

Historic infrastructure investment announced for Brampton

by Alex Gregory

Brampton's transit system is set to receive a historic investment, as the province and federal announced a collective \$83.1 million in funding earlier this month.

The announcement was made outside the city's Sandalwood Parkway facility, with city leaders, provincial and federal representatives and dignitaries on hand to herald the funding, which will go towards multiple projects, including replacement buses, refurbishment of

existing vehicles, replacement of on-board video cameras, a new downtown transit mobility hub and more.

The city will also contribute over \$30.2 million through the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan.

"This investment today, will go directly towards our community and its future growth, it will impact the lives of so many residents. Supporting a healthier and more sustainable community, when we

invest in our communities everyone wins," said Wards 7 & 8 councillor Charmain Williams during the event.

Infrastructure advancement and development, particularly in next-gen and green technologies is an important investment, which is shared by many in the city and beyond.

"Diesel buses are done in Canada," said Gara Hay, president of MTB Transit in Milton, which supports the transit industry in

Canada through bus repair and refurbishment services.

The biggest challenge facing public transit during the COVID-19 pandemic is rideship decline, which is down significantly, up to 90 per cent in some municipalities.

Going forward, cities will need to come up with innovative solutions and attractive propositions to keep riders safe, Hay told Peel Weekly News last week.

"I think riders will be very careful about piling onto a bus like they used to," said Hay.

To that end, the transit services firm recommends refurbishment of existing buses, which can give the vehicle an extra 12 years of life - particularly through new propulsion systems and technologies that will ease the stress on buses, which run anywhere from 12-18 hours per day.

"If the transit operator doesn't do any maintenance,

around year 12, that bus is ready for the landfill," Hay said, who advocates clean fuel strategies, such as ZEV Clean Power, a technology that reduces emissions and can help cities reach their climate change goals.

"All municipalities have very aggressive goals to have clean fuel in next 30 years," said Hay, indicating he was looking forward to seeing the enhancements to the Brampton transit fleet.