

<b>To:</b>	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Council Date:</b>	December 10, 2020
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	CAOR-CW-01-21
<b>Title:</b>	Community Transportation Accessible Service
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove, CAO
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	Grey County wide
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution CW08-21; Endorsed by County Council January 14, 2021 per CC08-21;

## Recommendation

1. That report **CAOR-CW-01-21 Community Transportation Accessible Service** be received, and;
2. That the GTR accessible parallel service, as outlined in this report, commence operation in 2021.

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of a proposed parallel accessible transit service that would provide pre-booked rides between the Grey Transit Route (GTR) fixed stops. This would ensure that those who require fully accessible transportation and can be picked up and dropped off at GTR stops until such time as the County determines it feasible to move to larger, fully accessible vehicles. The County's contract service provider who books the rides will facilitate the accessible rides as part of their service to Grey County. The cost of the accessible trips will be covered through the Community Transportation grant funds for 2021.

## Background and Discussion

The Grey Transit Route (GTR) launched on September 14, 2020. Prior to COVID-19, Grey County had planned to lease six accessible buses and contract First Student to provide drivers. As a result of Covid-19 Grey County altered its plans and began offering service with 10 passenger transit vans. The decision to begin with smaller vehicles meant the vehicles may not be able to accommodate the accessibility needs of all riders. Individuals requiring an accessible ride that could not be accommodated by the GTR were referred to a specialized transit provider in our region, such as HCSS, SMART and Meaford Moves.

In an effort to better align the GTR with AODA legislation. Grey County and Driverseat are working with Home and Community Support Services (HCSS) to offer an accessible service to run parallel with the GTR.

It is important to note that the GTR is a conventional transit system. All passengers will be picked up and dropped off at scheduled stops and at scheduled times. Dedicated specialized transit providers offer an individualized service, where the passenger is picked up at specific address (most often a person's home) and then taken to a specific address (often an appointment). With specialized transit, it is typical for the transit operator to wait for the passenger to complete their appointment and then return the passenger home. Specialized transit is very customized and provides a higher level of care for passengers who require it.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, staff presented County Council with report [CAOR-CW-14-20](#) highlighting the costs to increase ambulatory and accessible seating on the GTR service. In that report staff presented the option of purchasing an accessible minivan, that could be booked and used as demand warranted. The approximate cost of purchasing an accessible minivan was \$80,000 and this cost did not include fuel, vehicle maintenance or staff time.

GTR passengers requiring accessible service will need to book their seat a few days in advance to ensure the vehicle that is booked meets the specifications of the rider's mobility device. All GTR riders are charged the same fee, however, when the accessible service is booked Grey County will be charged an hourly rate and a per kilometer fee from Owen Sound. At this time, it is hard to predict what the cost will be to Grey County as it will depend on usage. Staff have estimated that for approximately \$80,000 Grey County can provide 162 unique accessible trips along the GTR route.

Although it is the recommendation of staff to work with Driverseat and HCSS to offer accessible transportation along the GTR route immediately, the long-term vision of the GTR is to offer one conventional transit system with accessible vehicles.

## Next Steps

Staff will monitor the accessible ridership requests and financial expenses over the next year and provide Council with regular updates regarding service utilization.

A report on ridership and service updates for the period September to December 2020 will come to Council in January 2021.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

In consultation with Grey County's and Meaford's Accessibility Advisory Committee, staff will continue to improve the GTR service to meet the needs of all riders.

The [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#), S.O. 2005, c. 11 and [Ontario Regulation 191/11](#), Integrated Accessibility Standards, establish accessible transportation standards for conventional transportation service providers in Ontario.

[Ontario Regulation 629](#), Accessible Vehicles, R.R.O. 1990, under the *Highway Traffic Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8, establishes further requirements for accessible vehicles.

## Financial and Resource Implications

At this time the true financial impact is unknown as the expenses will be a direct result of usage. However, an additional financial investment of \$80,000 shall be considered in the 2021 and 2022 annual budget process.

## Relevant Consultation

Grey County Legislative Services

Grey County Finance and Purchasing Department

Meaford Accessibility Committee

## Appendices and Attachments

[CAOR-CW-14-20](#)