



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 29, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Transit Ridership on the HSR (PW24024) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Maureen Cosyn Heath Director, Transit Public Works
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

That staff be directed to report back to the Public Works Committee respecting the Transit Division’s ridership on HSR during the 5-year period between 2019 – 2023.

INFORMATION

Ridership has always been an important measurement used to determine the success of a transit system; however, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the other intrinsic benefits of transit to a community. While ridership remains a quantitative metric that is used in the transit industry to monitor system performance, it is a narrow view of transit’s value, as evidenced during the pandemic.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on ridership in the transit industry lasted longer than originally anticipated. Provinces first began implementing public health measures in March of 2020, and by the end of 2023, the national average ridership rates were still at only 80% of 2019 levels.

At the February 5, 2024 Public Works Committee meeting, staff were directed to report back to the Public Works Committee respecting Transit’s ridership analysis numbers from 2019 through 2023. Transit reports ridership as part of Hamilton’s Open Data and can be accessed as part of the City of Hamilton’s open data initiative. Table 1 displays ridership data from 2019 - 2023. The data shows that transit usage was at an all-time

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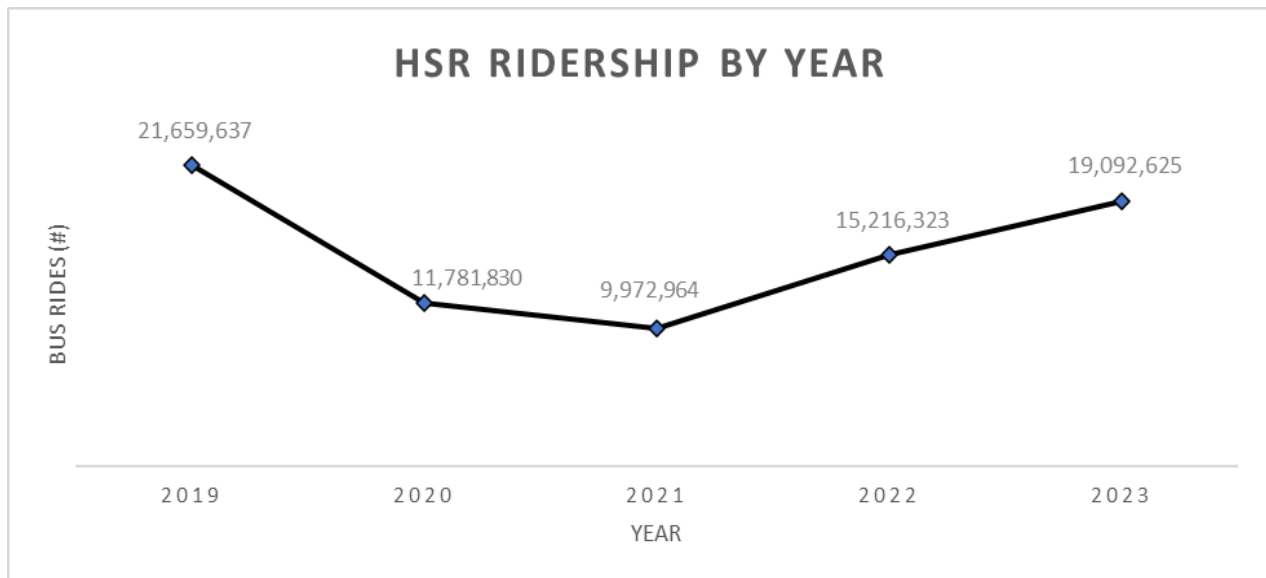
OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

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low of 46% of pre-Covid levels in 2021 when restrictions were in place for most of the year, education continued online, and work from home practices were in force. Subsequently, as restrictions lifted and were finally removed, ridership gradually began to climb back, with an overall 88% recovery experienced by end of 2023 compared to 2019 levels, which represented a 26% growth over 2022 levels.

Table 1



Early data to February 2024 shows ridership is at 98.2% of 2019 actual, with the month of February exceeding 2019 levels for the first time to reach 102.1%. This is 16% ahead of 2023, and 10.6% ahead of the YTD 2024 budgeted level, which is a promising indicator for the remainder of the year. Overall, it is expected that ridership for 2024 will reach 21,280,722, an 11% increase over 2023.

The pandemic demonstrated how critical transit service is to Hamiltonians and the City at large. While Transit will continue to track ridership as an important metric, broader metrics that focus on economic impacts, access and accessibility to opportunities, including employment, education and recreation, environmental impact by forgone greenhouse gas emissions compared to single occupant vehicles, and equity and access will be developed.

These metrics, along with ridership and revenue, and transit service delivery metrics (service reliability, service frequency, on time performance and overall customer satisfaction) provide a more holistic view of the value of transit to the community than focusing on a single datapoint. Future Transit reports on system performance will be developed with this broader framework in mind.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A