
BFAST COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLAN

**PRESENTED TO THE
COMMUNITY PLANNING, REGULATION AND MOBILITY COMMITTEE
BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
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BFAST has been following the progress of the Integrated Mobility Plan (IMP) with great interest in the hope that it will provide a framework for needed changes in our transportation system. We are pleased with the draft report's general direction and support for moving people but not cars. We also appreciate the efforts of Kaylan Edgcumbe and the study team in keeping BFAST engaged and informed of progress.

BFAST is generally in agreement with the preliminary transit network that has been developed in the progress report. We are encouraged by the objective of establishing either bus rapid transit or transit priority on major streets. We are confident that enhanced service will contribute to modal shift away from private automobiles. We also recognize the expertise that now exists within Burlington Transit to develop the expanded transit network.

While we support the draft Plan as a baseline objective for greening Burlington's transportation system and making it more efficient, BFAST does have some suggestions that we wish to present to Council as well as the study team.

DECREASING CAR USE:

While the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) states a goal of replacing internal-combustion-engine (ICE) vehicles with electric ones (EVs), the many "once-in-a-century" climate events which have taken place even since the CAP's adoption provide clear evidence that a mere switch to EVs is not enough. As BFAST pointed out in its submission to Council on the CAP, continued over-reliance on the automobile will do nothing to ameliorate the environmental negatives of its petroleum-based infrastructure — roads, parking lots and concrete parking structures — that all require require huge quantities of oil, gobble up valuable land, and act as heat sinks to promote further climate warming.

In addition, this over-reliance on automobiles does not end (or perhaps even significantly reduce) the environmental degradation caused by the transportation sector; if anything, it merely shifts the existing environmental burden of fossil-fuel extraction to those areas that will mine the lithium, nickel, cobalt and other materials necessary to their manufacture. Shifting the environmental

BFAST COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLAN

burden to other areas of the planet, many of which have not enacted any environmental safeguards to speak of, does not contribute to mitigating climate change.

In our view, the IMP should seek to compensate for this major failing of the CAP by providing strong incentives for using transit and disincentives for using a car, along with a recognition that future urban planning must be focused on walkable neighbourhoods where a large proportion of trips currently made by private cars can be done with active transportation or transit. Below, we outline several ideas which will help accelerate the needed modal shift.

FREE PARKING VS. FREE TRANSIT:

Paid parking provides a very strong fiscal incentive to not drive, but to instead take transit, walk or cycle. Matt Pinder, a transportation engineer who attended McMaster University, demonstrated this in 2015 by analyzing travel modes in two wards in Hamilton and Ward 2 in Burlington using data from the large survey “Transportation for Tomorrow” conducted every five years by the University of Toronto. This very robust survey includes over 100,000 respondents from across the GTHA and included questions on how people got to work with and without free parking.

MODAL SHARE FOR HAMILTONIANS WITH AND WITHOUT FREE PARKING AT WORK (2011 TTS SURVEY)

MODE	FREE PARKING	PAID PARKING	DIFFERENCE IN MODAL SHARE
AUTO DRIVER	82%	52%	-30%
TRANSIT	8%	12%	4%
AUTO PASSENGER	5%	24%	19%
WALK	3%	9%	7%
CYCLE	1%	2%	2%
OTHER	1%	0%	0%

The results for Hamilton show that the provision of free parking is a key factor in discouraging both transit and active transportation in daily commuting. Without free parking at work, car pooling almost quadrupled, transit use increased by 50%, walking tripled and cycling doubled.

On the other hand, free bus service is a very strong incentive to use the bus instead of driving. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Burlington Transit provided free rides to passengers going to the Burlington GO. This resulted in 250,000 riders taking the bus to and from the GO station — the

BFAST COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED INTEGRATED MOBILITY PLAN

equivalent of a 500-space parking lot! Although GO users continue to get a discounted fare to GO stations, it is a much weaker incentive than a free ride. Free bus service for seniors has also provided a significant boost to Burlington Transit's ridership.

Burlington's past experience and the work of Matt Pinder provide the basis for a further examination of disincentives and incentives such as these.

METROLINX:

Metrolinx is a key provider of transit in Burlington and throughout the GTHA and as such needs to participate in initiatives to promote local transit.

Financial Support: When GO Transit announced their expansion of GO services throughout the GTHA in a plan called "The Big Move," they had included \$300,000,000 in annual support for local transit. This would have allowed local systems such as Burlington Transit to significantly expand and improve local services throughout the GTHA. Unfortunately, Metrolinx quietly removed these funds from their plans.

Free Parking: While eliminating financial support for local transit, GO has made huge expenditures on expanding parking at all of its stations. In fact GO boasts about being the largest parking-lot operator in North America. As shown by Pinder's analysis, free parking is a big incentive to drive rather than taking transit, walking or cycling. The City of Burlington should press GO to increase transit use and reduce free parking at its Burlington facilities.

ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY:

The UN Report on the Climate Emergency makes clear that we need to greatly reduce our greenhouse gasses as soon as possible if we are to avoid or reduce the risk of a global climate disaster. We believe the targeted reduction in car use and corresponding increase in transit use needs to be accelerated significantly. We would recommend a target of 2031 for the required modal share changes.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS:

The IMP does not include an economic analysis.

While the implementation costs of the mobility plan will be substantial, the costs of inaction will be much higher. An economic study of the costs and benefits of reducing car use would help garner the necessary public and political support for the IMP. Such economic analyses have been completed on a number of climate action plans in Ontario, including Hamilton.

CONCLUSION:

While BFAST strongly supports the work done by the IMP team to date, we believe events have caught up to and surpassed even the most far-reaching plans adopted or considered by Council to do our part in mitigating the the disastrous effects of global warming. We have suggested several areas for Council and the IMP team to consider in strengthening Burlington’s approach to this very real and growing crisis.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Burlington for Accessible, Sustainable Transit