

Report SSR-SS-01-15

To: Chair and Members of the Social Services Committee
From: Barb Fedy
Meeting Date: December 10, 2014
Subject: **Request for Approval for Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program Application**
Status: Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution SSC07-15; Endorsed by County Council January 6, 2015 per Resolution CC24-15;

Recommendation(s)

WHEREAS in May 2014 a transportation study to investigate the rural transportation services currently being offered throughout the County of Grey was jointly initiated by the Social Services, Transportation Services and Planning Departments;

AND WHEREAS Lough Barnes Consulting Group presented their findings to Grey County Council in October 2014 identifying options that could enhance the service to the citizens of Grey County through a collaborative model recommended to meet community needs, increase resource utilization and increase the overall capacity of the current transportation system providers;

AND WHEREAS an estimated budget was provided for the three phases outlined as Inception, Formalization and Implementation, including one time and operating costs;

AND WHEREAS in late November 2014 the Ministry of Transportation announced a Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program to provide financial assistance to municipalities across Ontario for the planning and implementation of local, coordinated community transportation projects;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Report SSR-SS-01-15 be received;

AND THAT Grey County Council endorses an application to the Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program to seek provincial funding for the coordination of transportation services in the County of Grey.

Background

The Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program Application Guidelines and Requirements indicate that applications must be submitted and received by the Ministry before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 30, 2015. With the release of the program in late November 2014, the time frame to complete this application for funding is minimal. The grant program is a two year program (April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2017) and the maximum amount an organization can apply for is \$100,000.

Staff from Social Services, Transportation Services and Planning have met to review the application and guidelines, and find it to be a good fit for the recent work that has been undertaken within Grey County regarding coordination of services. In October 2014, County Council was provided an overview of the recommendations from the review of the rural transportation study that investigated rural transportation services currently being offered throughout Grey County. Lough Barnes Consulting Group identified options to enhance and coordinate existing services to residents of Grey County. At that time Grey County Council endorsed a motion that the report be received and further that Council support in principle the recommendations contained within the consultant's report. The recommendations included:

- developing a collaborative model through formal partnership agreements amongst participating transportation services providers
- jointly procure and operate on a shared transportation scheduling and dispatching system that allows the providers to pool together resources, leverage a sophisticated algorithm to maximize efficiencies and reduce deadheading in service delivery and to enhance the overall quality and accuracy of local transportation related data
- centralize scheduling and dispatching functions to reduce operational complexity and increase efficiencies
- service standards, service quality, service experience and user-fees should be aligned across the providers to ensure equitable access to services regardless of where residents live within the county or their physical/cognitive/financial conditions

Council also included in the motion that staff provide the incoming Council with a report outlining the recommendations and associated implementation costs for consideration and direction. Unfortunately the timing limitations of this grant opportunity do not allow for staff to finalize such a report. However, staff do not want to miss the opportunity to

apply for the grant as it aligns very well with the recommendations of the consultant, and which, as previously mentioned, were supported in principle by County Council. It is clear that access to safe and adequate transportation is a concern for residents and leaders of Grey County.

If approved for the funding grant, Staff would prioritize the resources required for internal or external dedicated staff support to facilitate inception of the coordination as well as project management, change management and legal costs affiliated. If funding permitted, resources for the procurement of scheduling and dispatching software and hardware, IT technical support and licensing costs would also be considered as they were specifically identified by the consultants as next steps. The grant program guidelines include many of these items as funding opportunities.

Financial / Staffing / Legal / Information Technology

Considerations

The Community Transportation Pilot Grant Program involves a one million dollar allocation and there is no commitment for any matching municipal contribution. The 2015 Social Services Draft Budget includes an allocation of \$30,000 that is intended to commence the work outlined for the initial phase of coordinating services and any grant funds approved would support this work, expediting the process.

Link to Strategic Goals / Priorities

Coordination of the existing transportation services would realize the unused capacity with the current system and increase transportation options to residents in the greatest need for services, improve quality of life, and meet the corporate strategic goal of enabling healthy and resilient communities through improved access to health care services. This would also meet the strategic goal of listening and working together by exploring innovative ways to more effectively and efficiently deliver services and programs, including consideration of partnerships.

Attachments

[Attachment to SSR-SS-01-15 Rural Transportation Study Lough Barnes October 7 County Council](#)

[Attachment to SSR-SS-01-15 Community Transportation Grant Guidelines](#)

Respectfully submitted by,

Barb Fedy
Director of Social Services