

May 5, 2021

County of Grey
Warden Selwyn Hicks
595 9th Ave E, Owen Sound, ON N4K 3E3

Re: Grey Transit Route

Dear Warden Hicks,

We would like to offer our support to the pilot transit program for the county, Grey Transit Route (GTR). Our SkillsAdvance Ontario program, **connect2SKILLS**, is now in its fifth year of operation. Offered by the Four County Labour Market Planning Board, this program provides essential skills training and job placement support to residents in our community with a normal participation rate of about 80% of Ontario Works recipients.

The majority of our participants do not have access to reliable transportation, and many of them live in rural areas and small communities. If they don't have access to a vehicle, there is no hope of securing employment that will lift them out of poverty and put them back on the road to independence.

Last fall, one of our participants was able to use the GTR to get from Hanover to Walkerton allowing him to participate fully in our Manufacturing program, he was able to gain access to the internet, a computer, and one-to-one assistance as needed. We will continue to use the GTR service when we have participants on the available routes.

Many times, we see an employer is willing to offer employment to a graduate of our program who is ready to work, but without public transit, it is sadly out of reach. The GTR – Route 6 is affordable and reliable, however, the limited days of service was not suitable for a full work-week. We appreciate there are great costs associated with expanding this type of program but as we work towards increasing the local labour supply, for entry level positions, it is important that both employers and job seekers build confidence in a transportation system. This will go a long way in alleviating some of the workforce barriers of rural residents.

We look forward to building more partnerships among service providers like our organization, job seekers and employers in Grey County through this transportation solution.

Sincerely,



Gemma Mendez-Smith
Executive Director

Planning to keep you working