



# Review of ATS Eligibility Determination Process and Services

Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

October 7, 2021



**DILLON**  
CONSULTING

# Background: City Auditor's Report



Hamilton  
Office of the City Auditor

## Accessible Transportation Services (ATS) Eligibility Audit

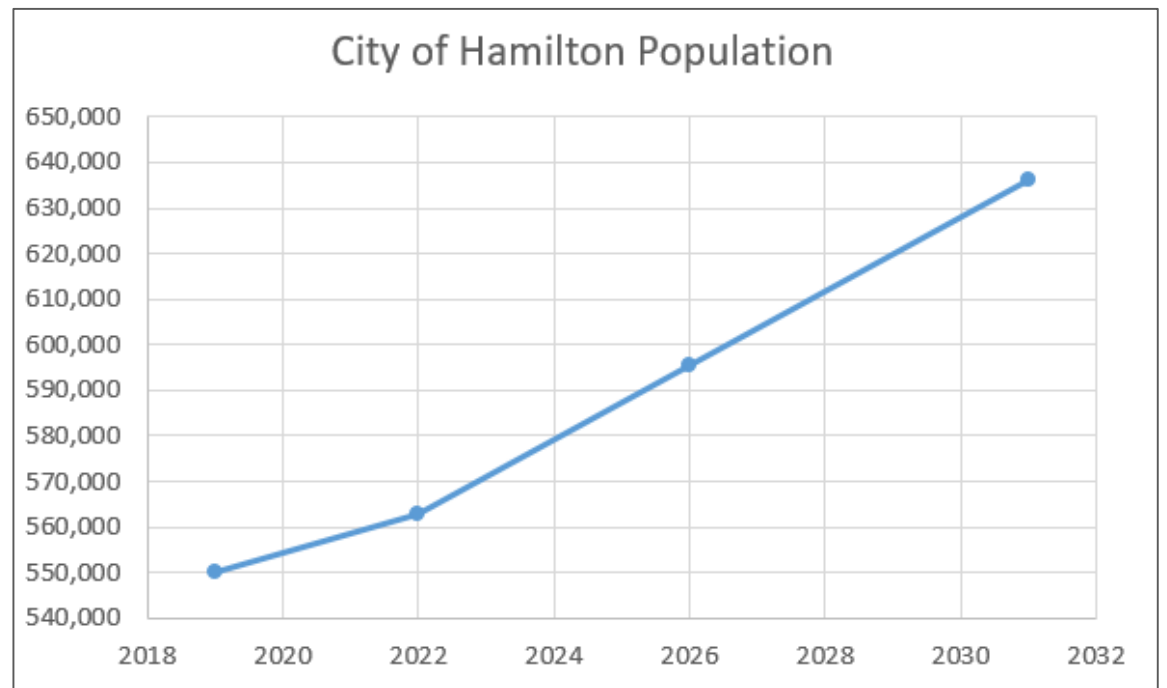


December 7, 2020

- Initiated by City Council
- Identified ways to increase process efficiencies and explore cost saving opportunities
- Key recommendations:
  1. Evaluate and potentially redesign the eligibility assessment process
  2. Create standard operating procedures and guidelines for all assessment processes
  3. Assess the need for strengthening the professional qualifications and experience required for making eligibility determinations
  4. Explore the feasibility, potential savings, costs and benefits of an expanded taxi scrip program, Integrated service model, Expanded travel training, Shuttles and Community buses
  5. Create performance metrics to measure process efficiencies and community impact and report on these regularly

# Base Case Scenario

- Hamilton is experiencing population growth as well as an aging population, leading to an increase in the overall number of older adults and individuals with disabilities
- By 2031, the number of specialized transit registrants will grow by 20% and ridership will grow by 25%
- In a do-nothing scenario, operating costs will increase by 24% over this time
- \$25,420,913 to \$31,575,900
- Escalating costs will make it challenging to meet service demand without a significant increase in resources





# The Project Purpose

- Evaluate potential for cost savings based on Auditor General Recommendations
- Recognize growth in Hamilton Street Railway conventional network and take advantage of more fully accessible infrastructure and transit services
- Provide more travel options and a better level of service for customers with disabilities



## Best Practices Highlights

- *Calgary Transit Access (CTA), York Region Transit (YRT):* Staff trained in health services conduct assessments with in-person component
- *Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), CTA, YRT:* Majority of registrants able to access conventional transit for some trips
- *YRT:* Family of Services model (integrated trips) for specialized transit riders completing travel training

- Reviewed City of Hamilton Transit Division data and completed extensive analysis to prepare recommendations
- Conducted Peer Review with 10 other transit agencies across Canada
- Met with Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities





# Recommendations

## Challenges:

- As Auditor notes 'Eligibility outcomes drive service level and costs' – 99 percent of applications are accepted
- Minimal use of conditional eligibility based on ability to use conventional transit
- No reassessment as transit accessibility improves

## Opportunities:

- Using a person-centred approach based on ability to ensure that individuals can access the **right transit service** at the **right time** under the **right conditions**
- Support increased travel options for riders by determining conditions under which riders can access conventional transit to align with their abilities



# Application Process



## Recommendations:

- Hire a Transit Abilities Coordinator with health care qualifications to assess applicants' abilities in a re-designed application process
- Increase conditions of eligibility based on the ability to use conventional HSR
- Reassess existing registrants as HSR is more fully accessible
- Set a three to five years eligibility limit for new applicants as accessibility continues to improve



# Integrated Service Delivery Model/Travel Training

## Challenges:

- Limitations of existing software to schedule integrated trips
- Booking and scheduling process is currently fully separate from conventional transit
- Infrastructure for specialized transit vehicle layovers at stops and stations

## Opportunities:

- Expand travel training to reach more people and support improvements to accessibility of transit
- Increased accessibility of conventional HSR network and the new BRT/LRT network
- Engage the public about their improved mobility options

# Integrated Service Delivery Model/Travel Training



**B L A S T**

Future Expansion

**HAMILTON Long Term Rapid Transit System "B.L.A.S.T." (Conceptual Only)**

**RAPIDTransit**  
moving HAMILTON forward

## Recommendations:

- Hire an Accessible Transit Coordinator to support persons with disabilities access conventional transit through an expanded Travel Training program, awareness and improved accessibility
- Design the future BLAST network, L.R.T. line and GO Rail stations for future specialized transit trip integration
- Implement the integrated trip model on one or two corridors in the short-term

## Challenges:

- No evidence that increasing subsidy or availability of taxi scrip will decrease rides on specialized transit

## Opportunities:

- With improved accessibility of conventional transit, there are more mobility options for persons with disabilities

## Recommendations:

- Do not expand or increase Taxi Scrip
- Consider reassessing legacy Taxi Scrip clients as part of an improved application process



## Challenges:

- Does not attract sufficient riders to reduce Specialized Transit costs

## Opportunities:

- Can provide a higher level of service and improve overall mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- On Demand transit may provide an alternative solution in areas that do not have enough ridership to support fixed route transit

# Community Bus

## Recommendations:

- Community Bus is not a means for short term cost savings
- HSR may wish to investigate Community Bus to provide additional mobility options
- Consider expansion of On Demand service based on results of Waterdown On Demand pilot



# Group Trips/Shuttles

## Challenges

- High rates of late cancellations and No shows reduce the effectiveness of grouping trips
- Need to ensure increasing number of passengers per vehicle does not reduce service quality (e.g. result in a trip that is too long)

## Opportunities

- Late cancellations and No shows can be reduced using established industry practices
- The number of rides available can be increased if trips are grouped more efficiently



# Group Trips/Shuttles

## Recommendations:

- Address the high rate of Late Cancellations, No Shows in the short-term
- Schedule and deploy larger capacity vehicles during peak periods while focusing subcontracted services during lower demand periods
- Work with the contractor to develop partnerships with community agencies that provide services such as adult day programs to create scheduled Group Trips

# Recommended Actions for ATS

1. Hire Transit Abilities Coordinator to implement updated application process

2. Implement Late Cancellations and No Show Points System

3. Initiate Change Management Plan to engage stakeholders

4. Hire Accessible Transit Coordinator to implement expanded travel training and support

5. Communications Campaign to inform everyone of new processes and improvements

# Questions?



Dennis Kar  
Dillon Consulting  
dkar@dillon.ca  
(647) 242-1047

Lorna Stewart  
Trestle Consulting  
lorste@shaw.ca  
(250) 516-8778