

Pathways to Transit Equity in the Suburbs: A Study of Brampton, Ontario

Marlon Gullusci

July 28, 2021

Supervisor: Dr. Stefan Andreas Kipfer

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies (Planning).

York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Student:

Supervisor:

This page is intentionally left blank.

Abstract

Public transit has been identified by scholars, urbanists, and activists as foundational to developing equitable cities. However, the acute impacts brought on by COVID-19 clearly exposed public transit's current vulnerability to crisis. This research takes an equity lens to critically probe the inequities present within Brampton's auto-centric transportation network. Public transit occupies a central node in public life, and its value transcends simply transportation. By rejecting the neoliberalization of public transit and the ensuring the provision of substantial public funding, public transit's role in the city and in the everyday lives of urban residents can be reimagined. Equitable public transit provides riders with fair and just access to mobility and the ability to more fully participate in collective life, irrespective of gender, race, class, and ability. My research reveals the barriers to transit access experienced by Brampton's transit riders, demonstrates how COVID-19 has intensified such inequities, and proposes a series of measures to begin to address the barriers unevenly faced by transit-dependent residents. This paper will analyze Brampton and how it interacts with the surrounding urban region to examine if the city's transportation infrastructure and transit service standards produce and contribute to inequitable outcomes for transit-dependent residents. The express intent of public transit should be to provide an equitable baseline public service to all, fare free. However, under neoliberal governance models, publicly owned and operated transit is subjected to market factors and thus the risk of deterioration and privatization.

Foreword

This Major Paper has been submitted to the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC) to satisfy all the Master of Environmental Studies (MES) Planning Stream program requirements, including the Plan of Study. My plan of study has continued to evolve throughout my time enrolled in the MES program, not only indicating the knowledge I have acquired in completing coursework, but also through my passion and interest in building more equitable and livable cities. Component 1 of my Plan of Study, Transportation Planning, has been the focal point of my program. The combination of literature, field experience, conferences, and workshops has supported me in fulfilling the objectives outlined within my plan of study. I have gained the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the program requirements for candidate membership into OPPI and CIP. I drew upon the transportation equity and justice literature produced by scholars such as Krumholz, Litman, and Enright to expand upon Component 2, Transit Systems. Equitable transportation has been a foundational component of my research on public transit in the City of Brampton. Although Component 3, Political Economy of Transportation Planning, was not discussed in depth, the scholarly work of Addie and Keil was engaged to establish linkages between political economy and equity. The objectives of this component surround neoliberal governance configurations of the P3 model of infrastructure and service delivery, the production of barriers to mobility, and the political influence on transportation planning. Additional investigation and discussion from an equity lens is required to continue to critically examine public transit planning in Brampton and the wider GTHA.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my humble gratitude to the many amazing people that have supported me throughout this incredible journey. I am extremely grateful and thankful for my professor and supervisor Stefan Kipfer who has been an incredible wealth of knowledge that has greatly contributed to my academic growth and supported the completion of my major paper. Thank you to my advisor Laura Taylor who has lent her tremendous and unwavering support throughout the MES program. To all the respondents who contributed through interviews, thank you for sharing your insights and experiences, this project would not have been possible without your valuable contributions. Many thanks to my mentor Antonietta Minichillo, who took me on as an intern early on, giving me the opportunity to learn more about the planning profession as well as all the continuous support and wisdom you have lent to me over the years. Thank you to Teresa Abbruzzese, Douglas Young, and Pablo Idahosa for both inspiring me to push forward into graduate studies as well as advocating for me in the form of many written references. Lastly, I would like to thank my family for their countless years of selfless support. To my mother Julie and father Giovanni, thank you for all the sacrifices you have made that have allowed me to get here. Thank you to my sisters Cassandra and Marina for being some of my strongest and important supporters. Thank you to my partner Cassandra Alvarez for your constant encouragement and support, I appreciated the many hours spent studying alongside one another and for your reminders in helping me stay on track. To all my family, friends, professors, and mentors, this research would not have been possible without your constant positivity and unconditional support. Thank you all.

List of Figures

Figure 1. Educational Institutions Accessible by ZUM (Photos by Author)	6
Figure 2. GO Train System Map (GO Transit, 2021)	8
Figure 3. Main Street 502 ZUM Rapid Transit Stop (Photo by Author)	16
Figure 4. Downtown Brampton GO train platform, Accessible Ramp and Platform (Photo by Author)	19
Figure 5. Brampton Transit Fare Chart (City of Brampton, 2021)	24
Figure 6. Educational Institutions Connected by ZUM Network. (Map by Author)	26
Figure 7. Brampton Transit Connections to Pearson Airport & Adjacent Employment Lands. (Map by Author)	27
Figure 8. Brampton Transit Route Frequency. (City of Brampton, 2021)	28
Figure 9. Transit Map East Brampton. (City of Brampton, 2021)	29
Figure 10. Steeles Avenue, Six Lanes of Automotive Traffic (Photo by Author)	36
Figure 11. ZUM Bus in Mixed Traffic (Photo by Author)	37
Figure 12. Region of Peel Discounted Transit Fare Program (Region of Peel, 2021).	41
Figure 13. Triple Fare: Cost from Brampton to Union Station, Toronto (Graphic by Author)	42
Figure 14. GTHA Local Transit Authorities with Fare Integration (Map by Author)	45
Figure 15. Toronto Region Average Home Price. (TRREB, 2021)	48
Figure 16. York University Transfer Walking Route 501A ZUM to TTC. (Map by Author)	52
Figure 17. 511 ZUM Platform Crowding (Toronto Star, 2021)	56
Figure 18. Overcrowded GO Train Platform Caused by Service Change (CP24, 2019).	58
Figure 19. Union Station, Toronto, GO Train Platform with Construction (Bow, 2014)	59
Figure 20. TTC Fare Evasion Campaign (Toronto Star, 2020).	63
Figure 21. Parody TTC Fare Evasion Campaign. (Reddit, 2020)	64
Figure 22. Timeline Transit in Brampton During COVID-19 (Graphic by Author)	73
Figure 23. Brampton Transportation Masterplan. Community Consultation (City of Brampton, 2015)	83
Figure 24. Brampton Road Expansion. (Map by Author)	84
Figure 25. Bus Stop Not in Use Sign. (Photo by Author)	87

List of Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

ATU – Amalgamated Transit Union

BART – Bay Area Rapid Transit

BRT – Bus Rapid Transit

CSRB – Canada Sickness Recovery Benefit

CTA – Chicago Transit Authority

DRT – Durham Regional Transit

FCM – Federation of Canadian Municipalities

FMLM – First Mile(s) Last Mile(s) Problem

FTT – Free Transit Toronto

GGH – Greater Golden Horseshoe

GTHA – Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area

HSR – Hamilton Street Railway

LRT – Light Rail Transit

NDP – New Democratic Party

P3s – Public Private Partnership

PC – Progressive-Conservative Party

TMP – Transportation Masterplan

TRREB – Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's

TTC – Toronto Transit Commission

TTS – Transportation Tomorrow Survey

VMC – Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

YRT – York Region Transit

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Foreword.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
List of Figures	vi
List of Acronyms.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Transportation Infrastructure in Brampton	4
1.3 Methodology.....	8
1.4 Theoretical Framework.....	11
1.5 Transit Injustice & Inequity	11
Chapter 2: Transit Inequity in Brampton	14
2.1 Barriers to Access	14
2.2 Automobility	31
2.3 Affordability	38
2.4 Discrimination & Class	50
2.5 The Neoliberalization of Public Transit	65
Chapter 3: COVID-19 Intensification of Transit Inequity in Brampton	72
3.1 Transit and High-Risk Settings for COVID-19	72
3.2 Bus Capacity and Crowding.....	77
3.3 COVID-19 & the Transit Funding Crisis Under Neoliberalism	78
3.4 Capitalism Incapability in Weathering the COVID-19 Crisis.....	80
Chapter 4: The Way Forward, Overcoming Inequity & Injustice in Transit	82
4.1 Confronting Automobility & Auto-Centric Planning	82
4.2 Confronting the Neoliberalization of Public Transit	86
4.3 Confronting Discrimination & Class Warfare	92
Chapter 5: CONCLUSION.....	100
References	102
Appendices.....	110
Appendix A: Interview Schedule	110
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	111
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form	113

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

This research aims to provide a precise and clear view on the issue of public transit equity and build upon the existing academic discourse calling for free and equitable transit in Brampton and beyond, with the hopes of developing more equitable cities and urban landscapes. Through identifying the inequities that exist within public transit in Brampton, we can begin to dismantle those inequities and chart a way forward to achieve equitable transit. The City of Brampton like the neighbouring City of Mississauga and Town of Caledon are lower-tier municipalities under the Region of Peel, which is located just west of Toronto. Brampton is a predominantly working-class city situated within Canada's largest urban region, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). With a population of over 593,638, the City of Brampton is the nation's ninth largest city (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Brampton is primarily comprised of racialized immigrant populations. 73 percent of the city's residents are considered visible minorities, many of whom are part of the sizable and thriving South Asian and Caribbean communities (Statistics Canada, 2017b).

Brampton's urban form and geography is characterized by sprawling low-density suburban neighbourhoods, industrial corridors, and commercial plazas connected through an expansive and congested road network. Car-oriented development has shaped the way in which residents of Brampton commute within and beyond the borders of the municipality. *The 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey* conducted by Data Management Group (2018) found that, 82 percent of all trips made in and out of Brampton were completed by car, while public transit trips on Brampton Transit and GO Transit accounted for just 9 percent of all trips, leaving walking and cycling, and other modes coming in at 6 and 3 percent, respectively. This examination of the

usage of the different modes of transportation in Brampton, emphasizes the high degree of car-dependency that permeates the city's urban landscape. Mobility in Brampton's suburban landscape is centred on the car with limited public transit service, which ultimately paves the way for inequities in both access and mobility.

Among Brampton's fast-growing population, there is a significant number of essential workers employed in manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, construction, waste management, and healthcare (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In addition to housing the largely essential and skilled workforce in the city, Brampton plays an integral role in servicing the GTHA and wider Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) as it possesses a substantial portion of the region's transportation infrastructure. This critical transportation infrastructure supports multi-scalar logistics networks essential to the transportation of goods at regional, national, and global scales. The transportation and warehousing infrastructure provides Bramptonians with significant access to job as Brampton residents make up 12.4 percent of all transportation and warehousing jobs in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2017b). The role the city plays can be attributed to Brampton's rapid population growth paired with the city's advantageous geographic location that is roughly centred within the GGH along with its connectedness to major regional, national, and global infrastructure networks of super-highways, rail networks, and the region's major international airport.

Brampton has also become colloquially known by GTHA residents as Canada's worst city, often leaving it subjected to a high degree of scrutiny on social media and in news articles. There are a multitude of factors that contribute to the city's poor reputation. However, the main theme that paints Brampton as a poor-quality place to live can be largely attributed to racist parodies and stereotypes about the city's predominantly racialized and working-class community. Brampton has experienced sustained and rapid growth that has attracted many newcomer families who began

to establish strong roots in the community and played a significant role in the formation of the city's eclectic mix of cultures. 73 percent of its residents are non-white, significantly higher than the provincial average of 29 percent non-white residents (Statistics Canada, 2017b). However, the transformation and newly established families were not always welcome. The fast-paced changes that came to Brampton resulted in many of the white residents continuously but reservedly expressing their overtly racist opinions of the negative impacts of 'changing demographics' and 'cultural tensions' (Grewal, 2013). Many of the city's white residents vocalized their hatred and fears of visible-minority groups, specifically the city's growing South Asian community. Many white residents perceived their new South Asian neighbours as intruders who were 'taking over' their pristine, white dominated suburban neighbourhoods.

An ancillary factor that upholds the negative perception of Brampton remains rooted in decades of unfettered fast-paced residential growth and auto-centric planning. According to Young and Keil (2010), ...” the suburbs of Canada's largest urban regions are the most culturally diverse communities in the country, their traffic is among the country's worst, and their workplaces are growing the fastest” (p. 94). Brampton's car-centric, traffic-heavy lifestyle is a significant factor in the designation of Brampton as an unsavoury place. Given that car ownership is widely considered essential to accessing employment, healthcare, or completing daily tasks, non-car owning residents of Brampton are at a significant disadvantage in comparison to their car owning counterparts. Young and Keil (2010) express, “Lack of connectivity in the suburbs has been shown to create issues of heightened risk and vulnerability as non-car owning populations, for example, are stranded in neighbourhoods that were built despite their needs” (p. 92). Those without access to a private vehicle experience a severely reduced level of accessibility. For them, navigating the sprawling suburban landscape by other modes of transportation remains a cumbersome challenge.

Brampton's public transit system has made considerable improvements over the last ten years; despite this advancement, the service continues to be insufficient in supporting the needs of Brampton's residents. The subpar status of the city, perceived or otherwise, leaves residents clamouring to abdicate their residency and respect for their city, to express their hatred of the city and their desire to leave Brampton.

Aside from the contempt for Brampton linked to racism and car-centricity, there continues to be a lack of academic exploration and study in nearly all disciplines. However, urban issues specifically in Brampton remain severely underexplored. Comparatively, cities such as Toronto that carry a higher level of perceived value and importance in regional, national, and global networks receive much more academic attention. Due to the lack of academic investigation and research, many unique urban issues facing Brampton go undocumented and unscrutinised. Brampton is certainly less glamorous and, in many ways, a typical suburban city that is less attractive to study in comparison to neighbouring cities. This dichotomy in the perception between cities such as Brampton and Toronto result in disparities between the levels of interest of academic researchers.

1.2 Transportation Infrastructure in Brampton

Brampton's public transportation infrastructure has expanded significantly with plans to further build the existing public transit network. In the City of Brampton there are three transit authorities: Brampton Transit, TransHelp, and GO Transit. They each offer a distinct service with unique mandates that cater to a diverse array of individual transportation needs. However, they fail to operate as a cohesive transportation network. While the three authorities connect at major transit hubs, they remain siloed with haphazard connections and unintegrated fares that ultimately create barriers for riders. Riders frequently transfer between multiple transit providers and therefore are

reliant on a smooth transition between these services. In many cases riders transfer between Brampton Transit at the local scale and GO Transit at the regional scale to complete their trip.

The primary objective of Brampton transit is to provide local transit service and inter-city mobility to residents. Brampton Transit has been unable to deliver frequent and quality service along routes that boast low ridership. In recognizing the shortfalls of Brampton Transit, it has also achieved resounding success since establishing the ZUM bus rapid transit (BRT) network. The ZUM BRT is focused on expeditious service along main corridors that connect Brampton to major transit hubs and educational institutions in neighbouring municipalities. The ZUM BRT network is well-known for operating on a more frequent basis providing commuters with more robust connections and expedient service at a greater capacity. Unlike transit agencies like York Region Transit (YRT) whose VIVA BRT routes are operated at a premium charge and privately operated, Brampton's ZUM BRT is publicly operated as part of the Brampton Transit system, within which it is accessible with a single bus fare or transfer. However, Brampton's ZUM network is a result of public branding to clearly demarcate BRT routes (which operate on accelerated schedules and skip local stops) from regular Brampton Transit routes. Routes including the 501, 502, and 511 connect Brampton to major hubs in neighbouring cities in addition to supporting improved access to employment and educational opportunities.



Figure 1. Educational Institutions Accessible by ZUM (Photos by Author)

The 501A and 501C have been extremely successful in offering connectivity to Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) and York University each boasting connections to the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) subway and bus networks. Brampton's 502 connects Brampton to Square One in Mississauga with connections to employment and educational opportunities in the area and the MiWay bus network. The 511 ZUM route links Brampton to Humber College and Guelph Humber providing access to educational opportunities and TTC bus routes. The ZUM rapid transit network has made important and valuable linkages to improve accessibility and affordability to Brampton's transit riders pursuing post-secondary education outside of the city.

The TransHelp para-transit service delivered by the Region of Peel is principally focused on supporting the mobility needs of folks who may face challenges or difficulties in accessing the conventional public transit network or infrastructure. TransHelp operates across the three municipalities that make up the Region of Peel: Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga. As the Region of Peel's most recent data collected in 2018 shows, TransHelp made 716,542 yearly trips in 2018, ten percent higher than initially expected (Region of Peel, 2019). The service is vital to supporting equitable mobility in a region that is defined by automobility and experience a lack public transit infrastructure developed with the principles of universal design. TransHelp offers one-way fare for \$3.75 and offers taxi scrip, a non-refundable voucher that can be used to access taxi services at a discounted rate subsidized by the Region of Peel (Region of Peel, 2021c). TransHelp also carries strict membership criteria. It is only offered to Peel residents who are living with permanent or temporary disabilities that prevents the use of conventional forms of public transit (Peel Region, 2021b). This criterion excludes disabled riders that commute to or in Peel Region but do not live within it. Riders who do not live in Peel but travel within the region are not entitled to having access to a public transit service suitable for their needs. Despite the limited criteria, TransHelp provides a vital transit service to riders with disabilities living within the Region of Peel.

Metrolinx's GO Transit operates robust regional bus and rail networks that are primarily concerned with providing transportation service over significantly longer distances and typically across multiple municipal boundaries. GO Transit makes connections between Brampton and other

major transit hubs in the GTHA such as Toronto's Union Station where most bus and rail lines radiate from.



Figure 2. GO Train System Map (GO Transit, 2021)

GO Transit is frequented by many people living in outer satellite cities who may work or study in Downtown Toronto or require other transit connections in the downtown. GO Transit's service is a premium service with a price tag to match its more comfortable seating arrangements. GO Transit fares are dependent on distance travelled; it is not uncommon for the riders to pay upwards of \$8 per one-way trip, coming out to \$16 or more per day (GO Transit, 2021b). Given the exuberant cost of riding on GO Transit, many riders opt to take cheaper public transit services that are less expedient and excessively long, with commutes that frequently exceed two hours.

1.3 Methodology

My research project *Pathways to Transit Equity in the Suburbs: A Study of Brampton, Ontario* includes a qualitative research approach that engages voluntary participants in interviews and undertakes a comprehensive document analysis. These qualitative methods of research aim to provide a snapshot of the current landscape of transit inequity and injustice within the City of Brampton and the wider GTHA. The goal of the research is to comprehend and actualize the realities and experiences of transit riders in Brampton through their perspective and explore deep below the surface to understand the realities invisible without firsthand experience (Bryman &

Bell, 2016, p. 170). In understanding the perspective of the interviewees, I will be able to make connections and share both their collective and individual stories and experiences of taking public transit in Brampton.

The interviews were conducted through the ZOOM teleconferencing application where I facilitated semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for both flexibility and for participants to play an active role in the development of the research. The research participants are comprised of both transit riders and a transit operator from within my personal network. The transit riders are residents of Brampton who currently are or have been reliant on public transit as their main mode of transportation. The transit operator has several years of experience operating Brampton Transit buses within the city of Brampton.

I employed a 7-step interview process to prepare, collect, and analyze the data. Step 1 was the development of relevant research questions. Step 2 was the conducting of the interview with research participants living in Brampton. Step 3 consisted of preparing the data collected for analysis through transcription. Step 4 included the development of a coding strategy to develop and analyze the data. Step 5 was to conduct the coding and identifying themes. Step 6 consisted of analyzing and comparing data and determining which intersections are important as well as key trends that exist. Step 7 concluded the process by presenting the findings of the research.

I also completed a document analysis using publicly accessible information and open data to support my research on transit equity and transit justice. I adopted a 5-step plan to support my document analysis. Step 1 was to determine my research questions and how they will allow me to dissect the documents. Step 2 was to sample the documents. Step 3 consisted of selecting and preparing the data including identifying relevant sections within the documents. Step 4 included analyzing and comparing the documents to determine what intersections and trends are important.

Step 5 was to interpret and present the findings of my document analysis. Some of the documents that I analyzed were included planning documents such as Brampton's Transportation Masterplan, and the Metrolinx Report: The Big Move. Looking at these documents, I was able to more thoroughly understand how transportation infrastructure and its delivery could impact equity and justice in public transit. I have also examined statistical data from the 2016 Canada Census, the *Statistics Canada Journey to Work* survey data, and the 2016 Transportation Tomorrow Historical Survey (TTS) to identify relationships between different factors that contribute to accessibility of public transit. Using these documents, I was able to develop an understanding of the interconnectedness between provincial and local planning documents and identify linkages with statistical data on residents and riders to unearth structural inequities of car orientation.

The overarching objective of the research paper is to answer the following research questions: What does transit injustice and inequity look like in Brampton? How has the COVID-19 pandemic deepened existing issues related to transit access? And what steps can be taken to overcome the factors that create and/or accentuate injustice and inequity in transit? Question one is aimed at understanding the current landscape of transit inequity by identifying barriers within existing transit infrastructure that threaten equitable access. Question two serves to assess the effects of the pandemic on transit services, with a focus on its impact on vulnerable transit riders. The objective of question three is to use the knowledge acquired to put forth recommendations that support the development of equitable transit in Brampton.

Although not based on a fully representative sample, this research is aimed at sharing some of the stories and experiences of transit riders in Brampton to ignite discussion and further inquiry on the subject of transit equity in Brampton. The project remained limited by the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic preventing safe conditions required to conduct a more representative

study with a larger sample size. The participants did have unique and diverse experiences on transit which provided insights into the life of Brampton's transit riders and the barriers they may or may not face.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

To analyze and explain the existing transit injustices and inequities faced by riders in Brampton, I will employ political economy as the theoretical framework that will guide my research paper. Political economy as a theoretical framework provides immense value to this research as it supports the analysis of the complex economic and political relationships that have supported the development of uneven geographies. These uneven landscapes are designed through car-centric infrastructure that result in the intensification of inequitable mobilities. Political economy as a theoretical framework will serve to highlight the contradictory nature of the neoliberalization of public transit systems in Brampton. It will also help me identify how transportation contributes to the development of uneven and inequitable urban landscapes. Transit planning is currently done through a cost-benefit analysis primarily looking at the economic impact public transit investments have on the transit agency as well as the wider regional economy rather than the needs of transit reliant transit riders. Therefore, this framework will support the development of a potential path forward towards a more equitable future for transit riders in Brampton.

1.5 Transit Injustice & Inequity

In order to comprehend transit equity and transit justice, we must first understand the concepts of transit inequity and transit injustice. Transit inequity refers to the barriers people encounter when attempting to access public transit as a result of an unjust distribution of both costs and benefits (Litman, 2013, p. 8). This inequity can be manifested through the disparate

division of transit infrastructure providing some communities with a superior level of service in comparison to others. The uneven provision of transit infrastructure contributes to maintaining the inequitable and discriminatory nature of public transit systems. Krumholz (1982) defined equity as, "... [a way] to provide a wider range of choices for those ... residents who have few, if any, choices" (p. 163). This understanding of equity does not fully grasp the meaning of the term. Delivering a broad range of choices can be helpful, however, it fails to address the disproportionate impacts inequity places upon certain groups and communities. Additionally, as understood by Litman, equity is separated into two categories, horizontal equity which looks at the distribution of impacts and benefits between people of similar socio-economic standing, and vertical equity, which seeks to redistribute impacts and benefits between people of different socio-economic standing (Litman, 2013, p. 8). Although Litman's explanation of equity acknowledges the need for redistribution, it only seeks to define redistribution with a monetary lens. As a result, Litman's comprehension is not fully equipped to understand equity beyond the pecuniary confines of this definition. In building upon his interpretation of equity in relation to transit, transit equity refers to the equitable redistribution of the costs and benefits of public transit access.

Likewise, transit injustice can be understood as the presence of systematic inequities within the public transit system that are faced by people based on ethnicity, gender, class, and age and the complex intersections of those identities and oppression (Enright, 2019, p. 673). Transit justice transcends the concept of fairness by examining the intentional systems of exclusion and discrimination that cause the unjust disadvantages experienced by oppressed communities. Transit justice is focused on the right to unencumbered mobility irrespective of race, status, or income (Enright, 2019, p. 673).

Developing a more equitable and just public transit system is crucial to bridging gaps in transit access for all people regardless of race, class, age, or gender. In guaranteeing fair and adequate mobility, riders can enjoy enhanced access to services and opportunities such as employment, education, and healthcare. Public transportation occupies a critical nexus of where the state intersects with civil society, transit has the opportunity to support equity by connecting people with social services. It is important for transit authorities to play an active and purposeful role in supporting equitable cities due to its centrality in civic life. Keil & Young (2008) state, "... the TTC ... denies a role in social engineering (servicing and subsidizing the transit-dependent non-car-owners), which it considers to be outside its mandate" (p. 742). The clear abdication of responsibility by local transit authorities in supporting social equity is baffling given how vital public transit is to participation in civic life. The struggles in mobility are more complex than travelling beginning to end; the struggle is embedded more deeply within the basic notion of the right to exist and participate in urban life (Enright, 2019, p. 667). Transit is engrained within the urban fabric as an integral and defining shared urban experience. Supporting vulnerable people and communities in such a central component of urban life can establish the foundation of a more just and equitable society. Without provincial data collected or a clear definition or measure of social equity, the province continues to impede the process of measuring change (ARUP et al., 2013). A way to measure equity is an essential first step in identifying inequities and building the foundation on which to hold governments accountable to provide the necessary supports to communities in need.

Chapter 2: Transit Inequity in Brampton

The factors contributing to transit inequity in Brampton are specific but not unique; they are similar to challenges faced by other North American cities. In taking stock of the inequities present within Brampton's multi-scalar transit network, we can more thoroughly isolate the individual factors and pinpoint the circumstances resulting in inequality. Some of the causal factors of the disparities in mobility faced by transit riders are uneven access, automotive hegemony, affordability, discrimination and class, and the neoliberalization of transit. The manifestations of inequities within Brampton's transit network provides an opportunity to gather a more in-depth understanding of the disparities present and support the identification of potential solutions.

2.1 Barriers to Access

Public transit in Brampton has not been delivered to achieve equitable outcomes for the city's residents. Public transportation infrastructure has been developed in a manner that has created increasingly polarized realities in accessing public transit. Riders on Brampton Transit and GO Transit experience public transit access differently, they are part of a transit network where resources are unevenly distributed and thus create disparities in public transit access. Here are some examples: the first mile(s) last mile(s) (FMLM) problem reduces the geographic accessibility of transit; conditions that exacerbate existing challenges and barriers to accessing healthcare, education, and employment; and a system that's main priority of which is to cater to the needs of employers requiring labour-power during the typical nine to five workday.

One way that transit injustice and inequity manifest is through the uneven access to quality and frequent public transit. The disparities in public transit service are often determined geospatially. Where people live can be a significant determinant of the level of public transit a

person has access to. People who can afford to reside in central locations such as downtowns, along major public transportation corridors, or areas with transit supportive densities often experience a privileged level of access to well-connected, quality, and frequent public transit. In turn, those unable to afford to live in central and well-connected areas are often pushed to the outskirts of the surrounding satellite cities or areas with low transportation ridership where they are deprived of frequent and quality transit service. Neoliberal governance in the GTA has created wider mobility gaps that can be understood through disparities in spatial access to public transportation (MacDonald, 2012, p. 34). Public transit systems have significantly uneven levels of service as they have been designed using a neoliberal governance model that seeks to ‘reduce’ public sector spending and ‘save’ taxpayer money. As a result of the financial austerity measures, transit routes and their supporting infrastructure have been organized in a way that attempts to keep costs lower rather than aiming to deliver effective and equitable service for all. Due to these misplaced priorities, public transit service has been concentrated along the most ‘important’ routes with high levels of ridership and deserting the less ‘important’ routes creating stark geospatial disparities.

The Downtown Brampton Terminal is one of the city’s most critical junctions for public transit. It is the main node in a multi-scalar transportation network, hosting connections between local and regional transit networks. The terminal serves as a connection between Brampton Transit’s local routes, the busiest ZUM rapid transit routes, the GO Transit regional rail service on the Kitchener Line, and the GO Transit regional bus network. During Navya’s experiences living and commuting in Downtown Brampton, she has observed spatial discrepancies in transit service. “Here in the downtown core, transit is quite accessible. There are many lines that connect to

wherever you need to go, but it's just the main [streets]. [The] further out you go from the core transportation is [less] accessible” (Participant 3. Personal communication March 8, 2021).



Figure 3. Main Street 502 ZUM Rapid Transit Stop (Photo by Author)

These multi-scalar transportation connections solidify the Downtown Brampton Terminal as one of the most connected places in the city, offering considerably enhanced public transit access in comparison to other areas of Brampton. Reflecting on the level of transit service near her home near Downtown Brampton Navya said, “Where I do live, I have a lot more accessibility than other people I would say. So, it's not really an issue for me getting around or out of the city” (Participant 3. Personal communication March 8, 2021). Major transit nodes such as Downtown Brampton receive consistent and frequent service even extending into the late evening and night-time hours. Inversely, riders living or commuting in northern Brampton experience a vastly different public transit experience. In discussing the level of transit service in his neighbourhood, Milton explains,

Northern Brampton is probably the least serviced by Brampton Transit. Not many bus routes come up this way and when they do, they're not frequent, they have long wait times, and the service tends to end a lot earlier. (Participant 1. Personal Communication March 5, 2021).

The experiences and observations of Brampton's transit riders paint a polarizing image of the vastly different realities in accessing public transportation depending on where you live in the city. The servicing frequencies between these areas that are well-connected versus those that are poorly connected can be drastically different. Those living in underserved areas often have to make difficult or inconvenient choices to get to their destination during times when taking routes that run infrequently or end service for the night altogether. Ultimately, public transit service in Brampton remains inequitable in geospatial terms. The uneven distribution of transit access throughout Brampton is a direct result of wider regional planning structures at play that aim to serve the needs of the central metropolis and thus relegate Brampton to a reservoir of 'skilled workforces'. The need for labour-power in the central area of the conurbation is met at the expense of the mobility of people living in the surrounding municipalities. Transit infrastructure is aligned to support out-of-city connections rather than inter-city connectivity.

The FMLM problem is a considerable barrier to public transit accessibility in Brampton as in most cities. The FMLM problem is characterized by the cumbersome initial or remaining distances of public transit trips. These that can stretch short to long distances often traversed on foot. Benjamin, an avid transit rider shares his account of the challenges faced by local transit riders walking home from the bus stop. "Some of these ladies walking with two bags of groceries a quarter mile is no fun, and some of them have already spent [the money] budgeted for groceries [and there's] not even any taxi money left" (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021). This issue disproportionately impacts people who are reliant on public transit such as the elderly, people carrying groceries, parents travelling with young children, people with physical

limitations to their mobility, and poor folks who are unable to spend extra money to use a privileged mode of transportation such as a car or a taxi. Reflecting on his experiences taking transit in Brampton, Benjamin expresses his discontent with the service gaps within the current transit network.

Here it is, take your bus to the corner, walk the rest, with your six bag[s] of groceries or take a taxi. So, to me that needs to be captured, it needs to be looked at, because it's taxpayers' money that's being put into the public transit, they're asking them to make it better for us and they're saying this is as best as it is, but it [can] get better (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

For many transit riders, walking the first or last mile(s) between the bus stops and their starting point or destination is burdensome and poses a significant challenge for people without the financial means to access alternatives to walking. People with more disposable income might consider calling a taxi or ride-hailing service to transport them home with their groceries, a luxury that not all people are able to afford. Surjan, a transit operator with Brampton Transit stated,

So, I would say the only thing that would be trouble would be more residential streets, where maybe if it is difficult for someone let's say to walk or get to the bus stop, I understand, the residential streets are hard to access. (Participant 4. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

Surjan identified that many residential streets are not serviced by Brampton Transit, and this gap in service creates an accessibility issue for many riders as there are long distances between where people live and the closest or most convenient bus stop. He pointed out that Brampton Transit could do more to support riders by doing more to address the FMLM problem.

Inadequate infrastructure and environmental hazards including walkway conditions or weather can severely impact the mobility of transit riders and exacerbate long-standing issues contributing to the FMLM problem. Infrastructure built without the principles of universal design creates an inequitable urban landscape with the established baseline of transit service reserved for

able-bodied riders. Environmental hazards and poor weather conditions without adequate maintenance practices also continues to intensify the inequities in transit access for all riders but particularly those with physical disabilities.

People experiencing physical limitations to mobility already struggle to navigate cities that lack the necessary infrastructure to support the mobility needs of all riders. Brampton's transportation infrastructure from sidewalks to transit vehicles are principally designed to accommodate able-bodied individuals. This results in those with limited physical mobility to be left out of the equation by design. The principles of universal design have not been implemented to build transit infrastructure to accommodate all riders with ease.



Figure 4. Downtown Brampton GO train platform, Accessible Ramp and Platform (Photo by Author)

The Brampton GO train platform located downtown Brampton requires separate and severely limited infrastructure to accommodate folks with limited physical mobility and riders using assistive mobility devices such as a wheelchair. Disabled riders are unable to board the train at any point they would like. Instead, they are directed to a ramp, which requires them to make adjustments to their commutes to board the fifth car specifically allocated for disabled riders. Additionally, GO transit riders accompanied by a support person are required to purchase a ticket at a service counter to get a Support Person Ticket (GO Transit, 2021a). Requiring riders with disabilities travelling with a support person to purchase a ticket at the service counter is an inequitable policy to which able-bodied riders are not subjected. Riders travelling with a support person should not be required to adjust their commute based on their accessibility and support needs. The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires Ontario's public transit authorities to ensure that transit vehicles, platforms, stations, and shelters are accessible for all riders (Thomson, 2018). This legislation should extend to reduce the policy level barriers for riders with disabilities. Brampton Transit and TransHelp have recently partnered with MagnusCards, a free mobile application designed to help riders with autism and other cognitive impairments access important information and thus make transit more accessible (City of Brampton, 2021d). The application is focused on making public transit information more easily accessible for their riders.

Snowstorms and inclement weather can impact how and if people are able to access public transit. Environmental conditions can accentuate existing disparities in transit access and preclude people with limited physical mobility from accessing public transit entirely. Milton, an able-bodied transit rider, shared some challenges he observed that transit riders with disabilities experience.

A big one that I noticed, so it doesn't affect me as much as it would some who have disabilities. A lot of the sidewalks especially in the winter are unsalted or not shoveled properly. You see a lot of people that actually would fall or get stuck in the snow getting on or off the bus. So, you can only imagine how bad it would be in a wheelchair or if you had other mobility issues to get on, because not even the ramp will be able to go down flat. (Participant 1. Personal Communication March 5, 2021).

The inability to access public transit with ease due to environmental hazards such as snow prevents people's most basic mobility needs. Reduced mobility due to environmental factors is as a result of poorly funded and organized infrastructure maintenance. In Brampton and many North American cities alike, municipal snow-clearing efforts prioritize the mobility of drivers on arterial roads over the mobility of pedestrians that utilize walkways to access public transit. The City of Brampton exhibits this by declining to plow sidewalks and instead place the responsibility of sidewalk snow clearance on the property owner or tenant under the *Snow and Ice Removal By-Law 242-76* (City of Brampton, 2019a). The By-Law requires the sidewalks to be clear as of 11:00am which allows sidewalks to remain uncleared of debris during the morning hours and creates compliance concerns. Prioritizing drivers over pedestrians is a major policy miscalculation that continues to contribute to inequities in mobility, leaving vulnerable residents deprived of access to mobility. During the winter months, pedestrians are subjected to sparsely maintained walkways frequently blanketed with a thick blanket of snow and ice. Pedestrian crossings are where the problem is often most substantial. There, large mounds of snow and ice block pedestrian walkways making it difficult for some and impassable for others. The way winter maintenance is organized is fundamental to building equity into municipal policies that support mobility and good transit access.

Extremely cold weather is also a significant factor faced by transit riders in Brampton. Many riders find themselves waiting and walking long distances in sub-zero temperatures in a state of desperation to catch the next bus to stay warm and get to their destination on time. In a city

where cold weather is a guarantee during four to five months of the year, transit frequencies on many local routes continue to be subpar. Bus frequencies on local routes can easily range from 30 minutes to an hour; a long time to wait for a bus. Benjamin expresses his thoughts based on his experience riding Brampton Transit,

I know that they have posted internally on buses, you know. Please don't run for the bus, please don't do certain aggressive things, [but] because people were in the freezing cold, and you have an hour to wait, and they're desperate... Most people who take the bus are less inclined to jump to a cab that quickly. So, they tend to depend on that bus to get them from point A to point B. (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

These experiences illustrate the conditions riders routinely face during their commutes during the winter months. The knowledge Benjamin has acquired over many years of riding public transit provides insight into the mindset of transit riders in those moments of desperation. In an attempt to catch a bus, a transit rider might make a daring dash across a multi-lane highway-like road to avoid waiting in the blistering cold. The infrequently scheduled bus service on Brampton Transit's less busy local routes creates unsafe and unsavoury conditions for riders running to avoid the cold and catch a bus.

The disparate access to public transit is due to a system that designates service and infrastructure based on market factors and neoliberal austerity. The infrastructure gap developed as a consequence of constant public sector underfunding beginning during the neoliberal shift occurring in the early 1980s (Whiteside, 2000, p. 4). Neoliberal governance affected all facets of Ontario's public service including public transit which set the foundation for the following decades of reduced funding and provincial support for public transit. Keil (2002) states, "the province [of Ontario under Mike Harris] downloaded social welfare and transit costs to the city [Toronto] and caused a painful budget crunch at the municipal level" (p. 590). The financial constraints of downloading public transit impacted municipalities across the province. As a result, the following

decades were marred by inadequate funding for transit, which has caused severe inequities in who has access to employment, healthcare services, and educational opportunities. Reduced mobility for transit reliant folks translates into diminished economic opportunities perpetuating social reproduction among vulnerable, racialized, and low-income communities. The persistence of intergenerational marginalization among vulnerable, racialized, and poor communities continues to broaden existing socio-economic inequities.

Access to healthcare and health-related services are essential components of supporting healthy communities. However, access to healthcare can be significantly hampered for those who are reliant on public transit in Brampton. Brampton Transit's service at times can be inconsistent and unreliable, often rolling up to the bus stop late due to substantial traffic volumes, automotive accidents, road maintenance on Brampton's car congested road network. A transit system that fails to provide consistent and reliable service can make it difficult to meet time-sensitive medical appointments and access other urgent health-related services. Riders often have to commute long distances and make numerous transfers to access a hospital, a specialist, or an urgent care clinic. Providing equitable transit is imperative to supporting equitable access to healthcare services.

Brampton residents interested in pursuing higher education at a post-secondary institution are faced with significant barriers in their ability to access education. Brampton is home to the Sheridan College's Brampton Campus, a small Algoma University presence, and a future Ryerson University satellite campus with some programs currently running out of Brampton's City Hall (City of Brampton, 2021e). Although Sheridan College, Algoma University, and Ryerson University operate within Brampton, they only offer a limited capacity for students as well as a narrow range of programs and courses. The limited capacity and program offerings restrict the educational opportunities available to students within Brampton and lead students to pursue their

studies outside of Brampton. Studying outside Brampton means that students with the financial means may choose to live on-campus elsewhere. However, students without the financial means to live away from home will have to endure drawn out commutes to neighbouring cities like Toronto and Mississauga. Students living and commuting from Brampton are also not given access to fare discounts since Brampton's fare scheme does not provide a student fare but rather determines fare categories solely upon age.

Effective September 1, 2019

Cash Fare: \$4.00

Exact change is required when paying cash.

PRESTO Fares

Fare Type	Adult*	Youth*	Senior*	Senior Resident*	Child*	Preschool Child*
Per Trip	\$3.10	\$2.55	\$1.60	\$1.00	\$2.00	Free
Weekly Pass	\$34.00	\$27.50	-	-	\$22.00	Free
Monthly Pass	\$128.00	\$107.00	-	\$15.00	\$84.00	Free

▼ Fare Category Details*

- **Adult:** 20 - 64 years of age
- **Senior:** 65 years of age and older
- **Senior Resident:** 65 years of age and older with a valid Brampton Transit Senior Identification Card
- **Youth:** 13 - 19 years of age
- **Child:** 6 - 12 years of age
- **Preschool Child:** 5 years of age and under. Must be accompanied by a fare paying passenger.

Riders may be asked to present identification at the Operators discretion.

Figure 5. Brampton Transit Fare Chart (City of Brampton, 2021)

Students in Brampton and beyond are faced with steadily increasing tuition fees and transit fares. They are often employed in a part-time capacity or in minimum-wage jobs as they try to cover their tuition and transportation costs.

Brampton Transit does not offer discounted fares to students, students living in Brampton must pay the regular adult fare. This contrasts with other transit authorities in the GTHA such as TTC, which provides a post-secondary student monthly pass offered at a discounted rate. The

TTC's regular monthly pass is \$156.00 per month and the student monthly pass is offered for \$128.15, saving students \$27.85 per month and \$222.80 over a typical eight-month study period (TTC, 2021b). While the student discounts offered by TTC can result in substantial cost savings over the course of the year, OC Transpo servicing the City of Ottawa in partnership with local post-secondary institutions offers transit to students free of charge. The OC Transpo U-Pass program costs are included in a student's full-time student fees at a cost of \$218.03 per term (OC Transpo, 2021). Ottawa's U-Pass program results in extremely significant cost savings to students. Implementing a post-secondary student fare program similar to the OC Transpo U-Pass is not without challenges. The GTHA has a substantial student population, but its landscape is multi-layered. The GTHA has many transit providers each with their independent fare schemes and level of subsidy in addition to many different post-secondary institutions. The sheer number of organizations involved making the program extremely complex to implement. Yet public transit discounts would go a long way to make it easier for students to attend post-secondary institutions. In Brampton, reaching educational institutions beyond secondary school often requires an hour or more commute one-way, unless the program chosen is one of the select few offered in Brampton.

Despite the difficulties students face when accessing post-secondary, Brampton Transit ZUM BRT network has transformed the face of commuting in Brampton through the improved accessibility to out-of-city post-secondary institutions. Prior to the launch of 501, 502, and 511 ZUM BRT routes, accessing post-secondary education was a much more challenging feat for those without regular car access. The newly introduced ZUM routes have provided enhanced public transit service to commuters offering direct access to numerous post-secondary educational institutions under the existing Brampton Transit fare. The ZUM routes now reach York University's Keele Campus, the Humber North Campus hosts Humber College and University of

Guelph-Humber, and Sheridan College's Hazel McCallion Campus at Mississauga's Square One. Establishing these routes was a crucial step for the City of Brampton. It recognizes the power of public transit and the value in improving the mobility of its residents to support access to opportunities outside of the city.

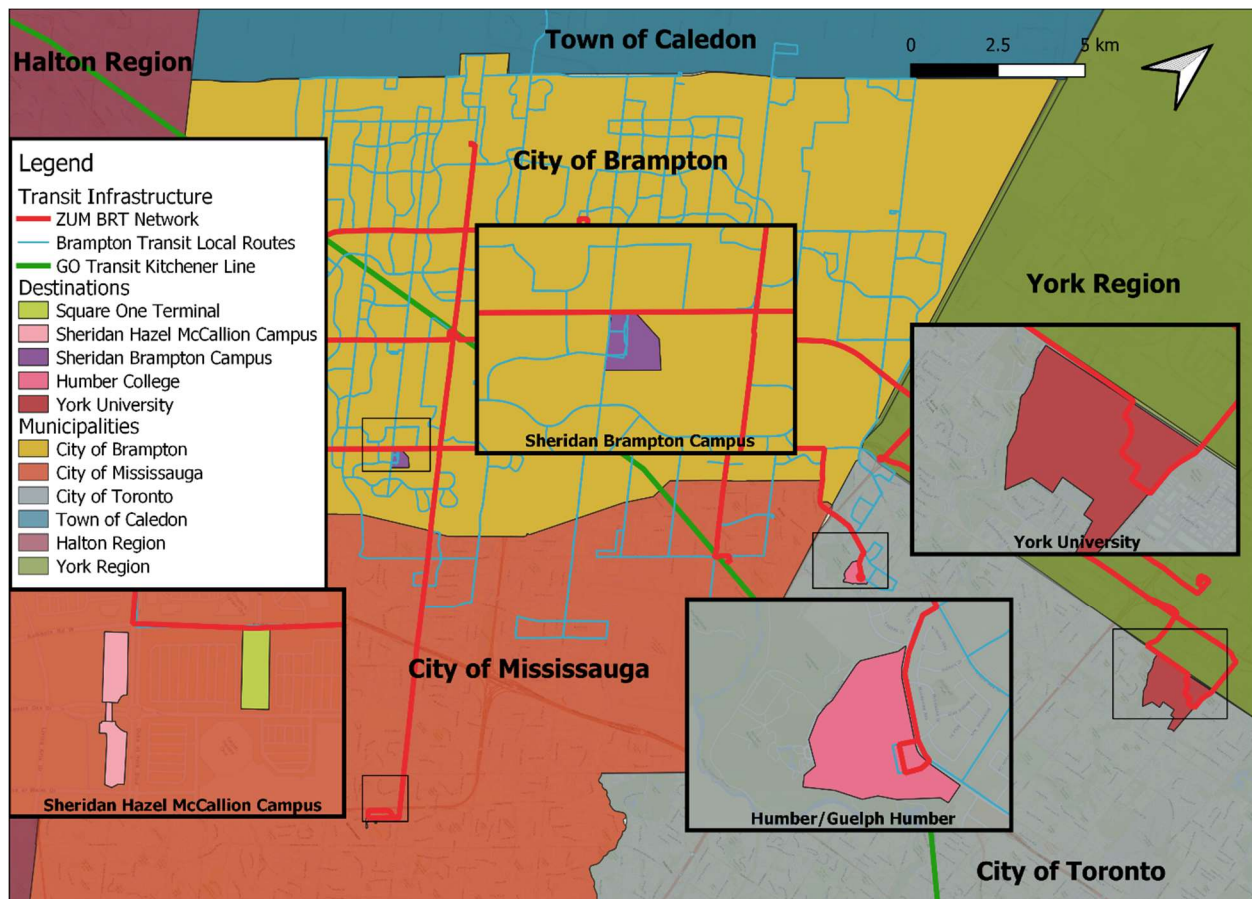


Figure 6. Educational Institutions Connected by ZUM Network. (Map by Author)

Brampton Transit has also made significant strides by establishing many out-of-city transit routes to ensure that Brampton residents have access to a variety of employment opportunities in adjacent municipalities. Due to the city's proximity to Pearson International Airport, Brampton Transit routes connect directly to Pearson Airport for residents catching flights, picking up family members, or working at the airport. In addition, many Brampton bus routes service the adjacent

employment lands that hosts businesses that are directly or indirectly linked to the commercial aviation industry.

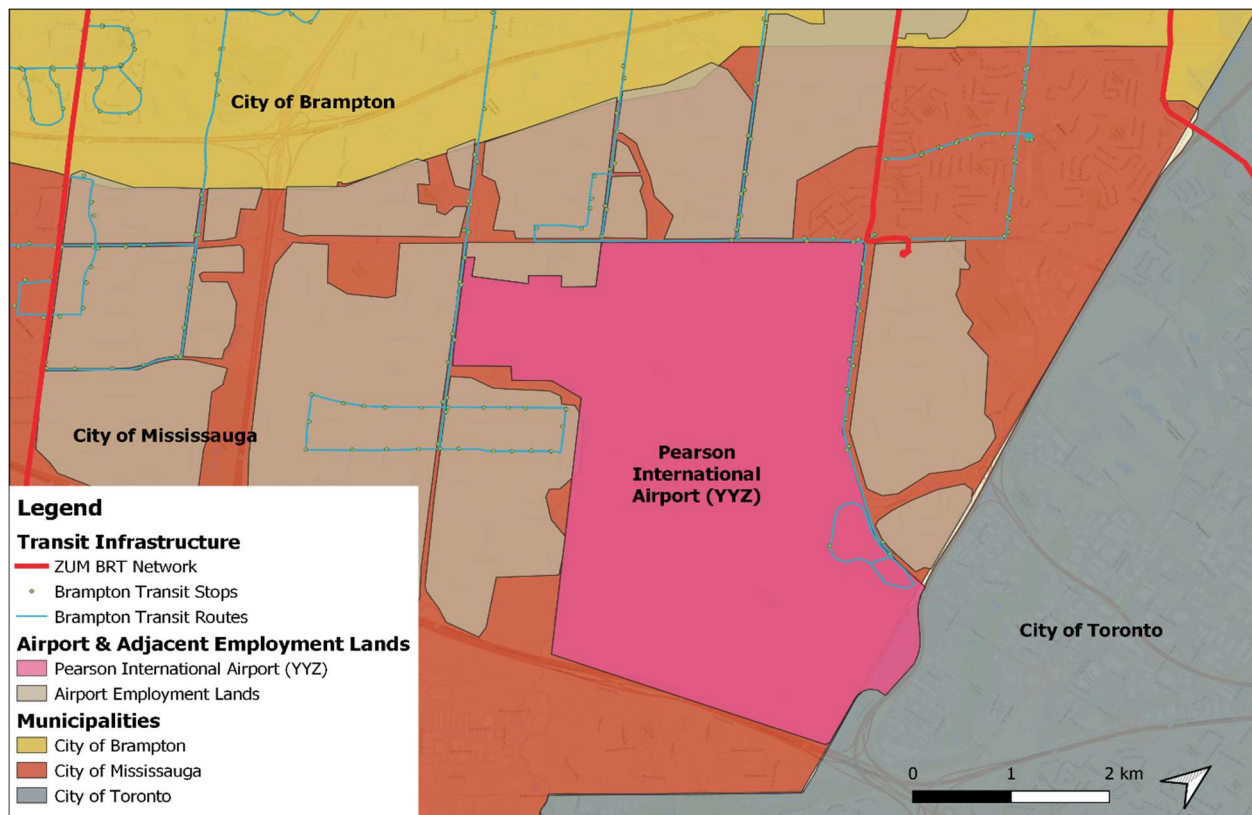


Figure 7. Brampton Transit Connections to Pearson Airport & Adjacent Employment Lands. (Map by Author)

However, despite making significant strides in expanding the transit network to support access to job opportunities for Brampton's residents, Brampton Transit still has significant deficiencies in service. With a large workforce in warehousing and manufacturing, industries that are extremely contingent on shiftwork with facilities that operate around the clock. Kaur Amar & Teelucksingh (2015) expressed that their research findings point to the limitations in public transit affordability, inadequate route servicing result in significant obstacles to accessing work opportunities throughout the Greater Toronto Area (p. 45). Aside from the dayshift, workers on the afternoon and night shifts lack any form of public transit service supporting riders in getting to or from work. The workers on those shifts where one or both of their trips to and from work have no public transit

service, they are forced to make inconvenient and often expensive arrangements to access employment. Reflecting on his experience working in a Brampton distribution centre Milton describes the challenges of shiftwork, particularly for those working during the night-time hours.

I think Brampton should have 24-hour access to transit. Especially with the amount of people who work overnight shifts and the midnight shift. Then they don't have to cough up money to take Uber or taxis home, they can take transit and I think that's great, because transit is safe and it's more affordable (Participant 1. Personal Communication).

Some workers spend the extra money to take a taxi to work while others may take transit hours in advance or wait hours after work to return home in a less costly manner. The current distribution of public transit obstructs access to employment and intensifies the transportation costs for riders working during off-hours.

Along Brampton Transit's local transit routes, buses stop running relatively early, leaving many areas underserved by transit. Brampton's northeastern and northwestern neighbourhoods experience some of the poorest service in the city due to the lack of reliable all-day bus service.

Route Frequency Guide MINIMUM Service Frequency in minutes		Effective: January 4, 2021 until further notice							
		Additional unscheduled trips may operate during peak times							
Route Name & Number		MONDAY to FRIDAY			SATURDAY		SUNDAY		NOTES
		AM / PM Peak	Mid-Day	Evening	Day	Evening	Day	Evening	
24	Van Kirk	35	35	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE		NO SERVICE		No Evening, Saturday or Sunday Service
25	Edenbrook	40	—	NO SERVICE	—	—	—	—	
26	Mount Pleasant	35	35	NO SERVICE	35	—	NO SERVICE		No Evening, Sunday Service
27	Robert Parkinson	35	35	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE		—	—	
28	Wanless	45	—	—	—	—	—	—	
31	McVean	65	65	NO SERVICE	65	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE		No Evening, Sunday Service
32	Father Tobin	45/50	45	NO SERVICE	45	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE		No Evening, Sunday Service
33	Peter Robertson	45	45	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE		—	—	
35	Clarkway¹	30/35	45	NO SERVICE	40	NO SERVICE	40	NO SERVICE	No Evening Service
36	Gardenbrooke	NO SERVICE			—	—	—	—	
50/50A	Gore Road	15	20	30/40	30	40	30	40	

Figure 8. Brampton Transit Route Frequency. (City of Brampton, 2021)

Many of Brampton's Transit buses often ended service early with service becoming even more reduced during the pandemic, leaving large service gaps. East Brampton's 31, 32, 33, and 35 routes

have no weekday evening service, with bus service ending in the afternoon and the 36 bus route being cancelled, leaving limited transit options for many riders.

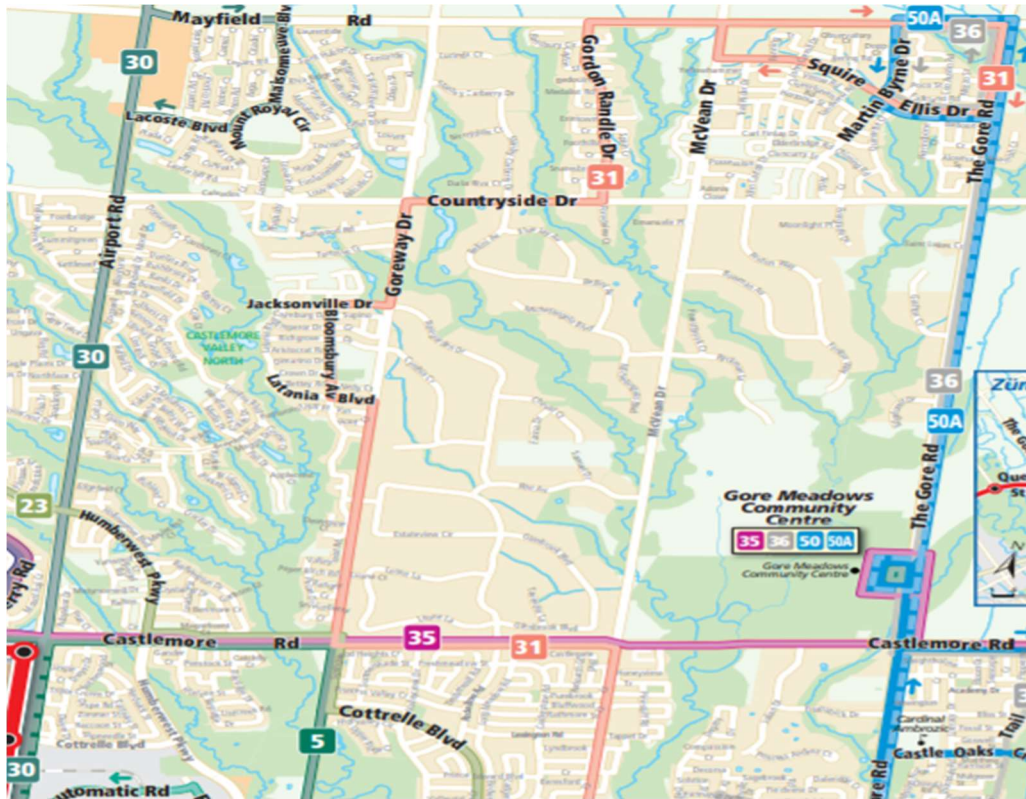


Figure 9. Transit Map East Brampton. (City of Brampton, 2021)

In west Brampton similar issues exist as the 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 routes also lack weekday evening service. Transit riders living or commuting in these areas during the evening hours have a severe lack of options with significant service gaps. Mobility in Brampton is significantly weaker during the off-peak hours including midday service. Public transit service is at its worst in the evening and during the night. Those who depend on public transit as their primary means of mobility during these times are often left without viable transportation options. Consequently, riders are forced into traversing long distances on foot, often along desolate road corridors with little to no pedestrian traffic. They are thus exposed to unsafe conditions or involuntarily incur additional transportation costs when they call a taxi or use an on-demand service. Benjamin sheds some light on the incongruent service depending on the time you are taking transit.

That is really good for when you want to catch a train at rush hour... But after Midnight, [or] after the rush hour in the morning, there's the regular people in Brampton who are going from point A to point B, doing their regular stuff, going to look for a job; going to the supermarket; going to their everyday social stuff. Those are the people who would be standing at the bus stop for an hour and a half and miss one bus and that's where I think that there should be an option for those people to also have access to transportation in a timely manner. (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

Based on how transit service is organized on a daily basis, people who rely on public transit only have reasonable access to public transit during the morning and early evening rush hours. Even through times when service is strongest, the cost of transit fare continues to hinder access to transit. When they travel as labourers with regular, full-time day-time hours are their mobility needs somewhat met. Beyond these times access to public transit is significantly reduced. Transit access during the night-time, after work, or during the weekends (when people might want to use public transit for personal affairs) seems to be out of the question.

Public transit service is scheduled to give employers access to a pool of labour-power for the purpose of capital accumulation. The primary goal of public transportation has and continues to be aimed at wealth accumulation with transit service catering to the morning and evening business rush hours rather than supporting overall mobility. Riders whose trips might fall outside these limited temporal parameters often end up waiting for excessive periods of time or are completely left without service. Milton pointed to TTC's night-time transit service as a vital component of mobility in Toronto and how a similar service could better support transit riders in Brampton.

... the TTC has the blue light network which operates when their normal [routes] stop. So, from like 2:00am to 5:00am, right? And I think Brampton should have an option like that, so you have 24-hour access to transit. And I think that's important, especially with the amount of people who work like overnight shifts over the midnight shift. Then they don't have to cough up money to take Uber or taxis home, they can take transit and I think that's great, because transit is safe. And it's more affordable. (Participant 1. Personal Communication March 5, 2021).

Transportation during the night-time hours remains a significant challenge for people working afternoon or night shifts in many Brampton factories, warehouses, and other industrial facilities. Riders are forced to grapple with the choice to dedicate a substantial portion of their paycheck to cover the costs of private transportation services, opt to travel hours in advance, or walk debilitatingly long distances. Benjamin states,

So, if the accessibility of our transportation is the question, then yes, it is limited. You know, if you go right back to the rush hour, boom, we have it. It seems nice the buses are all packed, but after that, there was [already] limited access. (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

Benjamin highlights the way in which public transit is organized, specifically on its focus on providing transportation to people working during the typical 9:00am to 5:00pm business day. Such selective service contributes to other gaps in the transit network, deficits in transit infrastructure, and a lack of multi-modal transportation options. Transit service in Brampton carries considerable deficits in access as the transit network in its current capacity continues to be inequitably distributed.

2.2 Automobility

Automotive dominance has fundamentally shaped the development of GTHA and the wider urban region. Brampton's development as a car-dependent satellite city within a wider conurbation has turned most streets into thoroughfares and most roads into highway-like wastelands. The head-over-heels adoption of the automobile has situated the car at the very centre of daily life in Brampton as well as many other North American cities. This has led to the widespread development of car-centric infrastructure leaving few alternatives to the car. The car has not only become etched into our urban form, but it has also engrained itself within the suburban culture of Brampton. Automobility has become a beacon of wealth, personal freedom, and

mobility. Addressing automobility is one of the most significant opportunities to tackle inequity as well as the climate emergency. Any attempt to confront automobility is almost always met with vehement resistance in an effort to maintain the privileged mobility enjoyed by drivers and their cars. Therefore, to give up the car is to give up privileged access.

Just as in many other sprawling suburban cities, Brampton is extremely car-dominated and has resulted in making automobile-less travel extremely difficult due to the dependence on the car-centric infrastructure. Brampton was built almost entirely during the era of the car. 95 percent of the city's housing stock has been built since 1960. In fact, 72,935 or 43 percent of the city's overall housing stock in 2016 was built in the 15 years following 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2017b). With the city being built mainly within the post-fordist era, the city was designed and built to the scale of the car, rendering human-scaled modes of transportation such as walking and cycling ineffective. Despite the city's rapid growth and the bulk of housing being developed within the last 60 years, some remnants of Brampton's pre-car history remain. The city's historic downtown centre, Churchville Heritage Conservation District, and the many other heritage designated and listed properties throughout the city. Many of the properties across the city are farmhouses that have been incorporated or relocated into the newly developed subdivisions.

Dispersed suburbanism develops path dependencies such as car-dependency in sprawling and dispersed urban regions, deeming car access a prerequisite to full and meaningful participation in labour or engage as a consumer (Filion, 2015 p. 638). Should full and meaningful participation be restricted to car-owners? How can full and meaningful participation be extended to community members that rely on public transit? Public transit like the car is capable of supporting long-distance mobility provided traffic conditions are favourable. Automobility interferes the operation of public transit in Brampton, since transit runs in mixed-traffic, public transit remains a slow, and

unreliable transportation option for many. Keil and Young (2008) reveal, “A distinct culture of automobility in the 905 area is counterposed against strong support for public transit in the more central districts of the Toronto region.” (p. 744). In Brampton and the wider GTHA, car-dependency has sprouted a car-culture that has become engrained in the suburban lifestyle as a normalized part of daily life. Reid-Mucson (2018) argues,

In many Anglo-American contexts, a component part of the materiality of citizenship is automobility, upon which liberal and neoliberal citizenship formations rest. Those excluded from car ownership and licensing face barriers in accessing employment, housing, and services. (p. 310).

Car culture has become synonymous with suburban citizenship. Any attempt to confront car-dependency is met with severe backlash from suburban car-owners, a diverse constituency with various subgroups. Some car owners fall within a fierce cult-like group desperately clinging to their privileged ability to drive through the city. Meanwhile, many working-class car owners have a pragmatic relationship to the car. They depend on their cars to access employment and other opportunities, bring home groceries, and travel with children. The car is so deeply embedded within the daily lives of several groups, any attempt to challenge car-dependency is often perceived as an assault on mobility and freedom rather than a positive step forward. In an effort to maintain their positions in office, politicians ‘advocated’ for their constituencies by protecting automobility, resisting of public transit projects, and more compact anti-sprawl development practices (Henderson, 2006, p. 300).

The backlash from car driving homeowners is considered such a significant force that politicians are seldom brave enough to challenge automobility and maintain the status quo. Former Toronto mayor Rob Ford frequently expressed his staunch opposition to multi-modal transportation in favour of the car and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to repossess bike

lanes for the car in a populist political move to appease the car owning suburban constituencies in the city (Walks, 2015, p. 415). Avoiding or directly opposing a transition away from the car as a primary mode of transportation, has been a tactic exercised by politicians to shield their political careers from the more privileged home-owning and car-driving voting constituencies in their city, and Brampton is no exception. The City of Brampton made headlines in 2015 when its city council became embroiled in a gruellingly long special council meeting, narrowly voting down a provincial-federally funded light-rail-transit (LRT) system. (City of Brampton, 2015b). The line was set to run along Hurontario/Main Street from Mississauga's Port Credit GO Station to Downtown Brampton. The contentious meeting decided that Brampton's downtown would remain a traffic artery rather than a public transit destination.

Car-centric planning in the GTHA has led to the expansive network of super-highways and major arterial roads providing significant infrastructure for cars and trucks to travel over long distances. Conservative politicians such as Ontario's Premier Doug Ford have made a clear and concerted effort to double-down on auto-centric planning by reviving the proposal for Highway 413. The project was once again proposed despite the repeated calls from citizens, activists, urbanists, municipal governments, and elected officials to put a stop to the highway. The grassroots resistance to the proposed construction of the highway has been centred on conservation and sustainability to protect sensitive lands in the Green Belt, counteract the further loss of farmland and wetlands, and save Ontario residents billions of dollars (Environmental Defence, 2021). The highway would make major linkages to the 400-series highway network stretching from the 401/407 Interchange in Milton, cutting through West Brampton to connect with the highway 410 and finally linking to highways 427 and 400 north of Vaughan. The project has also come under widespread scrutiny as some of the GTHA's largest developers are poised to make record profits

off of their substantial landholdings along the highways proposed route. The same developers who ‘coincidentally’ were also some of the biggest donors contributing \$55,199 to the Ontario Progressive-Conservative (PC) Party and \$150,000 to Ontario Proud, a third-party group campaigning for the PC Party (McIntosh, 2021a). Just as developers in Los Angeles during the late nineteenth century had utilized the automobile coupled with auto-centric planning to increase their potential profits (Gonzalez, 2009, p. 49), Ontario’s developers stand to make immeasurable sums off publicly funded auto-centric infrastructure. In addition to the many concerns surrounding environmental conservancy and corruption, Highway 413 could spell disaster for Brampton. The city of Brampton would become completely encircled by the traffic congested network of 400-series super-highways continuing to further induce the demand for cars. The highway would destroy hundreds of acres of sensitive wetlands and integral farmlands while doubling down on car-dependency and maintain the privileged mobility needs of more affluent car-owners using the highway as a bypass. The project would also add to the already significant automotive traffic and pollution in the city. Who would fail to benefit from the proposed highway? In considering this question, we can think about the many non-car owning residents that rely on public transportation and how the development of another highway would seek to build more unnecessary infrastructure that excludes many people from ever using it.

Automotive traffic in Brampton has reached a saturation point for many residents. It has become a significant burden on daily life and left the streets inundated with cars pushing the road infrastructure to its limits. Brampton is known for having some of the worst traffic congestion in the GTHA and carries a stereotype of also having the worst drivers. The narrative is continuously fuelled by social media accounts posting videos of GTHA driving incidents and accidents followed by a caption reading, ‘what city are they from?’. The answer to the rhetorical question is met by a

resounding number of comments about Brampton. Driving is a significant issue in Brampton; however, the issues lie within the city's short-sighted development strategy and band-aid solutions that have and continue to consist of sprawl and road expansion. Brampton's usual strategy has been to expand roadways from two-lanes to four lanes and eventually to six-lanes. While alleviating traffic in the short-term, road widening fails to provide long-term solutions or attempt to address the inequities and injustices that automobility creates. Many of Brampton's major arterial roads such as Bovaird Drive, Steeles Avenue, and Queen Street offer six-lanes of highway-like infrastructure catering to the scores of commuters and long-haul truckers. These roads carry a significant portion of the city's automotive traffic and accounts for a large portion of its congestion.



Figure 10. Steeles Avenue, Six Lanes of Automotive Traffic (Photo by Author)

In addition to each of these major corridors being some of the most traffic-congested areas in the city, they are also some of the busiest and most important public transit spines in Brampton. Each

of these major roads host a popular Brampton Transit ZUM BRT route. Despite being an automotive-dominated city with its relatively successful and expanding ZUM BRT network, the city does not have a single bus-only lane. Brampton has made few to no plans to implement them over the long-term. Public transit is offered no priority status in moving throughout the city, leaving transit buses to travel among the thousands upon thousands of cars and trucks clogging Brampton's roads. This is one of the most significant roadblocks to developing a more efficient transit network to support transit riders and reduce the advantage carried by private vehicles.



Figure 11. ZUM Bus in Mixed Traffic (Photo by Author)

Brampton's Transit buses driving amid mixed traffic creates unreliable transit service, the quality of which is directly related to the fluctuating levels of automotive traffic and chaotic situations it creates. However, BRT systems in cities with dedicated bus-only lanes are able to circumvent congestion

or respond easily to unexpected scenarios such as automotive accidents, all in order to operate more predictably.

Like many cities around the world, Brampton has been designed around the car as the foremost means of transportation. With the car occupying such a significant portion of space and the modal breakdown, there remains a lack of viable alternatives to the car. Governments continue to develop policies that support and encourage car ownership and fail to equip cities with the infrastructure to confront automobility evident by the clear absence of bus-only lanes. Automobility continues to make our cities inequitable providing infrastructure for more privileged car owners at the expense of transit reliant folks who depend on public transit. Automobility is a notion that has become deeply embedded within suburban culture and changing that culture requires more than just infrastructure and investment, it must seek to change the hearts and minds of people.

2.3 Affordability

Affordability is crucial to developing equitable cities. Unfortunately, Brampton has followed the broader trend in the GTHA where life has become an increasingly unaffordable. Some of the factors that have influenced un-affordability include expensive transit fares, double and triple fares, some of the highest insurance rates in the country, and skyrocketing housing prices. These four factors have been the main drivers impacting affordability within Brampton, leaving residents with severely limited savings. People living in Brampton as well as in other cities in the GTHA struggle financially due to the costs associated with transportation and housing. Affordability can be connected to this combination of factors that compound to create substantial financial pressure on families living in Brampton.

For some transit riders, the public transit fare might be a seemingly insignificant price to pay for the ‘service’ of public transit. However, many transit riders in Brampton dedicate a significant portion of their paychecks to covering the costs of public transit fare. The perceived costs of transit are relative to the rider’s financial situation, affecting low-income riders disproportionately in comparison to their higher-earning counterparts. Transit fare can also be a significant cost for low-income families that also pay a high cost for housing. Cozart (2017) underlines, “Housing and transportation are the largest expenses for most households and, when coupled together, they can eat up significant portions of a household budget” (p. 2). Transit fares paired with rent or mortgage payments for housing can consume large portions of total household incomes. Expensive and increasing transit fares pose a challenge for many riders reliant on the service, especially in cities like Brampton where housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable. Brampton Transit’s cash transit fares have also increased. The fares have risen from \$2.75 to \$4.00 between 2009 and 2019 representing an increase of approximately 45.45 percent over a ten-year period (City of Brampton, 2021a; Mackenzie, 2009a). Brampton Transit has continued to expand and improve its service to support transit riders that may not have other alternatives. The expansion has been welcomed by the community since it has expanded mobility to places beyond Brampton and in some cases improved frequencies. However, the expanded transit service and rising operating costs that have been downloaded on to riders have a disproportionate impact on low-income and racialized riders. Riders who were likely already heavily reliant on transit or experience significant barriers to accessing public transit. In *The Black Community in Peel: Summary of Research Findings from Four Reports* (2015) the Social Planning Council of Peel identified the high cost of public transportation as a significant factor impacting the ability of Black youth to participate in local community programs and to be able to apply for employment

opportunities. (p. 5). The increasing costs of fare prevents racialized groups, specifically Black youth from accessing public transit, severely restricting access to employment opportunities and opportunities to take part in community events or programs. Navya explained how the rising cost of public transit has affected her and other riders in Brampton.

In terms of, let's say the fares they have of course, gone up over the years. And that has messed up a lot of peoples' ways of, you know, getting around the city... I had been working and I use that money just to dedicate most of my money towards transit and commute (Participant 3, Personal communication, March 8, 2021).

For many residents working minimum wage jobs and using public transportation as their primary means of getting around, mobility becomes extremely costly and compounds over time. The rise of transit fares increases the proportion of a person's bi-weekly income that is dedicated to covering the cost of public transit alone. Fare hikes impact different people asymmetrically. A fare increase is seldom felt by more affluent commuters with higher-paying jobs and car drivers who don't take public transit at all. Yet low-income folks are well aware of the financial implications of fare hikes. Increasing transit fares is one of the most inequitable ways to finance and operate public transit.

The Region of Peel offers a transit fare discount program. Eligible transit riders in Brampton and Mississauga can ride transit at half-price for 12 months (Region of Peel, 2021a). The discount program is geared towards supporting households whose net-income falls below the following thresholds.

Household size	Net household income
1 person	\$22,133
2 persons	\$31,301
3 persons	\$38,335
4 persons	\$44,266
5 persons	\$49,491
6 persons	\$54,215
7 persons	\$58,558

Figure 12. Region of Peel Discounted Transit Fare Program (Region of Peel, 2021).

Although the program is aimed at supporting the region's most vulnerable residents, it is not a well-known program, and its eligibility threshold is quite exclusive. The threshold is too low and many residents that fall outside it struggle with affording basic necessities despite their income not falling under the low-income cut-off. The exclusivity of the program limits its overall effectiveness in supporting riders in need of support who may be ineligible by a slim margin.

Others may simply be unaware of the program's existence due to a lack of advertising. The cost of the fare continues to be a significant financial burden on low-income individuals and families.

As the GTHA and other conurbations around the world become increasingly interconnected, commuters must often travel beyond the boundaries of their home city to access employment, education, healthcare, or for leisure. This is precisely the reality in the case of Brampton as many people leave the city to access opportunities. For transit riders, commuting beyond the city limits often requires transfers between different transit providers in which they are expected to incur additional fares. Non-car-owners in Brampton commuting to Downtown Toronto to access education or employment are often charged two fares and, in some cases even three separate fares to cover the transfers between different transit providers. For example, transit riders

travelling from Brampton to Downtown Toronto often begin their trip aboard a local Brampton Transit bus enroute to one of the city's three major GO stations. There they board a GO Train bound for Toronto's Union Station before switching to a TTC subway, streetcar, or bus to cover the final leg of their trip. Although when transferring between Brampton Transit and GO Transit using the virtual wallet PRESTO pass, riders receive a small discount of about \$0.80 (City of Brampton, 2021a), the discount is miniscule totalling about a dollar per trip. The program was also very similar to a program offered between TTC and GO Transit that was canceled by the provincial government in 2021. By not renewing the program, Queen's Park hurt commuters from using a combination of GO and local transit.

Triple Fare: Brampton to Toronto







	PRESTO (1-WAY) Brampton Transit \$3.10 GO Transit \$7.66 (with discount) TTC 3.20 TOTAL \$13.96		COST Per week 5 trips (2-way) \$139.60 Per Month (2-way) \$525.30
	PRESTO NO DISCOUNT (1-WAY) Brampton Transit \$3.10 GO Transit \$8.67 (no discount) TTC 3.20 TOTAL \$14.97		COST Per week 5 trips (2-way) \$149.70 Per Month (2-way) \$561.35
	CASH (1-WAY) Brampton Transit \$4.00 GO Transit \$10.30 TTC 3.20 TOTAL \$17.50		COST Per week 5 trips (2-way) \$175.00 Per Month (2-way) \$700.00

Figure 13. Triple Fare: Cost from Brampton to Union Station, Toronto (Graphic by Author)

Despite the minor discount offered by the Brampton Transit and GO Transit co-pay system, it represents some progress towards fare integration and saves transferring commuters some money over the long-term.

In addition to the co-pay program, Brampton Transit has partnered with a number of municipal public transit authorities to offer fare-less transfers between one another. Brampton Transit partnered with MiWay, York Region Transit (YRT), Oakville Transit, Burlington Transit, Hamilton Street Railway (HSR), and Durham Region Transit (DRT) to eliminate double fares by accepting paper transfers from participating transit providers (City of Brampton, 2021c). Under these programs, riders would no longer be subjected to additional charges when transferring between transit providers within a two-hour window. The program is a significant step towards fare integration in the GTHA. However, some transit riders commonly take trips exceeding the two-hour transfer time during a one-way trip. Charging a second fare on these connections adds insult to injury to those commuting long distances who opt to take local transit over the more expensive regional transit. Commuters engaging in long trips may also already be disadvantaged due to the distance and time required to make their trip. The fare thus becomes another burden on an already difficult trip. Extreme commutes of this length are not exempt from additional fare charges which begin to highlight the inequitable nature of charging fare by distance or by time. According to the TTC Riders report *Transform the TTC: Pandemic Recovery Fare Policies for a Thriving Transit System (2021)*, “The 2-hour fare window does not benefit people who travel primarily on buses and experience unreliable bus service, because a one-way trip can take at least two hours” (p. 16). Riders may need to travel long distances on transit buses because they have been pushed to the periphery or other inner-city areas with poor transit service in order to access more affordable housing options. Additional transportation charges can eat into the savings made by living further away.

The partnerships between transit authorities to reduce the impacts of the double fare remain partial and requires riders to be aware of the programs. The programs are also often left out of the

conversation surrounding fare integration as most attention is paid to connections with the TTC, the central transit operator in the region. A significant number of riders from Brampton transfer between multiple transit authorities on their commute to Toronto, where many economic and educational institutions are concentrated. Connections between Brampton and Toronto are numerous. 48,148 Bramptonians work and 25,283 students study in Toronto; they are likely to use public transit for the purpose of commuting (Data Management Group, 2018). Due to this substantial ridership, there is an increased emphasis on these Toronto-bound connections, thus contributing to the lack of awareness of integrated fare programs in the rest of the GTHA. With the exception of the agreement between Brampton Transit and MiWay, these programs could be considered among the most well-kept open secrets in the GTHA. Milton, an avid transit rider who relies on transit in the GTHA explains the gaps in knowledge among transit riders.

I think fare integration is an important aspect. I know Brampton and Mississauga have it, which is what [makes] commuting across Brampton and Sauga [Mississauga] in that sense is quite easy. But when it comes to connecting to other areas is when it gets very expensive (Participant 1. Personal Communication March 5, 2021).

The gaps within Milton's awareness of the wider integrated transit fare program illustrates the lack of knowledge in the GTHA of the program, even among some of the more knowledgeable riders.

GTHA Local Transit Authorities with Fare Integration

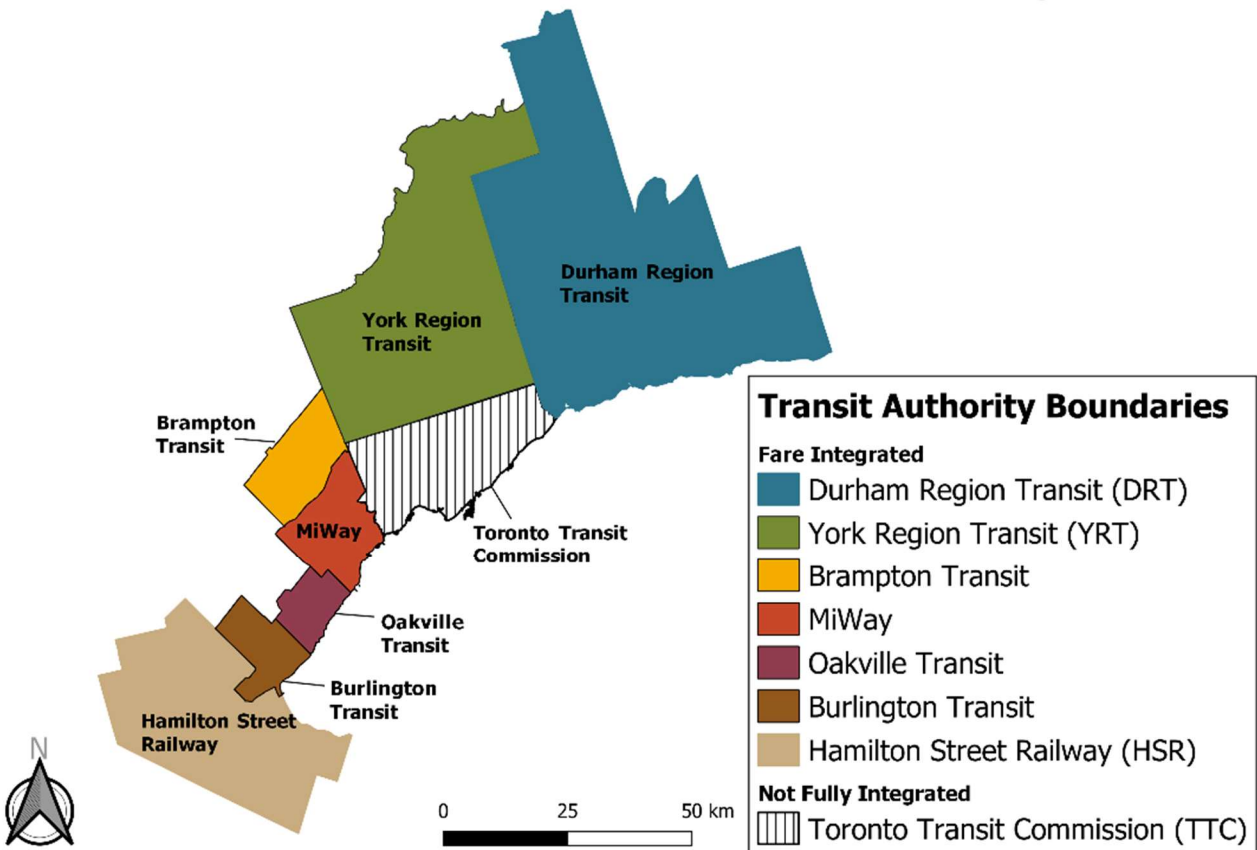


Figure 14. GTHA Local Transit Authorities with Fare Integration (Map by Author)

Brampton Transit’s transfer policy offers riders transferring from the TTC a similar fare-free transfer. However, it only applies to TTC–Zone 3 punched transfers (City of Brampton, 2021c). The transfer policy is restrictive and does not include many of the connections between Brampton and Toronto such as downtown and North York. Therefore, the program has minimal effect on the majority of trips between the two cities. The City of Toronto represents a major hole in fare integration across a wider system of integrated fares that must be filled to make the GTHA’s transit network more integrated to support low-income riders travelling long distances. Although Brampton Transit is part of a significant number of the GTHA’s transit authorities that are committed to integrating public transit fares, the province and Metrolinx have remained unable to successfully implement a single harmonized fare system. The integration of siloed public transit

systems has been foiled for many years due to the failure to cooperate between municipalities (Grengs, 2004, p. 61). Fare integration has been a long-standing goal in the GTHA but has always come up short. The failed attempts to integrate transit between local transit authorities and GO Transit's regional transit network has resulted in the compounding of costs on riders. As riders are charged double fares on short-distance and long-distance commutes, it continues to pose a momentous barrier to developing a more equitable public transit network. It is important to note that fare integration is not entirely equitable. Transit agencies like TTC that have benefited from many years of investment paid through municipal budgets but is also widely used by non-residents who do not contribute to the tax-basins that make that investment possible. Fare integration is important but cannot be equitable without addressing the dire need for adequate and permanent provincial funding for local transit.

As Brampton is an extremely car-centric city with a transit network that fails to meet the mobility needs of Bramptonians, many of whom may choose to purchase a car to improve their mobility. Brampton residents pay the highest automotive insurance premiums in Ontario with average insurance costing Bramptonians approximately \$1,505.00 per year (LowestRates.ca, 2020), a whopping 123.5 percent more than the provincial average. The exceptionally high insurance rates in Brampton paired with the cost of a weekly tank of gasoline, licencing fees, and general car maintenance continue to make car ownership excessively expensive and can cost drivers a cumulative cost of \$5,000 and in some cases much more. Comparatively, a transit rider taking two trips per day for a year using a PRESTO pass with a cost of \$3.10 per ride would total \$2,263.00, less than half the cost of a car. However, most riders spend significantly less than this as they may not travel on transit every day.

People with limited adequate transportation options are often forced to incur the substantial costs of car ownership to enhance their mobility and expand their access to employment, education, healthcare, leisure, and other services. Currently, access to mobility comes at a cost, and for low-income riders that cost is a quite substantial. Riders can take public transit at the expense of spending significantly more time commuting which could result in less time with family. Riders are often incentivized to trade their PRESTO pass for a set of keys which can give them more time with family, despite the significant monetary costs. The dedication of a prodigious portion of their paycheck to cover the costs associated with car ownership is hard on many families. With a public network that is primarily focused on operating transit in a market-oriented manner that plans transit based on recuperating operating costs rather than supporting equity, Brampton and its residents will continue to be forced behind the steering-wheel regardless of the cost.

Transportation and housing are fundamentally intertwined and cannot be understood as separate urban issues, they are all part of a single whole. Both play a vital role in urban life and determine questions of who has access and who can dictate change in the city. By better understanding the linkages between transportation and housing we will be able to more effectively make more equitable and livable cities overall. Brampton is a city that experienced significant growth due to its proximity to Toronto and neighbouring municipalities, strong access to employment, and more affordable housing prices. Despite Brampton's housing prices historically remaining more affordable in comparison to adjacent municipalities, the GTHA's market-induced housing crisis has greatly inflated housing costs in Brampton eroding the city's relative affordability. According to the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's (TRREB) January short term *Market Watch Report* (2021) the average house price in Brampton was \$971,462, surpassing the Toronto average coming in at around \$866,331. Brampton and the wider Toronto region real estate

market trend has been a constant increase. However, the last ten years the increase has accelerated substantially.

TRREB MLS® Average Price
Monthly Time Series with Trend Line

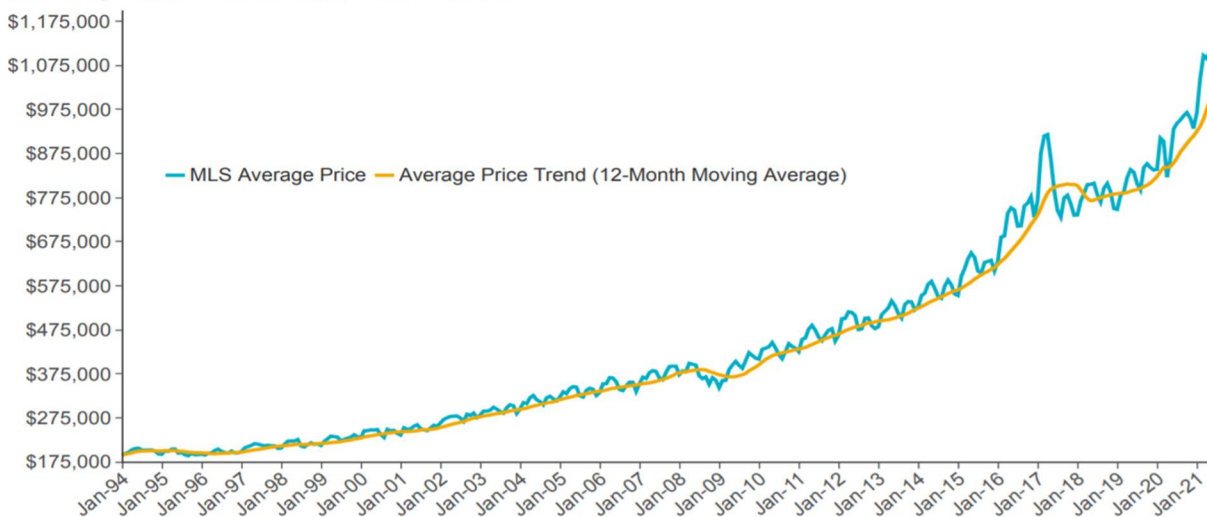


Figure 15. Toronto Region Average Home Price. (TRREB, 2021)

The increase in Brampton home values has made home ownership in Brampton simply out of reach for many families pushing them to the periphery, sacrificing mobility for affordability. In any city location is everything, proximity to amenities such as frequent public transit is vital and highly sought after. Transit is just one factor that determines desirability which typically results in these central locations being more expensive in comparison to areas further away from these concentrations of amenities. Despite poorer transit access in northern Brampton and other pockets of the city, the city's housing prices have continued to surge, in line with home value trends in the Toronto region as a whole. This has reinforced an already existing housing crisis. Kieran discussed his understanding of transit accessibility in Brampton in relation to location.

So, the people living on the outskirts would be living in basement apartments, renters, housing is often more affordable, they get shafted because the transit routes out there aren't as accessible as well. And that forces them to get other means to and from where they need to go. (Participant 2. Personal Communication March 6, 2021).

The differences noted by Kieran in affordability and how it impacts access to transit is not only an issue in Brampton but in many suburbs dominated by a major city. Housing located within close proximity to frequently serviced public transit lines are highly sought after due to their superior access to transit and the increased perceived value and desirability that accompany it. As a result of the high costs of housing in areas with good transit access, low-income individuals and families struggle to maintain or find affordable housing options nearby. People might relocate to access more affordable housing options that may be less accessible by transit despite being reliant on the service. As Tomer, Kneebone, Puentes, & Berube (2011) highlight, “housing and transportation are the largest expenses for most households and, when coupled together, they can eat up significant portions of a household budget”. Despite public transit access being a vital transportation alternative to the car, rising housing costs can prevent low-income residents from living or moving to areas with frequent and quality service. Access to public transit is one of many factors impacting housing affordability and access to mobility. Inadequate public transit connectivity, housing unaffordability, and car-dependency disproportionately effects Brampton’s predominantly working-class community, particularly the transit-reliant segment of the working class.

Factors such as expensive transit fare, double fares, expensive car insurance, and the rising cost of housing have contributed to the erosion of affordability in Brampton, the GTHA, and many other Canadian cities. Rising costs of transportation and a housing crisis have become financially burdensome conditions for most households. Brampton is a city where affordability has become a more pronounced issue, highlighting a growing trend driven by the marketization of housing. In this context, improving transit affordability could be a key element in supporting equity.

2.4 Discrimination & Class

Class has a tremendous impact upon who can access and traverse the city and how they do it. Working-class and racialized people are more likely to experience barriers to accessing premium transportation networks. Marginalized groups are often subjected to long and gruelling commutes and severely crowded public transit routes. They also face disproportionate scrutiny from fare enforcement officers. Struggles in mobility are much more than just transportation, mobility is inherently connected with the right to participate in public life (Enright, 2019, p. 667). The disparities that exist within mobility establish barriers in the participation of marginalized groups and affords the ability to participate in public life to those with privileged mobility.

Premium networked infrastructure and spaces that prioritize the mobility needs of privileged and often affluent white professionals in by-passing traffic congested roads and ‘unimportant’ spaces. The in-between city is understood as a relatively recent component of the urban landscape surrounding many urban regions, despite not considered to be part of the conventional understanding of the city or the suburb (Young & Keil, 2010, p. 87). These spaces are unpopular zones and destinations to be by-passed by transportation infrastructure directing traffic to ‘important’ locations. Highways such as the 407 are forms of premium networked space that efficiently allows users to bypass such places. The objective of these routes is to by-pass the in-between city in the most expedient way possible. Sheller (2018) unveils, “When transport is isolated as a matter of efficient movement, it becomes disconnected from the wider meaning of streets, neighbourhoods, and communities and thereby ignores the valuation of diverse peoples’ livelihoods, well-being, and health” (p. 23). Spaces that are geared towards transporting drivers with the disposable income and businesses relying on efficient transportation to bypass more

congested roads and infrastructure. These spaces not only accommodate more affluent drivers but also exclude low-income people.

Due to the significant price of GO Transit distance fares, some lower-income working-class riders remain priced out of the service and are pushed to more affordable but less direct transit routes that sit in traffic instead of by-passing it on dedicated infrastructure. Transit riders commuting from Brampton to Toronto and other municipalities sometimes take longer routes to avoid the premium transit fares. The 501A ZUM BRT route is a principal example of longer routes that transit riders take to avoid higher fares. While some low-income riders try to avoid paying the higher GO Transit fares, many low-income GO Transit riders rely on the more expedient and direct service despite the more substantial fare prices. Riders taking the 501A ZUM would routinely cut across the York University campus parking lot to access the TTC's eastbound 60 bus route or walk to York University Station to take the subway on Line 1 toward Downtown Toronto.

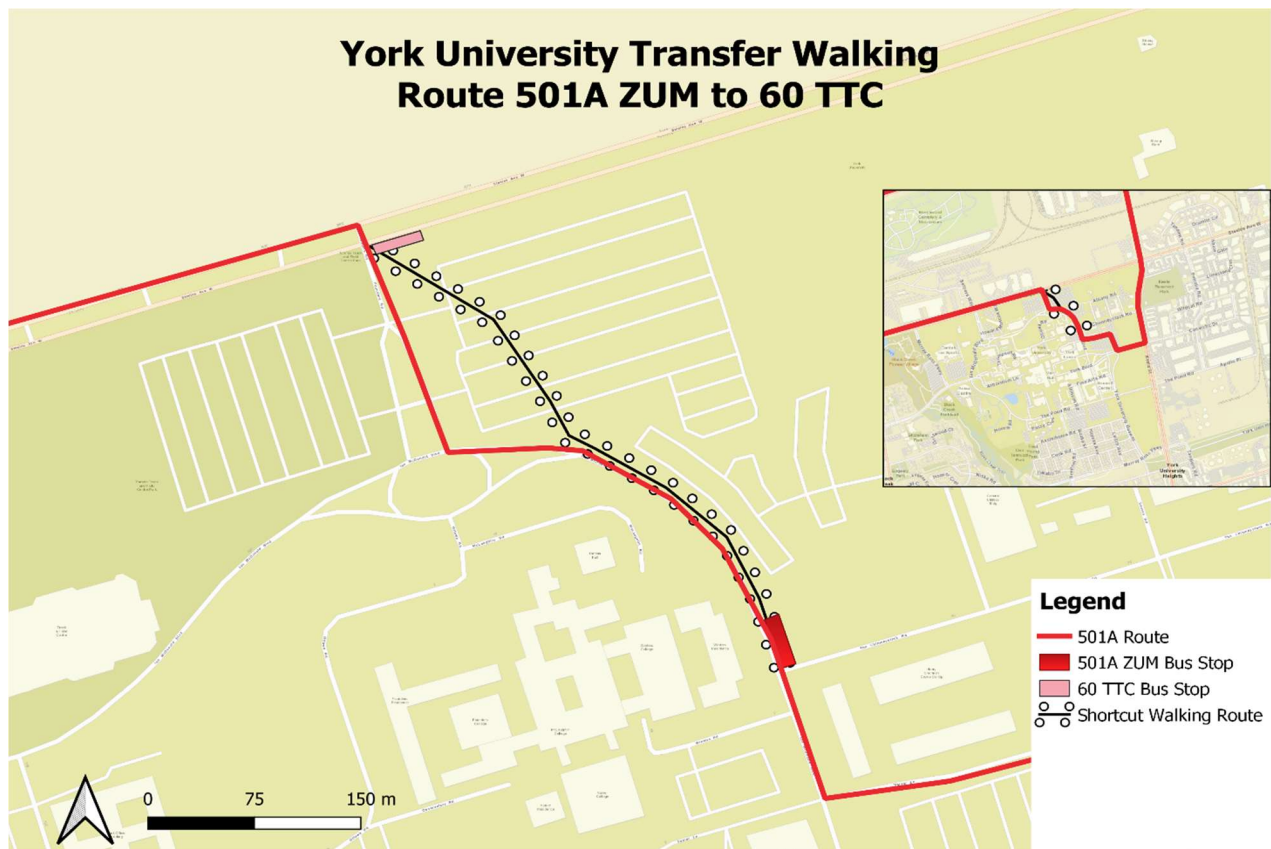


Figure 16. York University Transfer Walking Route 501A ZUM to TTC. (Map by Author)

The 501A has become a viable alternative for Bramptonians trying to avoid paying the premium charged by GO Transit during their commute to Toronto. The privileged networks that are deliberately avoided to save money or inaccessible due to cost creates a tiered system of mobility that disadvantages low-income commuters who are unable to afford to take quicker modes of transportation such as a car, on-demand service, or GO Transit's regional bus and rail network.

Many commuters travelling from satellite suburbs like Brampton to Toronto have little to no control over their daily lives and are unable to be full and active contributors to public life and access opportunities. The Weberian understanding of class confirms that class has an influence upon the provision of one's life chances (Breen, 2005, p. 4). Many transit riders lack the agency to choose not to spend a significant portion of their day working outside of their own community in a different city and on in long commutes. As a result of these same commuters who rely on the

bus are often prevented from taking part in the wider collective life within their own community. Litman (2016) concludes that there are significant benefits to both bus and rail as modes of transportation; however, he notes that buses are often frequented by low-income and transit-dependent riders in addition to being best suited to serve dispersed urban areas with lower demand. Prioritizing transit by bus thus has particularly equitable impacts. (p. 89). Brampton Transit accounts for a more significant portion of total rides as Brampton Transit moved 31,914,291 passengers in 2019 while GO Transit transported just 1,803,500 Brampton commuters (City of Brampton, 2021b; Metrolinx, 2020). Its fleet consists entirely of buses and is far cheaper for riders than GO Transit's regional rail and bus lines. Despite the significantly higher price of GO Transit, just as Brampton Transit, they are both systems that support the mobility of the working-class. Local transit as of late has taken a backseat while regional rail expansion has been prioritized by the Ontario government. Rather than supporting mobility for people without access to a car, transit infrastructure and service is only expanding further out to the suburbs (Grengs, 2004, p. 62). Ontario transit policies have prioritized the expansion of rail corridors servicing long-distance commuters. Local bus transit has been neglected as a result of the focus on regional rail service. Regional and local transit are both important components of the wider transportation network in the GTHA. Heavily investing in local transit such as Brampton Transit that has a broad range of local coverage to match the investment and enhancements made to Metrolinx's regional transit would directly improve the mobility of non-car owning communities. Both systems are crucial as transit-dependent residents may rely on a combination of transit services.

Poor transit connectivity and incapacitating automotive traffic result in poor outcomes for Brampton's predominantly working-class families. Despite this, in Brampton's and other sprawling suburban cities, car ownership is perceived to be related to success and freedom.

Freedom from the whims of the local bus schedules and layovers. While fundamentally flawed, as a result of Brampton's auto-centric built form and unreliable transit network, transportation mode has become perceived as a component of social class. As automobility obstructs public transit efficiency, many bus riders prefer getting a car instead of making public transit better. Car drivers enjoy heavily funded road infrastructure while transit infrastructure is significantly less subsidized in comparison. In this sense, car owners' 'right to drive' comes at the expense of the transit-dependent working-class. The expanding gaps between transit and car driving constituencies is rooted in social divisions making the bus the mode of transportation for the poor, out of sight and out of mind for the decision makers focusing on the more affluent suburban residents (Grengs, 2004, p. 61). Social divisions in education, income, and status in Brampton impact how people commute and to what degree they can imprint public life. In Brampton, a city marred by automobility, there remains a clear and defined designation of who is and who is not permitted to partake in civil life and shape urban space, and it is rooted in class.

Those riders without the financial means to allocate extra money to take a privileged form of transportation such as the car on premium networked infrastructure are frequently thrust on to unreliable and overcrowded buses or trains. Buses in which nearly every square metre is occupied by a seated or standing passenger as it meanders through a sea of automotive traffic. Instances of extreme overcrowding leave riders like Benjamin to question, "Why is it that sometimes when they're needed, we don't have two buses following each other? And other times that people are always packed like sardines?" (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021). These uncomfortable experiences leave many riders stuck standing aboard transit for extended periods of time or on occasion the entire duration of their trip creating an unpleasant ride. Mass transit systems become less and less efficient when immersed in traffic (Farmer & Noonan, 2014, p. 64).

Brampton's buses are susceptible to the ebb and flow of car traffic resulting in less efficient and longer commutes. Standing for long periods of time can be a debilitating experience since many transit riders may have been or will be on their feet for the entirety of an eight-hour shift. This directly impacts workers employed in exploitive work in retail, food service work, warehousing, or manufacturing. Often times bus capacity is unable to meet the intense demand for public transit due to austerity fuelled cuts made by 'cost conscious' neoliberal governments. In Surjan's experience as a transit operator he points out the challenges of maintaining capacity levels aboard buses and provides insight to the levels of crowding experienced by riders. Surjan highlights the difficult balancing act to respond to crowding and maintain safe capacities aboard the bus and the effect it has on Brampton's transit riders.

But sometimes one of the things that happens is when buses get full. That's the thing, when busses get full, we put them in the out-of-service and we just keep driving till obviously we drop some passengers off and pick up again. But sometimes we have to leave people waiting at the stops. (Participant 4. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

Brampton Transit's buses, particularly ZUM buses are often so full that drivers have no choice but to stop picking up passengers until the bus is at a safe capacity. The operators must by-pass some stops entirely as riders look onward in frustration, leaving many riders stuck waiting for the next available bus. Brampton Transit's most popular bus routes, the ZUM BRT lines, are well-known in the GTHA for their incredibly long line-ups that crowd transit terminal platforms and generate extremely long line-ups at bus stops.



Figure 17. 511 ZUM Platform Crowding (Toronto Star, 2021)

The 501A at York University and 511 at Humber College are notorious for their long line ups to board the bus headed for Brampton. The red and black ZUM buses are some of the most affordable options for Brampton residents to access education and have become staples in Brampton Transit's bus network.

Overcrowding has also been a significant issue at Brampton's three major GO Stations, especially Bramalea Station and where crowding has become a significant burden and hazard. Brampton has long been in need for service improvements and two-way all-day GO Transit service. Toronto's Union station platforms hosting idling trains bound for Brampton are also almost always overcrowded, often leading to tremendously dangerous conditions for riders waiting on train platforms. Benjamin reflected on the crowding he experienced when taking the GO Train

between Bramalea Station and Toronto's Union Station. Benjamin reflected upon the grievous consequences upon the cancellation of the 4:50pm GO train.

You get so immune to the chaos, as a way of putting it. You're looking into the chaos... you have the pushing and the cramming, it wasn't easy, because Bramalea kind of got a reputation for that. Our trains we so packed, the next train coming home, that was unbearable. (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

The appallingly dangerous crowding situation at Union Station came to a head on January 7, 2019, when the Ontario government and Metrolinx approved the elimination of the 4:50pm express train from Toronto's Union Station to Brampton (Nielsen & Vella, 2019). The change was to support the expansion of the regional rail network with the extension of rush hour GO train service to Kitchener, but instead it induced significant crowding on the Union Station platform. There was already a high-level of ridership and severe crowding taking place on the GO Transit platforms and trains between Brampton and Toronto. Despite this, the cuts led to a frenzy on the platforms and throughout the entire concourse, significantly intensifying an already dire situation. Brampton's largely working-class community faces the brunt of the consequences that result from inadequate public transit infrastructure and service, car-dependency, and urban sprawl. The transit-dependent segments of the working-class are even more acutely affected by auto-centric sprawl because they are most directly impacted by a chronically underfunded transit system.



Figure 18. Overcrowded GO Train Platform Caused by Service Change (CP24, 2019).

The decision to cancel the 4:50pm express train was quickly walked back as the government announced they would be restoring service as of February 13, 2019, nearly a month after the onset of the catastrophe. The decision was made following widespread public outrage, viral videos circulating on social media and news outlets, and calls from Brampton's commuters appealing to the city council to pressure Metrolinx to restore the service (Fox, 2019) The decision was made without consideration for Brampton's transit riders. The route between Brampton and Toronto on the GO prior to the incidents were already facing severe overcrowding and despite repeated calls to improve service and institute two-way all-day GO train service between Brampton and Toronto. Riders on GO trains would often find seating on the stairs in-between the upper and lower sections of the train cars as a substitute to for seating. The debacle took place while Union Station was undergoing renovations and substantial reconstruction efforts to improve the station's infrastructure.



Figure 19. Union Station, Toronto, GO Train Platform with Construction (Bow, 2014)

The on-going construction left significant portions of the platforms, staircases, and concourse cordoned off with construction barriers, eliminating space for a desperate crowd of commuters clamouring to board a train ill-equipped to handle the capacity.

Much of Brampton's vital transit infrastructure including Brampton Transit and GO Transit is responsible for supporting the mobility of about 90,729 Brampton residents (Data Management Group, 2018). Although transit riders only consist of 9 percent of the city's commuters, it is an important mode for many non-car owning workers, students, and vulnerable residents. Drivers and car passengers make up 82 percent of all commuter traffic with cycling, walking, and other making up a total of 9 percent (Data Management Group, 2018). Aboard buses and trains, transit riders experience crowded conditions of transit created uncomfortable and dangerous conditions that riders were forced to endure to get to their destination. In addition to the high level of crowding aboard both the ZUM BRT network and GO Transit routes, riders are subjected to lengthy commutes that often take about an hour or more from point-to-point. Brampton's average commute time by public transit is 57.1 minutes (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Severe overcrowding and long

commute times coupled together leaves many riders standing for considerable periods of time making for an unpleasant commute.

With public transit authorities in the GTHA continuing to be chronically underfunded by the provincial and federal governments, municipal transit authorities have attempted to reduce their losses from unpaid fares by using transit enforcement officers. Transit enforcement officers are on staff to check proof-of-payment aboard public transit buses, on platforms, and at terminals. Brampton Transit does not have fare enforcement officers on staff, in contrast to other transit authorities such as Go Transit, MiWay, TTC, and YRT. However, drivers with Brampton Transit are tasked with ensuring proof-of-payment upon boarding the bus. In practice, operators have the discretion to grant or deny access to the bus. Surjan described his experience handling situations where transit riders did not have fare. "...they [Brampton Transit] tell us to educate the riders, let them know that this is how much the fare is, and let them on, obviously for free" (Participant 4, Personal Communication, March 9, 2021). Based on Surjan's description Brampton Transit seems to take a softer approach to ensure fare payment, whereas transit providers such as GO Transit, MiWay, TTC, and YRT have taken more hardline approaches to fare enforcement. Although Brampton Transit does not have fare enforcement, it still operates as an oppressive system with drivers playing a dual role of bus operator and transit enforcement. Corporate security or police are often called to deal with non-compliant and non-paying passengers. Fare enforcement officers continue to target and racialized people disproportionately for largely suspected and unsubstantiated minor offences such as but not limited to fare evasion often leading to violent forced 'removals' and debilitating fines. Fare enforcement effectively criminalizes poor and racialized communities and contributes to the development of an atmosphere of fear and unease within such an essential component of public life and mobility. Transit operators may instead rely

on law enforcement to assist in the removal of an ‘unwanted’ or non-paying passenger from the bus. On December 13, 2019, a Brampton resident taking TTC in Scarborough was accused by a transit operator of not paying his fare. Even after he repeatedly tapped his PRESTO card, Toronto Police were called. They proceed to violently assault the rider (Ng & Knope). Transit riders taking Brampton Transit are by no means insulated from discrimination and fare policing as many riders take other transit systems where there are fare enforcement officers.

Transit systems like TTC, YRT, MiWay and GO Transit have fare enforcement officers that board buses and patrol transit terminals checking proof-of-payment. Riders caught by fare enforcement officers without proper proof-of-payment can be issued hefty fines that can reach as high as \$425, triple the amount in cities like Ottawa and Vancouver (TTC Riders, 2020). Rider organizations such as TTC Riders see fare enforcement as an oppressive and unjust practice. Riders are penalized simply because they are too poor to afford public transit fares, and rather than supporting riders through redistributive efforts, riders are forced to pay absurdly high monetary fines. The transit fine can be as high as 100 times the cost of a single transit fare. Why would you issue a fine of nearly \$400 to someone who could not spare \$3.00 for fare in the first place? This flawed and inequitable practice of issuing fines to people struggling to afford transit fare is not only inequitable, but detrimental to the mobility of low-income individuals.

In addition to the cruel and inequitable practice of publicly chastising and fining poor folks with large fines, fare enforcement offices have come under major scrutiny for unevenly policing ‘fare evasion’. Transit enforcement officers often act upon their inherent biases as they disproportionately police poor, houseless, and racialized people. According to the TTC report *Racial Equity Impact Assessment of TTC Enforcement Activities* (2021),

Further analysis reveals that Black and Indigenous people are grossly over-represented in both caution and charge incidents. The data indicate that Black and Indigenous people are significantly over-represented in all of the major offence categories captured by the TTC data (p. 4).

The role of fare enforcement is part of a wider system of state institutions erected on the premise of white supremacy and oppression that has produced a reality where poor and racialized people have and continue to be systematically and disproportionately targeted by fare enforcement officers. This has resulted in significant over-representations of Black and Indigenous communities in fare enforcement-related incidents. Furthermore, as racialized folks are more likely to be targeted for ‘fare evasion’, they are also far more likely to face aggression and violence to ‘resolve’ the situation. Enright (2019) asserts, “The public transit network, and especially the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), has become a particularly iconic symbol and key rallying point of the movement because of [the] way the network has historically galvanized racist disadvantage and violence” (p. 672). Just as BART, the TTC produces racist disadvantage by both targeting and criminalizing poor and racialized transit riders. Brampton Transit is more equitable than other transit systems in the GTHA based on its internal policy of fare forgiveness and the fact that it does not employ fare enforcement officers. However, Brampton Transit being less bad than other transit providers remains an unacceptable excuse for allowing inequity and racism to permeate the transit system. Brampton Transit does perpetuate the same racism, discrimination, and criminalization as other transit system despite the absence of data to indicate its existence. It is precisely the absence of records and publicly accessible data on such encounters occurring on Brampton Transit that inhibits the identification of a pattern. By not collecting data on incidents where police or corporate security are called and involved in violent encounters, these encounters will remain invisible and continue to go unchecked.

Along with fare enforcement officers, transit agencies have undertaken fare compliance campaigns predicated on the notions of shame, guilt, and responsibility to keep the budgets of public transit intact. Fare enforcement officers occupy a role that would not be necessary if public transit was appropriately funded by the respective levels of government. TTC is one of the best-known examples in the GTHA for its fare evasion campaign consisting of wrapping buses with short statements shaming the act of fare evasion.



Figure 20. TTC Fare Evasion Campaign (Toronto Star, 2020).

The campaign drew widespread criticism as being out of touch with the needs of transit riders. Activists made signs parodying the advertisement campaign pointing to the hypocrisy of the TTC campaign in a system that remains underfunded by government.

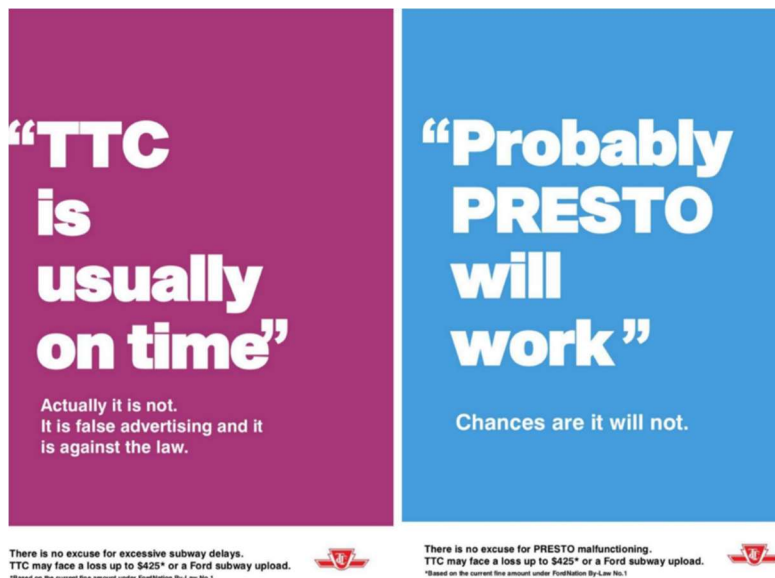


Figure 21. Parody TTC Fare Evasion Campaign. (Reddit, 2020)

It is clear that guilt tripping advertisements are ineffective at curing the financial woes of public transit that have been a direct result of a being inadequately funded by all levels of government. While Brampton Transit did not engage in a guilt-inducing campaign, many of the city’s residents frequently transfer to other transit systems and are also subjected to the same realities.

Public transit currently plays an active role in racial discrimination and the reinforcing class warfare by restricting access to what should be public transit. Transit systems prioritize the needs of privileged users, subject poorer transit users to uncomfortable levels of crowding, and prevent and criminalize working-class and racialized folks aboard public transportation. Public transit allows class to determine which people can access the city and how people access and traverse the city. Brampton Transit and other transit providers in operating in Brampton are designed in a way that perpetuates systemic discrimination against poor and racialized transit riders creating significant disparities in mobility.

2.5 The Neoliberalization of Public Transit

The neoliberalization of public transit has negatively impacted transit riders, downloading more costs on to transit riders as the province has abdicated its long-term responsibilities of funding transit operations, pushed to privatize transit, and marketed public transit as service. Public transit has been pushed to the limits, receiving inconsistent government funding that only covers capital costs, the increased pressure to privatize segments of public transit, and the idea that public transit is a service to be paid for. Public transit is a critical life-support system for cities and Brampton's system is critical for the mobility of Brampton's transit-dependent residents. Neoliberal policies have reduced funding to public transit and hampered Brampton Transit's operations resulting in the escalation of public transit fares and a focus on cost remuneration rather than service.

Under the guise of fiscal responsibility, the neoliberal model of governance has dried up federal and provincial funding to support the on-going operations of public transit systems. This absence of financial support and the download of public transit on the municipalities came under the Mike Harris PC government from the mid 1990s to the early 2000s. The download placed operations and financing entirely on local municipalities previously covered by the province (Hamilton, 2012, p. 30). However, the province continued to exercise administrative control over municipalities as they are 'creatures of the province'.

In recent years, the federal and provincial governments have only stepped up to announce billions of dollars in support of large-scale capital projects to construct new transit infrastructure or facilities. Although the funding remains crucial to expanding the major nodes of the network, it makes no effort in covering the increase operating costs over the long-term. With newly built transit lines and new infrastructure, the expansion comes with a need for additional staffing needs

with new cleaners, mechanics, and transit operators to support the newly built infrastructure as well as future maintenance and renovation costs. MacDonald (2012) states, “Because the capital program has not been properly funded through the state’s general taxation revenues the cost of the revitalization will fall on the riders through ever escalating fares” (p. 32). The absence of sustained funding for public transit operations forces local transit authorities to be increasingly more reliant on fare collection. As public transit providers become reliant on fare collection to fund transit operations, they become incentivized to operate routes with high levels of ridership while disincentivizing routes with lower levels of ridership resulting in an unevenly distributed transit network. The prioritization of high ridership routes is clear in the disparities in service frequency. The ZUM 502 BRT route runs on an interval between 7/8 minutes to 15/20 minutes while the 31 Mcvean local bus route runs on 65-minute intervals (City of Brampton, 2020c), despite being the only bus in the area. The impacts of uneven distribution combined with the downloading of monetary costs on to transit riders disproportionately harms a city’s most vulnerable communities with limited disposable income. In Brampton and most other cities, low-income transit riders are most adversely affected by the uneven distribution of transit and fare hikes due to the lack of alternative transportation options available. As the federal and provincial governments fund public transit on a provisional basis makes for inconsistent and unevenly dispersed funding that shifts with the winds and tides of politics creating turbulent realities for public transit providers and the communities they serve. Therefore, neoliberal doctrine has problematically discouraged sustained operational funding in favour of market-oriented financing contributing to the development of inequitable transit systems.

Doug Ford’s conservative government followed the neoliberal path of past conservative governments by pushing for public private partnerships (P3s) in delivering public transit, hailing

the private sector as a key element of delivering better and cheaper public transit in Ontario. Infrastructure Ontario maintains that the P3 model of delivering public infrastructure in the province continues to be refined and adapted to innovate and produce quality infrastructure serving the best interest of Ontarians (Infrastructure Ontario, 2021). However, as Farmer (2013) points out, “P3s are a concrete mechanism to accomplish the neoliberal goal of more market-based control over the public commons” (p. 64). The Ford government required Ontario’s municipalities to agree to complex and unfavourable terms in the *Safe Restart Agreement*. It required municipalities to undertake studies on the potential for microtransit in replacing ‘low-performing’ transit routes, allow the province to play a part in decision making on its implementation, consolidate procurement, and ‘explore’ new governance model for transit as a prerequisite to qualify for Phase Two of COVID-19 relief funding (Mulroney, 2020). Cutting low-performance routes reduces the effectiveness and coverage of public transit. Fiscal austerity employed at all levels of government drove competition for limited monetary resources to fund construction; as a result, municipal governments monetized their transit system to cover losses and deficits (Farmer, 2013, p. 63). Privatization is incentivized and done over long periods of time with funding cuts that create the conditions for public entities and infrastructure like public transit to deteriorate and provide the opening to the private sector through P3s. One could argue the need for microtransit as a possible solution is due to the lack of appropriate development regulations that make public transit delivery more costly for transit providers. Privatizing public transit would be detrimental to the scores of transit riders in need of affordable and equitably serviced transit of which the like of the private sector is not situated to provide. The continuous underfunding of public transit infrastructure provides the ripening of the conditions contributing to privatization.

The concept of public transit as a fare-based service in itself is deeply problematic. A person's right to mobility should not be determined by one's ability to pay. For low-income individuals and people living in areas far from essential services and resources, their mobility is significantly hampered by the cost of local transit. Moreover, mobility was more exclusionary due to the high costs charged by the GO Transit network and the high costs of car ownership. Public transit in Brampton and in most places around the world, is considered a commodity; a service accessed through the exchange of payment. Between 2009 and 2019 while TTC increased its fares from \$2.75 to 3.25 while Brampton Transit increased its fares from \$2.75 to 4.00 (City of Brampton, 2021a; Mackenzie, 2009a; Mackenzie, 2009b; TTC, 2021b). While TTC's fare increase during the ten-year period was 18.18 percent, Brampton Transit's fare increase was a staggering 45.45 percent, more than double that of the TTC. Brampton's Transit fares have raised at a far more accelerated rate than other municipal transit authorities like the TTC. Public transit has become increasingly commodified and run like a for-profit service making the provision of equitable public transit a less important goal than cost recovery which focuses on high ridership levels often located in high-density areas. "As higher densities can create more transit users (customers in the eyes of transit authorities), density becomes a major factor in determining transportation policies that can exclude low-density communities from receiving transit improvements" (Nortey, 2017, p. 10).

Due to the high level of value placed on cost remuneration of transit operations through fare collection by transit providers, high density areas are prioritized for service due to the high concentration of paying 'customers'. Both the commodification and neoliberalization of public transit are diametrically opposed to public transit as a vehicle for social equity. The more business-like model adopted by public transit authorities has become more apparent to transit riders. Milton,

a long-time transit rider expressed, “But the way Metrolinx is operating my opinion, especially now, they're operating more [business-like] when these agencies should not be running like that. It should be running more for accessibility and affordability” (Participant 1. Personal Communication March 5, 2021). Neoliberal and market-oriented operating practices weighed under a cost-benefit analysis disregard the improvements transit could make to improve the lives of transit reliant riders and instead focuses mainly on making money back through fare. Since Brampton consists primarily of low-density neighbourhoods that boast low ridership on many local routes. Brampton’s transit services along some local routes are thinly spread widening present gaps in access to mobility between the more accessible central routes running on more rigorous schedule. The gaps are visible in Brampton Transit’s schedule as the main 502 ZUM BRT route is serviced all day, operating on a 15/20-minute frequency during off-peak whereas local routes such as the 60 Mississauga Road bus runs of 70-minute intervals only during weekday mornings (City of Brampton, 2020c). The neoliberalization of public transit represents a conscious change from realizing the collective aspirations of the community towards a more restricted vision, one that prioritizes economic interests in the efficiency of privileged transportation networks over aims of social equity reducing public transit to a mere tool to curtail traffic congestion (Grengs, 2004, p. 52). In addition to reducing transit operations expenses, transit providers are concerned with traffic reduction by catering to drivers who might choose to take transit if the conditions are favourable. These misplaced priorities build inequity into the planning and distribution of service to meet the needs of the competitive city. The history of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) suggests that capitalism is responsible for the deterioration and misrepresentation of mass transit systems in a way that benefits capital accumulation through favouring exchange-value over the use-value (Farmer & Noonan, 2014, p. 83). When public transit is subject to market factors it is focused on

cost recovery which dictates the distribution of service along corridors with high ridership while low ridership areas are left with significant mobility deficits. Comparatively, public transit should be a public service unbothered by running deficits, its primary function should remain to provide mobility to all at no cost.

Today transit remains central to the neoliberal economy and growth coalitions are major proponents of its expansion. Investment in public transit infrastructure provides the most benefits out of any other infrastructure class, driving more job creation and boosting the economy by \$1.50 for every dollar invested, making public transit a key component of the post-pandemic recovery (CUTA, 2021). Public Transit carries substantial benefits and opportunities to support economic growth in the GTHA. However, local growth coalitions only seek to ensure the efficient and effective movement of people, goods, and service rather than the fair and just delivery of a pillar of urban life. Growth coalitions merely support improvements to public transit service and infrastructure when it is in their interest to do so. The business-case argument driving the development of public transit infrastructure is routinely considered the most viable and significant proposal; often perceived as a ‘win’ for the city and everyone in it despite clear disparities in who is set to benefit from its development. The capitalist political economy is primarily fixed on developing transportation infrastructure that seeks to meet both the traditional and explicit needs of production and accumulation (Addie, 2013, p. 79). Although transportation networks have been sold to the public as mobility improvements for the people, they have been designed and built in a deliberate manner to serve the needs of the major local and regional business interests. The business case for transit hinges upon the use of public investment to drive private profits. The interest of capitalists in public transit varies. Some business factions are concerned with reducing traffic congestion to improve the movement of goods and services or

expand access to specialized labour whereas others may be interested in utilizing transit to bolster the value of real estate assets. However, once the goals of these local interest groups are met, they are no longer proponents of public transit investment. Transit riders in Brampton encounter multifaceted barriers contributing to the disparities in mobility including uneven access, automotive hegemony, affordability, discrimination, and class, and the neoliberalization of transit. These manifestations of inequities in Brampton are not unique to Brampton, they very much present in transit systems in other cities. Inequities within Brampton's transit network allow us to identify potential solutions.

Chapter3: COVID-19 Intensification of Transit Inequity in Brampton

During the COVID-19 pandemic Brampton has become subjected to constant disparagement based upon its predominantly non-white population and the city's overall lack of 'whiteness'. Like Northwest Toronto and other areas of Peel, Brampton's already lousy reputation within the GTHA was once again reinforced throughout the pandemic when infection rates spiked in the city's neighbourhoods, which were subsequently designated COVID-19 hotspots. In addition to the poor reputation, the pandemic posed significant challenges to the health and mobility of Brampton's residents, specifically those who work in 'essential' sectors and commute by public transit. COVID-19 exacerbated pre-existing challenges faced by transit riders in Brampton by lowering bus capacity limits, cutting routes, and reducing service hours and service frequency. As a result of the fallout of the pandemic and stipulations from the Ford government, Brampton Transit was pushed to cut service on the 501A/501C, 561, 18B, 21, 36, 40, 58, 65, 92, 104, 185, and 199 routes (City of Brampton, 2020c). As a consequence, walking distances for bus riders increased. With a pandemic-fuelled funding crisis, severe crowding on transit creating high-risk situations, and the inability of capitalism to weather the COVID crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the issues of crowding and safety aboard transit. It accentuated the inability of marketized and neoliberalized public transit system to cope with plummeting demand and the temporary halt of fare collection.

3.1 Transit and High-Risk Settings for COVID-19

Doug Ford's conservative government stipulated in the federal-provincial Safe Restart Agreement that all municipalities must reassess ridership and investigate the feasibility of microtransit in place of 'low-performing' transit routes and to consider new governance structures (City of Brampton, 2020b). The mandate has strong-armed municipalities to study microtransit

and to discuss ways to ‘optimize’ the way transit is governed, thus confirming the heavily interventionist nature of the Ford government. The stipulations push closer to privatization of transit and the elimination of convenient and accessible publicly owned and operated transit. The changes would adversely impact transit reliant riders living in low-density neighbourhoods with low levels of ridership.

Cuts under the pandemic have already exacerbated crowding aboard Brampton Transit’s buses through consolidating transit riders on fewer routes. Milton explained how the COVID-19 related cuts to transit made transit crowded and less accessible.

These buses were already packed before COVID, [now they] are a lot more packed, and you have a lot of people waiting at bus stops, they're all still trying to get to work as those essential workers.... So now people have to find different ways that take a lot longer, right? It's really just screwing over a lot of essential workers, right? Because you're putting them in a position where they actually have no control over physically distancing from people. (Participant 1. Personal Communication March 5, 2021).

The adjustment and elimination of routes impacted many communities that depend on transit who were forced to walk longer distances to access public transit in addition to making transit crowding worse.

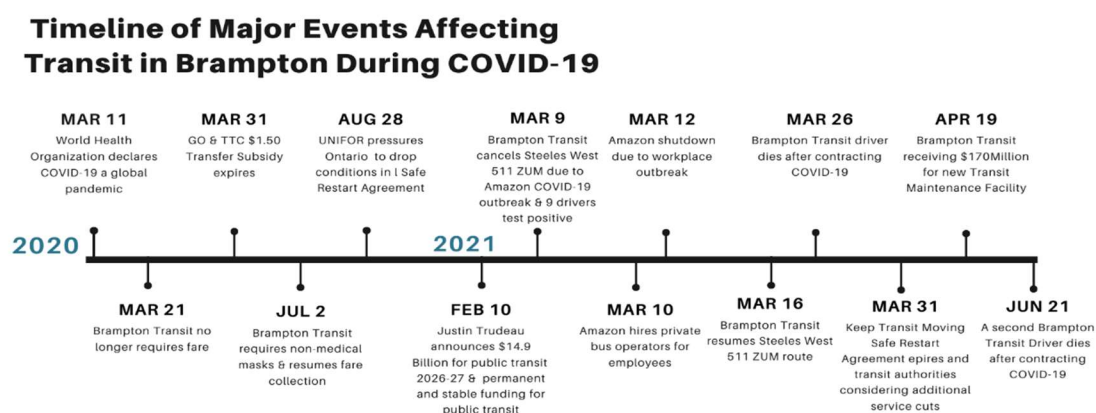


Figure 22. Timeline Transit in Brampton During COVID-19 (Graphic by Author)

Brampton Transit made headlines on March 9, 2021, upon cancelling its 511 ZUM route servicing the Steeles West corridor after nine Brampton Transit operators who tested positive for COVID-19, possible because of a significant workplace outbreak at the 8050 Heritage Road Amazon Fulfillment Centre (Wilson, 2021). The cancellation of the 511 west ZUM route and other local routes was done to protect transit operators and begin a public health investigation. However, it left many workers and commuters without transit service and scrambling for transportation alternatives. In light of the cancellation of the western portion of the 511, Amazon chartered private bus operators to transport employees to and from work (Pecar, 2021). On March 12, 2021, Peel Public Health stepped in to declare a workplace outbreak and mandated the facility to shut down for a 14-day isolation period. Just over two weeks following the suspension of the 511 BRT route, a transit operator with 18 years of public service with Brampton Transit passed away after contracting COVID-19 (Aguilar, 2021). He operated the 502 ZUM route, a major transit spine that intersects with the 511 ZUM route. On June 29, 2021, the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) put out a statement honouring the passing of second Brampton Transit operator from COVID-19 related complications (ATU, 2021). The passing of two Brampton Transit drivers speaks to the severe risks of exposure to COVID-19 faced by transit operators, essential workers, and transit-dependent communities. With a lack of support from the provincial government to allow Brampton Transit to operate more buses and maintain service levels despite lower bus capacities, buses remained too crowded to make physical distancing possible.

During the third wave of the pandemic between March and June of 2021, neighbourhoods within the City of Brampton had a positivity rate, of 22.4 percent, more than double the province's positivity rate of 10.5 percent (Carter, 2021). Brampton's overall rate of infection outpaced that of the surrounding cities, which had some significantly impacted areas such as

Toronto's northwestern neighbourhoods. Brampton's soaring positivity rates prompted an onslaught of poor media coverage which characterized the disproportionate level of infection as a moral failure by the inhabitants. The attention was misplaced and attributed the high level of infection to the city's South Asian community and Diwali celebrations. An opinion piece in the Toronto Star titled *South Asians play a part in COVID-19 transmission, and we need to acknowledge it*, vilified the South Asian community for irresponsible behaviour that was 'driving' COVID-19 community transmission (Chagla, Chakrabarti, & Kaura, 2020). Although the article did not specifically mention Brampton, it continued to direct an inappropriate and ill-conceived narrative at a predominantly working-class and racially diverse city. The authors also failed to identify the lack of multilingual public health information that was later championed by the grassroots *This is Our Shot* campaign. The campaign was coordinated by a number of collective of organizations including South Asian COVID Task Force, Siksika Health Services, the Canadian Muslim COVID-19 Task Force, and the Black Health Initiative aiming to combat vaccine hesitancy and encourage Canadians in underserved communities to get vaccinated (Somos, 2021).

Peel's Medical Officer of Health, Doctor Lawrence Loh, addressed the misperception of COVID-19 infections when he clarified that Brampton's surge is a function of workplace connectivities, not individual behaviour. They are due the fact that the city occupies a key role in the movements of goods and services. Loh also noted that many jobs in these sectors do not allow workers to physically distance and high-risk contact (Fox, 2020). As a significant portion of Brampton's workplaces were deemed essential to maintain the flow of capital, many workers were forced to work amid a global pandemic. Despite the risks faced by primarily racialized and in many cases transit reliant essential workers in Brampton, Ontario's vaccine rollout initially

prioritized eligibility based on age only. In a ‘young’ city like Brampton, a city with a median age of 35.8 years old (Statistics Canada, 2017a), most essential workers were deemed ineligible for the vaccine. Federal Leader of the NDP (New Democratic Party), Jagmeet Singh criticized Ontario’s vaccine rollout describing it as discriminatory after the province prioritized vaccination clinics in other cities while Brampton had some of the highest positivity rates and had been a well-known COVID-19 hotspot since the beginning of the pandemic (Gamrot, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic hit racialized communities such as Brampton particularly hard. The entire city was afflicted by the pandemic and by late 2020 nearly all of Brampton’s postal codes had been designated as COVID-19 hotspots. “Brampton and Mississauga are home to many racialized, working-class, immigrant communities – communities who overwhelmingly work in industries deemed essential during the pandemic, including logistics, warehousing, e-commerce, and retail” (Warehouse Workers Centre, 2021). The virus raged through workplaces where essential workers rarely had paid sick days and experienced difficulties accessing the federal Canadian Sickness Recovery Benefit (CSRB) in a timely manner. The program proved to be flawed based on extended waiting periods of 10-12 business days for funds to be dispersed (Jones, 2021), leaving workers in struggling households to make counter-productive choices to pay for bills and groceries. The absence of paid sick days created a situation where some took transit to a testing centre or workplaces despite being sick or infected without symptoms. Benjamin pointed out that Brampton Transit buses were still packed despite the bus capacity limits because the level of service was insufficient. He also made note that many riders were people of colour who were employed in high-risk workplace environments (Participant 5. Personal communication March 9, 2021). The lack of sufficient transit service amplified the poor conditions for working-class and racialized communities. In comparison, GO Transit’s more affluent ridership base was more likely

to be able to work from home and were not forced to encounter the same high-risk conditions as a result of crowding on the GO train and bus networks. While not all Brampton residents that took GO Transit prior to the pandemic, many industries that could support a work-from-home option are concentrated in Toronto's downtown. Brampton residents frequently commute via GO Transit to downtown for work. Toronto's five main employment sectors make up 54.6 percent of all employment in the city. Three out of five are industries that could allow for work from home such as finance and insurance; professional, scientific, and technical; and educational services (City of Toronto, 2021a). In contrast, three of Brampton's five top sectors in total employment include manufacturing; transportation and warehousing; and health care and social services, all of which overwhelmingly require in-person work (City of Brampton, 2019b). Employees working in Brampton's most significant and high-risk employment sectors rely primarily on local transit. The health outcomes between riders that typically take GO Transit versus Brampton Transit are significantly different.

3.2 Bus Capacity and Crowding

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Brampton Transit's ZUM rapid transit buses as well as GO Transit's trains were dangerously overcrowded with large numbers of people standing in the aisles. As the pandemic decimated transit ridership, many transit buses were running empty or at low capacities. Surjan an operator with Brampton Transit explains, "There was still the same amount of buses, but it was like everyone was running empty buses" (Participant 4. Personal communication March 9, 2021). Brampton and other transit providers implemented new capacity limits and cordoned off seats to comply with public health directives to ensure physical distancing in public settings. However, due to a decline in COVID-19 cases, the Ontario government loosened pandemic restrictions in its 2020 three-stage reopening plan beginning in May and continuing

throughout the summer months. The relaxing of pandemic restrictions allowed workplaces and businesses to reopen and brought back riders in droves. Surjan describes how a spike in ridership led to overcrowded buses where physical distancing among transit riders became increasingly more difficult or impossible to maintain.

But for riders, it is harder because we have to obviously, shorten the amount of people that actually get onto the bus, because with the COVID rules, making sure everyone's two meters apart or whatnot. So, that would be harder for the passengers and like I said, leaving people behind because the buses are full, compared to before where people could be standing in the buses no problem, right? So, that's the only thing I would say, and people have been complaining a lot. There they see there are less buses, but if that's not the case, it's just less capacity in the buses. (Participant 4. Personal communication March 9, 2021).

The bus capacity limits implemented to ensure the safety and health of transit users meant that fewer riders could board the bus and left the others waiting longer for the next one. Capacity limits without adding buses and improving service frequency negatively impacted transit riders who are reliant on transit to access employment, healthcare, groceries, and other essential needs. Brampton Transit's ridership base of essential workers arriving at a bus stop or terminal were left to question whether they would be permitted to board the next bus or even the following bus. Transit riders were stuck with a highly unreliable, uncertain, and infrequent transit system. Riders were forced to grapple with the difficult choice: boarding a transit vehicle where physical distancing is impossible or risk being late to work or an appointment. Car owners did not have to consider such options, they could abandon transit and drive to work instead.

3.3 COVID-19 & the Transit Funding Crisis Under Neoliberalism

The COVID-19 pandemic accentuated existing transit inequities and injustices in Brampton. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bramptonians faced limited access to frequent, reliable, and affordable public transportation service in their area. The pandemic led to a ridership crash in 2020 for Brampton Transit, as the annual rides decreased by from 31,914,291

rides to 18,098,238 rides, representing a steep 43.29 percent decline in ridership (City of Brampton, 2021b). While Brampton Transit was profoundly affected, the fallout was not as severe as that faced by other municipal transit authorities, such as the TTC. The TTC saw a ridership decline of 86 percent during COVID-19 (TTC, 2020, p. 1). The pandemic posed new challenges for Brampton Transit, disrupting its current funding model of public transit, a model that relies on the collection of fares paid by transit riders. The crash created the conditions for a financial crisis for Brampton Transit spurring the provincial government to require the elimination of low-performing transit routes and readjusting existing transit routes resulting in deteriorated access to frequent, reliable, and safe public transit.

From March 21 to July 2, 2020, Brampton's response to the pandemic was to suspend fare collection and operate public transit free of charge to support people living and working in Brampton (Callan, 2020; City of Brampton, 2020a). The move supported the city's essential workforce, aided transit reliant communities getting to vital appointments and activities, and also protected the city's many transit operators by having passengers enter through the rear doors, reducing potential contact with positive COVID-19 cases. During this time, Brampton as well as a myriad of other Canadian municipalities were in poor financial shape, running astronomical deficits due to lost revenue streams. ATU Canada organized and launched its Federal Funding Campaign in May 2020 petitioning the federal government to commit historic funds to support a pandemic and post-pandemic recovery (ATU, 2020). The campaign was to ensure a just recovery calling for emergency funding in support of transit authorities and the communities they serve from the major fiscal losses. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) appealed to the federal and provincial governments for relief from an estimated \$400 million per month in ridership losses alone (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2020, April 23). Canadian

municipalities were in desperate need of federal and provincial support to continue operating essential services. This made abundantly clear the immense value public transit has in the daily life of cities. The appeal was met with the federal and provincial joint *Safe Restart Agreement* that provided emergency funding to municipalities to prevent bankruptcies and allow them to deliver essential services, specifically public transit. However, neoliberal stipulations were outlined in the Ontario *Safe Restart Agreement* and received strong criticism UNIFOR and the provincial NDP. A statement by UNIFOR (2020) reads,

...under the Federal-Provincial *Safe Restart Agreement* public transit agencies across Ontario would be required to explore the viability of implementing microtransit as well as reviewing existing bus routes with low ridership and conclude whether it could be better served by microtransit. The union believes this is part of an effort to undermine public transportation and open the doors for private-for-profit on-demand transportation services similar to ride hailing services Uber and Lyft.

The conservative government thus attempted to use the fiscal crises created by the pandemic as a way to push for the partial privatization of public transportation.

3.4 Capitalism Incapability in Weathering the COVID-19 Crisis

Kipfer (2020) suggested that “... the [COVID-19] crisis has shown, once again, that capitalism’s survival depends on collective interventions (bailouts, nationalizations, stimulus packages, proactive industrial policies) that capitalists are not usually willing to concede in ‘normal’ times”. The global COVID-19 pandemic, just as in other major crises, has reasserted that capitalism is incapable of tackling inequity and injustice as it proves to be a fragile economic system that’s very survival is routinely thrust into question. In order to respond to crisis, capitalism requires immediate and large-scale financial support from government institutions along with specific and direct policy interventions. Therefore, capitalism and the ‘market’ cannot address the disparities and inequities they themselves create. Due to a lack of sustained funding for operations, public transit has been spread thin resulting in inadequate and infrequent service. Prior to the

pandemic, Brampton Transit's local and less popular bus routes such as the 20/20A, 24, and 27 operated on 30-minute intervals during peak hours and ending service significantly early (Brampton Transit, 2020c). The challenges imposed by fiscal austerity left transit riders with limited mobility options and became magnified after the pandemic began. Some of Brampton Transit's routes that were already sparsely serviced lost weekend and evening service and others were cut altogether. These cuts have hurt transit-dependent riders in the city's northern neighbourhoods resulting in riders having to walk longer distances between home and their most convenient transit stop. Any cuts to transit service place undue burden upon those most reliant on public transit as their primary source of mobility that connects them to workplaces, healthcare, and other essential destinations. Capitalism thrives upon the continued movement of capital and production made possible by essential workers. During times of crisis, the vulnerabilities of capitalism become more visible as it requires specific government bailouts and regulatory responses.

COVID-19 has put incredible stress on Brampton Transit's transit network whose level of service has been negatively impacted, disproportionately affecting riders depending on safe and reliable daily transit service. Brampton's essential workers and transit reliant individuals had already been harmed by the neoliberal cost saving measures employed by local and provincial governments. The pandemic has put additional pressure on transit riders as well as the transit system as a whole. Transit riders have endured reduced service and crowding creating high-risk conditions for contracting COVID-19 borne as a direct result of capitalism's inability to endure times of crisis.

Chapter 4: The Way Forward, Overcoming Inequity & Injustice in Transit

Looking towards the future in establishing a way forward in overcoming the inequities and injustices embedded within Brampton's Transit network, we must set the focus on the development of a more accessible vision for public transit. In order to build a more equitable transit system for the future it is imperative that we confront automobility and auto-centric planning, oppose the neoliberalization of public transit, and end discrimination and class warfare. Public transit is a key component for the post-pandemic recovery and critical to build resiliency within our transit systems to support cities like Brampton through times of crisis. COVID-19 has magnified barriers to transit such as longer distances for FMLM as a result of cuts to bus routes, reduced bus capacities, crowding, and less robust schedules. The pandemic has highlighted the need for significant improvements in the transit network to address some of the pre-existing challenges worsened by the pandemic.

4.1 Confronting Automobility & Auto-Centric Planning

The City of Brampton in partnership with the Region of Peel, and the Government of Ontario must work collaboratively to dismantle the supremacy of the automobile and confront auto-centric infrastructure in order to develop more equitable and just cities. While conducting a public consultation with the community for *Brampton's 2015 Transportation Master Plan* (TMP), the community identified numerous issues by plotting them on the map of Brampton. The community identified a cluster in north Brampton of areas that need bus stops since the north of Brampton is less serviced possibly due to a concentration of relatively affluent car owning residents. Despite the high level of car ownership, this lack of bus service leaves many transit

dependant groups such as low-income individuals and youth who have limited transportation options.

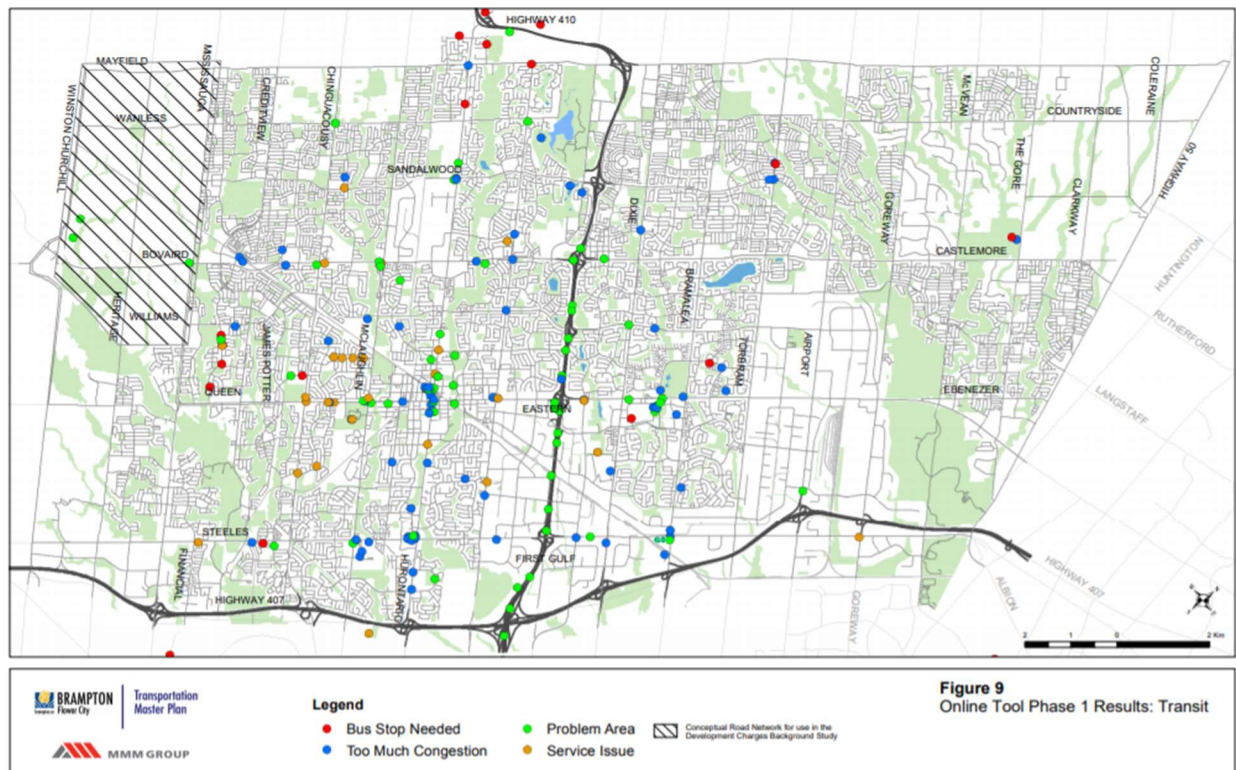


Figure 23. *Brampton Transportation Masterplan. Community Consultation (City of Brampton, 2015)*

The participants also recognized highway 410 as a problem area in its entirety. The problematic locations identified by citizens appear to be linked with car-centric infrastructure and the lack of available alternatives to the car. To make the city better for transit riders, Brampton needs to make a conscious and energetic shift away from the car as the most ubiquitous mode of transportation in the city. The transition away from car-dependency will aid Brampton in reducing its carbon emissions and make the changes necessary to combat climate change.

Road widening and new road construction remain to be central components of provincial and municipal planning. By refusing to widen major arterial roads, both the municipal and

provincial governments can take the bold first step in the long process of decentring the car from public life.

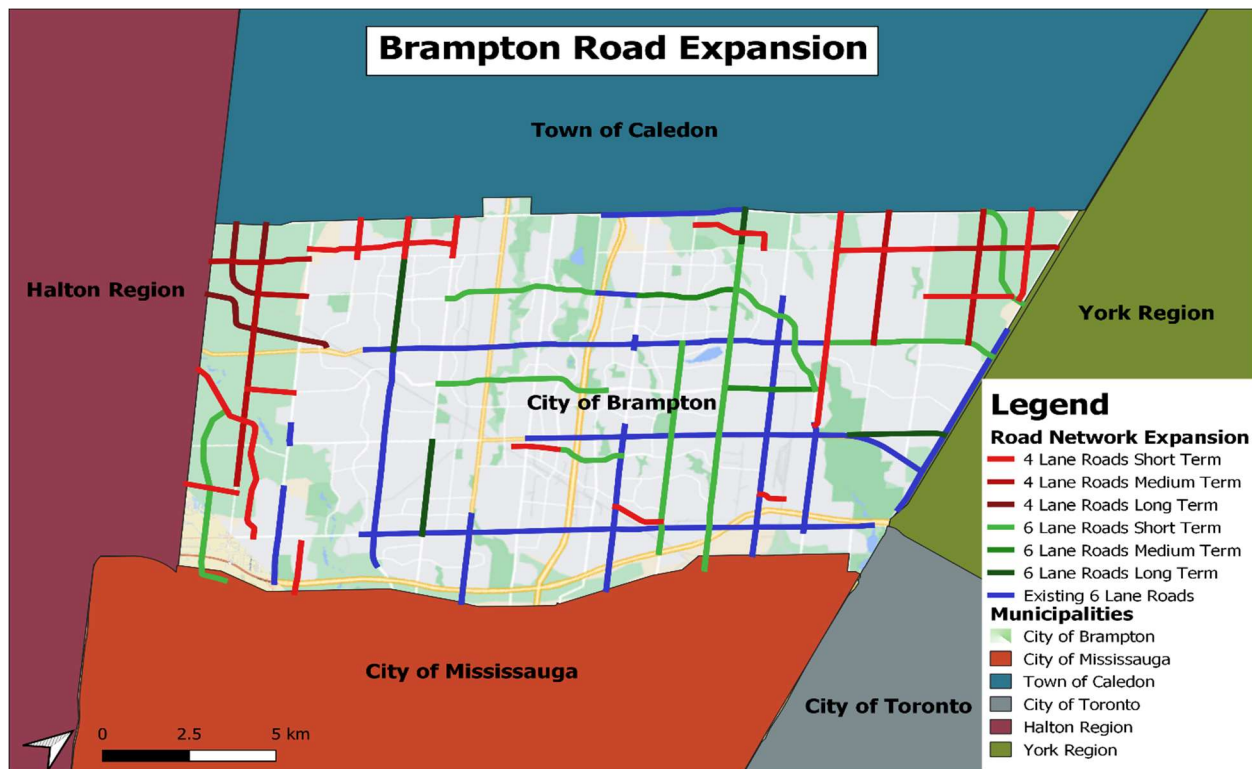


Figure 24. Brampton Road Expansion. (Map by Author)

Deliberately limiting the space dedicated for cars and continuing to restrict their access supplemented by transit priority as an alternative would begin to disempower the car and close the mobility gap between drivers and transit riders. Reducing the advantage afforded to the car would make private vehicles a less attractive means of transportation. By readjusting transportation priorities, public transit could be positioned to become a more effective and efficient means of travel.

4.2 Highway 413

The proposed development of Highway 413 is slated to cut through Northwest Brampton and cut across the Caledon just north of the city would have devastating impacts on the city already inundated with automotive traffic. The construction of the 400 series super-highway caters to the interests of drivers and business. It would make transportation in Brampton and surrounding region

less resilient and fail to make the transportation network more equitable. The Ford government has been pushing for the development of Highway 413, seemingly in the interests of land developers with significant landholdings along the proposed route that bisects the Green Belt, the very same developers who were major financiers of the PC Party's 2018 election campaign (McIntosh, Buist, & Javed, 2021). If constructed, the proposed highway would further induce demand by providing more infrastructure for private vehicles and would double down on automobility. The Ontario government has continued to contravene established best practices in transportation planning which aims to reduce automotive dependency in cities that have been championed in some of the world's leading cities. The construction of Highway 413 would leave less money allocated to public transit projects and service, which are in desperate need of sustained government funding. The GTHA's transportation problems and inequities cannot be quelled with more expansive super-highways, but with significant and consistent investment in the region's public transit network.

By deprioritizing the car in Brampton, stopping the widening of the existing network, and ending highway construction, all levels of government could cut back on expensive infrastructure. Less road infrastructure maintenance would result in fewer potholes to fill, fewer roads to resurface, reduced salt usage, less need for snow clearance, and thus, fewer budget expenditures. The exorbitant sums of municipal and provincial tax dollars allocated to building and maintaining continuously deteriorating roadways could be diverted to public transit. By putting an end to highway construction, the Ontario government could allocate the \$6 billion budget Highway 413 to make GTHA's public transportation network more robust. This increased funding could go towards ensuring a state of good repair on existing transit networks, financing expansion, hiring more staff, and providing more affordable transit fares. Shifting funding from infrastructure for

private vehicles to public transportation would support the needs of all residents rather than the privileged few.

Constructing bus-only lanes on existing lanes of mixed traffic would help improve public transit. As of 2021, Brampton remains a city without a single bus-only lane. Through the implementation of higher-order transit infrastructure along Brampton Transit's ZUM BRT corridors, the transit provider would see remarkable improvements in the speed and efficiency of transit through the delineation of buses from mixed-traffic. The improved efficiency for transit buses would translate to reduced commute times and improved efficiency for transit riders whose mobility would become prioritized over the mobility of drivers. Through the delineation of traffic and developing bus-only lanes in place of existing lanes of mixed traffic would successfully reduce infrastructure for cars and make public transit a more viable and preferred option to the car. Throughout the entirety of the *City of Brampton's 2015 Transportation Master Plan*, bus-only lanes are mentioned just once and specify it would only be considered a viable option on 6-lane roadways. Additionally, higher-order transit was only mentioned only on a handful of occasions. The absence of bus-only lanes and lack of priority for high-occupancy-vehicles such as buses is alarming given that Brampton is in desperate need to combat its traffic-congested road network. Bus-only lanes would place emphasis on designing a system for residents that have historically had limited mobility without regular access to the car, taxis, or on-demand transportation service. Creating bus-only lanes would be an important feat in establishing a more equitable transit system.

4.3 Confronting the Neoliberalization of Public Transit

The on-going neoliberalization of public transit needs to be opposed. The federal and provincial governments must commit substantial and permanent funding for public transit, halt attempts to incorporate private microtransit and other transit operators into public transportation

strategies, stop cuts to transit routes with lower ridership and develop an effective and equitable transit network.



Figure 25. Bus Stop Not in Use Sign. (Photo by Author)

Transit infrastructure deterioration is not a natural aging process, but rather a political effect (Farmer, 2013, p. 74). Farmer highlights that the decay of the public transit network results from political decisions to underfund public transit. Public transit has been tailored to serve the more grandiose political scheme of neoliberalism that aims to prevent public institutions from fulfilling a mandate to support social equity (Grengs, 2004, p. 58). Keeping transit public and ensuring the system is adequately funded by various levels of government is crucial to confronting the current neoliberal system.

The neoliberalization of public transit has resulted in the downloading of public transit operations on to municipalities forcing them to raise fares to cover reduced operating revenues, Keil and Young (2008) articulate,

...decisions on transit funding are incoherent and ‘political’ funding announcements for short-term political benefit rather than for the sake of the improvements to civic infrastructure with potential benefits to the regional economy. Federal and provincial governments have been hesitant to commit full financial and organizational support to regional and local transit in Toronto. (p. 746).

In Canada, investments in infrastructure are often attempts to gain political favour rather than to support social equity. Politicians routinely stand atop a podium announcing the latest grandiose infrastructure project. Politicians opt to showcase the ‘work’ they have done to support transit projects to remind voters what the ruling political party has ‘achieved’. And yet, as Reid-Mucson (2018) argues, disinvestment in public transit (particularly less sexy operating funding) has had disproportionate impacts on those locked out from private car ownership, namely racialized groups, women, and low-wage immigrant groups. (p. 310). To reverse the impact caused by years of underfunding, public transit must be funded properly through multiple levels of government. This would benefit above all transit-dependent riders without viable and affordable alternatives.

Attempts to privatize public transit by allowing private transit agencies to operate microtransit for municipalities or allocate monopolized bus routes can have detrimental effects. In allowing private transit agencies to operate transit under a neoliberal governance model, the public transportation network will continue to erode in favour of more expensive private options that have been falsely conveyed as cheaper. An example of the false notion of the private sector operating cheaper is in Innisfil, Ontario. The municipality partnered with UBER and subsidized rides at \$6.20 per trip, totalling about \$165,535 within eight months accounting for 26,700 total trips made by only 3,400 individuals (Wilt, 2020, p. 42). Innisfil’s P3 failure demonstrates that P3 private on-demand transportation service are in fact more expensive and underutilized. Based on interviews with transit riders in Brampton, many expressed their interest in an on-demand service with smaller vehicles as a means to addressing the FMLM problem and long distances between bus stops and destinations. Riders are not mainly interested in an on-demand service but principally concerned

in addressing the FMLM problem. The move to private transit agencies or on-demand services would slate many secure, good paying public sector jobs, boasting good benefits for elimination in lieu more precarious non-union employment, with reduced pay, and limited to no benefits for transit operators, mechanics, and support staff. Ride-hailing services are able to do this by exploiting workers who they designate as third-party contractors allowing companies like UBER and LYFT from paying drivers a stable living wage (Wilt, 2020, p. 133). Private transit companies are incentivized to make substantial profits, often accomplished through keeping costs such as wages low. In addition to lowering operation costs in the form of employee wages private transit providers often focus on operating the most profitable routes leaving the unprofitable routes without service. Sheller (2018) points out,

Bike-sharing, car-sharing, carpooling, on-demand ride-sharing, paratransit, microtransit, and for-hire mobility services have all been promoted in cities in various combinations, often drawing on new mobile information and communication capabilities. While some see shared mobility as a potential disruption of traditional forms of automobility and transport injustice, there are also concerns that it will undermine public transit services, increase elite mobilities, and not be fairly distributed to the mobility poor (Sheller, 2018, p. 80).

Despite the appetite to find a solution to the FMLM problem, we must ensure that public transit remains in public hands in order to guarantee that transit is obligated to be distributed and operated in a fair and equitable way.

Private sector bus service has been problematic in Canada with many routes serviced by transit operator Greyhound without transit service as the private operator made the call to stop operating in Canada. Greyhound engaged in extensive negotiations with the provincial and federal governments to ask to receive subsidies in order to continue servicing unprofitable routes (Montgomery, 2021). The private transportation industry operators have no obligation to provide transportation services to communities, its fiduciary responsibility lies with its ownership or

shareholders. Greyhound announced its decision to cease all operations in Canada leaving its routes without service, an essential transportation service responsible for connecting many parts of Ontario including rural communities and long-distance routes between major cities. Private operators are also not incentivized to keep prices affordable; the private sector would benefit from increasing the cost of the service. COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the financial stability of private operators that lack resiliency during time of major crisis or change, private transit operators are unable to stay afloat based on a payment for service business model. Greyhound's decision to cancel all service in Canada highlights the importance of maintaining a robust publicly owned and operated multi-scalar transit network. The private sector is incapable to weather crises without specific public sector interventions resulting in detrimental effects on local communities. In the case of Greyhound without subsidies along some routes, service would not turn a profit prompting a hasty departure. The private sector bus agencies are able to close up shop or shutdown at a moment's notice leaving thousands of people transportation and governments in a frenzy to fill the gaps in transit service. Greyhound's departure poses an unprecedented opportunity for the provincial government to take over the abandoned routes and offer government operated services. Having the government owned and operated service would allow for better subsidized transit fares and better connections to other public transit networks in Ontario, an important way to support the mobility of many transit riders. The move to close up shop sheds light on the problematic nature of privatized transit networks, and points to public transit's immense value in maintaining stability in the mobility of transit reliant folks during crisis. Privatization would leave Brampton susceptible to the same factors and risks.

Halting the demands of the Ford government that requires transit authorities to slash 'low-performing' transit routes is important to ensure all riders continue to have access to public transit.

Mandating transit cuts during a pandemic as a prerequisite to receiving emergency funding to mitigate financial losses disregards the riders, who have their mobility adversely affected in the name of reducing public spending. As MacDonald (2012) affirms with respect to an earlier round of cutbacks in New York City, “In years of fiscal austerity, ... service cutbacks disproportionately affect poorer residents of the inner-suburbs who are already ill-served by a transit system which privileges the global-city workforce and heavy rail development” (p. 32). These business-like management tactics in the operation of public transit prioritize cost-savings over public service designed to serve all people. Continuing to service low-ridership routes is an important part of supporting people without access to alternative modes of transportation.

Thousands of Brampton’s residents work in the city’s many warehousing and manufacturing facilities as well as in warehouses near Pearson Airport that operate on a 24-hour basis. They would benefit greatly from 24-hour transit service. Such a service would support those most in need of transportation during off-peak times currently without service. As we have seen, workers have limited options to travel to or from work during the afternoon and night shifts forcing them into taking taxis or on-demand services like Uber and Lyft just to access employment. Simply accessing employment might cost a worker an entire hour or more of their pay when taking a taxi or on-demand service, whereas a trip on public transit would be a fraction of the cost. With 24-hour service, workers would benefit from reliable, safe, and affordable transportation.

Improving public transit is a vital part of turning Brampton into a more equitable and livable city for its residents. In order to advance public transit in a positive and equitable way, governments must be committed to confronting the neoliberal neglect of public transit. As Reid-Mucson (2018) states, “Neglected public transit systems and segregated urban landscapes sever racialized, disabled, and poor people from jobs and services” (p. 320). Crucial steps that must be

taken to address the current neoliberal organization of transit include providing consistent and substantial government funding, 24-hour transit service, and an end to privatization. These measures are vital in establishing a transit network that is centred on the people as well as the principles of accessibility.

4.4 Confronting Discrimination & Class Warfare

Brampton Transit, as well as most public transit systems, are oppressive institutions, many of which are born of colonial governments. They continue to play an active role in social reproduction and the inequities that continue to persist in cities. In an effort to address discrimination and classism within transit, public transit must become more affordable or free, halt fare enforcements, be designed to accommodate all riders, evenly distribute service, and improve overall service. The improvement of service and the elimination of barriers experienced by poor, racialized, and vulnerable groups can make a significant impact in building a transit system for the people. Public transit can no longer remain part of the wider system of oppression and must be restructured to encompass principles of equity and serve the public.

Tacking affordability is paramount in creating equitable transit systems designed for all people irrespective of their ability to afford public transit. Public transit affordability is a major component of the larger system of conditions impacting affordability in the city. Transportation costs coupled with the cost of housing and other essential needs contribute to an unaffordable landscape that hurts vulnerable and low-income communities. Through the reduction and integration of public transit fares, all riders benefit in the long-term, with low-income riders reaping the most rewards. Non-driving and low-income riders in Brampton have limited transportation options and are heavily reliant on public transit as their primary means of transportation; any reduction in fares would thus be a significant benefit to vulnerable groups.

Significantly reducing public transit fare is the most effective redistributive tactic at the disposal of a municipal government (Fainstein, 2009, p. 31).

Reducing fares and integrating public transit fares across all transit authorities in the GTHA would be a major step for public transit positively impacting the lives of transit riders. In order to access healthcare, employment, education, or other daily needs many transit riders commute outside the municipality they live in, often passing through multiple municipalities in a single trip and transferring between numerous transit authorities. In integrating fare across the board, transit riders would no longer be required to pay double or triple fares to travel to their destination. The positive outcomes arising from fare integration would benefit people who use multiple different forms of transit in a day, eliminating the added costs associated with transfers. In response to the Ontario government's call for input regarding the *Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Consultation*, the Region of Peel identified making transit more affordable as a key component in addressing well-being and social inclusion, one of their four main recommendations (Region of Peel, 2020). Reducing transit fares and integrating fares between Brampton Transit and the wider GTHA would support folks who are already pushed to the fringes of cities to access more affordable housing options. Living further out of the city often requires travelling over longer distances and paying double fare to transfer between different transit authorities would reduce overall transportation costs, allowing individuals and their families to reallocate those savings to other important needs such as housing, food, and well-being. By reducing or eliminating transit fare, people could have more money available to access housing located closer to public transit stops, work, school, family, and other amenities. Reducing public transit fares, integrating public transit fare in the GTHA are concrete measures that could be taken to best support transit reliant people in Brampton.

Although reducing fares could be the most valuable measures instituted at the local level, fare-free transit is one of the most effective strategies for making transit more equitable available at the provincial and federal levels, too. In providing public transit as a public service and offered free of charge, mobility would not be predicated on an individual's ability to afford to pay transit fare, encourage drivers to take transit, improve the efficiency of transit and financial savings of transit authorities, reduce discriminatory fare policing, protect transit operators from conflict with riders, and averted the devastating financial crisis wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic by decimating transit ridership.

Transit delivered as a public service would benefit all transit riders, making the most impact for low-income families who rely on public transit, eliminating a significant portion of their expenses. Through supporting the community's most vulnerable residents, all riders would seek to benefit from providing public transit for free. In addition to supporting low-income transit riders, the change could also spur an increase in ridership in switching to transit or choosing to take transit more often to save money on transportation costs or experience a less stressful commute not driving. In incentivizing public transit as a mode of transportation, it could support tackling the issue of automobility and stimulate more improvements to existing public transit networks.

Free transit would have a significant impact on protecting transit operators and transit riders alike. Brampton Transit and GO Transit operators are at the front lines of public transit and are responsible for ensuring the collection of transit fares aboard their bus networks. In offering transit free of charge, bus drivers would not be required to check fares, avoid being assaulted or get into other potentially aggressive altercations with transit riders. Poor and racialized riders would also be able to experience a heightened level of safety and comfort aboard public transit in knowing they would not be racially profiled for fare evasion or be worried about being caught without proof-

of-payment. Free transit has the ability to transform public transit into a place of safety and comfort for riders while also creating safer working conditions for transit operators. As Surjan said: “So, it's in our policy just let them ride, we don't want to go through any trouble either, because there have been assaults and what not in the past over fare disputes. So, it's just for our safety” (Participant 4, Personal Communication, March 9, 2021). By eliminating fares, potentially aggressive and violent confrontations between both riders and operators alike could be avoided by creating a less abrasive relationship between riders and operators creating an environment of comfort and safety.

Transit efficiency could be improved through the implementation of free transit. Brampton Transit and GO Transit could improve boarding times at transit stops and terminals. Since riders would not be required to pay fare, they would be able to board at any door and not need to provide proof-of-payment. On many occasions long line-ups of riders are stalled for conversations with transit operators pleading for leniency for insufficient funds, issues with electronic payment systems, and conversations between operators and riders about paying fares in the future. In eliminating these instances, transit would have less lost time and transit operators could focus on operating the vehicle and supporting riders rather than having to enforce fare payment. Transit authorities could also save significant amounts of money spent on fare payment technology, rendering payment stations at transit terminals and aboard transit vehicles obsolete. Transit operated as a public service could result in significant savings through improved efficiencies and the elimination of expensive electronic fare collection infrastructure which could be reallocated to expanding or improving transit service.

The COVID-19 pandemic thrust public transit across Canada into crisis and financial disarray, public transit authorities such as Brampton Transit were left uncertain on how they would

continue operating transit without federal and provincial financial support. The public transit financial catastrophe required billions of dollars in recovery grants and future transit improvements which would not have been necessary. The calamity could have been entirely averted if public transit had consistent and sustained funding to provide transit free of charge, thus allowing public transit authorities to operate and respond according to the needs of the community during times of crisis. Brampton Transit and other transit authorities rely on fare collection to finance public transit operations and the ridership crash along with the offering transit for free dried up their revenue stream leaving the organization in crisis. Therefore, through making transit a public service operated free of charge funded by the provincial and federal governments could have averted the near insolvency of municipalities.

In operating public transit as a public service that is delivered to the community free of charge, mobility would not be connected to one's ability to pay, drivers may consider taking transit instead, transit efficiency could be improved and transit authorities could save money on expensive equipment, eliminate the potential of discrimination from fare enforcement, protect operators from assaults, and improve transit's resiliency to major financial crisis. Enright (2019) asserts, "in making transit free, they [Free Transit Toronto (FTT)] seek to remove commuting from the commodified realm and thus to dramatically alter the basic structures of urban inhabitation and movement" (p. 671). Free transit would carry significant and logical benefits to the Brampton the community through developing a more just and equitable transit system as well as Brampton Transit. Transit should be provided by the government free of charge rather than looking to riders to fund the operation since transit benefits all of society across the board, including drivers.

Eliminating fare enforcement officers and fare inspectors on GO Transit, public transit agencies would consciously divert the resources currently designated to penalizing and oppressing

low-income and racialized transit riders to be reallocated to fund public transit service to support the community in a more meaningful way. By funding other areas of the public transit system, the transit network could focus on fulfilling a new mandate of building and operating a transit system that is accessible to all. Fare enforcement officers disproportionately target racialized and low-income transit riders for the crime of not being able to afford fare. In taking a punitive approach accompanied by financial penalties, policing ‘fare evaders’ is an inherently inequitable practice that does not seek to support transit reliant folks in accessing employment, education, healthcare or other essential activities. Therefore, the elimination of fare enforcement officers and halting the policing of proof-of-payment on transit systems like GO Transit as well as other transit authorities in the GTHA would help to curtail instances of racial profiling and discrimination while supporting other areas of transit maintenance and operations.

Accessing public transit should be simple and barrier free, however, it can be a challenge for many pedestrians to get to a local bus stop. While most Brampton roadways have sidewalks, there are a number of major and minor local roads without sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk along the edge of the road. Providing extensive and accessible pedestrian walkways is an important element of ensuring access to public transit since many riders walk their FMLM to and from the bus stop. In areas where there are existing pedestrian walkways along with transit stops, and terminal maintenance during the winter months is instrumental in ensuring equitable access to the transit network. Plowing and maintaining sidewalks, pathways, bus stops, and terminals ensure access to public transit for all people, specifically those with physical mobility impairments, people with grocery wagons, and parents with children or strollers. In Brampton, this is particularly important given the significant distances between bus stops, homes, or other locations. Walkways would be free of snow and intersections liberated from hardened mounds of snow and ice.

Public transit vehicles should be designed in a way that supports the diverse needs of all riders as a baseline service. Riders and their families should not be burdened by having to plan their trip in advance or adjust their route simply to guarantee the vehicle, stop, or terminal is outfitted with the appropriate infrastructure to ensure their access. Accessibility should not be secondary but built into the system by design. Public transit built with universal design would make transit more accessible to people with accessibility needs, parents with strollers, or people carrying items on public transit if it were designed in a manner that allows all people to access it devoid of barriers. Parents also pointed to the expense, lack of space for strollers, and service that is often unreliable and not conducive to travelling on transit with young children (McLaren, 2018, p. 853). Brampton Transit and GO Transit can ensure accessibility within their networks by purchasing accessible vehicles for their transit fleets and harmonizing the infrastructure to ensure a barrier-less transit network. Key features would include platforms at grade, accessibility ramps to train cars, and buses equipped with hydraulic ramps that flip outwards.

Improving the geographical distribution of public transit service would counteract inequitable mobilities. Increasing the frequency of bus service would allow buses to operate more efficiently and reduce crowding along busy routes by providing more capacity and less ‘bunching’ of passengers at stops. As a result, commuting times would be reduced. Ultimately, improved transit schedules could be eliminated entirely, allowing riders to walk to a bus stop or terminal at their convenience, confident that a bus will arrive within a reasonable timeframe.

The FMLM problem is one of the most cumbersome issues facing transit riders in Brampton. Better multimodal connections, more human-scaled development, and more robust transit networks could reduce the challenges faced by Brampton’s transit’s riders in navigating a car-oriented landscape. These measures, supported by more frequent service, longer service hours,

and more fine-grained transit routes could begin to tackle the FMLM problem. Addressing the FMLM problem could transform the patchwork of bus routes into an equitable and well-integrated transit system.

Automobile dominance, neoliberal governance, and discrimination are integrally linked and continue to perpetuate harm on racialized and low-income people. Public transit systems continue to operate in an oppressive manner that perpetuates systemic racism as well as class inequality. Reducing or eliminating public transit fares, eliminating fare enforcement officers, building transit infrastructure for universal design, and fairly distributing public transit access are central to addressing the classist and discriminatory nature of public transit. By implementing strategies that seek to begin a modal shift away from the car, making public transit a public service free of discrimination can transition public transit into a vehicle for equity.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

This research paper provides in-depth insight into the challenges and current landscape of public transit inequity in Brampton and proposes a series of changes aimed at embracing a new direction for transportation policy and planning that hinge upon transit equity. Public transit's main goal should be to provide a basic level of mobility that is evenly distributed and accessible to all transit riders in most need. In the analysis of Brampton's siloed transportation network and how it is experienced by transit riders, it is apparent that the inequities faced by each rider are distinct and multi-layered. Inequity in Brampton's public transit network persists in many ways, often as a result of the neoliberalization of public transit which has developed inequitable urban landscapes and established two sets of transportation infrastructure. One set of infrastructure is privileged and is designed and operated for those who can afford premium charges and use expensive and highly subsidized infrastructure. In contrast, the second set of infrastructure is more affordable but certainly less effective and chronically underfunded that is designed to accommodate less-privileged riders with limited financial means.

Although the ways in which riders experience transit inequity is unique, many such inequities are produced through the neoliberal economic governance models that seek for the reduction of public sector spending contributing to the erosion of public transit. The truth is, public transit is not cheap, it comes at a cost, requiring extensive and consistent public funding. Despite its cost, public transit remains to be an absolutely integral component of urban life. According to FTT (2021),

Toronto [and the wider GTHA] needs to radically decrease the dependence on private vehicles that has been structured into our living and working lives since the mid-20th century. On its own, *Free Transit* would not end car dependence. Doing that would require not only dramatic increases in transit capacities, but also measures to transform the way we use cars today.

To successfully incorporate principles of equity and justice into transit planning requires collective and steadfast commitment from all levels of government toward a set of coordinated and shared goals. The shared set of goals must be centred around social equity which must be embedded within the mandates of all departments in public institutions. In designating social equity within the mandate and guiding principles of public transit, a key component of public life. Brampton Transit can become a conduit to support the city's residents most in need of support through different types of redistributive endeavours.

Once we focus on developing a transit system designed to accommodate all people regardless of financial means, class, race, and place of residence, we will we have made significant strides towards making a more equitable transit network to build a more equitable city and vice versa. Public transit must incorporate universal design to ensure accessible and equitable transit that is barrier-free. As stated by Enright (2019), "... mass transit systems are imbricated in fundamental questions about who belongs in the city, who is allowed to participate fully in urban activities, who decides how space will be planned and produced, and who gains from urban transformation" (p. 666). Public transportation is a key pillar of collective public life and can be instrumental in transforming it from a simple vessel of transportation to a vehicle of equity and progress. Public transit's significance highlights its capacity to reimagine the right to exist and participate in urban life. Public transit must be decommodified, heavily funded and be made into a public good available to all people.

References

- Addie, J., & Keil, R., York University. (2013). *Mobilizing city-regional urbanization: The political economy of transportation and the production of the metropolis in Chicago and Toronto*. York University.
- Aguilar, B. (2021, March 26). 'We have lost one of our brothers': Brampton Transit bus operator dies after contracting COVID-19. CTV News. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/we-have-lost-one-of-our-brothers-brampton-transit-bus-operator-dies-after-contracting-covid-19-1.5364804>
- Amalgamated Transit Union. (2020). *Federal Funding Needed Now!* Federal Funding Petition. ATU Canada. <https://www.atu1722.ca/2020/05/27/federal-transit-funding-needed-now/>
- Amalgamated Transit Union. [ATU Canada]. (2021, June 26). It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of ATU 1573 member, Brother Atif Khalil who passed away last week due to complications from contracting COVID-19. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and co-workers at this time. [Tweet]. Twitter. https://twitter.com/atu_canada/status/1409882941442953224
- ARUP, Associated Engineering, & LURA Consulting. (2013) The Big Move: Baseline Monitoring Report. Toronto, ON: Metrolinx. Retrieved from: www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/bigmove/The_Big_Move_Baseline_Monitoring_Full_Report_EN.pdf
- Breen, R. (2005). *Foundations of Neo-Weberian Class Analysis*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511488900.003>
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2016). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Carter, A. (2021, April 21). *Test positivity in Brampton hits 22.4% as COVID-19 crisis worsens*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/brampton-covid-19-positivity-1.5996199>
- Callan, Isaac. (2020, March 21). *Brampton Transit waives fares in battle against COVID-19*. The Pointer. <https://thepointer.com/article/2020-03-21/brampton-transit-waives-fares-in-battle-against-covid-19>
- Chagla, Z., Chakrabarti, S., & Kaura, T. (2020). *South Asians play a part in COVID-19 transmission, and we need to acknowledge it*. Toronto Star. <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2020/11/15/south-asians-play-a-part-in-covid-19-transmission-and-we-need-to-acknowledge-it.html>
- City of Brampton. (2015a). *City of Brampton Transportation Master Plan Update*.

- City of Brampton. (2015b, October 27). *Special Meeting re Hurontario-Main LRT, rescheduled from September 16, 2015*. Brampton City Council. Agenda and Meetings Archives. <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/City-Hall/meetings-agendas/pages/minutes-agendas-archive.aspx?Year=2015>
- City of Brampton. (2019a). By-Law 242-76. Snow and Ice Removal. <https://www.brampton.ca/en/City-Hall/Bylaws/All%20Bylaws/Snow-Ice.PDF>
- City of Brampton. (2019b). *Work and Labour*. GeoHub. <https://geohub.brampton.ca/pages/profile-labour>
- City of Brampton. (2020a). By-Law 96-2020. To Amend By-law 52-2020 and User Fee By-law 380-2003 regarding Brampton Transit Fees in Response to the COVID-19 Emergency.
- City of Brampton. (2020b). *COVID-19 Relief Funding for Brampton Transit*. Staff Report. Report Number Brampton Transit-2020-089. <https://pub-brampton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=334>
- City of Brampton. (2020c). *Reduced Frequency Guide*. Brampton Transit. https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/transit/plan-your-trip/Documents/2020-001906_FrequencyGuide_January4_RD2.pdf
- City of Brampton. (2021a). *Bus Fares*. Brampton Transit. <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/transit/Fares/Pages/TransitFares.aspx>
- City of Brampton. (2021b). *Ridership*. Brampton Transit. <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/transit/About-Us/Pages/Ridership.aspx#:~:text=Average%20ridership%20for%202019%3A,Weekly%3A%20713%2C000>
- City of Brampton. (2021c). *Transfers and Connecting Transit*. Transfer Policy. Brampton Transit. <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/transit/Fares/Pages/Transfers-and-Connecting-Transit.aspx>
- City of Brampton (2021d). Magnus Cards. Accessible Service. <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/residents/transit/Accessible-Service/Pages/MagnusCards.aspx>
- City of Brampton. (2021e). *Post-Secondary Education*. <https://www.brampton.ca/EN/City-Hall/Downtown-Brampton/Pages/Post-Secondary-Learning.aspx>
- City of Toronto. (2021). *Toronto Employment Survey 2020*. Planning and Housing Committee. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2021/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-167127.pdf>

- Cozart, A. M. (2017). Transportation matters: closing the chasm between housing and transportation to foster communities of opportunity for all. *Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law*, 25(2), 219–222. Retrieved from <http://www.abanet.org>
- CUTA. (2021, May 11). *Transit Welcomes New Funding in Toronto*. <https://cutaactu.ca/transit-welcomes-new-funding-in-toronto/>
- Data Management Group. (2018). *2016 Transportation Tomorrow Survey*.
- Enright, T. (2019). Transit justice as spatial justice: learning from activists. *Mobilities*, 14(5), 665–680. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2019.1607156>
- Environmental Defence. (2021). Stop The 413. The Problem. <https://environmentaldefence.ca/stop-the-413/>
- Fainstien, S. (2009). Planning and the Just City. Marcuse, J. Connolly, J. Novy, I. Olivo, J. Potter, & J. Steil (Eds.), *Searching for the Just City* (pp. 19–39).
- Farmer, S. (2013). On the Move: The Neoliberalization of US Public Transportation. *Harvard Review*. 35(2), 60–64.
- Farmer, S., & Noonan, S. (2014). The contradictions of capital and mass transit: Chicago, USA. *Science and Society*, 78(1), 61–87. <https://doi.org/10.1521/asis.2014.78.1.61>
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities. (2020, April 23). COVID-19: Municipalities seek emergency funding. <https://fcm.ca/en/news-media/news-release/covid-19-municipalities-seek-emergency-funding>
- Fox, C. (2019, January 10). *Province vows to ‘find a solution’ to overcrowding at Brampton GO Stations*. CP24. <https://www.cp24.com/news/province-vows-to-find-a-solution-to-overcrowding-at-brampton-go-stations-1.4247976>
- Free Transit Toronto. (2021). *Changing Our Use of Cars*. Home. <http://www.freetransittoronto.org/>
- Gamrot, S. (2021, May 7). *NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, MPP say lack of vaccines for Brampton ‘clear systemic discrimination’*. Brampton Guardian. <https://www.bramptonguardian.com/news-story/10389178-ndp-leader-jagmeet-singh-mpps-say-lack-of-vaccines-for-brampton-clear-systemic-discrimination/>
- GO Transit. (2021a). Travelling with Us. Accessibility. <https://www.gotransit.com/en/travelling-with-us/accessibility>
- GO Transit. (2021b). Trip Planning. Calculate Fare. <https://www.gotransit.com/en/trip-planning/calculate-fare>

- Gonzalez, G. A. (2009). Real Estate Interests and the Techniques of Urban Sprawl. In *Urban Sprawl, Global Warming, and the Empire of Capital* (pp. 39–51). Albany: SUNY Press.
- Grengs, J. (2004). *The abandoned social goals of public transit in the neoliberal city of the USA*. 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810500050161>
- Grewal, S. (2013, May 24). *Brampton suffers identity crisis as newcomers swell city's population*. Toronto Star. https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/05/24/brampton_suffers_identity_crisis_as_newcomers_swells_population.print.html
- Hamilton, D. K. (2012). *Measuring the Effectiveness of Regional Governing Systems: A Comparative Study of City Regions in North America*.
- Henderson, J. (2006). Secessionist automobility: Racism, anti-urbanism, and the politics of automobility in Atlanta, Georgia. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30(2), 293–307. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2006.00662.x>
- Infrastructure Ontario. (2021). *Our Public-Private Partnerships (P3) Model*. <https://www.infrastructureontario.ca/Our-P3-Model/>
- Jones, Ryan Patrick. (2021 January 14). *Federal sickness benefit falls short of paid sick leave protections, advocates say*. CBC News. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/federal-sickness-benefit-paid-sick-leave-1.5872913>
- Kaur Amar, A., & Teelucksingh, C. (2015). Environmental Justice, Transit Equity, and the Place for Immigrants in Toronto. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 24(2), 43–63.
- Keil, R. (2002). “Common-sense” neoliberalism: Progressive conservative urbanism in Toronto, Canada. *Antipode*, 34(3), 578–601. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00255>
- Keil, R., & Young, D. (2008). Transportation: The bottleneck of regional competitiveness in Toronto. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26(4), 728–751. <https://doi.org/10.1068/c68m>
- Kipfer, S. A. (2020). *Free Transit is in Town, For Now*. Socialist Project. The Bullet. <https://socialistproject.ca/2020/04/free-transit-is-in-town-for-now/>
- Krumholz, N. (1982). A Retrospective View of Equity Planning Cleveland 1969-1979. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 48(2), 163–174.
- Litman, T. (2013). *Local funding options for public transportation*. Victoria, B.C.: Victoria Transport Policy Institute. 0–39.
- Litman, T. (2016). *Evaluating Public Transit Benefits and Costs - Best Practices Guidebook*. Retrieved from www.vtpi.org/Info@vtpi.org

- Lowestrates.ca. (2020 October). *Report: Ontario's 15 most expensive cities for car insurance*. <https://www.lowestrates.ca/blog/auto/ontarios-15-most-expensive-cities-car-insurance>
- MacDonald, I. T. (2012). Public Transit Strikes in Toronto and New York: Towards an Urbanization of Trade Union Power and Strategy. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 21(1), 24–51.
- Mackenzie, R. (2009a, February 9). Brampton Transit Raises Fares, February 16. Archives. Transit Toronto. https://transittoronto.ca/archives/weblog/2009/02/09-brampton_t.shtml
- Mackenzie, R. (2009b, December 31). TTC Resumes Selling Tokens, Raises Fares, January 3. Transit Toronto. https://transittoronto.ca/archives/weblog/2009/12/31-ttc_resume.shtml
- McIntosh, E. (2021a, February 17). *The money trail: Developers who donated to Ontario Proud, PC party got the green light for projects*. Canada's National Observer. <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/02/17/investigations/developers-donated-ontario-proud-pc-party-projects-got-green-light>
- McIntosh, E., Buist S., & Javed, N. (2021b, April 3). *Investigation: Developers with ties to Ford Government stand to cash in on Hwy. 413*. Canada's National Observer. <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2021/04/03/investigations/developers-ties-ford-government-benefit-highway-413>
- McLaren, A. T. (2018). Parent–child mobility practices: revealing ‘cracks’ in the automobility system. *Mobilities*, 13(6), 844–860. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2018.1500103>
- Metrolinx. (2020). *Ridership Performance Year-To-Date (YTD)*. Go Train and UP Express April 2019 to December 2019. <https://blog.metrolinx.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/click-here-to-see-the-above-ridership-map-in-detail.pdf>
- Montgomery, M. (2021, May 14). *Greyhound cancels all intercity bus service in Canada*. CBC Radio Canada International. <https://www.rcinet.ca/en/2021/05/14/greyhound-cancels-all-intercity-bus-service-in-canada/>
- Mulroney, C. Catherine Mulroney ‘to’ Mayor John Tory. (2020, August 21). *Safe Restart Agreement – Letter From Minister Mulroney, Aug. 12, 2020*. <https://www.scribd.com/document/472840262/Safe-Restart-Agreement-Letter-from-Minister-Mulroney-Aug-12-2020>
- Nielson, K., & Vella, E. (2019, January 10). *Metrolinx, province promise solutions to overcrowded GO trains between Toronto and Kitchener*. Global News. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4834948/ontario-metrolinx-overcrowded-go-trains-kitchener/>
- Ng, J., & Knope, J. (2021). *Black man testifies at trial of Toronto police detective accused of choking him during 2019 arrest*. CBC News.

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/black-man-testifies-at-trial-of-toronto-police-detective-accused-of-choking-him-during-2019-arrest-1.6070325>
- Nortey, J. (2017). *Planning Towards Prosperity: How Transit Affects the Educational Trajectories of Students*. <https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/35141>
- OC Transpo. (2021). Fares. U-Pass. <https://www.octranspo.com/en/fares/reduced-fares/u-pass/>
- Pecar, S. (2021, March 10). *Amazon hires private buses for workers as Brampton Transit closes busy Steeles Ave. route*. InSauga. <https://www.insauga.com/amazon-hires-private-buses-for-workers-as-brampton-transit-closes-busy-steeles-ave-route>
- Reid-Mucson, E. (2018). *Shadow Mobilities: Regulating Migrant Bicyclists in Rural Ontario, Canada*. *Mobilities* 13(3), p. 308-324
- Region of Peel (2019). 2018 Performance and Trending Data. TransHelp. <https://www.peelregion.ca/strategicplan/community-for-life/transhelp.asp>
- Region of Peel. (2020, April 29). *Region of Peel Submission – Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Consultation*. <https://pub-peelregion.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=2184>
- Region of Peel (2021a). Apply for a discounted monthly pass. <https://www.peelregion.ca/help/discounted-bus-pass/#howto>
- Region of Peel. (2021b). *Applying for TransHelp*. See if you qualify for TransHelp. <https://www.peelregion.ca/transhelp/apply/#qualify>
- Region of Peel. (2021c). *Taxi Scrip*. TransHelp. <https://www.peelregion.ca/transhelp/taxi-scrip/>
- Sheller, M. (2018). *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in an Age of Extremes*. Verso Books.
- Social Planning Council of Peel. (2015). *The Black community in Peel: Summary of research findings from four reports*. Region of Peel, ON: F.A.C.E.S. of Peel Collaborative. <http://www.bcanpeel.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/summary-sm.pdf>
- Somos, C. (2021, April 28). *Battling vaccine hesitancy, 'This is our Shot' aims to rally Canadians*. CTV News. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/battling-vaccine-hesitancy-this-is-our-shot-aims-to-rally-canadians-1.5405600>
- Statistics Canada. (2017a). *Brampton, CY [Census subdivision]. Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016324. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?TABID=2&LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&G>

C=0&GK=0&GRP=1&PID=110712&PRID=10&PTYPE=109445&S=0&SHOWALL=0
&SUB=0&Temporal=2017&THEME=125&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEF=

- Statistics Canada. (2017b). *Brampton, CY [Census subdivision], Ontario and Ontario [Province]* (table). *Census Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa. Released November 29, 2017. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Thomson, G. (2018, April 4). *An Accessible Ontario: Activities Undertaken by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario*. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- Tomer, A.; Kneebone, E.; Puentes, R.; & Berube, A. (2011). Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/missed-opportunity-transit-and-jobs-in-metropolitan-america/>
- Toronto Transit Commission. (2020). *COVID-19 – Transitioning from Response to Restart and Recovery*. https://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2020/June_17/Reports/4_COVID_19_Transitioning_from_Response_to_Restart_and_Recovery.pdf
- Toronto Transit Commission. (2021a). *Racial Equity Impact Assessment of TTC Enforcement Activities*. https://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2021/April_14/Reports/5_Racial_Equity_Impact_Assessment_of_TTC_Enforcement_Activities.pdf
- Toronto Transit Commission. (2021b). *Fares & Passes. Prices*. https://www.ttc.ca/Fares_and_passes/Prices/Prices.jsp
- Toronto Regional Real Estate Board. (2021). Market Watch January 2021. <https://trreb.ca/files/market-stats/market-watch/mw2101.pdf>
- TTC Riders. (2020). *Email Zap: Stop policing transit – Fund the TTC*. <https://www.ttcriders.ca/fundingnotpolicing/>
- TTC Riders. (2021). *Transform the TTC: Pandemic Recovery Fare Policies for a Thriving Transit System*.
- UNIFOR. (2020, August 28). *Ford government attempting to use pandemic to privatize and cut public transit services*. Cision, <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/ford-government-attempting-to-use-pandemic-to-privatize-and-cut-public-transit-services-862292580.html>
- Walks, A. (2015). Stopping the ‘War on the Car’: Neoliberalism, Fordism, and the Politics of Automobility in Toronto. *Mobilities*, 10(3), 402–422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2014.880563>

- Warehouse Workers Centre. (2021). *Workers in Brampton and Mississauga are deemed essential but are being denied their rights*. Peel demands second wave pandemic pay, health and safety protections for workers NOW!
<https://www.warehouseworkers.ca/index.html>
- Whiteside, H. (2000). *Purchase for profit: Public-private partnerships and Canada's public health care system*. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Wilson, C. (2021, March 9). *Brampton suspending bus route, testing drivers after 9 COVID-19 cases linked to Amazon warehouse outbreak*. CTV News.
<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/brampton-suspending-bus-route-testing-drivers-after-9-covid-19-cases-linked-to-amazon-warehouse-outbreak-1.5339566>
- Wilt, J. (2020). *Do Androids Dream of Electric Cars?: Public Transit in the Age of Google, Uber, and Elon Musk*. Between the Lines. ProQuest Ebook Central,
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york/detail.action?docID=6341233>.
- Young, D., & Keil, R. (2010). Reconnecting the disconnected: The politics of infrastructure in the in-between city. *Cities*, 27(2), 87–95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2009.10.002>

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Participant 1, Milton, Transit Rider, Personal Communication March 5, 2021

Participant 2, Kieran, Transit Rider, Personal Communication March 6, 2021

Participant 3, Navya, Transit Rider, Personal communication March 8, 2021

Participant 4, Surjan, Transit Operator, Personal communication March 9, 2021

Participant 5, Benjamin, Transit Rider, Personal communication March 9, 2021

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Questions for Transit Riders

Part A. Taking Stock of Transit Injustice & Inequity

1. Have you been reliant on public transit as an essential part of your daily commute? Explain.
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience on your daily commute?
 - a. How long does it take?
 - b. Where do you go?
3. What are some of the barriers to transit access that you have faced or are aware of?
4. Do you think the current public transit system in Brampton was planned with the community in mind? Why or why not?
5. Are there any areas or locations that come to mind when thinking about a lack of connectivity or poor service? Why or why not?
6. Do you believe that the public transportation infrastructure in itself is adequate? Please explain.
7. Is accessing employment, healthcare, or other essential services by transit a challenge in Brampton?

Part B. COVID-19 & Public Transit

1. With COVID-19 disproportionately impacting racialized people in Brampton, how has this impacted your commute and other transit riders?
2. Have you continued to use transit as part of your daily commute throughout the pandemic?
 - a. If so, was your decision driven by concern for your health? Or were you given the option to work from home?
 - b. Has the reduction in servicing and route cancellations affected how you get around?
3. How has the COVID-19 pandemic deepened the existing issues related to transit access?
4. Do you believe there could have been additional steps or measures taken to improve accessibility and equity during the pandemic?
5. While thinking of public transit, were there any changes that occurred during the pandemic that were positive?

Part C. Towards an Equitable Future

1. In your opinion what are some steps or measures that could be taken to overcome some of the factors and issues mentioned earlier?
2. How can transit operators such as Brampton Transit, GO, MiWay, or Wheel Trans leverage its transit network to better support the city's most vulnerable?
3. What do you feel should be prioritized in order to achieve a more equitable reality for transit riders? Explain.
4. If you could choose 3 things transit operators could deliver on, what would they be? Why?

Concluding Questions

1. Is there anything else that you think I should know to help with my research? Any additional comments that may be of relevance to this study?
2. Do you have any questions for me or about the study in general?

Questions for Transit Operators

Part A. Taking Stock of Transit Inequity & Injustice

1. How long have you been a driver with Brampton Transit?
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your experience working as a driver?
3. What routes do you drive frequently?
4. From your experience, what are some of the barriers for riders in accessing public transit?
 - a. Is fare an issue?
 - b. Is walking distance an issue?
 - c. How does fare enforcement work on Brampton Transit?
5. Are there any locations or areas that you find to be problematic, poorly serviced, or poorly connected?
6. Are there any routes you think could be improved and in what ways?
7. Do you believe Brampton Transit could deliver better transit service? Why?
8. Is accessing employment, healthcare, or other essential services a challenge for people who are reliant on Brampton Transit?

Part B. COVID-19 & Public Transit

1. With COVID-19 disproportionately impacting Brampton, specifically racialized people in Brampton, how has this impacted drivers and commuters?
2. How have things changed throughout the course of the last year since the pandemic began?
3. With the initial reduction in travel and traffic, were buses able to move more efficiently?
4. Have many people continued to use transit as a primary mode of transportation during the pandemic?
5. How has the reduction in service and route cancellation affected how riders get around?
6. 8?
7. Do you believe there could have been additional steps or measures taken to improve accessibility and equity during the pandemic?
8. While thinking of public transit, were there any changes that occurred during the pandemic that were positive?

Part C. Towards an Equitable Future

1. In your opinion what are some steps or measures that could be taken to overcome some of the factors and issues mentioned earlier?
2. How can transit authorities such as Brampton Transit, GO, MiWay, or Wheel Trans leverage their transit network to better support the city's most vulnerable?
3. What do you feel should be prioritized in order to achieve a more equitable reality for transit riders? Explain.
4. If you could choose 3 things transit providers could deliver on, what would they be? Why?

Concluding Questions

1. Is there anything else that you think I should know to help with my research? Any additional comments that may be of relevance to this study?
2. Do you have any questions for me or about the study in general?

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Page 1 of 2

Informed Consent Form

Date: MM/DD/YYYY ____/____/____

Name of Participant: _____

Research Name: Pathways to Transit Equity in Brampton

Researcher: Marlon Gullusci, Master of Environmental Studies, Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change, York University

Email: msg17@yorku.ca Phone: 416-659-5573

Purpose of the Research: To identify barriers and paths forward to achieve transit equity in the Region of Peel. This research like all MES Major Research will be published in YorkSpace and may be published on the EUC website if nominated for the Outstanding Paper Series.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: Participants will be asked to answer interview questions pertaining to transportation equity and other relevant issues. Participants will be asked for consent to audio/video -recordings of the interview. The estimated time commitment to participate is approximately 1-3 hours.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of any relationship you may have with the researcher(s), study staff, or York University, either now or in the future.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I, _____ (participant name), consent to participate in Pathways to Transit Equity in The Regional Municipality of Peel conducted by Marlon Gullusci. I understand the nature of this study and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

- I agree that my participation may be audio-recorded: Yes _____ No _____
- I agree that my participation may be video-recorded: Yes _____ No _____
- I agree to be identified by name: Yes _____ No _____
- I agree to be quoted by name: Yes _____ No _____
- I would like to receive a copy of the final research paper, at the following email address:
- I agree to allow video and/or [digital images or photographs] in which I appear to be used in teaching, academic presentations and/or publications based on this research. I am aware that I may withdraw this consent at any time without penalty. Yes _____ No _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher Signature

Date

Risks and Discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort resulting from your participation in the research. You have the right to not answer any particular questions. There is the potential for minimal risk of harm to professional career and opportunities if the information disclosed is subject to confidentiality, your participation will remain confidential to mitigate potential risk.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: Voluntary participation in this study can contribute to benefits to the academic literature surrounding transportation equity and could inform planning practice. The researcher will benefit from the use of the information in their major paper to satisfy the requirements to complete Master of Environmental Studies program in the planning stream.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. If you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality: Unless you specifically give your permission by checking the boxes below, all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Recordings will be collected by electronic recording device and hand-written notes. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility, the recordings will be stored on a separate hard-drive not connected to internet cloud-based storage. Hand-written notes and the hard drive will be kept in a secure location under lock and key and only research staff will have access to this information. The transcriptions and coding will be stored for a minimum of two years in a secure room under lock and key. Upon the expiration of 2 years' time, the data will be shredded and disposed. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact my Supervisor, Dr. Stefan Kipfer, by e-mail (kipfer@yorku.ca). This research has been reviewed and approved by the EUC Research Committee, on behalf of York University, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca.