

**Township of Southgate**  
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## **Staff Report CL2023-014**

**Title of Report:** CL2023-014 - Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit Membership Update and Recommendation  
**Department:** Clerks  
**Branch:** Legislative and Council Services  
**Council Date:** June 7, 2023

### **Recommendation:**

**Be it resolved that** Council receive Staff Report CL2023-014 for information; and **That** Council direct staff to notify the Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit Board of Southgate Township's commitment to their service and that Southgate intends on remaining a municipal partner moving forward.

### **Background:**

Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART) is a specialized public transit service providing transportation solutions to the residents of 10 municipalities in Grey and Bruce Counties. The Township of Southgate has been a member of SMART for several years. Southgate appoints one Council member and an alternate every term to sit on the SMART Board.

At the December 4, 2019, Regular Meeting of Council the following was approved based on a Notice of Motion presented at the same meeting:

No. 2019-794

**Moved By** Mayor Woodbury

**Seconded By** Councillor Sherson

**Whereas** the Township of Southgate is a member of Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART) and is represented by a board of directors representing the member municipalities; and

**Whereas** each board of directors determines the policies, priorities and budget for SMART; and

**Whereas** each member municipality financially supports the SMART organization and the service provided to each of our communities; and

**Whereas** the costs to deliver the service continues to rise impacting our municipal burden on taxpayers,

**Now therefore be it resolved that** Council direct staff to provide notice with a copy of this motion of our intentions to withdraw from the SMART partnership as a member; and

**That** Council recommend to other SMART member municipalities that we cooperatively explore amalgamation of service with Grey and Bruce Counties to deliver the SMART service to reduce transit duplication, develop transit efficiencies through one service delivery model and specifically to reduce our present back-haul time and costs without customers on-board; and

**That** Council direct staff to send this motion to all SMART member municipalities, as well as Bruce and Grey County Council's for their consideration. **Carried.**

Following the above direction from Council, staff provided correspondence to SMART of the Township's intention to withdraw from the service and notified the other member municipalities.

In 2020, due to the on set of the COVID-19 pandemic, at the November 4, 2020, Council meeting the following was approved based on a Notice of Motion presented at the same meeting:

No. 2020-511

**Moved By Mayor Woodbury**  
**Seconded By Councillor Rice**

**Whereas** Council approved resolution number 2019-794 at the December 4, 2019 regular meeting of Council directing staff to provide notice to Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART) of the Township of Southgate's intention to withdraw from the SMART partnership as a member, and further recommended that member municipalities cooperatively explore amalgamation of services with Grey and Bruce Counties to deliver the SMART service; and

**Whereas** the COVID-19 pandemic has decreased the member municipalities time and efforts in exploring an amalgamation of services to deliver the SMART service, **Therefore be it resolved that** Council direct staff to provide notice to SMART to continue with the use of their services for the period of one year. **Carried.**

Following this direction, staff provided the above to SMART and member municipalities.

In 2021, due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, at the December 15, 2021, Regular Meeting of Council, the following motion was approved:

No. 2021-789

**Moved By Mayor Woodbury**  
**Seconded By Councillor Shipston**

**Whereas** Council approved resolution number 2019-794 at the December 4, 2019 regular meeting of Council directing staff to provide notice to Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit (SMART) of the Township of Southgate's intention to withdraw from the SMART partnership as a member, and further recommended that member municipalities cooperatively explore amalgamation of services with Grey and Bruce Counties to deliver the SMART service; and

**Whereas** the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the member municipalities time and efforts in exploring an amalgamation of services to deliver the SMART service; and

**Whereas** Council approved an extension of the SMART services for 2021 at the November 4, 2020 regular Council meeting by resolution number 2020-511 due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

**Therefore be it resolved that** Council direct staff to provide notice to SMART to continue with the use of their services for 2022. **Carried.**

In 2022, staff presented Staff Report CL2022-015 to allow for an extension for 2023 and advised that Council would have to decide in 2023 to either formally withdraw from the service or not. The following was approved at the May 4, 2022, Council meeting:

No. 2022-268

**Moved By Deputy Mayor Milne**

**Seconded By Councillor Sherson**

**Be it resolved** that Council receive Staff Report CL2022-015 for information; and **That** Council approve an extension of the Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit System partnership to December 31, 2023. **Carried.**

Staff provided notice of the above to SMART following that direction.

**Staff Comments:**

Staff are bringing forward this report to include background information for members that were not on the last term of Council to advise of past decisions and to also provide a decision to SMART and member municipalities of the Township's intention moving forward.

The agreement between SMART and Southgate requires that notice be provided in advance of your intention to withdraw from the service:

*9.1 No Member shall withdraw or resign as a Member of the Corporation without giving written notice to the parties hereto and the Corporation which notice shall be effective on December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following the year in which notice was given (i.e a notice was given in 2013 will take effect on December 31, 2014. Said Member shall be obligated to pay its proportionate share of the operating costs of the Corporation until the effective date of its withdrawal.*

Staff believe that the annual extension notifications that we've been sending to SMART is not advantageous as it commands a lot of staff time (from the Township and SMART) and leaves SMART wondering if Southgate will be utilizing their services or not for the upcoming year. At this time, staff recommend continuing with the SMART service indefinitely and advising SMART of this, and then they will have a firm decision from Southgate moving forward.

If in the future, Southgate decides to discontinue the service, SMART will be formally notified at that time, in terms of our agreement.

**Financial Implications:**

Financial implications to the Township is the annual contribution to SMART, included in the 2023 budget.

**Communications & Community Action Plan Impact:**

This report has been written and presented to Council to communicate accurate information to the public.

**Concluding Comments:**

That Council direct staff to notify the Saugeen Mobility and Regional Transit Board of Southgate Township's commitment to their service and that Southgate intends on remaining a municipal partner moving forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Dept. Head:** *Original Signed By*  
Lindsey Green, Clerk

**CAO Approval:** *Original Signed By*  
Dina Lundy, CAO

**Attachments:** None