

To All Commissioners

**Re: Draft 2022 Conventional Transit Service Plan**

### **Recommendations**

That the Commission:

- i) APPROVE, the Draft 2022 Conventional Service Plan;
- ii) DIRECT administration to forward a copy of the Draft 2022 Conventional Service Plan report to Members of Council for their information; and
- iii) DIRECT administration to finalize the 2022 Conventional Service Plan and present same at the Commission's March 30, 2022 meeting.

### **Background**

At the February 27, 2019 meeting, the Commission approved the second Five-Year Service Plan Framework document for service changes over the period of 2020-2024. The Framework focuses on six strategic directions to continue the momentum of improvement including;

1. **Enhance the Overall Levels of Service-** There are three key factors that drive ridership growth; frequency, reliability and travel time. This strategic direction will promote the continued improvements to service levels as a method of making the service more attractive to London residents.
2. **Explore Alternative Service Delivery Models in New Communities-** This direction in the plan is to begin to explore the use of Alternative Service Delivery Models (ASDs) in areas of the City that are currently unserved due to low ridership potential.
3. **Improve Direct Connections-** Continue to expand on the grid network, identifying opportunities to provide more direct routes, connected to key destinations.
4. **Build on the Express Route Network-** Continue to identify opportunities to expand the express route network and build ridership through improved service levels and enhanced connectivity to other routes.
5. **Eliminate 60 Minute Headways-** Continue to improve the frequency of routes that operate every 60 minutes (during certain periods), targeting 30 minute headways or better, or the implementation of an ASD where the demand does not warrant a service increase.
6. **Minimize Impacts on Existing Passengers-** Minimize the impacts on existing customers when modifications occur.

The overarching principle of the Five-Year Service Plan Framework was to begin to implement service frequency improvements to the feeder routes that will be required as the rapid transit corridors are implemented. Postponing this work for an extended period of time will result in a significant amount of service improvements that will be required to be made in a shortened period in order to ensure proper integration of the local and rapid transit routes.

While the Five-Year Service Plan Framework sets the direction for service improvements over the applicable horizon, the annual service planning process provides for the opportunity to revisit the planned changes each year in order to ensure they continue to be the highest priority based on actual ridership demand as well as other factors. This process has proven to be very effective over the past few years as administration has navigated and responded to the impacts of the global pandemic.

In 2020, all service improvements included in the 2020 Service Plan were put on hold given the high levels of uncertainty with respect to the duration of the pandemic and the related public health responses to same that resulted in lockdowns leading to significant declines in ridership. During this period, administration prepared a Pandemic Response Plan, which broke the response to the pandemic, from an organizational perspective, into three phases; resolve, resiliency and rebuild.

In August of 2020, the Commission approved the 2021 Operating Budget, which included a growth component intended to provide for the implementation of the service improvements in 2021. The 2021 Operating budget was approved, and the Draft 2021 Service Plan was revisited, consistent with the annual review process. The final 2021 Service Plan was amended from the draft plan to better align with the current operational landscape and the Pandemic Response Plan. The priority for the 2021 service improvements shifted focus to improve frequencies system wide, noting this approach would result in a more attractive service across the city, and would help play a role in attracting riders lost during the pandemic. As set out in Staff Report #5 dated November 24, 2021, London Transit is continuing to face Operator shortages and supply chain issues for bus repairs. As such the phased implementation plan for the 2021 service plan changes has been delayed. While work continues to be able to implement the approved 2021 service changes as soon as operationally feasible,

timing of implementation is not known at this time and will be dependent on achieving an Operator complement level to support these changes.

In August 2021, the Commission approved the 2022 Operating Budget, which again included a growth component that would fund the 2022 Service Plan. The 2022 Operating Budget, which was approved by the Commission at the August 2021 meeting for submission to Municipal Council was broken into two component parts. The first part is the base budget request, which provides for the budget required to continue the operation on a “status quo” basis (i.e. at 2021 service levels, with the implementation of the approved 2021 service plan changes). The second part of the request includes the budget requirements for growth in service hours of approximately 18,000 hours consistent with that envisioned in the Five-Year Service Plan Framework. Concerns with respect to the level of assessment growth that will be available for 2022 Growth Business Cases, as well as what level of tax increase will be deemed acceptable by Municipal Council for base budget requests were raised by civic administration prior to the 2022 budget submission. It is currently anticipated that Assessment Growth Business cases will be approved in March 2022.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned concerns, in order to be in the position to implement any level of service improvements, the work associated with the 2022 Service Plan needs to get underway. As the report recommendations set out, the Commission is being asked to approve the Draft 2022 Service Plan in order to allow administration to undertake public consultation and a more detailed analysis of proposed changes. Any work undertaken prior to council approval of budget will be administrative in nature only. Given the timing associated with the approval of the Assessment Growth Business Cases, the current plan is to bring back a final 2022 Service Plan at the Commission’s March 30, 2022 meeting.

### 2022 Draft Service Plan

Consistent with past practice, the 2022 draft service planning process takes direction from the recommendations in the 2020-2024 Five-Year Service Plan Framework, but also includes assessments pertaining to:

- existing service performance issues and demands
- new growth areas
- customer contacts
- Operator, Inspector and Dispatcher feedback
- the Commission’s Pandemic Response Plan

#### Draft 2022 Service Plan Changes

Preparation of the 2022 Draft Service Plan included consideration of the changes included in the 2020 and 2021 Service Plans that were deferred for future consideration, those changes set out in the Five-Year Service Plan Framework for 2022, and current service conditions. All proposals were re-evaluated based on current circumstances to determine which changes continue to be warranted at this time. The 2022 service plan changes focus on enhancing overall service levels along routes where this is warranted based on current ridership as well as expanding service to Industrial areas of the city.

The Draft 2022 Service Plan sets out the changes that are considered the highest priority, totalling approximately 27,500 hours on an annual basis and requiring seven additional peak period buses. Given the Commission-approved 2022 budget includes the addition of 18,000 annualized hours and five expansion buses, further assessment will be completed to prioritize changes consistent with budget allocations. It should be noted that the Final 2022 Service Plan may need to be adjusted further should the Assessment Growth Business Case not be approved, or be approved for a lesser amount than requested.

Table I below sets out the summary of the Draft 2022 Service Plan components, including a brief rationale for same.

**Table I - 2022 Draft Service Plan**

Route	Description of Proposed Service Change	Annual Service Hours	Peak Buses	Rationale
Route 2	Weekday- Increase round trip time from 120 minutes to 135 minutes between 4 pm and 6 pm	504	1	Schedule Adherence
Route 16	Weekday – Increase round trip time from 80 minutes to 90 minutes and Increase frequency from 17 minutes to 15 minutes between 9pm and 2pm	1,260		Schedule Adherence
Route 20	Weekday- increase frequency from 20 minutes to 15 minutes between 9 am and 2 pm	2,880		Ridership Demand
Route 24	Weekday- Increase frequency from 40 minutes to 30 minutes between 6 am and 9 pm	3,780	1	Ridership Growth
	Saturday- Introduce service between 6 am and 10 am on a 40 minute frequency	416		

	Saturday- Introduce service between 5 pm and 9 pm on a 40 minute frequency	416		
Route 25	Weekday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 7 am and 9 am	504		Ridership Demand
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 9 am and 12 pm	756	1	
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 12 pm and 2 pm	504	1	
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 6 pm and 9 pm	756		
Route 36	Introduce an A and B Routing with Route 36A serving the Airport and the current Industrial area south of Oxford and Route 36 serving the airport and the Industrial area north of Oxford along Huron and Robin's Hill Road	3,024	1	Ridership demand Expansion of Industrial service
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 15 minutes between 6 am and 6 pm			
	Weekday- Extend service to 7:30 pm on a 15 minute frequency	756		
Route 93	Saturday- Increase frequency from 36 minutes to 25 minutes between 8 am and 10 am	104		Frequency Improvements
	Saturday- Increase frequency from 38 minutes to 25 minutes between 5 pm and 9 pm	208		
	Saturday- Increase frequency from 36 minutes to 25 minutes between 9 pm and 12 am	156		
Route 94	Weekday – Introduce 20-minute frequency between 9 am and 2 pm	6,500	2	Ridership Demand
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 26 minutes to 20 minutes between 6 am and 9 am			
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 23 minutes to 15 minutes between 2 pm and 6 pm			
Route 102	Weekday- Increase frequency from 20 minutes to 15 minutes between 6 pm and 9 pm	756		Ridership Demand
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 35 minutes to 20 minutes between 9 pm and 12 am	756		
<b>Total</b>		<b>27,564</b>	<b>7</b>	

A more detailed discussion of the proposed changes is provided in Enclosure I. The discussion includes high-level consideration of budget implications, and provides what is considered the most effective and efficient means to resolve each issue.

As a result of the continued impacts of COVID-19 and the limited ridership return on some routes, the previously approved 2020 Service Plan improvements as well as the 2021 Service Plan improvements proposed in the Draft 2021 Service Plan that were ultimately deferred for future consideration set out in Table II are not recommended for implementation in 2022. Ridership growth on these routes will continue to be monitored through the annual service planning process and assessed for implementation when warranted.

**Table II- Previously Approved Service Changes Deferred for Future Service Plan Reviews**

Route	Description of Service Change	Annual Service Hours	Peak Buses	Rationale
Route 2	Sunday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 9 am and 11 am	248		Sunday ridership has not returned to a level where an increase in frequency is warranted at this time
	Sunday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 6 pm and 10 pm	496		
Route 25	Sunday- Extend service on a 41 minute frequency starting at 7 am	112		Sunday ridership has not returned to a level where an extension of service is warranted at this time
Route 31	Weekday- Increase frequency to 20 minutes between 6 am and 6 pm	3,024		Weekday ridership return has been slow and frequency improvements are not warranted at this time
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 55 minutes to 30 minutes between 6 pm and 12 am	1,512		
Route 90	Sunday- Extend service on a 40 minute frequency between 7 pm and 9 pm	124		Later service extension is not warranted at this time based on current ridership
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,516</b>		

As a result of planned service plan improvements that have been deferred, the 2022 implementation strategy as set out in the Five-Year Service Plan Framework was re-evaluated to determine if the initial proposed changes are warranted at this time. While many of the changes continue to be warranted, there are other more pressing priorities, which were deferred from 2020 and 2021. As such, the majority of the 2022 service plan improvements included in the Five Year Service Plan Framework are being deferred for future service plan consideration, the details of which are included in Table III below.

**Table III- 2022 Service Plan Proposals to be Deferred**

Route	Description of Service Changes	Annual Service Hours	Peak Buses	Rationale
Route 10	Re-route service along Wonderland Road North and Fanshawe Park Road terminating at Masonville Place	3,850		Due to the deferral of previous service plans the current focus is on improving frequency as opposed to modifying existing routes.
	Weekday- Increase frequency from 30 minutes to 20 minutes between 6 pm and 9 pm			Ridership during the early evening period is still recovering and an increase in frequency is not warranted at this time.
Route 29	Re-introduce Route 29 as a short-turn of Route 27 operating weekdays on the following frequencies 6 am to 7 am- 30 minutes 7 am to 9 am- 20 minutes 9 am to 2 pm- 30 minutes 2 pm to 9 pm 20 minutes 9 pm to 12 am- 30 minutes	4,770	3	The proposed change was to provide required capacity along Sarnia Road as a result of the proposed change to Route 10. As the change for Route 10 is recommended for deferral, it is recommended that Route 29 also be deferred to be considered at such a time as the Route 10 modifications are proposed for implementation
Route 33	Weekday- increase frequency from 13 minutes to 10 minutes between 9 am and 2 pm	2,300		Current ridership demand does not warrant the frequency increase.
Route 91	Extend Route 91 to Argyle Mall	4,550	2	Due to the deferral of previous service plans the current focus is on improving frequency as opposed to modifying existing routes.
<b>Total</b>		<b>15,470</b>	<b>5</b>	

### Community Bus

The 2022 Bus Replacement Program will see the replacement of the only four 30' buses in the fleet, which have reached the end of their useful life. These buses were purchased specifically for use on the community bus routes, based on the assumption that ridership would be lower on these routes, and that the smaller buses would provide for easier access to locations that were difficult to serve with a 40 foot bus. Over the past number of years, ridership on the community bus routes has been such that, on many days, 40 foot buses are required to accommodate the demand. An assessment was undertaken of the stop locations for the community bus routes in order to determine whether there would be any negative impacts associated with

transitioning the 30 foot buses out of service to be replaced with 40 foot buses. The assessment has concluded that a small number of stops may need to be moved by up to 100 metres in order to accommodate the 40' buses, but that all routes would be able to continue to operate as they are without any significant challenges. This transition will also provide for additional capacity on these routes going forward. This piece of the 2022 Service Plan will proceed regardless of the approval of the Assessment Growth Business Cases noting there is no operating cost associated with the changes which will be required in order to operate the routes with 40 foot buses.

### Public Engagement

Traditionally, public information sessions would be held in each of the areas most affected by the proposed service plan changes. Given the current climate and the continued impacts of COVID-19, traditional in person sessions will not be held for the 2022 Service Plan. These meetings are particularly useful when route modifications are being proposed as they provide administration the opportunity for detailed discussions with customers that may be affected by the changes.

Given the majority of the 2022 Draft Service Plan provides for service frequency improvements and/or additional running time to improve schedule adherence, public feedback with respect to the plan is anticipated to be limited. In order to provide the opportunity for public feedback, the detailed Plan will be included on the corporate website with contact information for the Planning department to allow customers to schedule a telephone discussion or provide commentary via email. As always, comments and feedback can also be made by emailing or phoning the customer service line.

### Next Steps

London Transit will be promoting the Draft Service Plan through traditional measures including the LTC website and social media platforms, and through community associations.

Over the coming months, staff will further assess the identified priorities and refine the recommended service changes to be included in the Final 2022 Service Plan.

As referenced, the final recommendations respecting the 2022 Conventional Service Plan are scheduled to be presented to the Commission for approval at its March 30, 2022 meeting, and will incorporate any required changes as the result of the level to which the Assessment Growth Business Case is approved.

Consistent with the recommendations, this report will be shared with all Members of Council.

### Enclosure

I - Draft 2022 Conventional Service Plan Changes

Recommended by:

Katie Burns  
Director of Planning

Concurred in by:

Kelly S. Paleczny  
General Manager