



GRAND RIVER TRANSIT BUSINESS PLAN TO 2014

January 2012



GRT
GRAND RIVER TRANSIT



Region of Waterloo



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WORKING PAPERS

The following working papers provide support for the business plan and should be reviewed for more detailed analysis in the specific areas.

Working Paper 1: GRT Goals, Objectives and Service Standards

Working Paper 2: AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) Strategy

Working Paper 3: Express Corridor Priority Phasing

Working Paper 4: GRT Service to the Township Urban Areas

Working Paper 5: Interregional Services

Working Paper 6: Technology Review

Working Paper 7: Marketing Strategy

Working Paper 8: Customer Service Strategy

Working Paper 9: Financial Plan





1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Grand River Transit Business Plan to 2014 is intended to guide the implementation of transit service improvements and fare strategies from 2011 – 2014 to help achieve the goals of the 2010 Regional Transportation Master Plan (RTMP). The RTMP places a greater emphasis on the role of public transit to provide a sustainable transportation system required to achieve the compact urban form as prescribed by Ontario's Places to Grow Growth Plan and the Region of Waterloo's Official Plan.

GRT provides an integrated public transit system for the approximately 450,000 residents living in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and since 2009, Elmira and St. Jacobs using 64 routes and a fleet of 218 conventional buses (203 are low-floor accessible). Grand River Transit (GRT) has grown significantly since its inception on January 1st, 2000; when the regional transit system was established through the merger of the former Cambridge and Kitchener conventional and specialized transit systems¹. In over 10 years of operation, Grand River Transit has achieved considerable ridership growth and has become a key element in addressing the land use, economic, environmental and transportation objectives of the Region.

Transit ridership has been increasing at triple the rate of population growth. Annual ridership in 2011 was 19.7 million, a 110 percent increase from the 9.4 million annual rides at the end of 1999 when GRT was established, and an 9.1 percent increase over the 2010 ridership. In 2010, GRT carried an average of 62,000 revenue passengers and provided approximately 1,900 hours of service per weekday.

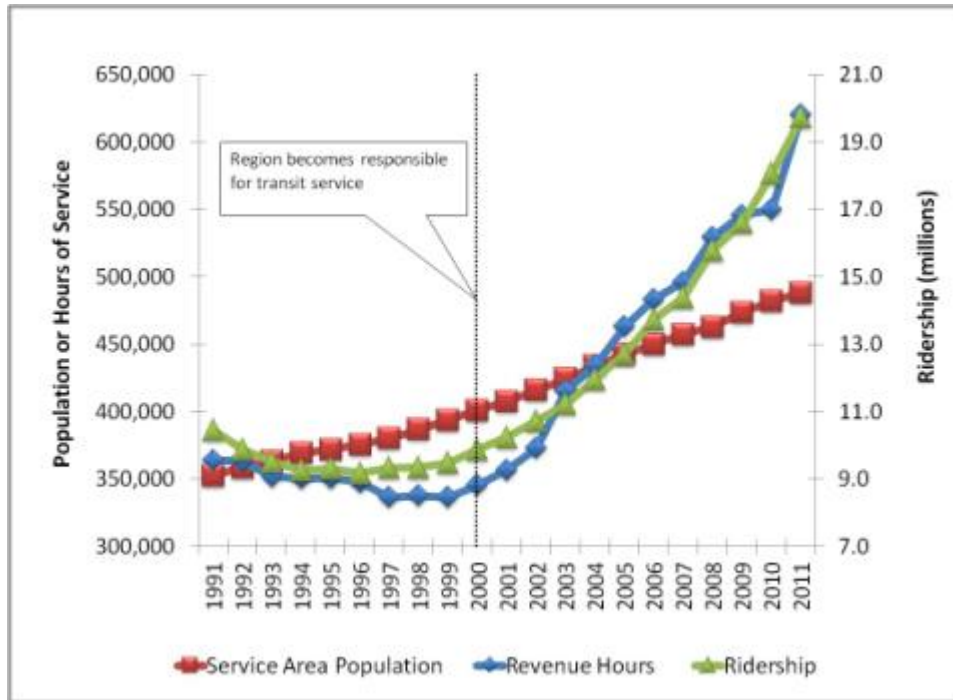
Business Plans have been used by GRT to define the necessary transit services, infrastructure assets, technology, marketing and customer services that are required to meet the Region's goals. Business Plans also identify the required level of investment, defining fares and setting performance measures. As illustrated below, the key to the success in ridership growth is the continued investment in transit service by the Region of Waterloo.

The first GRT business plan was approved in July 2001, and was a key document that identified transit services needed to serve growth and enhance the newly formed regional transit system. This was a pivotal document as it also recognized a paradigm shift for transit service in Waterloo Region; with a stronger focus on an integrated regional system and a need to significantly improve and expand service to meet ridership targets. That Business Plan recommended an average annual increase in service hours of 6 percent to generate an average annual ridership increase of 4.5 percent.

¹ GRT MobilityPLUS was officially established on January 1, 2001 and includes Kiwanis Transit which served seniors and persons with disabilities in the township areas.



GRT Growth in Hours of Service and Ridership



Today, GRT is embarking on a similar paradigm shift. The 2010 RTMP places an even stronger focus on transit as a means to address quality of life objectives in the Region. While ridership has grown by over 10 million annual rides over the past ten years, the 2010 RTMP has set a significantly higher target for ridership growth, with a goal of capturing 14.8 percent of the PM peak period travel market by 2031. The 2006 transit mode share was estimated to be 4 percent and this ridership growth target will require an increase of 35 million annual transit trips over the next 20 years.

To achieve this goal, transit must continue to grow and improve how service is delivered to meet the needs of existing customers and attract new users to transit. Changes will include an increase in express services; a strong focus on marketing, customer service and technology; and an expansion of GRT services to better address interregional and township-based trips while continuing to identify efficiencies within the existing service.

The big shift for this Business Plan is the introduction of Rapid Transit (RT) in the central north-south corridor with Light Rail Transit (LRT) and adapted Bus Rapid Transit (aBRT) services scheduled to commence operations by 2017. While these improvements fall outside of the timeline of this business plan, this commitment to Rapid Transit and accelerated ridership growth requires strong action from GRT to optimize the conventional network to be integrated with and support the Rapid Transit services through seamless connections between bus and rail services.



Transit service improvements introduced in September 2011 represented the first step in the implementation of the 2010 RTMP and the upgrading of GRT's network. The primary investment was an express route along the Fischer-Hallman corridor (iXpress 201) between Forest Glen Terminal and Wilfrid Laurier University; along with several base service improvements designed to simplify the bus network, reduce travel times, improve access and convenience, and ensure transit services are integrated. Seven other GRT express corridors have been planned and are scheduled for implementation starting in 2013 along with other improvements to the network.

On December 19th, 2011, GO Transit began operating rail services between Downtown Kitchener and Toronto. This initial service of two peak period trains will be upgraded in the coming years and interregional bus services will also be enhanced. GRT has an important role in connecting residents and employees with these long distance transit services and this forms an important component of this business plan.

There are also several settlement areas within the townships that do not have conventional transit access to the larger urban areas in Waterloo Region and there is an opportunity for GRT to provide such services. Improvements in customer service, adopting new technologies, responding to the requirements of legislation such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and updating marketing strategies are also addressed in this Business Plan and are required for GRT to address the significant ridership targets identified in the 2010 RTMP and move the system to its next evolution.





2.0 MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The 1999 Regional Transportation Master Plan outlined a target of doubling transit ridership by 2016 in an effort to produce a more balanced transportation system in the Region. Ridership by 2011 has already increased to over 19.5 million rides annually, representing an increase of 106 percent over 1999.

The Region, through GRT, has worked hard to implement the goals and objectives set out in the previous business plans. This includes a number of key initiatives that have led to this significant ridership increase. Before discussing where we go from here, it is important to celebrate GRT's recent successes relative to the goals set out in previous Business Plans. These are documented below:

- Seamless transit connection among the major population, employment and activity centres in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo;
- Improved service levels and coverage within the transit service area;
- Successful implementation of iXpress as a stage toward Rapid Transit services in the central north-south corridor;
- A region-wide fare strategy and targeted affordability programs;
- Provision of a specialized transit service (MobilityPLUS) which serves the entire Region (note: MobilityPLUS has its own Business Plan for 2011 to 2014);
- Universal Transit Pass (U-Pass) programs at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University;
- Modernization of the bus fleet (90 percent now accessible) and transit facilities;
- Adoption of new technologies and systems including transit signal priority to speed up bus operations, trip planning through the internet and real time customer information systems; and
- Extension of conventional transit service to Elmira and St. Jacobs.





3.0 GRAND RIVER TRANSIT BUSINESS PLAN GOALS

In order to accomplish the objectives of the 2010 RTMP and the Region's 2011 Strategic Plan, a number of goals were established for GRT, to be implemented during the 2011 to 2014 Business Plan. The goals flow from the Vision and Mission statements of GRT, with particular reference to achieving the 14.8 percent transit mode share target.

- Goal 1 Provide a level and quality of service to accelerate ridership growth**
- Goal 2 Improve productivity and financial performance**
- Goal 3 Support and promote a sustainable, equitable and environmentally responsible community**
- Goal 4 Ensure fiscal responsibility and long-term sustainable financing of transit**
- Goal 5 Move towards seamless integration of GRT bus, rapid transit and interregional services**
- Goal 6 Achieve a high level of employee satisfaction and workplace excellence**

The first goal is based on the understanding that ridership will need to triple to reach the PM peak period transit mode share target by 2031. To meet the 2031 target, service improvements over the life of this Plan should strive for an annual ridership of 22 million by 2014. This goal will be achieved with the planning and delivery of a transit service that is competitive with the private automobile and provides an attractive choice for residents, employees and visitors.

The second goal recognizes that service improvement and ridership growth will require a significant investment in resources. The need is to be both functionally effective and fiscally prudent, to ensure that resources are effectively being allocated and utilized. The goal is to maximize the efficient use of resources, vehicles, facilities, technology and systems.

Goals 3 and 4 recognize that transit forms a key component to achieving quality of life objectives in the community. Decisions on GRT service levels must be tied to other strategic goals in the Region. Investment in transit provides multiple benefits for the individual customer, the homeowner, businesses and the overall health of the community. To meet the ridership growth targets, increased revenue and sustainable funding sources will also need to be secured.

Goal 5 addresses the need to further promote seamless integration of GRT bus, rapid transit and interregional services. Interregional transit services should be encouraged and GRT can be an effective feeder to these services. Investment in

Grand River Transit will increase ridership and provide an integrated transportation system that is supported by our community and delivered by a strong team of highly trained professionals.

GRT Vision Statement

Grand River Transit is a team of dedicated professionals who take pride in delivering safe, efficient and progressive transportation that strives to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Region.

GRT Mission Statement



Rapid Transit and the introduction of GO Train services are two significant advances, and GRT conventional services must be integrated with them to reach the Region’s transit mode share target. The growth in travel demand to and from township urban areas must also be addressed by GRT.

The final goal recognizes that employees form the backbone of the transit system and a direct link to service quality. GRT must ensure a workplace that encourages employee commitment, professional pride and excellent work performance along with a willingness to be accountable and innovative. This is an essential component to achieving the next level of ridership growth.

Each of these goals is tied to a set of objectives and supporting strategies that identify the ‘means’ to achieve the goals, targets for performance and a monitoring strategy to measure success. A key component of this Business Plan is the establishment of an updated Service Standards and Performance Measures document, to be adopted by Council and used as a tool for the planning and delivery of GRT services.

The detailed goals and objectives of GRT, and the service standards and Performance Measures document is contained under separate cover (Working Paper 1: GRT Goals, Objectives and Service Standards).



4.0 FACTORS INFLUENCING GRT'S GROWTH

The 2011 to 2014 Business Plan must ensure the successful integration of GRT local and express services with the LRT and adapted Bus Rapid Transit (aBRT) services being implemented in the central north-south corridor. Specific plans related to the Region's Rapid Transit program are contained in Regional Report E-11-072 presented to Council on June 15th, 2011.

The successful iXpress service strategy, first introduced in 2005, has resulted in a significant ridership increase in the central corridor. A second iXpress service was implemented in the Fall of 2011 along the Fischer-Hallman corridor and express service strategies will now be applied to seven additional corridors. This will transform transit services in the Region of Waterloo to a spine network of high frequency, semi-express, competitive travel corridors for an increasing number of regional residents and employees; supported by a redesigned base network.

There are two 'drivers' that provide strong guidance for the activities of GRT during this Business Plan and beyond. The first is the goal of significantly increasing transit ridership to capture 14.8 percent of the peak period travel market by 2031. The current mode share is estimated to be 4 percent and this ridership growth target will require an increase of approximately 35 million transit trips over the next 20 years.

The second key 'driver' is the clear financial target established by Regional Council for GRT funding over the next seven years. All expansion costs for GRT services, both capital and operating, must be able to be sustainably funded by the approved RT/ RTMP Reserve Fund. This Business Plan establishes a Financial Model that can be readily updated with prior year actual results and used to demonstrate how GRT will stay within its financial envelope while improving service and accelerating ridership growth.

Accelerating ridership growth and achieving the RTMP mode share target requires greater use of transit for local, regional and interregional trips. Having developed a successful transit service in the densely urbanized area of the Region, GRT is now called upon to provide appropriate transit links to the settlement areas of the townships. There is also a growing emphasis on GRT's role in ensuring that all residents and employees in Waterloo Region have strong local transit connections to GO Rail, GO Bus, VIA Rail and intercity bus operations.





Technology advances for transit continue to accelerate and GRT has been at the forefront. Located in the heart of Canada's high tech sector, and with industry partnerships and the assistance of students and faculty in local Universities and Colleges, GRT must continue its leadership role. Whether in fare collection or passenger information systems, users' expectations of service providers will drive the need for major commitments to technology that will also provide system efficiency and productivity improvements. Collectively described as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), the continuous evolution of ITS at GRT will be necessary to support the Region's ridership growth strategy.

Another major influence arises from demographic changes within the Region of Waterloo. Since its formation in 1973, the Region has consistently ranked as one of the fastest growing communities in Canada. In the past 5 years, the Region's population has increased by about 8 percent or 7,900 people per year. By 2031 the Region's population is expected to reach 729,000 residents. This growth combined with intensified development will provide a strong market for GRT services.

Discussions are ongoing with Conestoga College students concerning implementation of a Universal Pass program. If an agreement is reached, it will have major impacts on the Business Plan given the current enrollment of 9,000 students at three Conestoga campus locations in Waterloo Region and significant planned growth. Additional equipment and service hours will be needed to address the increased student transit demand.

Legislative and regulatory impacts must always be considered by service providers. In particular, the AODA will continue to shape how GRT delivers transit services. This legislation will affect all areas including Customer Service, Transportation Service, Information and Communications, Employment and the Built Environment. GRT staff are well prepared to ensure compliance with both the specifics and the spirit of the legislation and details are provided in ***Working Paper 2: AODA Strategy***.

Other external factors that will influence GRT services and ridership include the cost of auto ownership and operation, employment levels in the Region, post-secondary enrollment at Universities and Colleges, environmental programs and policies, parking supply and pricing, the success of intensification strategies and the availability of funding incentives from senior levels of government. The financial model developed in this Business Plan will help GRT and regional decision makers adapt quickly to the impact of such internal and external influences.



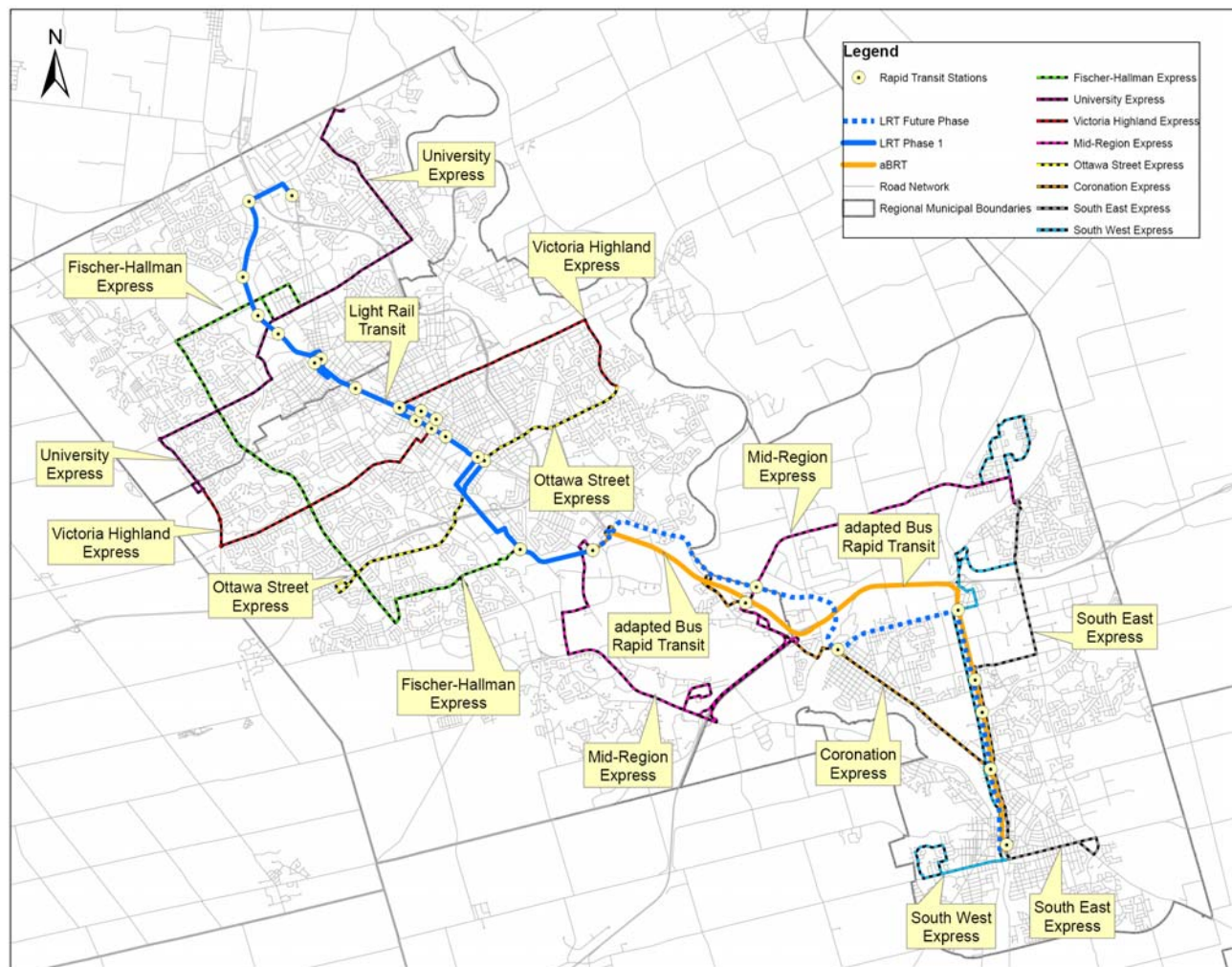
5.0 GRT SERVICE PLAN AND STRATEGIES

Service Expansion Plan within the Transit Service Area

2021 Express Corridors Strategy

With the introduction of LRT and aBRT service, GRT’s network must be redesigned to provide seamless connections between bus and rail service and improve overall travel options for transit riders. The 2021 long-term plan will see a spine service that includes Rapid Transit in the central north-south corridor between Cambridge and Waterloo and a network of up to eight Express corridors that provide connectivity to the Rapid Transit corridor and key destinations in the Region.

Proposed 2021 Rapid Transit and Express Corridor Network



With the Rapid Transit corridor scheduled to be operational in 2017, a key objective of this Business Plan was to prioritize the implementation of the Express Corridors and identify key service improvements that will be implemented by 2014.



2011 GRT Service Plan

In 2010, GRT operated 549,928 annual bus hours of conventional transit service with the 200 iXpress route in the central north-south corridor between Cambridge and Waterloo. In September 2011 another express service (201 iXpress) was launched in the Fischer-Hallman corridor, along with many enhancements to the 200 iXpress route and other local services. The 2011 service plan included 72,398 hours of service and 17 additional peak period buses. This represents the largest increase in annual service hours in GRT history. The 2011 service improvement plan is detailed below.

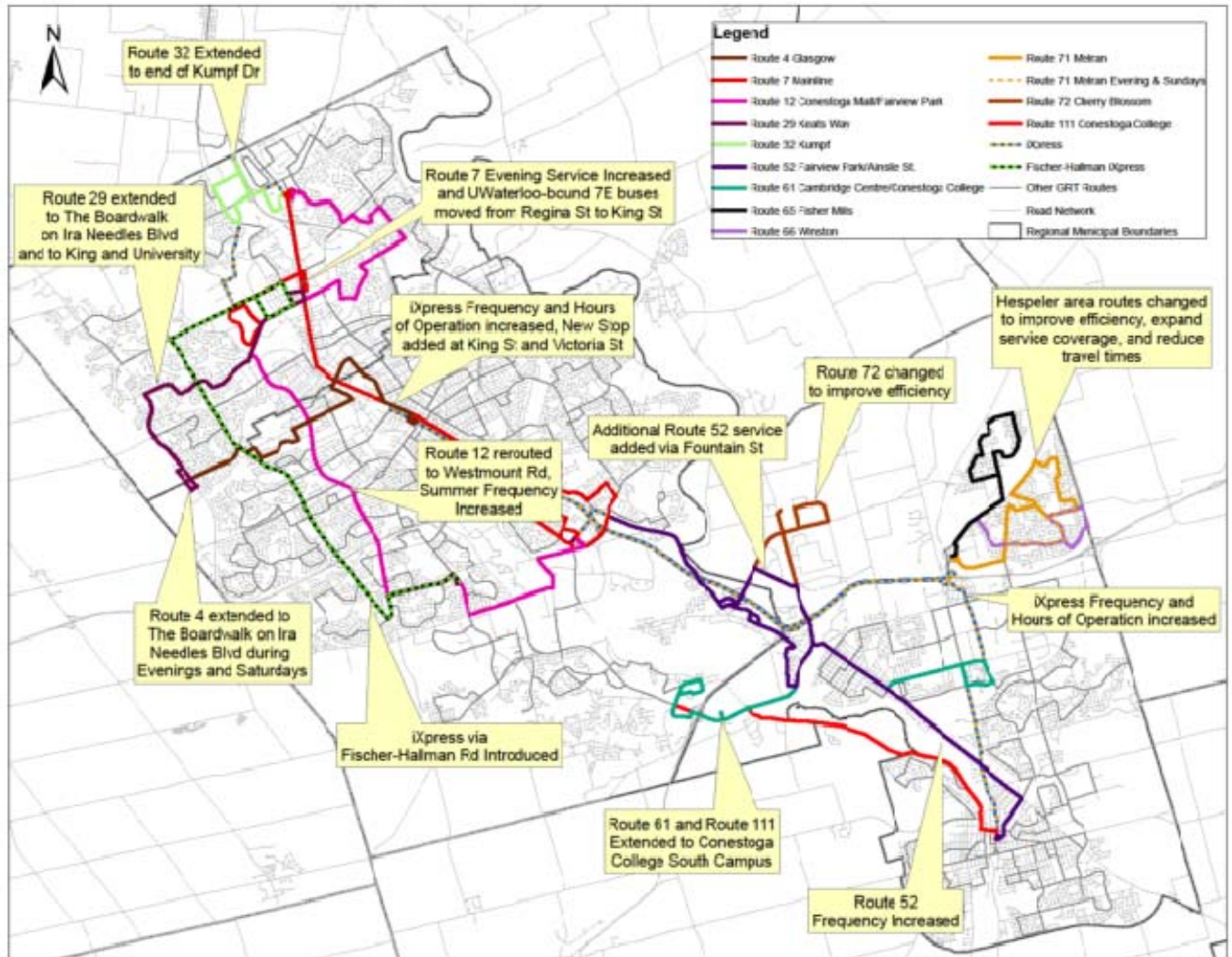
2011 Service Plan – Expansion Service Hours and Buses Implemented

Service	Proposed Service Improvement	Service Hours	Expansion Buses
Fischer-Hallman Express	Implement Fischer-Hallman Express with 15 minute frequency weekday peak service and 30 minute frequency weekday off peak and weekend service.	24,641	4
Route 61	Enhance weekday early morning, evening service.	975	
	Enhance midday summer service.	290	-
Route 52	Provide weekday all day 15 minute frequency service (split leg Preston Parkway/ Fountain Street).	7,688	4
Route 7	Increase weekday evening service and move University of Waterloo bound 7E buses from Regina Street to King Street.	5,300	
200 iXpress	Increase weekday peak and midday service frequency, with some additional evening trips.	20,862	6
	Increase Saturday frequency to 15 minutes between Fairview and Ainslie.	1,678	-
Route 12	Adjust the route to Westmount Road. Increase weekday summer frequency to 15 minute directional peaks and 30 minute off-peak.	-2,744	-
	Provide additional weekend evening service.	783	
Route 29	Extend service to The Boardwalk and King and University. Improve to 10 to 15 minute frequency weekday peak service, plus the addition of evening service.	12,030	3
	Improve Saturday service to 30 minute frequency / extend service hours.	468	-
	Improve Sunday service to 30 minute frequency / extend service hours.	427	-
Route 32	Extend service to the end of Kumpf Drive.	-	-
Route 4	Extend service to The Boardwalk on Ira Needles Blvd during evenings and Saturdays.	-	-



Service	Proposed Service Improvement	Service Hours	Expansion Buses
Route 61/ 111	Extend service to Conestoga College South Campus.	-	-
Hespeler Routes	Restructure routes to improve efficiency, expand service coverage and reduce travel times.	-	-
Route 72	Restructure route to improve efficiency.	-	-
Net 2011 System Expansion		72,398	17 (+1 spare)

2011 Service Plan





Evaluation of Express Corridors

The financial model indicated that the level of municipal investment approved by Regional Council in June 2011 would be sufficient to support the implementation of one new Express service every second year starting in the Fall of 2013. Seven proposed express routes were evaluated and prioritized based on the need to address existing system issues and pressures, connectivity to Rapid Transit, support for Regional land use planning objectives, potential for advancement towards the RTMP mode share targets, financial impacts and revenue performance, and ease of implementation.

Based on an evaluation of these express corridors (detailed in **Working Paper 3: Express Corridor Priority Phasing**), the priority for future service expansion was established as the:

- University Express corridor in 2013;
- Victoria-Highland Express corridor in 2015;
- Mid-Region Express and Ottawa Street Express in 2017; and
- Coronation Express, South East Express, South West Express corridors starting in 2019.

The University Express was prioritized for implementation in 2013 for a number of reasons. The corridor best addresses short-term capacity issues and provides service to major destinations including the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. Even with the recent implementation of the Fischer-Hallman Express (201 iXpress), more service is required to meet the travel demand and it is important to address level of service issues experienced by existing customers. The corridor provides an attractive east-west travel option in the north, connecting to growing residential and employment areas. The University Express corridor was also projected to have high ridership growth potential and greater ability to address transit mode share targets immediately.

The Victoria-Highland Express also addresses short-term capacity issues and provides service to newly developing areas. It provides an attractive east-west travel option which supports growth in downtown Kitchener (an urban growth centre and large employment area). The corridor connects to the GO Rail service and to the Fischer-Hallman Express route which will help support ridership growth. Based on ridership forecasts, this corridor has the second highest forecasted ridership of the seven Express corridors evaluated. It will attract new ridership in the short-term, help address transit mode share targets and build ridership as a feeder to the Rapid Transit services. This corridor was selected as the second priority and scheduled for implementation in 2015.

While the evaluation of the Express network extended beyond the term of this Business Plan, the structure and prioritization of the network beyond 2015 will be re-evaluated during development of the 2015-2019 Business Plan, taking into account updated travel patterns, public feedback and funding availability.



In addition to the Express corridor services, a number of GRT service enhancements to the base network are planned through 2014 and some initial service strategies have been identified for the period 2015 to 2018. These are illustrated in the tables and figures below.

2012 GRT Service Plan

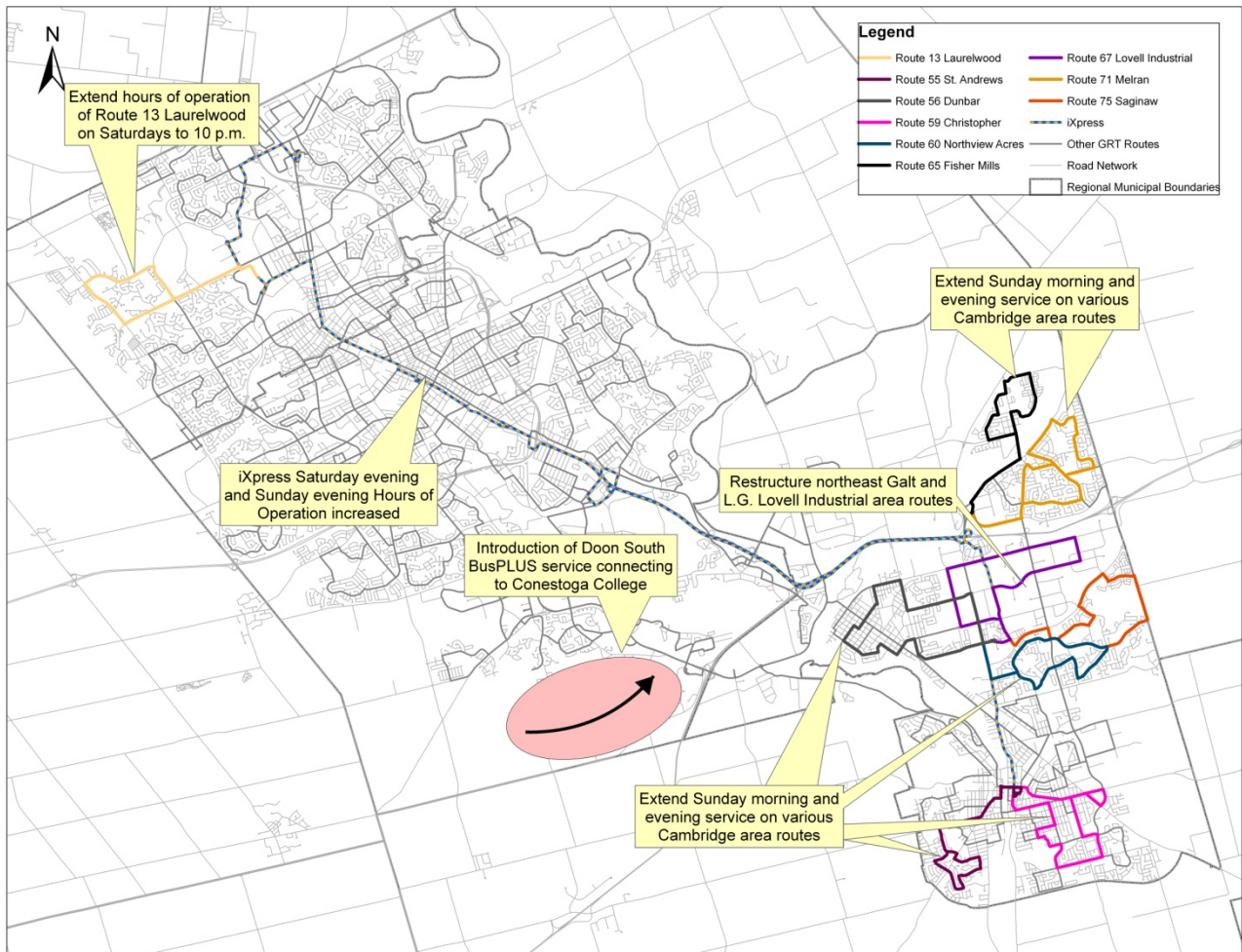
In 2012, 10,890 annual hours of service are proposed to be added to the GRT network with a focus of increasing weekend service on the central 200 iXpress corridor and improving services in Cambridge. Two-thousand (2,000) hours of the new service and one expansion vehicle can be offset through efficiency improvements and reallocation of service elsewhere in the system.

2012 Service Plan – Expansion Service Hours and Buses Required

Service	Proposed Service Improvement	Service Hours	Expansion Buses
Cambridge Service	Extend Cambridge Sunday morning and evening service	3,281	-
200 iXpress	Extend Saturday evening iXpress service to 11:00pm	1,234	-
	Extend Sunday evening iXpress service to 8:00pm	1,903	-
Route 13	Extend hours of operation on Route 13 Laurelwood on Saturdays to 10 p.m.	440	-
Northeast Galt and L.G. Lovell Industrial area	Improve service to northeast Galt residential areas, and to L.G. Lovell Industrial Park	4,032	1
Route 75	Relocate Route 75 BusPLUS service to Doon South	-	-
New Service Subtotal		10,890	1
<i>Less Reallocation of existing service</i>		- 2,000	- 1
Net 2012 System Expansion		8,890	-



2012 Service Plan





2013 GRT Service Plan

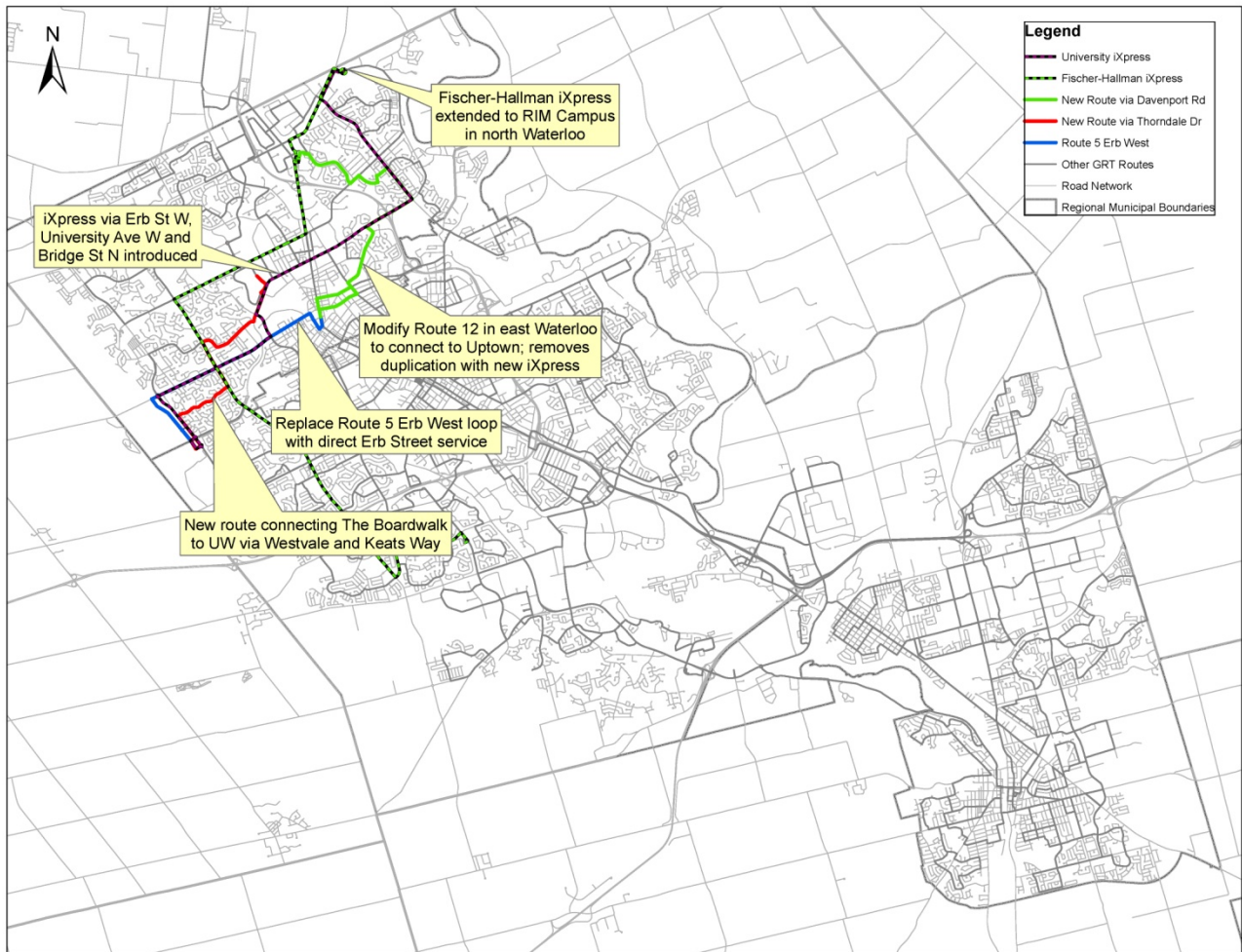
The 2013 service plan will implement the University Express corridor and modify local routes in the area. This will add 53,238 annual service hours to the GRT network and require an additional 16 peak period buses. The service improvement will increase coverage to Ira Needles Boulevard and the employment area at University Avenue and Northfield Drive. Local service adjustments are also required to accommodate the express corridor and improve coverage and directness of local routes. Five-thousand (5,000) hours of the new service and one expansion vehicle can be offset through efficiency improvements and reallocation of service elsewhere in the system.

2013 Service Plan – Expansion Service Hours and Buses Required

Service	Proposed Service Improvement	Hours of Service	# of Buses Allocated
University Express Corridor	Implement University Express connecting Ira Needles Boulevard to Bridge Street via University Avenue. The service will operate with 15 minute weekday peak period frequencies and 30 minute off-peak and weekend frequencies.	23,018	8
Route 5 and 12	Modify Waterloo local service including Route 5 Erb West and Route 12 Fairview/ Conestoga, and implement new service connecting Westvale to the University area via Keats Way	18,600	6
Route 201 iXpress	Extend Route 201 iXpress to Research In Motion Campus in east Waterloo via Conestoga Mall	11,620	2
New Service Subtotal		53,238	16
<i>Less Reallocation of existing service</i>		<i>- 5,000</i>	<i>- 1</i>
Net 2013 System Expansion		48,238	15



2013 Service Plan





2014 GRT Service Plan

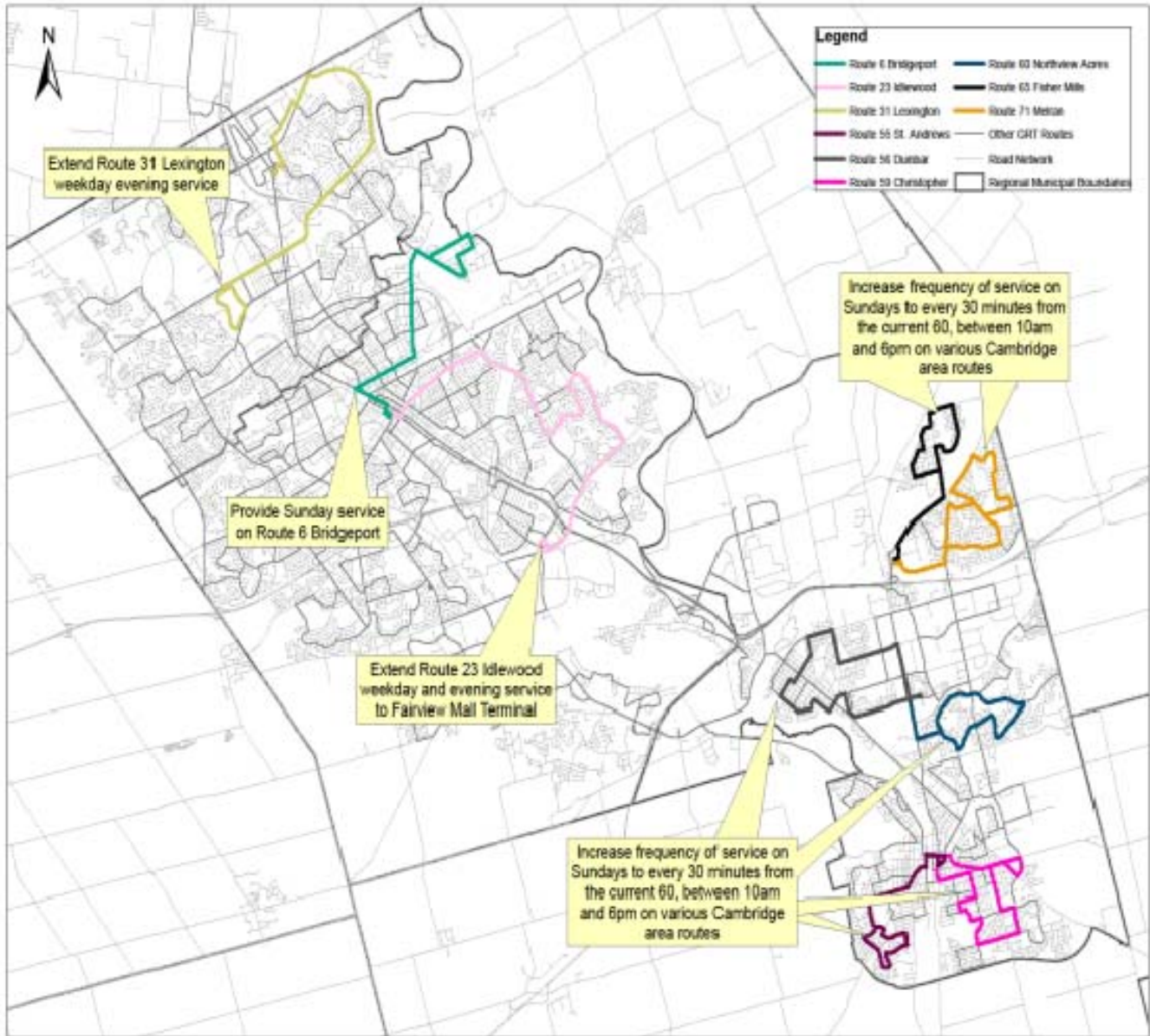
The 2014 service plan focuses on local service improvements that increase hours of operation and frequency of certain weekday evening routes and improves Sunday service frequency in Cambridge. In total, 7,592 annual hours of service will be added to the GRT network. Two-thousand (2,000) hours of the new service and one expansion vehicle can be offset through efficiency improvements and reallocation of service elsewhere in the system.

2014 Service Plan – Expansion Service Hours and Buses Required

Service	Proposed Service Improvement	Hours of Service	Expansion Buses
Route 31	Extend Route 31 Lexington weekday evening service	2,016	-
Route 23	Extend Route 23 Idlewood weekday and evening service to Fairview Mall Terminal	2,520	-
Route 6	Provide Sunday service on Route 6 Bridgeport	1,054	-
Cambridge Service	Increase frequency of service in Cambridge on Sundays to every 30 minutes from the current 60, between 10:00am and 6:00pm	2,080	-
New Service Subtotal		7,670	-
<i>Less Reallocation of existing service</i>		<i>- 2,000</i>	<i>-</i>
Net 2014 System Expansion		5,670	-



2014 Service Plan





2015 – 2018 Service Strategies

Beyond the term of this Business Plan, it is expected that service expansions each year will continue to alternate between additional express corridors and local service improvements. It is important to note that these proposed plans will be continuously reviewed and updated as more detailed service design and public consultation are undertaken for the 2015 to 2019 Business Plan.

2015 to 2018 Service Strategy – Expansion Service Hours and Buses Required

Year	Proposed Service Improvement	Service Hours	Expansion Buses
2015	Implement Highland-Victoria Express corridor. The service will operate with 15 minute weekday peak period frequencies and 30 minute off-peak and weekend frequencies.	26,855	10
	Modify Route 24 Highland and Route 25 Queen South to improve service in Highland West area of Kitchener and connect to commercial destinations on Ira Needles Boulevard.	5,422	2
2016	Provide Saturday service on Route 31 Lexington	1,248	
	Provide Sunday service on Route 22 Laurentian West	488	
	Provide Sunday service on Route 35 Eastbridge	1,364	
	Provide service to east Kitchener industrial areas along Shirley Avenue	1,008	
	Provide two-way service in L.G. Lovell Industrial Park, connecting two Rapid Transit Stations	2,896	2
2017	Implement Mid-Region Express connecting Cambridge with Sportsworld via Maple Grove Road during weekday peak periods.	14,742	9
	Implement Ottawa Street Express with east Kitchener local service improvements	40,312	14
	Extend Route 201 iXpress to Block Line Rapid Transit Station	4,530	1
2018	Local route restructuring in Central Transit Corridor		
New Service Subtotal		98,865	38
<i>Less Reallocation of existing service</i>		<i>- 10,000</i>	<i>- 4</i>
<i>Less Reallocation of existing services within the Central Transit Corridor as Rapid Transit services begin operation</i>		<i>- 85,460</i>	<i>- 26</i>
Net 2015-2018 System Expansion		3,405	8



Summary of GRT Service Improvements

A summary of the total service hours being added to the system and expansion buses required between 2011 and 2018 is illustrated in the table below. Annual expansion hours and buses include new services and improvement of existing services. During each year, efficiency improvements will reduce the number of new service hours and buses required. This is also illustrated in the table below.

Summary of Service Improvements (2011 to 2018)

Year	Annual Expansion Hours (buses)	Less reallocation of existing service hours (buses)	Net Expansion Hours (buses)
2011*	72,398 (18)	0 (0)	72,398 (18)
2012	10,890 (1)	2,000 (1)	8,890 (0)
2013	53,238 (16)	5,000 (1)	48,238 (15)
2014	7,670 (0)	2,000 (0)	5,670 (0)
2015 - 2018	98,264 (38)	95,460 (30)	2,804 (8)
Total	242,460 (73)	104,460 (32)	138,000 (41)

*Already in Place

The following table illustrates how the service improvements will be funded. Between 2011 and 2018, a total of 138,000 new service hours and 41 expansion vehicles will be funded through the Council approved reserve fund. The remaining 104,460 expansion hours and 32 expansion vehicles will be delivered through existing resources, including efficiency improvements and the reallocation of the 200 iXpress corridor and Route 7D/E when the Rapid Transit corridor is implemented.

2011 to 2018 Funding Summary

Year	Source of Funds	Service Hours	Expansion Buses
2011 - 2018	Reserve Fund*	138,000	41
2012 - 2018	Efficiency Improvements	19,000	6
2015/ 2017	Reallocated from Central Transit Corridor (200 iXpress)	71,732	17
2017	Reallocated from Route 7D/E	13,728	9
Total Service Plan		242,460	73
Total Service Expansion (net of reallocation of existing service)		138,000	41
Percentage Increase to GRT service, 2011 - 2018		25%	



5.1 GRT Service to Township Urban Areas

With the success of the Route 21 extension to St. Jacobs and Elmira, the opportunities to provide conventional transit service to other urbanized areas of the townships was assessed and results are contained in **Working Paper 4: Service to the Township Urban Areas**. While Route 21 services the largest population concentration in the Region's townships (Elmira) and a key attractor in the St. Jacob's Farmers Market, there are still a number of potential markets in the Township urban areas with sufficient population and/or employment to be able to accommodate some form of service offering.

Population and Employment in Township Settlement Areas

Township	Settlement	Population (2009)	Employment (2009)
Wilmot	New Hamburg	7,310	2,938
	Baden	4,112	815
	New Dundee	1,210	313
	Mannheim	1,041	24
	St. Agatha	610	91
North Dumfries	Ayr	4,249	1,150
Woolwich	Elmira*	9,891	4,373
	St. Jacobs*	1,832	2,290
	Breslau	1,416	391
	Conestoga	1,359	221
	Maryhill	632	114
Wellesley	Wellesley	2,700	299
	St. Clements	1,421	220
	Heidelberg	1,164	129
	Linwood	831	198

*Service already provided

The Breslau area is adjacent to the existing GRT service area and lends itself to consideration of a route extension. Residential growth is significant and may accelerate with implementation of GO Train service, including a new train station in Breslau. The service design should focus on regular commuters from Breslau destined to work and school locations in GRT's network and would also address some existing coverage issues along Victoria Street in Kitchener. GO Transit commuters would benefit from this service and the route might generate ridership in both directions by targeting employees travelling to businesses located in Breslau industrial areas, including near the airport.

Another opportunity is a transit service for 'home to work' and 'home to school' commuters from New Hamburg, Baden and Petersburg that links with existing GRT services at the Boardwalk. A third opportunity is a similar commuter service from Ayr linking either to the Ainslie Street Terminal in Cambridge or Sportsworld in Kitchener.



Given the travel distances involved, these two service applications are suggested as dedicated, semi-express routes linking residents directly to key transfer points in the GRT network.

The primary transit market for township urban areas (with populations of 5,000 or greater), is 'home to work' and 'home to school' trips during weekday peak periods. Off peak and weekend services could be considered as demand warrants, subject to achieving specified ridership and financial targets.

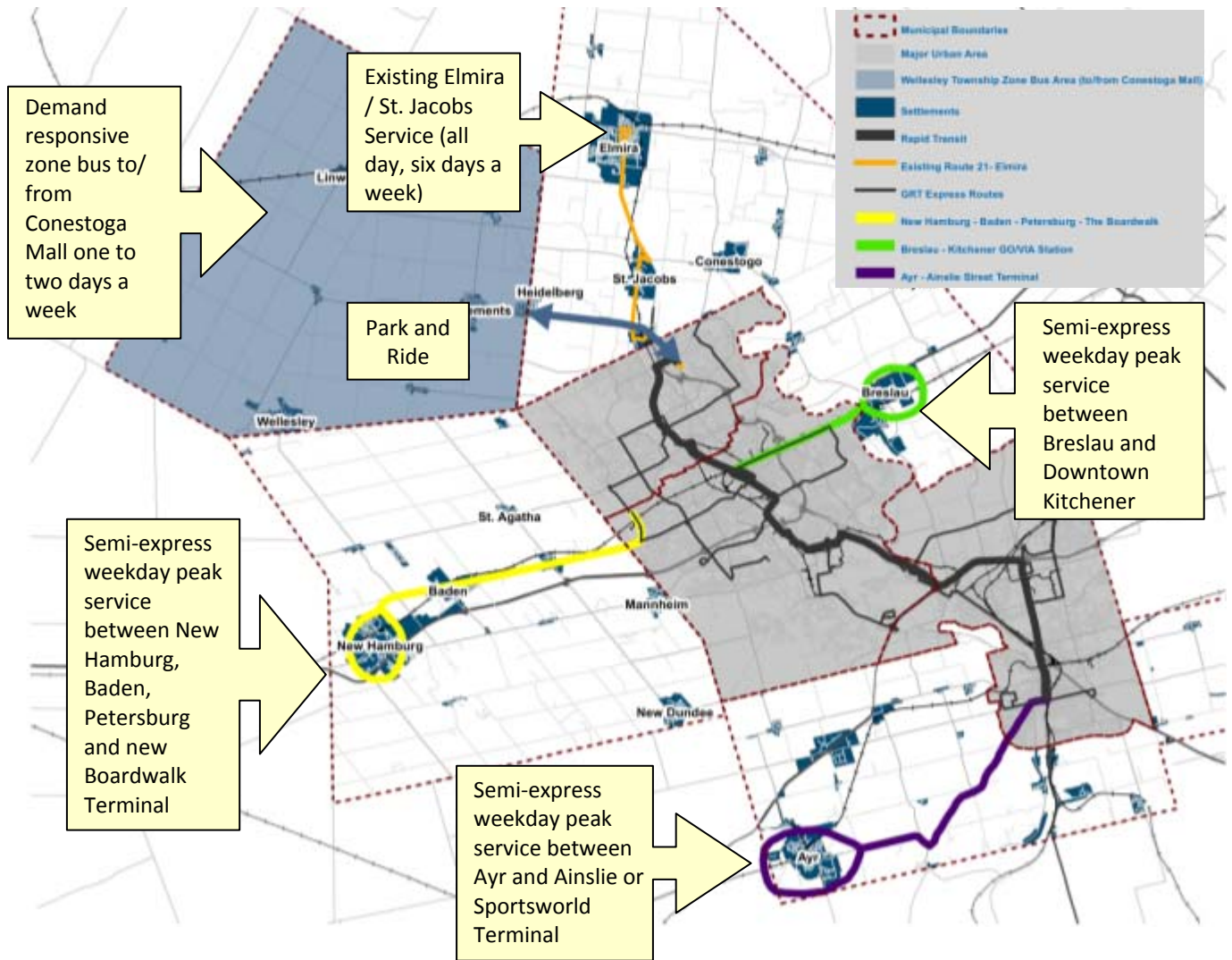
For urban areas in Wellesley, the populations are too low for conventional transit to efficiently provide regular 'home to work' commuter service and the suggestion is for the Region to develop 'park and ride GRT' lots at strategic locations to accommodate some portion of long distance commuter trips on transit. A transit service, operating perhaps one or two days per week and targeting occasional travellers making shopping, visiting or personal services trips, should also be considered for Wellesley residents.

A preliminary service concept, including ridership, revenue and cost projections, was developed for each of the above opportunities and the next stage would be to circulate the information to township councils. If a supportive response is received, a joint public consultation process will be developed for each township. As plans are further developed, specific service strategies for township urban areas will be added to GRT's service strategy.





Preliminary Service Concept for Township Urban Area Transit Service





5.2 Grand River Transit and Interregional Trips

There are a significant number of interregional trips between the Region of Waterloo and neighbouring municipalities but very few are on public transit. By providing a local feeder service and seamless integration for long distance travelers, GRT is in a position to help develop the interregional transit market, increase its own ridership and contribute to reduced road congestion in the Region. Rapid Transit in the central transit corridor and GRT Express services are logical connection points to interregional transit services and there are also opportunities to coordinate marketing, fare collection and passenger information systems among GRT and all interregional service providers.

GO Train service started in December 2011 and is based at the existing VIA Station on Weber Street. Currently, GRT is providing shuttle services from the Charles Street Terminal and Route 18 also provides a local transit connection. Fare integration for GRT users accessing the GO Trains is in place and the program can be extended to residents using GRT to access GO Bus services. The development of a multi-modal transportation terminal and Mobility Hub at Victoria and King is underway and will include a new GO Train/VIA Rail Station, an interregional bus station, a Rapid Transit station and GRT bus terminal. This will be a significant interchange opportunity for GRT service connection to interregional trips. The multi-modal terminal is to be operational in 2017, outside of the timeframe of this Business Plan.

There are 325,400 trips by all travel modes being made internally within the Region or to/from the Region in the PM peak period according to the 2006 Transportation Tomorrow Survey. Of these trips about 15 percent are between the Region and external municipalities. The potential transit demand and the role of GRT relative to all interregional transit service providers operating in the Region of Waterloo is assessed in **Working Paper 5: Interregional Services**.

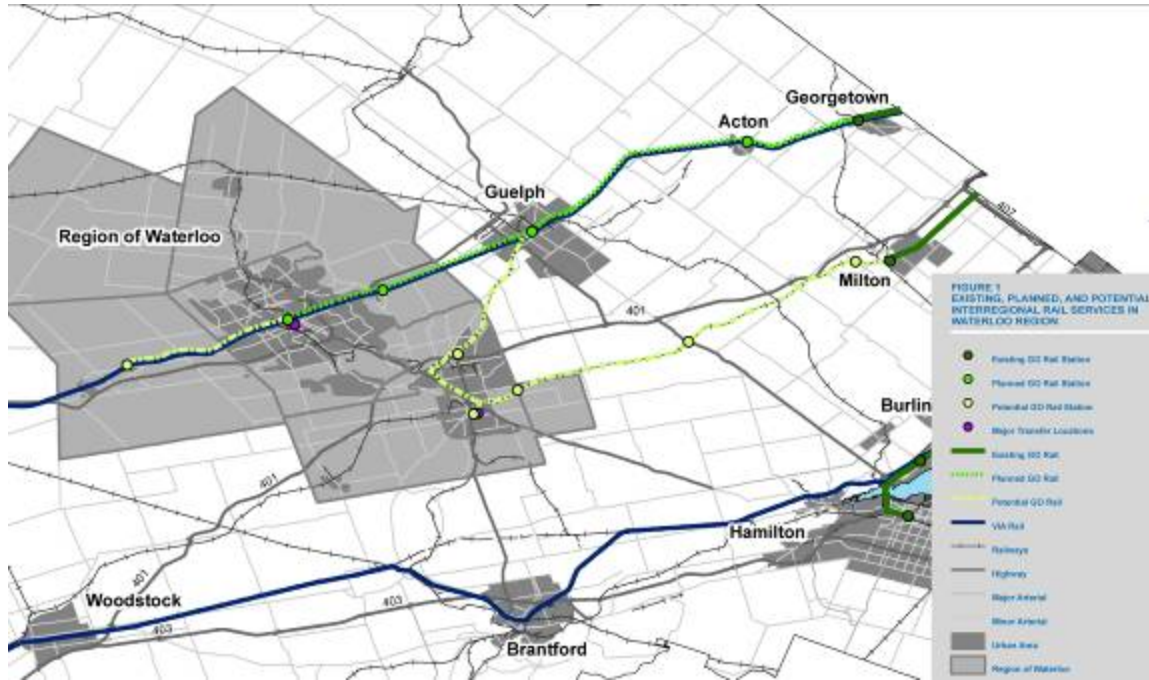
PM Peak Travel Demand Inter-regional Trips

PM Peak Period		Destination
		Waterloo Region
Origin	Guelph	8,664
	Peel	3,380
	Wellington	2,301
	Hamilton	2,098
	Toronto	2,067
	Halton	2,041
	Brantford	976
	Brant	782
	York	750
	Niagara	373
	Other	4,430
	Total	27,862

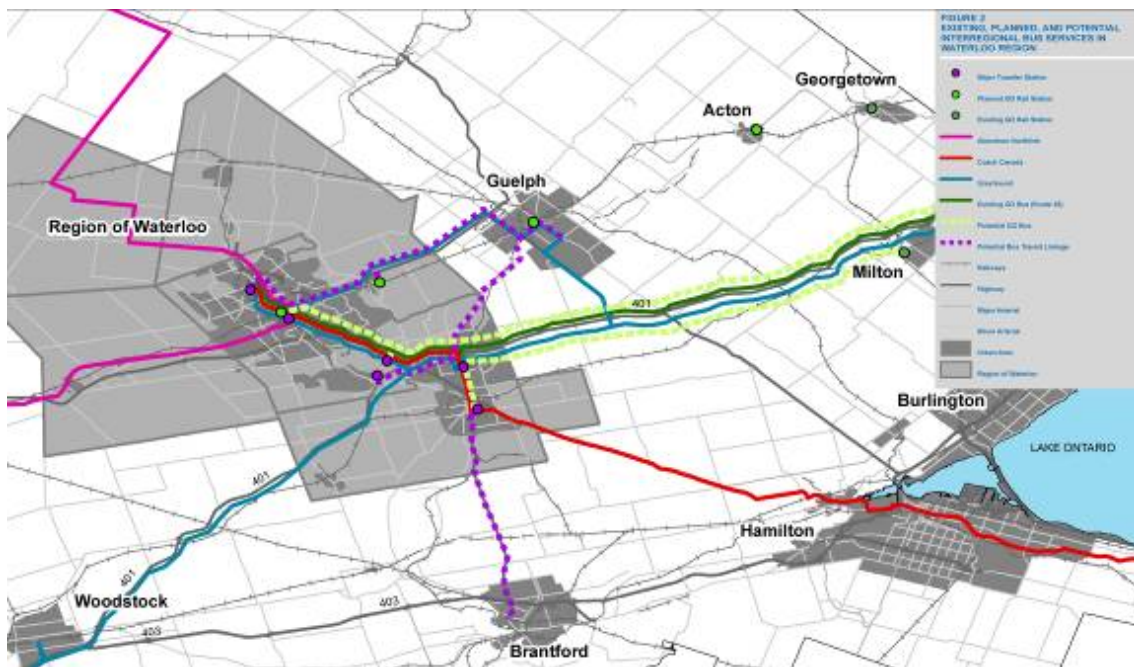


Currently the transit mode split for these interregional trips is approximately 1 percent. This is primarily due to the limited availability of interregional transit services for travel to/from Waterloo Region. As planned interregional services are implemented (as illustrated in the figure below), improving GRT coordination with interregional transit providers will be an important component to improving local travel options and meeting the 14.8 percent transit mode share target in the RTMP.

Existing, Planned and Potential Interregional Rail Services



Existing, Planned and Potential Interregional Bus Services





Cooperation will be required between Metrolinx/GO Transit, Region of Waterloo/GRT and various other service providers to achieve common goals and permit Regional residents and employees to move easily between systems. The following actions will be taken by the Region and/or GRT to help improve the transit mode share for interregional travel:

- Begin discussions with Metrolinx and advocate to reduce the 'in train' travel time of GO Transit commuters (through track and signaling improvements, semi-express schedules);
- Work with Metrolinx and the Province to finalize arrangements and implement the Breslau GO Station as soon as possible;
- Advocate to Metrolinx to provide additional peak period train service by increasing the number of GO Trains and/or by arrangement between Metrolinx and VIA Rail that would permit commuters to use the existing VIA trains for the equivalent GO Transit fare;
- Advocate to Metrolinx to extend the GO Train-Bus services beyond the VIA station to also serve local transit users at the Charles Street Transit terminal;
- Explore a 'reverse-commute' train service to address workforce needs of employers in the Region (a study is currently being conducted in partnership with the technology sector industries in Waterloo);
- Request Metrolinx to extend a new branch of the Route 25 GO Bus to serve the Ainslie Street Terminal in Cambridge;
- Work with Metrolinx and surrounding municipalities to develop a business case for GO Bus services between Cambridge and Hamilton and between Cambridge and Brantford);
- Continue discussions with Metrolinx and the Province to initiate an Environmental Assessment Study for the extension of GO Train service from Milton to Cambridge and in the short term request Metrolinx to provide a 'train-bus' connection to develop the market;
- Work with Metrolinx to develop coordinated marketing programs, special event services, passenger information systems and service advisories;
- Begin discussions with Metrolinx, the Province and surrounding municipalities to initiate a feasibility study for interregional transit services between Kitchener/Waterloo and Guelph and between Cambridge and Guelph;
- Review the feasibility for a GO Premium Service shuttle; and
- Pursue fare and service coordination opportunities with VIA Rail and intercity bus operators.



6.0 TECHNOLOGY AND CAPITAL ASSETS

In addition to expansion buses, a number of other capital projects will be required with the implementation of the service plan and other strategies identified in this Business Plan. Capital Assets and estimated costs required between 2012 and 2018 are detailed in the table below. It should be noted that any costs beyond 2014 will need to be confirmed during the 2015-2019 Business Plan update and are subject to further review.

The 2013 service plan will require 15 expansion vehicles with most allocated to the new University Express corridor. Implementation of the Highland/ Victoria express, tentatively proposed for 2015 would require another 8 expansion buses.

The continued implementation of Express corridors will require new stations spaced approximately at one kilometre intervals. All stations should have shelters and concrete pads that provide a flat and paved surface to accommodate persons with mobility devices or families with strollers. The University Express corridor planned for 2013 will require 32 stations along its length. Between 2015 and 2018, capital budget has been set aside to implement an additional 91 stations along the Victoria-Highland Express corridor (2015) and the Ottawa Street and Mid-Region Express (2017) corridors (subject to confirmation from the 2015 Business Plan and available funding).

New satellite terminals and upgrades to existing terminals will be required as GRT expands service to new areas and as the route structure is modified to better meet the needs of travellers. New terminals will continue to be fully accessible, be located close to major destinations and allow seamless transfers between GRT conventional services, MobilityPLUS, Rapid Transit and interregional services.

In 2013, a new terminal will be built at the Boardwalk on Ira Needles Boulevard. This will be a terminus for the University Express (2013), the planned Victoria-Highland Express (2015) and other local routes. By 2014, the Cambridge Centre Terminal will be improved to integrate conventional transit with the upcoming aBRT service.

Between 2015 and 2018, a new satellite terminal will be required at Lackner Boulevard and Ottawa Street (2015). This facility will service as the eastern terminus and transfer facility for both the Victoria-Highland Express and Ottawa Street Express, along with a number of local routes. Upgrades will also be required to the University of Waterloo Intermodal Terminal in 2016 and the Fairview Mall Intermodal Terminal in 2017.

Adequate storage and maintenance of the bus fleet is an important component of GRT's operation, and this will require expansion of the Strasburg Road Transit Facility to accommodate existing and future capital needs. The expansion is currently underway and will be complete by 2014; increasing vehicle storage capacity to 292 conventional buses and 34 MobilityPLUS buses.



GRT Expansion Capital Requirements Between 2012 and 2018

Capital Requirement	Description and Timing				Capital Costs (Millions)		
	2012	2013	2014	2015-2018	2012-2014	2015-2018	
Expansion buses	0	15 buses	0	8 buses	\$7.8M	\$4.4M	
Stations for Express routes		University Express (30 stations)		Victoria-Highland; Ottawa and Mid-Region Express (129 stations)	\$1.6M	\$4.6M	
New satellite terminals and expansion of existing facilities		New terminal at the Boardwalk	Cambridge Centre and Victoria Hub	New terminal at Lackner and Ottawa (2015)	\$3.0M	\$2.0M	
				UW Intermodal Terminal (2016)			\$5.0M
				Fairview Mall Intermodal Terminal (2017)			\$5.0M
Expansion of Strasburg Road Transit Facility			Estimated completion date		\$38.5M		
Advanced transit technology					\$10.6M	\$0.7*	
Total					\$61.5M	\$21.7M	

**Note: Capital costs for technology are only calculated until 2015 for this Business Plan*

Transit has been benefiting from advances in information and communications technologies, particularly in the areas of customer information, fare systems, and service control. Access to the internet has enabled personalized trip planning to be offered, increasing customer convenience and reducing operating costs. Access to real-time information through mobile devices has also made the use of transit more convenient (CUTA Transit Vision 2040). Accordingly, the 2010 RTMP has recommended that GRT develop an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategic plan to include:

- ‘Real time’ scheduling of buses and information for transit users; and
- Implementation of transit priority measures to improve transit travel times and system productivity.



A technology plan for GRT was developed and is summarized in **Working Paper 6: Technology Review**. Funding for continued ITS development is included in the financial plan and the capital plan as noted above. Key directions include:

- Complete planning, identification of requirements, and development of a transit timekeeping system, to be coordinated/integrated with the Regional timekeeping and payroll system;
- Explore the use of transit priority measures along Express corridors and other possible routes and locations, and develop related guidelines and deployment plan;
- Develop a performance monitoring system that monitors the requesting and granting of priority to transit vehicles (to measure effectiveness and enable deployment of new strategies), and then explore enhancing the level of priority being provided to GRT buses;
- Complete as soon as possible the planning and design that is already underway of Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), and then deploy in all of GRT's traveler information systems;
- Develop a strategy for the use of the new available data and performance monitoring system, including developing standard reports and procedures and joint approaches with GRT Operations to benefit from new analyses available;
- Review the results from the pilot project on the bus control system, and based on the business case, determine whether to deploy to the entire fleet;
- Develop an inter-departmental (Rapid Transit, Transportation Planning, GRT Operations) task force for the planning of the Rapid Transit technology systems to ensure multi-modal integration of AVL, traveler information, and communications systems; and
- Initiate preliminary planning for a future smart card system such as PRESTO, including extensive consultations with other transit systems about experience and lessons learned.





7.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE AND MARKETING PLAN

GRT management understands the importance of customer service and the need to attract and retain transit customers. This Business Plan includes an overall Customer Service Strategy which enhances programs already in place and suggests new initiatives which may be implemented to improve the overall customer experience. This renewed focus on customer service is crucial in light of the significant service improvements planned over the next several years and the transition to being a Rapid Transit provider.

Many more customers will be welcomed on-board and it is essential that GRT has the right people doing the right things with the right equipment, programs and systems to deliver customer service excellence. The major elements of the proposed customer service strategy are as follows:

- Service Quality;
- Service Reliability;
- Service Recovery;
- Customer Engagement;
- Safety and Security;
- Customer Service Technology; and
- Employee Recruitment and Training.

The strategy also emphasizes the importance of organizational and individual accountability for service delivery. Therefore a series of performance measures and objectives for each strategy element are presented, which will entrench continuous improvement and customer service excellence in the way GRT does business.

Each of these elements is described more fully in **Working Paper 8: Customer Service Strategy** and the following are key recommendations:

- Operations and service planning staff should continue to monitor and analyze Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data to improve schedule adherence, operational efficiency, route planning and scheduling;
- Establish an annual service review process, prior to the annual budget cycle, to address known system deficiencies;
- Together with the Region, develop a strategy to manage social media;
- integrate with the corporate Customer Relationship Management system; and,



- Carry out a complete review of the existing safety/security program, to identify improvements for current facilities and services and further improvements which will be required, to offer continued protection in light of the planned system wide growth.

Transit users should be treated as GRT’s “customers” and customers are people who are making a choice to use public transit. If GRT services do not satisfy their needs, people will find alternative transportation or change their living/working arrangements. As in any business, by placing customers first in all priorities and recognizing that they are making a choice to use the service, the business is better able to achieve success.

GRT has an active marketing program targeted at informing and educating the community about its transit services. The annual Marketing Work Plan has been effective in serving both GRT and its customers as evidenced by the ridership growth rate. However, as the system is being transformed to a rapid transit network, the time has come to initiate a Strategic Marketing Plan to set the direction for highly targeted annual work plans. This Strategic Marketing Plan will address GRT’s need to:

- Keep existing transit users well informed of changes;
- Adapt to new communications technologies and customer preferences for receiving information;
- Attract new discretionary riders who are seeking an effective, economical travel choice; and
- Establish marketing partnerships with businesses, community groups, transportation associations and other service providers who share similar objectives.

The active promotion of Rapid Transit will incent more residents to make an economic choice to use public transit. There is the opportunity for many families to increase their transit use and down-size to one less car per household. The considerable money saved on the cost of auto ownership can be utilized to invest in other priorities to improve overall quality of life.

Recommendations for marketing and customer service are detailed in **Working Paper 7: Marketing Strategy** and in **Working Paper 8: Customer Service Strategy**. They include:

- That GRT focus on commuters, students and GRT employees as the primary target markets for ridership growth;
- marketing efforts be directed at improving the image of public transit as a viable alternative for the choice rider;
- That marketing programs be developed to generate ridership growth from seniors, new Canadians and interregional travellers;
- That marketing programs include information about reducing car ownership per household and looking at transit as part of a healthy lifestyle and as an economic and an environmental solution;



- That all programs describe transit as a component of active transportation, compatible with other elements such as biking, walking, rideshare, auto-share, etc.
- That all GRT employees receive information to help them fully understand service strategies;
- That GRT efficiently capture, report on and use all employee and customer feedback;
- That GRT work with businesses and educational organizations to pursue opportunities for new partnerships (bus pass programs, smart commute initiatives);
- That GRT work with GO Transit to develop joint information and marketing programs; and
- That GRT continue to survey its target markets on a regularly scheduled basis to measure effectiveness and to help plan for further transit growth and service improvements.





8.0 FARE STRATEGIES AND FINANCIAL PLAN

This Business Plan is based on and consistent with the funding envelope approved by Regional Council in June 2011 to create a Regional Transportation Master Plan Reserve Fund to support the implementation of the Rapid Transit initiative (LRT and aBRT) as well as the necessary enhancements to the GRT network of conventional bus and MobilityPLUS services.

A financial model has been developed and tested as part of the Business Plan update. Key inputs to the model are the 2010 actual statistics for GRT financial performance and ridership, annual Transit Reserve Funds available for GRT service expansion, all capital and one-time costs for service expansion, additional bus hours required each year and the marginal operating cost per bus hour, ridership forecasts, population and assessment growth rates and the average fare. Key outputs are the Revenue/Cost ratio and annual growth in transit ridership.

Different fare scenarios were examined as part of the business plan process; recognizing that GRT fares are, on average, lower than those of peer transit systems, particularly those that have or are moving into the provision of Rapid Transit services. Currently, GRT recovers 37 percent of operating cost through customer fares; with the balance provided through municipal taxes and provincial gas tax funding. With significant service improvements to be implemented over the next several years, it is important that an appropriate balance be achieved in how operating costs are funded. A Regional goal is to achieve a balance between the municipal operating contribution and transit system revenue.

Sensitivity analyses were conducted, particularly related to fare strategies and three scenarios were developed to address the goals of staying within the Reserve Fund allocations for GRT expansion while making significant progress toward both a 50 percent R/C ratio and the 14.8 percent transit mode share target.

The table below is for a fare strategy with an annual increase of 7 percent in the average fare over the life of this business plan. This fare increase will help move GRT in the direction of achieving the desired distribution in funding sources for the operation of the service and is in line with the goals of this plan for ridership growth. Traditionally fares are set annually at Regional Council and changes implemented on July 1st. To ensure transit service remains affordable for all members of the community, subsidy programs that provide discount fares to those in financial need should continue to be provided in conjunction with Regional Social Service agencies.

The financial model can be used each year to demonstrate the impact of alternative fare scenarios that Council may wish to consider. As the year's progress and ridership growth occurs at a greater or lesser rate than used in the current financial plan, there will be an opportunity to adjust fares to the appropriate level.

The financial model recognizes that the cost impacts of service enhancements are immediate while the associated new ridership (and revenue) takes up to three years to fully develop. There is also a recognition that GRT fares have been historically at a lower level than many peer group systems and the difference is especially large when comparing GRT to systems that offer express and rapid transit services. The proposed increases will



assist GRT in moving to fare levels more comparable with peer group systems that offer express and rapid transit services. Transit riders are generally supportive of higher fares if significant service level improvements are being provided.

Details of the GRT Financial plan are contained in **Working Paper 9: Financial Plan**. Key parameters for the period of this Business Plan and a summary of forecasted ridership and financial performance are summarized in the table below.

Projected Ridership and Financial Performance

Annual Statistics	2010*	2011	2012	2013	2014
Proposed Total Service Hours	584,367	612,346	657,278	679,284	713,973
Ridership Forecast	18,055,000	19,500,000	20,744,000	21,975,000	23,297,000
Operating Cost	61,014,000	64,832,760	71,320,000	75,546,000	81,338,000
Passenger Revenue	22,783,000	23,957,000	27,216,000	30,280,000	33,357,000
Net Cost of Service	\$38,231,000	\$40,297,760	\$44,104,000	\$45,266,000	\$47,981,000
Revenue / Cost Ratio	37.34%	36.95%	38.28%	40.08%	41.01%

Note: Based on 7% average annual fare increase

*Actual values for 2010



9.0 MONITORING AND NEXT STEPS

This Business Plan outlines a service strategy that includes the largest single year investment in additional service hours in GRT history (2011); the expansion of the Express corridor network; improvements in local services including frequency, service hours and route structure, addressing inter-regional travel demands and preparing for the introduction of Rapid Transit service connecting Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo.

The plan embraces the need for continuous customer service improvements, including how the GRT brand is communicated and marketed to the public; accommodating persons with disabilities and being at the forefront of advances in transit technology.

The 2010 RTMP sets an ambitious target for ridership growth. Achieving a 14.8 percent transit mode share by 2031 will require annual ridership to double within the next 10 years and interim targets are set for each year of the Business Plan. The plan includes performance measures and a monitoring strategy, with key targets and indicators that allow GRT staff to track performance and make modifications. This is documented in ***Working Paper 1: GRT Goals, Objectives and Service Standards***.

Service plans will be updated annually based on the review of performance measures and subject to annual budget deliberations. The fare strategy will also be reviewed annually and adjusted based on the achievement of ridership and financial performance targets.

The Region has made a significant investment in public transit which will improve the quality of life of residents and contribute to a strong local economy. This Business Plan to 2014 sets out the direction that GRT will take to achieve the goals of the RTMP including integration with Rapid Transit.