

# Town council endorses transit plan, Move Milton Forward

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As Canada's fastest growing municipality, Milton faces a number of challenges with the population expected to swell to 161,750 residents by 2021.

One of the challenges, as outlined in the Town of Milton's transit master plan, is how the transportation and transit system will respond to ensure the community continues to be accessible with effective mobility options available for everyone.

In introducing the master plan called Move Milton Forward to town council Monday night, the Town's Engineering Services Director Paul Cripps described it as a roadmap that lays out options on how the Town can develop public transit to anticipate growth in the community over the next five years.

It builds on the current foundation of transit service in Milton to achieve a more reliable, convenient, efficient and cost-effective system, he said, adding that the recommended service level improvements have to stand the test against the Town budget.

Recommendations for improvement this year include introducing Saturday services and having a GO shuttle service during afternoon peak periods for Milton GO Transit users. Staff also recommended a shuttle that would provide effective and efficient transit service to the growing business community in the Hwy. 401 industrial and business area.

Council approved the plan in principle in an 8-3 vote with the provision that service level

expansions are subject to the annual budget process and new area construction.

Councillors also endorsed the 2013 service implementation plan, which includes purchasing three eight-metre transit buses and fare boxes at a cost of \$567,617.

Dennis Kar, a transit and transportation planner with Dillon Consulting Ltd. hired by the Town to create the master plan, told councillors that through public consultation there was a strong desire from residents to extend service hours, particularly on weekends.


Faced with a potential university campus, a diverse workforce as Derry Green Business Park is developed and the construction of the velodrome in the years ahead, Kar added the vision for Milton's transit system is "fundamental in the way Milton moves and grows."

To that end, the plan outlines service improvements that could be phased in over time reliant on demand and supply.

"Triggers will look at the pace of population growth and expanding services into new areas as population is achieved," he said. "Ridership performance will be a trigger for service enhancements."

During heavy discussion, Ward 4 Councillor Rick Malboeuf and Ward 6 Councillor Mike Cluett questioned whether implementing the plan would be the best use of taxpayers dollars.

Malboeuf expressed his skepticism of the plan, which projects ridership will grow from about 300,000 to 1.1 million in 2017.

"To achieve that number we'd have to increase our ridership at 30 per cent a year," he said. 

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