

COVID-19 Ridership Recovery Strategy



MiWay - Business Development
TRANSPORTATION & WORKS | TRANSIT DIVISION
CITY OF MISSISSAUGA
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MiWay COVID-19 Ridership Recovery Strategy

Introduction

- City of Mississauga COVID-19 Recovery Framework Overview
- MiWay COVID-19 Recovery Framework

1 Responsive Service Planning and Delivery

- Service Planning
- Route Management
- Workforce Management

2 Investing in Transit Infrastructure

- Government Funding Opportunities
- Planning and Implementing Change
- Multimodal Transit Hubs
- Smart City Master Plan

3 Customer First Service

- Understanding the Customer Experience
- Keeping MiWay Relevant
- Supporting Customer Needs
- Adopt New Technology
- Investing in Staff
- MiWay Customer Charter

4 Planning and Adapting to the Future

- MiWay Five 2.0 – The Next Five
- On-demand Transit Service
- Higher Order Transit
- Building Sustainability

5 Revenue and Fares Management

- Government Funding Support – Safe Restart Agreement
- Transit Fees and Fares Strategy
- Fare and Service Integration
- Future Fare Payment Options

Introduction

In 2019, Mississauga city council approved the investment of an additional 32,600 service hours for use in 2020 to provide some new service, streamline routes, integrate with new transit hubs, improve off-peak service levels and reduce overcrowding on existing routes due to high ridership.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, MiWay had seen double digit ridership growth of 12 and 13 per cent in January and February 2020 over 2019. These increases were the result of years of strategic planning and investment in public transit service hour growth by the City of Mississauga.

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly disrupted life in Mississauga for its residents, its businesses, its visitors, and the city government and the services it provides. MiWay cancelled all planned service growth investments for 2020 and 2021.

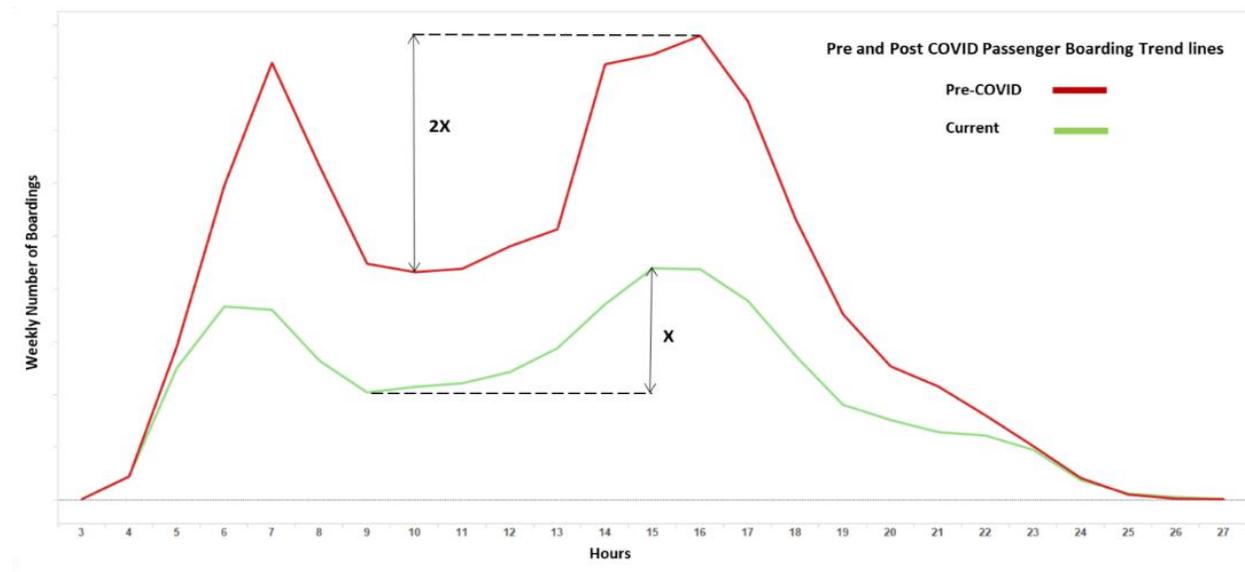
In March 2020, MiWay suffered significant ridership loss as the province entered the initial two week lockdown period while learning about COVID-19 and its impacts on public health. The impact on transit systems was both dramatic and rapid. MiWay implemented rear door boarding, loading restrictions and free transit by March 21, 2020. Ridership plunged on average 75 per cent and transit fare revenue dropped to zero for 16 weeks. Essential workers needing to travel for work remained in the system.

Ridership varied as we moved through the various waves, stages of recovery and stay at home orders. It also varied depending on the type of route, time of day and day of the week. By October 2020, ridership had regained slightly to 45 per cent of October 2019 levels. By the end of July 2021, MiWay was carrying 46 per cent of pre-COVID ridership.

The majority of ridership loss remains in the weekday ridership segment with the bulk of this loss coming from our express network and community based local routes as the province moved to online schooling and work from home arrangements. MiWay routes along industrial corridors remained steady and strong.

As ridership slowly returns, MiWay's service profile has changed and further fluctuations in ridership demand is expected. Transit ridership in Mississauga, and across the Greater Toronto & Hamilton Area is expected to return over the course of years, and not months. As shown in the graph below, the traditional peak service hour customer flow has flattened due to work from home arrangements and online learning programs. The ratio of peak- to off-peak travel demand is half of what it was pre-COVID. Service levels have been adjusted to respond to this demand and travel pattern change.

Ridership Profile – Pre-COVID & Current



Through 2021, provincial reopening phases and new lockdowns have resulted in continued fluctuating ridership demand.

MiWay is committed to monitoring all routes in the transit system network so that service levels are responsive to customers' needs and can change with shifts in demand as travel patterns continue to evolve. MiWay is adjusting service frequencies across the network to ensure that service is available where and when customers need it, and the potential for overcrowding is reduced.

MiWay will continue to deliver quality, customer-first service to existing customers while building future transit capacity through strategic projects and initiatives.

While the pandemic has severely impacted and challenged our business, it also presents new opportunity. MiWay must respond to this challenge and leverage this opportunity by fully understanding our customers, their new travel patterns and what they expect from the transit system. At MiWay, with the support of the City of Mississauga, we are committed to **Build Back Better**.

We will do this through responsive planning and delivery of reliable service, supporting a transit-oriented city, customer first service, integrating higher order transit, and revenue and fares management.

City of Mississauga COVID-19 Recovery Framework Overview

Mission

The City of Mississauga's Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will restore the City's ability to implement its strategic vision for the future. In short, recovery operations will ensure the City of Mississauga is a place where people choose to be. All recovery activities will align with the City's vision for the future, and the City's strategic pillars for change; move, belong, connect, prosper, and green.

Strategic Goals

The City's COVID-19 Recovery Framework aligns with the City's Strategic Pillars and highlights its commitment to public transit:

Move: The City will maintain and regulate a robust transportation network with a **key focus on the recovery of Public Transit** and role of Active Transportation.

Belong: The City will reopen public facilities and re-engage residents in events, programs and services in a safe and responsible manner.

Connect: Development will continue in a safe and regulated fashion when controls on construction and other projects are eased.

Prosper: The City will facilitate economic prosperity by identifying and creating existing or revitalized opportunities for economic contribution from city residents and businesses.

Green: Recovery will include a continued focus on achieving the City's Climate Change goals and promoting environmentally-friendly operating practices.

Fundamental Principles

The City has identified several fundamental principles that must be applied throughout the recovery process. Principles that directly relate to MiWay include:

Protect the Health and Safety of the Public and Employees – Under the guidance of Peel Public Health and other health care professionals, best practices and safeguards will be considered as the recovery and re-opening of facilities, services and programs within the City.

Building Back Better – Recovery actions ensure the City is able to thrive well into the future. Societal, organizational, and individual behaviors may be temporarily or permanently changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This may require the City to permanently modify the way it operates, or implement interim solutions.

Source: https://www7.mississauga.ca/documents/committees/council/2020/2020_05_13_Council_Agenda.pdf#page=4

MiWay COVID-19 Recovery Framework

Our Vision

By 2027 MiWay will provide a trusted customer experience for 50 million annual revenue rides as part of the City's integrated urban mobility network by:

- listening to our customers, staff, partners and stakeholders;
- working together as a team; and,
- leveraging data and technology.

In doing so, we will achieve an R/C ratio of 52%.

Our Mission

MiWay provides Mississauga with a shared travel choice that is friendly, reliable and respects the environment. We help to connect people to their destinations with ease. We are people who care about people.

Our dedicated team is passionate about providing a customer experience that makes our riders feel valued. Helping make life in our city better.

We strive to listen to customers as we continuously evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.

Our Guiding Principles

MiWay plays a key role in the City's post pandemic recovery. The following principles will guide decision making:

Define success: MiWay will measure performance based on parameters outlined in our Customer Charter and through established Key Performance Indicators.

Understand a changing ridership base: Respond to evolving ridership patterns – who do we move, when do we move them and where do we move them? Who are the customers we serve today? How have the needs of our customers evolved, and do the changes meet their needs?

Keep MiWay relevant: MiWay must remain top of mind to Mississauga residents, students and business owners and employees for continuous support. MiWay must tell the story of its ongoing focus on infrastructure investments and quality service delivery to drive awareness that MiWay is still in the community and working hard to make our city an attractive place to live, work and play.

Collaborate with our neighbours: MiWay is a key partner in fare and service integration initiatives for a seamless and consistent transit experience in the western Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) given Mississauga's strong employment base and central location. We must leverage relationships and partnerships with neighbouring transit systems to better serve the customer.

Invest in our future: Transit is a key component and driving factor of building a sustainable city. MiWay will focus on investing in on-street transit infrastructure and technology improvements through the MiWay Infrastructure Growth Plan (MIGP). These investments will build network capacity, increase customer amenities and foster future transit growth.

Foster trust amongst employees and customers: Just as MiWay commits to a safe travel experience on every trip for our customers, employees expect a safe work environment and a place where they feel supported each and every day.

Foster collaboration between internal transit teams: MiWay must live our values of Trust, Quality, Excellence, Teamwork and Commitment, and build on lessons learned and individual staff skills to enhance collaboration and encourage cross-team participation on initiatives.

MiWay Service Goals

- 1 Responsive service planning and delivery**
Plan and deliver on-street service that adapts to meet changing customer demand
- 2 Invest in transit infrastructure**
Build and maintain a network that meets the needs of customers and supports a transit-oriented city
- 3 Customer first service**
Put the needs of the customer at the forefront of everything we do
- 4 Plan and adapt to the future**
Integrate higher-order transit services and interregional connections
- 5 Manage revenue and fares**
Balance value (service provided) for money paid (customer)

MiWay 2040 Strategic Plan

MiWay's Strategic Plan, developed in 2018, established a framework for its role in contributing to, and building the City's urban mobility network. MiWay must remain focussed on the strategic pillars included in that document which includes: Move People; Focus on the Customer; Harness Technology and Innovation; and, Build Sustainability.

1 Responsive Service Planning and Delivery

MiWay regularly examines changing travel demand patterns, and will continue to measure the pace and the degree of recovery across the city in order to more accurately forecast the future needs. On-street service delivery must strike a balance between the needs of customers and remaining financially viable in the environment of reduced revenue ridership.

To do this, MiWay is focussed on:

- Responsive service planning to balance on-street service and manage operational efficiencies;
- Active route management to ensure service reliability and on-time performance; and,
- Agile workforce management to manage fluctuating absenteeism to minimize impacts on daily service delivery.

Service Planning

Baseline service hours will remain steady at 2019 levels until such time where ridership levels return to a steady state and new service hours growth is warranted.

While service growth investments will be less than projected as part of MiWay's annual service plan, providing the right service on the right route, at the right time remains our priority. MiWay teams monitor service to be more responsive to the on-street service environment.

To balance on-street service and manage operational efficiencies, the Service Development team:

- Reviews and monitors route performance to identify service improvement opportunities and operational efficiencies can be realized;
- Monitors passenger demands where overcrowding occurs;
- Responds to meet changing customer travel demands and patterns; and,
- Allocates fleet resources to ensure the right type of bus is on the right service.

Route Management

Customers expect reliability and for buses to arrive and depart on schedule, for trips not to be cancelled, and for buses to not be overcrowded. Managing service reliability and on-time performance is a key metric in the Customer Charter and must

be continually reviewed and monitored. The Operations team must effectively manage on-street service to meet customer expectations on a daily basis.

Workforce Management

Managing daily people resources has presented challenges in the Operations and Maintenance sections. Due to COVID-19, absenteeism is higher than normal and its daily fluctuation is amplified and unpredictable as staff members navigate a challenging work-home-life balance.

Through the effective utilization of the enhanced spare board and sick relief operator pool, Operations is able to minimize service cancellations by quickly moving and flexing resources when and where they are needed.

In order to effectively manage people resources, teams monitor and actively address staff attendance, individual absenteeism and minimize overtime costs.

Absenteeism is anticipated to improve as schools reopen, vaccine rollout continues, and transmission rates are minimized and controlled.

However, it is not clear at this point that pre-COVID levels of absenteeism will return quickly as the rate of vaccination to reach herd immunity in confidence will take time and the end of the pandemic is still uncertain.

In 2020, no new transit operators were hired and trained to fill projected service growth hours. Continuing in 2021 and 2022 there will be no new Transit Operator positions until ridership and service growth is warranted. Existing staff resources will be allocated to build protection to stabilize operator work force availability to provide reliable service and mitigate to employee attrition.

2 Investing in Transit Infrastructure

Building public transit technological and on-street infrastructure capacity in Mississauga continues to be a priority and highlights MiWay's ability to work closely with all levels of government to secure funding for projects that will help move people across our city, enhance the customer experience and help build a transit-oriented city.

To do this, MiWay is focussed on:

- Capitalizing on existing funding opportunities offered through the provincial and federal governments;
- Planning and implementing change through strategic plans;
- Leveraging multimodal transit hubs; and,
- Building technology capabilities through the Smart City Master Plan.

Government Funding Opportunities

The City currently capitalizes on existing funding opportunities offered through the Provincial and Federal governments such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). These funds are used to further develop different streams within MiWay. Projects under ICIP funding include:

Vehicle Upgrades

Replace diesel buses with hybrid buses, replace transit support vehicles with electric vehicles, and purchase major components for the bus maintenance rehabilitation program.

Infrastructure Improvements

Install new transit priority measures and stop amenities for priority (express) bus corridors, install on-street bus shelters, new enhanced bus terminal shelters, rehabilitate and install bus stop pads, replace stop markers with the new accessible design, provide glass partitions on the Mississauga Transitway for customer safety, apply red plastic treatments at strategic locations and provide station pylons for clear identification of MiWay's terminals.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Projects – A new BRT along Lakeshore Road

Dedicated two-way bus rapid transit corridor on Lakeshore Road with three new stations, separated bike lanes and sidewalks. The new bus rapid transit lanes will support a growing population along the Lakeshore Road corridor. Additional BRT projects have been identified and will be pursued when funding is available.

Technology Upgrades

Upgrade Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) hardware and software in transit buses, refurbish fare boxes on buses and upgrades to existing PRESTO fare collection devices.

Planning and implementing change

Mississauga is becoming that transit-oriented city. In keeping with the City's 2009 Strategic Plan, one of its Strategic Pillars of Change was noted to be “developing a transit oriented city”. The intent was to make transit more affordable, more accessible and more preferred in support of healthy lifestyles and fulfilling MiWay's environmental responsibilities. Transit service is changing to meet those demands and to better support this service growth, transit infrastructure needs to match this growth.

The MiWay Five Service Plan (2016-2020) identified the need for a capital program to support increased MiWay service. In response the MiWay Infrastructure Growth Plan (MIGP) was developed to provide comprehensive barrier-free transit infrastructure that enhances the customer experience, attracts new passengers, and strengthens the connection between land use and transit. The 10-year capital transit infrastructure investment strategy will maximize the benefits of added MiExpress service, facilitate route connections, make transit more reliable, and enhance the customer experience.

The MIGP investment strategy will capitalize on upcoming projects to minimize throw-away costs and is designed to accommodate the City's planned growth and change, to maximize benefits to transit passengers and operational efficiencies, and to meet three main objectives:

- Develop a stop and terminal classification system with supporting standard designs to support a consistent “look and feel” for MiWay stops and terminals;
- Identify and prioritize transit priority applications at MiExpress stops where such treatments will have the greatest benefit; and,
- Identify and prioritize terminal needs in response to changing local, express, and rapid transit networks.

Throughout the process, meetings were held with City staff, external stakeholders, other transit agencies and Council to receive feedback on proposed recommendations. The MIGP was completed in fall 2020 with recommendations being carried forward as part of the City's 10-year capital program and capital budget planning. Recommendations were presented to Council in early 2021 through

individual meetings and a Corporate Report to facilitate endorsement for future capital funding requests.

Multimodal transit hubs

Multimodal transit hubs, such as the Kipling Bus Terminal in Toronto, Cooksville and Port Credit GO Stations, and Renforth Station on the Mississauga Transitway, have introduced multi-agency transit connections in one location allowing for quick and convenient passenger transfers between providers. As investments in transit infrastructure and new service corridors across the GTHA continue to be built, these hubs will encourage transit use for cross border travel.

Customer amenities such as washroom facilities, fare payment purchase kiosks, digital signage and consistent wayfinding will make for a more streamlined customer experience.

Smart City Master Plan

MiWay will incorporate the opportunities technology makes possible into today's decisions on business models, procedures, and practices. The City of Mississauga's Smart City Master Plan provides a framework for how the City will approach digital projects, engage with the public and look at digital transformation. Smart City shifts digital into the public realm including infrastructure, transit, street furniture, public facing services and programs. The Smart City goal, **Focus on Mobility**, states: support mobility that provides freedom of movement, active transportation, and future oriented multimodal with integrated technologies improving access and choice.

3 Customer First Service

To restore and regain ridership, MiWay must deliver a reliable and quality service, understand who the customer is, and meet changing customer needs. To do this, MiWay must:

- Understand the customer experience;
- Keep MiWay relevant;
- Support customer needs;
- Adopt new technology;
- Invest in Staff; and,
- Launch the MiWay Customer Charter and report on the commitments.

Understanding the Customer Experience

Monitoring and measuring both qualitative and quantitative customer feedback must help guide MiWay's future decision making. Continued market research of current riders, non-riders and lapsed riders, as well as monitoring and increased reporting of MiWay's customer feedback will allow the organization to better understand the customers' needs, and respond accordingly.

To fully understand the customer experience, MiWay must understand:

- Are service levels meeting their needs?
- Are buses arriving on time and getting them where they need to go?
- Are buses clean? How does bus cleanliness correspond to overall perceptions of safety?
- Are drivers polite and providing assistance where needed?
- Is the system viewed as safe (multiple areas)? Are customers aware of the safety measures in place?
- Does the general public believe travelling on public transit is safe?

Keeping MiWay relevant

With more people working from home and less people travelling outside of the home for leisure activities, MiWay must remain top of mind to Mississauga.

To create confidence and build trust in the brand, MiWay must:

- Retain and reassure current customers that it is safe to ride;
- Reassure lapsed and potential customers that they can depend on MiWay;

- Create a sense of pride amongst residents that MiWay is doing all the right things to keep an ‘essential service’ going;
- Develop audience specific campaigns and programs to engage employees and inspire and attract riders back to transit;
- Continue to grow partnerships with internal and external City stakeholders; and,
- Celebrate transit investments and remain in the city-building conversation.

We will inspire and attract riders back to transit by creating awareness and engagement of MiWay’s value proposition and service offerings with customers and stakeholders (residents, non-riders and businesses), both online and offline.

In doing so, MiWay will Inform, Involve and Inspire future transit ridership.

Supporting customer needs

Customer Feedback and Information Line Support

Supporting customers with trip planning and service updates is a core mandate for the Customer Service team. With lower call volumes and fewer visits to the customer service booth at the City Centre Transit Terminal, customer service representatives now have the ability to spend extra time with each call and in person interactions to provide the care and support customers need.

Customer service staff, both call centre and in-person, continue to receive training on customer service principles and soft skills, build transit knowledge through regular updates and information sessions as needed. Coaching and quality assurance ensures staff are meeting KPIs and employee expectations.

MiWay has built on its existing measurement tools by ensuring a consistent and timely evaluation of individual employee performance, quality assurance results and customer satisfaction surveys. Ongoing call centre reporting data will determine if the team has successfully met answer rate, call handling time and abandoned call standards.

Adopt new technology

With many travel options available in Mississauga, relevant, timely, and accurate service information must be available for transit to be an attractive travel option.

Trip Planning

Through MiWay’s open data feed, real-time schedules, passenger volume levels and route information is available through any third-party trip planning application. MiWay provides an open data feed as part of the Smart City initiative.

Service Alerts

Construction, incidents/accidents and road closures across Mississauga impact both on-street operations and customers. Notifying customers of changes to their travel is critical. In order to reach the highest number of customers in the shortest amount of time, MiWay will begin pushing service alerts through the @MiWayHelps Twitter account and to the open data feed, which allows third-party applications to display the information for customers in real-time, as it becomes available.

Citylink

Citylink is MiWay's 24 hour automated telephone system to find out when the next bus is coming in real-time by entering a stop number. If a real-time departure is not available, a scheduled time is provided.

Investing in staff

Focussing on continued staff training and support is critical. With an aging workforce, high retirement rates over the next four years will change the workplace demographics. The needs of all groups, whether by age or role, need to be addressed and managed to ensure overall job satisfaction.

MiWay supports employees through:

Transit Operator Refresher Training – Refocus staff resources from new operator recruitment and training to accelerate refresher training for all operators. Refresher training includes customer service fundamentals (shown below), safe driving, and on-board technology device training.

The MiWay Basics – The MiWay Basics is a guide to every day decision making - a framework for staff to make decisions in the best interest of the organization, colleagues and customers. The Basics apply to all members of the MiWay team.

Mildea – An idea generation platform for staff, Mildea allows staff to submit ideas for feedback from both management and staff. Driving staff participation on this tool builds engagement and captures employee ideas to make MiWay a better place to work. Ensuring transparency and timely responses to ideas and questions is key to its success.

Employee Communications Strategy and Action Plan – Developed in 2020, the plan is a framework to:

- Improve employee understanding of MiWay's strategic priorities, key programs and priorities;
- Increase employee reach and access to department and industry information;

- Increase employee satisfaction through an enhanced and relevant recognition program;
- Enhance two-way communication efforts with employees; and,
- Create a workplace where employee communication and shared knowledge is viewed as a priority and where employees feel valued for the work they do.

Additionally, MiWay must take advantage of all learning opportunities available through City resources. This includes:

Success Factors insight learning – Leverage existing training resources available through Success Factors to drive staff engagement and encourage professional development.

BRAVO Customer Service Model – The City’s customer service model creates more consistent interactions between the City and its customers by delivering more consistent customer experiences within departments and across channels, providing consistent information, and following up consistently.

By implementing and delivering on the BRAVO model, MiWay customers will receive a more consistent and reliable experience across all sections.

MiWay Customer Charter

The MiWay Customer Charter is a public declaration of what customers can expect, and will hold MiWay accountable.

MiWay has committed to the following benchmarks to ensure a consistent and pleasant experience:

- To provide you with reliable on-time service;
- To always be welcoming and courteous;
- To always take your safety seriously; and,
- To provide you with accurate, consistent and timely information.

MiWay will be transparent about results, measuring and reporting on customer satisfaction quarterly.

The MiWay Customer Charter will be launched in fall 2021.

4 Planning and Adapting to the Future

Continued investment in MiWay's transit fleet and infrastructure over the next four years will ensure transit remains a viable, and attractive option for residents and visitors in Mississauga. Success here will be critical to maintaining MiWay's current ridership base and to rebuilding overall ridership numbers.

MiWay will focus its growth investments in the following areas:

- MiWay Five 2.0 – The Next Five Service Plan;
- On-demand transit service;
- Higher Order Transit;
- Building sustainability; and,
- Bus replacement management plan

MiWay Five 2.0 – The Next Five Plan

MiWay has successfully completed its first five year plan (2016-2020) which focused on moving Mississauga's transit system from a design that radiated from the city centre to a grid network; allowing for more frequent and direct service along main roads.

The Next Five guides the refinement and expansion of the City's transit network. Its main goal is to continue growing the system and improving connectivity to deliver a transit service that will be fast, efficient, attractive and easy to use.

To achieve this goal, The Next Five will:

- Further guide the refinement and expansion of the City's transit network towards achieving a fully integrated network;
- Improve service levels to further align with ridership demands and transit priority infrastructure;
- Adjust services to align with, and eventually integrate with the Hurontario Light Rail Transit line; and,
- Identify areas of opportunity within MiWay's transit network where collaboration with transportation network companies may be beneficial.

MiWay will implement initiatives identified within the plan as ridership returns to pre-COVID levels and when service growth warrants.

On-demand transit service

What is the future of transit in Mississauga and how does MiWay adapt and grow its base service model to meet the needs of customers? To better understand the need, MiWay will:

- Research and study existing on-demand transit service partnership opportunities;
- Investigate areas of the city that could benefit from on-demand service offerings;
- Explore opportunities to combine specialized service delivery;
- Investigate Ontario-specific communities currently engaged in providing on-demand service offerings; and,
- Develop a cost-benefit ratio.

Higher Order Transit

Transit growth and providing a viable travel alternative are priorities at the municipal, regional, provincial and federal government levels. Financial investments in infrastructure continue to push rapid transit projects from plans to construction and implementation.

The City's Mississauga Moves Strategic Plan, along with the Region of Peel's Transportation Master Plan and the Metrolinx Big Move plan set the stage for the future of transit investment across Mississauga and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

The City is readying itself for new rapid transit investments along the following corridors:

Hurontario Light Rail Transit – Opening Fall 2024

The Hurontario Light Rail Transit (HuLRT) project will bring 18 kilometres of new dedicated rapid transit to Hurontario Street from Port Credit GO Station in Mississauga to the Gateway Terminal in Brampton.

This new rapid transit corridor will play an important role in the development of new corridors across the city as the City and province look to expand transit infrastructure and new and improved ways of moving people around. Slowly, Mississauga will continue to move from a car-centric community of neighbourhoods to a transit-oriented city.

Lakeshore Higher Order Transit

With two major developments set to break ground along Lakeshore Road in the next five years that will welcome 30,000 new residents to the area, it is imperative that the corridor is served by high quality rapid transit from east to west.

The Lakeshore Connecting Communities Transportation Master Plan, endorsed by Council in 2019, recommends a phased approach to transit improvements including new MiExpress bus service and a new transit terminal to support local and regional transit usage. The new transit hub will help achieve transit usage objectives and facilitate the movement of people via transit between the west side of the Credit River and the east side.

Dundas Bus Rapid Transit Project

Metrolinx and the City of Mississauga are working together to develop the preliminary design and complete the Transit Project Assessment Process for the Dundas Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project. The Dundas BRT is planned to extend for 48 km along Dundas Street from Highway 6 in Hamilton to the Kipling Transit Hub in Toronto, including approximately 17 km in the City of Mississauga.

The Dundas BRT is part of a bold, forward-looking transportation plan aimed at creating stronger connections and providing fast, frequent and reliable transit to those in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Region.

Downtown Mississauga Terminal and Transitway Connection

One of Mississauga's highest priority transit projects is the Downtown Mississauga Terminal and Transitway Connection. This project will better integrate and complete transit connections in the downtown core. It will connect the western and eastern section of the Mississauga Transitway with a dedicated transit corridor and a new bus terminal.

The new terminal and transitway connection is a crucial section of infrastructure. It will create a central mobility hub for MiWay, GO Transit buses and the HuLRT.

Eglinton Crosstown West Extension

The proposed Eglinton Crosstown West Extension will bring more rapid transit to Etobicoke and Mississauga.

The extension will run 9.2 kilometres from the future Mount Dennis LRT station to Renforth Drive. The project will include seven (7) new stations, including a connection to the Mississauga Transitway at Renforth Station, and will primarily operate underground.

The proposed extension will offer convenient links to other destinations throughout the region – UP Express and Kitchener Line GO Train service at Mount Dennis, TTC bus services at all transit stops in Toronto, and MiWay and GO Bus services. Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario are working together to deliver the project, which is estimated to be complete by 2030-31.

Plans are also being explored with the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) to extend the line another 4.7 kilometres to Pearson International Airport with up to three (3) more potential stations between Renforth Drive and the airport.

Building sustainability

Identified in MiWay's 2040 Strategic Plan, building sustainability and resilience to further reduce MiWay's environmental footprint, improve energy efficiency and limit greenhouse gas emissions is a key pillar to meet the City's Climate Change Action Plan.

Reducing transit's carbon footprint while remaining financially viable through strategic investments in green technology will reduce MiWay's overall environmental footprint while improving energy efficiency and limiting greenhouse gas emissions from the vehicle fleet, its operations model and its facilities.

Building more efficient buses that optimize new and emerging technologies is changing the bus manufacturing market. The introduction of "green" buses has replaced diesel buses and helps cities reduce greenhouse gas emissions. MiWay is participating in, and monitoring a number of projects and programs as bus technology continues to advance. As new buses are procured a full review will be completed to ensure the right buses, both in available technology and bus size, are purchased.

In 2020, the following green initiatives were activated and will drive MiWay's future green initiatives:

- Received the first 60 foot hybrid-electric articulated buses in Ontario. These buses will provide needed capacity along the busiest corridors.
- An electrification study is underway to look at MiWay's facility requirements to accommodate the advancements in bus technology.
- MiWay is participating with CUTRIC (Canadian Urban Transit Research & Innovation Consortium) in a hydrogen fuel cell electric bus pilot project – the only one of its kind in Canada – to understand how hydrogen-electric technology can help advance the City of Mississauga's commitment to a zero-emission bus fleet.

Bus Replacement Management Plan

Between 2020 and 2023, 253 buses or 46 per cent of MiWay's total bus fleet will be retired and replaced. The existing bus replacement plan was modified in fall 2020 to address the impact of COVID and level out the number and types of replacement buses over the next ten years.

Due to a reduction in overall service hours and the number of buses required to fill current service levels, MiWay has implemented the following cost containment measures:

- Immediate suspension of major repairs to buses nearing decommissioning
- Immediate suspension of major body work to buses nearing decommissioning
- Active fleet management by moving major repair buses to inactive status

Through an active fleet management plan, the Maintenance team will alleviate operating expenses on buses not required to fill daily service while allowing capacity to adjust quickly as customers return to the system and more buses are needed. As ridership returns and more buses are needed, inactive buses will return to service. As new funding is available, those inactive buses will be the first to be replaced.

5 Revenue and fares management

In order to remain viable, and maintain service levels to meet the needs of customers, riders need to return to the system. The challenges MiWay is facing are not unique. Every transit agency across Ontario, and the country, is facing these same challenges – how do systems win back riders, maintain service and remain financially viable? Without fare paying customers, operational costs cannot be offset and this presents fiscal challenges for the City.

As the city re-opens MiWay will take this as an opportunity to better understand changing travel demand, and to measure the pace and the degree of recovery across the city in order to more accurately forecast the future needs and revise plans to operate transit.

To manage revenue and fares, MiWay will:

- Apply for, and leverage available transit relief funding available through the federal and provincial government;
- Review MiWay’s transit fees and fare strategy;
- Participate in fares and service integration discussions with 416 and 905 transit service providers; and,
- Reviewing future fare payment options through PRESTO such as open payment and an e-ticketing option.

Government Funding Support – Safe Restart Agreement

In response to the financial impact on transit systems, the federal and provincial governments committed funding to provinces. The transit funding is provided through a base amount and an additional allocation based on transit ridership. Funding could be used to provide immediate relief from transit pressures, such as lower ridership, as well as for new costs due to COVID-19, such as enhanced cleaning and masks for staff.

Transit Relief Stream – Phase 1

Phase 1 transit relief stream funding of \$31.1 million has been received. This full amount is anticipated to be required to cover costs in 2020. As per Phase 1 transit relief rules, \$26,750,600 has been applied to cover deficits generated between April 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020. The remaining \$4,335,500 will be transferred to a Reserve established for this purpose, and used to offset deficits generated from October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

Transit Relief Stream - Phase 2

In December 2020, the City of Mississauga was allocated \$38,886,274 under Phase 2 of the Safe Restart Agreement, Transit Relief Stream. As part of the Phase 2 reporting, municipalities are asked to attest to conditions related to transit initiatives including procurement, fare and service integration, on-demand micro-transit and governance, and indicate any progress or outcomes achieved. The City has already commenced work in several of these areas.

Transit Relief Stream Update - Phase 3

In March 2, 2021, the City of Mississauga was allocation \$30,393,091 and is to be applied to COVID-19 transit related financial impacts and costs incurred between April 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.

For Phase 3 only, in addition to the existing eligible expenditures covered under Phase 1 and Phase 2, eligible expenditures will also include up to 50% of costs incurred by the municipality, related to the following:

1. Initiatives (including short-term foundational actions) that support a long-term vision for regional fare and service integration;
2. On-Demand Micro-transit (ODMT) studies and pilot initiatives, including capital expenses incurred; and,
3. Expenses to support the transformation of transit structures/governance between neighboring municipal governments, where the Province has been engaged in discussions. At the Province's sole discretion, and on a case-by-case basis, the eligibility period may be extended to include costs incurred after December 31, 2021 but prior to January 1, 2023.

Source: [Special Council Report - March 5, 2021](#)

MiWay fees and fare strategy

Recovering lost revenue to manage deficit and increase overall revenue for the City will not come from increased fares for customers and must come from riders returning to the system. In response to the pandemic, MiWay committed to, and has implemented the following measures in 2021:

- No increase to regular fares;
- University of Toronto Mississauga Student U-Pass pricing negotiated and remains unchanged for the fall and winter 2021-2022 school terms;
- Charter service rates were adjusted for inflation; and,
- Two new fees and charges items included for the Mississauga Transitway access and on-street infrastructure restoration.

2022 Transit Budget

MiWay's projected 2022 transit budget calls for no increase to regular fares (subject to change). Future fare changes will be based on ridership returns and projected operating budget forecasts. Fare change recommendations will be presented for approval as part of MiWay's yearly Fares Strategy Report to Council.

Fare and service integration

Continuing the discussion on both fare and local service integration across the 416 and 905 remains a priority. Without both, barriers to travel for customers is present.

The impact of new fare strategies, including free service for those under 12 years of age, and discounted or free service for seniors implemented at neighbouring transit systems will continue to be monitored and evaluated. MiWay must ensure a responsible financial model that balances revenue and costs with delivering an attractive local transit service.

MiWay has leveraged strong partnerships with neighbouring transit agencies to coexist within each other's city limits for the betterment of customer travel. This service integration drives ridership across both systems and drives customer satisfaction too. The cost of fares, in particular the requirement for customers to pay a double fare between systems on a single trip continues to be a deterrent for taking transit. By introducing both standardized fares and fare integration between agencies, one barrier to transit service is eliminated.

Local and regional service providers continue to work towards an agreement on a standard fare structure and fare integration. As these agreements progress, the return to a more positive customer experience will be realized.

Future fare payment options

MiWay continues to promote PRESTO card use to support paperless and contactless payment. On-board PRESTO payment devices have been upgraded and the addition of new Add-Value Machines at CCTT makes it more convenient for customers to load funds safely with minimal delays. Paper printed special purpose tickets remain available to support Mississauga's vulnerable population. Special purpose tickets are only available to special interest groups such as food banks.

MiWay will continue to look for new opportunities to adopt advanced payment features such as time of use and open payment as they become available to 905 transit agencies.



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