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Subject: Extension of Trillium Line to Ottawa Airport

The City should save investment capital and reduce operating deficits by **ABANDONING ALL PLANS TO EXTEND THE TRILLIUM LINE TO THE MACDONALD CARTIER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.**

- The smallest airport in North America with a rail link is the Portland International Airport. This airport handles 3.7 times the traffic of Ottawa.
- Other airports with significantly more traffic than Ottawa, and with no rail transit, include Calgary, Edmonton, San Diego, Sacramento, Houston, Nashville, Tampa, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Austin, San Antonio, Buffalo, Detroit, Oklahoma City, Memphis, Raleigh-Durham, Norfolk, Kansas City, New Orleans, Columbus, Indianapolis and others. Many of these cities already have light rail systems in operations, but not to their airports.
- A preliminary review of rail systems at other North American airports shows that, on average, 8.1% percent of passengers use the rail transit services.
- This rate, when applied to Ottawa, implies a traffic volume of 413,418 per year; 206,709 inbound and 206,709 outbound. This implies 1,133 passengers per day; 566 passengers inbound and 566 passengers outbound per day.
- If the service operates 4 times per hour from 6AM to 10PM (this schedule would be useless for early morning departures and late evening arrivals, which are considerable), the service would carry 8.85 passengers per train.
- The airport route would be a continuing cash draw, a “white elephant,” and would prove a continuing embarrassment to the City, the Airport, and to OC Transpo.
- The above ridership statistics are optimistic. At all of those cities used for comparison purposes, the rail line goes directly from the airport to the downtown. At Ottawa, there would be fully two connections to reach the downtown; at South Keys and Bayview or Hurdman.
- By building the Airport line, the City would be committing to large future expenditures when it is decided to electrify the Trillium Line.
- The City is facing a large increase in the cost of Phase 2. Eliminating the airport link will help the project’s economics.
- The Airport-South Keys shuttle would compete with the Riverside South trains for using the Trillium line from the junction of the airport spur to South Keys. This segment would become the busiest part of the Trillium Line. It may require expensive double tracking; otherwise the Airport trains could delay the Riverside South trains and decrease the benefits of the Riverside South Line.
- Because of the limited volumes, the best choice for airport transit would be a bus to South Keys. The bus could then continue either directly downtown or go to the Confederation Line Hurdman Station. This would give the Airport far better connectivity than the LRT proposal, at far lower cost. If the Airport wants some “special” link, they could operate a bus, and absorb the fares.
- Has anyone developed ridership projections for the proposed Airport Extension?

Selected North American Cities With Airport Rail Transit

	Rail Usage	Airport Passengers	Rail %
Portland	1,168,000	19,076,944	6.12%
O'Hare	3,934,421	77,186,056	5.10%
Midway	2,741,843	21,823,940	12.56%
Philadelphia	2,217,010	29,521,170	7.51%
Seattle	3,796,000	45,278,240	8.38%
Washington Reagan	4,110,630	23,932,708	17.18%
San Francisco	4,015,000	53,800,032	7.46%
Vancouver	5007070	25,936,907	19.30%
Toronto	811,200	47,130,358	1.72%
Total	27,801,174	343,686,355	8.09%

- The table summarizes results for a small subset of airports for which data was readily available. It excludes Boston, Salt Lake City, Denver, New York Kennedy, Newark Liberty, St. Louis, Baltimore-Washington, Atlanta and Dallas/Fort Worth.
- In several situations, the data had “apples and oranges” problems of different measures of transit usage and different years for the total traffic statistics.
- Airport employees are major users of airport transit systems; this analysis considers only enplaned-deplaned passengers.
- Some of the airports, particularly Chicago O’Hare, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Toronto are large connecting hubs. Connecting passengers are not candidates for using airport transit. A more accurate analysis would consider origin-destination passengers ie. Those persons traveling to or from the airport in question.
- The Washington and Vancouver statistics greatly skew the results. Unlike other cities, Vancouver has no superhighways connecting the airport to the downtown. The Washington Reagan airport is an intermediate stop on two heavy rail lines, each providing access to downtown on different lines, with only 3 or 5 stops. The two lines also separate south of the airport to serve the Huntington and Franconia-Springfield areas. They connect with the red, orange, green and silver lines. This is incomparably better than what the Trillium line offers to the Ottawa airport.

Application to Ottawa Airport

Ottawa	Airport Passengers 2018	5,110,801
	Trillium Line Usage	
	Per Year (8.09%) of passengers	413,418
	Per Day	1,133
	Per Direction/Day	566
	Inbound Trips	64
	Passengers/Trip	8.84885304

Douglas Wilson

The Business Case Against Extending a Spur from the Trillium Line to the Ottawa MacDonald-Cartier International Airport