Motion Memorandum

SUBJECT: On-Demand Transit Pilot Project – Service Optimization and Community Mobility Expansion

TO: Committee of the Whole

From: Councillor Paul Sharman

Date to Committee: April 13, 2026

Date to Council: April 21, 2026

Motion for Council to Consider:

Direct the Director of Transit to explore how on-demand transit could be incorporated into Burlington Transit's fixed route model to improve transit efficiency, increase service utilization, and expand access to residents who currently do not use fixed-route transit services; and

Direct the Director of Transit to develop a proposal for a 24-month +/- pilot project that provides a phased implementation plan for on-demand transit service within Burlington and report back to Council by Q4 2026 with:

- Service design options,
- Financial implications,
- Technology requirements,
- Performance metrics,
- Risk assessment,
- Implementation timeline; and

Direct the Director of Transit to include analysis of how the pilot could:

- Increase vehicle capacity utilization;
- Improve overall community mobility access;
- Increase satisfaction among both existing riders and non-riders;
- Reduce per-trip subsidy over time.

Reason:

Burlington Transit has changed service in the last five years to be more direct and reach more customers, more frequently. However, there is still a proportion of residents who

do not use transit because of perceived barriers to access. Many seniors, youth, and first/last-mile commuters identify that they do not take transit because of limited mobility, distance to bus stops, or inconvenient connections. Some fixed-route buses during non-peak hours have lower utilization and may be more economically viable using an on-demand service.

On-demand transit has been incorporated into several existing neighbouring municipal transit agencies. These include Oakville, Hamilton, Milton, Brampton, Niagara and Bradford. All of these agencies have introduced on-demand transit differently, but they are seeing improvements in:

- Ridership
- Accessibility
- Vehicle utilization

Exploring a pilot model would allow Council to assess whether a flexible, on-demand service could improve efficiency, broaden community access, and attract new riders who may not currently use conventional transit services.

Outcome Sought:

On-demand transit offers Burlington an opportunity to expand access, reduce social isolation, support youth independence, improve commuter connectivity, and enhance transit system efficiency — leveraging proven examples in neighbouring agencies.

The objective of this motion is to evaluate whether an on-demand transit pilot that is integrated into the Burlington Transit conventional and specialized service can enhance operational efficiency, reduce resident's barriers to use transit and provide financial sustainability while expanding mobility options across the community.

Council seeks an evidence-based analysis to determine whether an on-demand model could improve customer satisfaction, increase ridership participation, reduce per-trip subsidies over time, and contribute to measurable greenhouse gas reductions, all within existing budget allocations.

Implications:

Financial Implications

The pilot would be initially examined with the goal of no proposed increase to the municipal tax levy. Financial analysis would consider vehicle procurement, technology platforms, potential reallocation of underutilized service hours, and opportunities for phased implementation. External funding sources, including grants, may also be

assessed. Long-term evaluation would focus on cost-per-passenger metrics and overall subsidy management.

Human Resources Implications

An on-demand service model may require adjustments to scheduling, dispatch functions, and operator deployment. Training would be necessary to support new routing and booking technologies. Workforce transition planning and change management would be important to ensure operational continuity and staff engagement.

Legal Implications

Any pilot will conform to existing City of Burlington procurement policies and will conform with accessibility legislation as well as data privacy standards related to booking platforms and passenger information. Agreements with technology providers require appropriate contractual oversight.

Communication Implications

Clear public communication would be essential to explain the purpose, scope, and service areas of the pilot. Education regarding booking methods, including mobile applications and phone-based access, would support equitable participation. Transparent reporting of performance outcomes would reinforce accountability.

Engagement Implications

Community consultation will support continuous improvement throughout the pilot period.

Climate Implications

Public transit significantly reduces the carbon footprint per passenger kilometer compared to private vehicles. By facilitating shared mobility and reducing the number of cars on the road, transit can play a critical role in mitigating climate change and improving air quality.

Right-sizing vehicles to demand may reduce empty vehicle kilometers and improve energy efficiency per passenger trip. Performance monitoring would allow quantification of greenhouse gas reduction impacts.

Strategic Alignment

☑ Designing and delivering complete communities
☑ Providing the best services and experiences
☑ Protecting and improving the natural environment and taking action on climate change
☐ Driving organizational performance

Approved as per form by the City Clerk