



Committee Report

To:	Warden McQueen and Members of Grey County Council
Council Date:	July 23, 2020
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-CW-10-20
Title:	Revised Community Transportation Service Delivery and Budget Proposal
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-CW-10-20 Revised Community Transportation Service Delivery and Budget Proposal be received, and;
2. That staff be directed to negotiate a single source agreement as per the purchasing policy, with Driverseat Inc. to provide services in fulfillment of the provincial Community Transportation grant and the additional Grey Road 4 route between Durham, Hanover and Walkerton, and;
3. That once completed to the satisfaction of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Warden and Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement with Driverseat Inc., and;
4. That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Corporation of the Township of Southgate, authorizing Grey County to deliver on Southgate's behalf, a transit service as required by the Provincial Grant awarded to Southgate, and;
5. That the cost to operate the system from September 1 to December 31, 2020, of \$213,911, after recoverable HST (excluding Grey Road 4) be funded as per the 2020 budget, and;
6. That should Council wish to proceed with the Grey Road 4 route, the cost to operate the route for the period of September 1 to December 31, 2020 is \$30,606, after recoverable HST, to be funded from the One-Time Funding Reserve, with 2021 and 2022 to be included in the annual budget, and;
7. That County Council direct staff to continue working to develop an on-

demand system in Grey County, and;

- 8. That the Warden and Clerk be authorized to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Southwest Community Transit (SCT) Association**

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a new service delivery option and associated costing for the Community Transportation project and to seek direction regarding next steps for developing transportation services.

Background and Discussion

On May 28th, 2020 staff presented [CAOR-CW-05-20](#) to County Council updating the status of the Community Transportation project. The project had not moved ahead as planned due to the COVID-19 shutdown. Given the effects of the pandemic on the economy and physical distancing requirements, it did not make financial sense to move forward with the earlier recommended service delivery model which was scaled to a larger number of riders than can reasonably be expected.

Upon reviewing the report mentioned above, Driverseat, a transportation solution company that has a franchise in Owen Sound, contacted staff. Driverseat proposed a service model that is responsive to current conditions and that staff feel would meet the needs of residents while achieving all grant requirements. Driverseat has continued to operate safely throughout the pandemic and have policies and procedures in place for infection prevention. Furthermore, staff are recommending that County Council direct staff to single source the contract to Driverseat. Driverseat will provide Grey County with transit operators, six - 10 passenger vehicles and an electronic fare payment platform.

Transit Route Requirements in the Provincial Grant

In order to fulfill the requirements of the grant, Grey County is required to operate a conventional transit system twice a day with scheduled routes and stops. Routes operating on Highway 26 and 10 are required to operate five days per week, while the Highway 6 route from Owen Sound to Warton is required to operate three days per week. Additionally, Grey County staff will establish an MOU with Southgate to authorize Grey County to execute the Provincial Grant and deliver a service on Southgate's behalf.

The first route would operate along Highway 26 from Owen Sound to the Town of The Blue Mountains, five days a week, Wednesday to Sunday. Staff are recommending operating Wednesday to Sunday as these are the busiest days for commercial and tourist activity. Additionally, many businesses are closed in Meaford and Thornbury on Monday and Tuesday. Staff recognize that there is a future need for service on Friday

and Saturday evenings to provide residents with access to employment and entertainment at Blue Mountain Resort. This need will be monitored closely, and proposed schedule revisions and costing brought back for Council consideration when appropriate.

The second route would operate along Highway 10 from Owen Sound to Orangeville, five days a week Monday to Friday. Buses will depart Owen Sound at appropriate times to ensure riders can arrive on time for employment in Grey Highlands or continue travelling to Dundalk, Shelburne and Orangeville.

The third route would operate along Highway 6 from Owen Sound to Wiarton, three days a week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Staff will re-evaluate ridership regularly to determine if an increase of service is needed, as well, staff will look for future partnerships with South Bruce Peninsula to extend the route to Sauble Beach during the summer of 2021.

Staff reviewed feedback from County Council, community stakeholders, survey respondents, municipal partners and employers to design a thoughtful and effective transit system. Staff considered shift start and end times, Georgian College class start times, evening entertainment at Blue Mountain Village, connections to Owen Sound Transit, Greyhound, City of Guelph, Orangeville Transit, Go Transit, Simcoe County Linx and Colltrans.

Transit Route along Grey Road 4

In consultation with Hanover and West Grey, staff learned that residents in West Grey access a variety of medical, employment and recreational services offered in Hanover and Walkerton. Residents with no access to a vehicle rely on family/friends or use alternative types of transportation. Staff learned about the positive environmental impacts that could be achieved by offering transit during peak travel times, as many residents commute to work along Grey Road 4, between Flesherton, Durham, Hanover, and Walkerton.

As per County Council's direction staff have considered a route on Grey Road 4. It is the recommendation of staff to implement a route running between Flesherton, Durham, Hanover, and Walkerton. If County Council support development of a route along Grey Road 4, staff would recommend that the route be implemented as the fourth phase of the Grey Transit Route, once all provincial grant requirements for service have been achieved. An alternative option to a conventional transit route would be an on-demand model like Uber or RIDE WELL.

Proposed Grant Service Level and Cost

Proposed Grant Service *						
Route	Service	Operating Days	Trips per Day	Cost per trip	Cost per day	Annual Cost
Highway 26 Owen Sound to Meaford	Five days a week	Wednesday to Sunday	Four trips per day	\$ 110.57	\$ 442.26	\$ 115,000
Highway 26 Meaford to Blue Mountains	Five days a week	Wednesday to Sunday	Four trips per day	\$ 116.44	\$ 465.75	\$ 121,100
Highway 10 Owen Sound to Dundalk	Five days a week	Monday to Friday	Three trips per day	\$ 228.31	\$ 684.92	\$ 178,100
Highway 10 Dundalk to Orangeville	Five days a week	Monday to Friday	Five trips per day	\$ 134.64	\$ 673.18	\$ 175,000
Highway 6 Owen Sound to Wiarton	Three days a week	Tuesday Wednesday & Thursday	Two trips per day	\$ 208.74	\$ 417.48	\$ 65,100
Total Annual Cost						\$ 654,300

*Additional expenses for maintenance, marketing and administration not included.

Cost to operate Grey Road 4						
Route	Service	Operating Days	Trips per Day	Cost per trip	Cost per day	Annual Cost
Grey Road 4 Durham to Walkerton	Two days a week	Monday & Friday	Five trips per day	\$ 180.04	\$ 900.18	\$ 93,600

The cost for Driverseat to operate the proposed service as per the Transfer Payment

Agreement, for the period of September 1 to December 31, 2020 is \$213,911, after recoverable HST. The total cost for Driverseat, maintenance, marketing and administration under the proposed model has a cost of \$ 2,581,939, after recoverable HST over three years as compared to the amount of grant remaining of \$2,511,379, after recoverable HST, resulting in a shortfall of \$70,560. This will need to be considered in the 2021 and 2022 annual budget process.

Staff recommends that the cost to operate a Grey Road 4 service, which is beyond the scope of the grant, for the period of September 1 to December 31, 2020 is \$30,606, after recoverable HST, to be funded from the One-Time Funding Reserve. The total cost for Driverseat for Grey Road 4 is \$280,857, after recoverable HST for a three-year term, with 2021 and 2022 to be included in the annual budget.

The cost to operate both services does not include fare box revenue; depending on ridership this will offset operating costs.

Funding Opportunities

Potential funding opportunities to increase revenue/offset expenditures are as follows:

- Federal and Provincial gas tax funding is used by transit agencies to improve transit in their communities; for example:
 - The City of Mississauga invested their gas tax funding to replace, platforms, roofs and ramps at various transit facilities.
 - The City of Brampton invested their gas tax funding to upgrade transit scheduling software, automated vehicle maintenance monitoring system, and refurbish buses.
 - The City of Kingston invested their gas tax funding to complete a downtown terminal feasibility study and construction.
- Financial contributions from Grey County member municipalities to improve service levels specific to their communities
- Financial contributions from Bruce and Dufferin County to extend services
- Commercial sponsorship
- On vehicle advertising
- Employer fare contributions
- Fare box revenue

Implementation of an On-Demand Transit System

An on-demand transit system would pick people up at a location of their choosing and deliver them to their desired destination. Grey County staff connected with Wellington County to learn about the initial successes, challenges and early wins of the RIDE WELL pilot. Wellington County shared that it is challenging to meet the requests and needs of all riders. Having access to accurate data regarding travel patterns is key to understanding the rider and it takes time to build ridership.

The development of an on-demand system would be of benefit to many Grey County residents. However, it would be expensive. The costs associated with operating an on-demand transit system like the RIDE WELL pilot would include a one-time set up fee of approx. \$25,000, an annual Project fee of approx. \$ 48,000 and a Per vehicle fee: \$2.00 – \$ 2.50 per day. It is important to note that staff wages and vehicle costs have not been included. Wellington County's RIDE WELL transit system is using four door sedan vehicles with a maximum capacity of four passengers and one driver. RIDE WELL fares are charged per person. Fares are set at \$0.60 per kilometer, with a minimum fare of \$5.00 and a maximum fare of \$40.00 each way. The system does not operate on a break-even basis and Wellington County is subsidizing it with additional resources beyond their provincial grant.

Additionally, Grey County has begun preliminary discussions with Uber. Staff feel that there is an opportunity for ridesharing in Grey County and the introduction of Uber would afford many benefits for all residents. Residents would have the opportunity to earn additional income and as independent operators. Staff feel there is an opportunity for cross county collaboration and will be working with Bruce and Dufferin County to discuss the idea of creating the appropriate regulatory framework for Uber to operate in all three counties.

With the introduction of a new style of transit in more rural areas, residents may be concerned about safety. Uber is committed to safety and has the following safety features built into their business model to ensure confidence for all users:

- **In-App Safety Toolkit:** Passengers have immediate access to the Uber app's safety features all in one place, including the ability to share your trip status with friends and family in real time, 24/7 incident support, and an emergency assistance button to call to get help if you need it. The app displays your location and trip details, so you can quickly share them with the emergency dispatcher.
- **Uber works very closely with law enforcement.**
- **Check your ride, every time:** Users can double-check the app for their driver's information to ensure they are getting in the right car by matching the license plate number, the car make and model and driver's photo to the information in the app. Uber's newest feature is PIN verification. On some trips, riders will be asked to provide

their driver with a unique 4-digit PIN before the trip can start.

- **RideCheck:** By using sensors and GPS data, RideCheck can help detect if a trip goes unusually off-course or if a possible crash has occurred. If the app alerts Uber to anything out of the ordinary, they'll reach out to provide riders with the tools to get help.
- **Commitment to keeping women safe:** In Canada, Uber works with experts like YWCA Canada, Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, and the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking to help keep people safe and end gender-based crimes in our country.
- **Keeping drivers safe.** All the above safety features, including 24/7 support and the emergency button are available to drivers as well as features like speed limit alerts.

Southwest Community Transit Partnership

Grey County has been approached by SCOR (South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation) to be a part of the Southwest Community Transit (SCT) association. SCT's mandate is to coordinate the delivery of inter-community public transportation services in southwest Ontario, share information and develop best practices, identify economies of scale through shared purchasing and operating agreements, and act as a common voice to support long-term sustainable transit funding.

It would be beneficial for Grey County to join the SCT and support the development of a seamless experience for riders including; routes and schedules, fare structures, policies, signage, technology, marketing and promotions. In addition to Grey County, the following municipalities are considering joining SCT: Brant County, Municipality of Lambton Shores, Middlesex County, Norfolk County, City of Owen Sound, Oxford County, Perth County, City of Stratford, Township of Strathroy-Caradoc and the Town of Tillsonburg. On July 2nd, an article was published in the Woodstock Sentinel-Review discussing the Southwest Community Transit initiative.

Next Steps

Upon County Council direction, staff will draft an agreement with Driverseat and begin promoting the new service.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

- While the provision of transit services is normally a matter reserved exclusively to lower-tier municipalities, the Provincial Grant awarded to the County gives the County the power, as an upper-tier municipality, to offer transit services as provided for by the Grant (per s. 22 of the Municipal Act) both within and beyond the County's borders

- The MOU with Southgate is necessary to give the County the power to operate in the area covered by Southgate's grant but not the County's grant (per s. 22 and s. 20 of the Municipal Act)
- It is necessary to have MOUs with the Grey lower-tiers that aren't part of the provincial grants (per s. 20 of the Municipal Act) so that the County will have the power to deliver the service in those municipalities
- It is necessary to have MOUs with any non-Grey municipality that the provincial grants don't authorize service to (per s. 19(2) of the Municipal Act)

Financial and Resource Implications

The cost for Driverseat to operate the proposed service as per the Transfer Payment Agreement, for the period of September 1 to December 31, 2020 is \$213,911, after recoverable HST. The total cost for Driverseat, maintenance, marketing and administration under the proposed model has a cost of \$ 2,581,939, after recoverable HST over three years as compared to the amount of grant remaining of \$2,511,379, after recoverable HST, resulting in a shortfall of \$70,560. This will need to be considered in the 2021 and 2022 annual budget process.

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Relevant Consultation

Grey County Legislative Services, Finance Department & Transportation Services

Grey County and City of Owen Sound Accessibility Committees

Grey County

- Municipality of Chatsworth
- Municipality of Georgian Bluffs
- Municipality of Grey Highlands
- Municipality of Southgate
- Municipality of West Grey
- Municipality of Meaford
- The Town of Blue Mountains
- The Town of Hanover
- City of Owen Sound

Bruce County

- Municipality of South Bruce Peninsula

- Municipality of North Bruce Peninsula

Dufferin County

- Town of Orangeville
- Town of Shelburne

Simcoe County

Appendices and Attachments

[CAOR-CW-10-20 Community Transit Update- Route Details](#)

[Project Summary to Date](#)