered through the Transit Project Assessment Process as a single project. Although the project is currently being considered in its entirety, this does not preclude Council's ability to consider the component transit corridors separately. As such, the constituent parts of the rapid transit project will be shown separately as part of the list of transportation projects requested by Council. At the Public Participation Meeting scheduled for March 20, the public will have the opportunity to comment. Council can consider each element of the plan on its own merits to be submitted for funding under the Federal Public Transit Infrastructure Stream (PTIS) program.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Rapid Transit Initiative has a long history that extends over a 15-year period. Three guiding documents, including London's Transportation Master Plan: Smart Moves 2030, The London Plan, and London's Rapid Transit Initiative Environmental Assessment, have

played a major role in the development of the current plan. The input received from residents, businesses and stakeholders through significant consultation resulted in refinements ranging from turn lane locations to added cycling connections. Completion of the Environmental Assessment will allow the City of London to move forward with any or all elements of the BRT project, but does not bind future decisions of Council. During the March 20 Public Participation meeting, the rapid transit initiative will be presented in its constituent parts and will allow the public and a new Council to consider each element on its own merits.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>
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