

<b>To:</b>	Warden Halliday and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	September 13, 2018
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	SSR-CW-13-18
<b>Title:</b>	Further Extension of Movin' GB Service
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee of the Whole as <b>amended</b> per Resolution CW214-18; Endorsed by County Council on September 27, 2018 per Resolution CC90-18.

## Recommendation

1. That Report SSR-CW-13-18 be received; and
2. That Council provides direction regarding continued operation of the twice weekly Highway 10 corridor route from Owen Sound to Shelburne given the absence of confirmed provincial transportation funding.

## Executive Summary

Grey County's transportation pilot funding expired March 31, 2017. Council has subsequently approved two extensions to the Highway 10 twice weekly corridor route from Owen Sound to Shelburne in anticipation of receiving grant funding from the Community Transportation Grant Program that was announced in May 2018. During the recent AMO delegation discussion with the Minister of Transportation, County officials were advised that no decisions regarding the flow of grant funds would be made prior to the completion of the province's fiscal review anticipated this fall. There are concerns regarding ongoing municipal funding commitments to operate this service without provincial support and Council direction is required at this time.

## Background and Discussion

Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2018 Grey County explored a variety of transportation options, funded by the province and led through a partnership with service provider Home and Community Support Grey-Bruce. Movin'GB supported riders through Monday and Thursday transit routes between Owen Sound and Shelburne.

Previous reports SSR-CW-07-18 and SSR-CW-09-18 provided information regarding the pilot and included requests for continued service pending the transfer payment agreement for the Local Transit and Intercommunity Bus Projects that Grey County has been approved for.

## Movin'GB Outcomes

The intent of the pilot was to improve the lives of Grey County residents who did not have access to adequate and reliable transportation options. Pilot project services targeted seniors, people with disabilities and residents living in low income who were in need of access to affordable transportation. However, the service was available to any adult who wished to access it for any purpose.

2018 Highway 10 Ridership (Mondays and Thursdays)	
February	10
March	38
April	50
May	40
June	54
July	59
August	55
Total	306

Recent survey results for reasons for accessing this transit:

- Medical (8)
- Shop (14)
- Social (6)
- Laundry
- Other (4)
- Work

Some early lessons learned during the short duration of the point to point route are that although ridership numbers are not overwhelming, they are new riders who did not have access to transportation previously and they reported experiencing a positive impact to their quality of life. It takes time to engage community to understand that transportation services are for all, not limited to certain populations. Awareness is necessary to understand that transportation is not just about big city buses; it can be smaller vehicles that address a universal problem in a rural setting

As well, a limited marketing campaign was intentional to ensure demand could be met. Staff were concerned about managing capacity with the pilot but it is anticipated more days of service, additional shifts and vehicles as well as improved route options will increase ridership and recent rider survey comments reflect this

## Funding Limitations

Council has endorsed the continuation of the twice weekly Highway 10 corridor route as it made sense to maintain the service pending the release of the transfer payment agreement and funding commitment from MTO. In the interim Grey County committed to payment of the route expenditures after the pilot funding ended March 31, 2018. However the delay in awarding the funding due to the transition to a new government is a concern as costs mount, as well as the Community Transportation Grant Program itself; ongoing operations of this route are approximately \$5000.00 per month and are not sustainable through 100% municipal funding.

To date rides have been free of charge in order to drive ridership. The operations and expenditure costs previously were funded through the pilot program. Recently, when asked, the riders indicated they could pay the following:

- \$5.00 / ride (8)
- \$40 / month
- \$2.00 / ride (3)
- \$0.00 / ride (2)
- Reasonable (2)
- Whatever it takes
- \$15.00 / ride
- \$20

Adding a fee to ride from Owen Sound to Shelburne would help to support some of the ongoing costs that are unfunded, which since April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 have been 100% municipally funded. There will not be enough to meet expenses however there are relevant studies including a recent rural business case analysis from the United States where missed health care appointments cost their system several times more than providing the transportation. Lack of transit was the reason for missed appointments in most cases. Further non quantifiable costs to low income residents, seniors and persons with disability include isolation and the need to be connected to community; also impacting health care expenditures in a negative way when there is no access to transit. Further, the CT Program funding was intended to expand this limited route for employment and skill development, critical to community as more and more employers are indicating they cannot fill their vacancies.

With the limited rural options, Grey County differs greatly from urban centres as there are no services or choices for public transportation. The investment of the committed CT Program grant funding is vital and a status update from the MTO is critical. Without the guaranteed 1.85 million, this small program cannot be sustained. This will again leave some with no options whatsoever as even if they could afford it, there are no taxis in some communities.

Finally, there has been a strong collaboration to develop this model between Grey County and HCSS-GB; the partnership and success from it has been positive and expanding the program as intended with the approved CT Program grant commitment will only bring better results when the funding is received. However without the promised funding, there will be no alternative but to cancel what has been developed.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

There are none.

## Financial and Resource Implications

Journalled expenses April 1<sup>st</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup> total \$26,264.85, which works out to be an average monthly cost of \$6,566. Report SSR-CW-09-18 estimated monthly expenses to be \$4790.11. In review there were additional unexpected TripSpark license costs that were pilot project-related included and after confirmation with MTO, could not be included as pilot expenses as they were received after the ministry reporting deadline.

If Council direction is to continue the service to the end of 2018, funding could be provided from the anticipated 2018 Ontario Works departmental surplus. If however should there not be sufficient surplus to fund these additional costs within the 2018 budget, the unfunded portion could be funded by a transfer from the Ontario Works Caseload Reserve.

## Relevant Consultation

Internal - Social Services, Finance

External - Home and Community Support Grey-Bruce

## Appendices and Attachments

[SSR-CW-07-18](#)

[SSR-CW-09-18](#)