

**Date:** 2022-12-22

**Subject:** **Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT, PDBC and TPAP Project - Update**

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**Report Number:** Brampton Transit-2023-054

**Recommendations:**

1. That the report titled: **Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT, PDBC and TPAP Project – Update (Report Number Brampton Transit 2023-054)** to the Committee of Council Meeting of January 18, 2023, be received; and
2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to Metrolinx for information.

**Overview:**

- **A rapid transit corridor on Queen Street was identified as a key Council priority to support population and employment growth, improve connectivity, and increase the share of trips made using transit.**
- **Metrolinx is leading a project to develop the Queen Street-Highway 7 Bus Rapid Transit Preliminary Design Business Case in accordance with the Transit Project Assessment Process (under O.Reg. 231/08), supported by the Region of York, the Region of Peel, and the City of Brampton.**
- **A major portion of this bus rapid transit corridor - 18 of its 24 km length - traverses Brampton.**
- **The project has progressed to a stage where Metrolinx plans to engage with external stakeholders, including through Public Information Centre #1, in January 2023. Metrolinx will delegate to City Council in advance of the PIC.**
- **The purpose of this report is to update Council on staff's proposed plan to be engaged as a key stakeholder as the Transit Project**

**Assessment Process for this major infrastructure planning project advances, and highlight the City's key infrastructure projects and initiatives that could inform or be informed by this project. City staff have been actively engaged with Metrolinx as the project has evolved to this stage.**

## **Background:**

Queen Street is a designated rapid transit corridor in the Brampton's Official Plan, and 2040 Vision, and was identified as a top transit priority by City Council.

Queen Street is the busiest transit corridor in Brampton, carrying over 30,000 riders per day, with ridership projected to grow significantly by 2051 due to population growth (+60% to 369,000) and employment growth (+48% to 164,000) compared to 2016.

The expectation for strong growth in ridership is supported by the high growth in Brampton Transit ridership seen over the last decade (160%) with growth in transit ridership exceeding the rate of population growth - and affirmative policies such as a focus on growth through intensification that support a shift to transit and other sustainable transportation modes. In keeping with the past strong growth trend, Brampton Transit ridership recovered relatively quickly from the pandemic with the monthly trips surging past the 2019 pre-pandemic levels in the Fall of 2022, one of the fastest recoveries in Canada.

The City's 2040 Vision envisions the Queen Street corridor as key spine to support the enhanced rapid transit network in Brampton to meet the future transit demand. In addition to fulfilling this utilitarian purpose, the BRT corridor will also support the city structure and mobility framework envisioned for the area in the 2040 Vision and the emerging Official Plan Update (Brampton Plan). This 24 km multi-jurisdictional rapid transit corridor – 18 km of which will be in Brampton - will support inter-modal connections to the City's Urban Growth Centre and also link with the neighbouring Highway 7 Rapidway in York Region, and with the TTC subway system.

The Queen Street corridor forms a part of the Frequent Rapid Transit Network outlined in Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, In 2020, Metrolinx completed the Queen Street-Highway 7 Initial Business Case, and earlier in 2022, initiated a project to develop the Preliminary Design Business Case (PDBC) and the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP, under O.Reg. 231/08) as next step in the planning process.

The specific details on the PDBC and the TPAP, such as the project background, study area, and evaluation methodology will be extensively covered by Metrolinx as part of their stakeholder engagement. The focus of this report is on the City's involvement as a major stakeholder. The report also highlights the key planning and infrastructure

projects of interest from the City's perspective as it relates to the bus rapid transit planning on Queen Street.

### **Current Situation:**

As part of the Transit Project Assessment Process, Metrolinx and their consultants will circulate a number of documents related to environmental studies, technical investigations, business cases, and preliminary design for review and feedback by City staff. This will require the involvement of staff across the City's departments with requisite subject matter expertise.

The Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT project timelines are governed by Metrolinx. The project was initiated in mid-2022 and is anticipated to be completed by mid-2024, with significant consultation with the City occurring between the fall of 2022 and the winter of 2024.

### City of Brampton a Key Stakeholder

As a review agency and directly affected municipality with vested interest in shaping its future mobility and managing its growth, and also as an operator of conventional transit services, the City is a key stakeholder for the Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT project. Metrolinx has identified two avenues for formal engagements on the TPAP and PDBC, noted below:

**Project Working Group (PWG):** This group is collaborating on planning, preliminary design, business case, and supporting works, and will seek to resolve any issues at the initial stages as the project advances. The PWG is composed of a smaller group of staff from Metrolinx and municipal partners including the City of Brampton that are intimately connected with the project. Staff from Brampton Transit, and Planning, Building & Growth Management attend the PWG meetings. Staff from other departments with relevant subject matter expertise will be invited to join on as needed basis.

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):** The purpose of this committee is to collaboratively support the planning of the technical components of the Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT through the project lifecycle including the PDBC and the TPAP. The TAC's roles and responsibilities also include review of the project materials, identifying any issues or concerns, and providing input on opportunities that exist within the BRT study area. The membership is composed of Metrolinx, municipalities including City of Brampton, Utilities, Review Agencies such as MTO, TRCA, MECP, and the Downtown BIA's.

Additional avenues for engagement also exist between the City and Metrolinx at the staff level as part of regular contacts, and also through the Metrolinx's Municipal Sponsor's office as part of Metrolinx program updates. These engagements also provide opportunities to seek direction, build consensus, and triage any potential issues for resolution.

## PDBC and TPAP documents reviews and feedback

In light of a significant number of reports and documents anticipated as the TPAP progresses, staff with subject matter expertise have been tapped from various departments across the Corporation to provide reviews and feedback. To guide the reviews and feedback following teams have been formed:

- Coordination Team: Comprising of staff from Brampton Transit, Planning, Building & Growth Management, and Public Works and Engineering to coordinate the reviews with internal departments.
- Core Team: Comprising of staff from the Coordination Team, plus staff from Public Works and Engineering, Planning, Building & Growth Management, and Brampton Transit to provide feedback on their respective functional areas and subject matter expertise.
- Internal Stakeholder Group: Comprising of the Core Team and appropriate staff from departments including Community Services, Corporate Services, and the Office of the CAO to provide feedback based on their subject matter expertise.
- Senior Leadership Team: Comprising of senior staff members (senior manager and above) from Public Works and Engineering, Planning, Building & Growth Management, and Brampton Transit to provide strategic direction and guidance, and to take up any issue(s) for resolution with Metrolinx should there be a need.

Staff from Brampton Transit working closely with Planning Building & Growth Management are leading and coordinating the reviews and feedback, along with Public Works and Engineering. For streamlined information exchange and for general coordination, Brampton Transit is the single point of contact with Metrolinx.

## Related City Planning and Infrastructure Projects

The City is advancing a number of infrastructure planning and design projects that could be informed by, or could inform, the bus rapid transit planning on Queen Street. Staff plan on proactively engaging with Metrolinx on points of interest or concern as the Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT PDBC and TPAP progress. Some of the key projects are noted below:

- Downtown Transit Hub (TPAP) Study
- LRT Extension EA (TPAP) Study
- Downtown Streetscape on Queen Street and Main Street
- Integrated Downtown Plan
- Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Study

- Riverwalk Detailed Design
- Downtown Centre for Innovation (CFI)
  
- Additional points of interest include: Bramalea Terminal connections
- Public realm enhancements on Queen St in particular the treatment of the segment under City's jurisdiction including the downtown segment.

As part of the review of development applications on Queen Street, staff are requesting that the right-of-way required for the BRT be protected.

#### Next Steps:

Staff will continue to be engaged in the Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT project as a stakeholder and provide review and feedback from the City's perspective and seek opportunities for coordination with City projects. Staff plan to bring forward information on City-led higher order transit projects at a Council workshop planned for early 2023. This will include the Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT interface with higher order transit projects in downtown Brampton.

#### **Corporate Implications:**

There are no corporate implications associated with this information report.

#### **Term of Council Priorities:**

The Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT PDBC and TPAP is in alignment with the 2019-2022 Term of Council Priority (Mid-term Evaluation & Refresh) – Brampton is a Green City. The BRT corridor will provide a key transit link in the regional transit network connecting Brampton to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

#### **Conclusion:**

The City of Brampton is a key stakeholder in the PDBC and TPAP stage of the Queen Street-Highway 7 BRT project. City staff are actively engaged in the project, with membership in the Project Working Group and Technical Advisory Committee and with engagement by senior leadership as required. Staff from across the Corporation will be involved in reviewing studies and other materials prepared as part of the PDBC and TPAP – providing subject matter expertise and advocating for Brampton's best interests. Staff will provide updates to Council as the project advances.

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