

To:	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
Council Date:	August 8, 2019
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-CC-11-19
Title:	Community Transportation Update
Prepared by:	Stephanie Stewart, Manager, Community Transportation
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, CAO
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	Grey County wide
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That report **CAOR-CC-08-19 Community Transportation Update** be received for information, and;
2. That a **By-law** be brought forward authorizing the **Warden and Clerk to execute the Transfer of Payment Agreement for the Community Transportation Grant Program.**

Executive Summary

On May 23, 2019, Grey County was awarded \$1,850,000 under the Community Transportation Program. The program requires Grey to provide regular, scheduled transit service along Highway 26 and along Highway 10 as well local services to support after school transportation to LaunchPad Youth Activity Centre in Hanover and between Owen Sound and Wiarton. Staff recommend leveraging core services and funding to provide a reliable, efficient and an effective mode of transportation for all residents.

Background and Discussion

Funding for the Community Transportation Grant has been divided over four years, with project completion by March 31, 2023. Funding has been divided into two levels, **local** and **intercommunity**. It is anticipated that the local (Launch Pad) project will start October 2019 to align with the start of programs, the intercommunity project start date will be released upon the successful selection of a third-party transit operator.

The local project consists of two sub-projects:

- A local transit solution for Hanover and its surrounding area to support student transportation to and from Launch Pad, and

- A local solution in Northwest Grey and Bruce County (Owen Sound, Georgian Bluffs, including Wiarton)
- Service will be three days per week between Owen Sound and Wiarton along Highway 6.

The Intercommunity Project consists of two fixed routes:

Highway 10/ Highway 6 Corridor

- The fixed route will operate between Markdale and Owen Sound
- Service targeted for employment, medical and shopping purposes
- A connection southbound between Markdale and Dundalk will be developed in collaboration with the Township of Southgate

Highway 26 Corridor

- This route will connect Owen Sound, Meaford and Town of Blue Mountains for employment, medical appointments, shopping and Georgian College campuses
- A connection to South Georgian Bay Transit will be available for those travelling further east
- There will be one vehicle deployed per route. The route will have two runs a day (AM and PM), five times a week and aligned with connecting service requirements

A focused environmental scan with key stakeholders has been completed to understand the current needs of Grey County residents. Data was collected from five internal stakeholders and 13 external stakeholders. The need for transit within Grey is significant and a coordinated, affordable transit service could benefit many.

Consultation with stakeholders and experience with the earlier community transportation pilot program identified a gap in the Community Transportation funding model. The current Community Transportation grant supports a fixed route; however, residents who do not live near the fixed route find it challenging to get to and home from the closest access point. As such, a large proportion of potential riders remain underserved. The Ministry of Transportation has been contacted to request that project-funded vehicles be able to be put into circulation for an on-demand service between the fixed route times. If the request is not granted, a follow-up report will be brought to County Council to discuss the cost benefit analysis for developing an additional on-demand service. An on-demand, fee-based service would provide an option to allow residents to travel without restrictions within Grey County.

Next Steps

1. Community consultation
 - a. Grey County residents will be invited to provide input on potential pick up and drop of locations and travel times
2. Call for transportation operators
 - a. Grey County will be seeking transit operators who are interested in working together to provide a coordinated transit service for residents.
3. Selection of a transportation software provider
 - a. Technology will be leveraged to deliver a robust and complex transit solution throughout Grey County.

- b. A transportation software will enable transit operators to appropriately dispatch drivers to riders and increase vehicle utilization.
- c. Transit riders will benefit from a tech platform as riders will have on demand and up to the minute access to transit solutions.

Transfer Payment Agreement

Attached is the transfer payment that requires a by-law be prepared authorizing the Warden and Clerk sign the agreement. The agreement is a standard agreement between the County and the Province and has been vetted through our agreement process.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

A signed transfer payment agreement between the County and the Province

Financial and Resource Implications

The project costs are 100% provincially funded through the Community Transportation grant.

Relevant Consultation

- ☒ Internal: Tourism, Communication, Economic Development, Social Services, CAO
- ☒ External: Chatsworth, Georgian Bluffs, Grey Highlands, West Grey, Southgate, Meaford, Owen Sound, Hanover, Launch Pad, CMHA Grey Bruce, Wellington County, Commute Ontario, Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit

Appendices and Attachments

[Community Transportation Grant Program Transfer Payment Agreement](#)