To: Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council

Council Date: January 9, 2020

Subject / Report No: CAOR-CW-01-20

Title: Community Transportation Update

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Reviewed by: Kim Wingrove, CAO

Lower Tier(s) Affected: Grey County wide

Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as amended per Resolution CW20-20; Endorsed by County Council January 23, 2020 per Resolution CC18-20;

Recommendation

1. That report CAOR-CW-01-20 Community Transportation Update be received; and

2. That County Council direct staff to proceed with and RFP to lease buses until March 2023; and

3. That County Council approves a single source contract with First Student; and

4. That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to execute a Transit Procurement Initiative (TPI) agreement with Metrolinx.

Executive Summary

Grey County and the Township of Southgate are working collaboratively to develop the transit services required under the terms of their respective Community Transportation grant transfer payment agreements. The services are required to be in operation by Spring 2020 and the total $2.3M in funding is to be expended by March 31, 2023. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of consultation undertaken, recent community survey results and transit system operating policies to be developed. It also provides an outline of the service levels and associated costs required to meet grant requirements. An enhanced level of service is also modelled for Council consideration and discussion.

Background and Discussion

On December 6th, 2019 a Grey Transit Route (GTR) survey was distributed for public input. The GTR survey was promoted through various media platforms across, Grey, Bruce and Dufferin County. As of January 2, 2020, 1037 individuals had responded to the survey. This survey has
received a lot of positive attention from the public and has provided Grey County staff with valuable insight on the needs of riders. Survey results can be viewed in Appendix A.

Transit Operations

Discussions were held with other municipalities with experience initiating and operating a transit system including City of Owen Sound, Town of Collingwood, County of Simcoe, County of Wellington, Town of Orangeville. Input was also received from the County's Accessibility Advisory Committee, and representatives from Meaford, Town of the Blue Mountains, Chatsworth, Grey Highlands, Georgian Bluffs, South Bruce Peninsula, Hanover and Launch Pad Youth Activity Centre.

In determining the most cost-effective method of meeting or exceeding the transit services required under the terms of the transfer payment agreement with the Province of Ontario, Grey County staff have consulted numerous transit industry agencies regarding pricing and opportunities. A negotiated request for proposals was advertised and closed September 18, 2019. The County received several proposals; however no firm was able to provide a complete service at an affordable price.

Further consultation was undertaken to determine approximate costing for drivers and vehicles from First Student, City View, Mississauga Bus and Metrolinx. Appendix B demonstrates the costs required to operate the minimum service required by the province, and potential route options. Appendix C demonstrates the costs required to operate an enhanced service level and potential route options.

Transit Service Policies

The adoption of policies to guide the operation of the transit system is important to ensure the system can be operated safely, efficiently and that customers are provided with an enjoyable experience. Grey County staff are investigating the process and appropriateness of implementing policies on the following topics:

Behaviour/ Conduct
Animals
Smoking
Fares
Boarding and Exiting
Priority Seating
Parking
Support Person Assistance Card
Presumption
Penalties and Enforcement
Next Steps

Staff have reviewed various transit structures and cost models and have concluded that the most appropriate option for Grey County is to contract drivers and lease vehicles to deliver a piloted transit service in Grey County till 2023.

Furthermore, staff are recommending that County Council direct staff to single source the contracting of drivers to First Student. This company has a strong presence in the region and has been the successful service provider in neighboring municipalities and counties. First Student is currently driving for the City of Owen Sound, Municipality of Meaford, Town of Orangeville, Simcoe County and many others. Having access to a pool of trained, skilled drivers is critical to the success of Grey County’s transit system.

In order to access competitively priced transit vehicles (should we decide to buy buses), cameras, monitoring software etc. many transit agencies throughout the province have joined the Transit Procurement Initiative provided by Metrolinx. Staff received a presentation on the program and believe that the buying power it provides would be very difficult to obtain on our own. Staff recommend that County Council approves the signing of the governance agreement, attached in Appendix D.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

Upon County Council direction, staff will finalize contract details with appropriate agencies (First Student, Metrolinx, Province of Ontario). Bus stop agreements along the determined route will be negotiated with property owners.

Financial and Resource Implications

As noted in Appendix B, using the recommended service delivery model of leased vehicles and contracted drivers, Grey County can meet the service levels required by the transfer payment agreement. Enhancing the services as outlined in Appendix C would require additional investment of between $454,000 and $612,000 annually.

Relevant Consultation

Grey County Legislative Services
Grey County Finance Department
Grey County Transportation Services
Grey County and City of Owen Sound Accessibility Committees
Grey County
Municipality of Chatsworth
Municipality of Georgian Bluffs
Municipality of Grey Highlands
Municipality of Southgate
Municipality of West Grey
Municipality of Meaford
The Town of Blue Mountains
The Town of Hanover
City of Owen Sound
Bruce County
Municipality of South Bruce Peninsula
Municipality of North Bruce Peninsula
Dufferin County
Town of Orangeville
Town of Shelburne
Simcoe County

Appendices and Attachments

Appendix A- Grey County Community Transportation Survey
Appendix B- Transit Service Grant Requirements
Appendix C- Enhanced Service Option
Appendix D- TPI Governance Agreement